

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, March 11, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/03/11

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our province and our country.

Amen.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 3
Mental Health Act

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 3, the Mental Health Act.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to provide for a new legislative basis for the treatment and the protection of rights of persons suffering from mental illness.

[Leave granted; Bill 3 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Legislative Assembly copies of information released today with regard to the tabling of the new Mental Health Act, which, among other things, indicates as well cabinet approval today to name three hospitals in Calgary -- the General hospital, the Foothills Provincial General hospital, and the Holy Cross -- as designated centres for the treatment of involuntary psychiatric patients.

I'd also like to table with the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, a number of reports required by statute; first of all, the report of the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses for the year ended September 30, 1986; as well, the report of the College of Physical Therapists of Alberta for the year ended February 28, 1986; and finally, the Alberta Registered Dietitians Association report for the year ended April 30, 1986.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table reports required by statute, being the annual report of the Banff Centre, the University of Calgary, and Grande Prairie college.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table with this Assembly the annual report of the Alberta Department of Career Development and Employment for the year ended March 31, 1986, and while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to table the second annual report of the Wild Rose Foundation.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly

two reports -- A Guide to Business Opportunities in the Oil and Gas Industry in Northern Alberta and Crop Insurance in Northern Alberta -- prepared by the Northern Alberta Development Council.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce some 41 students -- at least I hope they're back there -- from Eastwood junior high school in the constituency of Edmonton Norwood. They're accompanied by three teachers: Kay Jauch, Sylvia Krogh, Russ Romaniuk. I had occasion to speak to the grade 8 class, and I'm surprised that they still wanted to come to the Legislature, because that was only a couple of weeks ago. They're seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them to stand and receive the traditional welcome of the House.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, eight members of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council who've served us so well as leaders of the ethnocultural community. They are seated in the members' gallery, and they are Dr. Lila Fahlman, Mr. Uwe Welz, Mrs. Fiona Pelech, Shirley Kwan, Linnea Lodge, Richard Awid, Farooq Siddiqui, and Richard Shelford. I'd ask just that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Private Health Care Insurance**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the minister of health and declining medicare. More than 25 years ago our party led the fight to bring in a comprehensive medical care scheme. It seems now the Alberta Conservatives are trying to dismantle our medicare scheme. There are five principles, Mr. Speaker in medicare: comprehensive coverage, accessibility, universality, portability, and public administration. Could the minister explain to the House why the government has decided to violate some of these principles by introducing private administration to medical insurance?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the Bill which I introduced yesterday suggests that we would remove section 17 of the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act, which is the prohibition that's been in the Act for some time against private insurance companies providing insurance coverage for medical services. I've done some more checking this morning, and I'm advised that almost all provinces in Canada have legislation similar to what I proposed to the House yesterday. Our sister provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan certainly are two that don't, in their health care insurance plan Acts, outlaw the provision of private insurance.

The situation that developed here is that as time went on we were being asked for more and more exemptions to that clause in the legislation which prohibits private insurance companies from providing medical insurance. The result was a lengthy list of regulations providing exemptions. I asked the staff in my department for what reason we were doing that, and after inquiring of other governments provincially and of the federal government, we learned that most provinces didn't have that restriction.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, will change with respect to the manner in which the Alberta health care insurance plan operates, as a result of the proposed change in legislation. To suggest that such a change is going to mean the end of medicare in Alberta is simply inaccurate in the extreme, and that won't happen.

MR. SPEAKER: Just a brief difficulty with the question, and I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition will take due note of it. We can't get into the details of the Bill because of the anticipation, but as long as it's framed in terms of urgency of the issue, please continue.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the minister says about other provinces, we have also checked and there is a difference here in what we're looking at. By the minister himself deciding which services are going to be covered under health care, we are in fact moving to a two-tiered system: one for the rich and one for the poor. My question is to the minister. Before he brought in this type of legislation, who did they consult? Who suggested that we bring in this type of legislation? Was it in fact a trade-off with the medical profession for their abolishing extra billing?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, there was no discussion whatever with the Alberta Medical Association with respect to this particular clause in the Alberta health care insurance plan. The initiative for making the changes came as a result of citizens in Alberta continually writing to my office wondering why they couldn't receive private insurance coverage for certain medical services that are not covered by the Alberta health care insurance plan.

Mr. Speaker, the members should be aware that the Alberta health care insurance plan covers more services than any other plan in Canada. They should also be aware that it's our firm commitment to ensure that that plan continue to cover all medically required services that our citizens need. So there is no need for anyone to be alarmed by the possibility of private-sector insurance companies providing coverage for medical services that are not now provided by the Alberta health care insurance plan. Absolutely nothing will change with respect to the medically required services that our citizens have come to expect under the Alberta health care insurance plan.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister says "medically required services." Could he explain to this Assembly who is going to determine what is a medically required service? Is it going to be the Conservative backbenchers that determine this, or who is going to determine it?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, there is a system that's been developed over the years between the federal government and the provinces, and it relates largely to the Canada Health Act, wherein we have determined that certain services are medically required. That list is not written in stone, and it's oftentimes subject to interpretation by the federal government. There's a number of services that are not medically required by the Canada Health Act. They are services provided by podiatrists, optometrists, physiotherapists, chiropractors. Some provinces insure none of those things; we insure all of them. Some insure at much lower levels than we do.

We provide a great number of services that are not now medically required. An example would be all of the sexual

sterilization services that are provided under the health care insurance schedule. The annual checkup has always been considered to be not medically required, but we've covered it here in Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I didn't get an answer to that question. I hear the minister talking about annual checkups as being one of the things he's considering. Would the minister be a little more specific and tell us what his definition of medically required services is so the people of Alberta understand this?

MR. M. MOORE: Medically required services are those, in terms of definition, that are medically required under the Canada Health Act. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we cover a lot of other services. Any time that we move toward deinsuring some services that are now covered, such as we did when the end of extra billing came about and the deinsuring of cosmetic surgery, I make it a practice to consult with the medical profession, which I'm doing now with respect to some other services that we cover, and I do make it a practice as well to consult with the Conservative caucus.

MR. TAYLOR: I hesitate, Mr. Speaker, to ask the minister a question for fear the whole question period will be gone, but could the minister tell the House whether or not he had met with the Medical Association before announcing the changes in the present plan?

MR. M. MOORE: Sorry; I didn't catch the last part of the question. Before and after what?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat then. Could he tell the House whether or not he met with the Medical Association, or representatives of it, in the last month before he announced his plan?

MR. M. MOORE: I'm not sure what plan the hon. member is referring to.

MR. TAYLOR: Announced your plan of action then. Okay.

MR. M. MOORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I met a week ago last Friday with the A M A and had a three-and-a-half-hour meeting, as a matter of fact, with the Alberta Medical Association to discuss a number of ways in which we would try to control the escalating costs in the Alberta health care insurance plan, including their suggested list of items that might be deinsured. No decisions came out of that meeting yet, but they eventually will. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: No debate, hon. member. Thank you.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether he or his department will be putting in place any kind of a formal review mechanism for the Alberta health care insurance program to determine nonmedically required services versus medically required services? Was that review going to be put in place through some formal mechanism, or is it going to be done through the minister's own judgment?

MR. M. MOORE: That review is presently going on, and it in-

volves my office largely asking for advice from staff of my department; the chief medical advisor in our department; from the Alberta Medical Association, who have done a very extensive canvassing of their members throughout the province; from the College of Physicians and Surgeons; and from the other professional groups who provide medical services in the province, such as podiatrists, physiotherapists, dentists, and so on. So I think that's about as thorough as you can get. I review all of the recommendations that come from those groups and bring the matter forward to cabinet and caucus committees for discussion and finally would bring it forward to this House as a decision.

Hospital Funding

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the second question back to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. It's continuing with the government's seemingly all-out attack on health care. I'd point out to the minister that hospitals in Edmonton have already been forced by this provincial government to close 286 beds. I do not remember the government campaigning in the last provincial election, saying, "Elect us and we'll close your hospital beds." My question to the minister is: why didn't the government have the political courage to say that they were going to close hospital beds and tell us about their hidden agenda, that they were going to punish ordinary Albertans, during the election? Surely they should have done it then.

MR. M. MOORE: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is totally incorrect in suggesting that hospitals have been forced to close 200 and some odd beds. As a matter of fact, no beds at this point in time have been closed. [interjections] Well, just a minute now. We're talking about moves that hospital boards have been discussing to meet their budget requirements for next year. We're talking about a 3 percent decrease in the funding that's provided to hospitals in Alberta, which, even with the 3 percent decrease, is the most generous funding for hospitals of any province in Canada. There is nowhere in Canada that begins to match the per capita dollars that are put into the hospital system that we presently do.

Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows full well that hospital boards have a responsibility to try to meet that budget target. I haven't advocated they close beds. If they can close beds in some cases and still provide a level of medical care that's adequate for our citizens, then that's something that's their business. Surely the hon. member isn't suggesting that they ought to keep every bed open if they can find better ways to do it. The Foothills hospital in Calgary has said that they believe that by . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Order please. [interjection] Order on the member as well. Thank you. Second question, please.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question to the minister. He's such a whiz with figures. This government has done such a good job of managing their money. How would he suggest that hospital boards, with the cutbacks, do it without closing beds? Will he send that message out and tell them how to do it?

MR. M. MOORE: There's a good number of ways that hospital boards can reduce expenditures without closing beds. One of the ways that I was just beginning to describe at the end of the

last answer I gave is to ensure that there are not hospital beds lying there empty throughout the weekend and for two and three days prior to surgery procedures and that sort of thing. The chief of surgery at the Foothills hospital in Calgary has told all of the surgeons in that hospital that they will no longer be allowed to bring people in one, two, and three days before surgery is scheduled; they must bring them in the morning that it's scheduled. They must release them at 11 o'clock in the morning so a bed can be made ready for some other person that same afternoon. There's a great variety of efficiencies in hospitals in this province that can be obtained if the will is there to do it, and they don't always entail closing beds.

I'd be happy, Mr. Speaker, to take the hon. Leader of the Opposition through a whole series of moves that hospitals, I think, can make to reduce budgets without closing beds. The whole area of testing, of lab procedures, is one that in most hospitals is not well controlled, and there is lots of times duplication of tests and procedures from a general practitioner to a specialist. That's an area where a level of control can bring about a 3 percent saving very, very easily. I could go on, but I'm sure the question period isn't the time for it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can the minister stand in this House and unequivocally say that there will be no lives of Albertans in jeopardy because of these government cutbacks? That's what the people of Alberta want to know.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I can say this. We've got 5.5 beds per 1,000 population in Alberta. In British Columbia and Ontario they have just over four with a target of four. We have more per capita dollars in the hospital system than any province in Canada. What I can say is that there's a challenge not only to my office and the department that works for me but to the medical community throughout this province: doctors, nurses, and hospital workers. There's a challenge for all of us with the funds we have, which are more than anybody else in the world has, to provide a level of medical care that's second to none. No one can guarantee that someone isn't going to die. No one can guarantee that if someone hadn't been in the hospital five minutes sooner, by ambulance or whatever, they would have lived. That guarantee can't be given by me or any person on earth, but what we can do is strive to make a very good medical care system with the dollars that we've got, which are far above what most people have. [applause]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the government is pounding their desks over something like that. The minister has just admitted that there is possibility for chaos because of those cutbacks. That's what he has admitted. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, please. Hon. members.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, my question is: what follow-up is the minister doing? It's their cutbacks that are causing bed closures in this city, the city of Calgary, some 230. What follow-ups is the minister doing to make sure that Albertans aren't held in jeopardy? Rather than just saying it could happen, what's his department doing to make sure it isn't happening?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, that's an excellent question. Certainly we'll be monitoring the situation with regard to the

waiting times for surgery, both that kind of surgery that people can wait a few months for and the more urgent problems that people have. We'll be monitoring that. We'll be trying in every way we can to help hospitals ensure that the most medically required services are provided in their institutions. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition has any suggestions as to how we can better improve the system and at the same time meet some reasonable budgetary targets — it's easy to sit on the opposition side, Mr. Speaker, and have no responsibility whatever for financial matters and simply say, "Pour more money into the well." The challenge, as I've said . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. First supplementary, Member for Little Bow.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The minister has indicated that there's a possibility of restricting the number of doctors, especially in urban centres. Could the minister indicate whether there has been any follow-through with regard to that earlier thrust or whether that idea has been dropped at this time?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the idea has not been dropped. It's a very difficult problem that we are faced with. In Alberta alone over the last five years we have been admitting about 90 foreign-trained physicians into the province, and we're looking at somewhere around 130 or 140 Canadian- and Alberta-trained physicians coming into our system. I think it's always valuable to have some foreign-trained physicians coming into the system because they bring with them oftentimes a good degree of expertise and skills that are needed, but the numbers are higher than they need to be. I believe we need to find ways to put more of our own Canadian-trained medical professionals into the areas of the province where they are required. If we can find a way to do that, we can probably for a number of years yet accommodate the number of physicians who are being educated and trained in Canada.

The other side of the coin is that our present medical schools in this country are capable of graduating more people than our population needs, and that's been well documented in recent years. So the hon. Minister of Advanced Education, myself, and others across this country are going to have to deal with the difficult problem of how many people enter the field of medicine. We're going to have to do that pretty soon because it takes about eight or 10 years for them to graduate and be able to serve the public. I don't think we want to have people going into the field of medicine now and then telling them eight years from now that we don't have a place for them. So there is a challenge there.

In addition to that, I think we have to look at the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. There is a difficulty. It might take us eight or nine years to get through this question period. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, supplementary.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's like stopping a flood isn't it?

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

MR. TAYLOR: Just to the minister and to use his own words: who on earth is co-ordinating these cuts to ensure that the least

possible damage is done and to ensure that there is a co-ordination of service delivery amongst the institutions and regions in this province?

MR. M. MOORE: The reduction in budgets of hospitals that is resulting in the cut of some services and some bed reductions takes the form of the responsible hospital board reviewing the matter at some length, and sometimes they take away . . . [interjection] Wait till I'm finished. Sometimes they take several weeks in order to come to a decision after having got information from all of their departments. Then the hospital board forwards to the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care their proposals for budgetary guidelines for the next year, which may include bed closures for all or part of the year or program closures or whatever. Those are then reviewed by the staff of my department and forwarded to me for approval if they involve bed closures, because under the Hospitals Act a hospital requires approval of the minister of hospitals before they can actually close beds. That doesn't apply to cuts in programs, but on the other hand we've told hospitals that if they have complete program cuts and push the load onto another hospital, then we would have to look at cutting their budget as well. So they've all been extremely co-operative in providing information to my staff about what they plan.

The short answer to your question is that if we see an area where three major hospitals in the city of Calgary . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. minister. The Chair is having great difficulty with members who persist in interruptions. That therefore . . .

MR. TAYLOR: After seven minutes?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member. Therefore, that encourages ministers to respond to the repartee that is thrown in, and therefore to some degree both sides are adding to the difficulty here. I see here that I've got another nine people that would really like to get into question period sometime this week. So the Chair now recognizes the leader of the Liberal Party.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I'm not trying to defend the minister because the minister can well look after himself. But I think the question is very serious. The Leader of the Opposition asked the question, and I think the minister is entitled to answer the question fully. What I would like to get is information when the minister has information available.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. We will return to the point of order at the end of question period. Thank you. Leader of the Liberal Party, please.

Education Funding

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the Minister of Education. On Monday of this week the Minister of Education was asked whether or not she knew the effects her 3 percent cuts would have on special education. At that time she passed the buck on to the school boards to ensure that the quality of education of the province was maintained. Now, is the minister aware of a clause in the contract between the Calgary board of education and its teachers that guarantees a specific teacher/pupil ratio?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Yes, I am aware of it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Isn't this welcome, eh? I hope the minister of hospitals is taking lessons.

Is the minister aware that because of these contractual obligations the Calgary board has had to shift a very disproportionate share of the burden imposed by her 3 percent cutbacks to services for special needs children? That amounts to the loss of student services department head and four specialists, 17 classrooms for the learning disabled, nine speech therapists, nine psychologists, all psychological interns, the entire home confined program, three occupational therapists, and 85 resource teachers.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that the leader of the Liberal Party is following the important debate that is taking place in Calgary and all across this province as school boards deal with the difficult financial position before them. However, I think it's important to note here that in fact the grants for special education from the province to all school boards in this province remain at a constant level next year over this year and, as well, that the effect of those grants will not take effect in terms of reduction until September 1. It is a planning period. It is a decision which boards are going to have to make within their own responsibility, and it is a very important part of the way education operates in this province as a partnership between the province and the school boards.

MR. TAYLOR: To the minister. Does the minister realize that despite the good intentions she had in maintaining the levels of special education funding, boards have been forced -- forced -- to respond to her cuts in a way that discriminates against those students that need special attention? [interjection]

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition would like to give me a little more detail. The decisions boards are making will be decisions which are difficult to make but which they have to make. If he is suggesting that I tell them how to make those suggestions, I simply don't support that. As I have indicated, if he wishes to put a motion on the Order Paper in this Assembly suggesting that we ban school boards in this province, I would welcome that motion from him and the debate in detail.

MR. TAYLOR: I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, she would welcome the abolishment of school boards. But does the minister find it necessary to shuffle responsibility to the boards of education because she herself does not support these cuts and does not want to answer for orders that have been passed to her from the rest of her cabinet colleagues? Are you bailing them out? Do you really know what you're doing?

MR. SPEAKER: That's three questions.

MR. TAYLOR: That's right. She can answer any one of the three.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I fully support the very important effort which this government is dealing with, and that is a major reduction in our revenue. We have the highest quality services in this province and that includes education. We spend more dollars per capita in this province on services to people than any other province in Canada. I fully support this govern-

ment's program. I am working with school boards; I will continue to work with school boards. To suggest that I am suggesting that we abolish school boards in this province is a complete misrepresentation of what I am saying.

Economic Development Grants

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. Upon review of *Hansard* I note that the minister did not directly answer the question I raised with him the other day in terms of Oerlikon development and the loss of that development in Calgary because of ineligibility for IRDF grants from the federal government, from the department of regional economic development. Could the minister indicate at this time whether he was aware of the loss of that development because of the loss of federal grants, and if so, what action did the minister take at that time?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my response last week, I was very careful to indicate that I wasn't speaking to location in Calgary or Edmonton or any other part of Alberta. The Oerlikon contract is a contract and a decision made for a whole variety of reasons. It is a challenge to Albertans that we are not, for various reasons, as eligible under the rules as laid down by the federal government for certain subsidies as some other areas. But I think in this case it would be very difficult to sustain an allegation that the Oerlikon development did not go to Calgary because those grants were not available to Calgary. I don't know how anyone could substantiate that suggestion.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the minister. During the 1986 election campaign there was indication that a \$375 million magnesium plant was going to go ahead in High River. That hasn't materialized. Could the minister indicate whether that was because of the lack of federal grants in the province of Alberta, and if so, has the minister made any representation to the federal government on that matter?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to that particular issue, but my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade I'm sure can.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, at no time was there a request for federal assistance for the magnesium plant proposed for High River. There has been no request conveyed either by the principals of the company or by the provincial government to the federal government for assistance.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister of economic development as well. In terms of the polar icebreaker design contract that potentially could come into Calgary, could the minister indicate in that circumstance whether federal grants affect the future of that contract locating in Alberta?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I have no information one way or the other on that particular development, and I would attempt to obtain the information and provide it to the hon. member.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, to comment briefly. I don't pretend to be fully versed on that particular development, but I have done some study of it. It would appear that the location of the work is determined more by a choice of design than by any

other factor, and certainly that is the overriding consideration relative to any possible subsidies.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, does the government have any plan to implement any grant or similar programs of its own in the province in self-defence against the federal government policies favouring central Canada and in response to policies of Quebec and many other provincial governments which subsidize industries and draw them away from Alberta?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it has not been our practice to get into the business of subsidizing certain areas on the basis of geography. As the hon. member well knows, for northern Alberta we've given it a special focus with the Northern Alberta Development Council, and on a sector-by-sector basis we've put in a whole variety of infrastructure. I expect one day soon to be able to make as long a speech as time limits under the rules will permit to describe some of that for the hon. member, but I don't think I should undertake to start it today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Lloydminster.

Oil and Gas Industry

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of Energy. The end of this month marks three years since the announcement of the construction of the Husky upgrader in Lloydminster. At that time, Husky projected its pre-engineering studies would be complete and a decision would be made to dismantle its engineering group or go ahead with the project. Will the minister inform the Legislature if discussions are taking place at this time?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is accurate in stating that the pre-engineering studies were to be completed by the end of March of this year, and Husky officials have a meeting with officials from our department and officials from the department of energy in Saskatchewan and also with the federal government to discuss ways in which we can see the project go ahead. We have not received to date a final proposal from Husky. We're expecting one any day. I personally met with the president of Husky and the president of Nova to discuss a proposal in general, and we'll be having further discussions with them after I receive their proposal, which I said I would be expecting in a few days.

MR. CHERRY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister inform us what the costs might be, whether they would be scaled down, whether any discussions have been going on in that manner?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, we haven't got any of the figures that relate to the proposal. As I indicated, our officials have discussed a number of options. We read in the newspapers what has been said in certain speeches about the scaling down of the project, but I have not received from Husky any scaled down version of that project to date. We'll have to wait until I get the proposal from them so we can see the details. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: No supplementary allowed to a government member on a government question, hon. member; sorry. Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The question with respect to the Husky Oil upgrader reflects the focus of the government recently in their statements on megaprojects. The question is whether the government has any plans to assist and advance the interests of the conventional oil industry on which this province is so fundamentally dependent, or is it going to allow the conventional industry to become a backwater to the megaprojects?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo concerned about the conventional oil industry in this province, as we are. In fact I could take some time, if you would like, to spell out the different steps that we have taken in the past year in terms of incentives to the industry, with royalty reductions, royalty holidays, all for the conventional oil and gas industry in this province. And we have been lobbying the federal government and expecting the federal government to come through to do something on their part to address the needs of the conventional oil and gas industry, particularly the smaller companies in this province.

On the nonconventional side, it's important that we address how we are going to have different projects come on stream in the future if we are at all concerned about future security of supply in this country, because the conventional production in this country is declining rapidly to the point where, by 1990, three in five Canadians are going to be dependent upon foreign, imported crude unless we have projects come on stream. We are going to review with the industry all proposals that come forth to see that we can have these projects come on stream sooner rather than later.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should remember that we had a specific meeting with the federal minister to deal with security of supply, where we addressed both the conventional side and the nonconventional side. Over the upcoming months we are reviewing options as to how we can have these projects come on stream, with recommendations to be made to the ministers of energy across this country by July 1 of this year.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Energy. Could the minister indicate what effect the proposed plant is having on the heavy oil production from Bonnyville down in through Elk Point? Are they able to sell the product from that field, and will they be able to increase their product if the upgrader does not come on stream?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, with respect to selling products, we don't have any restrictions on the sale of the heavy oil through the pipeline system, even though we'd have the prorating system in place on the light and medium crude. One of the difficulties seen in the future with respect to moving heavy oil through the pipeline is the supply of diluent in this province. If in the early 1990s we run short of diluent, then we will have problems in moving the heavy oil through the system. That's why it is so important, in my view, that we get in place upgrading facilities in this province to help convert that heavy crude into lighter crude to be able to move it through the system.

MR. PASHAK: Supplemental, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Energy. What steps is this government taking to ensure that their federal counterparts will establish a price sufficient for oil that will make the Husky upgrader economically viable?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is presuming that part of the proposal would be that a certain

price be guaranteed Husky before they proceed to develop that project, and that may be part of the proposals. However, it would be a marked departure from the philosophy of letting market forces determine what the price of oil is going to be. However, having said that, I think that in terms of wanting to see these projects go ahead and address the question of security of supply, we have to look at all options, including the option that has been publicly put forth by Mr. Price of Husky. In that regard, I am sure it will be one of the options that will be considered by the officials when reviewing options over the upcoming three months, now two months, taking that into account with respect to the recommendations that will be made to us.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Centre.

Private Health Care Insurance
(continued)

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many Albertans are indeed alarmed by the increased attacks on our health care system and our medical coverage. I'm told 84 percent of those polls are opposed to this minister cutting services in the hospital sector, and now with Bill 14 we have the possibility, for the first time in the province, of having private insurers actually competing with Alberta health care insurance plan.

Is the minister in receipt of any advice or information which convinces him that it would not be possible for all the physicians of a particular town, say Valleyview for instance, to entirely opt out of Alberta health care insurance, shift to a private insurer, and force the residents to either pay the full cost of their health care or secure private insurance coverage?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the only reasonable way in which one can consider what might happen under these circumstances is look to other jurisdictions. In other provinces which for a number of years have had no prohibition against private insurance, such a suggestion as the hon. member makes has not happened.

On this issue, Mr. Speaker, a little earlier I said to the Leader of the Opposition that I had not had discussions with the Alberta Medical Association. While I did not have, a senior policy advisor to my office, Susan Green, did have some discussions with the AMA just this morning, and since the question period started, I received a letter from the president of the Alberta Medical Association, Dr. Richard Kennedy. I'd just quote the closing sentence in it:

In closing, let me congratulate you on introducing legislation which will enable private carriers to provide insurance for uninsured health care services. You are being most progressive, unlike some other provincial governments (e.g. Manitoba) which are considering deinsuring health care without the protection of private insurance.

I thought that might be useful.

REV. ROBERTS: I wish the minister would get to answering my question, Mr. Speaker. It is in fact about doctors. As we know, in the province of Alberta we have a number of doctors who would love private insurance and have already established private clinics, like Gimbel in Calgary with ophthalmology.

Is the minister in receipt of any advice or information which would convince him that it would not be possible for all the specialists -- the AMA, whose letter he has just so kindly read -- of

a certain specialty in medicine, for instance ophthalmology, to entirely opt out of the plan, have a separate private carrier who Albertans would have to go to, for instance, to get their cataract surgery?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I said in answer to the last question. The experience in other provinces, other jurisdictions who have exactly the same kind of legislation we're proposing here, indicates that that hasn't been in any way a problem. I should also say to the hon. member that he should be aware of the oath that medical professionals take when they're training and go into practice that requires them to provide services. I think the doctors of this province will continue to honour that oath as they go about their practice. I've seen no evidence whatever on behalf of any member of the Alberta Medical Association that they're about to withdraw their services.

REV. ROBERTS: I'm glad the minister has raised the point of other provinces. Has the minister commissioned anyone to monitor or to determine the amount of money that would be sucked out of the pockets of sick Albertans into the profits of private insurers in Ontario and the United States?

MR. M. MOORE: I'm not sure what the hon. member meant by his question. What we're doing here with the particular Bill that was tabled yesterday is simply saying that if private insurers want to provide medical insurance coverage for items that aren't covered by the Alberta health care insurance plan, that's their right to do so. If citizens want to buy that insurance, that's their right to do so. Most of the protest with respect to our existing legislation came to me from citizens who were anxious to buy insurance and couldn't. Does the hon. member suggest there's something wrong with that? I don't know.

REV. ROBERTS: I'm wondering whether the minister has in fact considered the possibility that patients and consumers might want to have a say in what's medically required as well as doctors and you, and whether or not he's going to be able to have a public hearing into what is necessarily defined as medically required, such as abortion for instance.

MR. M. MOORE: We've always taken the approach in this province that we would provide a very adequate package of medical services under the Alberta health care insurance plan. As I said earlier, it's superior to any province in Canada, and it will continue to be that way. If the hon. member has some suggestions to make as to what can be added to the health care insurance plan or what should be taken away, I would be happy to receive them. But I know of no way other than asking citizens and the AMA and others in the health care system what their views are, and that's what we've been doing.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister stated that other provinces have had no difficulty with opting out. Is the minister not aware that in fact in Regina approximately a year, a year and a half ago each and every anesthesiologist did in fact opt out, requiring the provincial government to intervene in order to ensure adequate medical care in that city?

MR. M. MOORE: My understanding of that particular matter is

that the hon. member's recollection is not quite right. They served notice that they were going to opt out but in fact never did.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we complete the complete set of questions with regard to this issue?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent of the House? Any opposed? Member for Calgary North West.

DR. CASSIN: Mr. Speaker, to the minister of hospitals and health care. Since it's been understood that in any socialized medical system the problem eventually is a problem of access to the system because of limitation of funds, will the people of Alberta have the option to obtain insurance for those procedures that they have to wait undue periods of time in this country as opposed to going to the United States or to Great Britain or to somewhere else to obtain those funds and to take those moneys and those services out of this country?

MR. SPEAKER: The minister has the drift of the question?

MR. M. MOORE: I don't believe that we would have any private insurance companies that would cover with insurance procedures that are covered now by the Alberta health care insurance plan if those procedures were asked for outside of our country, except in cases as they do now where individuals are traveling outside of Alberta and need emergency services. Most insurance plans for travel insurance don't cover people who have known heart conditions or something of that nature and actually go out of the province for treatment. I can't envision that insurance companies would move in that direction.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Point of order, Member for Clover Bar, who has a point made earlier.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, as I said, no one has to worry about defending the minister; he can defend himself. But it's been the practice in this House to legitimately seek information. Now, sometimes we on this side don't like the information we receive, but that's part of the opening you leave when you ask a question. So I would just like to say to the rookie members of the House on this side that when you do ask a question, you may get more than you bargained for and it may be a little bit longer. But I just wish to say that when we're asking a question, we're legitimately asking for information, and when the information is provided, I guess we have to accept it, even if it may be a little bit lengthier than sometimes we think it should be.

MR. SPEAKER: To the point of order, Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member might take into consideration both the length of the responses and whether or not the response is actually a response.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. I know the hon. member means well and is worried about the rookie mem-

bers, but I think his experience has come from a House where there was only one or two opposition, and they enjoyed the boredom of listening to a cabinet minister. We have a lot of people who want to ask questions. We want to put this government on the griddle. They have a lot to answer for, and to let them wander all over the place is not giving information.

MR. SPEAKER: The minister of technology, et cetera.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it's the et cetera I'd like to speak to at the moment. On the question of the point of order, I would like to draw to all members' attention your good advice to us early in the session when you outlined and, as a matter of fact, provided a printed copy to all members of the purposes of the question period and the manner in which it ought to be conducted, and perhaps if the preambles to some of the questions could be somewhat more restrained, the answers may also be somewhat more restrained.

MR. M. MOORE: The difficulty I had with some of the questions this afternoon, particularly the one from the leader of the Liberal Party, was that when the question is framed in such a way as "What are you doing about the health care system?" it takes quite a while to answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Now first off, the Chair wishes to appreciate the comments from all sides of the House, and in fact the point of order is indeed not a point of order but a point of useful information and dialogue for the House to listen to again from all corners of the House. The difficulty, of course, that is developing is that while the Chair has been willing to recognize a fair degree of latitude in the early days of this session, the time really is coming for us to tighten up a touch, to say the least.

Another part of the difficulty arises when we have questions -- and we had good examples of this today -- where a supplementary question is not only one but two, three parts. It really is an invitation to a minister to then have to respond to all three parts because a minister is not really able to identify which one of your multiple choice questions is highest on your priority list. I think all members really are sympathetic no matter what part of the House you're in, whether you're government, middle, and backbenchers, as well as members of opposition parties. It's difficult enough to ask the question in this form. All of us have gone through that kind of angst, that matter of anxiety.

The next part of it is that indeed it does take longer to answer a question than it does to ask a question most of the time. I'm sure that all members', having listened carefully to this purported point of order, will take things into consideration, especially as the Chair has counseled at least two cabinet ministers with regard to the fact that it's easier to address the Chair rather than to be seen visually speaking back and forth to other members in the House, because then one gets into a dialogue-and-debate situation, which has indeed been developing in the course of this week. The minister is really charged to answer the question that was originally put to the minister rather than going into the dialogue back and forth with subsequent catcalls or good information being offered to the minister from all parts of the House. We look forward with great expectations to the next few days.

The Chair would also like to point out, however, that today six hon. members were left waiting in the wings hoping to get recognized so that they could also represent their constituents in this House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: First, might we revert briefly to the introduction of special guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members. Minister of Agriculture.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. ELZINGA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity in reverting back. I take great pleasure in introducing to you and through you a member of our county council in the county of Strathcona and a member of the public school board, Mrs. Iris Evans. I would ask her to rise in the members' gallery and receive the warm welcome of the House.

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

Moved by Mr. Alger:

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.

Amendment moved by Mr. Martin:

By adding at the end of it:

"but regrets the absence of any programs aimed at achieving a significant reduction in the unacceptably high number of Albertans currently unemployed."

[Adjourned debate March 9: Mr. Younie]

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a certain amount of pleasure that I heard that last introduction and find that my -- in some respects -- former boss is here to hear me address the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

To some extent it's with a sense of déjà vu that I start to address the question of the throne speech and where it lacked. That is because as a rookie on the job last session I rose to speak about a throne speech and, bringing my educator's generosity, I was somewhat understanding that there weren't the kinds of things in there I'd like to see. I'd hoped that next time around the government would present us with a better throne speech with more constructive policies and more hope for the people of Alberta. The motion brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition indicates that in fact this one is perhaps if anything more lacking and the last session was less educational for the government in terms of drawing up a throne speech to help Albertans.

I ended last day by echoing words of the Premier of the province about faith in the strength of Albertans and how

much I share faith in their strength and how much I look forward to what they might do. It is a lack of confidence in the strength of the government in doing something about job creation that I think I also share with the people of Alberta. They do feel a sense of despair, that the government lacks the will, lacks the strength, lacks the concern to actually do something about the plight of the unemployed because they have so little in common with the unemployed. Their friends are those who run corporations and who are wealthy, and they don't have enough in common with those who are unemployed to really understand their problems. It's a "let them eat cake" attitude that really causes despair amongst the unemployed.

We heard one minister go on at some length about small business creating jobs and about the wonders of entrepreneurship. I have to agree that entrepreneurship is important in making business work, and I thought perhaps important enough that I would define the word as I understand it. An entrepreneur is someone whose goal is to come between a person who has money and his money by some means, through a business. In other words, his purpose is to make sure that the money goes from the consumer who has it to the businessman who wants it.

The role of government, it would seem to me, if it wants to create jobs or motivate entrepreneurs to create jobs, is to take money from those who have it, give it to those who would spend it, let entrepreneurs come into the field and create businesses to take it away from them again. What we have here is a government whose idea of job creation is to give money to people who already have lots of money and say "go create jobs," thereby taking away their sole motivation to create the jobs, which is to make the money. If you give money to a giant corporation, you've removed his main motivation. So I think we have a government that's going about it all backwards in terms of trying to create jobs.

I look at some of the problems I've run into in my constituency; specifically, a person who had gone to the government to try to get an electric wheelchair after having had three heart attacks and multiple sclerosis and finding himself imprisoned in his house. I wonder how the government can say to him, and in fact two people like him per month, that we would rather put Joe Dutton up in an \$8,000 apartment than provide this and let the money go out of the province instead of staying in the province. I would ask the government to look at its conscience and see how much it cares for those people.

I would ask how many teachers in the province have to be laid off to make up for Bow Valley Resource Services' guaranteed rate of return for running the Swan Hills waste plant. I would suggest an awful lot of teachers will have to be laid off for the money that will go from the taxpayers to that private corporation, and that will mean a lot of jobs. So I would say in fact that that's counterproductive to creating jobs in the province.

We have had no doubt and there's been no disagreement in this Chamber that job creation is or should be one of our most important goals, yet we've heard cabinet ministers saying, "It's not our job to do that; the private sector should." I would say if the private sector should do it, that person should go to the private sector rather than this Chamber and try to do something about it. I believe government can do something about it and would therefore say this is a good place to be to help. Government members who don't agree with that should resign their positions and try to achieve the job elsewhere.

If there has been any single policy of this government that

has shown its lack of commitment to creating jobs and shown its willingness, in fact, to do just the opposite, it's the guiding and outfitting policy as proposed by the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. That policy alone will put -- depending on whose figures you believe and which one of his bureaucrats you deem accurate -- between a thousand and 1,500 guides out of work, and I wonder where are they going to go to find jobs. What is the government going to do for them to give them jobs? Should they come to Edmonton and join the ranks of unemployed? Should they go on welfare? What does the minister promise them?

I think it's important to look at that policy because it does illustrate how little there is in the throne speech and how regrettably lacking the throne speech is in active policies. That policy will literally create a series of monopolies across the province for a small number of guides and outfitters, and those monopolies can then be sold. Now if you allow those monopolies to be created -- and this is a government that has said, several ministers have said just in the last couple of days how wonderful free enterprise and competition is -- this minister is in fact actively removing competition of any form from the guiding and outfitting industry.

DR. WEST: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking.

DR. WEST: A point of order. The hon. member is off base on this issue, and this is going to be discussed later on in some legislation that's coming forward into this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, and to the Member for Edmonton Glengarry, the Chair is having a bit of difficulty. The three examples used so far really seem to reflect more a discussion that might better have been developed with respect to the subamendment which was dealt with by the House. The Chair has been checking the *Hansard* of Monday and therefore really believes that the member is now about to deal more in terms of the amendment as moved by the Leader of the Opposition, which reads:

but regrets the absence of any programs aimed at achieving a significant reduction in the unacceptably high number of Albertans currently unemployed.

The Chair realizes the subtle nuance here, but one needs to at least draw back from time to time, make reference to the amendment.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. I felt I was speaking to the amendment in that I was expressing my regret at what was and was not in the throne speech and that I felt very badly in fact that the government's plans for the future do not include redressing -- after months of public protest, after months of public outcry and debate, there was nothing in the throne speech on behalf of the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife that would give the majority of guides and outfitters in this province any hope. They were looking to some sign that the minister might in fact show that he was not going to follow that policy, and there was nothing there. I think it fair and legitimate to review the policy and what economic effect it will have on these people and what it will do to their livelihoods and ask very legitimately why it was not in the throne speech, why there was no reference to that whole issue. I think it's . . .

MR. YOUNG: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The amendment as moved by the Leader of the Opposition is:

but regrets the absence of any programs aimed at achieving a significant reduction in the unacceptably high number of Albertans currently unemployed.

That is precisely what the debate should be addressing now, and that is, with respect, precisely what the hon. member is not addressing.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the honourable, et cetera, minister, the debate -- everything has to do with job creation. If a lot of the people the hon. member's talking about are unemployed . . . That adds to the unacceptably high unemployment rate. Traditionally on amendments to the throne speech it is broad, as long as they're following the general area of dealing with unemployment, which I've heard the member talk about. Clearly, it's in order, Mr. Speaker, because it allows -- if you look in *Beauchesne* dealing with the Speech from the Throne, it allows a very broad interpretation of that. That's why you have that sort of amendment.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, if I may. Section 350 of *Beauchesne* is quite specific, and it cautions members in the manner in which amendments should be phrased. Again, with respect to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, a general speech is fine if it's on the Address in Reply. We're not now dealing with the Address in Reply, we're now dealing with an amendment to the Address in Reply, and that's being phrased in a very specific manner.

MR. MARTIN: Well, supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If we're dealing with the general topic of unemployment and if people are going to be unemployed because of the government's policies and what they're doing, surely that's adding to the intolerably high unemployment rate. It's that simple. And so it's many areas that we can go into in an amendment like this that deals with unemployment. It's that simple.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry. The hon. member who's affected most by the point of order, to the point of order.

MR. YOUNIE: Yes, thank you very much. I think it's important to point out as well that it has been stated publicly many times by the minister that this policy will not create unemployment. So I think that before I can get to the point of asking or looking at the lack in the throne speech of something to redress that problem, I must establish and prove that the policy will cause that unemployment and then I can go on from that point. And I think the minister would be the first one to criticize if I just blandly stated that his policy is going to cost 1,500 guides their jobs, is going to create great economic problems . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Let's not get into the debate, please. This is to the point of order. You're on the point of order now. Thank you. [interjection] The member was not dealing with the point of order at that instance, hon. member. Thank you.

Now, the Chair has pointed out and will also underline for the benefit of all people who are in the galleries as well as people on the floor that indeed, the member -- and the Leader of the Opposition is indeed correct that when we are dealing with the reply to Her Honour's Speech from the Throne, indeed it is

wide-ranging debate. That will indeed happen, and this particular member will indeed have the full 30 minutes to discuss whatever issue he cares to discuss during that time when the House makes a resolution as to whether the amendment carries or not. So this in no way is an infringement upon the member's speaking time to deal in the throne speech debate over whatever range of topics the member cares to discuss.

The difficulty the Chair has is that on Monday we had an amendment and then we moved to a subamendment. The subamendment, if the House was still discussing that subamendment, would indeed relate to the three examples as given already to the Chamber by the Member for Edmonton Glengarry. And the Chair has only cautioned the member to rephrase and to take into account the difficulty that the Chair has, that now all members also have the same difficulty, to deal with the amendment as stated. If the amendment is dealt with this afternoon, then indeed the Chair is only too willing to recognize the member again to go over the whole gamut of issues and in particular this issue, as the member is outlining in such a detailed fashion. But the Chair is going to once again request that the member carefully look at what the amendment says, and let's deal with that, please.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will endeavour to relate my remarks to that theme, and that is the absence of programs. I will take it then that until some later point in debate, the minister will accept my contention that his policy as proposed and publicly discussed will in fact cause some drastic dislocation and economic hardship and put people out of work. I would then look at areas where his department could have in the throne speech outlined job creation programs that would have been legitimate within it.

Specifically here I would look at logging in the southeastern portion of the province, logging which went on above the 6,500 foot level and which raised the ire of a number of people, which will cost jobs in the field of tourism, and yet there was no announcement of reforestation. As I understand it, stumpage fees in the province include an extra charge, if companies so wish, that will exempt them from a duty to reforest and will instead pass that duty to the department of forestry. And in fact, in the area of Hidden Creek, where a centuries-old and very irreplaceable and very attractive forest for tourists is being destroyed and therefore in the long term where jobs related to tourism are being lost, there is no announcement from the minister on reforestation programs in that area. There are areas right adjacent to it that I've been told were logged off a decade ago. Because of the altitude they have not begun to naturally reforest. Certainly, no sign that the department is going to reforest them. I'm wondering how many jobs could have been created in the short term by going ahead with some of those reforestation projects, by reforesting some of them, and how many long-term jobs could be created in tourism.

I wonder sometimes where the consultation is going on between departments when the actions of one department in fact seem to be frustrating the thrust of programs from another department -- in this case, the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife doing things that will seriously hamper the activities of the Tourism department in trying to attract tourists and the public statement that the area of Hidden Creek would be as attractive to tourists with slash piles as it is presently with 300- to 500-year-old trees. I'm incredulous that anyone can make that statement. I enjoy hiking; I'm an outdoorsman. I do not like climbing over slash piles. I would much rather go to a forest

that hasn't been cut down recently, so I think that was very, very bad planning on the government's part.

I wonder how the minister can okay, for instance, a marina to be built on the shores of Lac La Biche in a very poorly chosen area, and then I hear publicly that in fact the Minister of the Environment told the forestry officials that their job wasn't to stop the project but merely to minimize the damage. And that was quoted in the paper.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it a point of order or is it a question of the member?

MR. KOWALSKI: No. The Member for Edmonton Glengarry has just lied to the House, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Then a very serious matter of privilege, a point of privilege. Would the "ohs" quickly state the issue?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the privilege of Blues in front of me, but the Member for Edmonton Glengarry just said that the Minister of the Environment had said to someone -- that I had said something that is absolutely, totally untrue.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MR. YOUNIE: If I may clarify, what I said was that it had been publicly stated by an official of the forestry department that the minister -- and I presume if he accepts the theory of ministerial responsibility, he accepts the statements of his underlings. That forestry official, Ray Makowecki, had been told by the Environment department it was not his job to nix that project but to minimize the damage. And I did not say that I heard the minister say it; I said I had heard it publicly reported that he had, assuming he accepts responsibility for his department.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, are you saying the first thing, or are you saying the first thing and the second thing? It would be much better to say the first part of your statement, hon. member, with due respect. It would be seen to be different phrasing than what the minister heard. All right.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment has never, ever had a discussion with the Mr. Makowecki that the Member for Edmonton Glengarry talked about, nor has the Minister of the Environment had any conversations with anyone other than the minister of forestry and public lands on this matter, in that particular department. So I simply do not understand what kind of information the Member for Edmonton Glengarry could possibly be conveying, having said that I have said something. That is completely erroneous.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's very serious. He said that the hon. member was lying, and so he either has to retract that or there's a procedure that we have to go through.

MR. SPEAKER: The whole matter may well rest on whether somebody else has to retract something, so both are into the

same situation of possible retraction. Since the Chair seems to be not making much progress with this, then the whole matter of a point of privilege will be dealt with tomorrow. I invite both members to examine the Blues and to be in conversation in the Speaker's office tomorrow morning. May we please continue? The Member for Edmonton Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if I can echo strongly enough, and perhaps I will leave it at that, how much I do regret the lacking nature of the throne speech and especially its lacking nature where real programs -- new and innovative programs, programs that mean something to people who are out of work -- are not found there. The programs are not there, and I would contend that it indicates how concerned the government really is about the problem. I've tried to point out where I thought it was lacking, and I think next election the people of Alberta will point out in the ballot box how lacking they think it is, and perhaps three years down the road I will have a chance to stand up and say something good and complimentary about a new throne speech brought in by a new government with some new ideas.

MR. SPEAKER: On the amendment, Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife?

MR. SPARROW: Yes, speaking to the amendment. Mr. Speaker, I think the record should be clear. The misinformation and the tactics of the Opposition are inexcusable, and I think we should stand up and be counted and correct those errors.

Number one, he's claimed our department has logged above the 6,500 foot level, which is in the prime protection zone. A definite falsehood, sir.

AN HON. MEMBER: Typical.

MR. SPARROW: Typical of you in misrepresentation of facts. Again, the piles of brush you talk about. It will be clear cut, and there will be reforestation, and that has been our policy, and we reforest every acre. Again, your innuendo and misrepresentation.

Hampering tourism? I was down there, sir, and the trees were so thick if these trails hadn't been cut. We've improved it. We've improved the tourism opportunities and recreational opportunities in that area to a great extent, and it's dependent on whose eyes you look through it.

There's plenty above the 6,500 foot level; there is a maximum of -- at least 20 percent of that whole area still has that type of forest in it.

As far as talking about the lack of jobs, Mr. Speaker, that he referred to in his speech, it very clearly spells out in my statements and in the policy that every guide that is legally doing anything, doing guiding last year, will be legally in the business next year after the policy is adopted. Not one opportunity will be taken away. In fact, many, many new opportunities will be created. For instance, antelope in southern Alberta: non-residents did not have to have a guide in the past. After the policy is in, they can. So there is misrepresentation of the facts, Mr. Speaker, that has to be corrected.

AN HON. MEMBER: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, we now have a point of order.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order, moments ago I was cautioned to leave that topic and did so on the grounds that it would be debated at some later point. I think it fair that that rule apply in this case as well.

MR. SPEAKER: If the member has made statements, I'm sure the member has to deal with at least some effort on the part of another member to try to bring their interpretation of the facts to the matter. But caution well taken. Minister, please continue with your comments.

MR. SPARROW: The same type of statements . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Is the Chair hearing a comment from the gallery? Thank you. Mr. Minister.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the same type of tactics of gross misinformation and false rumours by my learned colleague has been used to get groups of people throughout this province stirred up. Many, many participants in those meetings throughout the province have phoned me after the meeting and have written saying, "Do we have to put up with this garbage all the time?" And I say, "It's part of the job."

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure this House that we do, in forestry, reforest every area that is cut, and I want to make that clear and loud and not have the misrepresentation from this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, during your comments, which were aimed at the amendment, the minister also used a word which is unparliamentary: falsehood. I wonder if the minister would be gracious enough to withdraw that, knowing full well that it is incumbent upon all members of this House to indeed make certain their facts are correct before they bring them to the House. But once they have used them, it's their responsibility to be answerable for the comments that they indeed made.

Hon. minister, would you be good enough to withdraw the term "falsehood"?

MR. SPARROW: If you so wish, I will withdraw that word, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I hadn't intended to speak on the subamendment, but the words of the Member for Edmonton Glengarry . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Amendment, hon. member.

MR. BRADLEY: The amendment has spurred me to come forward and make some remarks today.

The amendment that was made by the Leader of the Opposition alludes to our policies and talks about unacceptably high numbers of Albertans currently unemployed in the absence of any programs.

Just for the benefit of members of the House, the Member for Edmonton Glengarry was talking about Hidden Creek logging and saying that we shouldn't do that. The Crowsnest Pass area of Alberta, which I represent, has very high levels of unemployment, in excess of 20 percent. The loggers in that area have been unemployed in some instances for up to 18 months to two years, and the member for Glengarry is supporting shutting down Hidden Creek logging, which would see those people con-

tinue to be unemployed. I think that just shows you the shallowness of some of the policies of the New Democratic Party with regards to employment. When we do have opportunities down there to put people to work, the official position of the opposition is to shut down those opportunities.

MR. SPEAKER: Speaking to the amendment, Member for St. Albert, then the minister.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the amendment but regret the absence of any programs aimed at achieving a significant reduction in an unacceptably high number of Albertans currently unemployed.

Mr. Speaker, we recently heard the minister of career development and unemployment stand up and say what a good job this government was doing in addressing unemployment. I would suggest to that minister that he go and talk to some of the families that live in the constituency of St. Albert and relay that information to them, because I'll tell you what they see. They see spending tens of thousands of dollars on their sons and daughters who are attending university. We as taxpayers subsidize tens of thousands of dollars more. For what? To train them so that when they get out of those facilities they cannot find a job? For all the Albertans that are attending various types of postsecondary education in the province of Alberta, that they can't find a job?

What I intend to do, Mr. Speaker, is speak to the shallowness of this government's action when it comes to creating employment opportunities for Albertans. This government continues to talk about the strength of Albertans, the toughness of Albertans. Let me tell you, those that are unemployed are on their knees. They've lost their homes; some of them have lost their wives, their families. Businesses out there: thousands of them have failed. And what has this government done? Very, very little. And perception is not everything; action is.

We turn around and talk about restructuring our economy to turn around and create employment opportunities for Albertans. That is not being addressed by this government. I see very, very little indication of it in the throne speech. That again is very, very shallow.

Our minister of unemployment talks about upgrading skills, going back and attending all these Mickey Mouse courses he's put on, one welfare program after another, wage subsidy programs that don't work, that are being abused. Let me assure this minister that this province has enough skilled tradesmen in the construction industry to build this province in the nature that I'd like to see it built and certainly my party. We have unemployed engineers out there by the dozens. How are we going to retrain them? What are we going to retrain them for? We've got architects out there. We've got draftsmen out there.

And we do have teachers out there, 900 of them that became unemployed because our Minister of Education turned around and said, well, we're not going to continue that program. After the big flowery statements came out on what they were going to do to create employment opportunities for those young graduates coming out of university, they turn around this year and are eliminating 900 of those jobs that cost \$16,000 or a little bit under to have those educators employed. Is this what our government is telling us and the people in the province of Alberta about how they are creating and addressing unemployment in the province of Alberta? I know what we've done, and you know what we've done too. We've taken 900 intern teachers and thrown them on to the unemployment insurance programs

or social assistance. Or some of them might find jobs in the service sector, if they're lucky, for a niggardly minimum wage of \$3.80 an hour, which we're not addressing either -- to turn around and increase it. That's what our government is doing.

Our government talks about initiatives. Let me assure you that this government doesn't know what innovation, initiatives, or any long-term economic planning to get us as the province of Alberta out of this morass we're in . . . And there is nothing that signifies that in this throne speech.

Talk about entrepreneurship creating jobs in Alberta. How can you be so foolish? You turn around and tell that to Albertans? That is foolish. Who do you think is going to support you in the style you've become accustomed to? And some of the flunkies you've got running around in your departments: who's going to support them when we're all unemployed?

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order, hon. member. Use of the word "flunky" truly isn't . . . While that's not listed in *Beauchesne*, it's really not all that terribly wonderful to refer to members of the civil service. Thank you.

MR. STRONG: Mr. Speaker, I apologize, but I thought I definitely heard you, not two days ago -- or was it yesterday? -- indicate to this Assembly that "flunkies" was not derogatory, so I felt I could use it. And if that's not the case, I apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The Chair mentioned that it was not listed in *Beauchesne*. But on the other hand, the Chair did not give approval to the use of the word because it really is derogatory -- in this example, to very valued members of the civil service -- no matter what. Please continue, though, hon. member.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, we talk and we listen to this government indicate to us that they've created 22,000 new jobs for Albertans. What kind of jobs did they create? Are we talking jobs that were created under PEP, where we as a government subsidize an employer \$5.50 an hour to create a job -- very, very short term? Is that job creation? It's not job creation. You've got all sorts of people out there abusing that, and I think we have indicated to one of the ministers an abuse. I still haven't received a response. If we as a government didn't provide that \$5.50 an hour, do you think that job still wouldn't be there? Or are some employers abusing the program -- where we as taxpayers are funding their employees -- and doing nothing for the economy of the province of Alberta?

You talk about the downturn in Alberta's economy, international market forces that have created this unemployment here in the province of Alberta, and certainly I can recognize that. But I think what we're asking you is, what are you doing to address unemployment? What programs are you coming up with to address unemployment? How are you lobbying your federal colleagues, your counterparts in Ottawa, to address Alberta's problem? And I see very little indication of that when I hear our Premier stand up and say, well, two of my ministers are going to go and meet with Michael Wilson to discuss Alberta's problems. I am sure that if the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood was sitting in that Chair over there, he would be having a personal meeting not with Michael Wilson but with our Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, to address the serious problems we're faced with here in the province of Alberta. And that's the bottom line. But I don't see that.

It's very convenient for you people over there to stand up and tell us or make the comments -- I've got a thick skin, and I've been needled by experts. You guys have a long way to go. Commies -- listen, any time any government ends up with a whole bunch of problems on their lap, what do they do? Accuse you of being a socialist, accuse you of being a commie. Let's not get into the rhetoric. Let's get down to providing the solutions to unemployment in the province of Alberta, and let's recognize that indeed we do have massive unemployment. Let me assure this government that it is not 12 percent. It is much, much higher than that. Start looking at your revenues. See where personal income taxes have gone and what unemployment has done to the province of Alberta. Recognize that unemployment in the province of Alberta is no less than a minimum of 20 percent because your government doesn't recognize all those people that came off unemployment insurance that don't count as statistics anymore or all of those people that went in to get upgrading or whatever so that they could qualify for student loans, at least get something. That's what you have to recognize.

Every time this government ends up in a problem where they get some criticism, they don't like that. So what they turn around and do is accuse us of being naysayers, accuse us of being doom-and-gloomers. Let me assure you that I am a realist, and my party is realistic in addressing concerns that you seem to care absolutely nothing about. Now I know what we have to do in Alberta, and you know too, and that is not to create job opportunities for your friends and forget about Albertans, hand out construction contracts creating a few employment opportunities for, again, some of your friends and forget about the rest of us, or create job opportunities for minimum wage and then come here and brag about it. It is nothing to brag about.

What I'd suggest to this government is that you start getting realistic. You start addressing Alberta's major problem, and that is unemployment, and you might get re-elected. If you don't, I suspect you will not get re-elected, and hopefully we'll be able to take over and move this province into our future: full employment, prosperity, not just a few crumbs for the people out there and all the wealth for a few, but everybody. And everybody includes all Albertans, not just Tories.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of the Environment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have an amendment before the House at the moment, and it deals with unemployment.

I would just like to provide a few comments with respect to one subject matter, and that deals with the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation facility that's under construction near the community of Swan Hills. I think there perhaps may be some misunderstandings expressed this afternoon with respect to a lack of employment opportunities associated with that particular facility. I would like all members of the Assembly to know that when the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation plant, a plant dedicated to the cleanup and improvement of the environment of the province of Alberta, is complete, it will be providing some 46 permanent jobs. There have been over the last five or six months an average of 75 workers on site. There has been an expenditure level of some \$40 million. Total tradesmen hours in the project amount to nearly 400,000 to date. In addition to that, there have been 18 houses that have been built in the community, essentially creating new job opportunities for the people in the area. In addition to that, tenders

have gone out recently with respect to a new multi-unit townhouse that was built there as well.

The project itself has been a generator of employment, Mr. Speaker. It's been a generator of temporary employment in terms of the tradesmen that have had to become involved in the project, and it will be providing as well 46 permanent jobs in the province of Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the Leader of the New Democratic Party, which adds:

but regrets the absence of any programs aimed at achieving a significant reduction in the unacceptably high number of Albertans currently unemployed.

Mr. Speaker, what prompted me to get into this debate were some comments by the hon. minister of unemployment the day before yesterday. Looking back at *Hansard* -- and I want to quote him very carefully on this because I cannot believe he actually said this -- he said:

The private sector is the area that job creation comes from. Government is not a job-creation source, Mr. Speaker; it is the private sector.

For somebody who has been spending so much time bragging about the number of jobs his department creates, I can't believe that he then turns around and says "but governments don't create jobs." I really think he's opened his mouth, and I intend to put my foot in it.

This government is the most bureaucratic government in the country. It has created the most number of jobs per capita for a government anywhere in Canada, yet he says they don't create jobs. Of course governments create jobs. Some of them are good; some of them aren't so good. I mean, if you're Mary LeMessurier or Horst Schmid, they're pretty good jobs. But if they're at \$5.50 an hour, like my friend here said a few minutes ago, then they're not so good. So there's a double standard there, of course, which is typical of this government. There are some of us that have and some of us that don't have. This government is in power, and they have and their friends have, but those that aren't part of that are on the outside and looking in. If you were Mary LeMessurier, you'd get \$72,000 a year for your job, but if you're a student coming out of school or something these days and you're lucky enough to get a STEP grant job, you'll get \$5.50 an hour or end up on unemployment insurance or looking for social assistance.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

This idea that the private sector is the only part that provides jobs -- it sort of puzzles me when somebody says that. You know, I spent a number of years working in different jobs on a farm. I was born and raised on a farm. I worked on oil rigs a couple of weeks one summer, I worked on road crews. But I don't feel like I was doing anything more important than when after five years of university and 25 years of teaching -- I was trying to teach some students mathematics at Ross Sheppard before I got elected to this Assembly. Because the government was paying my salary in my later years of work, does that mean I wasn't working, that I didn't have a job? You say governments don't create jobs. Obviously, governments create jobs.

So for the minister of unemployment to say that governments don't create jobs just doesn't make any sense. It's a question of whether they create good jobs or not good jobs, I suppose. But are you really saying that all those teacher colleagues of mine don't really have a job? Are you saying that professors at the university don't have a job? Is the minister actually saying that he doesn't have a job because the government pays his wage? I mean, maybe he should quit this Assembly and go back to the oil patch where he came from if he thinks private enterprise has to pay his wage in order for him to have a job. I cannot believe he hasn't woken up to the fact that we have a mixed economy in this country. The three levels of government put together create some 40 percent of the jobs in this country. If governments have the willpower, of course they can create jobs. If the government puts money into that Husky oil upgrader, are they not creating jobs? So the minister is all wet behind the ears.

In fact, the government brags a lot about the jobs it does create, and he also bragged about the support for small businesses. I'd like to point out to him and to the members of this government that most of the programs aimed at the business sector, at the private enterprise sector, that this government has brought in over the last few years -- almost all of them have had a lot of good rhetoric about helping small entrepreneurs, but in practice most of them have ended up helping the big entrepreneurs that didn't really need help in many cases and, in the biggest case, the multinational oil companies. Well, of course they're successful if that's where you put your money.

I think of Vencap, which was meant to diversify this economy and create jobs, and they're very reluctant to loan money to anybody that needs less than a million dollars. They've got three out of 21 companies that do that. Now what about the entrepreneur, the small businessman that wants \$20,000 or \$50,000? Where's he going to get it? Is he going to get it from the SBEC program, the small business equity corporations? No. There you've got to have \$100,000 to start with or you don't get anything. Are they going to get it from the Alberta stock savings plan that was brought in in the last Legislature? No. Again you need \$100,000 or so; you need to be listed on the Alberta Stock Exchange. Many small family businesses don't want to be listed on the Alberta Stock Exchange. They don't put themselves up for sale for somebody else to take them over if they become successful.

Most of the money, if you want to talk about money being given by this government as an incentive to businesses to help create jobs, has gone to the oil industry in royalty write-offs and incentive grants. Talk of ALPEP, for example. Now most of that money that's gone to the oil industry has gone to the big companies in the oil industry. Sure, they're going to survive this idiot program of deregulation that this government has embarked on. I mean, to leave ourselves at the whims of OPEC and claim that that's private enterprise and free market conditions is one of the most silly paradoxes anybody's ever invented, yet this government sticks to it and says: "Oh, great orthodoxy. You know, good private enterprise ideology says we should deregulate the oil industry." They picked the worst possible time and now insist on doing it even though the price is not a free market price -- or at least, to the extent that it is, that's what's killing us: the extent that it'll be controlled by OPEC, which is outside and beyond our control. We're sitting around waiting for a cartel to rescue us. And a cartel is private enterprise? Yet you guys can't see the paradox in that.

There was one program, the loan to small business, which this government likes to brag about. Well, it helped a few small

businesses but went by in the blink of an eye. It's over with, and many of the people I know, my business friends on 124th Street, didn't even know about the program; it came and went so fast. A lot of them did not get any money out of that. Most of the people that got money were ones that already had good credit ratings, already had a loan from the bank. All they did was rewrite it. The government gave the bank \$150 plus the 9 per cent they got from the person getting the loan plus 2.375 percent for administering it from this government's pockets. So the main beneficiaries were the banks, and a lot of small businesses were left wondering what happened to the program and where is it and can I get in on it? Too late now. And that's the way this government has helped small businesses in this province.

If you think about most of the programs I've been talking about, they represent what are called supply-side economic theory, that if you give enough money to those that have the power and the wealth, they will bury us all in cheap goods and services. That theory has been in vogue for about the last 10 or 15 years. Too many of you guys have been reading Friedman. It's time the minister of unemployment went and read some Galbraith, who told what's really going on in this world. If you really want to help some of the small businesses, farmers, ordinary people, you're going to have start thinking a little differently. And so I recommend some reading to the minister of unemployment.

For demand-side policies -- I mean, even Friedman recognized that sometimes when people have money to spend, it means that the retailers can sell to those people, that the retailers can buy from the wholesalers, the wholesalers can buy from the manufacturers, the manufacturers then hire people to produce more goods and services because their inventory goes down. So there is a recognition of demand-side economics to some degree even in Friedman's theory. Yet what did this government bring in in the way of demand-side economics in the last year? One miserly little 8 percent increase to people on workers' compensation; otherwise, nothing. What have they done in education? Cut 3 percent. What have they done for social services? Cut 3 percent. You will not get the economy moving that way, by putting more people out of work.

So we lay off provincial employees, mostly at the bottom of the scale. I've said that this government had the most bureaucratic government in the country, and that's true. But where are the cuts made? Are they in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy where we've got far too many people that are not producing anything, passing the buck for decisions? No, most of the layoffs are down at the lower end where the services are being cut. It's a double standard; it's not fair.

One of the programs to help these people laid off really bemuses me. Why on earth would you cut somebody's job and then turn around and give them money to go for counseling to find out how to get a job? You know, you make it so that there are less jobs available and then you tell this poor guy . . . I suppose you create a job in this way: when you give him the money to go get some counseling, the counselor gets the money. But what does that guy get except a more sophisticated method of competing with his fellow unemployed people who can't find jobs, until they all compete at a little more sophisticated level? But if there are no more jobs, what good does that do anybody? It just makes life more frustrating, because you do it at a more sophisticated level, but you still don't get a job.

Mr. Speaker, we produced an alternate throne speech, and in it we suggested a lot of alternatives for creating jobs. And the

minister of unemployment the other day. at the end of his little dissertation . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. Order please. The Chair is having some difficulty with the Member for Edmonton Kingsway in addressing another member of the House. I would quote you 319 of *Beauchesne*, which states very clearly that a member in debate addressing another member of the House will address him or her as "the Honourable Member for _____" or "the Honourable Minister of -----." To the Chair's knowledge there is no minister of unemployment in this House, so the Chair would respectfully request the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway to use the correct tide when addressing other members of the House. Please proceed.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of other people had done that, so I assumed it was acceptable practice in the . . . [interjection] Well, it's been done several times, and the Speaker did not stop anybody. But I thank you for your correction and will be careful.

In any case, it was alleged that we on this side of the House are always negative, so I would just like to remind the members of the government -- not just the hon. minister to whom I referred a minute ago -- that in fact the pages of this document contain some 135 very positive suggestions, and we have offered over and over again many positive alternatives to government policy, and you're very welcome to use them. We hope you would look at them seriously and take them seriously. I appreciate arguing and debating at a fairly high level of intensity, but I also think it's a really serious intent, on our side anyway, to put forward positive alternatives. If you don't care to listen to them and don't pay some attention to them -- I know you've already used some of them. I mean, the loans to small businesses and farmers is, as a matter of fact, a rather poor version of something we've been saying for years and years and years, so you do get around to using some of our ideas eventually, when circumstances get bad enough that you are kind of forced to.

But in any case, if you don't take a good look at some of our ideas and some of the things we're suggesting, I know that the people of Alberta will. So we will be forming the government next time, because a lot of those ideas are very practical and very worth while for the people of Alberta.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to rise briefly in support of the amendment and just tell a couple of stories that have happened with a number, or a few people, in my constituency. [interjection] Pardon me? Mr. Speaker, I notice that the Member for Red Deer North or Red Deer South has a comment to make, and perhaps if he wants to make it, he could speak up.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency up in the northeast end of Edmonton unemployment is a very serious matter. We've got a number of people that are involved in or used to be involved in the building trades or the construction industry in our province, Albertans who had spent up to four years learning their trade, spending years studying to become a carpenter or an electrician or a boilermaker. And the economy has soured somewhat, and now they find themselves without work, Mr. Speaker. In fact, for some of them the period without work has been so extended that many of them now are without pride -- not pride in them-

selves and not pride in their skills but a lack of pride in a government that they had once supported. Tradesmen wanting work -- an awful lot of them can't find it.

And what about those people that fall between the ages of 15 and 24 years? You know, we have in Alberta right now 11.5 percent unemployment across the province. But for that age group. Mr. Speaker, it's not 11.5 percent. My goodness, if it were 11.5 percent, they might even be happy. But if you're between the ages of 15 and 24, the likelihood of your being out of a job is greater. In fact, the rate is 17.2 percent. Forty-five thousand young Albertans are without work; 45,000 young Albertans who want work can't find work; 45,000 young Albertans who want the opportunity to be productive members of our society don't have the opportunity to contribute because this government hasn't got any long-term job-creation programs.

Now, when we hit 10 percent unemployment -- and we're higher than that at the moment -- but when we hit 10 percent unemployment, because unemployment is a transient number, because nobody is fixed on unemployment for incredibly long periods of time, what we find is that in a calendar year it's not 10 percent that are affected. It's 25 percent; that's from the Forget commission. Twenty-five percent of Albertans are affected every year by a layoff, by unemployment. Twenty-five percent, and this government in its throne speech has nothing to do, doesn't have any policies, and doesn't even want to examine any policies that may lead to getting away from some short-term economic fixes and looking at long-term solutions.

Training programs? Sure, there's something contained in the Speech from the Throne about training and retraining. In fact, let me tell you a story of a boilermaker. The boilermakers have an incredibly high unemployment rate in their industry. In fact, it's so high that right now if you are a boilermaker, you would qualify for retraining. So you would qualify for retraining if you're a boilermaker. A boilermaker came into my office, and he said, "You know, I'm interested in this program, so I went down and checked it out." He went down to the Career Centre and checked it out. They had him write an aptitude test because, boy, it's important to make sure that you get into the right career. And don't forget he's a boilermaker. His industry has a very high unemployment rate. He writes an aptitude test. They go through all the psychological studies, what he's fixed good for, what he can do. It comes back: they're going to retrain him; they're going to provide money for him. And what are they going to provide money for? They want him to be a boilermaker, Mr. Speaker. That's effective planning. That's effective strategy. Boy, what a government. What masterminds. Whoever came up with that one? [interjection] Yes, it's difficult sometimes.

You know, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister responsible for Career Development and Employment, in a response to a question, said that there were 22,000 more jobs in January 1986 over January 1985. Well, I guess that's what being Conservative is all about, is that you like to live in the past, because he forgot to mention that in January 1987 there were 20,000 fewer jobs than what there were in 1986. But that's all right; that's just a little slipup.

MR. PIQUETTE: That's called regressive conservatism.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay, I got it now. But you know, on the day before -- that's only one slipup; we can forgive one slipup -- the Minister again responsible for Career Development and Employment stands up in the Assembly and he says that 60,000

jobs, full-time jobs, were created between 1986 and 1987. Well, I just can't appreciate the figure. There's something wrong. I just can't appreciate what the minister was saying, Mr. Speaker. It's just not correct, because there were 144,000 unemployed Albertans in January 1987. That's up 29,000 from 1986. But that's unemployed; he talked about jobs.

Now, I went and I did a little looking at how many jobs have been created. In 1986, January, according to the figures, what do we have? One million, one hundred and twenty-seven thousand jobs. Now if you take the minister's figure and you add those 60,000 jobs to the 1.127 million, somehow you should end up with 1.187 million. Not in Alberta. We get 1.107 million jobs, 20,000 fewer jobs. I wonder, Mr. Speaker: how is it that the minister did not deliberately mislead the Assembly?

Mr. Speaker, the Premier stated on March 6, in a response to a question from the Leader of the Official Opposition regarding the setting up of a standing committee to deal specifically with unemployment and job creation, and I quote: "Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine a more foolish effort." That's from the Premier. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of 144,000 proud Albertans, let me say that I have never heard a more pompous, arrogant, or uncaring response, and it fails to recognize the needs of Albertans.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to stand today and speak on behalf of the amendment introduced by the Leader of the Official Opposition. Today, as a member from rural Alberta, from the Athabasca-Lac La Biche constituency, I would like to condemn the government's lack of job creation in rural Alberta, and actually the job creation, in terms of unemployment, in the northern part of Alberta.

The thing that really upsets me the most is the fact that we had a review committee of the ADC which has been touring the province, which had really had time to sit down and make recommendations, because we as the Official Opposition spent the fall going around the province of Alberta listening to farmers' concerns back in November. And I know they got the same message as we got. And I know our recommendations are ready and ready to be acted upon if we were government. We know we would be introducing debt moratorium on Alberta farms, because every day I'm getting calls in my office from farmers who were asked to sign quitclaims, and actually with a system which is totally, I believe, immoral. For example, a farmer yesterday called me from Rich Lake, Alberta, and said that he was asked to sign a quitclaim on his ADC loan. If he didn't do that, he would not be able to have the retraining grant that the federal government is so aptly encouraging farmers to do.

MR. TAYLOR: Shame, shame.

MR. PIQUETTE: And that is a real shame, because he wants to stay on this farm. It is a farm that he and his father and grandfather worked for for many years. He indicated to me that through no fault of his own, because of a dramatic drop in prices of grain in the last few years, he has not been able to make the payments on his equipment and on his farm. But now the ADC is asking him to sign a quitclaim so that he can be retrained. "To do what?" he said. He said he asked that question. He says, "Well, you can go to the Lac La Biche AVC and perhaps take heavy-duty equipment operator training." He said, "Well, I did

that before becoming a farmer, and I know half of my friends are no longer employed in that area. So how is that as a viable kind of retraining program?"

So I condemn this government that they have not listened to the people of Alberta. They know what the answers are, but it seems they are waiting to the next fall session in order to come down with the recommendation that they know they have to act upon right now to save the family farm, to quit putting farmers on the unemployment roll, on false retraining programs where there's really no job, if they actually are retrained to do something.

I had another call, actually from a friend of the Tory party who has worked through a Tory friend to try to get a 9 percent stabilization loan because he thought the Official Opposition member was not able to pull the right levers, I guess, to get that loan. But time and time again, he said, he was not able to get that loan because he could not prove that he had enough equity in his farm in order to get that 9 percent. He concluded, after the attempt of shopping around to all the major banks and the Treasury Branch, that that 9 percent stabilization grant was not meant for farmers who needed financing; it was really meant for the 50 percent of the farmers who have no debts. A great plan, a great plan. The 9 percent stabilization grant is not addressing those farmers who are in need.

The job-creation sector in rural Alberta is very dependent on the small business sector being healthy. Without addressing the needs of the farming economy, the small business sector is quickly going down the tube in rural Alberta. They are tough, as the Premier said. Yes; very, very tough. They've been cutting comers for the last four years. However, as the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce has indicated, we are in a depression, but this government here is acting like it's in slow motion. It still does not realize we have a serious economic situation in this province. In the small business sector, we again get a lot of rhetoric from this government. They say two things: "Our priority is agriculture, number one." We keep hearing the minister, and the Premier keeps saying that all the time, except where the programs that they have announced in terms of actual dollars being spent, that is not the sector which is number one in the government's mind. It's in the oil and gas sector and mainly aimed at the large corporate sector.

During the hearings on the heritage trust fund last fall, I asked the minister: is this government prepared to match the federal government bailout to help out the grain producers in this province, so that if the federal government puts out 50 cents on the dollar, we should kick in another 50 cents on the dollar to help support a parity price system for Alberta grain producers? I was told that we do not have the money to do that in this province. A week later the Minister of Energy announced a \$464 million program was in effect for the oil and gas sector with a six-week -- ending on December 29 -- short job-creation program to artificially stimulate the oil and gas sector. Now, that was really putting agriculture as a number one priority for this government.

Then when we look at the fact that we provided almost a billion and a half in oil and gas incentives in 1986, and then we look at the multinationals' dividend payout to their American investors, that comes out to almost half of what we put into the industry in 1986. That money was really badly spent, because it was not based on the premise of performance. If you're going to put a dollar for them to do something, it should be based on performance and not based on the fact that they will export that tax or that tax dollar outside of Canada to their American

shareholder. If we would have been more creative, to actually have used the 9 percent small business program to create new jobs, not just to simply recycle old debts but to target some selective areas that could generate jobs in Alberta, we would have a heck of a lot healthier economy in this province right now. But we failed to do that. We simply recycle old debt.

Also, again going back to the 9 percent small business loan, the way it was set up it was so poorly conceived that many of our rural small businesspeople never got access on the telephone to even get their phone calls in to the department, and you people have not even failed to admit that yet. I think if a study were made about the disproportionate number of businesspeople who perhaps knew a bit ahead of time or because they were in the city of Edmonton had freer access to the telephone and to accountants to put these things together, you will notice that the small businessman in rural Alberta was at an unfair disadvantage.

Again, a double standard, a poorly thought-out plan, a big window dressing, a big profit kind of situation for our banks, because the banks out-negotiated our government, both in the small business 9 percent loan and also in the 9 percent agricultural loan. And this is from a government who believes that it is a government that represents a kind of corporate type of government who really knows how to put the whole thing together. It must be the same way that TransAlta and some of our publicly owned corporations -- or I should say privately owned corporation monopolies that we have in this province -- are run. You know, it's fine to have a 15 percent guaranteed profit, but when we fail to include performance in that, it's a different story.

This government really has failed to speak on behalf of the small business sector and the agricultural industry in this province. It's a wonder that there are not more wide-awake Albertans to look at the policies of this government and see through the shallowness of its programs. Because I think now, even with the polls that the Tories are happy in receiving in the last few weeks, you know as well as I do that that poll does not accurately represent Albertans today. There are a lot of sore PCs out there who are saying "PC" if somebody calls them on the poll, but when it will come to the ballot box, when the decision has to be made, and when it counts to have performance, when it counts to talk about issues and having policies that will work, you know very well that a lot of you are going to be very seriously considering the next election. Unless you can start listening to the real concerns of Albertans, I know a lot of you will be retiring prematurely.

No, I see the arrogance still in this government, who have not learned the lesson from the election. When I see these committees going around the province and then they're not coming down with their recommendations immediately, because there's an emergency out there, then this government has lost all sense of perspective and all sense of any kind of credibility as a government.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we proceed, hon. members, it may be the Chair will have to pursue the Blues. The Chair thought that he heard the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche refer to the term "deliberately misleading." The Chair would ask the hon. member that if that were the case, perhaps he could give consideration under citation 319 of *Beauchesne* to take any appropriate action. If the hon. member is not sure and is prepared to wait until pursuing the Blues, then so be it.

MR. PIQUETTE: Okay. Could you check? Because I didn't realize I said the . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair is not in a position to check. However, if the hon. member is of the view that perhaps those comments were used, the hon. member may simply choose to use the term that he withdraw those remarks.

MR. PIQUETTE: If I did say it during my speech, which was full of emotion and vim and vigour, I do apologize.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair commends the member. The hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to react to some of the comments that were made by the minister for manpower earlier in addressing this amendment by the Leader of the Opposition to the throne speech.

First of all, he made the claim that government is not a job-creating source, and if the hon. minister were here, I would like to ask him just who the largest employer in the province of Alberta is. It seems to me that from time to time the minister takes great joy and pride in pointing out STEP and PEP when he introduces these to the Assembly and takes credit for them. Are these not government programs that are intended to create employment?

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

In pursuing this attitude, it seems to me that the minister begins to create a self-fulfilling prophecy, and if governments do take this attitude that the government is not a source for creating employment, then that's in fact what they don't do. They don't use the resources that are available to them to create a work force that is employable and is productive. A good example of that is that the Conservative governments in this country and in the western world have the highest rates of unemployment of any of the western governments. Consider Alberta and the way in which they went about creating jobs in the energy sector last year in response to the fact that some 50,000 jobs in the oil fields were lost. The government threw something like \$1.5 billion in program initiatives and in royalty holidays at the industry, and I'd like to ask the government just how many new, full-time, permanent jobs were created in this province as a result of throwing \$1.5 billion at the energy sector.

If you look at the drilling activity for the month of December, it's true that it really took a substantial increase. Many new wells were spudded in as companies raced to take advantage of the program initiatives that were offered. And by the way, most of those wells that were spudded in were initiated by multinational oil companies that had their highest rates of profit from their downstream operations since 1981.

Very little of that money went into the hands of small Alberta producers, for the obvious reason that most of these companies are pretty cash poor and couldn't begin to take advantage of the government programs or incentives. When you look at the daily oil bulletins for the period of January, you'll find that drilling activity fell off to almost zero. So as soon as the programs ended, the work-related activity ended, and even today less than half the rigs that were operating a year ago are operating.

So the government can be charged with failing to create jobs through throwing money at the industry. I mean, the major con-

cern that we have as a party is their total failure to diversify the economy when times were good. During many of those years \$5 billion a year was rolling into the Alberta Treasury, and what do we have to show for it? We have a heritage trust fund that virtually has nothing left in it in terms of realizable assets. There's no money there to begin to diversify the economy, so we wasted the boom years. And the government, in addition, seems to have adopted policies that are deliberately aimed not at creating employment in this province but at creating unemployment. They push policies of privatization.

They've encouraged the replacement of full-time workers with part-time workers. That's true even in the liquor stores, and that's what much of the strike was about last summer: the concern of workers that many of their full-time jobs were being lost to people that would work on a part-time basis. And of course this looks good in the short term. It seems to have some short-term advantage. If you can replace a full-time worker with a part-time worker, it reduces your costs of operating your business. If you replace construction workers that were previously working at 25 bucks an hour, if you cut their unions out for them by allowing spin-off companies to establish themselves in such a way that they can hire non-union workers and they can cut workers' wages from \$25 to \$15 an hour, that looks really good for the company that's first able to do that, because their profit pictures can go up.

But as soon as every other company starts to do that, then they're all back at the same level, and all you've got is a work force that's getting less dollars per hour, less dollars per month, than they were previously getting, and what does that do for the person that's trying to operate a small business or has a little supply operation of some kind? It means that there are fewer people out there with dollars to supply the goods and services that they're trying to provide, so that they begin to experience a downturn in their operation.

The same thing is true of government. We have people earning less salary so that there are less tax dollars out there to come into the provincial treasuries. So just at a time when there's greater need, there are fewer opportunities to get revenues, and when that occurs, of course, then we all begin to blame each other. A lot of bitterness is created in society. Backbiting occurs. We begin to cut back on social programs, and we've seen that where this government, with its holus-bolus 3 percent cuts in social services and health spending and education . . .

MR. YOUNG: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The sub-amendment dealing with cutbacks was dealt with last day and . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. member. A member is on the floor and has been recognized.

MR. YOUNG: . . . and *Beauchesne* is quite explicit, that the House having decided a matter of that nature, that's the end of it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The Chair now recognizes the Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: He did say "subamendment." We are on the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, that's exactly the point that the Deputy Government House Leader is making. It's with respect to the ruling earlier this afternoon. We had great difficulty trying to define the narrow focus of the amendment, that previously on Monday of this week the House disposed of a sub-amendment, which in itself basically dealt with the cutbacks, or so-called, without having the exact words here. So early this afternoon we had this other discussion with respect to trying to bring the focus back to the amendment. And so the point of order is indeed taken as being kindly advice to the member speaking to try to frame the comments with respect to the amendment. Because indeed the House looks forward to hearing from the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn in great length with respect to the great ambit of discussion he may wish to give us with respect to the reply to the Speech from the Throne. But if the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn would take those kindly comments under consideration, it would be appreciated.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll try to do that.

I was just trying to point out, in reaction to statements made by the minister of manpower in addressing the amendment to the Speech from the Throne, that a lot of these problems that are created by cutbacks have spillover effects that begin to eventually work their way through the economy and create loss of employment and create difficulties for everyone in the society in terms of the government being in a position where it's able to generate revenues from taxation, and that leads to further cuts and this sort of thing.

But going back then more closely to what the minister had to say, the minister seemed to extoll his own program which he outlined in the throne speech. And when I look at what was suggested in the throne speech as far as creating employment is concerned, I think that all that's really being offered to us here is training programs for jobs that don't exist. I could just go through the titles of some of these things, but I think it's very clear:

In anticipating the strengthening of the economy, the labour market strategy will provide work experience, retraining opportunities . . .

But retraining opportunities and work experiences for what kind of jobs? Where is the job creation in this? It goes on. They're going to establish youth allowance centres, a women's career resource centre,

addressing employment equity issues in apprenticeship in nontraditional occupations . . .

What has that got to do with creating jobs, I ask.

The only other positive suggestion that the minister made in his remarks was he dealt with the whole question of viewing the small businessman as the engine of the economy. But the only example he could provide was one of creating a tourist industry in the province of Alberta. But I ask again: except for the question of the Olympics, when obviously a lot of people are going to be coming to Calgary and to Alberta, who would come to Calgary or to Alberta in the wintertime to visit the province of Alberta? Even Tory cabinet ministers apparently prefer to go to Hawaii and Mexico, the Caribbean, Palm Springs. So it's very difficult to see where Alberta will become kind of a tourist mecca or a tourist haven, in the wintertime at least, except for the skiers. So to rely on a tourist industry to put the Alberta economy back on its feet, I think, is very, very misdirected.

Not only that; at the moment here in the province of Alberta, at least in the city of Calgary, according to statistics, it's got one

of the most highly educated work forces in the whole country. Are the people that are in these occupations, are they going to be asked to go into a hotel and work as a busboy or whatever? Why we don't we find some way, through using the government, to help these people develop their skills and put it together into some really productive and useful way? But that would require the government to do that, and government should do that. But of course this government's ideology prevents it from looking at the economy in these terms.

Well, what are some things that governments could do then? Well, I could just point out that the government of Manitoba has the best job-creation record in the country. The Bank of Montreal has pointed that out in one of its newsletters. They take an activist role in terms of trying to create jobs.

Here in Alberta there was just an announcement the other day that we're going to get a new ethylene plant that will produce something like -- well, it'll employ 1,000 people in the short term. But by the time that plant's in production -- it's a highly capital-intensive operation -- it will probably not employ more than 50 to 100 workers per year. So that's not going to deal with the unemployment situation.

But just consider what could happen here if a government was prepared to take that ethylene, convert it into polyethylene, and then get into the business of encouraging firms in Alberta to take that polyethylene and build whatever it is that we in Alberta consume. Chairs -- go through a government procurement list; in other words, begin to produce value-added-on products that would truly stimulate the Alberta economy. That's just one minor suggestion.

We're actually faced with a very serious problem in this country in terms of unemployment that can only be addressed nationally. What has happened globally is that we've gone into deregulation; we've gone into privatization. Firms that were once important manufacturers in this country nationally but also here in Alberta have gone where wages are lower. So companies have just folded up their tents; they've gone to Singapore, they've gone to Taiwan, they've gone to Korea. And in doing that, they've put our workers on the unemployment rolls. So that what is really needed here are government strategies. We need government strategies at the federal level, we need government strategies at the provincial level, and all of these strategies have to be co-ordinated if we're seriously interested in doing anything about unemployment in this country. Clearly, if we followed the minister's advice, nothing would happen. The same situation would continue to exist without any change.

It's time for a new government, a government that's prepared to be interventionist, a government that's prepared to get industry and labour sitting down and working out industrial strategies that will put not just all Canadians but all Albertans back to work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a call for the question on the amendment. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to make just a few comments this afternoon. There have been questions already raised in this Legislature since being reconvened last week about whether there is any sense of co-ordination in the way that services are being provided or cut to people in this province. But I think that question has to be addressed on a larger scale, and that is to ask the question whether

anyone in the government has any articulated, well-thought-out policy or strategy as to how this province is going to develop in the short term and in the long term? Because I have and my colleagues have a lot of concerns about the cumulative effect not only of the cutbacks but the lack of any kind of well-thought-out and co-ordinated program to provide employment to the people of this province. We're very worried about what the long-term consequences might be to the future of the people of this province, the future opportunities for economic growth, and the future, I suppose, along with that of this province in Confederation.

Let's just take a look at where some of this lack of thought and co-ordination is leading us. We're losing skilled manpower in this province. When people are unemployed, if they have a skill, they're going to go to the place where that skill can be provided. They're going to other parts of Canada. In fact, it was one of the Construction Association representatives in Manitoba who said not too long ago that the reason that there has been a high, persistent unemployment rate -- that is, of 7 percent; in Manitoba they're not used to quite the high rates of unemployment as we are in Alberta -- is because there are so many unemployed Alberta construction workers flooding into that province in search of employment. So, Mr. Speaker, we're losing skilled manpower.

Again, we've seen recently articles in the newspaper where people are out recruiting our nursing professionals because there is a shortage in other parts of the country. We're going to be losing those people. And by cutting back on education programs in our universities and our advanced education institutions, we're not going to be providing the same number of skilled people into the work force. We're not providing jobs for them when they graduate from these institutions and they're going to go elsewhere. What does that mean for the future of this province? If at some time in the future we want to recover economic development in this province, where are we going to get those people?

The dislocation of people which is created by unemployment -- people I've talked to in the last few months say: "I was born, I was raised in this province. Why should I be forced to go to Ontario to work? Why should I be forced to go to another province, another part of the country? This is where my family is . . ."

MR. STEVENS: Forced?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Yes, forced. You bet, forced. There are no jobs for them. They're being laid off. There's no place for them to market their skills in this province. If they want a job, they have to go to another province. You bet they're being forced. And the fact that there are no programs of job creation in this province from this government means that quite literally people are being forced out of this province to look for employment and an economic future for them and their families in other parts of the country. You bet that's what's going on.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of whether people are going to invest in this province -- when they look at an economy that is on a roller coaster, they are not going to look to Alberta to invest their money if one year it's a boom period, the next year it's a bust period. Foreclosures and that kind of economic dislocation are not conducive to a climate for capital investment. And unless the government recognizes that and takes steps to even out those booms and busts in this province, unless the government takes steps to provide a climate for economic growth

and development now, when we are in this trough of economic depression, unless they do that and smooth out those highs and lows, this is not going to be seen as a province in which people are going to invest money.

Mr. Speaker, my last comment is this matter of research and cutbacks at our universities and higher educational institutions. If we're going to provide any sort of long-term economic development in Alberta, we're going to have to be part of the leading edge of technology. And one of the concerns that I have, particularly because of the cutbacks in our institutions and the lack of any meaningful program of job development and providing of resources to those institutions, is that over the long run we're going to lose out in the technological race. If you look at countries all over the world that have been able to maintain their young people in educational institutions beyond the age of 16, those countries such as Japan, West Germany, and the Scandinavian countries are the countries that are ahead and leading in the technological revolution.

Mr. Speaker, unless we provide some way of ensuring that that continues in our province, we are going to become farther and farther behind in that particular race, which I believe for the long-term future of this province is going to be very detrimental. My question is: is anybody over there, in any way, shape, or form, taking a broad look, a long-term look, at what all these policies and lack of action are having for the future of this province, not only in the short term, not only in this year and the next year and the year after that, but five, 10, and 15 years down the road? Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid that that's not happening, and it causes me great concern, which is why I'm rising to speak in support of the amendment made by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this amendment, and I hope that the government will recognize what a serious amendment it really is. I think that if there are members in the government that don't recognize that a lot of their constituents are being forced to other provinces because of the unemployment situation in this province, they haven't spoken to a lot of their constituents. Perhaps they're already gone; I don't know.

I suggest that unemployment is a serious problem in every single MLA's riding, and I really hope that members make an effort to go out and speak to these people and find out exactly how they're feeling right now. I'm very distressed when I see that government ministers and members aren't even admitting that there's a problem here. It's one thing to admit that there's a problem and then choose to do nothing about it, but it's another thing to not even admit that there's a problem in the first place.

We've heard the Minister of Career Development and Employment talk about all the opportunities that are available to people in this province, and he can talk till he is blue in the face about all of these job opportunities for people in this province, but I know for a fact that a group of individuals that I happened to meet that were working on one of his wonderful PEP programs wanted to keep those jobs that they had on that program because that was their only hope. And what happened? It was terminated. These people were forced onto social assistance. And if that's the kind of opportunity that we're putting into people's lives in this province, then I suggest that we'd better take another look at what we are doing.

This simply isn't good enough. It's not giving hope and some kind of encouragement to people that want to stay in this province, that want to be educated here and want to find jobs here and spend their lives right here in Alberta.

And we can talk about the training programs in this province as well. And I know that I've had a lot of constituents go down to the career development centre and try and get training because they are out of jobs. One individual happened to be 55 years old and was told that because of his age it was just not productive to put him through a training program because we wouldn't get enough in return from him because of his age. Is this putting hope back into people's lives?

You know, I really think that we have to start asking ourselves: are we addressing the question of unemployment? We're making many cutbacks and as a consequence we are putting a lot of people out of work, so because of the cutbacks, of course, we've got higher unemployment. It just doesn't make any sense to me, and people out there are telling me this. It doesn't make any sense. They can't understand what it is that the government is trying to do.

Because on the one hand we have a need for these people to be working, and I'm specifically looking at the areas of education and the areas of social services. We need these people right now, we need them to be working for us, to be educating our children at a time when we need smaller class sizes. Or at a time when more and more people are depending on Social Services, we need these people. We don't need them to be in the lineups at the food bank. We need them to be delivering the services that are needed at this time. And whether I'm talking about the area of social assistance within the Social Services area, child welfare -- it doesn't matter where you look; we need more personnel working in these areas. And what we are doing instead -- we're laying people off, so they in turn will have to join the ranks of the unemployed.

If we talk about small business, I immediately think in my riding of a lot of the small grocery stores that one after another are going under, and it's basically because of the fact that we've allowed the large megastores to stay open on Sundays, and I see this government doing absolutely nothing about that. These small business stores cannot compete. They just can't, and they're seeing their whole livelihoods go down the drain. So if we're really concerned about small business and keeping people employed, then let's show that we care about this; let's do something about it.

We've been told over and over again that we've got to be tough, that we've got to hang in there and things will be better, and that Albertans are tough. Of course they're tough, but they're weakening all the time. If you lose your job, you see your family crumble -- and I'm not exaggerating; these are things that are happening to people -- how long can you be tough for? How long can you be strong? Five years ago I remember attending a meeting where a minister from this government told a crowd of people at that time that the way that we could deal with the unemployment issue in this province was to just keep smiling and that if we all smiled and appeared to be happy in this province, we would attract a number of entrepreneurs here and they would invest in this province. This was his answer.

And I see, Mr. Speaker, by hearing and reading the Speech from the Throne, that things haven't changed in the five years. These are the kinds of answers we're still getting after five years. And I suggest that the government take a serious look at unemployment, because it's hurting so many people, and sup-

port this amendment.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, the amendment to the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne focuses on unemployment and the failure of the government to take meaningful steps to cope with it. In particular, Mr. Speaker, the government has failed to address the proposition that since so much money is being put out to keep people in the necessities of life, whether by way of unemployment insurance or social allowance, but to do nothing -- would it not make sense to use that amount of money and add some more, not a great deal more, and have something to show for it at the end of the day? We have the plant, we have the men and women, and we do have still a fair amount of money. As I say, most of it is already being put out in unemployment insurance and social allowance. Not all of it comes from this government. I agree that's a problem, but none of this is addressed -- the concept that since the money is being put out anyway, there is a place in government to add to it, to have something to show at the end of the day.

And it's not as if we don't have work to be done. There are roads to be paved, parks to be constructed, sites to be prepared for industry, to name a few, on which unskilled people could be employed. For the skilled there is the completion of the LRT systems in Edmonton and Calgary, the oil upgrader at Lloydminster, sun and wind technology, preparation of the high-speed rail link that everyone talks about as being viable at some time in the future between Edmonton and Calgary. With all these resources idle now, does it not make sense to make some attempt to put them to work?

Unfortunately, a Conservative government cannot think in that way, at least not very easily, the reason being that it's not economically viable to do any of these things right now; that is to say, no one can make a profit on it right now. But that is precisely the time that government has a mandate from the people itself to do something. That is the socialist prescription. This government will not take anything from an alien philosophy even if it is patent common sense.

It follows, therefore, that when times are tough, as they are now, a Conservative government can only think of pulling in its horns, because the capitalist system, to be blunt about it, has let them down. There are not private entrepreneurs, to use the buzzword, out there who are willing to take the risk, because they face economic difficulty or ruin in doing so. Yet the government, which is spending all this money anyway, is not prepared to put in a bit more to get people back to work and have something to show for all that money that's being spent anyway at the end of the day.

It is little wonder that the one provincial government in Canada that is socialist does in fact have the best record when it comes to employment, notwithstanding that it has the fewest resources of the western provinces.

MR. DAY: And a \$48 million debt.

MR. WRIGHT: What is wrong with debt if you put the people back to work? That is the purpose of the amendment, Mr. Speaker: to address these problems. The people across the aisle can jeer and hoot, but it is a serious attempt to direct people's attention to another way of doing things which is quite alien to the philosophy of this government.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to rise and speak to the amendment made by the Leader of the Official Opposition, because I think this is a very significant and important issue. Unemployment has had a devastating effect on the people of this province, and I want to say particularly in my own constituency, where principally the people there are the so-called blue-collar workers, where we have some small businesses who are indeed feeling the frustration and anger at what has been happening to them. Mr. Speaker, they are young families who are quite often simply on the verge of starting their families, and they are hardworking and proud, and they are also tough, as the Premier and several members of the government have indicated our provincial people are. I certainly agree with that.

But their dignity is being removed. They are being subjected to applying for social services which they are not used to or want to do, but they are being forced to do that. They are forced to live off the avails of the food bank. Again, for people of this province of Alberta I think it's unfortunate that we even have food banks, let alone that people in my own constituency have to use.

The social impact has been tremendous. The loss of homes and property, the separation of families have only added to the problem. What is being done to help alleviate the situation these people are in? As it has already been referred to numerous times by various speakers in this Assembly, the throne speech does not seem to indicate there is much help on the way for these people.

It is therefore, I think, the position of this part of the House that the government must be probed and pushed to take initiatives. The government certainly lacks the kind of judgment and the initiatives that are required to put people back to work.

As mentioned by my colleague from Calgary Mountain View, workers are being forced to leave the province; my own immediate family members have had to leave the province to seek employment in eastern Canada. I think it's terrible that we who are supposedly a have province, a province who not so long ago boasted about the resources, the riches, that we have and indeed we have, could somehow end up in the situation we are now.

I think the government must be condemned for lacking to take the proper steps to keep the economy of this province up rather than yielding to the corporate sector, the larger oil companies, granting financial assistance to these companies without a provision that employment would be created as a result of this gift to them. The holiday on royalties, the incentive programs that are being dished out to companies, to multinationals, to create employment rather than putting the money into work projects that would put people of this province to work are obviously a fallacy, a poor direction being taken by this government.

On a daily basis I have people from my constituency that are calling to complain -- in fact, begging that we urge the government to do something about their situation. They have their families, young children, who are being subjected to situations which are certainly not good for them. It's not good for the family. Yet I'm in the hopeless position of saying we're attempting to do what we can, but certainly it appears that the philosophy of this government that's in power now does not have the fortitude or the intention of dealing with the average individual in this province, the average citizen, but rather they are more concerned about defeated cabinet ministers and party people.

I think these people are awakening to the fact there needs to be a change in this province. There needs to be a change in

direction. Hopefully, as other members of my caucus have stated, they're certainly not going to sit back and let this government continue to impose the kind of hardships that they are being subjected to for much longer. I'm sure, as other people have said, that come the next provincial election, hopefully the communities, the citizens throughout this province, are going to react in such a way that there will be a change in the philosophy and approach of dealing with unemployment in this province by another form of government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question. Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to lend my support to the motion as amended by the opposition leader a few days ago. It seems to me that what the motion calls for is a concerted effort on behalf of those to whom the public turns for leadership with respect to the most profound crisis experienced in this province since the 1930s. On the other hand, maybe the last world war was the most profound crisis; I don't want to have to compare one with the other. I think they've been both pretty atrocious parts of our history, and I would like to see them permanently consigned to the dustbin of history so that we don't have to see them repeated again and again.

The amendment calls for some specific recommendations from the Speech from the Throne, or from the government, to deal with the unemployment crisis. We've seen recently, as a matter of fact, in the United States a terribly serious error of grievous proportions occurring in the White House. Although it took some months, Mr. Speaker, even the President finally went out and said, "Oh, oh, I goofed; I did make a mistake." Governments are composed of people, and people make mistakes. No one wants to be unduly harsh on this government. On the other hand, surely it doesn't take that much guts to refer in the throne speech to specific programs which will help alleviate the most pressing condition in the province.

Now, I suspect that one of the reasons that the throne speech doesn't contain those specific recommendations and indications of a new policy orientation is because, as has been speculated before, the government itself has no new ideas and is utterly ideologically resistant to the presentation of ideas from other than their own ranks. Well, Mr. Speaker, if you want fresh ideas, you don't go just to your own members to get them.

What you do is you go to the public and ask the public what

their ideas are. You ask the public what their priorities are. It's true that you have to have guts to do it. It's true that you're going to be criticized if you do it. And you know what? It's even true that every once in a while opposition members are going to be criticized for something that they do when they engage in that public dialogue in an attempt to elicit the human, the well-thought-out, and best responses and ideas of ordinary, average Albertans. They, after all, are no lower than us in any sense of a hierarchy. They, after all, are the people who place us here and place their trust in us.

If you want to know how bad the unemployment crisis is in my riding, let me give you just a little example. In one little section of the riding of Edmonton Highlands, unemployment comes to 44 percent. That's atrocious, Mr. Speaker. Do you think that the people in the Boyle Street area like this building and what we do in this building, and like a Speech from the Throne when it doesn't talk about the serious condition under which they live without any hope?

We're not talking about transients. I know everybody in the world likes to think that Boyle Street area is just full of transients. It used to have a fair amount of transients; not so anymore. It is now the dumping ground for the deinstitutionalized. It is now the only place that the chronically unemployed can go to find support mechanisms that will keep them alive in the absence of progressive measures which will put the economy onto a road of recovery. I do note that there is an absence of reference to the road of recovery in the throne speech, and just as well, Mr. Speaker, because I think that would have been misleading without substance, without programs.

I see the Speaker is about to rise. I understand it's 5:29. I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: All members in favour of the motion to adjourn, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Motion carries.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, before moving we adjourn the House, I'd like to indicate that it's not the intention that the House would sit tomorrow evening.

[At 5:29 p.m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

