

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Friday, March 27, 1987 10:00 a.m.**

Date: 87/03/27

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill Pr. 11**Scott J. Hammel Legal Articles Act**

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 11, Scott J. Hammel Legal Articles Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to permit Mr. Hammel to serve articles with the judge of the Federal Court of Appeal subject to the directions of the benches of the Law Society.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary Glenmore, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 10, the Calgary Hebrew School Amendment Act. [interjection]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 11 read a first time]

Bill 30**Agricultural Operation Practices Act**

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 30, Agricultural Operation Practices Act.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is for those carrying on agriculture operations to do so without undue influence of others.

[Leave granted; Bill 30 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 30 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Bill Pr. 10**The Calgary Hebrew School Amendment Act, 1987**

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary Glenmore, I request leave to introduce Bill

Pr. 10, The Calgary Hebrew School Amendment Act, 1987.

The purpose of this Bill is to change the name of the school to the Calgary Jewish Academy.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 10 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 5**United Farmers of Alberta****Co-operative Limited Amendment Act, 1987**

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 5, the United Farmers of Alberta Co-operative Limited Amendment Act, 1987.

The purpose of this Bill is to amend certain provisions of the constituting Act of the United Farmers of Alberta to enable it to effect its objects and purposes outside Alberta and to enable it to hold property outside Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 5 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 6**Alberta Wheat Pool Amendment Act, 1987**

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 6, the Alberta Wheat Pool Amendment Act, 1987.

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the power of the pool to purchase reserves from members unable to farm due to terminal illness.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 6 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 19**Calgary Assessment of
Annexed Lands Act, 1987**

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 19, Calgary Assessment of Annexed Lands Act, 1987.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide that certain Local Authorities Board orders, as amended by cabinet, be confirmed by statute.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 19 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 4**The King's College Amendment Act, 1987**

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 4, The King's College Amendment Act, 1987.

The purpose of this Bill is to permit the college, which is located in the constituency of Edmonton Highlands, to widen the fields of education in which it may offer courses.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 4 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 3**An Act to Incorporate the Sisters Servants
of Mary Immaculate (Polish) of Alberta**

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 3, An Act to Incorporate the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate (Polish) of Alberta.

The purpose of this Bill is to incorporate a religious association and to provide for the constitution of the corporation and

the management of its business.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 3 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 2
The Alpine Club of Canada
Amendment Act, 1987

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave this morning to introduce Bill Pr. 2, The Alpine Club of Canada Amendment Act, 1987.

The purpose of this Bill is to remove the restriction which prevents the club from owning land above a certain value.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 2 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 12
German-Canadian Cultural Association
(Edmonton) Act

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the hon. Member for Lethbridge West, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 12, German-Canadian Cultural Association (Edmonton) Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to exempt certain property of the association from municipal and school taxes.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 12 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 15
Lake Bonavista Homeowners Association Ltd.
Tax Exemption Act

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 15, Lake Bonavista Homeowners Association Ltd. Tax Exemption Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to exempt certain lands owned by the company from municipal and school taxes while used for recreational and social enjoyment.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 15 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 22
Rhea-Lee Williamson Adoption Act

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 22, Rhea-Lee Williamson Adoption Act.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 22 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 1
First Canadian Insurance Corporation Act

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 1, First Canadian Insurance Corporation Act.

By the terms of the Insurance Act, it is necessary for an insurance company to be incorporated by a private Act. This Bill fulfills this purpose.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 1 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 14
Acts Leadership Training Centre Act

DR. CASSIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 14, Acts Leadership Training Centre Act.

The object of this Act is to provide religious training for persons wishing to enter the Christian ministry.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Bill as requested is not on notice and should be introduced at a later date.

Bill Pr. 16
Parkland Community Centre Calgary Ltd.
Tax Exemption Act

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 16, Parkland Community Centre Calgary Ltd. Tax Exemption Act.

The purpose of this Bill is identical to the purpose cited for Bill Pr. 15.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 16 read a first time]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Drumheller.

Bill Pr. 20
Institute of Canadian Indian Arts Act

MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 20, Institute of Canadian Indian Arts Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to incorporate the institution and provide for its constitution.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 20 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 17
Lake Bonaventure Residents Association Ltd.
Tax Exemption Act

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 17, Lake Bonaventure Residents Association Ltd. Tax Exemption Act.

This Bill's purpose also is identical to that cited for Bill Pr. 15.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 17 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 18
Midnapore Lake Residents Association Ltd.
Tax Exemption Act

MR. PAYNE: Finally, Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 18, Midnapore Lake Residents Association Ltd. Tax Exemption Act.

The purpose of this Bill is also identical to that cited in Bill Pr. 15.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 18 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file the answer to Question 130.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the annual report for 1985-86 of the Public Service Employee Relations Board.

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table with the Legislative Assembly the annual report of the Alberta Water Resources Commission, 1985-86.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, 10 adult students from the English as a Second Language program at the Alberta Vocational Centre in my constituency. The 10 students in the members' gallery are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Robert Nash. I would ask that they stand and receive a vigorous Friday morning welcome from members of the Assembly.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to introduce 24 grade 10 students from the Calmar school. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Jerry Pond. They are seated in the members gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the cordial welcome of the House.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Government Tendering Procedures

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my first question of the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. I wonder if the minister has now investigated the 4,000 square foot expansion program at Sterling Place contracted for the department of economic development and whether or not he can confirm if the lease was done at the same bid rate as the initial contract or whether the Tory contractor slipped in an increase.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is a question I took on notice from the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood a couple of days ago. When checking, I can confirm to the House that the direct negotiations that were carried out to provide the amalgamation for economic development in Sterling Place commencing March 1, 1987, were brought in at a lower net effective rate than the rate that was achieved on July 5, 1985, by select tender.

MS BARRETT: Well, supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. That is interesting information. I'm curious that the minister will indicate what inquiries he makes of the people he gives the taxpayers' money to. Is he aware that not one but two of the principals of LPI Development Corporation Ltd. have been political colleagues of the Premier? That is, is he aware of the presence of Peter Knaak, who was at one time MLA for Edmonton Whitemud and prior to that executive director of the Premier's former portfolio, on the board of directors of LPI?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I attempted to explain to the House earlier this week how we go about acquiring space for various client departments, and I thought I made it very clear that the original leases in Sterling Place were acquired by a select tender process. A number of building owners had an opportunity to

compete. He who submits the lowest bid gets it, and that was the case with our original occupancy of Sterling Place. Now, surely the hon. members aren't suggesting that we strike certain people from the list because of what their political, religious, or other beliefs should be.

MS BARRETT: No, Mr. Speaker, what I'm suggesting is that the tendering process be assured for all contracts and all leases that are awarded by this province. Will the minister now commit himself to abandoning the direct negotiations and ensure that Alberta taxpayers' money, which is currently being used for whatever specious reasons while ordinary Albertans are having their services cut back -- will he assure the Assembly that that tendering process will always take place in future to guarantee that the lowest bid is the one that is awarded?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the question shows the lack of knowledge on the opposite side as to the needs we're attempting to fulfill. Are you suggesting that if we're leasing X number of square feet for a department such as Social Services or Energy and a new program in that client department necessitates some additional space, we locate that additional program blocks away from the central structure of the department? You know, the only way you can satisfy an amalgamation or an expansion need is through direct negotiations, and I certainly will not instruct my staff not to use direct negotiations. We will always use tendering where tendering is feasible. And we'll use open public tendering where open public tendering is feasible. As I explained to the House the other day, we'll use select tendering where a general location is necessary. You can't open up a northeast regional office in Calgary by the open tender method. The lowest tender may come from southwest Calgary. I mean, let's do a little research and understand the leasing process.

MS BARRETT: In the first place, Mr. Speaker, it was the minister that was asked to do the research, and I'm glad that he reported. In response to his question, what we're wondering about is whether or not you're prepared to break the old Tory boys' network when it comes to contracting.

But my final supplementary question to the minister is: will he now confirm, media reports aside, if this government has in fact negotiated new space in the proposed very likely very expensive project downtown of Olympia & York for government purposes? Will he now confirm that?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I must comment again on the opening preamble. If there's evidence of favouritism that the members opposite have, I wish they would lay it out. The tendering process is open to anyone that has facilities in the particular region to offer. The direct negotiations are definitely necessary to fulfill client needs, and we will continue to use that process.

The final supplementary that the hon. member asked was asked in this House the other day, and I would refer her to *Hansard*.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister with regards to tendering. Could the minister indicate whether all services, all janitorial services, in public buildings across the province of Alberta are tendered out?

MR. ISLEY: The simple answer is no. In some public buildings the janitorial services are provided by government staff, in some public buildings that we lease the janitorial services are

provided as part of the lease agreement, and in other cases we are tendering to the private sector. Any time we have privatized the building in terms of its caretaking services or property management, that normally goes by a tender process, or I would suggest it always goes by a tender process, in some cases with prequalifications.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would remind hon. members -- order please -- that the government estimates are before the House, and the minister being asked can be designated to bring his estimates forward on a specific day. The Chair would therefore request that with the number of members wanting to ask questions, urgent and pressing business be the order of the day.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, also to the minister. Since the minister hangs his defence of the gift to his cronies on the fact that the original office space went out to tender, would he not confirm that select tendering for Sterling Place office space was only done after the government had already decided to occupy Sterling Place and only one other tender was requested and that at the very last minute?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the questions the hon. member is raising date back to 1984, and my information on this matter would indicate that the first acquisition of space in Sterling Place was done by the select tender route. We requested to submit bids, and the low bid won. The second acquisition of space in Sterling place was also acquired, because it was for a different department, by the select tender route. Four building owners that would satisfy the client needs were identified and requested to bid, and again the low bid was awarded.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the minister. To ensure that we all understand, especially the socialist opposition . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. NELSON: Is the minister suggesting that it is generally cheaper and in the better interests of the taxpayer to negotiate a contract under certain circumstances than to tender it?

MR. ISLEY: The answer to that, Mr. Speaker, is an obvious yes. It would appear that before sitting down I should remind those that are making the noise to go back and read *Hansard* and see if they can understand the tendering process. If they can't, please contact me and I will have lessons conducted in how tendering is done in this province.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Second main question, Official Opposition.

MS BARRETT: For the hon. member, two statements by the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question please.

MS BARRETT: I designate the second question to the Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. If party leaders are going to designate a question, the Chair would appreciate if it's

designated without comments being made. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

Credit Union Stabilization

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Treasurer. When some members of the board of directors of Edmonton Savings and Credit Union arrived at the credit union headquarters on Whyte Avenue last Friday, March 20, they found that the locks to all the third-floor offices and meeting rooms had been changed. That same day each member of the board was delivered a letter -- I have a copy of one -- informing them in effect that the board was no longer able to exercise its power and authority without the prior written consent of the administrator of the credit union, appointed by the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation. Edmonton Savings and Credit Union staff were also instructed that they could no longer do any work on behalf of the board or board members; they were told that verbally.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. McEACHERN: Was the Treasurer informed by the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation of its decision to mount a coup against the board of Edmonton Savings and Credit Union prior to that coup being effected last Friday?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any coup.

MR. McEACHERN: Then in that case, Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer has lost control of the stabilization corporation, an agent of this . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. McEACHERN: Will the Treasurer direct the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation to rescind its administrator's order of March 20 and restore to the board of officers of the Edmonton Savings and Credit Union their full democratically mandated power and authority?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker. I'm really glad to hear the member's newfound interest in credit unions. For some time he has taken pains to ignore this issue. When we brought forward recommendations with respect to changes in the financial institutions in this province, it was convenient for him not to talk about credit unions. Now, however, I am pleased to see he has taken a position in support of the board's role, and I'll make a note of that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker. I would just like to point out I spoke at some length in this House last Wednesday.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. McEACHERN: I attended their meeting two or three weeks ago.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Put your supple-

mentary without preamble.

MR. McEACHERN: To the Treasurer, and it refers to something he said on *Crossfire* the other day. He bragged that he was rescuing the credit unions for some \$33 million. Apart from the fact that the system needs far more money than that, why should the Edmonton Savings and Credit Union give up its democratic control of its operation for such a paltry sum?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I now must seek your advice since in fact there has been clear evidence of defalcation on behalf of the ESCU board on a very serious matter with respect to internal adjustments and perhaps some misrepresentations of the facts with respect to how the board is operating.

I know that the member is doing his very best in representing the board, but perhaps because some of the matters which are before the courts right now deal with possible fraudulent charges of that board, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I'm reluctant to pursue it any further except to say that -- let me make it very clear that this board and this credit union is now under administration. It has been under administration by the government since approximately one year ago, and the reason for that is that this credit union which the member is representing has run up losses of a little over \$93 million since its inception and therefore, acting in a responsible manner, the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation put this board under administration and is now attempting to work a reasonable way to assess how to save this credit union and is putting in place at least two adjustments which will do just that.

But because the member has taken the time to take the board's point of view, I hesitate to get strenuously into this discussion because there are some potential charges of mismanagement and perhaps even fraud before the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton Savings & Credit Union board . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order.

MR. McEACHERN: Their strength is down from 21 . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. McEACHERN: They're the only one of the unions that have put their house in order, and you're trying to force an amalgamation.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. If the hon. Provincial Treasurer has indicated that perhaps the matter is one of the sub judice, perhaps that line of questioning should not be pursued.

MR. McEACHERN: My question is: is the minister aware that the stabilization corporation called a meeting this morning for 7 a.m. with the intention of displacing the present president of the Edmonton Savings & Credit Union, Jim Sklarchuk?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it is in fact these moves that I'm referring to, which in all likelihood will lead to either statements of legal action against the board or in fact will have to make some accommodation to discharge that board because of course there's clear evidence now that there have been some

unusual transactions not really understood by the board. I should say that . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. It would appear to the Chair that based on the comments the Chair is hearing from the hon. Provincial Treasurer, this line of questioning will not be pursued today. A supplementary on this, Member for Edmonton Meadowlark?

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary to the minister. There is a difference between putting a credit union . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. The Chair has just said that based on what the Chair has heard from the hon. Provincial Treasurer, that matter will not be pursued today.

MR. MITCHELL: This has nothing to do with that. Mr. Speaker. It's the credit . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. The Chair is having difficulty in that the main question was on this and supplementaries should be related to the main question.

Job Creation and Job Training

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment. Recent budget estimates for the Career Development and Employment department show money allotted to training and career services to be cut by a little over 20 percent while money to employment services is up 33 percent. It would appear that the minister has merely shifted funds to prepare for some hidden agenda.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Since the department is cutting back on vocational training and career assistance and increasing to the private sector for the employment services, is the shift being made in an attempt to incorporate a work for welfare scheme with the emphasis on work, as in cheap labour, rather than in retraining?

MR. ORMAN: No, Mr. Speaker. The reduction in the amount that we put towards training and the increase that we put towards the employment programs have nothing to do with a hidden agenda. As a matter of fact, it's quite public. It comes out once a month, and it's called the labour force stats. We're merely being sensitive to the demands of the labour force, the demands of the economy today, by being sensitive to a need for employment-related programs as opposed to a need for training programs. Training programs are in demand when we have a very strong labour force, and there is a strong demand from employers for a skilled labour force.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The Budget Address did state that special emphasis will be given to employing social assistance recipients and those who have exhausted unemployment insurance benefits in this wage subsidy program.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. TAYLOR: Is the minister -- it's one sentence, Mr. Speaker -- intending to unload welfare recipients to wage-subsidized jobs without benefit of retraining or upgrading opportunities?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I should correct the record. The budget and the throne speech made no reference to the employables on social assistance in the manner that the hon. leader of the Liberal Party has suggested. If he has a good look at my estimates -- and I hope to be before the Assembly shortly with my estimates -- he will see that the two are not mutually exclusive. We still have a significant component in the budget for training. The hon. member should understand that the demand for training has somewhat subsided and the demand for job creation in recent work experience has increased. The employables on social assistance program will merely deal with, in a significant way, the single largest barrier to finding employment, and that is a record of recent work experience. Being out of work for a protracted period of time does not make you attractive in the labour force. This program will give individuals recent work experience so that they in fact will become attractive in the labour force.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Nevertheless, how can a government that cuts back -- it's cut back by over 20 percent -- on retraining opportunities and focuses on wage subsidy programs hope to keep people from falling through the social safety net in the long term?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm just a little bit puzzled by that last question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, the Chair is puzzled as well as to whether or not that indeed is the responsibility of the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Perhaps if the Liberal leader would like to rephrase or redirect?

MR. TAYLOR: I'll rephrase it. Obviously, he's concentrating on putting subsidy programs in and cutting back on training. That has to come to an end. You're getting a labour force, Mr. Speaker, that is not trained for the long term but to take on the new jobs. And if he cuts back on training, how can he focus on this long-term program if he is transferring money from training over to subsidies -- in other words, welfare?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not see in any way a wage subsidy program driven by the private sector as a manner of welfare. As a matter of fact, it's quite the contrary. What it does is give individuals an opportunity to participate in the economy, to find meaningful employment, and to get on-the-job experience. I don't see how that has to do with anything related to those comments. We have extreme concern for individuals who have not been employed in the labour force for extended periods of time. The hon. member simply has to look at my estimates of last year and he will find that it is a fraction of a percentage point in terms of reduction in the amount of money we'll be spending in the area of training and job creation. So I do not see where these cuts are in an overall global perspective that he's referring to.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary. Liberal leader.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A rose is a rose, wel-

fare is still welfare, so I'd like to turn the final supplementary to the Minister of Social Services. Since the minister announced cuts in her department this week which will make it almost imperative that social allowance recipients join her colleague's work for welfare program, what pressure has she exerted on her colleague to ensure that there are ample retraining options available in the program so that participants can escape the welfare trap in the long term?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, in discussing the individuals particularly who over the course of the last year have been coming on the welfare rolls and our great concern about them being very young and, to a large degree, single unemployables, it is important for us to identify the types of either skills or experience they may need. And as those individuals come forward, the programs will be available.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Career Development and Employment. What assurance can you give the Assembly that you're not going to lay off one group of people in the work force to replace them with a cheap labour source?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member brings up a very important point, and it's an ongoing challenge with us as a department. That has to do with the monitoring of our programs, particularly in the area of the wage subsidy programs. We want to be absolutely sure that additional employment under this program is incremental to existing employment. And as a matter of fact, we monitor the program closely with the employer and with the employee to be sure that there is no laying off of existing employees. If in fact that happens and we find out about it, the individuals are in breach of the contract that they signed with us and are subject to legal proceedings.

Heritage Savings Trust Fund

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer. It's with regards to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. A number of Albertans -- many Albertans, I would say -- and also in the last few days a lady from Carstairs, have raised the question as to what is in the fund and available to meet some of the needs in our current expenditure pattern. I'm talking about the base of the heritage fund and not the earnings of the fund. Could the Provincial Treasurer confirm to this Assembly that at this point in time the base of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund has no capability of funding the general revenue of the province of Alberta?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm in perhaps the specific way the member would like that statement. I think, as all members are aware, that there is a significant transfer from the heritage fund to the General Revenue Fund, and that's been referred to by the member. I should say that this year we will transfer the \$1.3 million income stream. And secondly, if you look at the documentation provided in the budget speech itself, you will see therein that close to \$8 billion has already been transferred in income from the heritage fund to the General Revenue Fund, protecting taxes and reducing impact on individual Albertans. The fund itself is made up of about \$12.5 billion in income-earning assets, and those assets are in fact the source

of the income stream that's being transferred.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. I'm not talking about the earnings, and I made that clear in my question, Mr. Speaker. Could the Provincial Treasurer reconfirm a statement that was made by a former Provincial Treasurer on [November] 13, 1981, where he said to us in this Assembly:

We should remember that the heritage fund has little cash in it: less than half of 1 percent of the fund is in cash form. Less than half of 1 percent is in a form where a person could go to a current account and ask for a withdrawal of [the] moneys. The heritage fund is long-term; it is committed.

Is that still the position of government and the current status, so that funds from the heritage fund are not available to the General Revenue Fund of 1987-88?

MR. JOHNSTON: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, since 1981 things have changed a bit. I can confirm now that the fund itself is in a fairly liquid position. Approximately \$2 billion in liquidity is available within that fund itself. This money is being used for a variety of purposes, including, for example, short-term advances to various other funds such as the small business term assistance program and the farm credit stability program. Both of those, on an interim basis, are being funded from the liquidity of the fund.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have before the Assembly an interim supply Bill which provides for some expenditures from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund for important capital projects, and those projects will be funded from within the fund itself. As I'm sure all members are aware, we have in this year in this budget statement capped the fund itself, in that transfers from the General Revenue Fund of oil and gas nonrenewable resource revenue will no longer be transferred over.

I suppose, Mr. Speaker, it would be possible, as I was trying to explain before, to liquidate the \$1.9 billion, nearly \$2 billion worth of investments in the Canada investment division. However, those bonds, which were advances to other provinces, which pay rates between 9.5 and 16.375 and yield as high as 17 percent in some cases, are the integral part of the earnings of the fund, which are now being transferred to the General Revenue Fund to account for about 12 percent of the total income of the General Revenue Fund.

However, there are varying degrees of liquidity, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, as I referred, there is the approximately \$2 billion in liquid assets. Other assets, including debentures of Alberta Crown corporations, are probably less liquid in that that's a very large portion. Yet they are income-producing assets as well. And so it ranges from very liquid down to perhaps not liquid, although it would be possible, with the current way in which the financial markets are now designed, to so called 'securitize' much of the holdings of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and convert it to liquid assets. But in doing so, of course, you would lose the income yield, let's say the 17 percent in some cases that I referred to, as compared to a normal cash return, which is about 6 or 7 percent today in some of the short-term money markets around the world.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer, and I'd like to refer to the deposits in marketable securities of some \$2.1 billion. Is the Provincial Treasurer saying that as of today if the funds are required, or in

the fiscal year 1987-88, we could liquidate those funds without a loss so that we could use them in the general revenue budget?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, since they are highly liquid, they are in fact probably within 30 days convertible to cash, and as I've indicated, we are using that liquid pool of \$2 billion as a short-term reservoir to fund the very major programs that I referred to and including the capital fund projects. And we're paying a rate of return on those as well. But yes, there is that money sitting there. The point is, however, that with the current strong financial position of the government and the fact that we do have the heritage fund in place, we are able to borrow money, for example, on the New York commercial paper market right now at approximately just under 6 percent, whereas we can invest that money here and make a larger return for it and work on that spread.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the minister, and it's relative to the borrowings. Could the minister indicate at this time the amount of borrowings that will take place in the fiscal year 1987-88 based on the use of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund as security?

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm not altogether clear on the question, Mr. Speaker, yet the budget document does set out the current cash requirements which likely will be borrowed over the next year. I would estimate that they would be close to \$2 billion, but the facts are in the budget document. I simply leave it to the member to check himself. But we will have to borrow this year.

As I've indicated, we have been very successful in entering the world markets, and our next step probably would be to enter the New York markets on a long-term, fixed basis, where we have the advantage both of very low interest rates that are now prevailing, a very strong possibility of the longer term bonds moving down, as we saw this morning, and an opportunity to perhaps do some favourable swaps with respect to interest rates and with respect to the currency as well. That's part of our plan, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Member for Calgary Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on the question from the Member for Little Bow, I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer his present policy position with respect to a future possibility, and that is: if \$2 billion in liquid assets were in fact transferred to general revenue, has the minister made a calculation as to what kind of personal income tax increase would be required in Alberta to replace the resultant loss in income?

MR. JOHNSTON: That's a very appropriate question point, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the income stream, as I've said, the accumulation of about \$8 billion in transfers from the heritage fund or last year's \$1.6 billion transfer from the heritage fund or this year's \$1.3 billion transfer from the heritage fund would under most assessments be about equal to a 6 percent sales tax. And a 6 percent sales tax in this province would add approximately in personal income tax likely 20-plus points to our personal income tax to generate a similar amount of money from the pockets of Albertans.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we're extremely fortunate to have this fund in place because it does assist us on the borrowing

side, provides the income stream, and it is in fact one of the finest components of our fiscal plan which draws comparisons and compliments from all other jurisdictions around the world.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, the opposition has been attempting to obtain from the government an estimate of the fair market value of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I was wondering whether the minister would admit that from \$1.5 billion to \$2.5 billion has been lost on heritage fund loans to provincial Crown corporations and that in fact the true value of the assets in the heritage trust fund are from \$10 billion to \$11 billion and not the \$12.5 billion ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary question please.

MR. CHUMIR: ... or the \$15 billion that the financial statements incorrectly stipulate.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, let it be very clear that there is no attempt here to hide what is in the fund. The fund itself now has approximately \$15 billion in assets, and there's no doubt about it, the assets are in place. They're working for the people of Alberta, and they are the significant contribution both to diversification, to jobs, and to economic growth in this province. All Albertans know that, and we have gone through at least two major debates across the province to defend this Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

Those who want to nay and say it, those who disclaim its importance, and those who truly do not understand the importance of it, should be the ones out there apologizing to the people of Alberta. For it's in times like this when this fund comes to the assistance of Albertans that we can be proud of the decisions, proud of the foresight of saving some of that money some seven or eight years ago. It is just that foresight, Mr. Speaker, that leaves these Liberals searching for some short criticism. This fund is an important heritage to these people of Alberta. It's a savings plan; it's the way we run our households ourselves. [interjections] And all Albertans ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

MR. FOX: Now that the hon. Provincial Treasurer has let all Albertans know that he's able to borrow money at 6 percent in the New York money markets, can he explain to Alberta farmers why he steadfastly refuses to lend them money at 6 percent?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the member's poor understanding of financial markets is clearly and once and for all finally revealed. He knows that when you borrow money short term, you're taking the risk of the interest rates increasing over time. But what we have provided to the people of Alberta, both to the small business sector and to the farmers -- and he was one who said it was a poor program, and he said he would not participate in it. I know he does not like the intention of this plan. Well, let me go on to say that 9 percent long-term money for 20 years to the farming community is unheard of. No one in the financial sector right now would provide 9 percent money to any institution for 9 percent because the risk is just too great. We're using our financial clout, the savings which we have in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the financial credit of this province, to protect the farmers at 9 percent for 20 years -- a program which has never been provided by any province to the sector so impor-

tant to us at any other time by any other government. It's an important first step, it's an important signal, and it's the very best financial terms provided. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Member for Calgary M c C a l l . [interjections]

Provincial Immigration Policy

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the noise on my right would like to listen, they might learn something.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, earlier this month it came to my attention about a Mr. Qaderi, who is a Canadian citizen, and his attempts to bring his Afghan family from a refugee camp in Pakistan. To the minister of manpower. I understand the delay is related to a purported physically handicapped daughter. Could the minister in his responsibilities for provincial immigration and settlement services indicate what information he may have on this case?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the case was also brought to my attention. The hon. member should know and the House should know that prospective immigrants and visitors to Canada, and particularly Alberta in this case, who have medical disabilities or physical disabilities are not eligible for admission into the province. Under circumstances where Canadian citizens are wanting to reunite their families abroad, we have a review committee that's made up of five departments of this government that look at the cases on a compassionate case-by-case basis. In this particular case the individual's daughter was physically handicapped. We have reviewed that matter, and as a matter of fact this morning I approved and recommended to my federal colleagues that we allow for the family to be reunified with Mr. Qaderi here in Alberta.

MR. NELSON: Supplementary to the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Do the family members now qualify under federal immigration policies to enter Canada as landed immigrants, which does not circumvent the normal entry system?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, there's been a great deal of attention lately on how refugees enter Canada. I should say and point out that in this case Mr. Qaderi is a Canadian citizen; has been, I believe, for some six years. His family has qualified as landed immigrants, are still in the refugee camp but have been held up because of the physical disability. It's important to point out that when there are disabilities that are medical or physical, we want to be sure that there is not undue stress placed on our social services or our medical care. In this particular instance the balance of the family is eligible for landed immigrant status, were held up because of the physical condition of the daughter, and in fact will now be eligible to become landed immigrants and be reunified with Mr. Qaderi in Calgary.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Alberta government is a very feeling government to people.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please come to the question.

MR. NELSON: Will the federal minister of immigration, through discussion with the minister, now move to grant the family a permit to enter Canada, so as to have the family unit reunited in a more humanistic environment?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I did, as I indicated this morning, accept the recommendation of the review panel. I have had a conversation with the ministry of immigration federally, and I have been advised that they will be moving forthwith to issue a minister's permit to the family. I would anticipate that in the very near future they will be able to leave that refugee camp on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan and be reunited with the father in Calgary.

MR. CHUMIR: Supplementary to the minister, whose comments reflect far too much focus on money as a government concern and not on compassion. Will the minister give the House an undertaking that it will in future give the same attention to reuniting the families of low-income immigrants as it does to immigrants with money, so that this situation of heartbreak encountered by Mr. Qaderi does not take place in respect of other . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That's really not a question . . .

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether the hon. member was just listening or not, but I would say that the decision in this case obviously points to a balanced and a compassionate perspective on the matters of immigration. I should point out to the hon. member that in Alberta we have the best record in Canada for accepting refugees under extreme circumstances. There have been times in the past where we, with 10 percent of the Canadian population, have taken 15 percent of refugees on a compassionate basis. So I don't think that has anything to do with money.

I should say that if the member is referring to the business immigration program that has provided \$58 million of risk capital investment into this province, that's less than 4 percent of the total people that come to Alberta under the immigration laws of this country. So as a matter of fact, I think it is more than balanced on the side of compassion.

MR. GIBEAULT: Can the minister assure the House that he will be taking an equally compassionate view towards these refugees that are streaming towards our country from Central America?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the matter of immigration is clearly a matter of federal jurisdiction. As I indicated, in extreme circumstances we look at situations as they present themselves that may present undue stress on our health care system or on our social services system. We have an agreement with the federal government, as do other provinces, in terms of the number of refugees that we would be willing to take in any given year. As I've indicated, we have a very strong record in this area, and it's not something that started yesterday or the day before. It's been historic with this government in Alberta.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would find it perhaps refreshing to hear the occasional yes and no from members of the Assembly.

The Member for Edmonton Calder.

Social Allowance — Single Employables

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Social Services. On Wednesday last the minister referred to her government creating initiatives, incentives, and opportunities for single employables in this province, when the reality is that this government is creating hardship, hunger, and hopelessness. The minister indicated that those on social allowance require career enhancement and job experience. Is the minister unaware that many single employables are skilled people, such as tradespeople, who simply cannot find work?

MRS. OSTERMAN: In keeping with the Speaker's admonition, the answer is yes.

MS MJOLSNESS: I'm glad she understands that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The time period for question period has ended. May we have the unanimous support of the House to conclude the questions already under way?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are there any opposed? The Member for Edmonton Calder, a supplementary.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary. Yesterday the minister indicated that she does not expect that all single employables in the province will live precisely the same fashion. Can the minister please indicate what life-style options she believes to be available to single employables with no more than a total of \$326 a month to spend?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the short-term assistance, which is for a period of three months, that is available for single employables is predicated on an average amount across the province that is outlined for room and board. I'm sure there are others that will look to other types of shared accommodation.

MS MJOLSNESS: One option is living on the streets.

A supplementary to the minister. What provision has the minister made for those single employables who are now on social assistance and will have to break leases in order to move to new, low-rental accommodation, thereby losing their damage deposit? Will the government give these people a damage deposit?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, a two-month period has been provided in order that those who will need to change accommodation can do so.

MS MJOLSNESS: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the current cuts are expected to bring Edmonton's Food Bank over 1,000 new clients a month, will the minister confirm that it is her government's policy to force people to utilize the food banks?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the estimates that the hon. member is using are her estimates; they certainly are not the government estimates. It is not this government's policy to direct people to food banks unless, in a social worker's opinion -- we do have individuals who have not managed the amount of dollars that they've been given to live on on a monthly basis.

They will share with that client any information they have about community resources,

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A supplementary. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, An internal report that the Social Services department prepared last year focused entirely on the plight of single employables on welfare. Will the minister agree to table that report so that all members can have the information before them before this punitive, regressive program is activated?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, from time to time, obviously every minister receives advice, and that advice is acted on by the ministers. Certainly I take full responsibility for acting on the various pieces of information and advice that I have received.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May we revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed,

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

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

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of 57 grade 6 students from Our Lady of Perpetual Help school. They are accompanied by four teachers: Sister Beaudoin; Mr. Stephen Lindop, who I'm dually honoured to introduce as we were fellow candidates in the previous provincial election; Miss Louise Roy; and Mr. Jim Ziebart. They are also accompanied by one parent, Diane Critchlow.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to meeting with the students, the teachers, and the parent after, and I would ask them if they would rise so that they could receive the warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order, Member for Red Deer North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker I'd like to raise a point of order with questions raised by the Member for Edmonton Kingsway as addressed to the Provincial Treasurer, and I refer the Chair and members to *Beauchesne*, citation 359(10), which says:

A question ought not to refer to a statement made outside the House by a Minister.

The member opposite prefaced a question to the minister by clearly indicating it was based on what he heard the minister say in the media presentation known as *Crossfire*. With all due respect to the media bards to my left, some considerably to my left, this again is a clear indication of the opposition's reliance on the media for their research data. Notwithstanding that however, I believe the question to be in clear violation of

Beauchesne's citation 359(10), and I respectfully submit that consideration to the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the point of order. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker. I wasn't relying on any media. I watched the Treasurer say it, and I heard the words directly through the T V . [interjections] That's directly. Nobody interpreted it. I heard the words directly, just as real as right here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Once again the Chair appreciates the very sage advice from the hon. Member for Red Deer North. This is the second day in a row when the information offered indeed is substantiated by *Beauchesne*. However, I do believe, in fairness to the Member for Edmonton Kingsway, that there are still many in our society who believe that seeing is believing.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Third Reading)

[It was moved by the members indicated that the following Bills be read a third time, and the motions were carried]

No.	Title	Moved by
2	Daylight Saving Time Amendment Act, 1987	Horsman
24	Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1987	Johnston
25	Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund) Interim Supply Act, 1987	Johnston
26	Appropriation (Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Capital Projects Division) Interim Supply Act, 1987-88	Johnston

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

6. Moved by Mr. Johnston:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly approve in general the fiscal policies of the government.

[Adjourned debate March 25: Mr. Hyland]

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I participate in the Budget Address I would first like to say I made most of the comments that I wanted to make regarding agriculture in the Agriculture estimates last night, so I'll spare the House the privilege of listening to them again. They're on the record, and they're there.

Mr. Speaker, firstly, I'd like to talk about the small business term assistance program and how useful that was to many small businesses in my constituency and how they made great use out of it. I've talked to some of the people who received some money from it. and they were indeed happy that they could stabilize their rate of interest so that they knew what at least that part of their business operation was going to cost them, and carried on and are indeed thankful for that assistance.

Speaking on the labour report, I've looked through that report and I've had some initial contact with constituents about it

and look forward to meeting with those people so that they can express their feelings to me on the report, and when it comes up for discussion, I can indeed keep their suggestions in mind and represent them to caucus and to the House when we get to that stage, if a Bill is introduced.

Mr. Speaker, another subject I'd like to speak on, and although it's a federal subject, it has a lot of importance to rural members. The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche talked about it yesterday or the day before -- whatever day -- and I should say that many of these notes were notes left over from when I thought I was going to speak on the throne speech. So if I had been up, we would have both been talking about rural post offices at about the same time.

Mr. Speaker, this year the people in Purple Springs had their rural post office closed, and even though there wasn't a large number of box holders, some of those people had traveled 15 or 20 miles just to get to the post office. In closing that post office, even though it's only seven or eight miles to the next town, that's an additional seven or eight miles many of those people had to travel, and we're talking one way. So it does add a lot more mileage to their driving.

The thing that I guess has always bothered people that get their mail in rural post offices is that we pay -- I'm not sure what it is; maybe other members can remember -- something like \$10 or \$11 a year for a post office box. We pay rent on the box. That may not be a great amount, but the principle of it -- those of you who are fortunate enough or unfortunate enough, depending how you feel about living in cities, get your mail delivered to your door free daily.

AN HON. MEMBER: Not everybody.

MR. HYLAND: Not everybody, but many do. There's always that feeling that we pay for that box so we should continue to have that service.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if they look at the post office system, even some of the rural routes in other parts of Canada, they get daily delivery of mail. We haven't heard about reducing them or cutting them out. If many of those places were on rotation of three times a week mail delivery or something like many small post offices in my constituency are now, the post office could indeed find a way of reducing their deficit that would be a lot more dramatic than that. Indeed, perhaps city dwellers -- you often hear people complain that all I get in the mail is junk mail anyway. So would it hurt one day or two days a week not to have mail delivery? I think they should be looking at things such as that and take into account the distances that many of us in the rural area have to travel to get to our post offices to pick up our mail.

Mr. Speaker, next I'd like to turn to education and talk about the Education budget and the reduction of 3 percent in the Education budget. Most of the people that I've talked to -- although nobody likes a reduction because we have come to believe that everything should increase every year and we've built our sights on these increases. There is no question that it's hard when a government comes out and does something that nobody else has done, and that is attempt to reduce spending and reduce it in a dramatic way. Even with the reduction of 3 percent in the major funding agencies, an average reduction of somewhere around 6 percent in other governmental departments shows that we are

interested and put priority on those agencies that were reduced only to the 3 percent level.

But in Education -- I believe it was two or three years ago -- we started a new funding formula that was supposed to solve the problems that existed between large urban school boards and the smaller and more sparsely populated and distance-driven rural boards. Mr. Speaker, I'm really not sure that that new program solved all the problems, because I keep on hearing from time to time problems that do occur with small districts. And when I say small, I mean small in numbers of children registered in school but not necessarily small in distances. In my constituency there are some schools with not too many children in them, yet some of these children are spending an hour, an hour and a quarter, an hour and a half on school buses one way to get to that school. So any time a school is closed, it's a dramatic event, because they are going a lot farther. I well realize that school boards are facing a very big challenge in attempting to deal with these situations, and I commend them for the stand that they've taken.

One thing I would like to say is that I hope in this that the minister has some flexibility where she can deal with jurisdictions that I described that have these problems, because the numbers of students and the programs that they're offering now -- special programs, for example; slow-learner programs or assistance programs, where they can still apply -- if they can prove their case they can receive additional funding for them, because there is a vast difference of having one more teacher in a school of 200 students. Then when you go to some of the jurisdictions that I represent, where there aren't 200 students in any school, just a few students in the school, the reduction of one teacher is very dramatic. When there are special programs, the parents are very concerned and have written the minister requesting that she visit the school. I would encourage her, if at all possible once the session is out, to go and visit some of these rural jurisdictions that are having some problems providing education, partly because of dollars -- no question -- but also because of distances, and to obtain an understanding from those administering the school and those on the school boards of the problems they feel they have and that they think they can prove where they need some further assistance, but they would like additional information and an additional hearing from those concerned.

Another thing, Mr. Speaker, that I've found in meeting with educators and school boards is the concern they have about the varying large amounts of programs that we offer and the rate at which we change curriculums. In a meeting with about four or five school boards in Medicine Hat, it was said that if curriculum changes can be slowed down and even stopped in this fiscal year, it would save those four or five boards combined approximately \$700,000 to \$750,000. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a great deal of money, at least in my books, and it would leave them a lot more money available to provide service to students. I think we've changed curriculums many, many times in the last few years, and I don't believe it would hurt to slow down the change or even stop the change so that they can deliver these services to students and that the students can have the benefit of these extra teachers. Because again, in smaller districts it means the teacher going away to learn in-service and you have to put somebody else in that classroom, so you've got double the wage right there. It may be a unique situation, but it's not as if you can go to night school or go to meetings at nights and learn the new curriculum. You have to go away from your area to learn that curriculum. So besides wages, you've often got costs for hotel rooms, out-of-pocket expenses, et cetera. I think we could

slow that down and even possibly hold it for a year or two, and let's assess where we're going.

The other cost that comes along with that is changing of textbooks. Every time you change curriculum, textbooks get changed too. Small jurisdictions start to buy textbooks class by class, and then all of a sudden the textbook is no longer used. I think that happened just a year or so ago, and a new textbook was accepted. It got used for a year. Somebody found something wrong with it, and the thing was pulled out of circulation. So many of these jurisdictions had a great deal of money invested in this book, and then the thing never gets used. It gets outdated and it's put on a shelf somewhere. When you're working on smaller budgets, it does create a lot of problems when you change those textbooks.

Mr. Speaker, we've put a lot of money in education in the last few years and a lot of money in educational changes, and I really wonder if it's doing what it should do in that. Are our students any better prepared to face the realities of life than what they were a number of years ago? At one of these meetings I was talking about, indeed, one of the trustees said that. He said, "Are we going in the right direction? Are those people being equipped the way they should be equipped to face the rest of their life? Are they getting the basics that they should need to face the things that may come before them in life?"

I think that maybe now is a good time to stop. Let's go ahead with what we've got in education. Let's review it and see indeed if we are heading in the right direction to make sure that students are getting what they want. I know that in discussion with a teacher at home a year or so ago that about 13 or 14 years ago when he came to town the three Rs were taught, if memory serves me right, something like 140 minutes in a day. Now it's less than half that, and we keep on lumping new programs in on them and it keeps on cutting it down. Then we get to university, and we wonder why when people get to that stage they can't compose a proper essay or a proper letter. There's no wonder. If all these other programs are coming forward it's no wonder that students don't have time to learn how to properly compose things.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about income tax. Obviously, nobody likes to pay additional income tax. If we had a survey done and a thousand people were asked "Would you like to pay more income tax?" I'd be surprised if we got three or four out of that thousand that said yes. It's human nature that you don't want to pay tax. If you're in business or in farming or just filing personal income tax forms, you go down the list to find the maximum number of exceptions that you can find before you total up your tax dollar.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think we should look -- in the taxation year 1974-75 we as legislators reduced the tax rate in Alberta, and that tax rate virtually remained until 1984, when it was raised. During that time it was changed from a percentage of federal tax dollars to points in the federal income tax. But the amount of taxes paid by people in Alberta, even taking that change into consideration, varied very little. I guess there always has to come a time when if you want additional services, somebody has to pay for it, and government is not magic. It's you and I and all the citizens out there. There's nothing magical about where the money has to come from. It has to come from somewhere. Obviously somebody has to be responsible for it, and that's us in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the table on page 88 in the Budget Address -- although I suppose you could say what comfort is it, because others pay higher taxes than you do -- we find

out that Alberta's basic tax rate is still the lowest of anywhere in Canada and that there are others at very considerably more than us, some just under twice. So the tax rate is there. Indeed, even the high-income surtax that was charged -- although not all the provinces have a surtax -- the surtax that we put on at 8 percent is the second lowest surtax, with the highest being in the province of Manitoba: a surtax rate of 20 percent, considerably more than our rate.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

But, Mr. Speaker, in talking to my constituents about that, naturally they're concerned about additional taxes and additional rates; they agree that somebody has to pay them. But their concern is -- and it's something that we all have to watch; all members of this Legislature -- that if we stop the deficit increasing of the budget and get out of deficit in the four-year period, that we continue to attempt to have a budget that keeps that deficit as minimal as possible, that we attempt to live within the means of the ability that we have to collect money or the means at which the nonrenewable resource revenue comes into our province, and that we don't continue to spend, spend, spend just to make it look like we're offering some sort of service that indeed we can't afford to have.

We've heard, Mr. Speaker, about the problems that have occurred because of excessive and questionable spending in the '70s that we're now paying for. But I can remember standing and sitting in this Legislature during that time, and even with increasing budgets of 10 percent per year, or whatever they were at times then, I can remember not only government members -- and you know, I could well have been one, I suppose, if you go back and look through *Hansard* deep enough -- but members of the opposition saying, "It's not enough; it's not enough." We were increasing at dramatic rates, putting many programs in, and people were saying, "It's not enough."

We've heard condemnation of too many hospitals built. We've heard of the money spent on Kananaskis park. We've heard all sorts of things. But, Mr. Speaker, during that time there were many, many jobs created during those boom years with those projects, and they are there now; we obviously have to operate them now. But even then, there were many jobs created on the operation of those facilities, so let us remember that.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that was done at that time, and it was done in my constituency, was a wing built onto the hospital in Bow Island, that houses medically fragile people. Those are people that have been moved out of Baker Centre. At one time they used to say "young medically fragile people," but they are living longer now, and they're not children anymore; they're adults. There was a 30-bed wing put onto that hospital to move some of these people out of Baker Centre in Calgary and move them back closer to their families so that it was easier for their families to visit them. Mr. Speaker, I make no apology for those kinds of things, because I think that was something that brought many of those people back to their families. It brought them into a small town where everybody became involved with them, and at least it allows them, because of their handicaps, to live at least a partially reasonable life.

Sure, there were many of those things that were done, but at least that's one example that I think was something that was done at the time that I feel was done well, maybe because it's in my constituency. It did bring these people back closer to home so they could at least be closer to their families and provided them with a facility that was indeed better than the facility they

existed in and lived in in Calgary.

[Mr. Payne in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, if we look through the budget, we find that there has indeed been a marked reduction in government spending, and if we also look at the approximately \$400 million that it's taken to finance the deficit that's been created, we find that there indeed was a very large decrease in government operation. I think that's key to this whole thing. When we are expecting other groups that we fund to take a decrease in their operation grants, we as government have to take and show a marked decrease in our operation and show that we indeed can operate on less money and provide the same or better service to the public that we report to.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I was pleased in the last number of weeks to be involved with the Rick Hansen Man in Motion tour when Mr. Hansen crossed the border into Alberta at Walsh and again to be involved with that tour when he came to Bow Island. I said when the motion was before the Assembly that I was really pleased with the town and the area when they pulled together, not only because of the amount of money they donated; but I would suspect that's probably one of the largest donations received on a per capita basis anywhere across the world, in that it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of just under \$15,000 from a town of 1,500 with a rural service area around it, and additional moneys from the area bringing the amount that day somewhere around the \$20,000 mark. It was indeed something to see a town pull together like that and to see, when he came into the school gymnasium, somewhere between 500 and 600 people that had gathered over a period of about 20 minutes. It was something. I have lived in that town all my life, and I have never see people come together that quickly. Tribute has to be paid to those organizers who planned the event and who worked at that event for how well that worked out.

What was interesting, too, were all the students groups and all the groups that had done -- in the elementary school, for example, my son in grade 1 came home and he was really excited; they were having a hot dog day. They had their hot dog day and donated the money towards Man in Motion. It's something when you see grades 1 or 2 students walk up with the can they've kept their money in and present it. It's really moving, and it's a feeling one doesn't see and go through very often in life, but indeed in this case many of us in that room that day were privileged to go through that feeling and be able to be part of that feeling that was expressed to us.

I think, as I said when I started, I used a few pages of my notes in the Agriculture debate last night and expressed my views on agriculture there, so I would accordingly sit down, Mr. Speaker, and let other members who wish to and are excited give their words on the budget.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to be able to rise in my place and speak in the budget debate. I didn't have the opportunity to speak in the address in reply to the throne speech, and I would like to make a few comments about the constituency that it's my pleasure and my privilege to represent.

I've been the elected member of this Assembly for the Vegreville constituency for almost a year now, and I've cer-

tainly found it to be the most challenging and most exciting year of my life. I've really enjoyed the work, I've enjoyed the learning, and I feel generally quite good about what I've been able to accomplish in these nine months.

Some of the responsibilities that I realized were mine shortly after being elected include things like working closely with locally elected governments. There are in my constituency some nine councils of towns and villages, four county councils, hospital boards, and school boards. I try on a regular basis to meet with these different boards to see what sorts of things we can work on together. I'm really pleased with the kind of rapport we've been able to develop. It's no secret that there are some members on the councils who have political views and aspirations that differ from mine, but that's never been a problem. We've recognized that we have some common goals, and that is serving the people who we represent. Recognizing that we represent the same people, we've been able to work together, and I'm pleased about that. I thank them for not only their encouragement but also their advice, because I've needed it on occasion, being new to the whole area of provincial government and certainly municipal jurisdiction.

One of the things that I felt it was very important for me to do as the elected Member for Vegreville was to be accessible to people and be available, and it seemed to me to be of utmost importance that I establish an office in the constituency. There'd never been one to that point, and I moved very quickly to establish a constituency office in Vegreville. It's the major community in the constituency. I'm pleased to say that the office has been very well received. We've had a large number of cases coming through there, people seeking help on a wide variety of issues, and though there are some things that we're not able to help people with -- some things are clearly beyond our jurisdiction -- I feel like we've done a good job there. We've provided a service that wasn't really as available to people before.

In addition to having an office in Vegreville, I moved in November to open an office in the community of Two Hills, a town of some 1,200 people that is in the extreme northeast region of my constituency, and that office, too, has been quite busy and quite well received. It was about a month ago, Mr. Speaker, that I further moved to spread my budget wisely and open an office in the town of Tofield, which is a community of 1,600 people in the extreme southwest of the Vegreville constituency. I think that by having these three offices open and available for people, I'm able to provide the kind of service that they deserve and the kind of access to government programs.

Another thing that I thought was very important was to try and make myself as available to people on a regular basis as possible, so that I can hear what they have to say. I think a mistake that politicians all too often make is feeling that they are there to tell people what's going on and tell people what to do and how to do it. I've really thought a lot about that role. I think a politician should recognize that there's time for taking advice and there's time for giving advice. I see my role in the constituency as someone who's there to take advice, be it from individual constituents or interest groups, community groups or local governments. The time when I do give advice, Mr. Speaker, is when I stand up in this Assembly, and it's my earnest hope that after much persistence, you know, somewhere, sometime in the future the members opposite will benefit from that advice as I have on occasion benefited from theirs.

To make myself available to people on a regular basis, I set up a constituency tour just prior to the session, where I arranged

public information meetings in every town and village in the constituency and traveled around to sort of give people an idea of what sorts of things had gone on in government in the past year but, more importantly, to hear from them ideas and suggestions and concerns that they might have about their lives and about their hopes and aspirations so that I could do a better and more effective job of representing them here in this Legislature. I'm really pleased to report that there were over 300 people in total that saw fit to come to these public information meetings. It's a commitment of mine to the people in the Vegreville constituency that I'll hold these tours twice every year, and I hope it becomes something that they'll not only look forward to but count on -- a time to have their say.

I should mention, too, for the benefit of people in the constituency that it was a deliberate attempt on my part to keep these meetings as apolitical as possible. I wasn't out there as a representative of the New Democratic Party trying to tell people all of the things that I know are wrong with the government and all of the things that I know are right about our policy. I didn't use it as a tub-thumping forum. I wanted to provide that objective, open opportunity for people to tell me what they had to say. It was very well received. A very telling comment was given me by one person at the first meeting we held in Two Hills. I made a bit of a presentation, and I asked them for questions, what sort of things they might have to . . . I'll pat the Member for Vermilion-Viking on the back in a moment.

I asked them if there were any questions that they might have of me, and nobody had any. I wasn't sure; was that because I'd answered them all or because I'd bored them all? And one guy put up his hand, and he said, "Well, we never had anybody ask us what we thought before." So I . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. FOX: It's a quote.

Another thing that I think it's important for MLAs to do in trying to determine what it is their constituents feel about issues is survey them on a regular basis. I know a number of members send out with their M.L.A. reports or mailouts a questionnaire that people can fill out and return. That's a good process, and I intend to use it. But one has to remember that it's not really an accurate, scientific way of surveying public opinion in the constituency, because you only hear from people who feel inclined to write back to you. There were a couple of issues that I felt were of immediate importance, and I commissioned some people in the constituency and they organized some volunteers to conduct an organized and scientific telephone survey of people, with a group of 500 randomly selected phone numbers in the constituency. I should point out that the Gallup Polls, upon which governments across this land base their million dollar decisions, use a sample of slightly over 1,000 people. So I thought a sample of 500 in the Vegreville constituency would give me a very accurate reading on what people's opinions and concerns were on these issues. We got 435 responses.

In asking people what issues were to them the most important at this time, there were two clear issues that stood head and shoulders above the others, and they were unemployment and agriculture. The agriculture one I certainly expected, Mr. Speaker, but the unemployment one is interesting to me because in a heavily rural constituency like Vegreville people tend to think that all anyone would be concerned with is agriculture. Well, that's not true. People are recognizing more and more that unemployment is a rural problem as well, that the recession

we're currently in is having a very deep and disastrous effect on business and employment in rural areas. People in rural areas are concerned about unemployment. It and agriculture were far and away the most important issues in people's minds.

Many people expressed concern about the effect of the budget cutbacks on the declining quality of education, health care, and social services. People were evenly distributed on whether or not the government should impose cuts, but there was no clear consensus on how those cuts ought to be imposed.

Another issue that I asked about was Sunday shopping, and the question was; are you in favour? The noes outnumbered the yeses by two to one. I thought that was an interesting piece of information, because I see Sunday shopping, Mr. Speaker, as an issue that has not only moral implications for some and social implications for others, but I think it's an economic issue in rural Alberta. Our businesspeople in small communities are having an ever more difficult time competing with large shopping centres and things in urban areas, and if these large, urban areas are open on Sundays, it drains more and more dollars away from our rural communities.

So I was pleased to see that people in my community, in my constituency, endorse the New Democrats' position on Sunday shopping and have some concern with the patchwork approach that this government has taken, an approach that on the surface seems like a reasonable one: well, we don't want to decide; the provincial government should not decide; we'll leave it up to municipal governments to make their own decision. Well, that guarantees that no decisions of any import will be made, Mr. Speaker, because what in fact happens is that communities are pressured by competition with other communities to follow suit. I think it's one issue that has lacked any clear direction and commitment from this government, and I know my colleague from Calgary Mountain View will continue to pursue this though private member's Bills in the future.

The other question though, and I must admit it was the one that I was most keenly interested in, is the issue of seat belts. I rather suspected that in my constituency, like several other rural ones, there would be a larger percentage of people who didn't favour the introduction of seat belt legislation. I wrote an article in the newspapers, as I often do, specifically on the seat belt issue, and tried to explain both sides of the issue and then tell people that personally I was in favour of such legislation and why. But I still felt that people would likely be opposed in the majority to seat belt legislation.

I was certainly surprised when the results of this scientific survey, our objective survey, came in showing that 48 percent of the people favoured introduction of seat belt laws, 42 percent opposed, and 10 percent weren't sure what to say either way. So it was an interesting result for me. Another statistic that people might find interesting is the breakdown. We did a male and female and age category breakdown, and females in every age category favoured the introduction of seat belt laws, males in every age category under 40 favoured them, but it was males over 40 who didn't favour them. Anyway I thank the volunteers who participated in this survey and the people who willingly gave their responses, because it helps me do a better job of representing them.

I would like to talk about something in the constituency that I face almost daily as a member who sits on the opposition side of the House, and I'd have to refer to it as "the big lie," the thing that some people like to believe about government, and that is that if a constituency elects a member on the opposition side of the House, somehow they'll be treated differently. And I have

great concerns about that, Mr. Speaker. I've raised it in the House before. I have great concerns, not personal concerns, because when it comes time to face the electorate again in three years, I'll be proud to run on my record of service to the community. If people feel that I've done a good job of representing them, they'll return me to office and I'll be able to do my very best on their behalf for another term. But I'm concerned for the kind of attitude that this indicates and the kind of view of democracy that it presents, because I believe very strongly that in a democratic system people have the right to make choices. And they have the right to make those choices without being threatened or told that they'll be punished for those choices by the government of the day.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I'd like to say that I have no indication that at any level this is in fact true. I have in every case dealt with ministers on issues of concern to constituents and received courteous and prompt service and advice, and in terms of projects that have been undertaken in the constituency, I'm more than satisfied that the people in the Vegreville constituency have been treated as they should, as any other Albertan. What I find interesting about this though, Mr. Speaker, is the people who want to propagate these rumours, who want to convince people that they'll be treated unfairly, are generally people who belong to a certain political party, and they're deeply disappointed by the results of the election.

ANHON. MEMBER: Those Liberals.

MR. FOX: No, they're strong Conservatives, and some of them, fairly prominent Conservatives, write letters to the editor that in a very direct way cast aspersions on the integrity and the intentions of ministers of this government. And I want you to know that I'm there defending you. I won't let them call your integrity into question. I stand up and tell them that the ministers of this Crown, though I may disagree with them on issues, are there to represent all Albertans, and they do so as fairly as possible. So I'm supporting you on that, folks. [interjections]

MR. R. MOORE: Doesn't your halo fit a little tight?

MR. FOX: I know the Member for Lacombe finds it difficult to take when I stick up for him, but I'll do it on occasion.

I should make reference to a visit by my friend the Minister of Agriculture to my constituency when he came to speak to a meeting there. He did make a statement saying that he was confident Vegreville would be returned to the government side after the next election. And I agree with you, Mr. Minister; we just have some . . . It will be this minister and this government.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Minister of Agriculture has a point of order.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to get into the debate, but since the hon. member has taken my name, I should point out that there was a letter to the editor that called into question somebody's integrity, and it was the hon. member's integrity, as he will recall that letter to the editor.

MR. FOX: That's a serious charge, Mr. Speaker. I have not written any letters to the editor, and the minister might want to

produce that. But, anyway, moving on with . . .

MR. ELZINGA: Point of order.

MR. FOX: Is this a point of order, Mr. Speaker, or a deliberate attempt . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. It would appear that it's really not a point of order, and members are cautioned with regard to quoting external sources from the House within the House. We've been through that previously today, so the Chair would take that as an observation or complaint by the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Some other responsibilities that I've had as a member in this Assembly over the last year have been serving on select and standing committees of the Legislature. I found that to be an interesting and very important role indeed. In sitting on the Legislative Offices Committee, I've had the opportunity to work with the three officers of this Assembly: the Auditor General, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Ombudsman. It's certainly been a worthwhile learning experience and an opportunity for members on both sides of the House to meet and work with each other outside of the glare of the media and the pressure of performance and get right down to business and deal with issues of substance. It's been a good experience.

It's taught me one thing, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to recommend to the government, and that's that we expand the role of all-party committees. I recognize that in this Assembly it's not been a common thing to have large representation on both sides of the House, so it may have been difficult in the past to have standing committees to which issues were referred. But I think the government is going to have to take recognition of the fact that they represent in real terms only 51 percent of the electorate and that we need to have some all-party committees that would address issues like free trade -- there is a committee in Ontario that does that -- or an all-party committee on social services, parliamentary committees, which the hon. member opposite is certainly well aware of. I think they have a role to play in terms of seeking public input on legislation and that's one recommendation I would make.

I did have the opportunity to attend on behalf of this Assembly, in company with the hon. Member for Chinook, a session in Washington sponsored by the Canadian Parliamentary Association that dealt with the development of U.S. trade policy. It was indeed a privilege for me to be able to represent this Assembly. It was a fantastic learning experience. We met with representatives from every stage of the development of U.S. trade policy. I learned a lot, and I didn't learn anything there that taught me that the role played by the federal and provincial government in promoting a wide-open free trade agreement with the United States isn't something we ought to take a very close and serious look at. I have some concerns about the government's position on this, and it reminds me of a concern I have about a number of stances they take on issues. I'm tempted to say, "Forgive them for they know not what they do," because it's easier for me to believe that than thinking that they do know and they're deliberately proceeding with things that I think have some very serious long-term implications. I would hope we'd have the chance to debate free trade in this Assembly sometime in the future, because I think there's a number of things that need to be pointed out about that.

I'd like to say also that I very much appreciated the opportu-

nity to spend time with and get to know the hon. Member for Chinook. I'd like to think the Speaker chose us to attend this function together so that I might be a good influence on him, but I rather suspect the opposite to be the case. I learned a lot, and on behalf of the members on this side of the House, I wish him well.

In terms of the work we've done with the three officers of the Assembly -- the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, and the Chief Electoral Officer -- we've met with them, learned extensively about their roles, and hopefully the committee will be involved in the future in the selection of a new Ombudsman, seeing as how the current Ombudsman is moving on to future opportunities, and I wish him well.

I would like to now, Mr. Speaker, get into a discussion about the budget, and I have to relate it to the throne speech because I think the documents go hand in hand, the throne speech setting out what it is the government is going to do and the budget setting out how they're exactly going to do it. I have a real concern about the documents that have been presented to us, because I think it represents something that I might call deficit fixation. It reminds me very strongly of the budget that was presented in Ottawa not too long ago, where the mandate of the budget was to reduce the deficit. The contention made by the federal Minister of Finance was that if we could somehow wrestle this deficit to the ground, unemployment would be eased and the economy would grow.

I thought that that more than anything else tells me what the difference is between members on this side of the House and the government in both Ottawa and Alberta, because we believe the economy should serve the people; we don't believe that people should serve the economy. We know that if you want to reduce the deficit you have to first tackle unemployment. Let's start at the beginning, build the economy from the bottom up, not try and wrestle the symptoms from the top down. It just simply doesn't work, Mr. Speaker, and it's a fairly simple idea to pursue but it doesn't seem to sink in.

It is exemplified by this province's budget, which I think is focusing too much on what is a political strategy rather than what should be an economic blueprint. We have a commitment from this government that their mandate is to try and reduce the deficit before they next go to the voters of the province of Alberta. I guess that's so they can say, "Look, we've got a balanced budget." They won't say anything about the \$7 billion or \$8 billion accumulated deficit, but they'll say, "We've got a balanced budget to present to you by the time we next go to the polls." I am disturbed because I think one of the reasons we have a large deficit is because we for too long have been pursuing political agenda and have not been looking at meaningful economic blueprints to build this province's economy. And while we recognize our very important role of pointing out the weaknesses in the government's strategy, we are going to at every opportunity present constructive alternatives, things that we know would work, things that we know would help to build this economy and make Alberta the truly great province that it is and should continue to be . . . [interjection] Well, we can talk about the economy in Manitoba, but you've got nothing to stand on, Member for Red Deer North.

I might point out, though, that the position this government takes on minimum wage is another clear example of how foolish their economic thinking can be. We recognize that with the lowest minimum wage in Canada -- \$3.85 an hour, a minimum wage that has not been changed since 1981 -- it punishes the economy, not just the people who have to work for that pittance,

Mr. Speaker, because we believe very strongly that if you can put spending power in the hands of the people who use it, the economy will flourish. If people at the lower end of the economy have increased purchasing power, then small business throughout the province benefits from that move.

I'm dismayed when I hear the minister of career development say that it would be the wrong time to raise the minimum wage because it would hurt business. I mean, it doesn't create employment to keep the minimum wage low; it inhibits employment. If that's his strategy, I suggest to him that he bring in a Bill suggesting that we lower the minimum wage to create more jobs. The ultimate of that kind of thinking is that the minimum wage be 50 cents and everybody would have a job.

ANHON. MEMBER: Let's make it \$100 an hour.

MR. FOX: Let's make it \$5 a hour and put some purchasing power in the hands that need it. Let's provide some incentive to the people of Alberta to get out and work. If it's worth more to people not to work than it is work, we're doing them a disservice, Mr. Speaker. We provide a disincentive for effort, and I think Albertans want to work. They want meaningful employment, they want to contribute to this economy, they want to play a meaningful role in this province, and I think the government is denying them that opportunity.

There are a few things that I had the opportunity to touch on in agriculture. I would be remiss if I didn't in this budget address go back on some of them. I can hardly believe the contentions that the hon. Provincial Treasurer was making today about lending and about how members opposite don't understand how it all works. The facts are plain and clear. He is able to borrow money on the New York money markets at 6 percent. We in turn provide that money to farmers and small business people at 9 percent. It's transferring too much of the risk to an industry that is already burdened with all kinds of risks that we can't control. What in fact happens, Mr. Speaker, is that farmers are able to access credit through regular channels at 10.5 percent or 11 percent, a savings of . . . [interjection]. This is a complicated argument, Member for Red Deer South; you might want to listen to it. . . . at a savings of 1.5 percent or 2 percent, savings to farmers of 1.5 to 2 percent. We're paying the banks 2.375 percent to administer the program.

Who is benefiting? The farmers benefit from knowing that they have some long-term credit arrangements in place. I don't deny that, and I supported that at every step; the minister knows that to be the case. But in terms of the impact on the provincial budget, a good part of that money is in fact going to pay the banks for administering the program, and it doesn't provide enough of an economic benefit to Alberta's farmers.

I'm going to talk about the much touted reduction in the farm fuel distribution allowance, because I repeat, as I did in the House last night, that I think the whole matter has been handled in a very shoddy and irresponsible way. I think the government has at every step of the way tried to fool farmers into thinking that they would not in fact be paying extra on June 1 for fuel. The price is going up 22.7 cents a gallon at that time. It represents in some cases a 43 percent increase in the price of diesel fuel and a 34 percent increase in the price of purple gas. It's a move that will cost some farmers \$1,000, \$2,000, or \$3,000 each, depending on the size of their grain farm, and I think it's a mean-spirited attempt by this government to advance their political agenda.

What is that agenda? The agenda is to reduce the budget

deficit by the time they next go to the polls. The desire is to do that by \$1.9 million this year. Thirty-six million dollars that is being taken largely from the grain farmers in this province through this budget-saving or deficit-reducing measure, I submit, is too punitive and ought to have been done in a better way, in a more up-front way. There was not any meaningful consultation done with farm groups prior to introducing this measure. There was no real assessment made of the true impact this will have on the already depressed grain economy.

I urge the hon. Minister of Agriculture to reconsider and at least forestall the reduction in the Alberta farm fuel distribution allowance until sometime late next fall, because the impact of this is simply this: farmers are right now making the plans that they need to prepare for planting a crop this year, and that includes making credit arrangements, accessing operating capital, going to your fuel and fertilizer and chemical dealers and trying to arrange with them what you need and how you're going to pay for it. Those projections are all based on the cash flow, income versus expenses, and a time when the income side of that formula is being eroded by future predicted decreases in grain prices is the wrong time for the government to try and weaken the expense side of that formula by raising gas prices and fuel prices by 22.7 cents a gallon.

I recognize that farmers in the province have received a good deal on fuel prices. I recognize that. I recognize that the program has been of great benefit to farmers, and I recognize that we've got a serious deficit that has to be looked at. But this is clearly the wrong move at the wrong time, and I hope that the government would reconsider.

There are a number of other areas of great concern to me as a representative of rural Alberta. I think a number of them have been mentioned by other people, but the education system in rural Alberta, I think, is being asked to absorb too much, again, of this government's attempts to reduce their deficit by 1990. We have systems out there that have been paring the fat, reducing expenditures, trying to centralize service and keep things going as best they can. To absorb further cuts is just creating an even greater disparity between the educational opportunities offered rural Albertans and those that are offered people in the cities. I think we need to take a very close look at that.

My hon. colleagues referred to post offices -- the Member for Lac La Biche, the Member for Cypress-Redcliff. Though this is not a provincial issue per se -- the decisions that affect post offices are made federally -- it should be an issue of concern to all Albertans. As a rural representative I've tried to make sure my voice is heard on these issues because I think it's important. I think it's unconscionable for the federal cousins of this government to try and reduce or balance the post office budget by 1988 by closing rural post offices. There is not a real savings to be realized. Many of the post offices in rural Alberta in fact pay their way, and I don't think we should be looking at it in that way at all.

It's not a matter of balancing the budget or reducing the deficit. You go out and ask rural Albertans, "What's the problem with the post office?" They won't tell you a \$200 million deficit. They won't say, "We need to balance the books by the year 1988." They'll tell you they're concerned about service. They expect service because it's a service to people. It's not something that has as its mandate to make money. It's not something that has as its mandate to break even. We don't expect police forces to make money; we don't expect fire fighters to make money. It's a service, a service that taxpayers in Alberta have a right to expect.

That's not to say we don't need to streamline the system where possible and provide the most efficient service possible, but I don't believe that this is the right thing to do. I think rural people deserve good service. It needs to be improved, and we on this side of the House will fight at every step of the way attempts by the federal Conservatives to close rural post offices to try and balance their budget on the backs of rural Albertans.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair hesitates to interrupt the hon. member, but under section 29 of *Standing Orders* the time limit has expired.

Hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pride that I rise to address the budget speech. I compliment our minister of finance, his department, and each of the ministers and their departments for the very positive, responsible reaction to our current fiscal condition in this province. I think it is a very positive response because it addresses the realities of today -- not as they were five years ago, not as we would hope they will be or we would like them to be, but as they are today. I think it is a very responsible reaction, because it brings into consideration a greater degree of accountability from every agency associated with government spending and our own personal expectations with regards to those agencies.

There's no question that many Albertans had a tough time of it in 1986, and the turn of events which created those hardships warrants concern. It is indeed a blessing that this government had the foresight to establish a heritage trust fund which continues to assist and shelter the people of Alberta. The income alone from the investments of this fund will contribute \$1.6 billion to the economy of this province.

[Mr. Alger in the Chair]

I've heard the suggestion that we dismantle the heritage trust fund and pay our debts. I can't help but see the analogy of going on a diet without changing our eating habits. We must change our spending habits, Mr. Speaker, or we will not only be back in this same position next year, but we will lose a large portion of that income that is being generated as well as many support programs that are being created by its existence. Would this really be good stewardship? I hardly think so.

This government's continued response to our farmers' plight is ongoing. The notation that 13,000 farmers have taken advantage of the Alberta farm credit stability program only tells part of the story. One of the significant factors that isn't mentioned is that a full 80 percent of the loans have been used to refinance existing loans, and a further 75 percent of the loans are made for 20 years, exactly what the plan was designed to do.

There has been an increase of 5 cents per litre in fuel tax, and we certainly can't make light of that. It is going to affect my friends and neighbours very directly, and that is a very serious concern. But in view of the gravity of our budget concerns I applaud the minister for his ability to maintain the 14 cent price differential through the farm fuel rebate program. As well, the \$22 per tonne farm fertilizer price protection plan . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The point of order is that I would like to draw to the attention of the Chair and of the hon. member *Beauchesne* section 309:

It is a rule in both Houses of Parliament that a Member must address the House orally, and not read from a writ-

ten, previously prepared speech.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Calgary McCall.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. It has also been tradition in the House that when members are speaking to the throne speech, the reply to the throne speech, and to the budget, there has been some relaxation of that rule. In addition, the member is not only speaking to his notes; he is looking up on a regular basis to the Chair.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair rules that I'm understanding the speech, and he can read all he wants, because I pretty near have to read every word I say. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

In all, a total of \$500,000 has been contributed to the agricultural community. We will see changes in the hail and crop insurance program due to the input of Albertans during a recent public review, the objective of which was to develop an improved and comprehensive program, one which will more effectively meet the needs of the producers. For the same reason, a very comprehensive review has also been made, with extensive public input, into the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation, and we look forward to the recommendations of that committee.

The commitment is very obviously there, Mr. Speaker, to very actively respond to the needs of our farming community. Such programs as Farming for the Future will continue to play a key role in our approach to agriculture research and promote research by universities, by government agencies, and by the private sector. This will be further promoted with the establishment of the agricultural research institute, which will develop and co-ordinate the priorities for the research we know is necessary if Alberta is to remain at the leading edge of technology and productivity.

As with farm credit stability programs, the small business term assistance program was a tremendous success, directly benefiting 11,000 small businesses and indirectly benefiting hundreds of thousands of Albertans. There has been a \$15 million injection into the Alberta Opportunity Company for creative financing, while at the same time this company will broaden its range of financing options.

All of these programs are specifically designed to help people help themselves, and as we all know, Mr. Speaker, that is the best kind of help there is. As a matter of fact, I feel this budget has brought a very refreshing breath of reality into our Alberta economy. Our expectations have long exceeded reality. We have invited our government into every area of our lives and willingly abdicated personal responsibility in so very many areas of our daily routines. The seat belt issue is a very good example, but since we have a Bill currently on the Order Paper, I will refer to it no further.

But there is no question that we too often find ourselves in the position of reacting to the effect rather than addressing the cause. We look to our government to buy us out of every uncomfortable position that we find ourselves in, even if it involves irresponsible borrowing to do so. We wouldn't run our households in such a manner, at least not for very long. We all recognize that a business can't operate in such a manner either.

There comes a time in our home, in our business, and indeed in every area of our lives when we have to stop what we are doing and take stock and realign priorities and re-establish goals. That's stewardship, that's accountability, that's responsible representation, and that, Mr. Speaker, is what this august Assembly is all about. That's what my oath of office pledged. It didn't mention anything about simply taking the easiest avenue, as is often advocated by the opposition.

I applaud this budget, Mr. Speaker. That's not to say it is not going to pinch in places, because it will, but growth and development have a way of doing just that sometimes. It is time that our expectations were tempered with reality. It may not be necessarily popular. It may be controversial, but it is honest and it is sincere, and most of all it is responsible. I am proud to be a part of this government and the stand that has been taken.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton Calder.

MS MJOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to have the opportunity to rise and join in on the debate on the budget speech on behalf of my constituents of Edmonton Calder and many other Albertans in the province that have some very great concerns about this budget. Every month that goes by, I am able to meet more and more of my constituents on a personal level. I have had the opportunity to hear from many of my constituents, be they disabled people in my riding, elderly people in my riding, small businesspeople, young people, those with jobs and those who do not have jobs. I could go on, but I would like to say to those people that have come to me with their concerns and their suggestions that I thank them for becoming involved in the political process, because I think that is extremely important.

I'd like to say that I'm very pleased that I finally heard from one of the Tory backbenchers that I sit beside now. They certainly have a lot to say when they're sitting down, so I'm glad that one stood up to say something -- finally.

We were warned that this would be a tough budget, and tough it was. I might add, though, that we were not warned that it would be irresponsible and very unfair to many Albertans. What do we see in this budget, Mr. Speaker? We see cuts to education funding, cuts to many social service programs, decrease in health care or money allocated to health care. We see personal income tax increases. Farmers will continue to experience a lot of financial difficulty in this province in the upcoming year, and many may experience bankruptcy. The Treasurer has actually admitted in his budget report that unemployment will increase and that the economic growth in this province will decrease.

Mr. Speaker, the budget clearly fails Albertans. It fails to show leadership in our present economic crisis. It fails to give Albertans hope and aspirations for the future, and I must say that it's increasing a lot of anxiety among Albertans, and this is indeed deepening their sense of insecurity for the future. The budget is depleting the purchasing power of many Albertans through a variety of new taxes and increased fees. These increases take away the purchasing power that people need in order to purchase things like shelter, food, clothing, and other necessities.

My colleague from Vegreville has talked about the implications of the low minimum wage in terms of purchasing power, and this does nothing to stimulate the economic climate in this

province. I'd like to give you an example of the economic climate in my constituency, and I speak specifically of small business there. It goes something like this. A person sets up a business in my constituency. He dumps his life savings into that business, and then he sits and he wonders how long he will be able to run that business, because he realizes that people have fewer and fewer dollars to spend. And he's so concerned about the future of his business that he's not even able to go out and purchase a house. He has to live in an apartment because he's not sure how long his business will be there. I suggest that this type of insecurity in the men and women of Alberta is very damaging in that they're working very hard and yet they're unable to sort of plan for the future.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, this budget is bankrupt of ideas. We even have to stoop to penalizing people who are poor, powerless, and defenceless. There were no solutions, and in fact it wasn't even mentioned in the budget, the drastic and alarming increases in this province of people who are now living in poverty and who are forced to turn to the food banks in increasing numbers to keep themselves and their children from becoming malnourished. The figures are startling in this province. According to the National Council of Welfare, between 1981 and 1984 the number of families living in poverty has doubled in this province. That's three years; it has doubled. That's more than one in every six Albertans are living in poverty in Alberta, and that was 1984 figures. It's obvious that in today's economic climate in this province things are a lot worse.

Now, I'm not just talking about students and young people that are out there trying to earn some money to pay higher tuition fees, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about young families with children and, in particular, families with children who are headed by one parent. And they're not all unemployed either. In Alberta we have a growing number of people living in poverty in spite of the fact that they are working. I think this is absolutely disgraceful, and I wonder, you know, where the pride is in this kind of a trend. The budget doesn't even address the issue of poverty, and I suggest that it's a very serious one and that the government is perhaps just attempting to deny that it even exists.

We've been told by this government that all Albertans must participate in bringing the deficit down. I believe that most people are willing to do their part and do what they can in these hard economic times in this province. But I would ask the government members: how can a single mom of four, earning \$12,000 a year, paying back a student loan, be expected to participate any more than she already is? You know, how can a young farmer who has farmed his father's or his grandfather's land and is headed for bankruptcy be asked to participate any more? How can the many young people that are on our streets, that are homeless, be asked to participate any more? And what about the young child who is sexually abused and badly in need of some kind of counseling? This government is expecting even this child to participate in fighting the deficit by denying that child counseling services.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is a dangerous one to many people of this province. We can't just expect to cut the programs and expect to pick up the pieces four years from now or whenever we have a balanced budget. It can't be done, because what we're talking about here are not pieces of a puzzle; we're talking about human lives and human beings.

Yes, I'll agree these are challenging times for this province and for this government and for all Albertans. Unemployment is high and the need for social programs is greater now than it's ever been before. I think it's important to remember that the decisions that this government makes today will undoubtedly affect all of us for many years to come. There are alternatives, Mr. Speaker, though, to fighting the deficit, to what we've seen from this government in the budget, and I suggest that there are some positive alternatives.

In closing, I'd like to recite a quotation that characterizes this budget and characterizes this government in this present set of circumstances that we find ourselves in. It goes like this:

A recession is when your neighbour has to tighten his belt. A depression is when you have to tighten your own belt. A panic is when you have no belt to tighten and your pants fall down.

Mr. Speaker, this budget clearly exposes this government in terms of their inability to deal effectively with this financial crisis. I would say that Albertans, quite frankly, expect a lot more from the people they represent.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Calgary Foothills.

MRS. KOPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to rise to participate in this debate on the provincial budget. Listening this morning, I wish to confirm that the priorities selected for the 1987-88 budget of employment, education, health, and help for the disadvantaged and those in need are confirmed by all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I find it deplorable that stories are related in the House of the poor and needy without action being taken immediately by those persons to help the poor and needy themselves. I feel a real compliment is due to the cabinet ministers and the Treasury Board that planned this budget, and I wish to compliment them on the process as well as the results.

Mr. Speaker, there's been communication since the middle of last summer to every Albertan, communication from within the departments, communication from this House, and from industry itself. It was easy to find out last year that in 1986 and '87 we needed to take a look at our expenditures. This early communication was unprecedented in the time in which I have been in this Legislature, and I feel was much appreciated by Albertans. I am aware that the ministers gathered together many bodies from throughout the province to discuss fiscal planning. There was a seminar on how to plan their budget far before the final figures were announced last week.

Mr. Speaker, last week seems like a long time ago right now, but I know that there were many people involved in the planning and many thousands of man-hours put in by the departments in this government in order to come up with the budget that is before us today.

In '86-'87, Mr. Speaker, the provincial government was spending about 60 percent higher than in Ontario and approximately 32 percent higher than the average of all of the provinces. The need to adjust spending was developing; there's no doubt about that fact in my mind. There was the 29 percent decline in the combined revenue, which is the general revenue and the income from the heritage fund, as our Provincial Treasurer has explained so many times. And it makes it essential that we must do something.

I really appreciated the analogy of the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury when he talked about our going on a diet without

reducing the amount of food we were eating. I think that's a very good analogy to use. In '86-87 the Alberta heritage fund income was a very important part of our budget. The investment income provides 19 percent of the combined income. The other 33 percent is to come from taxes. And, Mr. Speaker, I think most Albertans realize that we must dig in at this time.

Grants are by far the largest component of the combined expenditure and the largest source of expenditure growth. The total grants amount to approximately 70 percent, and these are grants to schools, universities, active treatment hospitals, municipalities and represent 40 percent of the province's operating expenditure. Mr. Speaker, this has grown, and I believe we've got to look at it, and the time is now. It is important.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to reflect briefly on another point too. We've referred in the throne speech -- and I was delighted, incidentally, when the hon. Member for Vegreville last night said, "There's the plan, and there's how you're going to do it." That's exactly right, and I was so glad to see his awareness.

Last year when I moved the throne speech for the government, I had a great deal to do with investigating this plan, and I'm really proud of what happened, what really happened, because of the action. There was assistance to agriculture, the shielding through the Farm Credit Stability Fund, which doesn't often really get the credit. There was a review of the agricultural crop insurance and the Agricultural Development Corporation. There was assistance to the energy. There was support for small business. There was a commitment to diversification in the establishment of three new departments that have acted, that have tried to diversify in Alberta. It's out there.

Health care: there was a move and an end to extra billing. There's a world-leading heart and lung transplant team at the University of Alberta. Municipal governments were very pleased to see the introduction of the Alberta municipal partnership in local employment program. The Alberta advisory council was introduced and is functioning and will be meeting in Calgary next Tuesday. The rural telephone service: we've worked on that, and we'll be extending that extended flat rate calling limit to 40 miles. There was a thorough review of the labour legislation; an eight-year, \$80 million fund of matching endowments for advanced education that has proven immensely successful to the universities; two new programs at our universities, including the Calgary MBA program; and a great deal has happened in the field of intergovernmental affairs, as evidenced by the news in the oil industry last week.

So, Mr. Speaker, the plans and the action do go together. Our record has proven itself. At this time we need to take a new look. We need to stop, investigate what we are doing. The sudden drop in oil prices, in fact to our resource revenue, was 64 percent. There is a global glut of almost every commodity, including food, and I think it makes us realize as a nation that continued exports of natural resources are no longer possible. Our plans for the future are very aware of this. We are living, Mr. Speaker, in a time of parenthesis. We are trying very desperately, knowing what we know, to meet the demands of the future. We are presently dealing with the past and depending on the past for our experience.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't help in listening to the Budget Address last week and thinking about it since then that Calgary Foothills really illustrates very well this transitional period in Alberta. Since 1971 the predominant growth in employment in Alberta occurred in the service industries, and services really do contribute a substantial part of all growth in living standards and create the majority of new jobs. The evolution has been well

outlined in the throne speech and with the employment initiatives I feel that this government has undertaken through tourism, diversification, education, and economic development.

This can all be illustrated in some of the things that are happening in Calgary Foothills, and I would like to reflect briefly on that. Mr. Speaker, Calgary Foothills is fortunate to have within its boundaries the University of Calgary. As such, the university itself is one of the single largest employers in Calgary with 4,689 full-time equivalent persons that are hired from both the operating and the research capital of the university. There's a spin-off of about 2,000 more jobs because of this institution. Needless to say, the University of Calgary and Calgarians were delighted to hear the Minister of Advanced Education's announcement of the appointment of Dr. Dupré to investigate the issue of funding of postsecondary institutions in Alberta. It's time, as I was saying before, that we do look at these things, and I think it's important that it's now.

Mr. Speaker, the challenge that we face as a province and as a young province is not unlike the challenge an athlete might face when they step forward to compete at the Olympic Games after training for so very many long years and meeting some successes and overcoming other obstacles. Only through competition and through the basic talent and the commitment to a goal and through teamwork and drive can you ever even begin to meet that competition. When the athletes come to Calgary in 1988, I think we'll be doing a lot more than hosting the athletes at the remarkable events of the Olympics. We'll be showing our province to the world and a great deal of Calgary Foothills. The athletes will be accommodated in the Olympic village on the campus at the University of Calgary and commute to sites throughout the province that have been built as legacies to our country.

Traditionally, tourists have come to see our beautiful province in the summer, the natural draw, of course, being the Rocky Mountains. Now this focus can be extended, attracting visitors year-round. For the first time we'll bring them back again and again in the winter. We certainly welcome the establishment of the Alberta tourism education council, and that joint venture with the private sector really formalizes the kind of close co-operation between three government departments and the private sector. And I think that's a very important factor to note.

Mr. Speaker, again regarding tourism and the events of the Olympics, McMahon Stadium has been expanded; many jobs have been created in the process. A volunteer centre has been built. The Father David Bauer Arena houses two international hockey rinks that are full all the time. The Olympic Oval and the new sports medicine facilities are all there on the University of Calgary campus -- there, the heritage of all of us sitting in this room.

Mr. Speaker, the University of Calgary further illustrates the quiet revolution taking place in our universities today. I believe, first of all, one of the very most important things to bring to your attention is the fine arts program. Fine arts can no longer be regarded as a frill when one considers the importance of the service industry to our economy. This trend that started in 1981, when arts-related employment became almost as large as the entire agricultural force in Canada, I think bears recognition. In 1984 here in Alberta the arts had a \$500 million impact on the economy and employed 2,300 people full-time and 3,400 part-time; everything from book publishing, to visual arts, to films, to recording, to drama, and historic resources.

Mr. Speaker, the University of Calgary campus can be considered a real catalyst, I believe, in the cultural life of the

Calgary community and indeed the larger community in Alberta. For instance, there's Charles Foreman and Marilyn Engle, internationally known concert pianists and teachers; the singers Alexander Gray and Donald Bell and Richard Heyman; Lois Choksy, world-renowned expert on the Kodaly Society; Alan Bell, nationally recognized composer of new music and president of the Canadian Music Centre -- his six compositions of Canadian music are played every week in Alberta; Phillip McCoy, an internationally recognized director; Joyce Doolittle, a director and internationally recognized author and teacher. Every theatre company in Calgary uses the resources of the university in both people and facilities. John Hall, a realist painter. Ron Kostyniuk. Dan Mato. William Laing. Donna Krasnow: all of these people are working in the arts in Calgary. And each one of them expands out into our community the feeling of the University of Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, there are other programs as well that have a great impact on the employment issues in Alberta, and one of these is the Advanced Computing Technology Centre. It currently is a unit of the university, but it will, it is hoped, in the near future be able to spin off on its own. It concentrates on the development of software systems and the development in conjunction with computer companies. Last year they did \$2.6 million worth of business, and they estimate \$3 million this year. It made a profit to the university of about \$700. This is diversification. It employed another 55 technical people, most of them graduates of the university's computer science program.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on the subject of computers, I'd like to mention another joint venture program established by the university about two and a half years ago. The department of economic development, the University of Calgary and Control Data Canada Corporation entered into a joint agreement to install a supercomputer at the university. Over a five-year period it is estimated it will generate \$25 million worth of high-technology activity in Alberta. This activity involved the installation of computers and software development and development application. There are about 30 projects going on there, and they are of such a diverse nature as the development and design of ice islands in the Beaufort Sea, study of safety in open-pit mining, and the study of heart pacemakers. So there are approximately 100 to 150 people employed using these various programs -- 100 to 150 people.

The university itself has benefited from the installation, and it is anticipated the uses will broaden and extend. It has been quite exciting to see this joint venture. It is the only one of its kind. There are three in North America; it is the only computer of its kind that is accessible to industry, and we have it here in Alberta because this government was willing to look ahead and take the risk of investing in this joint venture.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss in speaking of the university if I failed to mention the exciting growth and development of the Faculty of Management. After the completion of Scurfield Hall and under Dean Michael Maher's leadership, they have really made a mark in our community. The community has had a great deal of involvement in the furnishing and the funding that goes into the operation of the Faculty of Management, and they've also made a mark internationally.

There's a professor called Dr. Bob Schulz who with great enthusiasm for several years running has coached a championship team of business students, and they have won the Canadian business and the world championship business competitions. Dr. Schulz is an inspiration when you meet him. He is a driving force behind their wins, and he recommends to anyone facing a

challenge like this that they look at the sports world and the kind of way that athletes meet challenges. He recommends talking to the coaches; they know how to take a risk and win. Again, we're back to the sports analogy, I guess, that I started with.

I would like to move to another program that fits right into the vision of the future of our province as expressed in the Speech from the Throne, and that is the new venture program. The new venture development program is unique in all of Canada. In fact, the main proponents of this program were asked to speak, along with people from Japan, Germany, France, and England, at an international symposium on technology transfer. The University of Calgary was selected to represent North America at this international symposium of distinction. So the new venture development program marks something very important. It started several years ago, and the goals were to produce new business ventures, stimulate economic diversification, and create new jobs.

Services have been offered to more than a hundred entrepreneurs through what they call a new venture forum. They monthly have a meeting where they will do anything from talking to business equity corporations, having seed capital investors come and visit. They will showcase projects, new inventions, and let them explore their business management programs with the people in the audience. They have had 89 new venture projects completed in the first year of operation in 1984, and they were completed in 63 different community centres using the graduate students of the Faculty of Management taking entrepreneurship courses to help small businesses throughout the city, that being just one of their thrusts.

They helped immensely in the development, for instance, of Ribstone beef. If you'll excuse the pun, the owner Dave Hunt was interested in producing pure beef with no additives. He felt there was a market out there, and students helped him to prepare a business plan, and his company now employs five workers including a head butcher and a professional chef. That's one student that has spun off five workers.

There's another one here, Louis Stack. He dreamed up a Pro Fitter after suffering ski injuries. I wish I'd talked to him before. He now has a small production facility and design and marketing facility in Calgary that employs many people.

A flange aligner: I don't know what that is, but I know that it sells, and there is a market and several people employed on that. An ultrasonic leak detection device and sodium-free bottled water, the only sodium-free bottled water currently on the market, came through the new venture development program.

Camac Manufacturing have hired five new employees because they came to the courses offered through this entrepreneurship program. They formerly were producing truck fronts, radiator covers, and that sort of thing, and now they have diversified, I guess, by making horse blankets. It sounds very simple, but there are more jobs. The spin-off can be incredible. Mr. Speaker, the investment in entrepreneurship that this province could make, I think, will certainly pay off in the long run. This is the spirit of Alberta.

One more program, Mr. Speaker -- and this is with the Alberta Research Council -- is the small business incubator. Since its inception in May of '85 the incubator has assisted small advanced technology companies to get started, many of them. In the past 18 months more than 50 jobs have been created directly as a result, and that program continues to grow and has in fact started to attract companies to Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, initiatives such as these are going to broaden

the economic base. We can't just shout and talk about it; we've got to do it. It's through these initiatives that I think we're creating new, high-quality job opportunities and maintaining the technological leadership that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor spoke of in her speech and that is so important to us.

The key, Mr. Speaker: education. We have in our [city] the highest educated population in all of Alberta. It didn't get that way overnight. Steadily over the last 10 years this government has honoured its deep commitment to education with the best qualified teachers, presently the highest per capita student support in the nation. Our schools, with the high priority that we as Albertans place on education, will continue to be among the leaders in per capita support. There aren't many other provinces that can point with pride to some of the programs that we have here in our province.

As a teacher, time and again I've seen the kind of trauma that comes with a challenge, the kind of insecurity, and once that's overcome, the feeling of success and the positive benefits can provide further strength to those involved in that challenge. Mr. Speaker, we as Albertans can meet that challenge, and we can look forward with the very firm guidelines in this budget. It was a bold step, but this step will not leave our youth with a heritage of debt. We need to act now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how I'm supposed to condense a 30-minute speech into -- what? -- about one minute. I guess all I can say is that the government claims to be reducing the deficit by 40 percent this year and to zero by 1991, and our friend over here likened that to some kind of a diet. The kind of diet it puts me in mind of is one of putting skinny people on an even tighter diet. That seems to be what that budget is doing.

Mr. Speaker, we didn't need to try to solve all the deficit in one year. The Treasurer himself was bragging this morning that we can borrow money at less than 6 percent. He was also saying last night -- I was chastised for quoting him earlier -- that we were getting 15 to 18 percent on the heritage trust fund. On a very small portion of it that is true. But in any case, we didn't need to try to solve all our problems at once. The fact is that this government has gone too far too fast and is likely to kill the economy even further, rather than trying to keep things going as they need to be.

Mr. Speaker, I adjourn debate; it's too close to 1 o'clock.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway has moved that the debate be adjourned. All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, next week we hope to spend five days in Committee of Supply. On Monday in the afternoon the Department of Recreation and Parks will be called; in the evening, Public Works, Supply and Services; on Tuesday evening, Social Services; on Wednesday, subject to the selection from the Leader of the Opposition, we would propose to call Career Development and Employment; on Thursday evening, Culture; and on Friday, Tourism.

[At 12:58 p.m. the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]