

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Tuesday, April 8, 1986 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, there is a very special visitor in your gallery. Before I introduce her, I'd like to indicate to the Assembly that this morning I had the privilege of making a presentation to the hon. Member for Stony Plain on behalf of the Alberta Safety Council. The presentation was an award called the Saved by the Belt Club award, presented to the hon. Member for Stony Plain after he was involved in an accident that would likely have taken his life had he not been wearing a seat belt. At the same time I had the privilege of presenting a similar award to a niece of the hon. Member for Stony Plain, Miss Lindsay Purdy, who was saved by a seat belt in a tragic accident that killed both her grandparents a few months ago. Mr. Speaker, the niece, Lindsay Purdy, is seated in your gallery with her father, Don, and I'd ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 205
Seat Belt Act

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 205, the Seat Belt Act.

The Minister of Transportation has just made some very special remarks concerning my use of a seat belt and my niece Lindsay's use of a seat belt when my parents were killed in a motor vehicle accident some time ago. I'm saying in a testimonial way, Mr. Speaker, that I know from experience now that seat belts work. In this Assembly over a number years I've introduced legislation, and we've had debates. We now have the child restraint Act in place, and I'm sure that day by day the members of the Assembly are now coming to realize that it won't be very far off that we will have compulsory seat-belt legislation for all Albertans in this province.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 205 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: I note a tendency for the introductions of Bills to become more and more, shall we say, challenging for a debate in response. Perhaps we could abbreviate those introductions.

Bill 209
Alberta Palliative Care
Foundation Act

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 209, the Alberta Palliative Care Foundation Act.

This foundation, in addition to its conventional responsibilities, will have four areas of primary focus: firstly, to

advance public awareness and understanding of palliative care; secondly, to make grants to organizations that fund research into palliative care; thirdly, to make grants to organizations that provide training for medical staff in the provision of palliative care; and fourthly, to assist volunteer organizations to obtain financial and professional assistance for programs that develop understanding and provision of palliative care.

[Leave granted; Bill 209 read a first time]

Bill 208
Disabled Parking Act

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 208, the Disabled Parking Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to permit Alberta municipalities to ensure and enforce the reservation of parking spaces in public parking lots for vehicles operated by or transporting disabled persons.

[Leave granted; Bill 208 read a first time]

Bill 215
Mortgage Interest Tax Deductibility Act

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 215, the Mortgage Interest Tax Deductibility Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide tax deductibility for mortgage interest paid on a principal residence up to a limit of \$5,000.

[Leave granted; Bill 215 read a first time]

Bill 212
Council on the Status of Women Act

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 212, the Council on the Status of Women Act.

Mr. Speaker, the stressing of equality of Alberta women is this Bill's primary goal. If made law, this Bill would ensure a women's council with real teeth. A research- and action-oriented council as outlined in this Bill would have great latitude in its ability to deal head-on with the most pressing issues facing Alberta women today without being tied to arbitrary mandates from the minister or the government.

[Leave granted; Bill 212 read a first time]

Bill 211
An Act to Amend the Debtors' Assistance Act

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being Bill 211, An Act to Amend the Debtors' Assistance Act.

The purpose of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is not to forgive but rather to reschedule farmers' debts on a reasonable basis and thereby give them a better chance of success at no substantial cost to the Crown.

[Leave granted; Bill 211 read a first time]

Bill 213
Environment Conservation Act

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 213, the Environment Conservation Act.

The purpose of the Bill is to reinstate the independence of the Environment Conservation Authority and to allow an

impartial board to retrieve its authority to protect Alberta's environment without interference or influence from the minister.

[Leave granted; Bill 213 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the annual report of the Department of the Environment, the Surface Reclamation Fund, and file with the Assembly the annual review of the Alberta Environmental Centre.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the 1985 progress report of Farming for the Future and the 1984-85 annual report of the Agricultural Development Corporation. Copies were forwarded to members on October 31, 1985, and November 21, 1985.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual reports for 1984-85 of the Department of Labour, the Alberta Human Rights Commission, and the pension benefits branch, and to file, as required, regulations under the Electrical Protection Act.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the three volumes of the public accounts of the government of Alberta for the fiscal year 1984-85, showing a budgetary surplus of \$1.043 billion. As well, I will file copies of the financial summary and budgetary review.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 1985 annual report of the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the final report of the Alberta heritage fund small business and farm interest shielding program and the annual report of the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the annual report of Alberta Public Safety Services for the year ended March 31, 1985, and the annual report for the same period of time for the Alberta Department of Transportation.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table three annual reports: Alberta Recreation and Parks, the Alberta Sports Council, and the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual report of the Wild Rose Foundation for the fiscal period ended March 31, 1985.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm tabling the annual report of the Legislature Library and the annual report of the Ombudsman.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 29 grade 6 students from Swan Hills. Despite a three-hour bus ride the students are energetic, enthusiastic, well-disciplined, and just filled with energy to be here today. I should point out to them that the lady who is two chairs to my right

and dressed in green today and is the Whip of the government caucus is a former resident of the town of Swan Hills and was one of the first nurses in that community not too many years ago.

The students are accompanied by three teachers, Joyce Venables, Roger Manuel, and Terry Smyth, and by parents Sandy Berglund, Bernadette Clark, Corine Laing, and Lorraine Olson, who also assisted as the bus driver. They're all seated in the members' gallery. As I ask them to rise, I'd be pleased if my colleagues would accord them the traditional welcome.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery today are three members of the board of directors of the Westerner Exposition Association in Red Deer. Mr. Glenn Good is the president of the Westerner, Mrs. Marg McPhee is the immediate past president, and Mr. Alvin Johnstone is a former president. I would ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased at this time to introduce to you and members of the Assembly 26 students from Laurier Heights school in the Edmonton Glenora riding. They are from the bilingual grade 6 class. Monsieur le président, permettez-moi en ce moment d'offrir un bon accueil aux étudiants. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mlle Christiane Durant. They are in the members' gallery, and I'd ask the Assembly, in the bilingual fashion, to welcome them to the Assembly today.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, this is another class act. The real class is numbered among the 64 students from McKee elementary school in Edmonton Parkallen. It will take me long enough to recite the names of those accompanying them. I want them all to be on record, though. The classes are, in fact, three in number, all from grade 6, and in the charge of Mr. Dan Greene. Also with them are Mr. Ron Brewster and Mr. Al Befus, intern teacher Miss Sandy Lyons, student teacher Miss Barbara Zinselmeyer, student helper Miss Robyn Hodgkinson, and substitute teacher Mrs. Jean Bell. I would ask that they rise now in the public gallery and that the members accord them a very enthusiastic welcome to the gallery.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 15 students from the legal assistant program at Career College in the constituency of Edmonton Centre. They are accompanied by their teacher Denis Roy and their leader Beverley Oliphant Hatt. I am told that these students are aspiring legal assistants with positively brilliant minds. I would ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Somewhere in this House, Mr. Speaker, I hope that I have 38 students from Greenview elementary school in Calgary. They are accompanied by Mr. Pat Sproule and five adults. I would like them to rise and be recognized by the House if they are here.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to announce an increase in the distribution of lottery funds received through the Western Canada Lottery Foundation. Various sports and cultural groups throughout the

province have been receiving financial support through revenues from Alberta's participation in the Western Canada Lottery Corporation.

I am pleased to announce today that the government of Alberta will increase the funding provided to current recipients of lottery funds by approximately 25 percent. This increase will be effective for a three-year period to expire March 31, 1989.

A significant addition as well, Mr. Speaker, is new funding for 282 class A, B, C, and D fairs already existing as of April 1, 1986, throughout Alberta. This new funding will amount to \$200,000 to class A fairs, with the exception of Edmonton and Calgary; \$100,000 to class B fairs; \$25,000 to class C fairs; \$15,000 to class D fairs. Edmonton and Calgary will receive a larger increase in funding in view of their greater capital cost commitments. This additional funding to the various fairs will again be for that three-year period ending March 31, 1989.

I should highlight, Mr. Speaker, that this is a short-term adjustment to the lottery distribution method, and I plan over the weeks and months ahead to undertake a review of the distribution process.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I feel the substance of this announcement provides warranted support for the many volunteers, fairs, and associations throughout the province that provide a very valuable service to their communities. I wish to file with the Legislative Assembly two copies of the list of recipients.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hospital Funding

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the acting hospitals minister. It has to do with Edmonton's main city hospital, the Royal Alexandra. As the minister is well aware, the hospital is facing serious financial difficulty. My question is: will the acting hospitals minister indicate if the province is now reconsidering its refusal to fully support the hospital's redevelopment, and if so, when can we expect an announcement on this matter?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the answer is no, but the acting hospitals minister will refer the question to the attention of the minister immediately upon his return.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the acting hospitals minister. Is it the official policy of this government that Edmonton's primary city centre hospital will have to do without the high-tech equipment necessary for proper redevelopment?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the answer, of course, is the same as the one given to the previous question.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I will redirect the question then to the Premier, in view of the fact that he's made some public comments. Is this the final statement by the government, that there will be no money — some \$28 million asked for by the Royal Alex — that they will not receive this money?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague the Minister of Labour said, this is a proper item for the minister of hospitals to deal with when he returns, and we

will certainly have him do so. But I would say to the hon. member: no, that is not so. It is the position of the government that when additional funding is proven to be needed, that funding is provided.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I would be directing it to the hospitals' minister, but he hasn't been here for two days. It's an issue that we wanted to take up.

My question then is to the Premier — which seems to be a little different from what the acting minister said — when can we expect an announcement about this \$28 million?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I told the hon. member that it's necessary to determine whether it's needed. There is quite a difference — there always is, and it's something we live with in public life — between a wish or a want and a need. As I said, if we determine that it is a need, then the funding is provided.

MR. MARTIN: A wish, a want, and a need: is the Premier saying from that statement that the Royal Alex staff are incorrect and are actually exaggerating what's going on at the hospital?

MR. GETTY: No, I don't think that was in any way in my reply, Mr. Speaker. I must say that the Royal Alex staff and their board alerted us that they were going to be taking a public position on this matter and would be using the media, the opposition, the Legislature, and I guess the election, to press their point.

DR. BUCK: There's going to be an election?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think that's certainly acceptable. But it comes back to the original principle that I stated: we will try and determine the difference between a wish or a want and a need. If it is a need, then it will be provided.

MR. MARTIN: A wish, a want, and a need. Let me present this question to either one of the hon. gentlemen. Would either the Premier or the acting minister indicate the policy considerations which have led other Alberta hospitals to be able to get the proper funding to operate at full capacity while the Royal Alex has been blocked from the same? This just didn't happen. They said they've been trying to get this funding for three years.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, these are details that the minister of hospitals should deal with. I should point out to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that in Edmonton there is some \$860 million of hospital construction committed, under way, or being completed. That is more hospital construction than in any other province, not just a city. It's a tremendous contribution to hospital development in this city. However, the principle still stands: if it is proven that more is needed, then more will be provided.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier or the acting hospitals' minister. Do they have any studies about the Royal Alex situation? As has been stated by people over there, it's possible that people have died because they weren't able to get the proper care. Does the government have any studies on this matter? That might

determine whether it's a wish, a want, or a need for the government.

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and that is the type of thing that guides the government in making the determinations and the funding allocations.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question then to the Premier, if I may try to determine here an area between a wish, a want, and a need and help the government out, Mr. Speaker. Would the government be prepared to end extra billing and user fees and retrieve \$22 million from the federal government? That would go a long way in helping out the Royal Alex.

MR. GETTY: It's an interesting proposal, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the doctors who are speaking for the Royal Alex would suggest that as well.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm speaking for ordinary Albertans and ordinary Edmontonians, not the doctors.

My question is to the Premier. Never mind who the doctors are and all the rest of it. Is this one of the options the government will look at?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's not an option we're considering right now.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Would one of the options considered by the government be the changing of the priority that has been established with regard to the children's hospital in Edmonton?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker, it's not, because we consider that an absolute priority. But I would say that one of the things hon. members might consider is that with \$860 million of hospital development, it may well take pressure off some of the demands on the Royal Alex.

I'd like to say at this time that I consider it one of the finest hospitals in this country. The board and the medical staff make a tremendous contribution to this city. But there is sometimes a difference of opinions. We're not closing our minds. The Edmonton MLAs and the minister of hospitals will consider it, as I said earlier, to see if the need is there.

Royalty Debt Collection

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister of energy, I'd like to direct the second question to the acting minister. I would like to file three copies of a memo I have that comes from the associate deputy minister to the Petroleum Marketing Commission. I will ask the page to provide a copy to the minister also.

Mr. Speaker, the memo concerns a dispute between Esso Resources and the Crown on a royalty debt. The last paragraph is a quick one:

We would like to orchestrate things such that your settlement and our gas deal are divorced from one another from a documented perspective — that is, that one is not contingent upon the other in anyone's eyes other than the insiders . . .

My question to the government is: is it the policy of this government to orchestrate under-the-table deals with large oil companies to hide the writing off of royalty obligations?

MR. KOZIAK: I'm waiting for the mysterious memo. There's one a day, I imagine?

MR. MARTIN: Yes. [interjections]

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, it has come my way. I, of course, am just now seeing the memo for the first time. The minister of energy is presently in Ottawa, involved in some very important discussions on behalf of the energy producers of this province, and we all wish him well in that respect. He will be back tomorrow and will be able to respond. Of course, in terms of our government, all our dealings are on the up-and-up and first-class.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's certainly a debatable point. While the minister is checking so we can get a report on that, will he also have the minister check on whether a special deal has been arranged with Esso, which has not been offered to other in situ operators, on nonpayment of royalties at Cold Lake for gas produced there which is used for fuel?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that question as notice, and the energy minister will be able to respond when he returns.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. This one perhaps could be answered, because the memo says that Esso has some sort of "Cabinet blessed" document which releases them from a debt of \$19 million. Could the minister update us on that "Cabinet blessed" document? If he cannot here today, will he also have the minister report back on that?

MR. KOZIAK: I'm sure that the minister of energy will be able to respond to that as well when he returns.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The memo also says, "I don't believe the Minister would allow any litigation." Perhaps to the Premier: may we have a policy statement from this government on pursuing by litigation debts of some \$19 million in this case or more? Is this a special arrangement for Esso, or is it across-the-board policy that royalty debts are not pursued?

MR. GETTY: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, it is not the policy of the government that legitimate debts are not pursued.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. I would ask this: can the Premier outline what the policy of this government is when bureaucrats orchestrate settlements that are for insiders' eyes only? Specifically, do these require ministerial approval?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has raised in bits and pieces some questions regarding a memo that he has had. It would have been interesting to have them all at once so they could have the same reply that's necessary. We are going to look into it, as the hon. member said, and we'll give him a reply in detail.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Premier. Before I raised these questions today, was the Premier informed in any way about this royalty write-off?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, without looking into the memorandum and the details behind it, I couldn't reply to that except to take notice of his question and reply to him later.

MR. MARTIN: One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Recognizing that we do have this memo and the Premier is now aware of it, would he now undertake to make sure that this \$19 million is given back to the Alberta taxpayers where it belongs?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the same principle applies as I stated earlier: all legitimate debts will be pursued in order that we might receive payment on them.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't want to delay the hon. leader of the Representative Party. I should say that I had some misgiving about this procedure. It seems to me that if a line of questions is going to be based on a document, it should be put on the Order Paper and the document produced or referred to so that we don't take up the time of the question period with people wondering about something they've never heard of.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, just on a point of order. As we know, the energy minister hasn't been here for a couple of days. I could put it on an Order Paper, but it may never come back. That's the reality. If we want to deal with a serious issue, and we think this is a serious one, often this is the only time we have to do it and to have any assurances that we'll get any answers.

MRS. CRIPPS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it's orchestrated.

Agricultural Assistance

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, if I could proceed with my question and keep the band playing here for the farmers of Alberta. Yesterday in question period the Minister of Agriculture indicated that up to 5 percent of the farmers in Alberta, some 2,800 farmers, may not obtain operating funds from the banks, the lending agencies. Could the minister indicate and assure this House that the new farm development guarantee program will make operating funds available to most of those people that may go without funds this spring?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, my answer to the question yesterday said that in my discussion with the banks, they had suggested that it was a very small percentage, certainly under 5 percent. There can be no guarantee that people are going to get money. We streamline the guarantee so the banks can make those decisions and provide those guarantees. In addition to that, we have the Alberta farm development guarantee plus specific guarantees.

To ensure that as many producers as possible can receive the assistance they need this spring, we have moved over the course of the last year to put into place enterprise counsellors and whatever assistance would be needed to try and help farmers to develop a workout plan to be able to take to their banks so they would be able to get operating credit. Mr. Speaker, we provide the opportunity, but we can't provide the guarantee.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Agriculture, and it's relative to a guarantee. Some of the talks I have had with local bankers have indicated to me that there is a clause in the guarantee program which can cancel the guarantee if for some reason the farmer is unable to make his or her payments. I wonder

if the minister is aware of that. Would there be any consideration of reviewing and possibly changing that clause?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of that clause, but I'll certainly look into it and report back.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The interest rate on the farm development guarantee program would be prime plus 1. Has the minister considered possibly changing that interest rate?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, when we were looking at modifying the program so that it would become accessible to more farmers, of course we looked at that option. Most farmers and businesses, when they're getting operating money, get it at prime plus 1. If we would have had the rate significantly lower, then everyone of course would have been under that guarantee program and the normal bank operations would have been interfered with. We did look at it, but we felt it was reasonable being at the bank prime interest rate plus 1 percent, considering that interest rates are coming down somewhat and it is realistic looking at operating credit.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I should say that the level of comfort would be there for the consolidation of existing agricultural debt under our new \$2 billion loan program.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The minister talks about the comfort program, the farm credit stability program, as one that will assist in terms of operating moneys. Could the minister confirm whether operating funds are available through that program or not? Are machinery debts applicable to that program as well?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, we're still working on developing some of the further details of the program. Certainly new operating credit would not be covered under the program, but present agricultural debt, which of course would likely include some operating credit, could be. To answer the question clearly, the consolidation, reorganization, or restructuring of agricultural debt under the new program is certainly there, but it wouldn't be for new operating credit.

MR. SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. leader, but we're having difficulty again with the sound system. It's now over 10 years old. We've tried to be frugal about it, but I think perhaps we've stretched it beyond its limits. There's nothing we can do about it during the present session, so I would respectfully ask hon. members if they might speak less softly. I know I'm one of the culprits, but I'll try to remember. I'll try to imagine the member in the far corner there as being hard of hearing. Perhaps members could just turn up the volume a little bit, because not only other members but also our guests in the gallery are having difficulty hearing what is being said on the floor.

MR. GETTY: What was that?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, just as a point of interest, when I came into this Legislature, it was the first time that microphones were introduced into our Assembly. Prior to that time, prior to 1963, we had a Conservative member on this side of the House. He made multiple speeches, and no one in this Legislature ever heard them. A budget was

struck to put in the speaker system, and I guess we heard them too well. Maybe that's the other side of the story.

My supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture: in considering the 9 percent interest rate on the farm credit stability program, what considerations were made in terms of a 5 or 6 percent interest rate, and why were those two interest rates rejected in the government's consideration?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer may wish to supplement my answer, but of course we looked at what the most reasonable rate of interest would be considering what we were trying to achieve, and that was stability. If you look over the last 10-year period, an interest rate of 9 percent would have been a very reasonable rate of interest and one that would have certainly helped producers over the course of a number of years. We also didn't want the program to be inflationary. We're looking at stabilizing the interest rate at a reasonable level. That's the consideration it was given.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. Two of our organizations in the province of Alberta, the Cow-Calf Association and Unifarm, have put forward proposals relative to acreage payments and retroactive interest shielding. Their concern is certainly the availability of operating capital for the farmers this spring. Could the minister indicate the government's position on those two matters at the present time? Is any consideration being given to policies such as that being announced during this session or this spring?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, we seriously looked at the acreage payment proposal and made the decision that no, that wouldn't be a viable option. It would mean the drawing of lines and different dollar numbers flowing to individuals across this province. The federal government has taken that approach. We didn't feel it was the most reasonable approach, and in place of it we made the decision to double the farm fuel rebate to 63.6 cents a gallon, recognizing that a number of farmers — grain farmers are the larger users of fuel. We did that in the place of an acreage payment.

In addition to that, around \$800 million in programs that we've announced were put in there to help increase the cash flow of our producers and thereby enhance their cash flow and enable them to get operating credit. So, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question, we are not looking at any development of any acreage payment program at this time. We will continue to monitor the situation and, as we always have in the past, will respond when it's most appropriate.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A final supplementary to the minister. Could the minister clarify, in terms of the possible 2,800 farmers who may not get operating funds this spring, that that is a realistic figure, or has the government some other figure in mind that they're looking at to determine the present policy?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't have access to the books of all the farmers in this province, so I can only go by information that is given me. Bankers I've discussed it with said that there would be 1 to 1.5 percent who would have difficulty, and I asked: "Well, what is normal? Is that normal?" They said, "Usually that is fairly

close to being normal." I can only work from the best information I'm given.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A final supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate the general policy of the government of Alberta in retaining the present number of farmers on the farm in Alberta? Is there a loss rate that is acceptable to government, or is there a loss rate unacceptable?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to get into the numbers game of what's appropriate and what isn't. That's up to the individual private-sector farmers to decide. We will provide the opportunity for them to be in agriculture, and that's what we will continue to do. To even suggest in any way that we aren't doing all we can and what our policy is, is ridiculous because our intention — and it should be clear to anyone — is that we must provide a safety net for producers.

We're working on that with the overhaul of the crop insurance corporation and their proposals. We're looking at making proposals to the federal government on the changes to the Western Grain Stabilization Act and a number of other factors to provide the safety net and also try in the credit area to be of every assistance we can in providing reasonable capital at a stable interest rate for our farmers. That will give them the opportunity to be involved in agriculture. Mr. Speaker, I will not get involved in any way in suggesting that government should pick the winners and losers.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In view of the minister's statements here in the last few days and the action of the House yesterday that indicate clearly that per acre payments and parity pricing are rejected, yet in view of the minister's statement now that perhaps they have to continue to look at other things, could the minister indicate what other ideas he might still have in the wings that may be of some assistance if there is, as most producers are saying, a need for more cash on hand?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing that would take the place of a worldwide increase in our commodity prices. That would be the best thing that we can do. We will, of course, in the future as we have in the past, take every appropriate action to try to be of every assistance and be partners with farmers in this province to see that the agriculture in this sector not only remains strong but continues to build and grow.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The issue of the rate of the interest under the new credit program — I wonder if the minister could tell us if a factor in determining the rate of interest was the rate at which the province will be able to borrow on the world market the money that will be put into that program?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, because I neglected to say that, and that certainly is true. What we were attempting to do in that program was to take the strength of our triple A credit rating in Alberta and the strength of the financial position of this province and share it with the farmer, so we could pass on to the farmer our good credit rating.

That was the deciding point in choosing the 9 percent interest rate as being the most realistic one that we could expect in using the borrowing power of the province.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister just confirm that the province expects to borrow the money at the same rate of interest it will be passed on to farmers?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I refer that question to the Provincial Treasurer.

MR. HYNDMAN: Not necessarily, Mr. Speaker. We would attempt to secure funds at the lowest efficient rate for the province, and those rates vary by the day, as the hon. member knows. Of course, there will be administration fees to pay, and there would be other expenses which the government would incur, but we would endeavour to secure the funds at the lowest possible rate, bearing in the mind the fact that this program is a stability program for 20 years and that that is a very attractive rate of 9 percent.

Petroleum Projects

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne indicated support of major energy projects in the Alberta tar sands. Would the hon. Premier advise the Assembly if further expansion of the Syncrude project is part of the discussions taking place in Ottawa by the hon. ministers of energy?

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm certain the Husky upgrader, the general health of the energy industry in Alberta and Canada, and the potential expansion of the Syncrude plant would all be items that would be discussed at that meeting.

MR. WEISS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Premier have any details to report to the Assembly at this time?

MR. GETTY: I don't have any details to report at this time. I would expect we will hear from the hon. minister of energy, perhaps later today and probably tomorrow in the Legislature when he returns. But I would say this to the hon. member with regard to the Syncrude expansion: this government considers that that expansion, the development of the oil sands, and the upgrader are important parts of our province and indeed of Canada, and we feel very strongly that these projects deserve the support of our federal government. We think that on a common-sense basis and with the support of our Alberta MPs, we should get it, but if we don't, the government of Alberta will do everything possible to keep both the expansion and the upgrader moving.

MR. WEISS: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wish the Premier would clarify that. Does the Alberta government then have contingency plans in place if federal assistance is not there?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to completely divulge any matters that are properly used in negotiations with the federal government, but I will say this: those projects are important to this province and to our country, particularly because they have such a long lead time. There-

fore, we will, with or without help, maintain the pace of those projects through the engineering, planning, and development stages.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Does the Premier not consider it a tactical error to make that sort of statement when you're in negotiations with the federal party? They may just say, "Let them do it alone, and we get the benefits."

MR. GETTY: I've heard that argument before, Mr. Speaker, but I must say that I think common sense prevails and that these projects are tremendously important to our province and to our country. I assume that with the support of the Alberta Members of Parliament, the strong position of our government, and the position of the federal government, they will want to maintain these projects.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Common sense may prevail. They could get all those benefits if we're paying for it. My question is to the minister for making statements about going it alone: how would this be paid for without a long-term floor price? How are we going to get the private sector involved?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I guess I just have more confidence in the province and in the resources than the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Also, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows that it isn't the price of oil today that determines the viability of those projects but, rather, the price of oil when those projects come on stream.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Premier. Confidence doesn't pay the bills. My question is very specific, recognizing that there's a five- to seven-year lead time. If the private sector were so confident about that, it seems to me that they would be involved in it now, without government help. What terms of help are we prepared to give? How much are we prepared to give out of the trust fund? I think that's what Albertans want to know at this time before we go into an election.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I've made the position clear, and that is that the government is determined to keep those projects moving along their five-year, seven-year path. I don't expect that it would be giving anything or spending anything. I think it would be an investment in the future of this province.

University of Calgary Enrollments

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. This has to do with the current crowding and overcrowding at the University of Calgary. Can the minister indicate what long-range plans the government of Alberta has to alleviate the crowding at the University of Calgary?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to discover the newfound information from the Member for Clover Bar. In fact, if there was ever any overcrowding at the University of Calgary, it was probably taking place three years ago when the population of that institution reached its maximum. I'd like to inform the member that since then the population of the university is decreasing from that peak. Of course, with the massive capital investment program which the

province now has in place through a variety of colleagues, including the parks and recreation minister, who is responsible for the Olympics, we are attempting in a variety of ways to cope with the student numbers at the University of Calgary.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I know the member would want to learn of the new program which the province of Alberta introduced which provides for additional assistance to the universities and colleges to accommodate enrollment increases, which is term money, I agree, but is in response to the demand by students for more accommodation, more spaces, and by the university to cope with that problem.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, no rounded policy would be complete unless I did deal with the question of students themselves. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, this government has given some \$116 million to 50,000 university and college students in this province to allow them to complete their education. To me, Mr. Speaker, that's a program for you.

DR. BUCK: Maybe the people in Lethbridge will believe that, but the University of Calgary students won't.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Using the Advanced Education guidelines for the University of Calgary, where there's a shortage of 15,400 gross square metres of space, including the new facilities that the minister is talking about, there is still going to be a 22 percent shortage — using their own guidelines. If the minister is so brilliant, Mr. Speaker, maybe he can indicate to the Assembly why the University of Calgary's funding has gone down when the enrollment has increased. Can the minister indicate what he's going to do about that?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, once again, Mr. Speaker, the member is trapped in his own research. First of all, I should say that one of the reasons my colleague the minister of hospitals has been away is that he has been participating in a very exciting event at the University of Calgary; that is, the opening of Scurfield Hall. The combination of the private-sector donations from the Scurfield family, coupled with our endowment fund, the only one in Canada, has allowed that university to bring on stream a substantial amount of space for the business faculty which, in fact, has been overcrowded but now, of course, is reaching a very comparable level of square-foot-to-student ratio.

As well, Mr. Speaker — and as usual the Member for Clover Bar is imprecise in his analysis. In any comparison at all, if you take a careful look at the funding of the University of Calgary, you will find that it is one of the highest funded universities in Canada, as are all institutions in this province. And I will dare the member to measure the province of Alberta's funding against any other province's in Canada, by any measurement, with respect to per-student population or per capita. You must, of course, factor in the capital I referred to. On all bases, Mr. Speaker, Canada is proud of Alberta's record in the funding of universities and colleges, as am I.

DR. BUCK: I'm certainly glad I'm going half deaf, because I only had to listen to half of that garbage.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, that's what it was: garbage.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, using the minister's department's own figures — if we are going to use the guidelines as established by the minister's department, there should have been 3,400 fewer students at the University of Calgary. Is the minister going to indicate that if these figures were followed, we would be excluding people who are qualified to go to the University of Calgary? If we are using these space guidelines, there is a shortage.

MR. JOHNSTON: I know the Member for Clover Bar does not like to be beaten at debate, and he always wants to pick on this issue. Of course, he is faulty in his analysis. [interjection] I was tolerant with the Member for Clover Bar, Mr. Speaker. If he doesn't want to hear the facts, then skip over to another question where he can get the same kind of response, because he never does his work, as you well know. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that in terms of the analysis . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, that was an unacceptable remark. Every member comes to this Legislature to do their job and do their work, and the judgment is left to the time of the election. I think that's unfair of the hon. member to make a comment such as that. If we want to go to the election and make the judgment, my friend will prove to the hon. minister who thinks he has so much wisdom that he can gain majority support in a major way in his constituency and come back here and give some good advice to the minister, who we hope may be absent.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps we can conclude this exchange now and get back to the question period in the short time that's available. I didn't intervene. I realize that there were some things that were out of order on both sides. The hon. member first challenged the minister to be brilliant, and I had to give him a little scope. Then the hon. member referred to an answer as garbage, and of course I did object to that. The hon. minister somewhat added to my objection. Perhaps we could let it go at that. I don't think we need a long postmortem about it either.

I wonder if this could be brief. I overlooked the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, and he would like to ask a question before the time runs out.

Sugar Beet Industry

MR. R. SPEAKER: My question to the Minister of Agriculture is with regard to the sugar beet industry of southern Alberta. In the 1985 spring session the minister made \$6 million available through the government to the industry to attempt to assure that the industry would be in place in 1985. Current negotiations are going on, and I was wondering if the minister could indicate whether that \$6 million is still available to the industry in southern Alberta for various reasons.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, it was available up to the end of the fiscal year, and then, of course, it expired with the end of the year. It's my understanding that the negotiations are going fairly well. The federal government said that they will be partners this year with the growers, and then they will be negotiating for a tripartite type of stabilization approach for next year. So, Mr. Speaker, the dollars that were there were certainly there for the entire year last year, but there are no plans now to repeat that.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister indicate whether the government of Alberta has accepted being a partner in that tripartite agreement at the time negotiations will proceed? Has the principle been accepted by the Alberta government at this time and all that is left is the details of agreement to be put together?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: No, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's accurate. I said I would fully co-operate in the discussions working toward a tripartite agreement. There's a little difference in working with the sugar beet industry than there is with the livestock sector across the country. I'm not sure what the proper approach would be, but I made it very clear to the federal government that I would fully co-operate in those discussions working toward a stabilization agreement for sugar beet growers.

Farm Credit Stabilization Program

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question, pursuing some of the things we talked about earlier, to either the Minister of Agriculture or the Provincial Treasurer. The question is: could we be told, please, if there's been a rate for initial financing secured at this point or what the initial rate is that's expected for borrowing to put money into the credit stability program?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, no, that hasn't been done yet, of course, and would not until the funds are ready to flow. Certainly we will be looking at securing the rate at the lowest possible cost for people of Alberta.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, given the nearness of the program, the process must be under way. I wonder if the Treasurer could indicate what the expectation would be, within a fraction of a point or so, of a rate that they're going to secure money at.

MR. HYNDMAN: It's not possible to do that with precision, Mr. Speaker, because as the hon. member knows, the cost of money around the world varies virtually every hour. We will continue our efforts in securing those funds at the lowest possible rate. I can assure the hon. member the moneys will be available for this dramatic new program when the wickets open for the farmers.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If funds are secured significantly below 9 percent, could the Treasurer indicate whether any savings will be passed on through modifications in the program?

MR. HYNDMAN: Of course, Mr. Speaker, the exact cost of the program won't be known for some considerable time. In addition to such items as cost of administration, there would have to be borne the costs of defaults — hopefully those would be very few, but there would be some and those would be down the road — and as well the difference which there may be between the cost of the money borrowed and the money loaned. So it would not be possible for some time to estimate the exact cost of that, but I did give an indication yesterday as to the expected annual cost of the program.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the Treasurer indicate if there's any limit on rates that would affect the security of the program?

MR. HYNDMAN: I'm not sure what the hon. member is driving at, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GURNETT: Are there any rates that are in mind that would put a limit on the program's ability to function, any increased rates that beyond a certain point the program would not be functional?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to respond to that. It can be very clear to all farmers in this province that the program will be there late spring and the effective rate is going to be 9 percent. That will be fixed, and it'll be fixed for the 20-year term. That's fact no matter how the Provincial Treasurer works it out. I want the farmers of this province to rest assured that that will be the program.

MR. GURNETT: A supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary. We're running out of time.

MR. GURNETT: To the Minister of Agriculture the question is: if there is the availability of money at significantly below 9 percent, would the minister be undertaking to have the program modified to pass that savings on to farmers just as vigorously?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I've always tried to get the lowest possible interest rate that we can for farmers. You can be sure that I will do all I can to be helpful in that way.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for the question period has run out.

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. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, it's a real pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 15 grade 12 students from Ryley school in the constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Voegtlin and bus driver, Mr. Knudson. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 56 grade 6 students from the Grace Martin elementary school. Grace Martin elementary school is one of the 32 schools in the Edmonton Mill Woods constituency that I had the privilege of delivering *The Canadian Encyclopedia* to over the course of last fall, and I understand that they're making good use of it. The students are in our galleries. They are accompanied by their teachers Miss Zimmer, Miss Anderson, Mr. Tindall, and Mr. Overand. I wonder if they would be

kind enough to rise and receive the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I'll try once more. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you 33 students from grade 6 in Greenview elementary school in Calgary McKnight. Sadly, I'm saying hello to these students and good-bye, because after a certain forthcoming event, unfortunately, Greenview school will no longer be in the constituency of Calgary McKnight. I would like to introduce the teachers that accompany them: there's Mr. Philipiew, Mr. Sproule, Sidney Stephenson, Norm Mogolen, and Linda Vogelsang. Accompanying them is a parent, Mr. Keith Wilson. I would like the House to accord them the usual welcome, and I ask them to rise at this point.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring to the attention of the Assembly the former member for Calgary Currie in the members' gallery. Would Mr. Fred Peacock stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

130. Mr. Gurnett asked the government the following question: On April 17, 1984, the Assembly ordered the production of two returns showing:

- (1) Copies of various sorts of information gathered at and around the Luscar Sterco mine of Coal Creek near the Lovett River, and
- (2) Copies of any certificates of variance, water quality control orders, and stop orders issued to the permit holder for the mine.

When is it expected that these returns will be presented to the Assembly?

What circumstances or conditions have precluded the presentation of these returns to date?

MR. CRAWFORD: Agreed.

131. Hon. Mr. R. Speaker asked the government the following question:

What was the amount of the consulting fee paid to Ronald Ghitter of Calgary for his efforts in attempting to turn the \$30 million government hotel project in Kananaskis Country over to private investors? Please provide a detailed breakdown of the total amount paid to Mr. Ghitter, including the basic consulting fee and any other money paid to Mr. Ghitter associated with the above project. What was the total length of time Mr. Ghitter was employed by the Alberta government on the Kananaskis Country hotel project?

MR. CRAWFORD: Agreed.

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

201. Moved by Mrs. Cripps:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to take steps to ensure that Alberta's municipalities, schools, hospitals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations can obtain adequate and affordable liability insurance.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to have the first motion on the Order Paper. It took some scrambling, but we made it.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities, school boards, hospital boards, businessmen, and community organizations have found to their consternation that their insurance premiums have skyrocketed. In many cases the coverage is cut by anywhere from 50 percent to 200 percent. There have been cases where this coverage is nonexistent; that is, no takers. Counties, cities, and other governmental entities are faced with increased exposure to lawsuits and awards, causing dramatic increases in the cost of insurance coverage. These escalating costs ultimately affect the public through higher taxes, loss of essential services, and loss of the protection afforded by adequate insurance. In order to ensure the continued availability and affordability of quality government services, a comprehensive review is necessary.

There have been comparable cost increases in professional liability insurance. Escalating malpractice insurance premiums discourage physicians and other health care providers from service in their fields. Other professionals, such as architects and engineers, face similar choices — financial instability and unlimited risks — in providing service to the public. General liability insurance is becoming unavailable or unaffordable to many businesses, individuals, and non-profit organizations in amounts sufficient to cover potential losses. High premiums have discouraged socially and economically desirable activities and encouraged many to go without adequate insurance protection.

We would all support reasonable compensation for persons injured through the fault of others. Objective limits and greater predictability in the amount of the awards are necessary. The cost of providing reasonable compensation should be reduced whenever it is possible and [made] equitable by eliminating potential windfalls to persons and purposes for which the awards were not intended.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in this manner my original motion was different. I couldn't get it by the various sources, but I do want to read it:

Be it resolved that the government consider proposing statutory limits on damage awards by the courts on liability insurance and/or pass legislation which would facilitate self-insurance by municipalities if they so desire.

I couldn't get that by the hon. House leader and a number of other people, so I'm just reading it for information.

I hope to get this motion passed, by the way, Mr. Speaker. I've done pretty well with the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Agriculture on some of my motions, so I like to get it past somebody before I enter it. In fact, the House leader said it would be a draconian solution.

But frankly, I don't want my options limited or my ability to even purchase liability insurance dictated by unrealistic judicial awards. I believe the key element here is affordability. I have the distinct feeling that if the public does not oppose excessive awards, we will all be the losers. Everyone is aware of the celebrated Brampton, Ontario, case, where a child riding a trail bike on vacant public property was paralyzed. The court awarded \$6.3 million. It's being appealed. Surely there is some onus of self-responsibility on the child and the parent.

When I was in high school in Red Deer, two little children drowned in the Red Deer River. Today, rather than taking it for the tragedy that it was, someone would sue. Every city in this province has a river running through it. They cannot possibly totally injury-proof it or all of the other public areas that people are in, and they certainly can't prevent people from walking on thin ice or riding bicycles down dangerous hills.

In fact, the picture on the front page of today's *Sun* shows two 17-year-olds floating down the North Saskatchewan River. If they had drowned, in today's sue-happy society the city of Edmonton could possibly have been sued for not posting "Thin Ice" signs. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, the picture also showed the firemen risking their lives to rescue these two people from the river. Surely there is some onus of responsibility on the person.

I have a schoolteacher friend who laughs about riding her bicycle — and this is many years ago — down the hill by the Macdonald without any brakes. Luckily she made it. People are still doing such idiotic things but are not taking the personal responsibility for their own actions. There must be reasonable compensation to make up for personal inability to care for oneself in the case of an accident, but if the activity was a personal choice or with consent, then the onus of responsibility is still a personal one.

Some of you may remember the child at Al Oeming's game farm who put his hand through the fence and was bitten by a cougar. The child had crossed a railing and a protective space in order to get to the fence. The parents were suing, last I heard. Surely the parents have some responsibility to mind their children if they take them to a place where there are possible hazards. I would have thought the parents should have been sued for neglect and bad publicity.

A 19-year-old — this is a States case — was given \$7.5 million for disfigurement. Actually the award was \$4 million, but she got another \$3 million because of taxes and expenses. The rest of us pay taxes on anywhere from \$12,000 to \$100,000, but if you get a million dollars in an award for liability, you shouldn't have to even be bothered about paying the taxes on it. In the first place, you couldn't spend the interest on \$1 million, let alone \$7.5 million. It would almost seem that the chances of winning a liability lottery are better than the 6/49.

Let me go back briefly to the quasi-government situations. The MDs and counties were lucky enough to have their insurance in place before cost increases became prohibitive and the reinsurance industry said, "No, thanks." Even so, the cost to each county jumped from \$1,800 to \$7,800 for \$15 million of insurance instead of \$25 million of insurance, which they had before. This time, out of 27 companies approached for reinsurance, only one, Scottish and York, responded. This is for '87 reinsurance. The counties and MDs are now looking at the possibility of carrying the first \$2 million themselves and only buying backup insurance. The irony here is that four years ago the municipalities had a fund of \$3 million available to set up their own insurance or coinsurance, and the Superintendent of Insurance would not hear of it.

The school boards have an even more serious problem, not only with liability but with fire insurance. One school board's fire insurance premium jumped from \$50,000 to \$250,000, and they couldn't find a taker. The school boards are suffering from high liability claims this year and are not looking at finding liability insurance easily.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

The city of Edmonton is now paying \$1.3 million for liability insurance that cost \$600,000 last year. So they're paying twice the price for insurance, but they're only getting a third of the insurance. Their insurance coverage has dropped from \$50 million to \$17 million, and their deductible

rose from \$50,000 to \$250,000. So the fact of the matter is that the municipality is paying a far higher premium for far less insurance with a greater deductible.

The hospital coverage for a \$5 million premium has jumped from \$0.5 million in 1984-85 to \$1.7 million in '85-86 and \$8 million in '86-87. The coverage has been reduced by exclusions in the policy. For \$5 million coverage they're asking \$8 million worth of premiums. There is always a risk, and that's why people buy insurance, but to date the total AHA claims have never been over \$2 million in any one year and closer to an average of \$400,000. The Alberta Hospital Association is assessing self-insurance. Six months' worth of premiums will build the fund to \$5 million.

All of these municipal insurance costs will ultimately reach the cost of the taxpayer. The average citizen is also being hit with a sledgehammer. An oil service company had all of their vehicles covered for \$45,000 in 1985 for \$5 million liability. In 1986 their premium is \$105,000 and only \$1 million worth of liability insurance. The deductible went from \$1,000 to \$5,000. I have at least half a dozen companies who have told me the same story regarding their insurance.

Nonprofit organizations and sports teams are in the same dilemma. The Red Cross can no longer find an insurer for liability because of the AIDS scare. Free blood donors and recipients have long been a tradition and a vital part of the volunteerism of this province, which makes it a great place to live. One liability award would change all of that. Canadians were mortified to hear that the ski team could not get any liability coverage last fall. There is no question in my mind that the problem in the insurance industry is a real one, complex as it may be, and I will leave it to Jim to explain it.

Liability insurance companies have lost their shirts. They were working on investments from premiums in the 1970s. In order to get more cash flow, they lowered premiums. Tough competition. Rate wars. The interest rate dropped, and investments went sour about the same time that the award dollars started escalating, and the chickens came home to roost. Now insurance companies are in the precarious situation of government regulation hampering their attempts to become solvent, as they have to have an acceptable rate of capitalization to insurance risks in order to sell more coverage. Now not only have the chickens come to roost, but we have a "Which comes first, the chicken or egg?" situation. Fortunately, it appears that the problem will not reach the car and home insurance policy, because there the risks are more assessable.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know the steps that will lead to affordable liability insurance. I do know that the government has some special in-depth studies taking place. I hope the Member for Edmonton Strathcona will get back in time to report on his special task force. I have deliberately not discussed the problems the major cities are having, because I know that their MLAs wish to speak to these specifics.

There are four alternatives. I won't dwell on them at length, but I would just like to outline them. The first is to establish an upper limit on court awards for damages in personal injury claims against municipalities and other institutions. Second, limit the situations in which a municipality or institution may be found liable for personal injury occurring on the municipality's or institutional land. Third, allow judges to award structured awards; that's only possible now in an out-of-court settlement. Four, provide assistance to municipalities and others who want to participate in self-insurance schemes.

The balance has to be to keep government involvement to a minimum without jeopardizing the ability of the average Albertan and municipal government to obtain liability insurance. I am not at all opposed to bringing in legislation limiting awards, if that's what it takes, or of allowing self-insurance, if that's a viable option. Insurance is a business of transferring the risk from one person to a group of people. The insurance is there to protect the innocent from negligence. Liability, in fact, implies negligence. As long as the courts continue to find liability even in ridiculous circumstances and make excessive awards, companies will continue to pay and the average citizen will reap the brunt of the increased cost.

There are numerous scenarios on who or what is to blame, but the fact remains that liability insurance needs to be available and affordable. I hope members will support the motion.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we continue with the hon. Member for Barrhead, could we have permission to revert to Introduction of Special Guests for the Premier?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome five seniors from the Providence Renewal Centre to the House today. They are sitting in the members' gallery. I'd ask the members to give them a warm welcome on behalf of the House.

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

201. Moved by Mrs. Cripps:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to take steps to ensure that Alberta's municipalities, schools, hospitals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations can obtain adequate and affordable liability insurance.

(*continued*)

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, periodically a member of this esteemed Assembly is moved to participate in the debate. Today after hearing the eloquence of the Member for Drayton Valley, I am so moved. I guess at the outset one has to ask himself or herself the question: why is this a particular issue?

I was awoken this morning to the television set when it kicked on in my hotel room, and an interview was going on with a representative of the Canadian Red Cross. That representative was indicating that for the first time in the history of the Canadian Red Cross that organization, which the member for Drayton Valley has already pointed out as being one of the outstanding volunteer organizations in Canada, would have to cancel its liability insurance on blood transfusions, even though not once in the past 40 years of its history in this country had it ever had a case proven against it for negligence of any type. Now, because of premiums that have risen well over eight to 10 times

in the last number of years, it was no longer in a position to be able to buy such liability insurance.

More importantly than that, and perhaps as worrisome to me, was the recognition by this representative from the Canadian Red Cross in response to the question, "What will you do?" The representative indicated: "We're now going to have to move on a self-insurance premium kind of situation. However, we are working closely with various provincial ministries of health across this country, and it may very well be that should we receive a liability suit against us and we are unable to pay . . ." Then the suggestion was clearly made that the provincial treasuries of various provinces across this country would come to the aid and rescue of the Canadian Red Cross.

It may very well be such that we in the various assemblies across the country would all argue that that would be a worthwhile intervention and a worthwhile expenditure of public dollars. But the point was being made by a volunteer group of outstanding reputation across this country that because that group was unable to afford a liability insurance fee, it somehow could turn to government and government would be in a position to bail it out. There are thousands of communities and municipalities across this country who are facing a very difficult problem with respect to the purchase of liability insurance today.

At the outset as part of this debate I think it's very important to recognize that we're simply talking about one aspect of the insurance industry. We're not talking about the industry that sells life insurance in Canada. There are some 170 of these major firms, and they have assets of \$70 billion. We're not talking about those in the insurance industry who sell auto and home insurance, and there are some 300 of these firms across Canada with assets of some \$16 billion. What we're talking about today in this motion is the commercial side of the insurance industry, and that side of the insurance industry appears to be deeply in debt and in the red.

Let me tell you a story of how severe it can really be. On August 15, 1984 — and the Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray can relate, because he was probably in the city of Fort McMurray on that day. That day was a beautiful, sunny day, a big blue sky. The Syncrude plant, one of the gigantic world-scale plants, was humming along beautifully; 130,000 barrels of oil were being produced on a daily basis. Both of the giant cokers which manufacture the oil were humming along very, very well. As most of the workers went home that afternoon at 5 o'clock, 5:30, or 6 o'clock, they recognized that they would be returning to the plant site tomorrow and all would be okay: old Syncrude would pump out another 130,000 barrels of oil, the employment would be fine, the Provincial Treasurer would smile because royalties were coming in, and everything else.

At 9:20 that evening a 20-centimetre pipe burst in one part of the plant. That 20-centimetre pipe, which should have been manufactured of chrome steel but instead was manufactured of carbon steel, burst. The chrome steel pipe would have had a longevity of 20 years. Within a matter of minutes a gigantic flame erupted over the Syncrude plant. Hundreds of fire workers were on the scene, and shortly thereafter — four hours later, in fact — the fire was brought under control.

But what was its impact? Both cokers were down, Syncrude was no longer producing 130,000 barrels of oil a day, and there was an interruption of business. The gist of it all, Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, is that Syncrude currently has a claim against a

liability insurer that could very well be settled in the magnitude of \$300 million. That is in essence what the claim will be, and it will probably be settled in that magnitude.

A \$300 million claim. You may say, "So what; Syncrude probably pays \$35 million to \$40 million a year for the insurance premium, and surely after so many years things will be fine." But that's not the only example in the liability insurance industry in recent years, on not only the domestic level but the international level as well, that has caused real reverberations and repercussions to go through the whole industry.

Let me just give all the members here some examples. Multimillion-dollar medical malpractice suits in the United States have become a norm, it seems. Fierce storms in Europe several years ago wrote up hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of liability claims. The Mexican oil tank explosion just north of Mexico City in 1985 resulted in an over \$100 million claim in American dollars. In 1981, \$125 million damage was suffered in the city of Calgary because of the hailstorm. More than \$100 million in claims as a result of the Ocean Ranger oil rig lost off the coast of Newfoundland in 1982. More than \$180 million American was paid out as a result of two errant American satellites which went into the wrong orbit; \$306 million American for passenger liabilities in the Korean Airlines 747 shot down by those terrible socialists from the Soviet Union, \$440 million American paid out by Lloyd's of London for computer technology insured against obsolescence, and more than \$600 million American paid out in shipping losses in the Persian Gulf since 1983 because of the Iran-Iraq war. Claims in the neighbourhood of \$10 billion to \$30 billion American for asbestosis claims against asbestos manufacturers. In the U.S. a \$15 billion class-action suit against Union Carbide taken after the terrible toxic leak in Bhopal, India, last year.

Now you say, "What has this got to do with the liability insurance problems being experienced by the city of Edmonton or the town of Barrhead or the village of Onoway?" It seems, hon. members of the Assembly, that there really is a very insignificant industry that underwrites liability insurance in the province of Alberta in the country of Canada. This is an international underwriting that goes on. When there are severe claims on an international level against a tragedy that occurs anywhere in the world, it seems that many of our municipalities, in fact, are purchasing liability insurance from the same brokers that everyone else is, so the rates go up. The impact is then experienced in our environment, in our province, in our municipalities.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley has talked about some of the concerns and the problems. She talked about the headlines that talked about a \$10 million award for a Ponoka girl who was tragically hurt by an aircraft. We had just an absolutely ridiculous situation occur recently when a native Albertan went to visit a cemetery in Manitoba and wanted to visit a deceased in that cemetery. The cemetery was closed and the gates were locked. The individual decided to park his car in front of the gates of the cemetery to basically go over the wall of the cemetery: trespassing, from my common-sense definition. The individual gets hurt, sues the town of Gimli in Manitoba for something like several hundreds of thousands of dollars, and finally gets a settlement of over \$150,000.

This poor little community in Gimli, Manitoba, now has to have its premiums hijacked and everything else as a result of an individual, an individual whose common sense

would suggest that you might want to go down to the village office and say, "I would like to go to the cemetery; would you open the gates so I can go?" But no, machoism extends to all kinds of individuals, of course. Let's just [hurdle] the gates, go over, get hurt, and after all, let's sue somebody. Fine.

We have courts and we have judges in this country. It's really sad that an hon. member of this Assembly must go to the public every number of years and ask for the support of the public in the re-election procedure and somehow these fellows who are appointed to these various courts across this country get first-line aircraft tickets all the time and first-class service. No member of this Assembly can call them and say, "Would you consider this in terms of the common good or the common sense?" Anyhow, a decision was made. Penalties are assessed against some; enormous awards are given to others.

I have no argument against a legitimate award for someone who can prove malpractice or lack of concern, but a very tragic situation, where you sue at the drop of a hat, seems to be occurring in North America. The hon. Member for Drayton Valley so correctly talked about an example that occurred yesterday. All of us in this Assembly either watched the event on the television news or read about it in this morning's papers, about two idiotic young people in the city of Edmonton who decided to go and sit on an ice floe in the North Saskatchewan River. There were signs posted there, but if a tragedy had occurred to them, their estates would undoubtedly have sued the city of Edmonton and probably received compensation because somehow the city of Edmonton did not build a high chain-link fence along every square foot of the North Saskatchewan River on both the north and south banks.

I suppose that even if that had been built and somebody had trespassed over it — in a couple of years we'll be in a situation where there'll be a Doberman pinscher at every corner, in front of every public building and public institute in our country, because unfortunately some people will not use common sense.

But why should all of us have to suffer because of some people? When these insurance rates for liability provisions are raised, you and I, as property tax payers in this province, of course, have to pay for them through our property tax. There has to be a point in time when you basically have to say, "What is going on, and why are certain things going on with respect to this?"

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley said today:

... take steps to ensure that Alberta's municipalities, schools, hospitals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations can obtain adequate and affordable liability insurance.

She alluded to some alternatives and some suggestions as to what this Assembly might do. The first thing we have to do is bring it here to the floor of this Assembly. I have to really provide the most important bit of compliments that I can to her for bringing it, because in terms of all the motions on the Order Paper, without any doubt this is the one that is most important and will have the greatest impact on the largest number of people in the province of Alberta.

I think a second thing that clearly has to be done — we're sitting here in Edmonton today in the province of Alberta talking about this. Every assembly across this country must do the same thing, and I have no doubt at all that numerous states in America, many, many cities in America and Europe, and town councils here, there, and everywhere have to be talking about this same kind of issue. Why are

we all doing this in isolation? It seems to me that collectively, if we all got together, we'd certainly be able to come up with a greater degree of wisdom — not to suggest at all for a moment that the most important basis of wisdom would be found elsewhere than here. But undoubtedly we may be able to provide some guidance to others or, in fact, hear of some innovative new thoughts as to how we might address ourselves to this problem and what we can do in terms of resolving it.

It would seem to me that if all the members of the Assembly voted in favour of this motion this afternoon, certainly one of the inherent things that would have to go with it would be a reflection of this government that this subject matter should be placed before a national First Ministers' Conference. Certainly ministers and various provincial governments across this country must deal with it in a collective national forum and debate. This is a matter that affects every municipality and every volunteer organization in this country and is one that should be addressed now.

A second concern, it would seem to me, that must be addressed is the recognition of the fact that much of this insurance and reinsurance industry is located elsewhere than the country of Canada. We are dependent upon a foreign base of brokers. Of course, everyone here knows about the history of the British Isles and the history of Lloyd's of London and joint insurance, a grouping of entrepreneurs who would come together to basically buy the insurance that would allow a ship to go out into the far reaches of the world. Of course, if they came back with profit, the brokers all realized enormous returns and what have you.

It seems today that some really questionable things are happening on the international scene. Now, I'm not sure if there is a responsibility of a group of brokers in London, England, to pay for a jet airplane, a passenger plane flown by a Korean government, that was downed very deliberately by an aggressive nation in this world, the Soviet Union. But if there are to be payouts in terms of liability of over \$400 million or \$500 million American, then I wonder if there should not be the possibility of a different kind of liability insurance market that would cover that. Surely if we have an international organization known as the United Nations, that might be a matter they would want to look at.

I simply do not see the relationship between the purchasing of liability insurance by a municipality in the province of Alberta being in exactly the same boardroom kind of scenario by those brokers in London, England, or wherever the heck they are, to basically saying that the liability payments that will go to pay for a tragic, tragic situation caused by an aggressive nation in this world would be in the same pot of liability payments, in essence, as for some no less tragic but certainly less costly situation that might occur in the province of Alberta. That certainly would have to be a second point, I think, that our federal minister of External Affairs should draw before his plate and have, through our ambassador in the United Nations, brought to the attention of the United Nations itself.

The hon. member, my colleague from Drayton Valley, talked about individuals in our country who seem to have come up and have shared with the new plague of 'sueism' that has been part and parcel of American life for a great number of years. I wonder if there is not a responsibility that must also be reviewed by the members of the Law Society of Alberta. It's only recently, it seems, that a more sophisticated segment of law practice, malpractice law, has

risen to the fore in the province of Alberta. I would certainly hope that professionals who are lawyers, who have the LL.B. behind their names, who are members of the Law Society of Alberta, don't in essence have spotters at the emergency wings of all our hospitals checking to see who is coming in as a result of a tragic accident and then relaying that to some hotshot who might want to go out and say, "Look, what can I do to get you the maximum amount of dollars?" It's a question of morality, of massive ethics, in my view. I just leave it for the attention of those colleagues of mine in this Assembly who might be members of the Law Society of Alberta.

Other jurisdictions in our country are undertaking a whole bunch of reviews; I've already made mention of that. The hon. Member for Drayton Valley also talked about the possibility of establishing an upper limit on court awards for damages in personal injury claims against municipalities and other insurance agencies. We, of course, have a cap in the province of Alberta. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in a series of cases in 1977 and 1978, but perhaps that cap is up for debate as to what it really would be.

Limit the situations in which a municipality or institution may be found liable for personal injury recurring on municipalities' or institutions' land. Certainly the example of the two young people who were sitting on an ice floe on the North Saskatchewan River yesterday in the city of Edmonton has already been talked about. Fortunately, in this Assembly we have already shown excellent initiative, a number of years ago when we passed the Emergency Medical Aid Act, which protects the Good Samaritan when he goes to assist a person who has been injured. Prior to that time, if you went and assisted an individual who may have been hurt in an automobile accident and you touched that person, you yourself may very well have been liable for damage or further injury caused by the person who was injured. We've shown excellent leadership in this Assembly and this province in dealing with the Emergency Medical Aid Act, but Good Samaritanism is what a lot of this stuff is all about.

Should we provide assistance to municipalities and others who want to participate in self-insurance schemes? I think that's a matter we have to hear from many colleagues in this Assembly. Municipalities that do not have liability insurance and find themselves in a situation where they're sued might very well find at the lawsuit that the decision of the judge is so large that, in essence, the decision would bankrupt the municipality. So then what would the municipality do? Well, you all know what the municipality would do. It would immediately be on the doorstep of the local MLA and the Minister of Municipal Affairs saying, "Look, we've got this terrible situation; you've now got to bail us out." So I think we've got to be really concerned about how far we're going to go in terms of self-insurance ourselves.

But the point raised by the Member for Drayton Valley is a very good one. She, of course, has initiated it by giving you the overview and everything else, and I look forward to the participation of my colleagues with respect to this. There is no doubt at all that in each of our constituencies, in every municipality and every volunteer group in this province, this matter will remain a major issue for all of us as members of this Assembly to have to listen to, deal with, consult with, and be a part of the decision-making process as we go through 1986.

Hopefully, all this debate will become totally redundant in several years from now when we all conclude that this

is only a part of a very absurd cycle that we seem to be going through. Perhaps if liabilities in the international scene reduce themselves and greater attention is given to safety and common sense, then some of these horrendous claims that are being made against the liability insurance industry will find themselves reduced and, in fact, the premiums will be sufficient to pay for the claims and there will be no need for government intervention.

But having said that, we had better be concerned about it today.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to get into this debate this afternoon and congratulate the Member for Drayton Valley for bringing to the Assembly a very important concern that's out there in the country. The Member for Barrhead alluded to the Emergency Medical Aid Act and how that has protected individual citizens from legal responsibility if they go to someone's aid.

I believe that this Legislature has within its power and responsibility to provide the same sort of protection to our municipalities, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. To be legally liable for trespassers is one of the most horrendous things you can be faced with. I talked to a farmer the other night. A nonprofit organization has a ski hill on his land, because he's got this great big hill. The ski club cannot buy liability insurance because they can't afford it. The farmer is next in line; he is liable. He can't keep the people off the land, because we've got four-wheel-drive vehicles around now. He's afraid that one of these days that somebody's going to go off a 35-metre ski jump and he's going to be liable for it. He can't fence the place, because those guys can go anywhere with those four-wheel-drive vehicles.

So what do we do? I think that the Attorney General and others in this Legislature, with the help of the Member for Drayton Valley, can draft an Act very simply. It's just simply a two-page Act, the Emergency Medical Aid Act. I think there's something we can do to protect the volunteers, to protect the third parties wherever there is recreation on their land. Certainly to be sued because somebody trespasses on your land and a bull gets them or even frightens them or a dog bites them or they fall over a fence or trip on some baling twine or whatever — that's silly, but it's happening.

We have the Workers' Compensation Board. It has legislation so that if an employee gets hurt on the job, he cannot sue the employer. The employer can be prosecuted and fined and sentenced and all that other good stuff if he's negligent, but the employee cannot sue the employer. Why can't we have that kind of simplistic legislation to protect the innocent people? In this province we have assured income for the handicapped, so if somebody's handicapped they are protected. We have medicare that protects people, although if they're sued, this all has to be paid back and all that other good stuff. But if we have some simple legislation in place — although it will be more complicated, I'm sure — that leaves the decisions of legal liability to the courts on the basis of whether it's criminal or not criminal and leaves the personal liability things outside of the courtroom . . . I think our courts are tied up in litigation that they shouldn't be involved in.

I have a friend who was in a motor vehicle accident. He was driving. There were two young boys with him. They had been drinking and were lying in the backseat. The young fellow that was driving was sober, a very responsible young man, but he had never driven in the country or never driven very much. There was a road

construction job going on, he didn't know how to read the signs, and he was involved in an accident. The two young boys in the back of the car were hurt. They will likely sue. The RCMP waited months before laying a charge, if they have laid a charge. I'm not sure they have; my last information was that there was no charge. But the young fellow is free and clear. If they lay a charge and his insurance doesn't cover it, he just simply declares bankruptcy. No problem. Hell, he's away.

If a business is sued for something and it's a small limited company, he declares bankruptcy in that business and runs away from it. But here is an ordinary citizen who's got a few bucks, some money in the bank, a house, a farm, or a business. If somebody draws a bead on him, even if they can't prove liability, he's still got to pay all the litigation to protect himself. He can't just walk away. Here every one of us has some assets of some sort. It wouldn't matter how much we had; if someone draws a bead on us for a legal action, we have to defend that. There is no compensation for it. It could be someone that doesn't have a dime. It could cost us \$100,000 to protect ourselves. If we win, we still lose if the other people have no money. This is ridiculous. How unfair can it be that the only people who are hurt in this situation are people with a few bucks?

If we can't go out and insure ourselves at a reasonable price for reasonable things, then what are we doing here in the Legislature? We've got a bunch of professional people out there, and some of these people will go to any lengths to sue others. They're out there; I can introduce you to some. And we're allowing it to happen. As a landowner, as a businessman, as an individual, and as a family man, I'm frightened about it.

For years we've had this little Emergency Medical Aid Act. It's probably unique, it works very well, and it doesn't bother us. But if I want to be a volunteer and work on, say, a golf course, and I want to get some young people out there to learn to golf, the greatest summertime game ever invented, I'm going to be legally responsible if somebody goes out there, slices a shot, bumps someone on the head, and kills them. I've got a farm that's worth a lot of money, and I'm going to lose it because somebody slices a shot? It's possible.

MR. MUSGROVE: Hold your hands over it.

MR. LYSONS: Well, the only thing you can do is crawl out of the hole.

Mr. Speaker, this is probably the last time I'll have an opportunity to speak in this Legislature, and of all the things that have come forward in the Legislature and of all the motions that have been before this House, I think this one can probably set the stage for a lot of piece of mind for an awful lot of people in this province. We must have laws that protect the innocent. We must have our laws in a situation where you must accept some risk. You cannot possibly go through life without accepting some risk. The only people that seem to make any money in litigation are the lawyers; certainly the people that are being sued don't make any money on it.

We have some good programs in place, some good legislation through the Workers' Compensation Board, medicare, the assured income plan, and the Emergency Medical Aid Act. And we've got some very bright lawyers that come and go in this Legislature. Surely someone can sit down and draft something that would protect my farm, my

business, my savings in the bank, and my family if I were to belong to a club or a business as a director or an officer or a town councillor or whatever and something happened, so that I don't have to forfeit everything I've worked for, everything I may have inherited, or everything I may have left as an inheritance because somebody crawls over a fence and sues.

Mr. Speaker, it's been great spending 11 years in this building. I'm going to miss some more than others, but the one thing that I want to say before I leave is: it's been fun, it's been educational, and I certainly wish all of you that stay and all of you that go the very, very best.

[Two members rose]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View caught my eye first.

MR. ZIP: Mr. Speaker, hon. members, I wish to commend and congratulate my excellent seatmate, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley, for bringing before this House this excellent motion. The current situation facing governments, businesses, professions, and institutions with respect to insurance has been very well discussed and outlined by our previous speakers, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley herself, the hon. Member for Barrhead, and the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

I've discussed this situation very thoroughly from different points of view, and all I can add at this point are some of my own reflections on the problem and the public attitude that has established itself with respect to insurance and the approach that people in decision-making capacities have taken toward dealing with claims prevention and the placement of a greater degree of priority on safety and loss prevention.

In the last few years there has been a general lack of appreciation of the finite nature of the financial resources of insurers and of the true source of their funds, which is the premium payers themselves. Judging by the size of some of the awards that have been granted to claimants by courts around the world lately, one gets the distinct impression that money is no object to insurance companies. Somehow they can magically pull that money out of somewhere and make those fabulous settlements that we read about in the papers.

People seem to have forgotten the basic principles of insurance. Payouts come from a fund set up by premium payers who are unable to assume the risk themselves. If the fund is inadequate, premium payers have to pay more or receive less per claim or both. It's as simple as that. In insurance you really are your brother's keeper, and that goes beyond paying a premium that hopefully will be spent settling someone else's loss, not your own. It also means having a sense of responsibility that will call for preventative action on the part of everyone to bring down the incidence of claims and the awards associated with them.

This very unfortunately, I may add, hasn't been happening for a variety of reasons. Growing affluence and the spread of technology has led people to take part in a growing list of risky occupational, recreational, and other life-related activities. People travel more often, farther away from home, to more exotic but at the same time more dangerous places. People more often engage in a far greater variety of sports, some of which, like helicopter skiing or hang gliding, expose them to excessive risks, serious injuries, and death. People engage in occupations that now have enormous potential for

huge losses that once were unheard of. All we need to think of as a prime example of such potential is the Ocean Ranger.

There's also been a dire lack of priority given to the control of hazardous situations, often by governments themselves. The situation of Bhopal in India is a classic example of this, where the governments concerned allowed residential encroachment upon an extremely hazardous chemical plant. What happened there could have been largely avoided without that encroachment. The government's role in this problem can best be filled by setting a good safety example itself, by giving attention at the highest administrative level to safety and the prevention of accidents in the facilities it is responsible for, not only to reduce its own exposure to damage claims but to set an example for other institutions and private firms and individuals to follow. A good program of safety promotion and education sponsored by all levels of government, all governments, directed at the population at large would, in conjunction with its own good example of safety observance, work effectively toward alleviating the whole problem.

Despite all efforts of government to promote safety and accident prevention, this problem still falls back on the attitudes and actions of management in institutions and private firms. The management of institutions and private business and professional firms, like management in government, needs to give the proper emphasis on safety within their own premises and to solicit the co-operation of their own employees in making these safety programs effective.

Finally, individuals themselves have to realize that they have a responsibility, not only to themselves but to society as well, to apply common sense in ordinary, everyday life situations where you avoid hazards and apply extra care and attention where unavoidable danger exists. We had numerous examples of this type of gross carelessness cited by previous speakers. I just cannot understand the stupidity of individuals who climb fences to get at dangerous animals and the stupidity of judges who give awards to such fools.

Children especially must be educated as soon as they begin to understand life's hazards and how to avoid them, whether it be from vehicles, animals, poisons, or guns. Initiating in a general and concerted manner this preventative action toward hazardous situations, like the experience resulting from defensive driving, will bring about significant reductions in damage claims and a subsequent reduction in insurance rates. This way we truly become our brothers' keepers.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend that this motion be framed into a Bill for action by this House. Thank you very much.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to enter the debate on Motion 201 briefly. There almost seems to be a custom being established around this Legislature, at least in the short time I've been here, and that is the kinds of motions the Member for Drayton Valley keeps putting forth in this House on very important public policy matters, and this surely is one of them. That's a play on words I guess. This is obviously a very important public issue, and I'd like to commend the member for bringing this matter before the House.

It seems to me that there are a variety of jeopardies at work here. There has been much debate in this House and certainly outside this House in the general public about who's to blame: lawyers, courts, legislators, perhaps even the public itself. I've heard implications made this afternoon briefly on the old theory of ambulance chasers. I know it

was an implied comment, not an explicit one, but I don't think that represents the majority of the problem here. Perhaps, however, all the parties I've named above are jointly and severally accountable for the events leading up to this current predicament. We are in a predicament; make no mistake about that. We are faced at the moment on the worldwide scene with very difficult circumstances related to the acquisition and the costs of liability insurance.

Let me include in the enumeration of statistics put forth by the Member for Drayton Valley and other members an example of one of the circumstances facing the city of Red Deer. In 1986 the city of Red Deer will pay \$179,000 for insurance compared to \$44,000 in 1985. It's deductible. Members have often heard me speak of deductibles in this House on other issues, but the deductible for the city of Red Deer on its liability insurance rose from \$500 to \$5,000. Clearly we are witnessing a precipitous increase in the costs and a concordant reduction in the availability of the kinds of insurance that are necessary in our society.

It is a fact. I don't think there can be any dispute that in recent years courts have tended to increase the amounts for damages under liability awards. Where does that come from? It strikes me that it stems from the basic concept of tort which, as I understand it, expresses society's long-held view that we should be held accountable for our actions and offer redress to those we have harmed. But I think recent experience has led to an obvious implication that many insurance companies, many insurers, are observing that that whole concept of tort, of being held accountable, has taken on a totally unexpected extreme. It seems people are frankly unprepared in many instances to suffer any harm. That's one side of the issue, and I can accept that. But it seems also that there is a growing propensity for people not only not to want to have to accept harm done to them but not to want to accept even inconvenience.

So since it is the legislators in our democratic society, the elected representatives, who hopefully reflect society, I think we have some hard questions to ask. The natural question I think we have to ask ourselves as citizens — not just legislators, as citizens — is whether we're prepared to absorb the costs which our laws and their interpretations by the courts impose on our society. Here is a question I'd like to put forth for consideration. Are we as a society creating a risk-free, loss-free society? If we are, can we afford the costs associated with that?

I have before me a rather interesting article emanating from Ontario which puts forth some of the implications of the laws that society is asking for with respect to this "risk-free, loss-free society". In Ontario to protect the environment — no one is suggesting that we all do not have an owner's responsibility to protect the environment, but there are costs associated with that. This article indicates that the

"Spills Bill" in Ontario imposes absolute liability on the owner or carrier of the pollutant for cleanup and restoration [charges].

That may very well be an important public matter which requires a law. I'm not questioning that. But there are implications associated with it in relation to the experience we're finding in the costs of insurance and the availability of insurance.

There is another one. In Ontario there has recently been passed

The Family Law Reform Act [which] expanded considerably the categories of family members who can make a claim following [suffering and injury].

The causes for making a claim were "broadened to include loss of care, guidance, and companionship." So apparently we now have a law in the province of Ontario that considers the loss of things like companionship for the amount of damages. They apparently have also included the category of those who may be considered within that law, and those people are nieces and brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law and indirect members of the family. Mr. Speaker, I guess I'm just a little astounded with a society that is asking for laws to provide for the loss of companionship and the liabilities and the costs of the damage that may be associated with that in relation to the predicament that we find ourselves under. Perhaps we all have to accept some of the responsibilities for what is developing under the current circumstance.

There was reference by the Member for Barrhead which related to the reinsurance market. It's an interesting factor. There is no secret here, Mr. Speaker. The reinsurance market follows pretty closely and parallels pretty closely the basic insurance principle, and there is no secret to that principle. It simply suggests that rather than accept an onerous risk upon oneself, that risk can and should be equally shared amongst a group of people. The insurance companies in Canada have accepted that risk, but they, the same as individuals, have determined that they do not have the financial ability, for a variety of reasons, to accept an inordinate risk. So they share that risk with the reinsurance market. So what we are dealing with here is the worldwide reinsurance market that shares the risk of the liability claims throughout the world, and those circumstances were well enumerated and discussed by the Member for Barrhead, the Member for Vermilion-Viking, and indeed the mover of this motion.

I want to conclude my brief remarks on this matter, Mr. Speaker, by referring directly to the motion. The member has resolved:

That the Legislative Assembly urge the government to take steps to ensure that Alberta's municipalities, schools, hospitals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations can obtain adequate and affordable liability insurance.

I fully support the principle behind the Bill, but the way it's worded causes me to have some difficulty. It seems to me that unless I can be persuaded otherwise, what we're really dealing with is transferring the liability of the marketplace to the liability of the government. I feel that one of the basic problems with this whole issue is the societal attitude of the risk-free, loss-free society. I would submit that if we transfer that attitude from the private sector to the public sector, indeed we'll enhance it and we'll exasperate it.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a few comments to the motion that's before us today. In listening here, we've had a lot of very well intended comments about the tremendous increases in insurance premiums, in most cases to the various areas of the public sector and some of the victims, whether it be self-inflicted or otherwise, in the cost of doing business by the communities, volunteer groups, municipalities, and what have you. There hasn't been very much said about the little guy out there, the small businessman.

When you look at some of the circumstances that are before us and around us today in this country of ours, it's interesting to consider who is running this country. Sometimes people say, "the politicians." Sometimes I question that as being maybe even nonsense. Then I really think

about it, and I think, maybe it's the banks and the large insurance companies, maybe even lawyers and the courts have got something to do with it, and the legislators and the little guy out there really don't have a whole lot to say about it. Because after all, the big bad banks are out there. They've got financial control of much of the country. Insurance companies have got you by the hand and determine a rate of insurance you're going to pay if you want a little bit of protection in this so-called risk-free society. And then the lawyers and the courts determine that an injured person or victim, if you want to call it that, should receive X amount of dollars for a specific injury or whatever the case might be.

What is the answer to this thing? As the Member for Red Deer indicated: who is to blame? Is it the lawyers? Is it the courts? Is it the general public, or is it the legislators? It's very difficult to answer that question, because quite frankly I really don't know.

Some of the issues that have been addressed today really upset me personally, and I know they upset a number of people throughout the community. If you can imagine a person illegally entering a property, injuring themselves, killing themselves, or whatever the case may be, and then having a claim against that property owner, municipality, or whatever property they illegally entered because they were injured, I think that's just dastardly. Quite frankly, although the individual has become a victim of his own nonsense and his own risk, I don't think society or me, as an insurance payer, should be liable for paying the bills that that individual has begotten through an illegal act on his part, or her part for that matter.

I notice there has been some suggestion recently that we should activate the Alberta General Insurance Co., an insurance company owned by the province which was developed many years ago. However, I have some difficulty with that in that I'm not generally supportive of government getting into the insurance business. However, that may be an alternative that has to be considered, considering the high cost of doing business with insurance companies for businesses and, for that matter, some individuals with automobile insurance. I guess the socialist view would be to certainly take that route. It even tends to make some of you right-wingers think about socialism rather than the free-enterprise system. However, I think that may not be the complete answer.

How do we deal with it? Do we legislate liability award limits? How do we do that? That's a very difficult area, considering the fact of the courts giving judgment. Another question might be: are the courts the best judges to assess damages, or are legislators the best judges to set damages? Are Albertans paying higher rates to protect consumers in other provinces or other countries?

I note with interest some information from the Superintendent of Insurance of Canada, and I assume the information is correct. In fact, the net premiums written in Canada in 1984 were \$6.8 billion; net claims incurred were \$5.3 billion. Of course, the net premiums earned were \$6.7 billion. If those numbers are correct and I read them correctly, it means that the insurance corporations in Canada seem to be reasonably healthy in that they seem to be making some kind of a profit, at least where the premiums and claims are concerned.

Are lawyers pushing these high awards to make themselves rather wealthy from someone else's liability or disability? I sometimes am concerned about that, and I say that with all due respect to our legal friends. However, it's very

concerning when a lawyer will go in — and I'm sure they will indicate it's at the instructions of their client, but I tend to think otherwise, that it's from their own suggestions that they would go into a court of law and determine, by a discussion with their client, what that rate should be. If it's a \$10 million claim, possibly they might be going in and thinking they might get \$1 million or something of that nature. What concerns me about these large awards is the possibility of how lawyers deem what their fees might be, by percentage or otherwise. I have some concern about that.

We talk about self-insurance of municipalities, and certainly some of the smaller municipalities would have difficulty in being self-insurers due to the courts awarding these exceptionally large awards during the recent period of time. Large cities, like large corporations, can in fact self-insure because of the higher tax base or the higher revenue base they may have, especially large corporations.

However, let's think about small businesses. They can't self-insure. Let's face some facts. Small businesses today are faced with ever-increasing costs. They can't write them down and balance them off against a number of the different types of outlets they have, because they may only have one, two, or three outlets at very high rents. Many big businesses bleed on small business. You know, I hear from time to time that small business is the backbone of our job creation and our country, yet we don't do a heck of a lot to support small business. Big business seems to try and eat them up. In most cases national corporations have the ability to do business tremendously cheaper than a small business.

Insurance and taxes are a tremendous part of doing business. If a municipality has these high rates of insurance endowed upon them, that reflects back to the small businessman in both the property tax and the business tax that he would end up paying. Interestingly enough, the big insurance companies — if a small business has a couple of unfortunate mishaps, a break-in or two or something else, what does the insurance company do? Do you think they just go out and say, "Well, look, we've had a claim against you; we're going to increase your rate next year a small amount"? That may be acceptable to a degree. No, they go in, they send you a letter and say, "Look, you've had a couple of claims on you, so we're going to remove your insurance." They give you about two weeks to 30 days to tell you that you're not going to be insured any longer, so that means you've got to go out and buy more insurance from someone else. Try that sometime. It's really difficult, because if you're not insurable by one company, why would you be insurable by another? Yes, you can get insurance but, boy, you pay for it. Whether or not you have had any claims on that particular insurance for a number of years, if you get those claims, they will withdraw your liability insurance on your business. That is a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker. It has happened recently to a business that I know of.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Let's look at the taxi industry, again as a small business. It's interesting to note that some of our larger corporations that have very large holdings that own taxi businesses can and do obtain insurance at very low rates. For example, in Calgary I can address a taxi company that had their insurance rates jump from \$20 to \$79 a week per car. They are supposed to remain competitive with the large corporation

that still retains an insurance rate of something in the order of \$29 per car per week. I guess we could talk for hours and hours about similar types of circumstances that are there in the community.

What do we do about it? What are the options? Do we establish an upper limit on court awards for damages and personal injury claims against municipalities and other institutions, including businesses, homeowners, automobiles, and what have you? You can't just establish those on one segment of society without looking at the others.

Do we limit the situations in which various people, institutions, and municipalities can be found liable for personal injury? In other words, if someone illegally enters your property, should the property owner be liable for injury that may occur to that individual if they are injured on that property? Should we allow for people breaking into a business who are injured in the process of breaking into that business? Should we instruct judges to award structured settlements? That certainly takes away a lot of the freedoms that a judge may have. In fact, in many cases maybe what we should do is have laypeople as judges, rather than lawyers, except maybe in the criminal courts. That might even be an idea that could be put forth to our federal people to consider. Or do we provide assistance to municipalities and other people with government moneys to support them in insurance schemes?

Mr. Speaker, I don't have all the answers to those questions, and I've asked a lot of them here today. All I do know is that an examination of the insurance industry in this country has to be taken and done yesterday. People are not going to be able to afford liability insurance unless we find an answer to these tremendous costs in these awards that are being made. These large awards ultimately could affect the employment ability of businesses in this country, because they just will not be able to afford to consider hiring people that they might otherwise hire. It may put small businessmen out of their businesses. It may put people out of their vehicles because they won't be able to afford the insurance. It may in fact create such a burden on the taxpayer in some of our municipalities that you're going to have parks closed and you're going to have roads closed. You're going to have so many things closed that we're going to be like East Berlin with the big wall so you can't move.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I think that consideration has to be given to the various questions that I've asked. I commend the hon. Member for Drayton Valley for bringing this item forward. I would urge the members to consider giving it a positive vote, should it reach that stage today, and then the government can consider what steps are necessary to give this very worthwhile motion its due consideration.

Thank you.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I sat and listened intently to some of the reasons liability rates are so expensive and claim settlements so much higher, and I found it recalled a little incident I was involved in many, many years ago. I felt that I should then speak in favour of the motion and encourage all other members to do so.

I'd like to relate a little story and perhaps outline why I believe some of the blame should be put with regard to the poor judgment of some of the insurance adjusters and not the insurance companies. As I said, I think back to a little story. I was involved in an accident. I struck a little girl; her name was Dorothy. It sounds like it's the Wizard

of Oz story. It's not; it was very sad. The girl ran out in front of my vehicle and flew up on the top of the car. There were no visible signs of injury to the girl. I took her home; she lived close to the scene of the accident. Later that evening I found out that there was some swelling and it was diagnosed as a broken arm. I was very fortunate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the Assembly, that the police witnessed this particular accident, as well as several others, so there were no charges laid as a result of it. I visited the girl and sent a small gift to her, as I have indicated.

I was then very surprised to learn that through the judgment decision of an adjuster, they had gone over and offered to make a settlement with this family in the amount of some \$5,000. Today that would probably be \$50,000. They based the reason that they would like to make a settlement so no further claim could then be made. As I indicated earlier, the police had witnessed it; there were no charges. I could not understand why any funds should be forthcoming. Alberta Health Care and your and my benefits had gone to provide health care for the person. As I've said, it was a sad incident; nevertheless, it had happened. The outcome of it was that I wrote a letter to the insurance company in defence of what I thought were increased rates to yours and mine should a settlement have been made. Of course this was denied, and I found out later that a payment was subsequently made to the family as a result of the accident. Of course, then you and I pay for this. I would like to point out that incident to members because I think there should perhaps be some blame laid in other areas as well.

Also, I found it very interesting that later on my insurance was cancelled and I had to go to another firm. I find it very, very bad that people would make those judgments in view of circumstances such as that, in view of the fact that police had witnessed it.

I would urge hon. members to support the motion so there could be some review of the incidents and perhaps some assistance made by government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I want to contribute to the discussion on this very important resolution that was raised to the attention of the Legislature by the Member for Drayton Valley, and rightfully so. It's a matter that came to my attention over the course of the end of the last year and the beginning of this current calendar year, a problem that municipalities faced not only with respect to rising coverage costs, with premiums rising substantially, as other members have indicated during the course of their remarks, but also the fact that the quality of coverage was substantially being reduced: in one case, reduced total coverage; in another case, an increased deductible; and in another case, no insurance at all. Under those circumstances, I felt it was important that we gather all of the wisdom in municipal Alberta together to review the problem and come up with some suggestions.

On January 15, Mr. Speaker, I established a committee that was composed of representatives of rural government. Because there is interest in the public generally in what this committee is doing, I should point out who in fact sits on this committee. As I said, there are representatives from the municipalities and the municipal associations. The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association is represented by the president, Doug Fee, and the executive director, Tom Buchanan; the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties by Wallace Daley — again, the president of that association

— and their executive director, Jack Edworthy. The Alberta School Trustees' Association wanted to be involved in this process, and we added the school interests subsequent to the establishment of the committee. The ASTA is represented by Elaine Jones and Dr. Lawrence Tymko. The Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has Tewfic Saleh; the Department of Education, Jack Clark; Alberta Treasury has Dave Murray; from Municipal Affairs, Mr. Fleming and Mr. Lauder; and the city of Calgary, representing the cities who are not part of the Jubilee system and who buy insurance on the open market, by Mr. Harry Hogg.

I admit, Mr. Speaker, that I was somewhat ambitious in terms of my expectations of the report by this committee. I'd hoped that they would complete their deliberations and report by March 31. Unfortunately, that perhaps was, as I say, an overexpectation on my part, because the challenges that that committee faces are somewhat greater than even I expected at that time.

They're busy working at the responsibilities they have assumed. We're really pleased that Mr. Jim Wilkin, a special insurance consultant to Alberta Treasury, is working with us. What he suggested, and this is what is happening, is that we get together a team of experts to gather claims experiences in this province by local authorities over the past five years. Let's really find out what the facts are in Alberta. Let's take the Alberta experience, not what happened in Brampton or Brantford or Bhopal or wherever. What happened in Alberta, and what happened where municipalities were involved? Once all that information is collected, we have made arrangements that a firm called Anistiks, a specialist in the United States, will analyze this data and extrapolate future claims projections that might be used by the committee in evaluating the options of insurance coverage and/or risk pooling or even self-insurance.

The agenda for that committee takes it to the end of this month in terms of gathering data in this province. The input of that data will take another two weeks. The number crunching and analysis will take us until June 15, the final review and report another 30 days. So we're expecting a complete report in the vicinity of July 15 to July 30.

It may well be that this Assembly may be satisfied with those steps and may look upon the resolution as being well served by what has taken place. It also may well be that the Legislature may want to listen to what takes place. What are the results of this committee's deliberations? What recommendations will they have for the benefit of municipalities? The Legislature may want to take those into account before it either passes the resolution or deals with this issue further.

Mr. Speaker, I'm recommending that we maintain the matter on the Order Paper to indicate its significance and that we wait until this committee has concluded its report before deliberating on the issue further. I know the members of the committee will of course benefit from the discussions that have taken place in this Assembly today. I think we would benefit on some future occasion in our deliberations once we have had an opportunity to read their report. At that point I would like to make further contributions to this resolution and would appreciate if I would have the support of the Assembly in moving the adjournment of further debate on this motion this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, would the members in favour of the motion please say aye?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed please say no?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

202. Moved by Mr. Gogo:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to require all lottery ticket outlets in the province to visibly post the approximate odds of winning prizes for each game offered.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of bringing to the attention of members of the House something that I think is perhaps due. I intend to present, with a sense of fairness, a matter that I think is of concern to a lot of Albertans, as well as Canadians.

As Canadians we spend some \$4 billion a year in gaming events. Some may not think that's high. I would point out that the Canadian Wheat Board total sales don't exceed \$4 billion. If you compare it with that, obviously agriculture, if it's important, must run somewhat second to the gaming system in Canada. In lotteries alone it's \$1.3 billion, which is \$2.5 million every working day of the year. That's a pretty substantial industry. What traditionally was known as a virtue — that is, charity — has become an industry today.

We in Alberta seem to do our share. Our lotteries alone are over \$100 million in a year. That's somewhat remarkable when we have over \$100 million in lotteries and at the same time we seem to have an abundance of food banks. It must make people wonder in terms of priorities. On raffles — those little ladies giving away those quilts for three-for-a-dollar tickets — we're spending \$25 million. Casinos . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: What about horse racing?

MR. GOGO: I'm coming to that. I'm coming to the sport of kings and premiers in just a moment.

Casinos, Mr. Speaker, are in excess of \$100 million. Bingos, that staunch support of the Roman Catholic faith to many people, which is something we wouldn't dare touch, is \$55 million. Nevada tickets or pull tickets are in excess of \$72 million. You add up the aggregate and add onto that the sport of kings which — oddly enough, many people don't like going to the race track, yet if one looks at the information, it's the safest bet of all because there are only 10 horses starting out, one of which, presumably, must win. So one could make the judgment the odds are probably 10 to 1, ignoring the amount bet.

But when one looks at the motivation of these groups, it's like criticizing the church. It's something one had better do very, very carefully, because the law in Canada says that only charitable groups or religious organizations can sponsor these events.

My concern is not to see any of these well-meaning organizations go under. I can only speak from the constituency of Lethbridge West, where we've had at least seven groups such as the Elks club, the Canadian Legion, and others, who frankly just can't make it anymore because we've given birth to the bingo barn. The bingo barn, as you know, rents out to various organizations that have licences, and bingo players, as we all know, follow the

prizes. The loyalty is gone, and as a result we have some foreclosures with legions and Elks clubs and so on.

I don't want to get into that particular area, Mr. Speaker. I want to address the question of fairness. We in Canada know that television can sell anything. One only has to look at the election results and a few other things to realize the great persuasive powers of that magic eye.

The question should be: should government become involved? I would like to propose that government is involved in everything today. We in Alberta under the former Attorney General, now carried out so astutely by the present Attorney General, recognized that a gaming commission was essential to keep government away from these gaming events and put a gaming commission in. It's worked extremely well.

But what does a gaming commission say? A gaming commission says that all gaming events in this province must disclose the chances of winning or you don't get a licence. Whether you're a little old lady with a quilt at five tickets for a dollar, you cannot sell those tickets without the chances of winning being printed on the ticket. So they've made it mandatory in this province. Yet when it comes to lotteries, they're exempt from that. Lotteries, of course, do not have to disclose odds.

Many people believe that the odds are relative or similar to what the payout is. For example, lotteries pay out 45 percent of the total proceeds: \$1.3 billion minus 45 percent is what's retained, much of it for paying television. Raffles are 43 percent, bingo 62 percent, casinos 78 percent, and horse racing pays out 85 percent of the dollars bet — albeit maybe not always to the right people, but it pays it out. And Las Vegas casinos, that great industry we all are so critical of, pay out fully 95 percent of all the moneys bet.

I get concerned when I believe people who buy lottery tickets say, "If I bet \$100, then I've got to get back \$45 because the payout is \$45." I had that experience with my wife in Vegas, who thought that because they paid out 95 percent, she could only lose \$5 on \$100. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, after we'd slept in the car for two nights, she got the message.

Mr. Speaker, there's a TV commercial that pictures this fellow standing in a grocery store where they're selling these lottery tickets. The commercial comes on the television and says, and I quote, "He will never buy a 6/49 ticket because he's more likely to be struck by lightning than hitting the jackpot." And then there's that big flash and so on. It didn't hit him, so he says, "I'll buy a ticket". Little did he know the chances of getting hit by lightning are one in a million; the chances of winning 6/49 are one in 14 million. So unless he's Lee Trevino, who's been struck twice by lightning, the fellow has a long way to go in terms of risking lightning.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to hold up the House. I simply want to say that if members or people in this province realized that when they went to buy a 6/49 ticket the chances of winning a jackpot are one in 14 million, 14 times greater than being struck by lightning — Lotto West, 12 million; the Provincial, one in 800,000; and on and on and on. All I'm asking for in terms of a sense of fair play by the lawmakers of this province who make the laws is that if we are going to insist that people who buy lottery tickets must have the odds disclosed to them, don't we also have a responsibility to consumers, who are spending over \$100 million in this province with great expectations because they see commercials that we endorse as a government, to say, "Hey, if you must sell those people a ticket, disclose those odds"?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would hope members of this House would participate in the debate and approve this resolution.

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, Arthur Baer once said, and I quote: betting is pretty much like liquor; you can make it illegal but you cannot make it unpopular.

While I very much admire the initiative of my colleague the hon. member for Lethbridge for introducing the resolution, it really doesn't matter how the statistics are posted, where they're posted, or why they're posted. People are fascinated with numbers, they're fascinated with odds, and they're going to do whatever they're going to do regardless of who advises them, especially government. In fact, it's interesting when we start looking at this question of statistics that the most popular lottery in Alberta is Lotto 6/49, which has the worst odds and the biggest payoff of all the lotteries. It doesn't matter whether we post the sign on the front of the Legislature Building or on the front of a vending booth; I doubt that anything is going to change.

Mr. Speaker, there is a story of a former member of the Legislature who surprisingly died and went to heaven. As we know, he had to go past St. Peter. When he finally saw St. Peter, he was absolutely flabbergasted to notice there were millions of clocks behind this great booth. He said to St. Peter, "What are all those clocks for?" St. Peter said: "Well, don't you know that this is our way of keeping track of sins. Every time someone on earth sins there is a clock for them on that wall and the minute hand goes ahead one hour." The gentleman said: "Well, that's interesting. Have you got a clock for Brian Lee?" St. Peter said, "Yeah, we use it as a fan." The odds of that clock being mine were pretty great, but there are odds. All life is odds; all life is ratios. We have to go to X number of classes in order to graduate from school. We have to meet X number of young ladies in order to get married or . . . It's a numbers game that I've been studying recently. A salesman has to meet X number of prospects and make X number of presentations to make one sale. All life is ratios. This issue really is an issue of: should government be assisting the people to determine what the ratio and what the odds are?

Mr. Speaker, I relish this topic. I relish this debate. I'd like to get into it. My best remark's ahead. But being as the clock is moving forward, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, would those in favour please say aye?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: And those opposed please say no?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

[The House recessed at 5:27 p.m. and resumed at 8 p.m.]

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

Moved by Mrs. Fyfe:

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

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

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

[Adjourned debate April 7: Mrs. Embury]

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, this evening I'm very pleased to participate in the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

Firstly, I'm pleased to extend to you our deepest appreciation for your thoughtful leadership as Speaker of the Assembly. We in Alberta are indeed fortunate to have the most experienced Speaker of any parliament in Canada. This is evident in the way that you ensure that the proceedings of this Assembly are conducted in a fair and equitable way.

I would also like to pay respect to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor and thank her for the speech delivered last Thursday. The constituents of Calgary North West appreciate the contribution to this province made continually by the Lieutenant Governor.

It is a deep honour for me and, I'm certain, for all our colleagues to welcome and work closely with our hon. Premier, the Member for Edmonton Whitemud. The Premier has very quickly earned the respect of all Albertans by travelling throughout every constituency in the province, listening to the people, and now providing the leadership to meet each and every challenge facing all of us.

I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the Member for St. Albert and to the Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray for their excellent addresses. They certainly set a tone for the Speech from the Throne that hopefully the rest of us can emulate.

The government is to be commended for a Speech from the Throne that is not only timely in priorities but very sensitive to the needs of Albertans and to the less fortunate in other parts of the world. It is due only to our sound fiscal management and ongoing commitment of our government to respond quickly and efficiently to emerging needs. Albertans can be proud of the many and varied employment programs which we share with the private sector. I would like to commend the Minister of Manpower for the ongoing initiatives of employment and training, and also the Minister of Municipal Affairs for the announcement of the Alberta municipal partnership in local employment program, announced yesterday. This latter program illustrates the co-operative process between our government and the municipal governments. This, of course, is a very important program for a member such as myself who represents a large municipality such as Calgary.

I would like to commend the hon. Premier and the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources for their willingness to meet with the varied sectors of the energy industry. Constituents of Calgary North West representing the service sector of the oil industry were here on April 4 in discussions presenting their concerns to the minister. We have seen a very quick response in the announcement of the temporary

enhancement of the royalty tax credit program, designed to assist small producer cash flows, and the temporary exploratory drilling assistance program.

I am afraid I do have to make a comment that it is rather tragic that members of the opposition are not in the House tonight, but I am sure they will read my speech to understand that when they so often say in this House that we do not present any long-term programs of our government, little do they realize — and these last two programs I've mentioned this evening illustrate the need — that while we do have a lot of long-term planning in our government, we also respond immediately to the needs that are current and brought to our attention in Alberta.

While the oil companies are assessing the economic limit of low-productive wells — by that I mean less than 20 barrels a day — while we have assisted the small producer, and while the sliding scale of low royalties for low-production wells introduced previously by this government was a positive step and well appreciated by the industry, I would like to encourage a reassessment of our government to reduce further or entirely remove the royalties on low-productive wells, because artificially lifted, low-productive wells are job-intensive for the service and operating companies compared to the high-productive flowing wells.

Many constituents of Calgary North West are employed by all sectors in the oil and gas industry. Besides seeing the layoffs and consolidation of companies, there is also the spin-off effect which affects all our communities. As one example, the president of Varsity Acres community association in Calgary North West, in a newsletter to all members of that association, stated that their cash flow is going to be affected by lower membership sales, lower hall rentals, and lower attendance at functions. As most of the community associations are working to reduce debt service costs, this calls for a greater effort via the executive of our community associations and all the community members to work hard and to become more involved in those activities. As was done before when Calgary faced an economic downturn, I do echo the Premier's faith in the initiative and creativity of Albertans to meet the challenges.

I'm very pleased to see the emphasis through a separate Department of Forestry which recognizes the potential in our forest industry. My information has told me in the past that Alberta has already been a leader in many aspects of the forestry industry. I think this follows on our announcement and the passing of the Forestry Profession Act last term in this Legislature. I think this is a great step forward for the forest industry.

Many of us have also been aware for a long time of the potential of the tourist industry. The creation of a separate department will build on what has already occurred and give a definite signal to the private sector that we will be working together to explore all the potential possibilities that the many sectors of this industry have before us today.

The establishment of a new Department of Technology, Research and Telecommunications is a pleasant and innovative approach to the new and exciting era. It is challenging

for me to see how in this area alone the profession of nursing will change over the next 15 years. I'd like to quote:

The importance of the art of nursing can scarcely be overestimated. In many cases the recovery of the patient will depend as much on the care he receives as upon the medical skill.

This quote is from a book by C.S. Weeks-Shaw entitled *A Textbook of Nursing*. No, it isn't a recent book; this was written in 1896.

The beginning of nursing as a profession was clouded in doubt, and over the years there has been concern about the directions of nursing and what the directions should be. Nursing has developed a step at a time with plenty of debate within the profession and also from other people outside the profession.

In the future the professional nurse will use technology to help prevent illness and maintain health. The positive aspect of this approach is that the health care delivery system will become consumer-based. Biophysiological instrumentation will intrigue and challenge the professional nurse. Large and small mobile and stationary machines will be used inside and outside hospitals to provide nursing care to people in their homes, in business, in the schools, and in rural satellite settings. Multi-audiovisual communication modes will enable the nurse to keep in constant contact with her patients, the clients, the family, the multidisciplinary teams, and other social groups. These are only a very few examples of future trends in nursing, illustrating the changing roles and the need for different knowledge and skills to function in the complex world of technology and telecommunications.

Our government has recognized the potential of nurses by setting up the Foundation for Nursing Research. I would like to give you examples of what has happened recently in this province — of international acclaim, by the way. Last May, approximately a year ago, there was an international symposium on nursing, illustrating the use of computer information services. This was held in Calgary. There were over 500 people from all countries across the world. Two other meetings in the nursing profession that are very significant are coming up this year in May. First of all, in Calgary there is an international conference for maternity nursing and midwifery researchers, hosted by the faculty of nursing at the University of Calgary. Secondly, there is to be, for the first time in Canada, an international nursing research conference held here in Edmonton in May. These are significant changes which have happened over the last few years in nursing.

Hopefully, to continue the commitment and future challenge in nursing and ultimately to all Albertans, the research foundation program will continue to be funded. I would also suggest and hope that there will be funds provided for a doctoral program in nursing, which would be a first in Canada. And might I bring to the attention of my colleagues in the Legislature — I'm sure that we all receive the magazine called *Folio* from the University of Alberta. What is significant, and I'm very proud to announce it in the Legislature tonight, is that the nursing doctorate program has been endorsed through all the steps of the University of Alberta. So it will be coming forth in the future for us, hopefully, to fund.

Lastly, in regard to the nursing area, I would hope that we could consider expanding our funding to the universities for the undergraduate programs in nursing. If we don't look at this with a very serious concern in the future, we will

find that by the year 2000, nurses are not prepared, from an educational base, to assume the roles that will be expected of them in society.

I support the emphasis in the Speech from the Throne on the Senior Citizens Bureau. This is an area we must address in detail as to laying the foundation for a long-term plan to meet the needs of our senior citizens. I will reiterate what the Member for Calgary Egmont said last night. Senior citizens of Alberta are indeed very grateful for the wide and varied programs that we offer to them. But I think that the importance of the step that will be taken is because this is the way the seniors will have more input into what we are offering. As you know, there is now incredible potential for people that are retiring. With their experience in business, their educational backgrounds, all the skills that they offer, this is a huge resource of untapped wealth that hopefully we should be involving more and more in the decision-making process.

One of the questions that I think we have to address in this regard is: what will the costs be to us as a government, and is it only the government that should handle the costs? From time to time I think all of us in the Legislature have spoken to many of the seniors in our ridings and more and more, as many of them have their health and have some basic resources, they are saying to us, "We would like to participate more and more in sharing the costs." I only leave that as an idea with my colleagues in the Legislature to consider in the future. It is not to say — and I know that the opposition wouldn't comment on this, because they realize that the government is always prepared to assist people who need any type of services. So I'm not talking about the people who will always need our help and assistance, but there are many seniors out there now who feel that they can contribute more and more to our province.

The new advanced education endowment and incentive fund to be established is an indication of the success of the previous program, and I commend the minister for this endeavour. This will be a very important program for the University of Calgary. While commending the Minister of Advanced Education, I would like to congratulate him on the establishment of an Advisory Council on Women's Issues and the expansion of the Women's Secretariat. I would also like to commend Dr. Sheila Wynn and her staff for the excellent work they have been performing throughout Alberta.

One word of caution that I must reiterate at this time is that what is often perceived as women's issues are basically the issues of society. I really know that every member of this Legislature — female and all our male colleagues — is always very interested in these issues that affect women in their homes or in the workplace. I want to emphasize that point, and hopefully through the work of the advisory council this will also not interfere with the democratic process as it exists today. By that I mean that women will always feel free to contact their MLAs, the cabinet ministers, and the Premier to bring forth their concerns directly to the government in that way. I see the advisory council just supplementing that process, not replacing it.

It is a privilege as a member representing Calgary to see all the exciting aspects of the Olympic developments not only in Calgary but in the surrounding area. One can't emphasize enough what a marvellous legacy these facilities will be for all Albertans. I'd like to commend the organizing committee for their dedication and hard work. While I won't be a member of this Assembly in 1988, it will be an exciting time for all of us.

Before I close, I appreciate the Member for Calgary McCall and the hon. Premier for recognizing a constituent

of Calgary North West. That constituent is Mr. Ed Lukowich, the skip of the 1986 world men's curling championship. I too would like to add my sincere congratulations to the skip and to the members of the team.

In closing, I wish to thank the constituents of Calgary North West for their loyalty, support, and willingness to keep me informed as their member in the Legislature. I am grateful, as a government member, to have the opportunity to bring the concerns of my constituents to the attention of the government.

I wish to thank the cabinet ministers and all my colleagues for their co-operation and friendship. Unfortunately, time does not permit one to discuss all the positive aspects of the Speech from the Throne. I do want to reiterate and commend the government for the positive direction in the throne speech and the considerations given to assist our economy and the needs of all Albertans.

In closing, I'd like to quote from Kahlil Gibran's book, *The Prophet*:

If these be vague words, then seek not
to clear them.

Vague and nebulous is the beginning of
all things, but not their end, and I
fain would have you remember me as a
beginning.

Life and all that lives is conceived
in the mist and not in the crystal,
And who knows but a crystal is mist
in decay?

This would I have you remember in remembering
me.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this evening to enter the throne speech debate and make some comments, as I am also going to be a member retiring from this House, having served in this Legislature for 15 years.

First of all, I would like to thank the mover, the hon. Member for St. Albert, for her well-delivered speech and the way she presented it, with full support of her constituency. The member has always impressed me since she entered this Legislature in 1979. Also the seconder, the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray, for his presentation and how well he set forth some of the concerns they are looking at in the McMurray area because of some of the aspects that are happening to our economy right now.

I would also at this time like to welcome back to the Assembly the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud, the Premier. I had the pleasure of working with the Premier for about nine years in this Assembly, and I always appreciated his dedication to the various portfolios he held; sitting in the gallery from '67 to '71, having ambitions to get into the Alberta Legislature, watching the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud, which I think was Strathcona at that time, as a member of the opposition, and knowing how effective he was.

And to you, sir, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark: it's been a pleasure working with you for the last 15 years, especially since 1979, when I've had the honour many times of filling the chair that the hon. Speaker sits in, not to the capacity and the ability that the hon. member can, but I've enjoyed that throughout those years from 1979.

I look at the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's just an excellent working document for the people of

Alberta for 1986-87. I'm really pleased to see that we have placed a lot of emphasis on agriculture through this document. It's still the backbone of our economy. In the throne speech we say that in 1905 the industry of agriculture was founded upon the family farm. I would just like to reflect back and remind the Assembly that there were a number of people that came to Alberta and settled it before 1905. I had a grandfather of Ukrainian descent that came into the Two Hills area in 1896 and was one of the founding settlers in that area to make agriculture what it is and what it's all about. I also had a grandfather from my father's side of the family that came into southern Alberta and settled down in the Hanna area in 1905.

I discussed with many constituent farmers on the weekend the aspects in the throne speech and some of the priorities and parameters that we've set out in this particular very important document and how we're going to set up a \$2 billion long-term credit stabilization plan for the farmers. The majority of them have accepted that. They think there is still some light at the end of the tunnel for them to continue on.

Some other people who have visited my office have said to me that in this particular speech of 1986, the Fourth Session of this Alberta Legislature, we put too much emphasis on agriculture. I would just remind hon. members that I can remember having heard a number of throne speeches in this Assembly, and at times there may have been only one or two lines devoted to agriculture. So in 1986, in this particular speech, I think agriculture has certainly had the emphasis and importance placed upon it.

I am pleased to also see in the throne speech our extension of the extended flat-rate calling for telephones to 40 miles from 32. Being humble as I am, I guess I can say that it was my resolution that was passed in this Assembly on April 30, 1985, that made that possible. Hon. members of the Assembly supported that particular resolution and made that event happen. Many communities in the province of Alberta — and I believe about 105 will be affected in 1986-87 — will be allowed to have a vote to see what community they want to vote for for extended flat-rate calling throughout the whole province. In my particular constituency it will affect the summer village of Alberta Beach, Keephills, Wabamun, and Seba Beach. I don't have to go into the history of that, because hon. members have heard that speech from me a number of times in this Legislative Assembly. I am very proud that we passed that piece of legislation and will be putting it into effect for the citizens of Alberta.

The only other concern I have with telephones is still in the rural area, and that's the four-party system. Hopefully in the near future we can get that eliminated and have private-line services to our rural people.

I would like to take a couple of minutes, Mr. Speaker, to kind of reflect and look at the Stony Plain constituency over the past 15 years. It has been an exciting constituency to represent. It's a real mix of various people out there, as I mentioned earlier: agriculture, the rural people, a lot of acreage people, a lot of summer villages, one brand-new city in Spruce Grove, the town of Stony Plain, the village of Wabamun, and a number of other things. I would like to share with members of this Assembly what has happened over the last 15 years to these particular centres in the constituency. We also have to reflect that the constituency of Stony Plain has been chopped twice because of redistribution, so it's probably one of the smallest rural constituencies in the province, except still having a population of about 22,000 voters.

When I was first elected in 1971, the population of Spruce Grove was 2,000. On March 1, 1986, I had the pleasure of participating in the function to proclaim Spruce Grove as Alberta's 16th city. The population of Spruce Grove right now is very close to 12,000. Stony Plain in '71 was around 2,000; it's now around 5,500 and it's expanding. In 1971 Wabamun was a hamlet, in 1980 it went to village status, and it's starting to see some growth and expansion. We've had substantial growth in other areas of the constituency.

Many hon. members will remember in 1972 when we started on our process to decentralize out of the two metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary many of the government services that could be better served and serve the people of Alberta in a rural area. I would like to reflect what's happened in the city of Spruce Grove.

I can recall a conversation in caucus in 1973, I guess it was, when the minister of telephones of the day, Roy Farran, came to the caucus and wanted to get added moneys for AGT to purchase land on 149th Street in Edmonton so that AGT could build some mammoth major repair shops in that area to serve the rural part. At that time I spoke up and said, "What about our decentralization policy?" I was proud during the cabinet tour of 1974 to announce that AGT would be decentralizing out of the city of Edmonton. The first move was to Spruce Grove; then they went to St. Albert, Sherwood Park, and other areas throughout the province to serve the needs of the people. I thought it was kind of ludicrous to have AGT, especially the maintenance division, in a city setting when they're actually serving rural Alberta, and that took place. We were also successful in having Social Services decentralized from downtown Edmonton to Spruce Grove in 1980.

There was another first in the secondary road program. Spruce Grove council and myself proved to the Minister of Transportation that another secondary road should become necessary. The previous policy was that secondary roads running north and south were only possible every 12 miles, but I was successful in having what we call the Calahoo-Golden Spike road proclaimed as a secondary highway. That has now been expanded, and yesterday I had the pleasure of presenting to the city of Spruce Grove a cheque for \$1.1 million for expansion and completion of that roadway in 1986.

To assist the town we've also had to put four sets of traffic lights in. It was against the will of many people that had to drive through Spruce Grove, but for the safety of the citizens that live in Spruce Grove and of the travelling people, that had to happen.

Many things have happened in the town of Stony Plain. Westerra was announced in 1982 as the third technical institution for Alberta. By 1986 it was supposed to be 3,600 students, but unfortunately, because of the downturn in the economy and a number of other events that have happened, that particular institution has not expanded to 3,600 people. I can still see some really exciting events for Westerra in the near future, and I will dwell on that a bit further into my speech.

We also recently opened in Stony Plain a new provincial building and two courthouses. People are going to say, "Why two courthouses?"

MR. HYLAND: They must be bad out there.

MR. PURDY: Not me; some others are. There is a large area that a number of police forces look after, and it was

needed. The necessity was there that two courthouses should be built. It's not two separate buildings but two courtrooms under one roof. They are busy five days a week in court proceedings in that area. It doesn't put a very positive perspective out that way, but as I said, with the large population, the growing highway traffic, and the number of agencies policing the area, it was necessary.

I look at the village of Wabamun since it went to village status in 1980. It went into a street improvement program. I was successful in having the Minister of Transportation recognize that some additional funds should be available to expand the streets through to the TransAlta power plant. I think that total obligation by the provincial government through Transportation was something like \$750,000, which certainly helped the village in having that piece of street improved. This year they are going to complete the rest of the streets in the village to all paved standards. The village recently opened a new village office and fire hall, and I understand that by sometime in May they will also be opening a new liquor store.

Mr. Speaker, another exciting program that has happened in rural Alberta is the rural gas program. Under the previous administration, which went back a number of years, there was a rural gas program in place, but not very many people were benefitting from it. If anybody really wanted to get into the rural gas program and form a co-op, Northwestern Utilities and the other gas utilities in the province were going up, grabbing the cream of the crop, and then leaving the co-ops to have a very expensive capital project program. So in November 1972, Dr. Horner, who was in this Legislature for a while, along with myself, made the announcement at a Unifarm meeting in Onoway that we would expand our rural gas program, revamp it, and would start the first program in the Onoway area. That program has expanded throughout the whole province of Alberta, and the majority of farmers are now users of a very clean and necessary fuel.

The education facilities in the constituency have certainly grown over the number of years. The schools had to be built to keep up with the growth of the constituency. Over the last 15 years, Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of opening many facilities throughout the constituency. The latest one that I participated in was the refurbishing of an old school in the summer village of Seba Beach. When they got through with it, it looked like a brand-new facility.

Transportation has been pretty close to my heart. The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview made the statement in the Legislature yesterday that he would like to see the government committed to having all secondary highways paved by 1990. Mr. Speaker, I can stand in my place this evening and proudly say that the secondary highways in my constituency are all paved except for about 12 kilometres, and that contract is now let to go. When that is done, maybe before the end of the next election, all secondary roads in the Stony Plain will be under pavement. The rest of you may have to suffer, but whoever spoke up the loudest got the most work.

We also have had some very, very major highway work west of Edmonton. We now have two major highways, Highway 16 and Highway 16X, running within three miles of each other. Both these highways are needed because of the high volume of traffic that has been growing over the number of years. We've also put in a number of very important interchanges along Highway 16, and there are some interchanges to come on 16X. However, because of the commitment we've made to the people in Jasper, Hinton,

and Edson, I think we have to complete Highway 16 from Evansburg to the Jasper park gates by 1991. We made the commitment two years ago in this Assembly that we would build that highway to a four-lane standard.

Water and sewer have been a very important aspect of the constituency. When I first got elected in 1971, Spruce Grove had an inadequate water supply. Because of the growing needs of that community, and also Stony Plain, something had to be done. The first water line was built out of the city of Edmonton treatment plants to Spruce Grove and Stony Plain in that year. In the last three years we've had to expand that system to a larger line at a higher pressure.

There were some particular problems with the water line that went into the municipalities around the city of Edmonton. A lot of the local politicians at the municipal level were very upset that they had no particular input or say in the charges for this line, the capital costs, and many other things. I went to a meeting in Beaumont about three years ago and very boldly announced that — and this was to do with the sewer end of it — you had no say in the water end, but I would go back and talk to the ministers responsible and see if we could not set up a task force of elected people from the various municipalities to have input into this sewage line. That happened, and I'm proud to have been part of that particular involvement.

A group of people who are very important to Alberta and will be for many years — and I guess we'll all be in this particular category — are our senior citizens. In the constituency there have been a number of senior citizens' lodges, homes, built throughout the last 15 years. Spruce Grove now has a self-contained home along with a drop-in centre that the people of Spruce Grove, the many clubs — the Kinsmen, the Lions, and other ones — helped, along with government assistance. Stony Plain has the Meridian Lodge, plus Rose Manor and Diamond Jubilee. We also have plans now with the Minister of Housing for another high rise in downtown Stony Plain to meet the needs of our senior citizens.

We've also just recently — and I had the pleasure of doing that about a year ago — officially opened the senior citizens' self-contained home in Wabamun. Recent to that I had the pleasure of opening a drop-in centre in Wabamun, which I believe is now paid for. That group of people has really gone out and done a number of things to attract people into the centre, put on a number of fund-raising projects so that the home would be out of debt. We also have a home, a drop-in centre, in Darwell, and that is a really enthusiastic group of people who built that drop-in centre. They were the first ones to do a drop-in centre in the constituency. My heart goes out to them, the dedicated work that went into that centre by many, many individuals. Alberta Beach also opened a drop-in centre a number of years ago, as did the hamlet of Winterburn.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues in the constituency that have to be addressed, and I'll go into those in a minute. However, today I was a little bit taken aback, I guess, introducing some controversial legislation in this Legislature, having a presentation on the front steps of the Legislature, where my niece and myself were inducted into the Saved by the Belt Club — introducing legislation which, as I said, is controversial in the province because a number of people are saying, "You should introduce seat-belt legislation." Others are saying that we should not do it. I did not have any contact at all with the news media in our gallery. Of course they're vacant tonight again too.

Maybe, Mr. Premier and Mr. Speaker, we should just move the chairs out and let them stand instead, and we might get more attention out of the people there. We've had the problem here over a number of years. The news media come into this Legislature from downtown Toronto; they don't know what it's like out in good old rural Alberta and downtown Edmonton. Maybe we should give them an educational program of what it's all about here. I thought they might pick up on the seat-belt legislation as a controversial election issue, but I guess none of them has the political savvy to do very much.

I'd like to speak for a few minutes on the Stony Plain Municipal hospital. Most hon. members know the history of the Stony Plain hospital and that it has now come back to a very active treatment hospital. However, I still can't get a commitment out of the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care when a new facility will be built in that town or region. The hospital had 27,000 outpatients last year, and that's fairly high for a 30-bed hospital.

As I mentioned earlier, Westerra is moving along but not at the speed I'd like to see it progress. I accept that we've had the economy and a number of other things that have happened. I've had a number of discussions with the previous minister of small business and tourism. He's been out to visit the site, as has the Minister of Advanced Education. They know the need and what's needed at Westerra.

Another group that has done a lot of work in the area — and I'm not here this evening asking for funds — is the multicultural heritage society foundation that was formed in Stony Plain a number of years ago. They have the Multicultural Centre building in Stony Plain, they have the Oppertshauser House in Stony Plain, and they have the log cabin in Spruce Grove. Those particular people have now put together some information, which they will be forwarding to members of the Assembly and other interested citizens, on the importance of preserving our gift of heritage. It's a very interesting document. They've also got a board of governors that are going to be working and looking for support. I'm pleased that I am a member of that particular board that will be working with the various agencies, private industry, and so on, to look at additional funds for this very, very important facility in the town of Stony Plain.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 15 years I've had great support from this provincial government, and it was a difficult decision to think about my retirement from public life. There's a lot of water under the bridge in those 15 years. It's been 15 years of excitement. At this time I'd like to thank the people in the Stony Plain constituency. As I said earlier, it was a large constituency; now it's condensed to quite a small constituency. But I thank all the people that have helped me and worked with me throughout the various problems we've had over those 15 years. They came through many, many times when I needed their support, and when they needed my support, I was also there.

It was a difficult decision to go back into private life. I've been with TransAlta Utilities for 25 years. They have been a good corporate citizen to work for, one of the best in this province. I reflect on a number of other members coming into this Assembly who have worked for private companies and who have been told they had to resign or leave that company, to make a choice. But TransAlta has stuck with me, I stuck with TransAlta, and we've had an excellent working relationship over my 15 years in this Assembly.

I'd also like to wish good luck to Jim Heron, the newly selected Conservative candidate in the Stony Plain consti-

uency. I'd like to publicly say to Jim that as of today, he's still 500 votes behind.

At this time I would like to also thank Drayden Insurance for their support of an office and their staff over the last 15 years. This particular office, and I've said it in this Assembly before, has cost the taxpayers of this province no money. I opened the office 15 years ago as an election promise and have kept that office open throughout those years, and there's been no government expenditure that's gone into the operation of that office.

Also special thanks to Jad Kalke, who is my legislative secretary, for her dedicated support over the last — I guess it's a long time — eight or nine years. If any of the members of this Assembly want a dedicated secretary after the next election, I would ask you to look at her, because she is an outgoing and very, very efficient girl.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the hon. members of this Assembly for their support and the support of the cabinet ministers that I have known over the last 15 years. There have been a number of them in four terms in this Assembly. I would like to say to the members who hope to be re-elected: go forward to govern this province as we have done in the past for the betterment of Alberta. It's been a good 15 years.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in the debate on the Speech from the Throne, it's traditional to congratulate the Lieutenant Governor on her address, to thank you for your leadership in the Assembly, and indeed to congratulate the mover and seconder. It seems almost redundant at this stage of the debate to do so, but the fact of the matter is that I do truly support all of those sentiments and therefore echo the thanks and congratulations and best wishes so eloquently given by members who have spoken previously in the debate.

I would also like to welcome to the Assembly the Member for Edmonton Whitemud. I didn't happen to have the opportunity to serve with the hon. member when he previously was in the House. It's only in recent years that I've gotten to know the hon. Premier, but the longer I know him, the more I feel privileged to serve in the Assembly at a time when his leadership is taking control of the province and looking after our people.

Mr. Speaker, there's one other group I'd like to thank tonight. Last night I went through the members of the Assembly who we know won't be returning, who are retiring once an election is called, whenever that might be. All of those members have contributed personally to my education in this House and, I know, to the betterment of the province of Alberta. I'd just like to say thanks to each and every one of them personally for the education they've given me. I know some say that I've been a tough learner, taken a slow-learning approach, but I have enjoyed the time spent with each and consider each a friend.

It's difficult to single out any and dangerous to do so, but I will step into that hot water. There are three members in the House with whom I've served in particularly close capacities on various committees that I've chaired. I'd like to say to the hon. Member for Calgary North West, who served as vice-chairman of the Select Special Committee on Senate Reform when I was chairman, that I'm going to miss her good humour, intelligence, wisdom and, most of all, her friendship. I wish her the best in the future. To the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, who is not in the House this evening but with whom I also served on the Select Special Committee on Senate Reform and who

serves on the Health Facilities Review Committee, another committee that I chair: we're going to miss his particular sensitivity to people problems and to individuals. I will again miss the friendship. It's my personal hope that someday the hon. member will choose to return to public life and contribute again to the people of Alberta. The one other member, who has been vice-chairman of the House strategy committee as I've served as chairman, the Member for Edmonton Glengarry — again, I think the House will be slightly less for lacking his enthusiasm, energy, and imagination. I hope that that member, being of very young age, will choose at some future date to return to public life and further contribute to the province.

Mr. Speaker, I know it's not long in terms of the service that other members have given, but it's now been seven years that I've been sitting in this Assembly. For me those are a lot of years. In looking at those seven years and seven speeches from the throne, I've reached one conclusion with respect to the reason why governments and individuals are elected. I know that there are a lot of theories about that. Some people feel that you're elected if you have a lot of money or if you advertise properly or if you have the right connections. Since it's not any of those, I'm sure members realize that it's my Robert Redford good looks and my Mr. America physique that elect me.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I think there is really only one reason why governments and individuals get elected, and that's sensitivity to the needs of the people, to the times that people face and the problems they're involved with. I think we've had those through the years. I can really only speak for the years that I've been in office, but I look back to 1979. At that point in time, when I was first elected, we were moving into our rapid growth, high expectation, overemployment period. We were here at a time when money was no real problem to the people of Calgary Currie. Job opportunities were no real problem to the people of my constituency and to the rest of the province. But dealing with the overheated, high expectation era was very much a problem for this Assembly.

In addition, at that time in our history we went through a very acrimonious period of debate with the federal government on constitution and energy issues. I had the privilege at that time of working with our constitution committee, that you, sir, chaired so ably, and fought for our position on the Constitution. I believe that Alberta won important concessions for our place in Confederation.

In terms of the national energy program, I too think we won some important concessions there. But at that time the national energy program's effects already had been felt and combined with the international economic situation and other Canadian factors to end the boom period. All of a sudden we as legislators, who had frankly been trying to find places to put money so that it wouldn't overheat our economy, and our companies who were trying to hire employees faster than they could find them, were faced with this abrupt stop in our economic growth period. It wasn't really that the economy of the province of Alberta was so bad. By comparison with the rest of the country, it still looked very good. It was that the boom ended so abruptly.

In Calgary, and in Calgary Currie in particular, we had many people in the oil and gas industry and also in the construction industry who, in the case of the construction industry, had been part of what was estimated to be five times what was needed for stable growth; who all of a sudden had no work. We faced those tough times just before going into the election of 1982, and yet this government

was elected with a large majority, with a larger percentage of the vote than ever before. The one question, why, is answered again, I believe, by the term "sensitivity" — sensitive to the needs of the people of the province.

Today we are debating a Speech from the Throne which I believe again epitomizes that principle of sensitivity. Calgary Currie has fared very well by past speeches from the throne and past programs. Just in the last seven years every community association hall has received a grant for expansion. I've personally opened six senior citizen self-contained units, which the heritage trust fund funded, bringing to eight the total in my constituency. We've had money for expansion of the Good Companions hall for senior citizens. We've given money for Mount Royal College, which is in the centre of my riding: \$60 million for expansion, among its many other grants. Most recently I've had the opportunity to present a cheque for \$1 million, the first contribution of \$1.8 million that we're making to the southwest arena society for twin arenas which will serve the recreational needs of the constituents of my area and surrounding districts.

In a survey that I am in the midst of doing with my constituency, my constituents are saying in the initial returns that they're very happy with community hall facilities, recreational facilities, and others in the community. The problem that my constituents face, Mr. Speaker, is the same that I think constituents throughout the province face in varying degrees, and that is the potential problem of jobs and business opportunities. This throne speech speaks so well to those needs, and promises to do all that government can do in dealing with those problems. For that our constituents are thankful.

Mr. Speaker, though there is no question that the present oil price drop and the question of jobs and business opportunities are by far the greatest concerns in Calgary Currie, I would like to comment on a few other areas where I think we should be giving some consideration to new thoughts in the future, some new ideas and concepts, and some long-term directions.

With respect to our health care system I was pleased to see in the Speech from the Throne the addition of the 600-odd units for auxiliary hospitals, nursing homes, and lodges. They are needed. As chairman of the Health Facilities Review Committee, in travelling the province and looking at the facilities, we know that the effect of the postwar baby boom and the general increasing average age of the people of this province require additional assistance in that respect. That immediate need is addressed well.

I think, though, Mr. Speaker, that we must pay a great deal of attention in the year, and perhaps years to come, to the whole question of institutionalization. It is a fact that we institutionalize more people, especially more seniors, in Alberta than any other province in the country, and in the country we institutionalize more than almost anywhere in the world. That is good on one hand; it shows that we have provided for the need. On another, the expense and perhaps the need for people to remain in their own environment beg the question of what other options we should be looking at.

The throne speech does address one of those options well, and that's the home care program — one that I believe is essential, which is expanding and, I believe, is entirely necessary. But in addition to that, I think we have to pay attention to other options in the future, such as adult day care, and other approaches that may indeed help our people

to receive what they need in a sensitive, caring way that does not necessarily require an institution.

In the area of social services, again I believe the programs are being dealt with well. I congratulate the new minister on her appointment, and I feel that her sensitivity and knowledge will stand her in good stead in that portfolio. I would just emphasize that I personally believe that our approach has to be towards preventive social services more than anything else to try and help our citizens to deal with their own problems.

In that respect I would take this opportunity to once more refer the hon. minister and members to the family institute Act, which I presented to the Legislature some years ago. I do believe, especially at this time when we're moving towards privatization in the social service area, that a central body which would bring together all of the knowledge that volunteer agencies, governments, and projects have about dealing with the family and the problems faced by it would do away with duplication and assist in providing most efficiently for the programs. I'm happy at any time to discuss more details on that concept with the minister or others in the House.

Briefly, Mr. Speaker, in the area of intergovernmental affairs, while it's a far lesser priority than dealing with Ottawa — as I know we have ministers doing tonight on issues like the heavy oil upgrader and the problems of our energy industry — I believe we must not stop in our attempt to ensure that the Senate of Canada and other federal institutions are reformed so that our rightful place in Confederation can be forever guaranteed no matter what government there is in Ottawa.

In the area of education I might say I am glad to see an increase in funds provided for in the Speech from the Throne. I would like to draw members' attention to a study just completed by the postsecondary institutions in Calgary together with the school boards, which collectively took from Stats Canada figures which show that in Calgary the population over 15 with postsecondary education is the highest in the nation. I don't want Edmonton to feel too bad; Edmonton comes in a very close third in that respect. In this report we also show that of the population over 15 with better than grade 9 schooling, Calgary has a higher percentage than anywhere in the nation. In terms of citizens involved in adult education programs, Edmonton and Calgary together are the two cities that have the highest percentage of people involved. I believe this speaks well for the investment and the contribution we've made to education. More than that, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it provides a base, a resource, for our people that we can't tabulate now but that will stand us in good stead no matter what other problems this province faces in the future.

I also believe that though the study is aimed at Calgary, if we expanded it through the province we would find the provincial standings to be equally good in terms of comparison with the nation.

Mr. Speaker, in that area of education there are only two additional things I hope the House, or at least the ministers involved, will consider over the following year. One is that I hope the Minister of Advanced Education will give serious consideration to the establishment of an institute of constitutional affairs at the University of Calgary. Since I presented the idea last year in the House, the university has enthusiastically been working on it and would like to proceed in that direction. Given the needs that will be there in terms of the new Charter of Rights and the Constitution and our ongoing requirements for advice in constitutional

areas, I personally believe that we can give our youth no greater growth industry opportunity and ourselves no greater resource in the future in those areas than by providing for such an institute or such a direction.

The other area in education: I still believe, and my constituents, I believe, by and large support the concept, that in our school boards, in Calgary at least, we should move toward election by a ward system. I hope the School Act would be amended in that respect to allow for that so that the people can be closer to their trustees and vice versa.

Mr. Speaker, the one other area I want to mention briefly is in terms of labour relations. I come from a labour family. My father is a lifetime member of the plumbers and pipe fitters' union; my mother, an AUPE shop steward. We have some interesting discussions in our home. My wife is a CUPE member. I once was an IBEW member myself.

AN HON. MEMBER: Now you're a PC member.

MR. ANDERSON: Now I'm a PC. The Minister of Labour indicated that there were far fewer problems in terms of strikes and lockouts in recent years than there had been previously. I think that's positive, some of it resulting from the economic situation in recent years. I think we've got to take this opportunity when there is some harmony in this area, together with management and labour, to begin to look at alternatives to those outmoded methods of dealing with negotiations — strikes and lockouts are what I'm speaking of — and look at options that some of Europe is using that we can perhaps tailor-make for this province. That's a long-term project I think we should consider.

Those are some quick points, Mr. Speaker, all of them minor to my constituents today in comparison to the problem of jobs and the oil price difficulty; all of them second, indeed, to the priorities appropriately identified in the Speech from the Throne.

I might say that I have no hesitation; in fact, I'm honoured to support the motion by the hon. Member for St. Albert in that regard. I believe that with the Speech from the Throne, with the leadership in our province today and the base we've provided through education and an array of services second to none in the country, our citizens will still have the greatest opportunity possible to fulfill their needs and, indeed, to reach their full potential in the nation.

Thank you.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to be able to stand in my place this evening and make a few comments relevant to Her Honour's Speech from the Throne and, first of all, congratulate Her Honour for the superb job in which she addressed the Speech from the Throne.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Member for St. Albert and the Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray for the superb job they did in their capacities as mover and seconder of the motion.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to be one to congratulate and welcome our new Premier, the Member for Edmonton Whitemud. It's certainly going to be a pleasure working with our new Premier. I mentioned to the Premier last week that his impact on the community and the strengths he has shown since he became leader have been very, very favourably received in McCall by members of the community and certainly by people that are close to me. I would like to say: congratulations. I know his leadership is going to

be welcome for Alberta and is going to give Albertans and members in the House a fresh approach with new initiatives and new energies in our government since his election as leader. After another election, when he has his own mandate, I'm sure we'll see a lot of that energy portrayed in the upcoming months.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate you for your continuing patience and your direction in the House. I know your task is not always easy, especially when some of us get up and down and do our thing a little more aggressively than maybe we should.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend just a few minutes talking about Calgary McCall constituency as it presently exists and as it will exist after the next election. I have some mixed feelings because, should I be re-elected, I am going to lose some 19,000 voters out of the present boundaries of Calgary McCall. That is a tremendous number of people, considering that I'm losing that number and there are many constituencies in the province that don't have that many voters. So instead of being the largest constituency in the province as far as population is concerned, I'm going to drop to fourth. However, it is still a large constituency.

It's sad to see those members of the McCall constituency placed into another, which will be called Montrose, as for nearly 10 years I've represented and worked with those people that have lived in the constituency, and certainly many that haven't, who moved in during the boom period and the high growth of the late '70s. In 1977, when I was first elected, there were 30,000 people in the area that is known today as Calgary McCall. In 1982 there were some 80,000 people. Of course, with the economic situation and then the rebirth of some growth, the numbers have adjusted themselves. I couldn't tell you exactly what they are presently, but I'm sure they're somewhere close to the 80,000 mark.

Mr. Speaker, we have some 10 community associations within that constituency, and the leaders of those community groups are very dedicated and hardworking. Because of the newness of those communities, they have put a lot of hours and a lot of effort into seeing the development of the communities. In many cases we don't give enough recognition to many of our volunteers. In trying to do that, each year I offer community leaders a plaque to give them that recognition and hopefully generate other people to participate a little more within the community to make it a better place for all of them to live. I know that it does work, and I know that these people keep coming forward to participate to ensure that their community is well looked after and the programs are well developed.

We also have to recognize many leaders in the areas of Scouting and Guiding and our sports people. Mr. Speaker, our community sports programs are run by many volunteers, and in the McCall constituency we have two very large sports organizations.

One of them, the Property Sports Association, which assists the development of youth in the sports programs of some six communities, is the largest volunteer organization in the city. When you are trying to organize such a diverse group in the various sporting activities that are available, it's not only a difficult job but it is a job that requires a lot of support people. In fact, once a year they recognize many of those people. I know that on April 19 they're going to recognize those people at a volunteer dance at which in excess of 450 people will be in attendance. They've had to turn away over 100 people who would have liked to attend, but unfortunately the space wouldn't provide it.

It gives you an idea of the number of people involved in a volunteer basis in sporting programs.

In addressing the Speech from the Throne, I would like to see more emphasis placed on the area of sports in the communities. I know we have a Sport Council in Alberta, which does generate some activity and is relatively new. However, I'm quite an advocate of sports and think it's one of the greatest legacies we can have and leave in our time for our province and our youth to develop team spirit and sportsmanship. It's very crucial for the development of the human spirit.

Our church leaders, certainly because of the many activities over the years, have become pillars of strength within the Calgary McCall community. We have many church leaders and churches within the community, and they certainly provide tremendous support and assistance to many people in the community.

Mr. Speaker, in Calgary McCall we have 29 schools, which I have had the opportunity to visit at least once in the last few months and up to three times in some of them. Of those schools, four are now designated as community schools. If you do not have a community school, especially in the urban communities, I would encourage all members to try to get your school principals, your school staff, also your trustees, and of course one of the most important people, the minister, on side to ensure that that program is not only continued but expanded. It gives the community some additional spirit of pride, not only from the students and teachers but the parents themselves. They participate in the community at a much greater level and certainly with added pride.

Recently I had the opportunity to offer to the community and ethnic groups in excess of \$1.7 million in recreation and cultural grants on behalf of the province. Every group was extremely appreciative of those grants, because they do assist in the development of the community. Additionally, they not only assist those groups with their programs, be they sports, culture, or otherwise, but they also create employment in the community. I think it's very important that we should recognize that those moneys are not just wasted, but they generate jobs and also income. Of course, there are also spin-off opportunities that are created.

As far as the constituency office is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my secretary in Calgary, Zoe McCall, for her assistance over the years. Some of you might wonder if I'm using the name of the Calgary constituency of McCall, but my secretary is also named McCall, which is kind of unique. She certainly does a superb job. I just wish the government would allow a greater amount of constituency allowance for the offices, because it's a little bit lean when you need a full-time office and you can only support it with about 18 hours of help a week because of the high rents you pay in the urban centres. I'm sure it would be appreciated by many of us who require additional help but are unable to afford it through the budgets we are allowed.

I'd also like to thank my secretary here in Edmonton, Donna Kuhnle, for a superb job over the years. Between her and Zoe they do a superb job in assisting myself and my constituents.

We have very few senior citizens in our constituency. In fact, with the split I'll lose the only senior citizens' lodge I have. So the minister will have to bear with me, but we'd certainly like to develop another one in the new constituency or on the new boundary of the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, one of the more important issues that has developed in McCall and has been addressed in the Speech from the Throne is the economy. I think everybody has the economic times on their minds today, and interestingly enough, although there have been more jobs created and more people working in the last year than there have been for some time, there still is a concern. Basically, some of that concern is related to the oil patch with the pricing circumstance, as we all know. But in discussing this with many people, there is an air of optimism, and certainly it's cautious, that the difficulty may be short term. In the long term, people are fairly optimistic. However, it is a concern, and we have to continue to try to do everything we can to ensure that people don't get discouraged similar to the way they did during the longer recession that we've just gone through.

In Calgary McCall, of course, we have been able to create a lot of jobs, some through government initiatives and some through the private sector, including the development of the LRT, the new hospital under construction, the new liquor store that opened, and hopefully another new one coming on stream in the near future. There are new homes being constructed in the constituency, and there is confidence by the private sector, which has developed a considerable amount in the northeast area in the last year. Believe it or not, there's been a tremendous amount of development in commercial and retail activity. This is due to the stable fiscal responsibility of the government in dealing with economic realities. We have to ensure that that message, that we do have responsible fiscal initiatives in this government, is in the community.

It's interesting and appreciated by the constituents in Calgary McCall that the seven job-creation initiatives will remain, including a new municipal job-creation program which was introduced on Monday. We would like to categorize some of the areas that were mentioned in the throne speech. Small business and economic development certainly need to be placed together in one department and need to be examined to encourage investment and growth. Further examination of the area of business, in particular small business and economic growth and development, needs to be given a real punch, a lot of energy and initiative, to ensure that we in Alberta maintain a level of growth in that community that has never before been seen.

I've mentioned it in the Legislature on different occasions, and I'm going to throw it out again. I know it's not supported by many at this point in time, but maybe the constant drip will wear a stone. I believe the Alberta Opportunity Company should be integrated with the Treasury Branches and a new mandate given to Treasury relevant to this whole issue. I think that AOC can be better represented in all the communities of Alberta through the Treasury Branches and maybe even Treasury expanded to some degree.

Some of the thrusts with the new ministries are interesting, especially in tourism with a single ministry for that very, very important area. Aggressive development of our tourism initiatives and the broadening of our province's resources for allowing people to come in to visit and see some of the beautiful resources that we have in Alberta need to be taken by the horns, given a real good belt, and become very aggressive.

Training of our hospitality industry people needs to be aggressively pursued. Let them generate some enthusiasm within their own organizations so that people will come to Alberta and take back an excellent message: that we are a

good place to visit and we're friendly. I know we're friendly, but let's portray that within our hospitality industry.

The development of a special portfolio in forestry is extremely important. We have an extremely large resource in our forestry, and it is renewable. Let's expand that initiative to encourage the development and export of our wood products to the world. There's a tremendous potential in that area.

The other area, of a technological nature, is probably as important as any of them, because our future is in the area of technology. We need to aggressively pursue the development in that area so that Alberta will also be a leader in the marketplace in technology.

Mr. Speaker, I should have mentioned another area in tourism that we should more aggressively pursue. That is in the area of trying to obtain conventions, especially in our larger centres of Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Fort McMurray maybe a little bit, and Grande Prairie.

MRS. CRIPPS: Drayton Valley.

MR. NELSON: Drayton Valley is not big enough; it only holds one person.

Mr. Speaker, we should try to create more enthusiasm, and possibly one way of doing it is to increase some of our hosting grants for conventions and, in doing so, maybe add an additional incentive to bring conventions, companies, and people to Alberta. I'm sure they will be able to leave some of those dollars in our free-enterprise system.

The other area, that wasn't mentioned in the throne speech specifically, in the pursuit of development of technology and research — I know it's being done in the United States and Australia, and Australia is probably as advanced as anybody — is the development of solar technology. Solar technology is going to be a very, very important piece of energy in the future, and it's not too early to start now, even though we have a tremendous potential with our nonrenewable resources. If we could become a leader in the pursuit of solar technology, that certainly would be advantageous to the province of Alberta and Canada.

The other area is the pursuit of medical opportunities in organ transplants. As you know, the last year has seen Alberta have three heart transplants. I think that expansion of that and other organ transplants will be extremely beneficial to our medical profession and Alberta insofar as world technology and development.

Many people have talked about agriculture, and we in the urban communities do appreciate the agricultural industry. It creates many jobs within the municipality and the cities, with our food services and other avenues, including implement dealers, that are part of the agricultural scene. It's interesting to note that no other government in Canada can match the opportunities offered by the Alberta government as far as agriculture and the assistance and survival of our family farms are concerned. I think the government has to be congratulated for that continuing effort.

I indicated some minutes ago that Calgary McCall had some 29 schools. What I didn't mention is that we also have students in at least eight other schools in the city of Calgary, one of those being Greenvue. I think the class that was here some time earlier today that the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight introduced were students from my constituency attending a school in his. Education is very, very important. With the partnership we have with the Board of Education in Calgary, we've just had approval for the

development of a new high school, which will be the first one developed in Calgary for some years and only the second high school on the east side of the city. Certainly it is a welcome addition to our community and to the betterment of the education of our young people. We cannot forget our most important resource, which is our children.

As we all know, the Olympic Games are coming to Calgary in 1988. Again, I cannot stress too heavily that the development of sports for our youth is very important to not only our community at large but also the individual student or youth that may be involved. We cannot underestimate the importance of that activity.

Mr. Speaker, with the development of the many sporting and athletic venues within the region of Calgary and throughout the province, it is important that we continue to support our sports councils with dollars and experienced people that can professionally, if necessary, participate and train our youth. We have many people involved here. Many of our new Canadians have been involved with many programs overseas. They are experts, and we need to utilize them a little more and better for them to facilitate the youth of our communities.

It's possible that we could, through the programs, develop more sports-related programs to encourage these youths of all ages. I'm not just talking about hockey, soccer, football, and baseball. We've got other sports like rugby, cricket, lawn bowling, swimming, many Olympic and Commonwealth sports, both individual and team, and many other athletic events.

Mr. Speaker, there's been discussion at different times in the area of crime. When I was a member of the Calgary Police Commission, we discussed training programs. There was a suggestion that maybe a training centre should be developed in Alberta. Certainly a provincial police service may be eventually considered a little more so than it has been. It's quite an important issue. I know the RCMP in Alberta does a superb job, but there may be an avenue for the province to have a little more control over the policing activities within the province by offering their own provincial police service. Notwithstanding that, I wouldn't suggest that we take the police service of Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, and so on, off the map. I think they are very important to our community. In fact, as far as I'm concerned, the Calgary police service — I'm a little prejudiced here — is probably the best in Canada and maybe even North America.

Fines for offences in traffic need to be examined and many of them probably increased, especially where they're moving offences, and maybe we will slow down some of the carnage on our highways. Of course, the area of drunk driving should continue to be examined.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Calgary McCall continue to be very open and supportive of the initiatives that have been taken by the government. Certainly there's not always going to be 100 percent agreement. If that were the case, it would be a lot easier for the member.

In concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like to again thank the constituents of Calgary McCall for their continuing support and their continuing input into the activities of their member and the government. They have been very active over the years in offering me their questions and their suggestions to assist me in developing different initiatives for them. It's sad that I'm losing one part of that constituency. However, I'm sure that the constituency will be well represented by the new member that will be elected, and the members of the new constituency of Calgary

McCall can be assured that I will continue to support them in the manner that I have in the past, which hopefully has been very reasonable to them.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the members of the Legislature for their assistance and support over the year. It has been gratifying and certainly a very good learning experience. I feel I've made a lot of friends here, and I certainly appreciate it. I know that in coming up here, the first year or two was very difficult because it was a new environment. But that environment is starting to fit into its proper place, and I very much appreciate that and the help that's been given me.

Just one concluding remark. I know we're going to miss those members that may not return and specifically those that have indicated such. I'd like to say thank you for your assistance and your friendship. I wish each and every one of those people much success in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. leader of the Representative Party, would all those in favour please say aye?

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.
The motion is carried.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, as to business tomorrow, the Provincial Treasurer proposes to move the government motion relative to the appointment of the Auditor General, after which the Assembly would continue with the debate on the address in reply.

[At 9:37 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]