

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, March 16, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/03/16

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us a daily awareness of the precious gift of life which You have given us.

As members of this Legislative Assembly we dedicate our lives anew to the service of our province and our country.

Amen.

head: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice of a motion recognizing the rights of Alberta's aboriginal people to a secure economic base and to self-government and calling on the provincial government to negotiate the conditions of such self-government in good faith at the upcoming first ministers' meeting next week.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 16
Police Act**

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 16, Police Act.

This Bill addresses procedures for dealing with complaints about police policies, levels of service, discipline, and dismissal. The Bill delineates the duties of municipal council, the police commission, and chief of police. The Bill also addresses the liability of a police officer and the municipality. Municipal council will be responsible, as a master is for his servant, for the actions of a police officer. Finally, the Bill provides a number of options to permit Alberta communities to establish policing services consistent with local needs and the available financial resources.

[Leave granted; Bill 16 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, recently there was the unusual circumstance of a Premiers' Conference being called at the request of one province, in this case Newfoundland, because of a problem they were having with the federal government over cod matters on the east coast. There has been a fair amount of interest in the circumstances leading to that meeting, and so I would table correspondence regarding it, certain correspondence that was presented to us in the meeting, and a windup.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the response to Order for a Return 165 accepted March 12, 1987.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual reports for the period April 1, 1985, to March 31, 1986, for the Alberta Human Rights Commission, the Department of Labour, and the pension benefits branch, and also copies of the order in council appointing the board of examiners under the Electrical Protection Act.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual report of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1986, which at that time was under the capable chairmanship of the Member for Lethbridge West.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I trust members have noticed on their desks a strange object, a *Zeke and the Indoor Plants* pencil. I would like to remind members that next Monday night at 7 p.m. AADAC and the CBC will be showing an award-winning production by the Prairie River junior high school, and if you watch that program you'll know what the pencil is all about.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling the annual report of the Alberta Research Council for the year ended March 31, 1986, at which time it was under the capable chairmanship of my colleague to my right, the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to the members, 58 grade 6 students from Falconridge elementary school in the fine constituency of Calgary McCall. These students are ably accompanied by teachers Bruce Hurl, Gordon Hunter, Richard Murphy, Joris Kempers, and Joe McKee, their transportation director, is with them also. Falconridge elementary school is one of our fine schools in the constituency of Calgary McCall. It is overloaded, and certainly the community is looking forward to an addition to that particular school. I would like to ask that they rise and receive the normal welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to be able to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly, 53 grade 6 students from the constituency of Edmonton Belmont and from the school of McLeod. They are accompanied by two teachers, Ms McKeen and Ms C. Nishimura, and by a parent, Mrs. Dec. They are seated in the public gallery. I'd ask that they all rise to receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, four student leaders from the University of Calgary. They're Terry Weed, the vice-president of finance elect; Bob Armstrong, the *Gauntlet* editor; Mike Beaton, the external commissioner; Don Kozak, the vice-president of external affairs. I would ask them to rise and receive the usual warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, 12 students of the grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 gifted and talented class of the H.A. Kostash school in Smoky Lake, which is in the Redwater-Andrew constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Lorraine Leskiw,

and one parent, the bus driver, Mrs. Teresa Uglanica. They are seated in the members' gallery. At this time I'd like them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Free Trade

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. The Premier has previously acknowledged that Alberta's vital interests are at stake in the free trade negotiations, and we're told now that we're on the fast track. At the First Ministers' Conference last week, the Premier appeared to abandon Alberta's right to express its view through a formal ratification process. My question to the Premier is this: has the Premier now empowered the federal government and Mr. Reisman to make commitments on Alberta's behalf? In other words, have we given up our right to have ratification of this process?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, let me go on with the Premier then. I always appreciate his answers when he gives it so shortly. But my question is: would the Premier now be so good as to tell us then what is the role of the Premier in this ratification process? Is in fact the government going to go ahead and make these on the fast track, make some negotiations, commit us to certain things? What role do the Premiers have then at this point?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think, as all members know, that it would be very difficult to enter into a comprehensive trade arrangement with the United States that was not supported by the provinces. The federal government realizes that, and therefore the Premiers have been involved in a consultation basis that's probably without match in history. What we have done is, first, set up a group of officials who meet regularly and discuss almost daily with Ambassador Reisman the various matters in which he is negotiating. Then we established also a group of designated ministers who meet also to obtain information on how the negotiations are coming, to have input from the provinces in every detail of negotiations. And then, as members know, we are meeting quarterly as first ministers to discuss these matters, at which meeting we usually get a very exhaustive report from Minister Carney and from Ambassador Reisman and, of course, from the Prime Minister.

All of these meetings have kept the provinces fully informed and a part of the negotiating process. It's our belief that if that's maintained and if we are fully involved every step of the way in the negotiating process, then approval of the agreement, once we see it in its final form, will come almost automatically. Nevertheless, there are some provinces who feel that there should be a type of formula or process for ratification. That matter has been left open for further discussions, should it appear necessary.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Premier, I think Albertans and Canadians want to know more about this. They don't trust Conservatives behind closed doors deciding something as important as this. And my question simply is this: the Premier says it will be automatic; could he at least table in the Legislature the things that we're prepared to give up in provincial rights then to get to this automatic consen-

sus? If not, then why do we give up at this point our ratification process?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I really just answered that, but I say again, first of all, I didn't say it'd be automatic. And we aren't prepared to give up any provincial rights. There's nothing I said in my answer that could have led to that conclusion. I would say, though, that we are going through a consultative process that has been unmatched in the past, and that has us fully aware of all of the negotiations. It appears that in June we will be able to see close to a draft agreement, which will have been worked on by our officials and our ministers, leading up to the first ministers' meeting in June. Additional work would then go on, and we have another meeting scheduled for September, at which time I think we would be close to a final agreement, if a final agreement is possible. There are many hurdles to go before we'd ever get to that stage.

MR. MARTIN: Well, supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Today the federal House of Commons is beginning a series of debates on this important topic. When we get this draft agreement that the Premier's talking about, would he make a commitment to this Legislature that he would bring it back here so we could debate it in the Legislature so that the people of Alberta know what we're getting into?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there'd be plenty of opportunity. I'd be willing to bring forth a resolution that would allow the Legislature to endorse the government's decision.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier. What confidence can Albertans have that this government can defend the province's interest in a free-trade deal without some formal ratification formula, in light of a long list of past failures by this government in extracting federal commitments for Alberta, such as reneging on the Husky Oil upgrader, the Syncrude loan assistance, and so on and so forth?

MR. TAYLOR: We could go on all day.

MR. GETTY: Well, you could. I've heard that.

Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Alberta have illustrated in the past and continue to illustrate the confidence they have in this government.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate . . . I was so amazed by that remark that you just about caught me. I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton Centre.

Private Health Care Insurance

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, during the entire of last week the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, as I understood him, was consistent in saying that the purpose of introducing Bill 14 was to have private insurers who want to provide medical coverage for items that are not now covered by the Alberta

health care insurance plan. But then when the minister tabled his fact sheet on Friday, there was a contradiction when he says the main purpose is, "To allow a private insurer to indemnify a resident for the cost of any basic health service" or any "extended health service." Could the minister please clarify this contradiction? Will private insurance allow competition with the Alberta medical plan or not?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, there is no contradiction whatever. The legislation is clear in that it would remove the prohibition in the existing legislation against private insurers insuring medical services of whatever kind. What I did say is that it was not the government's intention to have that clause result in private insurers taking over the medical care system in Alberta. I have stated numerous times in the House that the fee schedule charged by the Alberta health care insurance plan is obviously much, much lower than any private-sector insurers could compete with. That is the very reason why some five provinces who have identical legislation don't have private health care coverage for items covered by their health care insurance plan.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, taking care not to get into the Bill.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But prior to the introduction of the Bill, did the minister commission or receive any studies of the probable effects on the Alberta health care insurance plan of interplay between the provisions of Bill 14, last year's granting of doctors the right to opt out of the plan, and any moves the minister may be contemplating to deinsure services, and if so will he table such studies in the Assembly?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, the very reason that we got into the debate as to what occurred in other provinces was with respect to that very question. The best way in which one can determine the effect of legislation that's being proposed or policies that are being proposed is to look at other jurisdictions and see whether they have anything that's very similar or identical in nature. In this case we have several provinces with identical legislation. In that regard I think that's the best place to look for examples of how it works. I wouldn't think it would be very productive to try to undertake a consultant study to find out what we already know from other provinces.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you. But looking at other jurisdictions -- has the minister spoken with his own deputy minister, Dr. Alex McPherson, who spent some time in Australia, about the Australian experience with private competition against the publicly administered health care plan, where a conservative government dedicated to cutting costs and cutting services caused the virtual destruction of the health care plan in Australia?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister is duty bound to respond with respect to the Alberta jurisdiction, not Australia.

MR. M. MOORE: Well, I'll just respond by saying that I haven't spoken with my deputy minister, no, because he hasn't returned from Australia yet.

REV. ROBERTS: He really hopped over that one, Mr. Speaker. Is it the government's intent to create a two-tiered system of

health care, one for the rich and one for the rest of us?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker. I've indicated very clearly in the Legislature on a number of occasions that we're fully committed to continuing to provide the best medical care system of anywhere in Canada in this province, and that commitment is not altered by the introduction of Bill 14 or by any comments from the hon. member opposite.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In light of the confusion that follows as to what plan he is following or what his interpretation of what provinces have, what plans, could he give his commitment to the Legislature that he will outlaw any insurance that duplicates the medical insurance here in Alberta, as do Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, B.C., and Prince Edward Island?

MR. M. MOORE: The only confusion that exists, if there is any, Mr. Speaker, is in the mind of the hon. gentleman who just asked the question. The member hasn't recognized that what we have done is introduce for debate an amendment that will allow the private-sector insurance companies to provide medical insurance in Alberta when and if they are able to compete with either the government's plan or any other private plan. That is the same legislation that exists in a number of provinces, and I can give no further guarantees except that the Alberta health care insurance plan is going to continue to operate, as I've said many times.

DR. CASSIN: Mr. Speaker, to the minister of health. I would like the minister of health to let the people of Alberta know that they will have the options of other alternatives rather than waiting for two to three years to get into the state hospital, as is the case in other jurisdictions where we have state medicine.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care rather than the minister of health.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the options to purchase insurance for medical services that are not now covered by the Alberta health care insurance plan -- if the amendments to the Bill are passed -- will certainly be there. That's what exists, as I understand it, in a good number of other provinces, and I can only make that commitment. I don't know then whether there will be opportunities for people to purchase insurance coverage for practices that might be carried out in other countries or not.

Community Schools

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Education. This government's recent cutbacks have been particularly cruel to community schools by slashing 50 percent of their grants while other areas took only 3 percent cuts. There are few government programs that both involve such a wide constituency and save the taxpayer money. My two sentences. Now the first question to the minister is: since in 1983 the community schools were put under the joint management of a committee of deputy ministers from the departments of Education, Advanced Education, recreation, and Culture, did this committee make a recommendation to the minister on the funding of the schools?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: No, they did not, Mr. Speaker. The deci-

sions, the funding for community schools in this province is totally under my budget for the Department of Education. I am responsible for those dollars, not an interdepartmental committee.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, this time to the Minister of Recreation and Parks. Given the number of recreational programs that are undertaken in community schools for Albertans of all ages, did the Minister of Recreation and Parks support these 50 percent cuts?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member. As a government member, I too support what this government is doing in the way of restraint in overall budget expenses. If he's referring to some specific instance that I replied to, I would gladly wish to respond to that instance. But as far as answering the question directly: yes, I support the expenditure of review that the government is going through.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might supplement some information given by the Minister of Recreation and Parks. All schools in Alberta are funded amongst the highest support in all of Canada. In addition to that, community schools are funded an additional \$37,500 by the proposals in my budget, which will come before this Legislature, and that will take place as of September 1. I think it's an important point to clarify some of the statements made by the leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I think that's a ministerial statement that I'd like the opportunity to respond to at the end of question period. Well, she's absolutely haywire. I have the document here to show that. I'd like to bring it up at the end of question period then as a point of order, because she's way out.

This particular supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Advanced Education. Sorry to wave back and forth there. Considering the opportunities community schools give Albertans for upgrading their education, did the Minister of Advanced Education know anything about the community schools being reduced?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did, and I support fully the actions and recommendations of my colleague the Minister of Education. I think what the hon. member is overlooking is the fact that there's ample opportunity for these schools to continue and, in fact, expand if the community support is there for them. The government funding which is still contained within the coming budget for the next fiscal year is very generous in comparison with many provinces.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, if they pay for it themselves, they can have it. That's very enlightening.

Mr. Speaker, this time it's to the Minister of Culture; I think he's been prepared for it this time. Given that a number of ethnic groups depend on community schools as their meeting place and activity centre and that these cutbacks fly in the face of his new mandate as multiculturalism minister, did he support the 50 percent cuts?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, my answer would be similar to my hon. colleagues' with respect to the 50 percent cut. That's a judgment that has to be made in light of the budget circumstance. My hope would be that organizations throughout the province continue to work as communities and in a consult-

ive manner with each other with the schools as a focal point.

MR. PASHAK: My question is to the Minister of Education. Has her department done any studies to look at the long-term cost consequences of cutting support for community schools?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I welcome an opportunity to speak to some of the priorities which I feel are fundamental to the delivery of a basic education program within the dollars available to the province to do it. My first priority will always be the student, but beyond that the first priority has to be the basic program that goes to students in our classrooms. The community school program is an excellent program. It has been an integration of home and community. But when I was looking at all of the grants to school boards across this province, I thought it very important to look at a program which funds 66 out of 1,500 schools across this province, the question being whether I should reduce the grants for basic education or reduce in some small way the support to community schools.

Community schools continue to have an additional \$37,000 as of September 1, over and above what every other school board in this province is getting for the operation of its schools. That's a very fundamental point. I believe that they can continue to work with their communities and to develop the most important program using those extra \$37,000 that other schools don't have and, quite frankly, would love to have.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. Would she confirm whether or not any organizations in the school system throughout the province, whether they're community schools or noncommunity schools, would be denied access to use those school facilities?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. In fact, across this province municipalities and school boards are entering into joint-use agreements. I think one of the perceptions is that it is impossible to use a school building outside of regular school hours. That is not the case. Schools and municipalities are working together to develop those kinds of things, but in addition to that the community schools currently designated are getting an additional \$37,000 over and above what other schools get. As well, there are schools in this province operating as fully as community schools as is possible to define within the model. They are doing it without an extra cent of provincial government dollars to do that. I applaud them, and I am looking at ways in which we can continue the important community school program within the available dollars, an essential question.

Tax Reform

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Provincial Treasurer, and it deals with federal Finance minister Michael Wilson's proposed tax reform package scheduled for release in June. Can the minister indicate what role the provincial treasurers of the 10 provinces have had as to input into this proposed process of the federal Finance minister?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity last Thursday to meet with Mr. Wilson, and all provinces participated in the discussion on several of his proposals which will deal with the changes in the corporate and personal income tax system and, moreover, in a very general way had a discussion

about the way in which he will replace the federal sales tax under something either called the business transfer tax or a value-added tax.

While I have been somewhat reluctant to provide any kind of credit to the minister before this past Thursday, I should say that the meeting this past week did provide us with an ample opportunity to discuss both the priorities of the provincial governments and to suggest ways to him that he could pattern the changes, both in the corporate and the personal tax side, to parallel the objectives of this government, and he was very acceptable to listening to our recommendations.

In a capsule, Mr. Speaker, while I can't give details as to all the items that were discussed, it should be noted that on the personal and corporate side there will be a clear attempt to broaden the base and to reduce the marginal tax rates, and that's the objective that we share in a general sense.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. I see the Provincial Treasurer is getting in shape for Friday. Can the Provincial Treasurer indicate to the Assembly what the provincial government's recommendation is re a proposed value-added tax?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that one of the unresolved questions is whether or not the federal government will be able to bring forward a business transfer tax or value-added tax which would bring into force the taxing powers both of the federal government and the provincial governments in one tax. Now that's a question which of course raises some questions for us in Alberta since we do not have a sales tax and, of course, the people of Alberta recognize that as being one of the unique advantages of living in Alberta, and we'd like to continue with that profile. Nonetheless, if all the provinces do not participate in some form of a sales tax on sales within their provinces, I would imagine that the federal government will move with something called a business transfer tax which will be essentially an indirect tax which will not show up in any of the sales invoices but would be simply paid by the retailer directly to the federal government.

If they were to proceed with the value-added tax, Mr. Speaker, it would require that each sale record both the provincial and federal tax calculations, and as you can anticipate -- as I'm sure the Member for Clover Bar can anticipate -- this would add additional administrative and time burdens to the private sector, and the government would like to avoid that as well.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, has the minister or the minister's department had an opportunity to see what effect the proposed value-added or the business transfer tax would have, especially on our petroleum industry?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, from his wealth of experience in this House, shows that he understands some of the subtleties and some of the problems which are open to discussion right now, and that is: what will the federal government do with respect to the resource industry?

Obviously, we have said that royalties nor government expenditures should not be taxed by another government. That principle is clearly found in the current Canadian BNA Act, Canadian Constitution/BNA Act, and we adhere strongly to that principle. Nonetheless, the way in which the b.t.t. will be levied and the way in which it'll operate has not yet been fully assessed by the federal government, and we're looking forward to

another opportunity, probably in May, to discuss more particularly and more fully the concepts, the problems, and the way in the business transfer tax will move.

I should say just by way of footnote, Mr. Speaker, that it is my understanding, my impression at least -- and I'm not committing the federal government to any particular time frame -- that they would move with the corporate income tax adjustments and the personal income tax adjustments before they brought in the business transfer tax. It is their assumption and their attempt to try and maintain these taxes in a neutral sense so that there's not any substantial increase in total taxes collected by the federal government. And we would hope that in the case of Alberta, where we do not have a sales tax, we do not have an opportunity to move back in as other provinces do, that we will find some way, at least in the short term, to deal with that shortfall and revenues collected on the personal and corporate tax side if there is a tax broadening and a reduction in the rates.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, with the minister having discussions with his federal counterpart, is the minister in a position to indicate if he has any optimism that the new system will simplify the tax system that we have now?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that's of course one of the objectives, and it of course has been one of the priorities of this government, to simplify the current tax system. We've argued strong and loud on that point. In fact, we're on record in the white paper analysis showing that that should be accomplished, and as a government we would fully support any moves which would do just that; that is, to make it simpler to get the professionals out of the game, if you like, and to ensure that the people understand the consequences of the tax decisions made by the federal government in particular.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a supplemental to the minister. Could he also share with us his discussions with the finance minister as to whether or not they will remove the discrimination against the Alberta and Saskatchewan oil industries and that risk money for going into the oil industry will be treated the same as risk money going into the mining industry?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear that over the course of the last seven months this government has taken clear time and a clear opportunity to state the inequities which now exist with respect to the taxation, the depletion, the exploration development -- ways in which that's treated under the tax Act -- and moreover, the flowthrough potential in the mining and the oil and gas industry. Let me make it very clear that we have made that point time and time again, that we would like to see symmetry between the two industries, the extractive industries, and have strongly encouraged Mr. Wilson to make those corrections.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would consider documenting an analysis paper on the effects of the proposed tax changes by the federal government and at the same time outline the taxes as we now have them, including tax expenditures which we do not account for, and table that document in this Assembly so that we here in this Assembly can at least get some idea where we're going in the future with this whole tax reform business.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there will be a

variety of ways to focus debate on the tax proposals. It seems to me that before the province can bring any suggestions forward, we would have to know the shape and the form of what the federal government proposes. And in that context, to assist the hon. member, I think it is a matter of record that Mr. Wilson, the federal Finance minister, will attempt to bring a paper down before the summer session adjourns, and then we'll have an opportunity for full debate, I'm sure, as to the important fundamental points. But that will be an opportunity, I think, for all Canadians and all Albertans to be part of that debate. I'm not too sure how the government will respond at this point except to say that we are doing an extensive amount of internal work ourselves. We're evaluating the proposal in the context of local government, local ministry, and of course taxation proposals which may impinge upon the jurisdiction and opportunity of the provincial government to move with its own economic objectives.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Stettler followed by the Member for Edmonton Glengarry.

Social Services Abuse

MR. DOWNEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Social Services. It has come to my attention that a successful Edmonton businessman who had substantial income in 1986 and who has substantial personal and business assets has applied for a welfare payment here in the city and in fact has been successful in getting one. My question to the minister is: what are the criteria used when assessing an individual to qualify for welfare benefits?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, to answer the question in detail, I believe it would be more appropriate to have that question on the Order Paper. But I would say to the hon. member that obviously assets and income are a part of the test, and where there have been instances of either abuse or, alternately, mistakes made by the frontline income security workers brought to our attention, they're immediately investigated.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. If it is found then that an abuse of the system has taken place, will the perpetrator be prosecuted?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, obviously a legal opinion would probably be in order to address the specifics of any question, but certainly a repayment in the first instance would be required. But I think it's important to note that it is certainly true that when there are over 5,000 people working throughout the province in the Social Services department and all of them, like us, being human, mistakes can be made. A review of the system over the course of last winter, when I believe there were enough cases investigated to give us a pretty clear understanding of how the services were being delivered -- in fact there are a number of instances where also we believed that an underpayment had occurred. So while I think it's important to note that staff are delivering the benefits in the best way possible and the fairest way possible, it is obviously within the capacity of the system that mistakes will be made.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary then, Edmonton Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: To the minister, Mr. Speaker. What at-

tempts have been made in the department to decrease the caseloads in order that income security workers can better do their jobs?

MRS. OSTERMAN: By hiring additional staff, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question? Member for Edmonton Glengarry followed by the Member for Calgary Buffalo.

Outfitting Industry

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Last Thursday I presented the minister and the Legislature with information regarding Ken Trudell's purchase of an allotment of nonresident sheep permits in Alberta. Has the minister's investigation verified this sale?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, my staff have been instructed to make a thorough investigation of it, and I would hope within the next day or two I could report back to the Legislature on that issue.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. I would look forward to seeing that. Will the minister as part of this investigate all hunts booked by Solomon Mountain Trophy Hunts to ascertain to what extent fees are being paid to Ken Trudell rather than Alberta guides?

MR. SPARROW: We have asked our staff to do a thorough investigation with that information which was given to us, and that was part and parcel of it.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. For the Attorney General, concerning information that I tabled and information that I sent to his office last week. I'm curious as to the results of his investigations as well. Has the Attorney General yet verified that this sale took place in contravention of existing laws?

MR. HORSMAN: No, Mr. Speaker. Having been away from the Assembly in Ottawa at the end of last week, I have not had an opportunity of reviewing that matter as yet. That will be undertaken by officials of the department.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. I'm glad to have that assurance. Will the Attorney General assure also that based on investigations, the appropriate and severe as possible proceedings should be launched if this investigation proves that such proceedings are warranted?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, at this stage that question is hypothetical.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, supplementary question.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the ministry of the hon. member in charge of hunting licences. Could you tell us whether or not you've had any requests or whether the minister has had any requests for transfers or sales from any other licences that are reportedly going to be granted under the new regulations?

MR. SPARROW: Personally, Mr. Speaker, I have not. The

policy as stated would go into effect for all species in 1988. Requests, though, could be considered during 1987 with reference to the 1971 sheep outfitters' policy. No specific recommendations have come forward. If they do come forward, they will be reviewed by the 17-man committee that has been set up and will be implemented, and that recommendation would come to me before any transfers take place. I'm sure that protection is built into the new policy to make sure that Albertans continue to control and own their guiding and outfitting services.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Calgary Buffalo followed by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Community Schools (continued)

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Education. Two weeks ago, the minister told community school supporters that the community school project was the only pilot project not suspended altogether in her budget announcement. This was tantamount to providing a sentence of life imprisonment rather than capital punishment. But I do know that the fact was not in fact very consoling to community school users who see the program being crippled and who presented the minister with thousands of signatures. Since these schools do provide additional services to communities, particularly to inner-city communities with single parent problems and large ethnic communities, does the minister feel that other departments of government should take some responsibility for paying a share of the funding commensurate with the benefits that accrue to their responsibilities?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, before I let the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo get away with saying something which I didn't say, what I did say was that community schools was one of the non-universal programs which would not be reduced by as great an amount as others would. Secondly, it's important to note that other programs of government are completely accessible within the rules of the programs to community schools. For a portion of that answer, I would refer to my hon. colleague the Minister of Career Development and Employment.

MR. ORMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have met on three separate occasions with representatives of community schools in this province with a view to examining their program and determining whether or not within the department of Career Development and Employment there are programs that may be accessible to community schools. Certainly we are not looking to backdoor cuts, but we certainly are willing to make available existing programs within this government to assist them if in fact they are meeting the objectives of those particular departments.

The community schools do offer a component of training and career experience. Mr. Speaker, and I, as I said, have examined with the community schools the options within my department and will continue to do so, hoping to move to a positive conclusion.

MR. CHUMIR: If I understood the minister of manpower's statement, he indicated that he is ready to provide some assistance to the schools.

I was wondering, to the Minister of Education, has the minister discussed this particular issue and the potential of such aid

with the ministers of manpower, Social Services, and Culture so that there is some co-ordination in terms of the possible aid to keep this valuable program going?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Liberal caucus doesn't work the way the government cabinet and caucus do. But yes, we have discussed, and we will continue to discuss amongst us all, the effective implementation of managing during a time of fewer dollars. That's what we're doing. That's why community schools are being given extra dollars over and above every school in this province: to define what are the most important parts of their program; to ensure that they can endure.

MR. CHUMIR: To the Minister of Education. The hon. minister of manpower has said that he is prepared to consider assisting those schools. What is the Minister of Education doing to consult and make sure that that offer of assistance advances?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, I have met with many, many community schools across this province, with many of the ad hoc communities, with the community education association, and I have made clear to them -- and I will make clear to all of them -- that if they wish to access some of the programs in government beyond the community school dollars, they have every opportunity to do so, and I will assist them in that approach.

MR. SPEAKER: A final supplementary, the Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you. To the Minister of Education. Does the Minister of Education feel that the spending of \$4 million or \$5 million to send Alberta students to Expo and export tourist jobs to British Columbia as occurred last year is a higher priority than spending that money on community schools?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: [inaudible] is in effect in that it seeks an opinion. Hon. minister, quickly reply. It's opinion -- opinion . . .

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I believe that students -- having gone to Expo was very much a part of an educational experience for those students. However, I don't think that given the same economic circumstances we are now involved in, that perhaps that decision may have been made in today's kind of economic climate. But at the time it was made, it was an important one. It was an important one for the education of those children and an important one for the Canadian context.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yes, supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It was also an election year.

I wonder if the minister would advise the Assembly if she had her officials conduct a cost/benefit study of that 50 percent cut to community schools, and especially inner-city community schools, to determine in fact if the savings accrued by her department are going to be more than taken up in extra expenses in policing community recreation buildings, other English as a Second Language facilities, and so on.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I looked very, very carefully at community school budgets, but I also looked very carefully at the budgets of 1,500 other schools in this province and at the way that dollars from education flow to those schools through their school boards. It was certainly a judgment, but it was a judgment which I would have to make again in terms of the recommendations coming towards this Assembly in the budget; that is, that there are extra dollars over and above the dollars that go to all schools in the province which are already supported to among the highest level in Canada. I believe that community schools are working very hard to ensure that the very best parts of their program can continue in this difficult fiscal environment.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Strathcona followed by the Member for Red Deer North, if there's time.

Private Legal Counsel

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General confirm that as part of economy measures the highly skilled departmental counsel from the department who formerly handled family and child welfare cases in the courts have been taken off these cases and the cases instead have been given to counsel in private practice?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of all the individual placements that have taken place within the Department of the Attorney General as a result of the impending budget. The current budget, of course, is still in place, and some moves are being made, but if it appears that some individual reallocation has to take place, then so be it.

MR. WRIGHT: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In the case of the family courts, though, as in any other such case, was an investigation made as to the cost effectiveness of this measure, and if so, what savings have been effected?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, we're leading into a discussion of the estimates of the Department of the Attorney General, which will of course be before the Assembly in due course.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, this is the past, the fact.

My next supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Was the firm that is doing all or most of the Edmonton work -- in which, by the way, a brother of a former minister of this government is a partner -- chosen on the basis of merit or price or patronage or what?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leaving a pall over this Assembly.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the people who are chosen to do work on behalf of the Crown in the private sector are chosen on the basis of their qualifications and their ability to do the job.

AN HON. MEMBER: Being a PC.

MR. WRIGHT: That being so, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Attorney General will tell us: in letting such a contract, what steps are taken to ensure that the counsel are skilled in the area and, for example, that articling students are not taking guardianship trials?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, there are certain trials which

can be undertaken by articling students, certain aspects of work that can be done [interjections] If the hon. leader wishes to hear my answer, please let me finish. The interruptions from the other side during the course of ministerial remarks, I've noted, is increasing. I should like to have the courtesy of silence, and particularly from the leader of the Liberal Party, who has yet an opportunity to ask a supplementary, should he wish to do so.

MR. TAYLOR: Give me an office. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. It's just that the Chair notes that members really should note themselves that they are wasting their own time of question period.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the Liberal Party has an office here and in the Legislature Annex. If it's not big enough for him, he can wait a considerable time.

The answer to the question, of course, is that qualified members of the legal profession in Alberta are sought in the private sector to do work on behalf of government from time to time, here in Edmonton and in other parts of the province, and qualifications are the rule. The implications inherent in the question and supplementary questions are not worthy of the members of the opposition in this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we complete this complete set of questions. Is there agreement?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried. Further supplementaries on this issue? Member for Calgary Buffalo, a question?

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Attorney General on the issue of hiring private counsel. I wonder whether the Attorney General would be able to tell us why the provincial government has retained, to represent the government, Toronto lawyers on a matter arising out of the Provincial Treasurer's office when there are clearly competent attorneys in Alberta who are able to handle this. Or is the minister saying that we don't have competent attorneys?

MR. HORSMAN: There are times, of course, Mr. Speaker -- a very few -- when it is necessary to seek counsel outside of Alberta, when it is apparent that many of the firms which have qualified tax experts, in particular, represent clients within Alberta who might put those firms into a conflict-of-interest situation. Those are always considered and have been, in particular, if the hon. member wishes to get particular on questions relative to this matter. I've gone over that issue very carefully with departmental officials. Only in the event that there are no qualified Alberta practitioners who have no conflict of interest because of their clients they represent would we retain outside counsel.

But on the other hand, I must say, Mr. Speaker, that this has very little to do with the family court situation that arose in the original question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair took it as a staffing issue, hon. member. Further supplementaries? The time for question period has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent to move the following motion under Standing Order 40:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to construct a permanent means by which the handicapped can enter the Legislature Building by the main front door, to be completed in the next fiscal year.

Do you want discussion? I've got about one minute.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the member have copies to be distributed?

MR. TAYLOR: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: They could be distributed, and then if the member would speak to Standing Order 40 as to the urgency of debate, not to the issue, please.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I think there's no question that any impediment or any barrier for any citizen of Alberta to be able to attend this sitting is a matter of urgency. The fact that it may not have occurred to people before doesn't take away from the fact that there are a great many people, due to the fact they use wheelchairs, that cannot enter the main front door. They have to enter to the side or one of the other doors.

Mr. Speaker, I think it should be demonstrated to those Albertans who are disabled that although this government has had a commendable record and has committed itself to funding programs for the disabled to the extent that it has outshone other provinces in this regard, just in the last week the government reconfirmed their financial commitment to disabled Albertans, promising that its funding to disabled programs will continue to lead the other provinces.

But at the same time that these commendable efforts are made, the fact remains that many disabled Albertans, when they come to the province's Legislature, must use the service entrance at the back portion of the building.

MR. OLDRING: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Member, for a moment please give way.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the Liberal Party isn't addressing the urgency of the situation; he's talking to the substance of the motion, which I haven't received a copy of yet.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Two issues, hon. member. Sergeant-at-Arms. to the pages, where are the motions, please? The House will halt until every member has a copy.

With respect to the point of order as raised, hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. please indeed focus on the urgency, why it must be dealt with on this day.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it must be dealt with on this day because any examination of the Order Paper business shows that there's no motion, there is nothing in process that will indeed ask the Legislature to go ahead and put in a method of access for the disabled to have access to this Legislature. It's all right to say that we didn't think of it until now, but that doesn't take away from the fact that there are literally dozens and maybe

hundreds of people out there that would love to enter through the front main door of this Legislature. Therefore, I don't think there is any question that it's urgent, that we rectify it as soon as possible or at least give the indication that we're going to rectify it within the next budget year.

MR. SPEAKER: Other members wishing to speak to the urgency?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think all members appreciate the subject matter of the motion very much, but we're having difficulty, under Standing Order 40, with the extreme urgency attached to it.

Certainly, during Mr. Hansen's recent visit to our building it did emphasize the disadvantages that some handicapped persons have in our society, and the hon. member has made reference to the steps that have been taken by this government to alleviate those. But looking at the wording in the motion, that should it be passed it "be completed within the next fiscal year," that leaves me to believe that by the nature of the project involved, if this motion were debated even several months hence, the intent of the motion, the objective of the motion -- should it be passed -- could still be met, that the structure be completed by the end of the next fiscal year.

Several years ago the government did act, and there are two accesses to the building: one by automobile and elevator for those arriving through the parkade, and through the southeast door for persons arriving that way through the ramp and thence into the building.

I must say I was a little surprised that the hon. member did object to the improvements that were made to this Assembly, which included space for wheelchairs. However, notwithstanding that, I think this request for unanimous consent based on the immediacy or the urgency should be defeated because the hon. member will have ample opportunity during the next weeks to present this motion and his idea following ordinary procedure.

MR. SPEAKER: A request has been made by the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon for unanimous consent to debate the motion.

All those in favour please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The request fails.

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.

[Adjourned debate March 13: Dr. West]

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, on March 5 Her Honour the Honourable Helen Hunley, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta, admirably . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member. Order please, in the Chamber. Private conversations in the lounge, hon. members. Member for Vermilion-Viking, continue please.

DR. WEST: Thank you. The Hon. Helen Hunley, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta, admirably delivered the throne speech, which I have the opportunity to address now. This throne speech, as all others, addresses the responsibility and direction a government has in the leadership of its people. The people of Vermilion-Viking, the constituency I proudly represent, accept the challenges of this throne speech, acknowledging the economically controlled times and willing to work on the positive initiatives of today for a better future in this great province.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, may I say with a great deal of admiration how much I enjoyed the hon. Member for Highwood's moving of the Speech from the Throne. He always seems to add a flavour of common sense and realism with a little sense of humour that we would all like to see more of. The constituents of Red Deer North should be equally very proud of their member who so eloquently seconded the throne speech and spoke so well and proudly of his constituency on their behalf. Well done, gentlemen.

Mr. Speaker, during these economically controlled times I sincerely hope that the confrontation between Albertans over restraint is kept to a minimum. A great strength can be achieved by co-operation rather than the so-called nit-picking antagonism that so often is demonstrated by certain factions at the present time. In the Vermilion-Viking area I see a very positive, supportive atmosphere of the government's initiative to control the deficit and prevent a legacy of debt to our children and future generations.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is the backbone and strength of the area that I represent. The diversification between the red meat industry, cereal crops -- especially in the feed grain industry -- and specialty crops is addressed positively through this throne speech. The feed grain market adjustment program, now renamed the Alberta Crow offset program, has seen some 140,000 more head of cattle fed in this province in the last year and more than 200,000 exported. The redevelopment of the cattle industry in this province and the industries that go with it are of paramount importance to my constituency, and I look to support in developing directives in the packinghouse industry, processing, and, above all, success by Mr. Hugh Planche in negotiating the Crow benefit back to the producers of this province. This would allow them in the feed grain marketplace of Alberta a greater ability to manage their individual initiatives through their own marketing decisions.

At the same time, in my constituency I see our hog, poultry, and dairy industries maintaining a degree of equity in our agricultural base. And on the other hand, the Vermilion-Viking constituency has some solid grain producers who look forward to the Alberta hail and crop insurance review committee's future recommendations. The farm fuel rebate program is one of the most successful and helpful programs in today's input cost squeeze and is applauded by the producers of the Vermilion-Viking area.

Mr. Speaker, all sectors of agriculture in our country must never go through interest rates that are allowed to escalate to 24 percent again. In saying this, the 20-year fixed financing of 9 percent through the farm credit stability program has been a positive delivery by this government in the above direction. The producers of my constituency took \$39 million of this program, helping some 330 producers, refinancing 80 percent of that over 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, our bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations to achieve a more open trade with our neighbours will help my constituency, due to its diversified and productive producers who, in the majority, have the ability to seek markets and market competitively if given the chance. In one area of grain transportation, Viking, Alberta, has potential as a grain handling centre utilizing incentive transportation, with variable rates as the driving marketing force. We should ensure that our grain transportation system moves into the 20th century, to match our grain handling system at Prince Rupert. Our producers would profit by this.

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly great for the Vermilion-Viking constituents to see the twinning of Highway 16 on schedule. The dream of seeing 150 miles of solid four-lane highway from Edmonton to Lloydminster will be realized. This will address the heavy traffic needed to service our oil and gas fields and activity at the Lloydminster upgrader in the future. Our traffic increases will come in tourism, agricultural transportation, and the general movement of Albertans into the Vermilion-Viking constituency area on their way to the untapped recreation areas of the northeast quadrant. We are just beginning in the Vermilion-Viking area and the northeast quadrant to develop our wildlife resources, recreation and tourist facilities in order to share them with the rest of Albertans.

On Highway 16 I look to the development at Innisfree of a first-rate combined rest stop, local recreation and tourist attraction site at Birch Lake. This will be in co-operation with the department of transportation; Recreation and Parks, through the municipal recreation tourism area grant program; our Department of Tourism; and a joint tourism agreement with the federal government.

The highways may bypass these communities but will never stop their initiatives and, Mr. Speaker, our government, through support of diversification in the throne speech, will not either.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to education is beyond any in this province, and Vermilion welcomes the recreation building at the Vermilion campus of Lakeland College that is being funded through the endowment fund. The community has itself raised \$550,000 and certainly will not be disappointed by this decision. The college also looks forward to the future building of the Alumni Hall, which so unfortunately was burned three years ago during renovations. The need is twofold: the completion of major administration areas, library, and cafeteria for a campus built over the last decade; and secondly, these facilities will facilitate Vermilion's hosting of the 1988 Senior Games, sponsored by the Alberta Sport Council of the department of parks and recreation. An invitation goes to all Albertans to come and enjoy some 1,500 seniors who will participate and, at the same time, visit parts of Alberta that you have never seen before.

Our province will move into many areas of economic expansion related to our oil and gas and other resource diversifications. And our secondary education systems as delivered by our colleges like Lakeland must remain strong in order to address the heavy demands on trades and related career development

that will be required to fuel the future economic drive. Let us not be lulled into a trap. While some of the trades and expertise have been lured out of this province, Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes this and maintains its support, as it has always, in colleges like Lakeland.

Mr. Speaker, the senior citizens' lodges in my constituency certainly need a positive direction, a flexibility to better address the ever-increasing longevity of our seniors, and I will continue to work hard to see better utilization of our lodges of the Vermilion-Viking constituency and of Alberta. A very interesting area brought out in the throne speech concerns the conversion of active-treatment beds to long-term care beds in our hospitals. For years Albertans have watched poor utilization of active beds in certain hospitals at high costs. This initiative is applauded and shows the common sense and positive direction of this throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to speak on three or four areas that I have observed since being involved in public life that have been addressed by this government in this throne speech. One is a directional process for all of us to consider in maintaining our family atmosphere in the province of Alberta and even in our total Canadian society. There seems to be a lack of those values and responsibilities that are based around the family circle and family unit. The Vermilion-Viking constituency being a part of rural Alberta, I could say that it is strong in those values, and we see a continuation of those strong family units and community spirit. But in saying that, we are not immune to the constant bombardments that the family takes. In urban centres I look and see an ever-increasing demand for singular units, individual rights, and not necessarily responsible, family-orientated values. So often it is insinuated in the press and other organizations that there are great travesties and negatives surrounding our family units. Instead of holding forth the positive values, responsibilities, and strengths brought out by those strong family units, a society can easily breed paranoia by listening to constant bombardment of the heritage and values that built its country.

Mr. Speaker, this government stands behind the self-initiative involved in the building of strong family units and must be ever-cautious of those that would spell out absolute rights without responsibilities. A you-owe-me or a me-too singular generation of philosophy can only harm the heritage that built this strong province.

Mr. Speaker, the second area is that of unity and national and provincial pride that we must maintain. We have a great country and a great province of Alberta and a great society. Let us not get down on it, and let us always keep mindful that the strength of this country and province is under our Canadian and provincial flags and our Alberta heritage. The department of culture and multiculturalism has gone a long ways to help individuals maintain their cultural background, but let us be ever mindful that they join our Canadian and Alberta heritage first and acquire our help in the integration first and foremost and be aware that it is because of the heritage of Alberta that they have the freedom to maintain their cultural natures.

In keeping with these thoughts, Mr. Speaker, a third area is that of freedom -- the freedom of choice; the freedom of self-initiative; and the freedom of individual resolve, the freedom to function without unnecessary government intrusion into our lives. That freedom takes a great deal of responsibility, and it bears some consideration again to the ever-growing philosophy of absolute rights rather than responsibilities. Our social programs are some of the best in the world, but we must always

recognize that it is not healthy or productive to any society to start second- and third-generation individuals -- or for that matter, any individual -- on social assistance, that would be healthier and more motivated working. A hard day's work is healthy, and we must address this, certainly, during these times of economic control with higher unemployment. Our initiatives must always be to ensure that it is better to have a job, to seek self-improvement and responsibility rather than depending on Big Brother. This throne speech re-emphasizes that direction of self-initiative both in diversification and the challenge of creating an environment where private enterprise is paramount.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people ask me now: "How is it going up there as a new member of the Legislative Assembly?" And I tell them that it's probably the greatest access to education I have ever had and one of the greatest challenges and one of the greatest groups of people that I have ever worked with, bar none. But in saying that, I challenge all of you not to disappoint me during the next two months or three months, and I'll try not to disappoint you. And I say that in the context of those thoughts conveyed to me by Albertans, by friends, by family: that we conduct ourselves here not in the manner of our federal counterparts but in the respect that we owe the system we represent. We had a prayer the other day that asked us during parliamentary democracy to be given strength, and I ask in that prayer to let us all be constructive, productive, and positive in all our endeavours for all Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne. It's been an opportunity that we have been awaiting for some time, having called for an interim session of the Legislature in the fall to discuss some of the overwhelming difficulties that seem to be facing this government and confronting the challenges that are facing this province and the people of this province in turn.

It's a great opportunity to be back in the Legislature to begin the debate on important issues facing this province today and into the future and into the next century in fact. It will be the focus of my comments, of course, to point out to this government where it can be done better, how we would do it better, and to offer suggestions, constructive as only ours can be.

The fact of the matter is that before I begin that, I would like to admit that not everything in this throne speech is bad, but in fact there are some positives which it would behoove me and my colleagues on this side of the House to point out. Seat belts, a breakthrough in this government's legislative agenda: to be the 10th province to do that is, I guess, of some sort of distinction. If nothing else, it demonstrates tremendous perseverance on the part of this government, and perseverance is something for which I would like to congratulate them.

Retraining is mentioned in this throne speech, and retraining is mentioned in such a way that -- I think that to be particularly positive, we have to view retraining as an important step in creating adaptability and an ability for people in our province to change to meet ever-changing economic circumstances. I congratulate the minister responsible for that particular area.

There has been some minimal additional attention to women. I emphasize the word "minimal." It seems we must struggle to pull this government into the 20th century. However, it is a step, however small, in the right direction; it is not a step backwards. And it is good to see that in this throne speech.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Finally, I would like to congratulate the government on its recognition of the need for patient capital with respect to the role of the Alberta Opportunity Company in this province. Patient capital is something which is sorely lacking in the capital structures of this province. I know that entrepreneurs, the business people across the province, will be pleased to see the government's emphasis of that.

Enough said about the positive. However, I would like to launch on yet another tack in this address, Mr. Speaker. The Speech from the Throne implicitly discusses, deals with one of the most overriding problems facing the people of this province, the government of this province today, and that of course is the issue of this government's deficit. We will see this year, 1986-87, a deficit in the order of \$3.5 billion. Consider that for a moment; that is, 35 percent of every bit of money that we will spend in this province this year will have had to have been borrowed. On a national level, given that we are 10 percent of the Canadian population, that deficit is in the order of \$35 billion. That's a deficit of historical proportions, a deficit that is an overriding problem in terms of fiscal responsibility for this province.

Consider that deficit against the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, which was seen to be the security for the future of this province. If there were \$15 billion in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, in four years that fund would be gone, with \$3.5 billion deficits. The first question that must jump to our minds, that must jump to the minds of Albertans, is how could this ever have happened in a province with the kind of promise the province of Alberta had up until recent years? There is only one answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, and that answer is that the government that we have had did not exercise the level of fiscal responsibility that it continued to tell Albertans it was exercising. And the proof is in the pudding today in this province. Three and one half billion dollars: it's a deficit of historical proportions; it is unprecedented in its level and in the level of the impact it will have on this province.

It is time to do something about that deficit. It is time to do something about restraint. But just as this government seemed to be excessive in its pursuit of spending money in the '70s and the '80s and saw that pendulum of expenditure swing to extreme levels, now we seem to be embarking on the reverse obsession. The deficit in and of itself will become an end for this government, with no regard to the fact that the deficit is a vehicle of public policy, a vehicle that is used to bridge a province, a people, a government through difficult times to better times, and instead the deficit reduction will become a policy end in itself. People will pay the price for that. We've already seen it.

The first areas that this government has decided to cut are areas in which it doesn't have to take the principal responsibility for making choices. We see that in education. Who takes the political responsibility for cuts in education? Not this government, at a provincial level. Rather, it will be the responsibility of public school boards to try and rationalize cuts that have been arbitrary and across the board.

Who will have to take the responsibility for cuts in hospitals and medical care? Not this government. Rather, it will be another level of jurisdiction, for which this government doesn't have to be responsible, that will be required to make the kind of choices, to set the kind of priorities that good, responsible provincial level government should be doing as a matter of course daily.

But perhaps most disturbing is that these cuts are being focused on people who are most vulnerable in our society and that these cuts are being done in spite of the fact that government has a responsibility to certain positive areas of promoting fairness and justice in our society. All these things have been forgotten and will continue to be forgotten, we fear, by a government that is obsessed with a single, pointed, public policy objective which is poorly founded -- unfounded, in fact -- and that is the public policy objective of doing away with the deficit at all costs, regardless of who will pay those costs. We know that those costs will be paid most prominently by those least able in our society to pay those costs. [interjection] Thank you.

We would like to offer some positive principles. [interjection] Half of our caucus just supported me. We would like to propose some positive principles for creative cost cutting, creative restraint. First and foremost, this government -- any responsible, good government -- must cut waste and must cut services to itself. We have seen a profound reluctance on the part of this government to do that. In 1985-86 the government of Alberta spent \$64 million on travel. The commensurate level of spending in B.C. is about \$29 million. That's \$35 million more that we have spent in government travel in this province than in B.C. We know it can be done for \$29 million because B.C. has done it. Thirty-five million dollars is more money than will be saved by a 3 percent cut to Advanced Education. Would it not be more appropriate for a government to make a choice, to set a priority and take that money from government travel and put it into Advanced Education? Because that is an investment in the future rather than an investment in waste, rather than an investment in making our lives in this government easier on a day-to-day basis.

We look at the political pressures that this government has responded to in excess spending. I'm referring, of course, to the Swan Hills waste management plant agreement, which will see us spending \$4.5 million to \$5 million a year more for the construction of that plant than we would have to spend if we did it as a public utility, if we did it in a context in which the company doing it was expected to take some risk and that we weren't guaranteeing overwhelming return based on no risk whatsoever.

I'm reminded, in discussing cutting waste, first of the fact that this government has 25 government departments. Our province of Saskatchewan has 16 government departments. Is it not time, Mr. Speaker, that this government considered consolidating its departments, bringing back Social Services and Community Health -- it seemed to be an arbitrary decision to split that -- putting the Department of Technology, Research and Telecommunications under the rubric of the economic development department, putting Tourism under that department as well. It's difficult to understand what a minister of economic development and tourism could possibly do if he didn't have to do high technology and if he didn't have to do tourism. Surely there are ways to find money to cut waste that are effective and that don't seek to place the burden of those cuts upon people least able to bear that burden.

It is essential as a second principle that this government does not cut across the board. We've seen the excesses that can result in. I would like to mention the impact that that particular nonpolicy has had with respect to the Misericordia hospital in the constituency of Edmonton Meadowlark. This is a hospital that is like many hospitals throughout this province: a hospital that faces service demands from an ever-increasing population. When the Misericordia hospital was built, there was very little construction, very little residential housing west of 170th Street.

It is clear now that there are literally tens of thousands of people living west of 170th Street and that they are placing increasing demands upon the Misericordia hospital for its services. What has happened is that the government has shirked its responsibility, placed that responsibility on a lower level of jurisdiction, a jurisdiction that doesn't have the global view and therefore cannot rationalize these cuts in a proper and effective manner. Hospitals like the Misericordia are therefore paying the price. They are confronted with increasing demands for their services on the one hand and an arbitrary 3 percent across-the-board cut on the other hand, without any ability to rationalize that cut against the real demand for their services.

Cuts have to be done fairly. It is not possible, it is not acceptable for a government to seek to blame the excesses of the '70s -- their spending in the '70s and their spending in '80s -- on people less capable of bearing the brunt of restraint. And so it is, however, that we seek to cut back health care, to cut back social services, to reduce services to women, to discontinue studies setting standards and guidelines for the proper implementation and delivery of social services in this department.

Specific cases. The Kara community services group provides support services to, among other people, single parents in the east end of the city of Edmonton. My colleague from Edmonton Gold Bar and I had the opportunity to visit that particular institution in the basement of a public housing unit. There we met some of the women who are extremely dependent upon those services, and I want to describe some of their circumstances.

I met a young woman, 20 or 21 years old, a single parent. She has had three children and has lost the first of her children to the province as a ward of the province because she's been unable to take care of that child properly due to her economic circumstances. She's unable to work. Kara provides her the one important feature in the quality of her life. It provides her courses whereby she can be better trained and increase her capability of living day-to-day: diet, health care, parenting, and so on -- things that we take for granted but that many people in our society just never had the opportunity to learn properly. It also gives her a respite from the continuing pressure of being a single parent without anybody to assist with her two children. It gives her a chance to put those children in a playschool for a time several times a week and to therefore have some free time to herself to spend in these courses and to spend with people her own age. It is an extremely important part of the quality of her life, however small it may seem to us.

Kara negotiated a contract with the Department of Social Services: \$4.40 an hour to provide services to people referred to them from the Social Services department. No sooner had that contract been negotiated than the government canceled it. That seems like a broadbrush approach, easy to do. It's just \$4.40 on paper, Mr. Speaker, but in terms of the impact on the lives of those four or five women that we met that day in the Kara social services unit, it has a devastating impact.

McMan Services: here's a very, very disconcerting event, an evolution of an approach to quality of social services. McMan has spent some time negotiating with this government for funding.

MR. JOHNSTON: Who's speaking? Oh, it's you, Grant.

MR. MITCHELL: It's nice to see that the Treasurer is listening for once. He at least knows that somebody is speaking.

McMan Youth Services had originally been negotiating a \$2

million contract. Due to restraint they accepted a cutback to \$1.6 million, had accepted that they would go out and find \$400,000 of private funding from charity donations. No sooner had they negotiated that contract, demonstrated a willingness to implement their services with the help of private funding services and go out and find those sources themselves than the government changed the framework of that negotiation, the framework of that deal, and said, "No, we're not going to give you the \$1.6 million. We're going to tender this in the private sector."

What are the implications of that, Mr. Speaker? The implications are frightening, because a facility, an organization like McMan, has a clear concept of the quality and level of social services. And I would say that for graphic purposes, it is up here. They will be unable to tender at some inordinately cheap level or price for contract. A private entrepreneur might well tender down at a lower level. The government will give the contract to the lowest bidder without ever addressing the issue that quality of services has been diminished significantly. That will happen, as it were, without any public recognition, because what they will argue publicly is: clearly, this is better because it can be done cheaper. They will never have to address the issue that it may be done cheaper but it's being done much less effectively, and the results can be disastrous in human terms for the people who depend upon those services.

There are individuals paying the price, Mr. Speaker. There's a lady in my riding with a very, very unfortunate case. I would like to discuss it with this Legislature. I wish the Minister of Social Services was here to hear this, and I wish the Minister of Culture was here, with his responsibility for women's issues. This woman is having extreme difficulty with her second marriage. She has teenage children. They have been abused by her husband. She has been physically abused by her husband. It became apparent in her estimation that she had to leave that house and had to leave that relationship. She couldn't tell her husband that she was doing it, due to her fear for his violence. She went to Social Services and said: "I've done what I can do. I've got the money to pay the rent in my new apartment, but I have to have money for the damage deposit." This government said: "No, we will not give you money for a damage deposit because it is our policy not to provide funds in any way, shape, or form that contributes to the breakdown of the family." So what did they have to do instead? Due to her persistence, due to the persistence of our constituency office, finally they succumbed to the pressure, and they agreed to give the damage deposit to the 16-year-old daughter. What that says, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What's your point of order, please?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe the member has referred to the presence or lack of presence of MLAs in the Assembly, and I believe that's not in accordance with our rules. I think it's important that I raise that, Mr. Speaker, because many times members of the Assembly must be away momentarily to attend other duties, and we have *Hansard* of course.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, that's fair comment, and I'm sure the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark now understands that.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, and just for the record, I'm certain that the minister is listening to these comments in her office on her speaker.

Where was I? I was discussing a lady in my riding and the problem that she had in getting funding for a damage deposit so that she could . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, these comments are important — maybe not to these people, but they are to the people in my constituency and the people of Alberta. Thank you. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I think, in all fairness, every member of this Assembly has the right to be heard. Whether that member is understood is a matter for the members to decide. Hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What this underlines is something that I can only term an archaic view of Social Services and an archaic view of women's status in our society. If a woman determines that she has to leave a relationship, far be it from any government to tell her that she can't do that and argue that it can't provide adequate funding, reasonable funding, so that she can do that to preserve her children's safety and to preserve her own safety.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other services that are required in my constituency. There are many services in the west end of Edmonton that will be sacrificed, that will be damaged because of these across-the-board cuts. I'm referring to the West Jasper Place community association, which will very likely have to close its doors despite the fact that it provides extremely important information and other services to the west end residents of this city.

We need to complete the ring route around the west end so that we don't have to live with a dangerous goods route, the Whitemud Freeway, 170th Street, coursing through the centre of our community. We need a west end library. In a community where west of 170th Street, where we have more young children perhaps than any other area of the city — or at least it is one of the most concentrated areas concentrated with young children — we require a library. The Library Board's own guidelines suggest that it's long since overdue. Cutbacks to the city will make that, again, impossible and delayed. We need a junior high school in the community of Edmonton Meadowlark. Again, it has a high concentration of children who are growing up, and demand for that kind of facility is extremely important.

Another principle along which we must fashion our restraint policy is: you don't cut the future. Cuts to education, to advanced education, to the quality of both those levels of education, are extremely unfortunate given that they do risk the ability of our young people to train their minds adequately so that they can contribute to our province at a time when we need the best minds we can possibly find to solve the problems, to meet the challenges that face this community and this province in all areas and walks of life: economic, social, cultural.

And we have to leave room for fairness. We can't simply cut everything. We have to look to those places where we have to be positive about the development of our society, where we have to emphasize fairness, and we have to emphasize justice. I am thinking, of course, of the question of family issues and women's issues in our society. It is in that spirit that we have presented what we believe to be a comprehensive, effective employment equity package that is supplemented by legislation requiring adequate statistical records in this government and in the private sector on women's issues, and comparisons, and so

on. And we have taken initiatives in the area of day care and day care standards, which are extremely important.

Government has to cut; it has to restrain. But it cannot do that at the expense of justice and fairness. Employment equity is an issue whose time has come. It has to be addressed by any enlightened government at this time, in this country, in this province. Yes, we have to cut, but we have to do it carefully. We will not solve a \$3.5 billion deficit problem by cuts alone. The government will consider revenue increases. We don't want to suggest what those should be. We would like to see them take responsibility for that. I would like to point out, however, Mr. Speaker, that revenue increases alone will not solve this problem. We could double income tax. I exaggerate this point for emphasis only: we could double income tax in this province, and that would increase our revenue by \$1.7 billion. Of what consequence would that be? That would reduce this year's deficit only by half, and we'd still have a \$1.7 billion deficit.

Let's look at corporate taxes. We could double corporate taxes; that would be another \$700 million. We'd still have a \$1 billion deficit. That not only underlines the severity of this deficit, the problems that this government has had in managing in a fiscally responsible way in the '70s and the '80s, but it also underlines the importance of not becoming obsessed with traditional views of a deficit, with looking at simply reducing the deficit at all costs. It underlines the importance of viewing the future, of finding positive ways to dig ourselves out of this economic hole that this government has placed us in.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is the second area of my comments: the area of economic development. Now is perhaps a time when we have to consider aggressive economic development more than we have ever had to consider it before. It has become so clear that in dealing with the good times, this government has failed to anticipate and to manage properly for the lean times. And we have been driven, I believe, to a point where this government has replaced proper economic planning with a view of subsidization for economic activity. It's embodied in the way that the Heritage Savings Trust Fund has been used. It's embodied in the kind of subsidies that have been going to the energy industry.

Mr. Speaker, it must be made entirely clear, entirely apparent, that government subsidization is no substitute for proper, real, economic activity. And now that we are experiencing these lean times, we have a tremendous motivation to find ways to generate a stronger economy and broaden our economic base, and we have to start in that process by coming to some agreement about the relationship of government to the private sector. For our part, we would like to contribute an underlying principle for the consideration of that relationship, and that is that government is not the engine of economic growth in any way, shape, or form, but that the private sector is. And the conclusion that we have to draw from that particular principle, in viewing the relationship of government to the private sector, is that government has a responsibility to play a facilitating role in creating conditions conducive to economic activity but that that economic activity is economic activity by the private sector.

Our vision in the Liberal Party of tomorrow's economy is one in which economic activity is powered by the capacity of Albertans' entrepreneurial energies and that a dynamic, innovative economy must be nurtured by government policies that encourage excellence and reward success.

There are a number of principles underlying that general vision of economic development policy. First of all, government

must ensure that its policies facilitate adaptation, that they support innovation in the private sector. Among other things, therefore, government must foster an economic environment that allows entrepreneurs to develop new and marketable products, that allows entrepreneurs to find some support for the marketing of those products that ensures that there is adequate, sufficient capital base upon which their ideas can be generated and support for their ideas can be found. We have to look beyond the venture capital and equity capital sectors -- which require attention, of course -- to the traditional financial industry sector, which has been devastated in this province, and we have to find ways to incubate ideas for the private sector. We have to review once again our view of labour legislation. Labour has to play a positive role in the development of adaptation, adaptability, change, innovation in our economic development.

Government must provide a stable, predictable environment for the private sector. Government must recognize that the world is changing, that foreign trade and international competition are the orders of the day in developing this economy or any economy, that we have increased competition amongst regions for limited industrial development opportunities, and that we must never sacrifice education, therefore, because education gives us one of the most important competitive advantages that a province like ours can have at a time like this in competing with the world and beating the world in terms of economic development.

We have to realize that size isn't everything, that mega is not a panacea solution, that throwing money at Syncrudes and Husky Oil upgraders isn't necessarily the way of solving the problems of this economy but that any size of economic activity is beneficial and is worth while pursuing. And we have to believe, Mr. Speaker, that we in fact can do it ourselves; that we can take responsibility for our own future; and that we have the resources, we have the capability, we have the mandates, the powers, the authority, to do much of that in this province; and that we have to make that the premise upon which we go to Ottawa so that we are not viewed as being whiners and instead we go to Ottawa with a positive strategy for negotiating with the rest of this country, a strategy that sends this country the right message, that doesn't tell them we're rich when we're not rich, a strategy that says we will work very hard to build a western Canadian coalition so we have authority and we have power that is commensurate with the authority and power of Ottawa and Quebec and the federal state.

We have to be creative. We have to find institutional reform; the Triple E Senate is what I am talking about in that regard. We have to address the process of politics. We have to bring goodness and decency back into the political process so that people can have confidence in their politicians, in their institutions, in their government; so that we can govern with their support; so that we have the depth of political credit with which we can make difficult decisions. In that light, Mr. Speaker, we're offering a series of legislative proposals, including conflict of interest, shield legislation for the press, freedom of information legislation, and sunshine legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there's a crisis in this country, a crisis in this province with respect to people's confidence and trust in their institutions and in their government. We as legislators have to move in a creative and innovative way to curb that crisis and to begin to place ourselves in a position where we can govern effectively and govern strongly for the future of this province and for the future of Albertans.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I believe the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane caught the Chair's eye.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like, before remarking on the Speech from the Throne, to make observations about the renovations to the Chamber and to the direction and leadership by the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the architect, the contractors, and the individual workmen. I think that since we joined again and reassembled on March 5 and have come back to this building, to this Assembly, we all appreciate what has been done, not only for our own ability to listen and to be able to speak with each other but to know that in our galleries there is now room for more members of the public to attend. I notice, of course, that, as normal, there are absolutely no press members present, but at least their facilities are improved, and I see it's very fine for our electronic communication system that we have a place for the gentleman who works our audio equipment, that he can see most of us.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that all of us owe your office and that team of people a fine expression of appreciation, even in this difficult time: the first major renovations in this building for so many years.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne is a balanced document. It recognizes clearly that in 1986 we had a very difficult year, a difficult year for individuals and for families. But the Progressive Conservative government provided a range of programs: farm stability, energy industry incentives, royalty reductions, and the small business term assistance plan, just to name a few.

And now looking ahead to 1987, our government's plan is to present an action plan, an agenda of action in employment, in education, in agriculture, in energy, and in continued diversification of our economy, and especially in the area of tourism.

As the M.L.A. for Banff-Cochrane, I am happy to be able to report on activities which have occurred and which will continue to take place as Alberta, Canada, the Olympic Organizing Committee, the town of Canmore, Kananaskis Country, our provincial Olympic Secretariat, and the various provincial departments that are involved, together with the city of Calgary, prepare for that incredible event in February 1988. Remember that 2.5 billion people during that period of time will for the first time, perhaps, focus their attention on our part of the world. It hasn't been easy, Mr. Speaker, but what an achievement! What an achievement by the province, by our provincial Olympic Secretariat, by our Public Works, Supplies and Services department, by Transportation, by Kananaskis Country officials, just to name a few.

The Canmore Nordic Centre, site of the 1988 Olympics ski events, not only opened on time, against all predictions, but under budget, and is now actively used by thousands of individuals and families, from senior citizens with their families to young couples and their babies. It has been a successful host of the biathlon and the cross-country events in preparation for the Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, I brought with me today, and I'm happy to share with members at some time, the literature that is available as people arrive at the Canmore Nordic Centre, the literature that describes the centre which offers a challenging opportunity for those of us who wish to cross-country ski along quiet forest trails or even ski all the way through to Banff townsites. And these trails are designed to meet international requirements, as well as all of the standards that are established for the cross-country biathlon and nordic combined ski events.

There are so many facilities there it's a pleasure to drive to Canmore, drive up that beautiful new road built by Alberta Transportation and arrive at the Canmore Nordic Centre. And I compliment the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Public Works, Supplies and Services, and all of the people involved for developing such a wonderful facility for Albertans and for our visitors. It is sited, of course, beside the beautiful town of Canmore, population 4,000, a town that has every citizen excited and involved, including other citizens from the Bow Valley communities and from the District of Bighorn No. 8, as they are involved together with volunteers from the city of Calgary, from Springbank, and from all of the parts of the province in developing the activities leading up to this event.

I should say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a \$15.4 million complex, with assistance in addition by Alberta Transportation for the access road and the signs, those very well-designed and very informative signs that allow our visitors to find their way to the various venues. And all of this has been funded by the province and will now be operated as a part of our Kananaskis Country operations -- and what an integral part of a fantastic Olympics legacy.

Adjacent to this beautiful area lies the Peter Lougheed Provincial Park in the heart of Kananaskis Country, an area of striking contrasts which has over 55 miles -- I don't know what that is in kilometres -- of cross-country trails in the parks alone. The park and the visitor centre, the Pocatererra hut, operate seven days a week, and yet for visitors there is also the Boulton Creek trading post, which is open on weekends. And if one wants information or to stop and just simply warm up or obtain food or beverages, the facilities are there. But in addition to those facilities, for our senior citizens and for disabled Albertans, for handicapped children, we have the William Watson Lodge, which has now undergone an expansion, the world's first and indeed only seniors' and handicapped, disabled or physically challenged facility for year-round visitations. There's a year-round day lodge and there's overnight accommodation. I hope every member has had a chance to visit this facility and will be pleased to give members information about the telephone number for their constituents so that they can possibly reserve an opportunity to stay overnight or to visit the day lodge.

Near Peter Lougheed Provincial Park and in the Kananaskis Country area surrounding, we have the Mount Kidd 229-unit recreation vehicle campground. Here we have tennis courts and whirlpools and supplies, a store, all for our visitors, and when they arrive there, they are very well received by the two families and their staff who run this facility. There's the Kananaskis Country golf course, of course: in the winter, a cross-country ski area, but in the summer, two 18-hole world-class facilities in Canada's finest scenery. Fortress Junction nearby offers an opportunity for auto services and supplies year round, and I hope one day that our federal Member of Parliament will be able to convince Canada Post that we should have a post office there. Ribbon Creek provides a year-round youth hostel, and the alpine village, now nearing completion, will offer Albertans a world-class hotel complex built by the private sector for Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I've left the best for the last: Mount Allan. I can recall in this Assembly, as plans were announced about Mount Allan in 1982, all of the knockers in the opposition and in the press and in other parts of our province -- people who probably haven't even put skis on their feet for years, or if they did, wouldn't know which end was the front end -- who said that Mount Allan and Nakiska wouldn't be successful. Well, I'm very proud of our weekly newspapers; I'm sure all our rural

members share my view about the support of our weekly newspapers. Notwithstanding the great, wonderful media experts in some of the other areas, I refer briefly to last week's issue of the *Banff Crag & Canyon* and comments made about the success of the recent events at Nakiska, at Mount Allan, the women's and the men's world cup events. Everyone who wanted to knock it has had a chance to knock it. Everyone's taken a bite out of Mount Allan. But as I mentioned two years ago and I mentioned last year, and I'll say again in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I challenge any member to join me on those slopes, and I'll take you on a tour of one of Canada's finest ski resorts, an area where the hospitality of the staff, the services, the design, and the way in which it's managed is a marvelous, marvelous new development for Alberta.

While the opposition parties and their leaders are calling the Alberta government to task, thousands and thousands of Albertans enjoyed those facilities these past two weekends, and given the heaviest criticism, given the highest temperatures in nearly a hundred years, given the least snowfall in 10 years, those events went ahead. And why did they go ahead? Certainly they could have been moved to some other mountain. There is always a contingency plan. The Olympic Organizing Committee is not stupid; there's a contingency plan. But why was it important to do it at Mount Allan? Because that's the alpine event venue, and they showed it could be done. They developed it and they've learned from it and they've practised. They've had crowd control; they've had ambulance service; they tried the food services; they checked the slopes. They've had approvals, including world-class competitors, who say that Canmore Nordic Centre and Nakiska are rated 10 -- 10 out of 10. It's time the doers got recognition. The choice has been made; the races are on; the events are coming. It's time to listen to the doers; it's time to express our appreciation to the men and women who designed and built and managed these facilities for all of us and our visitors. And again, Mr. Speaker, a provincial facility built on time and under budget; again, a world-class facility, \$25 million, which will have two billion people watching it and will have millions and millions of visitors.

Now, I have the privilege of representing other ski operators, including Canada Olympic Park, which is not in the city of Calgary, including Fortress Mountain, Lyon Mountain, Sunshine, Lake Louise, and Norquay. Those operators are good operators. Those facilities all have unique features of their own and offer a challenge for different varieties of uses. But I do think that every one of us should be proud of this new addition with nearly 3,000 feet of vertical rise at Mount Allan and 30 alpine runs. Something for everyone, including trails for cross-country skiing. There are high-speed chairs with 5,500 skiers per hour capacity. The world saw that on live television this weekend, and they're coming.

Just south from Nakiska we have the Fortress Mountain facility, where excellent downhill skiing and some overnight accommodation is available, and ski rentals and all other things that go with that, but for all levels of ability. This year I'm very pleased that Alberta Transportation was able to provide some financial assistance to the operators of Fortress Mountain to maintain a road which was built years ago before today's standards. I do think that Joe [inaudible] and his team there, together with Rene Farwig and his team at Nakiska, are going to be fantastic hosts for us.

I wouldn't want to overlook the incredible facilities in the rest of Banff-Cochrane, because all of those venues now -- you remember, Mr. Speaker, in this House even, opposition mem-

bers saying: oh, we're going to have snowmaking equipment at Nakiska. My goodness, there are very few skiing facilities in this world today, in the northern or southern hemispheres, that don't have snowmaking equipment. All of the facilities in Banff-Cochrane have snowmaking equipment. It extends their season. It provides a better base. I'm very proud that I can welcome any of you, and I'll join any of you on any of the slopes.

Banff, Canmore, Lake Louise, and the Bow Valley communities, including Cochrane, including the municipality of Rocky View and the improvement district of Big Horn and Kananaskis Country will welcome the world in 1988.

I should mention, Mr. Speaker, the Canada Olympic Park at the boundary of the city of Calgary. That is a federal project, and it has been done very well. It is a wonderful facility to bring new opportunities not only for the athletes, the judges, the participants, the coaches, but for those of us who probably have some fear of bobsledding or the luge or jumps to have an opportunity to go and watch our young Canadians develop their abilities as they challenge the world. All of these facilities, all of the people and the services, are part of a tremendous story of diversification -- diversification in a tourism opportunity -- and more meaningful jobs for young Albertans. I'm very proud of our contribution as a province.

Mr. Speaker, I would comment also on the federal/provincial tourism agreement that was entered into in Alberta, working with Canada, a year or two ago. I report that it is working well, very well, for Alberta and for our tourism areas such as Banff-Cochrane. Throughout the Bow corridor enterprising business operators have submitted proposals in all categories of the program. I want to compliment the minister and his staff for the way in which they administer this program. There are some unique new facilities, some unique new services being developed and established in this corridor.

You know, Mr. Speaker, for all of the visitors that choose to come to our province, three out of four choose the Calgary-Bow corridor -- Banff, Lake Louise -- to visit. Three out of four. Now, that doesn't mean we can't encourage them to come up to Edmonton and to see West Edmonton Mall or go to Fort McMurray and visit the incredible scene of our tar sand developments. There's a great opportunity for the private entrepreneur and for the tourism industry to encourage more visitors to spend more time. I'm very pleased to see our minister has developed the Take an Alberta Break theme. But still they're coming here. Let's take advantage of that and create the hospitality environment that we need to make sure that they will come back.

Mr. Speaker, there isn't a page or even a paragraph of the throne speech which doesn't apply in some way to Banff-Cochrane, whether its agriculture or advanced education or energy or any other matter. In my constituency visits or in my communications with my constituents, I'm happy to have this document as part of our government's plan of action.

I'd like to highlight, Mr. Speaker, two areas I'm very happy about as a member of this Assembly since 1979. First, the commitment by my government to have seat belt legislation during this session. I recall the efforts of many members of our Assembly and particularly of our caucus. I recall particularly the efforts of Bill Purdy, the former Member for Stony Plain, for one, and of course Dr. Stan Cassin in this Assembly. I'm very proud to have been a participant in those debates. You know, it's a funny thing, Mr. Speaker. As I did research on this problem -- the evidence, the opinions, the recommendations that were being developed everywhere -- and I came to my own opinion about

whether or not we should have seat belt legislation, it then became an easy matter for me to go out and discuss this with my constituents, to present those arguments and to show my constituents why it was so essential to take action. I found growing support for that position even in, what the press like to say, a rural constituency. I found overwhelming support. Well, I've had obscene calls too. I've had all of the kinds of calls that we as members sometimes get from people who take opposite points of view or strong positions, but I certainly am happy to have seen our government present this as part of our throne speech and the introduction recently of the Bill. It's very strange how people can become blind to the truth and want to be so vicious in their attacks and to make them personal, but we are all here, and if we can't stand the heat, we can certainly get out of the kitchen.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment also on the leadership role that has been established by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission under the commission and the former chairman, the Member for Lethbridge West. There is much that needs to be done. In the throne speech there is reference to the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Co-ordinating Committee, which is under the chairmanship of AADAC, and it will be increasing its efforts to ensure co-operation between the private and the public sectors to develop effective new programs to attack the problems of drinking and driving. I was listening very attentively to the remarks by the Member for Drayton Valley recently when she mentioned it will take social action on our part. It is socially acceptable to drink; it is socially acceptable to drive. Sadly the combination of those two socially acceptable actions leads to tragedies in our society. The casual attitude that we have as a society towards alcohol is a lethal danger to us all. Tobacco use is another, and the misuse of drugs and solvents and substances harmful to us, even deadly to us, is a growing social tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to mention in this regard that a number of actions have taken place. The Impaired Driving Countermeasures Co-ordinating Committee is happy to be able to report that during the brief time that this committee has been in action, a number of significant events have taken place which have an impact on impaired driving. There have been, of course, the amendments to the Criminal Code, but there have also been changes in our own provincial legislation and procedures by both the Solicitor General and the Attorney General. The federal Justice department has established a new program co-ordinating information, developing a newsletter, and contributing to community groups. Here in Alberta, People Against Impaired Drivers, a volunteer organization, recently received a grant of \$50,000 from the federal Department of Justice to put on an impaired driving awareness day in Edmonton and in Lethbridge. The federal department has approved in its entirety a proposal put together on behalf of PAID for a mass media campaign targeted at the general public but especially high school, college, and university students between the ages of 16 and 25. That theme day, Mr. Speaker, is coming up soon. It's scheduled for April 15, 1987. This year's theme will be, "If You Drink -- Think."

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the federal Speech from the Throne announced a new strategy to be developed by the federal government and this terrible social problem that we have. There will be a new five-year health and welfare program, \$20 million for a national media campaign, driver education materials, and a host of things that are trying to have a people understand that it is our problem, that we have to come to grips with this. So I'm

pleased to see reference in the Speech from the Throne to this very important subject.

Mr. Speaker, I also refer in the Speech from the Throne to a proposal which will be introduced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, a proposal which will lead to greater equity in the property tax system in rural Alberta. For those of us who represent farmers, small holdings, acreage owners, it has been a very difficult problem, the problem of the abuse of the present system by some to avoid taxation at municipal levels. It is not an easy problem to solve, and I look forward to the minister bringing forward his proposal.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't easy. It isn't easy for Albertans. We face a difficult year. And perhaps it will not be one difficult year but several difficult years as we recover from world commodity price declines in agriculture and in energy. We have seen our provincial revenues decline dramatically. But as we debate this Speech from the Throne, as we prepare for the budget to be introduced by the Treasurer, and as we prepare for the debate that will follow, we should remind ourselves that we are indeed a unique province. We are rich in natural resources. We are rich in people resources. We are strong and we are proud people. But we're resilient. We have a land of splendor, a province which is a magnet for millions of people, not only visitors but people who wish to come to live here. Indeed, there is no better place in which to live. There is no better place to be. Even if sadly some of our fellow Albertans are unemployed or on social assistance or disabled, there is no better place to be than in Alberta.

We can continue as a government to help those in need, but we have to stretch our dollars. We have to manage more effectively, and we're going to have to make those decisions that governments must make about eliminating unnecessary programs, changing our priorities. We're going to have difficult choices to make. It is our responsibility as members to be front and centre with our constituents, to listen to them and to explain why we've made those difficult choices and priorities. But by golly, with our approach of working together, with careful fiscal planning, and with our heritage fund, the strength of that fund, we can do it.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring you the good wishes of the constituents of Banff-Cochrane, and we look forward to listening with interest to the members who will wish to participate in the debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member . . . Order please. The hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's not my task, Mr. Speaker, in criticizing what I view as some of the shortcomings of the Speech from the Throne, to blame the government for the deficit and simultaneously blame them for taking steps to reduce it, because I don't think that is something that recommends itself to fair-minded people. I recognize that this is a very difficult time for a government, but that it's faced with a budget, the income side of which has been severely reduced mostly by reasons outside the control of the government, namely the slump in the world price of oil. I do not say the low commodity prices for grain. That's just contributing to a great deal of poverty in the province and misery amongst farmers, but it does not greatly affect -- certainly not greatly in a direct sense -- the income side. It is mostly the problems of the world slump in oil prices, of course.

What I do see as shortcomings in the Speech from the

Throne are the measures that the government might use to cushion the impact and indeed reduce the impact on various areas by changes of approach, which changes, however, the Conservative government would find very hard to make. Also, I agree that you can't propose policies which might work nationally, because the national government is in charge of printing money, with the policies of a provincial government that has to stay within its budget over time. In particular years you can run deficits and sell bonds, if you like, but in the long run somehow it has to balance. These things we try and recognize on this side of the House, and to make an appraisal based on the realities of the matter. The area for criticism, I submit, comes in the difficulties that the government has in properly coping with this situation. These difficulties are of two kinds: inherent and of their own making. The inherent problems are those that have faced the economy always in Alberta: distance from market and being subject to world commodity prices. But how about the self-made problems? In this connection, having regard to the fact that it is oil and gas that is the chief problem when it comes to the income side, is the degree of foreign ownership of the Alberta economy. The importance of this is that it puts our most single productive sector, in revenue terms, to a totally unacceptable extent out of the control of the provincial government and indeed the national government.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

I just wish to remind you of a few figures -- just a few; I won't bore you on this. Every thinking Albertan should be aware of these figures. The latest figures are contained in Statistics Canada publications for last year and relate to 1983. In testing the degree of foreign ownership, the best guide is the income generated by foreign-owned firms compared to the income generated by Canadian firms. The figures for all corporations in Alberta amongst the nonfinancial industries are that 62.2 percent of the revenue generated goes to foreign corporations. We're talking about the profits obviously. And in the most important sector, which is shown as mining in the statistics -- there isn't a breakdown between oil and gas on the one hand and extraction of minerals on the other -- it is 82.7 percent. We had thought that there was a downward trend because of restrictions on foreign investment and so on, but in fact the extent of foreign ownership has got to the point that further acquisitions are being fueled from income generated within Canada by those corporations. So it stands at a staggering 82.7 percent in terms of mining, which of course is largely oil and gas in Alberta. Compare that to other provinces: Ontario, 56.9 percent; B.C., 82.2 percent, almost up to our level; Manitoba, 22.1 percent; Saskatchewan, 77.9 percent. That's for the mining area, including oil and gas. The first figure that I've mentioned as to the total for all nonfinancial industries including agriculture, being 62.2 percent, also compares very unfavourably with other provinces. B.C. is next highest, and that is only 41.2 percent; then Ontario, 39.2 percent; Manitoba, 32.1 percent; and Quebec, 30.9 percent.

Now, this government has made no attempt at all to try and reduce that serious problem in our Alberta industry, Mr. Speaker. Agreed, it's to a significant extent a matter within national jurisdiction, but we don't hear the government opposing the demolition of FIRA or something similar. We don't hear them complaining about the high degree of foreign ownership in the oil and gas sector; on the contrary, they're keen to dismantle such controls as there have been. They claim they are the government of business, yet they are in favour of controls when the

price for oil and gas is high, and when the price slumps out of sight, they are not in favour of controls. That would be the very opposite of what a reasonably astute businessman would wish, I submit.

Now, the unwillingness to intervene directly in the economy is at the root of the problem in the government's failure to take meaningful steps to cope with the disastrous slump in the price of the oil and gas on the world market. Again, the government is in favour of free trade, and it says it's in favour of diversification of the economy. But in fact, given a Conservative philosophy which dictates all by the marketplace, it is impossible to interest private owners in diversifying the economy if there's no money to be made in it. Therefore, it can only be done by subsidizing private profit in an area of the economy which, for the time being, is profitless. And these are the problems that face any conservative government, Mr. Speaker, in coping with a deficit and trying to do something about it.

There's a further point here too. If the province had a provincially owned energy corporation, then it could be there to keep for Albertans the assets of those corporations that went under which are presently Albertan owned. The figures show that a remarkable number of Alberta corporations are holding out when logically one would have thought they would have been forced to the wall. That's a matter for considerable credit and congratulation, but the multinationals are there waiting to snap them up, when they can, at rock-bottom prices, notwithstanding the holdings of oil and gas that they may have. At least if there was a provincially owned oil and gas corporation, they could step in and save those assets for Albertans and not give away on a plate further Canadian assets.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

The other important point about a provincially owned energy corporation is that the level of activity in the oil and gas sector that the province would feel appropriate, given the uneconomic nature of much of the enterprise, now could be undertaken by the provincial corporation, using the province's money directly and targeted instead of in effect bribing the privately owned corporations, most of them foreign-owned, to do, one hopes, the same thing. In fact, they don't do the same thing, or if they do, it's at a much higher price than could be achieved if we did it directly. But we even lack the vehicle to do that. The Alberta Energy Corporation, which showed considerable signs once of being such a instrument or vehicle, has long since been sold off and is just another company.

The importance of this from my standpoint as a private member with a constituency to look after is the impact that it has on the government money that normally comes into that constituency and the fact that the cuts will have to be greater than would otherwise be necessary for a given saving. And in my constituency that is of considerable importance because of the number of government-financed institutions in it. The University of Alberta, of course, is in Edmonton Strathcona, also the northern branch of Athabasca University -- its called the northern office but its actually south of the university itself. I suppose its the only constituency with two universities in it. But at any rate, they are attempting to cope as best they can with the cuts that the situation has dictated and the policy of the government has worsened. There will be another time shortly when the budget estimates are debated, Mr. Speaker, to get into the details of that.

In addition, there are five active treatment hospitals in the

constituency, all of which are directly affected by government funds for hospitals and health care: the Cross Cancer, the Veterans' Home -- that's the Mewburn pavilion -- the Aberhart, the Walter Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre, and St. Joseph's hospital. When I say active treatment, not all of those are active treatment although they're just next door to such facilities, but they are medically attended hospitals. There are about half a dozen homes for the elderly, which again is an exceptional concentration but not unique. At all these places there is a legitimate concern over increases in fees and a reduction in service, which I contend is unnecessarily severe because of the doctrinal restrictions on government policy.

In my own critic area of justice, in question period today I adverted to the situation in the family courts, which is in my respectful submission, Mr. Speaker, a false economy under the guise of cutting. More generally, with the prosecutors there is too much work being farmed out on a regular basis when it can be more cheaply done with departmental staff. I'm certainly not against contracting work out to lawyers in private practice where it's necessary to do so, but I am against it, in the city certainly, on a regular basis, because the same object can always be more cheaply achieved with departmental counsel.

The court reporters reduction, Mr. Speaker, is a particularly flagrant example of this I'm afraid. The court reporters have been told that some 34 of their number will be losing their jobs. They haven't got the pink slips yet fortunately, so there is time for the government to rethink this through. The idea is to economize. In fact, the opposite will be the case, because the reduction is being achieved by the court reporters not being allowed to transcribe evidence in civil cases anymore. That provided some 50 percent of their income so that the remaining court reporters will have had their income cut by about 50 percent. So either they will require to be paid more or the better ones will leave and go into the private sector, and the service will be reduced. That is a false economy, Mr. Speaker.

It's one thing to achieve an actual reduction of cost. One can criticize the areas targeted, but it's another thing under the guise of reducing costs to in fact achieve the opposite. None of these attempts and the problems they produce in reducing the deficit appear from the throne speech. In the area I'm talking about, the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, there are some good statements made but not anything that indicates the turmoil that has been caused in certain areas. Under the heading of Attorney General and Solicitor General in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Lunney's idea that he proposed and began to implement 10 years ago in Edmonton, community-based policing, is taken out of the cupboard and dusted off and produced again. We're all in favour of that, but it's been talked about for a long time and we haven't seen it happen. It is certainly something we support, but I have my doubts as to whether it will come about unless there is a change of will here.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Someone pointed out in a recent paper -- a local policeman actually, but a very good paper, Mr. Speaker -- that when people report stolen bikes, it just goes into a file somewhere, if you're lucky. When people report a theft or an attempted theft at a bank, then all hades breaks loose. The police are out there, and there are reports made and a great fuss is made. Yet in Canada -- and I can't remember the exact figures -- there's about \$64 million worth of bikes stolen every year, but bank holdups net on the average maybe \$3 million or so. Yet bikes are nothing

and banks are big. The moral of this is that since most people are affected by the loss of the bikes of their children or their own and few are directly affected by bank robbers, community-based policing will pay much more attention to the smaller crimes which affect people, and the investment in dealing with those smaller crimes in terms of the goodwill of the public coming back will help you with the bigger crimes. I do believe that there is a blindness in police enforcement to some extent, because it's not exciting chasing bikes; it's much more exciting to do the high tech stuff and deal with bank robbers. That was just a thought I had as I was going along in an otherwise orderly speech, Mr. Speaker.

One thing I do note in the few paragraphs dealing with the Attorney General and Solicitor General is on the question of builders' liens. Here again, this is a tremendous problem currently. We have recurrent situations, and I'm sure that many members will have encountered this in fact, in which contractors are so desperate for contracts that they are bidding at a price at which you know that subcontractors will not be paid. You just know it. It's just impossible to finance the contracts, and therefore builders' liens are extremely important now. The current tangle with the law and the interpretation the courts have put on what seems to be fairly straightforward law is producing a tremendous amount of injustice. So this indeed is an area that one finds commendable in the Speech from the Throne, with respect, Mr. Speaker. However, it says that the task force to look into it will be made up of representatives of the construction industry, government, the financial community, and the energy sector. I do find it surprising that union representatives, who represent the workers who all too often under the current state of affairs are not being paid, are not represented at all. That is perhaps an oversight; I would like to think it's an oversight, Mr. Speaker.

I did put down a question last year -- actually, I think it was in the form of an oral question -- to the Premier concerning the handing out of awards. The Premier said that it would be looked into. It was looked into, and there was a return made to it. I think the question turned into a question of notice, and a return was made to it. A copy was sent to me. It was a very dusty answer indeed, Mr. Speaker, that the present practice would continue, in effect that when awards were made to people in constituencies, the minister concerned or a government member concerned would be the one to carry the award, meaning usually the cheque, to the individual concerned, whether a corporation or a society or a person. The justification given for this was that the government is responsible for the policy that produces the money and therefore it is the responsibility of government members to field the issues and the questions that result from that policy. It is as if the government feels that the public revenue that generates these awards is the government's money and not the money of the province that individual members are as accountable for as any member on the government side when it comes to the award of the results. So I submit that that is not a proper way for dealing with the subject of awards.

The basic problem is that there is no attempt at all at structural rectification of the economy in the Speech from the Throne. There is no addressing of the problems that confront the government of Alberta when making a pitch to the government of Canada or other provincial governments for assistance, the assistance we truly deserve in this province because of the disastrous affairs on the income side.

One thing that is easily correctable is the situation with the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Mr. Speaker. Here we have an asset which is still on the books at something like \$15 billion

when we all know that the liquid part of it is one-quarter of that, and that another quarter of it -- somewhere between a quarter and a half anyway -- is a bookkeeping entry; the money has long since gone. One hopes that the results of that money are an asset, but to call it even an asset, like a building, is erroneous. The Auditor General's report should be taken into account, and the heritage savings fund written down to a level which makes it easier to deal with the other provinces of Canada and the government of Canada itself in attempting equity in financing.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I submit that there are some opportunities that the government has when the economy is as depressed as it is to help Albertans and at the same time save assets for Albertans by proper intervention on the part of the government. Those opportunities are being thrown away, and in the course of doing so, an opportunity to reduce the impact on the public of the cost-cutting measures has been lost.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take great pleasure in rising to reply to the Speech from the Throne, although the speech itself did not include very many new initiatives that will help the people of my constituency. In referring to the people of my constituency, I'd like to tell the members that I did take time to consult them in the period between the sitting of the House in September and the present session. I reported back to them in the fall and talked extensively about what had happened in the Legislature and what had not happened and got their input and their questions. In the two weeks prior to the opening of this session, I held four town-hall meetings in different community leagues in my constituency and learned a number of things about the concerns of some of my constituents. As well, of course, we've had a considerable amount of feedback from the people who phoned in for one reason or another or wrote in with different kinds of problems from out of the constituency but also from right across the city in my critic areas.

I'd like to just take a few moments to share some of the problems and thoughts of some of my constituents with this House and particularly with this government as they are about to bring down their budget. One of the concerns that was pretty clearly expressed was that it's the little guy that absorbs the cuts while the fat cats remain fat. Now, if that's starting to change, fine, but I don't see enough evidence of it on the part of this government. Perhaps we will see some in the new budget, but certainly that's the kind of comment that this government has earned over the last three or four years. While the finances of the province were getting worse, this government kept spending as if the good times were still here. I'm thinking of the Kananaskis golf course. I'm thinking of the Mount Allan ski run, which the Member for Banff-Cochrane bragged considerably about just today. He said they were going to welcome the world on those slopes next year. That's all very well, but you're not going to be welcoming the people of Kingsway who are lined up at the food banks or on social assistance because they can't make ends meet. That kind of mentality is still carrying over far too much as far as many people out there are concerned, or that point would not have been made. And, Mr. Speaker, of course, that is not fair.

There was also concern expressed that we place too much emphasis on dollar values than on human values. Sort of the old bottom-line thing, you know; everybody always gets back to the bottom line. We don't stop to think about the people and the human issues involved.

The area that caught the most attention, Mr. Speaker, was education, so I will talk a little bit about that, although I know certainly that my colleagues Ms. Laing and the Advanced Education critic, Mr. Gibeault, will deal adequately with this section later. Nonetheless, I think I could share a few thoughts on this subject.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, please refer to members by their constituency rather than by names.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand corrected.

Some of the comments went something like this: the cutbacks in education are criminal; our future is our kids. Some people were concerned that after school care was cut. Others wanted to know what the effects would be on special education -- well, we found that out -- on community schools, special education programs. They were concerned about who determines the cutbacks in education, and the minister of course has given us the runaround on that. She says: we make the cutbacks, and then the school boards have to figure out how to deal with it. That of course is just the case and what's happening. Internships were cut. Young adults were put out of work. People that went to university for four years to get an education degree will find that they can't get a job.

Before I go on to some of the other areas, I want to say that I think one of the problems the government is getting into is that they're becoming paralyzed by this deficit. They're saying that the only way to deal with it is to make cutbacks, and they're making the cutbacks across the board and without really stopping to think through what the effects will be. It reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of a story of Tommy Douglas. Since there are several versions of this story floating around and you may have heard some of them, don't be surprised if I tell a slightly different one. But it goes something like this. Prior to World War II he was pressing the federal government to spend money on roads and education and social service programs of one kind or another. The Minister of Finance stood up and said: "The hon. member from Weyburn, Saskatchewan, must think that money grows on gooseberry trees. I would like to assure him that it does not." He went on to say a few other things. So the [member] from Weyburn duly stood up and said: "Mr. Speaker, I do not think that money grows on gooseberry trees. I don't know what kind of a tree money grows on. I don't even think the Minister of Finance knows on what kind of a tree money will grow. But I do know this. If there was a war started tomorrow, he would find the tree." And war did start very shortly and he did find the money. Tommy Douglas sat on an all-party national committee, and very shortly after the requests he made were turned down for money for important programs, they voted some \$5 billion to the start of the C.D. Howe war effort. So the money can be found if you have the will. I'm not saying that we're in that kind of a situation now, but it does indicate that we do not have to be paralyzed by a deficit.

Some of the other concerns that were raised by my constituents, Mr. Speaker -- of course health care. Seat belts of course is a move in the right direction, but I can't believe the length of time and how hard this whole province had to work to drag the Premier kicking and screaming into the 21st century to bring in seat belts. Anyway, we finally did it. In that area, I am proud that I introduced a province wide ambulance Bill into the House already, and hopefully we'll get a chance to debate that later.

There were many very specific other concerns, like a code of ethics for politicians. I guess that's partly a reflection of what's going on at the federal level, but certainly we need to take a close look at ourselves at the provincial level, and our leader has introduced a conflict-of-interest Bill into this Legislature already.

Some people were concerned about the possible sale of ACT and they were against it. The Public Utilities Board does not look after consumers' interests; it seems to look after the utility companies. They were concerned about the labour review committee, another place where the government could have cut back and saved us some money in this province.

One of the areas that got a lot of attention was the CKUA radio station, the threat to shut down CKUA. I'm glad to say that a number of people wrote to me, and I passed on those letters. That resistance to shutting down CKUA has seemed to be at least temporarily successful.

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't you think others should support that.

MR. McEACHERN: Sorry, I couldn't hear that.

Other questions were raised about North West Trust, and of course I intend to speak on that at a later date.

Just a couple of sort of individual cases that I would like to mention, Mr. Speaker. I got a call on a Tuesday afternoon, I believe it was, a couple of weeks ago from a man whose wife was in a great deal of trouble. She'd had what we like to call a mental breakdown. She had gone to a doctor, a psychiatrist; he had recommended that she be put in Alberta Hospital. He had admitting privileges there, but when he phoned, he found that the hospital was too full, that in fact they didn't have any bed for her. I traced back through the three: I phoned Alberta Hospital; I phoned the doctor; I phoned the man. I finally got to talk to the admitting officer, and the next day they did find her a bed. But I wondered if maybe in order to do so they didn't have to push somebody out that also needed to stay there longer, if things were that tight. I am just saying that the situation is not good in this province in the area of mental health and the support services for people that need them. We certainly need to look more closely at that.

The second sort of individual case that I wanted to mention actually did make the papers, but I think the story is worth encapsulating in a short form. The particular person has been a bricklayer all his life. He's 52 years old, I believe. A few years ago he developed cancer in his neck and throat. So he went through a series of operations which left his shoulder unable to operate, so his right hand, although it moves -- he is not able to lay bricks anymore even if there were bricklaying jobs in this rather depressed economy. So he is now on AISH, Alberta assured income for the severely handicapped. He also is getting a federal pension, from Canada Pension, for the handicapped.

A short time ago the Mulroney government decided that they would raise the amount of money given to people in that category, and in fact his raise turned out to be \$165. His income was shared between those two programs. The provincial government merely took the \$165, and he has nothing more. In fact, when you work it out, his rebate on his income tax next year will be nil. This past year, given everything else the same, he actually got back \$288. So he is being penalized over \$20 a month because the Alberta government and the federal government didn't get together and decide how they were going to handle this program. The federal government actually thought they

were going to help this gentlemen, and the provincial government just took the money and nothing has come of it.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the hour, I would move to adjourn debate, and perhaps we could carry on with it another day.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, do all those in the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? The motion carries.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to indicate that the House will not be sitting this evening or tomorrow evening.

[At 5:27 p.m. the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]