

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Monday, June 5, 1989 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 1989/06/05

[The House resumed at 8 p.m.]

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

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

Moved by Mr. Clegg:

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

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

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

[Debate adjourned June 5: Mr. Martin speaking]

MR. MARTIN: [applause] Go ahead if you want to give a standing ovation.

Mr. Speaker, now we come down to stage two, and I want to alert the members opposite that there's only another 70 minutes left. When we adjourned at 5:30, we were talking about the consolidated debt that the provincial government faces which, I am sure the hon. Treasurer sitting across the way will recognize when that magical budget comes down, will be over \$7 billion. Now, I was just concluding by saying that the reasons we have a debt, just to reiterate them quickly, are, one, the triumph of ideology over common sense when we went to deregulation when the price was going down, even if you believed it; number two, the panic, \$12 billion over the '80s given to the oil industry with no guarantees of jobs; thirdly, an unfair taxation system that depletes the revenues.

So we have a problem. How has the government responded to our current economic problems, Mr. Speaker? I suggest to you, frankly, that the government has panicked and has embarked, I believe, on an irrational and unsafe plan to develop Alberta's forestry resources, a plan to build pulp mills that could only be summed up as too many, too fast, and with too little regard for the health of Albertans and their environment. We must keep this in perspective: that the government now has committed one-third of the province's land base -- that's one-third of the whole land base -- to forestry management agreements, while charging companies, frankly, only a fraction of the going rates in some other Canadian provinces. It is not staged in, this development, so that the bulk of new projects will come on stream just as pulp prices are expected to decline. It has not, despite its promises, required the use of the best available technology. When I heard the Minister of the Environment saying we now had the best in the world, that was a new one for me. We used to only be the best in Canada, but the newer members tend to exaggerate even more than the older ones. The fact is that's just not the case. We do not have the latest available technology, Mr. Speaker. As a result, the environment will be harmed, and Alberta will produce mainly bleached kraft products, products we expect few people will want in coming

years.

Mr. Speaker, just to keep on the economics of it, besides the environment. First of all, I do not understand why we want seven pulp mills coming in together to try to drive the price down. That's going to have a significant impact right around the world, when you bring on seven projects. We may be competing with ourselves, driving the price down. Secondly, as should be well known to the government -- and I expect that it is -- there is some talk about the European community, who seem to be much more cognizant of the environment than we are, saying that they are going to try to move, towards 1991, to get rid of bleached kraft products altogether. So we could be bringing on stream bleached kraft products at a time when a major group in the world, with pressure throughout the world, may not want it. So I say to you that there is still time. Not that forestry isn't a legitimate area to move in, it's just the pace and the technology that we are critical of.

Mr. Speaker, in its throne speech the government has presented little that is new and beneficial to average Albertans. I noticed during the election campaign that commitments were made to seniors and for a drug abuse foundation program. But what we must remember is that over the previous years, back when they were in their cutting mode, there were cuts to previous seniors' programs and cuts to AADAC. If the commitment was there, why were they cut to begin with and why just during an election do you bring it back? The government has paid lip service also to the concept of sustainable development, but very little has been done.

Mr. Speaker, as pointed out Friday by the members for Edmonton-Highlands and Edmonton-Avonmore, we believe that it has watered down previous commitments to women and inner-city children, because there is very clearly a difference in the tenor and the tone of those two throne speeches. If we say that we care about the family, remember this: with 93,000 Alberta children living in poverty, this government can't even articulate the same commitment to health and nutrition from one throne speech to another, ones that were only 10 weeks apart.

Mr. Speaker, overshadowing any commitment or program, we find in the throne speech what I talked about the other day: an underlying tone of a cynical and vindictive government. The message is clear. If you expect anything from this government, you had better be prepared to act the right way, speak the right way, and vote the right way. I don't think it was ever made more clear than by the Deputy Premier in his questions to the Member for West Yellowhead. As I say, just ask the people of Edson, who were punished for expressing their desire for a new elected representative. Ask the publishers of a magazine for the disabled. They suffered a symbolic punishment from this government for having the nerve to talk about the government's commitment to physically challenged Albertans. Now, I do not believe it was the Premier; I think it was an overzealous bureaucrat. But I certainly hope he's had that bureaucrat in to talk to him. It's this type of cynicism that's pervading this government.

Mr. Speaker, as I said the other day, this is a government that will say anything and do anything just before and during an election but, as we found out in '86 to '87 and we found out with the federal Conservatives, has a totally different agenda, including retribution, after an election. This is not a government that Albertans will want for very long or that Albertans deserve. The people of this province need a government that is going to act fairly for all Albertans regardless of where they live or how

they voted, a government that acts in their interests and not just in the interests of their wealthy and powerful friends.

Few things indicate the Premier's failure to act in Alberta's interest -- and I go back to question period today -- than his refusal to stand up to Brian Mulroney and tell him that the recent federal budget is an absolute and total disaster for this province and a total and absolute disaster for average Albertans. The further deindexation of federal transfer payments is much more serious than the Premier's \$20 million estimate during the Stettler by-election. Mr. Speaker, we estimate that in five years EPF cuts will cost our Treasury \$100 million in a year. That is not chicken feed, and I know -- at least I had hoped -- that the Provincial Treasurer would like to have that money.

There are many other impacts that I was frankly disappointed we had such a weak-kneed response from this government in terms of the federal budget. The abandonment that we talked about today, the federal government's responsibility for passenger rail service in Alberta; frankly, a service that is crucial to the health of our tourism industry. Also, Mr. Speaker, the introduction « that's what we talked about today. I know the Treasurer and the Premier said they're against it, but I haven't seen much fight anymore about it. I believe we've caved in. This regressive tax on goods and services will cost, in our estimation, an average Alberta family another \$1,000 per year in 1991.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the Treasurer and the Premier that if we really want to take this one on, you have the support of the Official Opposition. Let's do it in a nonpartisan way. Let's go down and lobby or do whatever. Because I agree with the Treasurer -- at least, I think, with what he was saying before; I hope he hasn't changed his mind -- that this is a disastrous, regressive tax, and it has no place in Canada. I, for one, will support him on that if they will stand up and fight a little harder than I've heard in the last little while.

There are also cuts in the federal government's contribution to crop insurance, which means, again, that either the Provincial Treasurer pays more or Alberta farmers receive less; either way unacceptable. It's interesting to note that a commitment to an enhanced crop insurance program made in the February 17 throne speech is strangely absent in the speech we are debating today. Another promise gone, Mr. Speaker? Is it because of the federal government backing off? Either way I didn't hear the provincial government talking about it.

Also, the closure of CFB Penhold, a mainstay of that area's economy, was made, again, with no consultation with the community or plans to fill the economic gap the closure will leave behind. Mr. Speaker, I notice that in Prince Edward Island and other governments where it's happened, even in Manitoba with the Conservative government, they're fighting hard for those military bases. I haven't heard anything coming out of this provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, there is also -- and I notice that the throne speech mentions \$1.8 billion for western Canada. I think you'd better go back and check your figures, because I notice there's been a 40 percent cut in funds for regional development programs. Interesting. I remember Brian Mulroney and his friends going around the province and everybody saying: "Just give us a trade deal and we'll all be so popular and so prosperous that we won't have to worry about it. There'll even be more money, even more money for regional development programs." They weren't in jeopardy. First thing they do is cut back 40 percent. Why hasn't the government talked about that? Why hasn't the provincial government put the pressure on? Mr.

Speaker, I say to you, to members of this Assembly, that the federal budget is indeed a disaster for Alberta, and it's time this government woke up and did something about it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Alberta New Democrats have taken great care in our 27-year-old history to develop the policies that we believe meet the needs of average Albertans, policies that, first of all, would strive toward an economy where those who want to work can find meaningful employment. I start to worry when I hear the new Conservative lingo that somehow 6 percent is full employment. They would not put up with that in many other parts of the world; nor should we. We advocate policies that address pressing social concerns. The key point, though, that I want to make here is the policies we have consistently advocated before, during, and after an election. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we mean what we say and say what we mean. It's not that we campaign on one thing and then have a totally different agenda after.

The other day the Speaker said that there is a cynicism towards public life. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that's true. One of the reasons simply is this: people don't believe you can trust politicians. They've seen it too often. Say this, do this during an election, and then do something entirely different after, when you believe that you're safely there for four years. As I've mentioned, we saw it last time with the provincial government, and we certainly see it with the federal government.

We have tried to show during the election how a taxation system where all individuals and corporations pay their fair share could bring an additional half-billion dollars into the Treasury every year. Now, Mr. Speaker, this goes a long way towards the fiscal responsibility that the other political parties crow about but have done nothing to achieve. If you do not get that taxation revenue there -- as I mentioned during the election, even the darling of the conservative movement, Ronald Reagan, recognized that and brought in a minimum taxation on corporations. Even Ronald Reagan. Surely we could do that here.

Also, in terms of fairness and especially fairness to Alberta families, a fair taxation system would also allow the government to put some cash back in the hands of overtaxed Alberta families in the form of a refundable tax credit. Again, during the election we showed how that could be done, Mr. Speaker.

We have also proposed the use of the Environment Council of Alberta as an independent body to conduct environmental impact assessments on all industrial developments prior to project approval. These assessments would include public hearings with interventions by all interested groups, not just the company and not just the government and not just with a public relations exercise where you hand out -- if there are public meetings -- so that the bureaucrats know how to answer the questions, Mr. Speaker. I raised that in the election. What a farce. They would provide the resources necessary to ensure that corporations are not the only party to present a well-prepared and documented case. We have proposed greater commitments to municipal recycling programs and a method by which the government could start to clean up its act at home by running the provincial government's fleet of vehicles on recycled oil. All a step in the right direction, to make a point.

We've got a program for rural Alberta which rejects the Conservatives' acceptance of the trends to more corporate farms and fewer family farms. A little more action and a little less love for the people of rural Alberta and I think they'll be well off, Mr. Speaker. We've advocated -- and we did during the election and will continue -- a 3, 6, 9 program of debt restructuring that

will give the most benefits to starting farmers, the younger farmers who are struggling. All our policies for rural Alberta have been developed in consultation with Albertans. The Official Opposition's task force on the family farm, chaired by the hon. Member for Vegreville, contains what we believe is a workable program for keeping rural Alberta vital. And if we don't do a lot of the things we're talking about, the government's prediction I talked about earlier on -- there will be 93,000 less people in rural Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, we have provided Albertans with a plan to make the best use of our health care dollars by placing the priority on the delivery of services instead of the construction of institutions. Building buildings everywhere doesn't necessarily solve our problems. It becomes very expensive in the long run. We have proposed a task force to examine the specific health needs of Alberta women and a fund to research the primary health care alternatives that Alberta must adopt if it is to promote health, prevent illness, and meet the health care challenges of the coming decades.

We've also shown that inflation and government cutbacks have left Alberta's primary and secondary schools about 12 percent behind the funding levels that existed in the first year of the Premier's government. Mr. Speaker, our policy would restore funding to these levels, eliminate user fees, and see the province picking up 85 percent of the cost of education, a recommendation that was made to this government by the Kratzmann report back in 1983 but has never been lived up to. People say we can't afford it. Well, what's happening is that it's still the same taxpayers paying for it; it's the property tax payers at the local level. It's a regressive tax. It doesn't work well, and that's why we showed over the election how we could move to that level in four years and we could still balance our books. The New Democrats are guided by the philosophy which says that longer graduation lines now mean shorter unemployment lines in the future. We say this is the philosophy that should be guiding this government.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other policies which we have developed and advocated, but I will take the time to only mention two others. First of all, they deal with equity and fairness in the workplace. Firstly, Alberta must follow the lead of other Canadian provinces and make pay equity a reality in our province. It is a gross injustice that Alberta women continue to earn on average a full third less than their male counterparts, and I don't think it makes any economic sense either. If we could narrow that gap, as they've done in other places, those people then have money to spend at the local stores. We believe that our economy must provide equal pay for work of equal value, and we would start with the public service, Crown corporations, and those doing business with the government and eventually include the private sector. Pay equity will not solve all the problems Alberta women face in the workplace, but it will go a long ways towards addressing what we believe is a great injustice.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, New Democrats would repeal the current labour code and Employment Standards Code in favour of labour legislation that meets the needs of working Albertans. We would institute laws that strike a fair balance between the powers of employees and employers. As I said earlier on, the legislation brought in by this government last year, I hope they understand now, is unjust. It's going to create problems. It's creating a problem at Zeidler's; it's creating a number of problems. Until they change those laws and bring that balance

closer, we're going to face problems in the future. This government should replace them.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, this throne speech -- oh, I can go on if you want; I wouldn't start pounding for a while -- is not the throne speech Albertans need or deserve. It backs away from commitments made less than three months ago. It sets the stage for tax increases and cutbacks to needed people services. It fails to address the question of increasing poverty and the basic injustice of our taxation system. This government would be better advised if for once it took an honest look at what average Albertans need and decided how the resources at our disposal can be used to meet those needs instead of always addressing the needs of corporations, who frankly can look after themselves.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech says that the next few months "will be more difficult" than anticipated. Well, I suggest to this Assembly that the next four years are going to be more difficult than Albertans anticipated, mostly because this government, I believe, lied to them all throughout most of the last election campaign. We're going to see an entirely different agenda over the next year or so than the election campaign.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we are facing difficulties because of the federal government. You know, this government rants on about free trade. We understand why we are in this trade deal. Conservative governments wanted it. Their big business allies wanted it because they wanted to harmonize between the two countries. Why did they want that? Well, you recall in the federal election that with this government's help, we were told, prosperity was around the corner. All we needed was this free trade deal with the United States. And we were told, Mr. Speaker: "Don't worry; our social programs are going to be okay. Don't worry; our regional development programs are going to be okay. Don't worry; universality is a sacred trust." Now we're seeing stage two of what this debate's all about. Stage one, a trade deal; stage two, fundamentally try to change this country and make it more like the United States. Take away universality. Move on the social programs. Now the big business people are saying yes, they should do all these things. So stage two is this federal budget.

So this battle's going to go on, Mr. Speaker. It's going to go on into the next three or four years. Conservative governments -- call themselves Liberal or Conservative -- that want to stand on the trade deal; they're going to be in a major war, because more and more average Canadians are aware of what this trade deal means now, especially following the budget that they didn't talk about at all. So the next three or four years are going to be interesting. Unfortunately, they're going to be very, very tough on Alberta families and, for that matter, on Canadian families. It's for this reason that Albertans deserve much better. I say to you and to members of the Assembly that the New Democrats are going to devote the rest of this session and the next four years to seeing that they get it, and I think the quickest way is to start today.

I have brought along an amendment to the Speech from the Throne. I have copies here and one for you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to propose the following amendment. It's moved, of course, by myself that the address and reply to the Speech from the Throne on today's Order Paper be amended as follows:

that the Assembly condemn the government for failing to uphold commitments made in the throne speech of February 17, 1989; failing to introduce tax fairness measures that would ensure that wealthy individuals and profitable corporations pay

their fair share; failing to protect Alberta's environment; supporting higher taxes and cuts to vital services in the federal budget of April 27, 1989; and supporting the so-called free trade agreement with the United States even though it means lost jobs and opportunities for Albertans.

I would like to move that amendment for your consideration. Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Perhaps we could just wait until the amendment is before all members.

I'd like to call the hon. leader of the Liberal Party if he wishes to speak.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'll forgo comment on the amendment.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognize the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have a chance to participate in this debate on the throne speech this evening, because as the amendment by my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition, puts forward for the members of the Assembly, this deserves to be condemned for a variety of reasons including the fact that there's no proposal whatsoever in this throne speech to try to bring some degree of fairness to the tax system. There is nothing in there to reassure Albertans about this government's commitment to preserving the environmental integrity of the province of Alberta in the face of the wholesale giveaway and tree cutting program of pulp mills all over northern Alberta without any environmental impact assessment worthy of the name. And the motion goes on, Mr. Speaker.

In a word, we'd just simply have to say that this throne speech is a disappointment, and that is why we have proposed this amendment that we are encouraging members of the Assembly to support. Because you just have to look at the throne speech on page 8, where the government proposes that education is a high priority, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'd like the government to come out to my constituency and try and suggest that to my constituents, because there are many parts of Edmonton-Mill Woods, which is a new suburban constituency in the city of Edmonton, fully developed yet don't have schools in the neighbourhoods that they ought to have. For example, the Woodvale district, which happens to be the area that I live: a fully developed suburban subdivision, yet no junior high school for an area that's larger than many communities in the province of Alberta which have such junior high schools. There is no Catholic school, even at the elementary level, in the district of Burnewood.

I could go on. There's a number of shortcomings in the district. We have been pressing the government to provide support to the Edmonton public and Catholic school boards so that they can provide these schools that the people of the Edmonton-Mill Woods constituency deserve and must have. I'm sure that the Minister of Education, who must have had a hand in drafting this throne speech, must know of the representations that the Edmonton public school board has made to the government in terms of obtaining a fair amount of the capital funding in relation to the students they educate within the province. They are getting clearly an inferior amount of capital funding, and they're not able to provide the schools and other capital developments that are required to the students of the city of Edmonton. That

simply is not addressed, Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech. So I implore the government to review that, and I'll be looking forward, as other members will be in terms of the budget, to see what provisions are being made for school boards and particularly for some of the new suburban districts that are experiencing high growth rates and still don't have the educational facilities they are entitled to as citizens of this province in an urban area.

Mr. Speaker, let's turn our attention for a moment to the area of multiculturalism. In this throne speech of June 1, 1989, this government couldn't even bring itself to put in a few words of rhetoric on multiculturalism anymore, so we have to wonder: what is the commitment of this government to multiculturalism anymore? Is it just an oversight in the throne speech? I mean, there was a reference to multiculturalism in the earlier throne speech of this year, and in the June 1 version it's simply missing. In the earlier edition, February 20, there was a reference that the Alberta Multicultural Commission had conducted hearings back in November 1988, last year. We're talking a half a year ago now. And in this document that has been put before us, this throne speech of June 1, there's not even a single reference to it. I have to wonder what that means. I know the ethnocultural communities of this province are wondering what that means. You know, when the . . .

MR. BRASSARD: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order, the Member for Olds-Didsbury.

MR. BRASSARD: The hon. member is not referring to the amendment but rather to the Speech from the Throne. Could he get back to the amendment, please?

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed, Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that, and I will keep that in mind. I just want to point out to the hon. member who raised the point and to the other members of the Assembly that we're talking about the whole area of fairness and what this speech has and what it doesn't have for the people of this province.

I just want to make a few brief comments in that particular area. We're talking about fairness. We had hoped that there would be in this document, in this throne speech tabled before this Assembly, some indication of the report of the Alberta Multicultural Commission. We have to be concerned that there's no reference to that in there. Has the government simply abandoned that whole consultation exercise that it had with the communities across the province of Alberta? We don't happen to know. We do know that the consultation process had many presenters calling on the government to improve the composition of the Alberta Multicultural Commission, pointing out and criticizing the commission severely for the fact that it had no members of visible minorities on the commission, a gross oversight, Mr. Speaker. No indication in this throne speech document -- and I challenge the members opposite to point it out, but there isn't any reference in there to a government commitment to correct that oversight.

Nor is there in the throne speech -- and this is why we're bringing in this amendment, because it is so totally flawed --

any commitment to respond, again, to the many people who made presentations at those public hearings across the province during the Alberta Multicultural Commission's hearings to implement some form of employment equity or affirmative action program at the provincial government level. Many, many groups asked for that, and there's no reference in this document to that effect whatsoever.

Most recently, Mr. Speaker, we have the case of the Sikh community, and that was raised here in terms of whether or not this government, the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, and the Solicitor General are even prepared to stand up on behalf of Canadians and Albertans of Sikh heritage in order that they may wear their traditional religious garb, whether it's in the police force or in other public institutions of this country. Even something as clear as that, where we want to try to eliminate racism and stereotypes and bigotry within this province, we couldn't seem to get the two ministers responsible here in this particular case to come on the record and make a clear statement of the fact. Neither, unfortunately and to the discredit of this government, would the Premier make a similar kind of statement, and it doesn't help when we have Members of Parliament of the Conservative Party endorsing these kinds of shameful and sad petitions slurring one particular ethnocultural community.

I want to turn now, Mr. Speaker, to page 7 of this document, which talks about workers' safety and compensation. I have to say how disappointed I am on behalf of many of the injured workers in this province who have been in touch with myself and my colleagues, trying to get a fair shake, justice for claims, trying to get retraining, trying to get through a bureaucracy that has destroyed many individuals, has destroyed many family lives, resulted in many divorces. We have a government here that likes to talk a lot about how they're concerned about the family. If this government was really concerned about the family, they'd make a special effort to make sure that injured workers' families were looked after and wouldn't have to do as Mr. Spencer has had to do here today: bring his family to this Legislature and have an extended demonstration to try and get this government to pay some attention to the situation his family is facing.

Again, we're talking about the whole question of fairness and whether or not this government is one that we can trust to represent the interests of the ordinary worker in this province. I think clearly the answer is no, because if this minister who is responsible for Occupational Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation, and his government, had some concern about the high rates of accidents and fatalities in the Alberta workplace, we'd have a commitment in this document to increase the number of occupational health and safety inspectors to more than what we have now, to more than the 100 or so officers that we have in the province who are enforcing the fish and wildlife regulations. We have only about 84 who are looking at enforcing the regulations and legislation pertaining to occupational health and safety. Yet this kind of high rate of accidents and fatalities continues to go on, no action forthcoming, at least indicated in this throne speech document by this government. We found out again this afternoon that while we were hoping that a new minister might show some leadership, it seems that it's much more important for this government to make sure that their friends are appointed to the board of the Workers' Compensation Board rather than . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I have

been listening carefully to the hon. member's remarks and have reflected upon the amendment. It seems to be quite broad in nature and would allow considerable latitude as presented by the Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps the member might get back to the very wide-ranging amendment that has many topics to be dealt with within it, if you please.

MR. GIBEAULT: Yes, indeed, Mr. Speaker.

Well, we are saying, of course, in this amendment that we condemn the government for failing to uphold many of those commitments that they made during the throne speech and, by implication, in the government's electoral campaign which we recently all went through. We are talking about the question of tax fairness, environmental protection, and the vital services in the federal budget, which this government couldn't seem to bring itself to support, which were being attacked by the federal government.

In concluding these comments on this consideration, Mr. Speaker, I only want to say at the moment that, as I was mentioning earlier about workers' compensation, there is still no indication from this minister in the throne speech that he has any intention of introducing any legislation. I hope he would stand and join in this debate on the throne speech this evening and indicate to us that that's not the case, that he will introduce some legislation, because as he knows, some of the recommendations by Mr. Millard that were recommended for improvements to the system require legislative changes, including, for example, the indexation of pensions. We are talking here simply, Mr. Speaker, of trying to get the kind of benefits for injured workers as this minister himself enjoys. I mean, here he is, dragging down a sizable ministerial salary, and on top of that he's collecting his MLA's pension which, let's just point out to all the injured workers of this province, is fully indexed. Now, why can't we do the same for the injured workers of this province?

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say that this throne speech is a grave disappointment to me and many of my constituents, and I urge the members of the Assembly to support the amendment proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to speak in support of this amendment, drafted by the Leader of the Official Opposition, for several reasons. If indeed we were dealing with the original throne speech as presented to us on February 17, 1989, there might be somewhat less to complain about, but I did note, as did members of the Official Opposition caucus, that even though it was probably cheaper to simply reprint the February 17 throne speech and just put a new cover on it that says June 1, for some funny, suspicious reason the government decided to go through the trouble of retypesetting it. One wonders then just what it was the government was up to when it could save money by reprinting the February 17 one. Of course, what one has discovered is all sorts of subtle differences between the two. Those subtle differences are constituted in vague references to what will doubtless be cutbacks in public services, vague references to the dark corner that we are about to turn in the economy; you know, those things that sort of set the stage that the Treasurer no doubt wants to set for next February or March when this House resumes with a new budget, whereupon the Treasurer's real agenda shall be revealed.

Well, if that weren't bad enough, if we could go along with the February 17 thing, the throne speech, there would still be some flaws that would have to be discussed, and I'm afraid the best way to do that is in the form of an amendment that says "but for the fact," which is what this type of amendment does. You see, Mr. Speaker, there are other issues here, one of which is the provincial government's lamb-like conformity to the free trade agreement with the United States. I call it the so-called free trade agreement, Mr. Speaker, because I keep wondering what the heck Canada's going to get for free out of this. I figure Canada keeps paying the price.

Now, one of the prices that I note we're paying that isn't addressed or dealt with by the throne speech -- little wonder, given the Conservative support for the FTA -- is the fact that our labour laws are now worse than anybody else's on the continent, including that of Alabama. I mean, you know, if you want to play one-upmanship and be the best in the world, did you have to choose draconian labour laws to be the worst in the world for? Well, unfortunately, that's evidently the case, and there was no indication that they shall be overturned, by government motion at any rate, in this throne speech.

I reflect also that as a consequence of the Conservative desire to support the FTA, it went along with and didn't fight its federal counterparts when the patent protection governing prescription drugs was overturned in a way that actually extended the patent protection for the multinational drug companies and prevented the generic producers, many of which are Canadian, by the way -- real Canadian producers, not, you know, subsidiaries of American companies -- from producing cheaper products that have the same remedial effect. Now, that costs Canadians and Albertans a lot of money, and it's going to cost our health care system a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. I'll bet you something. I'll bet you right now -- our spokesman for health care for the Official Opposition, I won't have to bet him any money, because he already knows -- that at this time next year the House will still be sitting, deliberating the budget that will come down next February or March, in which further cuts to health care will be imposed on Albertans. One of the reasons that the Provincial Treasurer won't cite will be the increased drug costs that all the hospitals and health care facilities will have had to absorb because of that federal change in the patent protection law.

Now, another issue that I think is important that the Conservative crowd here doesn't seem to want to talk about but is implicit in this government's endorsement of the FTA, restated, I note, in the second draft -- Throne Speech Two: The Sequel, as my friend wrote -- is the fact that we are now facing, as of last week, severe changes to the national unemployment insurance system, which has hitherto been cost shared by employers and employees alike as a genuine insurance system. Now the federal government intends to bow out of any participation and, worse yet, intends to and probably will -- because it enjoys, at least temporarily, a majority in the House of Commons -- take money out of workers' pockets to subsidize companies to so-call create jobs. Now, what a slap in the face, first of all for the concept of insurance, Mr. Speaker, but secondly, what a way to bow down to the demands of our neighbours from the south and the corporate boardrooms that dictate their governments. It's happening right here in Canada. It happened last week in the House of Commons, and it's going to continue to happen.

Then I look at my friends across the way and I say, "How is it that you could spend my money, my tax dollars, in a federal election campaign in the most partisan way possible by support-

ing the federal government's desire to establish this free trade agreement and say not a word about the value-added tax that everybody knew they were going to impose? Now, I don't know where my Liberal friends stood, and I don't know where my Conservative friends stood, but I know where I stood in minus 35 degrees: out on doorsteps with fact sheets about the value-added tax, Mr. Speaker. I can say I did what was right. I lived with a system that has the value-added tax, and it's a cash cow. And you know who it hurts the most, Mr. Speaker? The low- and middle-income earners. And anytime the Conservative government, including the Thatcher government under which I lived, needed a little more money, it was so easy to add 1 or 2 percent. After all, it only makes headlines for a few days, but by God, it's enough to make a difference in the long run, to make poor people so destitute that rather than spend the money heating their homes in the winter, they would go and spend 25 pence and drive around a circuit on the underground.

The Conservative government here had the gall to spend my money and your money sponsoring at least a half million dollar advertising campaign saying how wonderful the FTA would be and didn't have the guts to tell the truth about the VAT and now won't even launch or continue a fight to pressure the federal government not to impose that tax. I saw the headlines where Mr. Mulroney says, "Hey, fight me on this issue, and by God, you'll get punished." Is that the way Conservatives treat each other? I'm glad I don't have any Conservative friends, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad I never have. I'm glad I've never voted Conservative, and then I have to ask myself . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MS BARRETT: Just about done here.

Well, then I have to ask myself: could I trust Liberals any more on this subject? And I must conclude no. Don MacDonald was the author of the original blueprint for that free trade agreement, and I say shame on you, Don MacDonald, former Finance minister. Surely he should have been able to figure out what a devastating relationship between Canada and our new master would result from the implementation of that agreement.

AN HON. MEMBER: Big business Liberals.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

I look at the provincial leader here or the provincial leader in Quebec and I see similar endorsements, and I say, "Which side are you on?" Well, I can tell you which side the government's on. The government's on the side of the corporate boardrooms, and that is clearly reflected in its failure to acknowledge the imbalances in our tax system, federally and provincially, in its failure to stand up to Ottawa, in its failure to at least treat even-handedly the issue of public expenditures on government campaign advertising when it comes to the free trade agreement on one hand and the value-added on the other.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech, if it was in its original form, may have some merit to it -- some -- like, you know, community schools funding and some of those promises. Those promises are so diluted now that the document is barely comparable to the February 17 document. I say that if you didn't have a hidden agenda, why did you retypeset it? Why did you reword it? Ultimately, if you were really on the side of the people, you wouldn't have included things like support for the FTA, and

you'd stand up to Ottawa and the Conservative kissing cousins there on the value-added tax.

I urge you, friends -- and I know you're paying attention; I know you're going to consider this very carefully -- to stand up and support the Official Opposition leader and our caucus in sponsoring this amendment to the throne speech.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Red Deer-North, followed by the hon. Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was looking forward to engaging directly the Leader of the Opposition in his remarks on our Speech from the Throne, and I guess with this amendment being as wide-ranging as it is just to allow for as much falsehood as possible on the other side, I will be able to engage the leader and also the amendment itself because of the wide-ranging nature of it.

I would like to say that because it is not parliamentary procedure to comment on whether a member is present or not, Mr. Speaker, had I had the audacity to introduce an amendment so lacking in fact, so lacking in any substance, and so based on fiction, I at least hope I would have had the jam to sit here and take it as it was rebutted. I'm not commenting on anybody being absent or present; I'm saying if it had been me, I certainly hope I would have stayed here.

Mr. Speaker, I also would have enjoyed looking at this amendment had it been anything meaningful and had it been based on substance. I cannot believe the lack of reality and thought that's gone into it. There is nothing in here that suggests . . . As I listened to the Leader of the Opposition and as I look at his amendment, I was thinking -- you know, I really thought that maybe he would have one good idea. Just maybe, in all that wide-ranging verbosity that we were exposed to, I thought there'd be one, at least one good idea, one thing so that I could stand and say, "The member opposite has a good idea." And we have done that in the past, Mr. Speaker. This government has looked at amendments from opposition members in the past and seen some goodness in them. It's a rare occasion when one surfaces like that, and we have taken it, embraced it, and put it in our legislation. I thought: I'm looking forward to at least making one positive comment about something brought forward from the other side. There was nothing, Mr. Speaker, absolutely nothing.

Now, I also didn't expect that this amendment would reflect glowing, wonderful comments about the good job the government is doing. But again I thought: in all the years in which we have governed this province, maybe they would say -- not that we were looking for a pat on the back from them -- one, one little good thing that has been accomplished in all these years. But nothing, nothing in the amendment at all suggests that, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, we're to assume that the members in the opposition parties are saying that for years and years and years the overwhelming majority of our population has been wrong in their political assessment. And that's an insult to the population of this province, Mr. Speaker.

In looking at the amendment and in listening to the member opposite presenting it, I thought to myself: well, here's probably a living example of why some people would like to put restrictions on freedom of speech, when we have to be exposed to that type of thing. I would be far from one to ask for restrictions on freedom of speech, but when we are exposed to things which are not based on fact and truth, it does tempt one considerably,

Mr. Speaker. I thought: can he really not remember one good thing that's ever happened in this province? I'm reminded of a line out of one of Tennyson's poems, "A Dirge," a dirge being a funeral lament, so the line is appropriate to the way in which the opposition approaches things. And it says,

God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thine memory confused.

And the only thing I can think of, Mr. Speaker, is that they have so abused freedom of speech that their own memory is confused on this.

Now, an acceptable technique for discussion and debate on amendments is the technique of comparisons. If we want to compare products, we compare, for instance, two cars, or we compare apples, or we can compare diamonds, or we can compare policies. So as I look at this amendment, we need to compare our policies with the drivel that is mentioned in these amendments to show how sound our policies have been. Far be it from me, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that this government has done everything perfectly over the years. One of the reasons I am in this political process is to try with my energies, fallible though they may be, to keep us on a good course and make sure that governments do give good government. So I'm not saying we've done everything perfectly, but I will use the vehicle of comparison, or metaphor, if you will. I've mentioned Tennyson and what causes confusion and . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Point of order. I would like to say that the member has been speaking for the last eight minutes and has not once talked about one policy or one thing that was in the speech or in the amendment. He's just talked a lot of garbage.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I'm hoping with some anticipation that the Member for Red Deer-North will soon be through his introductory remarks and on to the amendment. On the other hand, I would remind the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway that it is proper to quote the point of order when you so raise it.

Proceed.

MR. DAY: Thank you for your good judgment, Mr. Speaker.

As we look at this amendment, we will notice that the opposition have left themselves wide open to the consideration of anything this government has done under any kind of reflection to do with the throne speech of February 17, because they've said in here, "[We] condemn the government for failing to uphold commitments made in the throne speech," and the throne speech covers almost every aspect of life in Alberta. So they have opened themselves, Mr. Speaker, not only by pursuing falsehood, but they have opened themselves to the discussion of virtually anything we have touched on. And I think to myself: why would they want to get so exposed in terms of bringing forth what they call fact, and it isn't fact? I can only think of the words of Muhammad Ali before one of his fights with Joe Frazier. They said to him, "Mr. Ali, why do you like to fight Joe?" And he said, "I like to fight Joe because Joe likes to get hit." And the only thing I can think of is that the members opposite like to get hit, and so they have exposed themselves so brutally here.

They talk about forestry, and the Leader of the Opposition said, falsely, that we have squandered our forestry resources and in the same breath says we have no environmental standards. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out very clearly that in this prov-

ince harvesting companies are responsible for reforestation. The requirement is that 800 evenly spaced trees per acre must be successfully established: not just planted, dropped in the ground, and walked away from, but successfully established. This is a standard by our forest service. And the new forests that have been reforested by this government's policy are capable of producing 30 percent more wood than the mature stands which were harvested. Mr. Speaker, we are replenishing, we are increasing the green lungs of Alberta. And yet not one bit of acknowledgment of that from the opposite side, not a shred of that; instead, falsehood, misrepresentation, and misinformation to try and discourage the population of our province when these are the facts. Pine Ridge nursery: I've never heard them mention it. It's the most modern and complete nursery of its kind in North America, capable of producing 38 million seedlings a year. That nursery was built with funds from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It's one of a kind in North America. I've never heard it mentioned, and yet they say we're squandering our resources.

Then they go on and say, and this amendment would have us believe, that we have nothing in the way of environmental standards in terms of our pulp mills and some of the new mills and buildings that have been announced. I'd like to quote from a source which is not a government source, as a matter of fact, coming from central Canada, which is not always nice to us, a source that is extraneous to the political process, saying that

Alberta led the country this winter when it announced that, effective immediately

not in the future, effective immediately

all new or expanding pulp mills in the province are required to install all three chlorine substitution systems . . .

This is chlorine substitutions. They keep talking about a bleached kraft process that isn't even a part of our standards. We've exceeded and surpassed that. This means building bigger digestors for extended cooking -- that's not supper we're talking about, folks over there -- chlorine dioxide generators and oxygen delignification systems.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say that "the province is the first . . ." This isn't our Treasurer saying this; this isn't our Minister of the Environment. This is another source totally, no friend of our government, saying:

The province is the first to legislate the use of the expensive and highly effective oxygen-bleaching process, which environmental groups . . . argue is the only sure way to cut chemical pollution to levels that will soon be required in Europe.

We are the first ones in Canada, Mr. Speaker. No acknowledgment of that at all from the other side.

This article goes on to say that Sweden, which is of course the cradle of socialism and always adored and worshipped by the opposition members here, has looked at our standards. This article says they hope -- they hope -- by 1992 to legislate standards like ours. By 1992, and we've already done it. Is there a shred of credit for that? No, Mr. Speaker. Misinformation and deceit is what we get.

In the area of taxes. I don't know; they just like getting hit, I guess, is the only reason they can stand up and talk about us raising taxes. In 1988 when our taxes, our income taxes, were already the lowest in Canada, we could have come forward and said, "Hey, they're already the lowest in Canada." We lowered them again, and no sales tax, and the lowest small business tax. And yet we hear the Leader of the Opposition, who came forward with this amendment. He gets to his feet and -- a beautiful quote; I don't know why they like getting hit -- he says that he

predicts these are going to rise; he predicts these taxes will rise.

I'd like to look, since we're looking at the amendment, which is the words of the Leader of the Opposition -- I think we need to consider previous predictions by that individual so that we can see if there's substance to the amendment. May 19, 1987, two years ago, Mr. Speaker, and this is from the Member for Edmonton-Norwood: "Mr. Speaker, we're all betting on the future of this province" -- betting, not just predicting -- "because it won't be a Tory government in a couple of years." Hey, a couple of years have rolled by, and you're looking at a Tory government. This is the predictive ability of the member opposite.

Again, to assess the amendment and to see if it has substance, we need to look at his predictive abilities. March 23, 1987: the Tory government "priority is to cut, cause increasing unemployment, and allow the economy to shrink." Predictive abilities there: cut, cause increasing unemployment, and allow the economy to shrink. What's the fact, Mr. Speaker? In 1988, 40,000 new jobs created in Alberta, 40,000 new jobs, more than at any other time in the history of this province. And Alberta's real growth, adjusted to account for inflation, was 6.8 percent. What was the prediction, Mr. Speaker? Shrinking employment, growing unemployment, and shrinking economy.

As we look at this amendment and the predictability of it and the predictions inherent in this amendment, I reflect on the total lack of ability to predict and prophesy that the Leader of the Opposition has exhibited. I think back to an Old Testament custom where they used to stone the prophets that came out with false predictions. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, he was already stoned when he was giving those predictions.

Then again, we talk and the amendment reflects on labour laws, regressive labour laws. No figures to back it; just regressive labour laws. Since our new labour Act and labour code has come into being, in this last year for instance, 98 percent of all collective agreements in this province were settled without work stoppage. I believe that's commendable, Mr. Speaker. I can understand the member; in the opposition getting a little irate, Mr. Speaker, because we're dealing with fact, which they're not used to. They're more used to fantasy.

We've heard about the predictions about tax increases. We've heard about environmental standards, and we've dealt with those. I suggest that as we look at this amendment and we look at what was brought out to support the amendment, we have only three choices when we consider the mover of the amendment. He has come out with nothing in terms of fact, not one shred of fact, to back what has motivated this amendment. So we only have, not only as legislators but the population of this province, three choices when we consider the motive behind the mover. I'll be sending his document in *Hansard* and mine to various members of his constituency and mine. Here are the three. I'm not saying it's one of these three that has moved this amendment, but it's one of three things, Mr. Speaker. He's either dishonest and deliberately deceptive; that's one choice, because he's not dealing with fact. Or, number two, he's dispossessed of his mental faculties and beyond reason and logic; that's a possibility. Number three, Mr. Speaker, he's just plain dumb. So you've either got dishonest deliberately, dispossessed of . . .

MR. FOX: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. It's with regret that I rise, enjoying this entertaining debate at some length, but frequent reference to *Beauchesne* 489 and 488 will find that many

of the expressions used by the hon. Member for Red Deer-North are indeed unparliamentary, and I sincerely regret the level of debate to which the government members sink. We on this side try and keep a measure of decorum in public debate, avoiding at all costs the calling of names and the leveling of accusations, the imputation of motives, in an effort to maintain the decorum of the Assembly as you would wish, Mr. Speaker, and I do find it difficult to sit here and listen to the institution being so consistently debased by the kind of language I hear opposite.

MR. DAY: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that members opposite like to get hit. I anticipated a point of order being raised on the strong language that I was using, so before thinking about my remarks, I went to *Beauchesne*. If the member across, the would-be leader -- he hopes he would be some day . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you, hon. member, continuing your speech, or is there a point of order?

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's on the point of order. Thank you.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. His comments about the motives for the leader . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Perhaps, hon. members, we could move our way along here. First of all, does the Member for Red Deer-North wish to briefly comment further on the point of order?

MR. DAY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, in anticipation of the truth being a bother to them, if the member opposite who cited the point of order had had the foresight to turn one more page in *Beauchesne* and look at 489, it says very clearly that since 1958 the following expressions have been ruled parliamentary: in there, "dishonest" you will find very clearly; "deceit" you will find; "deceive" you will find. He didn't do that, Mr. Speaker.

I'll continue on with the amendment now.

MR. FOX: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair has listened carefully to the arguments that were presented on both sides of the House. I think that both sides of the House share one thing in common, and that is, they would like to see the debate advance and the decorum of the House maintained. I would ask the Member for Red Deer-North to please proceed on the amendment.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continuing on with the amendment, there's a direct reference here to profitable corporations having to pay their fair share; again, a total departure from fact and reality. I will try and help out the members in the opposition. Alberta businesses have a history of contributing very significantly to the Alberta tax base. The member opposite continues to talk about corporations and a 5 percent factor in terms of corporations contributing 5 percent to the tax base and income tax being 95 percent. They ignore the plain fact, Mr. Speaker. In 1985, 25 percent of all the corporate tax in Canada was collected in Alberta. In 1987, Alberta increased corporate

tax rates by 36 percent. Alberta broadened its corporate income tax base as part of federal tax reform, but unlike the rest of the country, which lowered their corporate tax rates to offset the base-broadening, Alberta maintained its higher 15 percent general rate.

The member opposite claimed that the personal/corporate split is 95 percent personal, 5 percent corporate. That is totally misleading. They very conveniently leave out some basic calculations; for instance, the royalty tax credit for one, which I guess somehow doesn't count as a tax. It only collected \$380 million from corporations in '88 and '89. They left that out of their computations. That amount should properly be considered and based on fact, Mr. Speaker. The correct breakdown is 23 percent corporate tax, 77 percent personal income tax. Their figures again do not reflect reality in the least.

It's very interesting to note that when the throne speech of February 17 came down -- and if they want to go back to their beloved *Journal* and other areas of eternal truth from which they gather their statistics, they will find copious quotes from themselves about the throne speech of February 17. The NDP and the Liberals totally denounce that throne speech. They absolutely condemn it. But what have they done ever since the last throne speech of a few days ago? They've upheld the February 17 one. They've clung to it like the eternal word itself and said: "You've digressed. You're forgetting it's part of the one in February. You've left this out; you've left that out." Mr. Speaker, their Damascus road conversion over the last couple of months has been remarkable, and I'm thankful for it. They've gone over it with a fine-toothed comb, and where they find that an "i" isn't dotted or a "t" crossed the same way, they say we have departed from the path of the throne speech of February 17, which they now appear to totally embrace. Yet they completely neglect the words of Her Honour in the throne speech of just a few days ago, which reflects on the February 17 throne speech, which is what this amendment is all about. Obviously they have not taken the time to read it.

They went to their various media sources to look for some comment and have tossed it back. But here's the plain language, Mr. Speaker, from Her Honour herself:

During this important session my government will reaffirm the legislative and budgetary policies for the priorities and programs outlined at the opening of the Fourth Session of the 21st Legislature on February 17, 1989, and so strongly endorsed by Albertans.

It's right there in the throne speech of just a few days ago, as plain as the noses on their proverbial faces, that anything that was said in that February 17 speech is being upheld and maintained.

Mr. Speaker, this government deals with reality and deals with fact. Where we err, we ask to be held accountable. I go to my constituents in Red Deer-North to ask for comments on the throne speech, to ask for comments on policy, and I get constructive criticism. I get good advice. I get things that I can bring back to my colleagues here and see what we can do to adopt the ideas of my constituents into policy. We're not getting that from across the way. We get mindless opposition. Being blind is one thing, but as the song writer wrote: there's none so blind as those that will not see. I leave Albertans and I leave fellow legislators with the reflection on this amendment, the fact that it's based not on fact, reality, or substance. They have three choices when they look at this amendment. The mover is either being deliberately dishonest and deceptive or,

number two, he is dispossessed of his mental . . .

MR. McEACHERN: He is not allowed to impute motive, and I wish he would stop talking about our leader in that manner. That is not acceptable parliamentary practice. It's right in *Beauchesne*. I don't know which item it is in the new *Beauchesne*, but you know it, and everybody else knows it. Those kinds of imputing of motives are not acceptable . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

I believe at this point in time the hon. Member for Red Deer-North is moving into the conclusion of his speech, and we can move on with the debate.

MR. DAY: You have anticipated my direction precisely, Mr. Speaker. I compliment you for that.

I thank the members for their good graces in allowing me to point out and deal with fact and reality, and I would trust Albertans to deal with fact and reality, Mr. Speaker, as we move in this House, hopefully, to vote against this amendment and to move on with the business of the House.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, thank you for your ruling and your observation that the amendment is so broad-reaching that it really entitles a respondent a total review of that which has been set out in the Speech from the Throne. I have some difficulty with the amendment. I think it could easily be construed that the amendment, in the way it's constructed, puts the members of the NDP opposition in the position of agreeing holus-bolus with that which is set out in the Speech from the Throne of February 17, 1989. I think that is an interpretation you can certainly put.

In the interests, Mr. Speaker, of moving the business of the Legislature along, I think I'd like to take this opportunity of making this my maiden speech in the fact that I can have this total review.

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to have been elected by the constituency of Edmonton-Glengarry to speak and to present matters on their behalf, to make matters -- the quality of life for Albertans, for those living in Edmonton-Glengarry -- better. Edmonton-Glengarry is in north Edmonton. It is known as one of the constituencies in Alberta that is very much representative of the spectrum of what Alberta is all about. It has a very wide range of people living in the constituency who are involved in age, in education, in the monetary incomes that they have, and so on. It has a very high proportion of ethnic minorities residing within the constituency, and, of course, because of my long involvement in multiculturalism nationally, provincially, and at the local level, it's with great honour and pride that I will represent those concerns.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of the last general election, in going from door to door in Edmonton-Glengarry, there were certain things that came to my attention in Edmonton-Glengarry as there were in other constituencies in Alberta: a certain pain that constituents were feeling towards the quality of life, the way of life, the things they were experiencing in Alberta.

There is a high rate of unemployment -- too high a rate of unemployment -- in Edmonton-Glengarry, in the city of Edmonton, and in the province of Alberta. People in Edmonton-Glengarry have been out of work, many of them for more than a year. Others have been laid off and hired and brought back and so on, treated like ping-pong balls. Mr. Speaker, there are far

too many young people living in Edmonton-Glengarry and in other parts of Alberta who don't have a sense of knowledge, of knowing where it is that they are going, understanding where they're going, having a sense of having somebody show them that there is an opportunity for them in the course of the development in our province.

There are too many poor people in Edmonton-Glengarry and in the province of Alberta. There are too many single mothers struggling to make ends meet. It seems to them that the system is stacked against them. There are too many small businesses in Edmonton-Glengarry and in other parts of Alberta where they don't see that hope in the future. So it's with disappointment that I and the members of the Liberal Party look at, assess, review the Speech from the Throne.

Alberta used to be rightly proud of its ability as a province to sustain rich, full, promising lives for its citizens. We commanded great respect at the national level in politics and in business. We don't have that respect in the way we had it any longer. Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne disappoints those businessmen who generate income, the small businessmen of Edmonton-Glengarry. It disappoints the mothers, the students, the people who are looking for a sense of direction, because this Speech from the Throne shows none of that.

It's with disappointment that we in Edmonton-Glengarry, and I as the spokesman, note that economic forecasters in our country have indicated that the growth rate that's anticipated for our province, a province once great, a province that once set the records in Canada -- that those economic visionaries see the growth rate next year for our province at about 2 percent, the worst of any province in Canada. I suppose nothing could be more humiliating than to note that the province to our east is anticipated to have a growth rate of about 8 percent. Nothing could be more humiliating, I would suggest, than to note that the maritime provinces are expected to have a better, a greater, growth rate in economic terms than our own great province of Alberta; an indicator, a measure that's shown clearly to us a long time in advance of what's coming. And how do we react? What actions are taken? What plan is submitted? What solutions are put forward to say: "We'll get through that. We won't have that kind of a problem of 2 percent growth. Here's what we're going to do. Here's how we can make it certain that young people don't have the confusion of wondering what's going to happen in the future, that businessmen won't have that kind of confusion."

I rose, Mr. Speaker, on my first day in this forum to point out that our province is, in fact, a net debtor province. When you add the accumulated deficit, that deficit that has increased unbelievably in the last three years, to the unfunded pension liability -- and I tried to say today that it doesn't matter how you look at that; our Auditor General holds and says that that is a liability that has to be met -- the liabilities, even when you consider the heritage trust fund, are greater than the assets of the province of Alberta. What a shame, what a humiliation to add to the humiliation we already have: high unemployment, no prospects for the future, no plan.

Those people in Edmonton-Glengarry, Mr. Speaker: 62 percent of them and 62 percent of all Albertans in the last three years have been giving to food banks in Alberta. What a dreadful, unfortunate, unbelievable humiliation for us to talk amongst ourselves about, and for other provinces to look at this great province, this one-time great province, and see that 62 percent of Albertans in the last three years have been giving to the food

bank. What a great humiliation, Mr. Speaker, to note that just a few months ago 60,000 children had to be fed from the food bank in the city of Edmonton. Sixty thousand children. What kind of future do they have? How does the throne speech address their problems and the problems their moms have, the single moms, many of whom have to look after those children that had to go to the food bank.

No wonder that the poll that was done recently by the University of Alberta cited as a conclusion to a number of questions that Albertans said of their government that they didn't seem to care about them. Well, what's happened? Why has this gone the way it has? I believe it's because of the leadership in our province. I believe that it's like a ship on the ocean; there's a good rudder, and there's a wheel or a helm that's in good shape, but there isn't the captain of the ship telling somebody how to steer the course for the ship. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, it goes further. There isn't somebody plotting and charting the course to advise the captain in the direction that ship should be taking.

AN HON. MEMBER: The *Exxon Valdez*.

MR. DECORE: The *Exxon Valdez*? The Alberta Valdez. A humiliating situation regarding the leadership in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech tosses off dozens of phrases and talks about a bunch of sectors, economic and social, that the government intends to involve itself in. But there is no plan. There is no charting of a course. There is no direction that's set out in the Speech from the Throne.

Why do we need this course being set, this goal being determined? Well, it's easy, Mr. Speaker. When young people, those students that are now confused, wondering about their future, see that there is a direction that's being taken by our provincial government, they know what to study. Educational institutions know what courses to give, to promote, to establish. Employed people and unemployed people know where to train and retrain. Businesses become more confident in knowing where they should invest and when they should invest. Lending institutions get energy and excitement in knowing that the province is being taken in a certain direction, and involve themselves. There's a synergy that's developed. But that synergy can only take place, Mr. Speaker, when that direction is known, that course is charted, the ship is going where it is supposed to be going, and that's to the horizon and not to the next wave. Only when that plan is communicated to Albertans so they know what's going to happen, not to allow us to have situations as have recently occurred, where a mother stands up at an annual general meeting and an hon. member of this House says: "Well, madam, I don't know what your children can do. They probably have to go to Toronto because things aren't moving very well in this province."

Mr. Speaker, our Premier has been telling people since February and through this Speech from the Throne that everything is tickety-boo or hunky-dory when he uses phrases like waves of confidence, and renewed faith. There isn't renewed faith. There are not waves of confidence. The Premier and those who advise him are still looking at the wave in front of them instead of the course to go.

I heard on a number of occasions in the last few days in this forum the ideology that is being pursued: the ideology of good business management, the ideology of great things to come in the future. Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no evidence of that. The track record does not speak the same way. The sun will not

shine tomorrow, as the government prophesies and as they have been prophesying month after month and year after year in the last three years.

Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that the government continually talks about. It's their answer to what they determine and believe is the plan for Alberta. They continually use the word "diversification" to attempt to snowball citizens in Alberta into believing that there is something there. If you look at the statistics from the Alberta Bureau of Statistics, the figures show that since 1971 there is a greater dependence, a much greater dependence, in those areas where we are resource dependent than in those areas where we want to get away from those things that are cyclical and bring us down. And that was my understanding from the way the government originally intended the word and the concept of diversification: take us away from that cyclical difficulty that the energy sector and the agriculture sector and the forestry sector would offer. But it pains people in Edmonton-Glengarry and people in Alberta for this government to talk about diversification again and again and again in the sense of another fertilizer plant or in the sense of a small shop which sharpens saw blades close to some forestry project.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the loan guarantees that have been set out by this government in the last few years, those loan guarantees aren't by and large taking a diversification route for Alberta that's going to take us away from that difficulty of cyclical ups and downs, but keep us to the very same wave ahead of us, this complete and continued dependency on just a few sectors.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal Party expected, and people in Edmonton-Glengarry expected, that the throne speech would talk about ways of making government more cost-efficient. Those suggestions came out during the course of the election: what things could be done to trim, how we could be more efficient, how we could make the dollar stretch a lot further. It's with disappointment, Mr. Speaker, that I have to report to my constituents in Edmonton-Glengarry that nothing, but nothing, was set out in the Speech from the Throne to deal with that matter.

And nothing -- after all of the comments made by members of the opposition through the whole of the election and through the humiliating experience of having a chairman of the Land Compensation Board have to resign, that same chairman who was a next-door neighbour of the Premier -- nothing was set out in the Speech from the Throne that would clean up the smelly business of appointing people to boards and tribunals. We still don't have a system to put the best men and the best women onto those boards and tribunals. Surely, Mr. Speaker, that's got to be a continuing humiliation to Albertans and the way others outside of Alberta see the way we operate.

Mr. Speaker, I talked earlier about the humiliation that we're experiencing at the national level. It's unfortunate that it takes another Conservative provincial government, Manitoba, and two other provincial governments which are Liberal to take a courageous stand on that foolish Meech Lake agreement. I'm delighted to see my friends nearby now starting to shift their position with respect to Meech Lake, nationally and provincially. That Meech Lake agreement, Mr. Speaker -- it was unbelievable when I heard in this forum that that signing was met with such jubilation, because that agreement is a slight to the women of Canada. It's a slight to the minorities of Canada, and it's now been proven to be exactly that in the action that was taken in Quebec. It's a slight to the natives of Canada. In sub-

stance, it shouldn't have been signed.

Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to set our own agenda, to set an agenda for western Canada and Alberta, perhaps for the Atlantic provinces, and say, "No, we won't sign that Meech Lake agreement; we want Senate reform." And Senate reform is more than simply electing a Senator. It's what you define when you use that word "effective." That's what we should have been doing. That's what we should have insisted on, and we should have insisted on time lines and specifics to get that done. We capitulated. We caved in. The government caved in. Now we have to wait and sit back and watch a Conservative government from a short distance away and two other Liberal governments get us out of this mess. I ask for the government to change its view on that Meech Lake agreement.

Finally, the throne speech says nothing and does nothing to advance the cause of women in Alberta. We have the introduction of an Act, the family day Act. Two comments, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that when your province is in difficulty, when you know that you're going to be experiencing the lowest economic growth rate in Canada, something should be brought forward to excite and energize and stimulate Albertans. The family day Act doesn't do that. Secondly, one of the great problems we have in our cities, particularly our cities and towns in Alberta, is the fact that many women must go to work to supplement the income of the family. Many of those women are involved in part-time employment, another issue the government fails to deal with and won't deal with. Those part-time employees are told by shopping centres like West Edmonton Mall: "We don't care whether there's a holiday or not. We want to make some money. You make yourself available to work on Sunday or this holiday or whenever or else you don't have a job." Nothing in this throne speech protects those many thousands of women and men who must go to work on this so-called family day when they're going to be separated from their spouses and their children. What an Act. What a humiliation to families in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the ideologies the mover and the seconder related to when they talked about the throne speech aren't there. There is no sense of business stability. There is no sense of caring. With respect to the amendment, I support free trade. But the Speech from the Throne is so bad; it is so disappointing. It is so humiliating that I think it requires as much power, as much effort as possible to condemn the Speech from the Throne in its entirety. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I indicate my support, in spite of that reservation in that one area, to condemn the government for its lack of a plan, its lack of action, and its totally and completely disappointing Speech from the Throne.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to speak in support of this amendment. I believe this Speech from the Throne in some real sense endorses the federal budget cuts and has made, as the federal government has, an obsession of the deficit and is not concerned about the poor and the lower middle-class people and, indeed, is willing to balance the budget on the backs of the poor and disadvantaged in this country and in this province not only through increased taxes but through cuts in services. We hear proposed a regressive tax on necessities that costs the poor the same as it costs the rich. But the poor

spend a much greater percentage of their income on the necessities of life, so the tax is a greater hardship on them.

We see that the government says, "Let's balance the budget by increasing taxes," but they do not include in that a fair taxation system that would in fact tax those who can most afford to pay. We hear proposed also a claw-back clause that will destroy the universality of many of our social programs, and cuts to essential services and the social safety net. The claw-back clauses will allow that lower and lower income people would be subject to the taking back of the kinds of programs we would hold dear to our hearts in this country.

Again, we see that the essential services, the social safety net, is much more needed by lower income people. The rich, the higher income people, can in fact in many cases afford to pay for those services and programs. So what will happen is that we will have set up a two-tier system of society with an increasing gap between those that have and those that have not, something we have seen in Great Britain and in the United States, the richest country in the world, where children the from starvation. Surely that is a shame to be contemplated and one not to be emulated.

I would also condemn this budget and this government for support of the free trade deal. There have already been demonstrated job losses due to the trade deal, and the social safety net in many cases has been redefined so it can be slashed. One of the examples of that is to call unemployment insurance "employment disincentives." Talk about reality.

We will also see that under the free trade deal many of the gains women have made in the last few years in this country will be lost through the commitment of the trade deal and of the federal government and the American government to the competitive market place. The market place does not care about justice. It cares about competition. It cares about the animal world of "survival of the fittest." It loses touch with the human world of justice, a world in which we create a just society for all people.

The bottom line in the animal world of "survival of the fittest" is profit. The goal is to increase productivity on the backs of workers through deteriorating working conditions and lower wages. What is often forgotten is that the majority of consumers who are supposed to be buying these cheaper goods are, in fact, workers. Lowered salaries and increased unemployment mean a diminished buying capacity so that fewer goods are bought and there is a decrease in profit. So we have a spiral downward into a recession that we may never recover from. I would therefore urge that we accept this amendment to the budget.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have this opportunity to respond, particularly on our government's initiatives and commitments to agriculture. I'm surprised, actually really astounded, at the opposition leader's appraisal of the government's activities in the agricultural sector. To suggest that somehow the government is the architect of the decline of rural population sadly neglects this government's proud record of support for rural Alberta. As a farmer myself and as someone who is deeply committed to agriculture and the rural way of life, I find that suggestion contrary to the facts. We stand with our commitment in the February 17 throne speech in agriculture as in others. It is true that rural populations are declining, but surely the hon. member knows that this is a worldwide phenomenon and a function of many factors too numerous to dis-

cuss tonight, many of them obviously beyond our control. However, Alberta has managed what others have not. We've managed to slow down the process so much that our farming population decline is at a much slower rate than other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, we have a commitment to agriculture. We will maintain that commitment. The first commitment I would like to address is our initiatives to lower input costs. As announced in the February Speech from the Throne, the government extends the farm credit stability program. This extremely successful program offers farmers low-cost credit with flexible terms. At 9 percent, well below market rates, and with aggregate borrowing ceilings of \$250,000, the farmer has access to a secure source of credit over 10 to 20 years, thus helping liberate farmers from the burden of debt and the uncertainty of interest rates.

I would also mention at this time our commitment and desire to see farmers become better managers. Giving farmers access to credit is not necessarily the solution unless funds are utilized in the most efficient way possible. I am very hopeful that the new federal/provincial farm management programs will raise the level of knowledge and management skill among Alberta's farmers and make them leading competitors on the international stage.

Mr. Speaker, lowering the cost of credit is only one way we try to lessen the costs associated with operating a farm today. The farm fuel distribution allowance continues to result in a major cost saving for agricultural producers. A further 5-cent reduction on the cost of diesel fuel is another example of the government's commitment to the family farm, as is its farm fertilizer protection plan which is extended for another year, the farm water grant program, the remote heating allowance, not to mention our commitment to the farmers who suffered an extreme drought last year.

Mr. Speaker, all these are examples of the government's responsiveness to rural issues and our pursuit of longevity for rural communities and the family farm. If the hon. member would still insist our actions are insufficient, I have further evidence. Our beginning farmer program has been revamped to make it more responsive and more flexible. One of the progressive developments at ADC is the indexed deferral plan which allows farmers to defer their loan payments during times of low commodity prices.

Mr. Speaker, the only thing that is constant in agriculture is constant fluctuation. Helping producers cope with erratic commodity prices is another objective of our agricultural policy. The tripartite stabilization plans for red meat, edible beans, sugar beets and, most recently, honey introduce some much needed stability into agriculture and help make farming a kinder occupation than it is reputed to be.

I also wish to bring to the Assembly's attention our ongoing negotiations with the federal government to bring about changes within the Alberta hail and crop insurance program which will provide producers with reasonably priced, fair, and dependable coverage to meet those shortfalls created by forces beyond our control. Mr. Speaker, this first component of our system of support helps the farmer by reducing input costs wherever possible, stabilizing income, and reacting swiftly and responsibly to disaster. These programs have in common the fact that they flow directly to the producer. The next two components are perhaps a little less direct but just as important. Agriculture is a sector which is in a state of rapid change. It is expanding and diversifying into new and exciting directions. Alberta Agriculture is forging new horizons alongside the best. The Farming for the

Future program funds research into new techniques and crops which help strengthen the industry and make us more able to withstand price declines in one or two commodities. By venturing into new crops and adopting more modern and efficient means of production, all brought about by leading-edge research, and then by transferring that knowledge to producers, we again help lessen that inevitability of rural population decline.

Mr. Speaker, I end by examining for one moment the third component of our support system for agriculture, and that is the marketing of our high-quality and competitively priced products. We will continue to aggressively pursue markets for Alberta-made products, both within Canada and abroad. We also uphold our commitment to liberalizing trade, to give our products a fair chance on the international market. In that vein we will continue to demand the elimination of unfair subsidies through the GATT and other international forums.

I wish to make one final point, and that is on the topic of environmental protection. Last year I was proud to sponsor amendments to the Soil Conservation Act. I am pleased that new soil conservation initiatives have been implemented, and I look forward to better preservation of this important essential resource. Mr. Speaker, I understand the importance of good husbandry, and I am committed to making farmers aware of environmentally sound practices. This industry will not survive if we do not assume stewardship of the land and all that implies. It will be one of our objectives to see that the land remains productive so that future generations can continue to derive a living from it.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood implied that this government didn't resist the inevitability of rural decline. I argue that we support the inevitability of rural survival, and it will survive under the proven and effective policies of this government. Mr. Speaker, our government remains deeply committed to maintaining the well-being of rural Alberta.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too wish to take this opportunity to make this presentation, my maiden speech, so if you'll bear with me, I'll appreciate that.

Whitemud is the largest constituency in the province of Alberta populationwise. It's a constituency in which the residents respect very much the democratic process, and they are prepared to exercise their right in participating in the democratic process. It's a riding that some people say is very affluent, possibly the most affluent riding in the province of Alberta, but there are problems within Whitemud. There are those people that come to the constituency office with problems relating to social services, problems relating to low-income housing, problems relating to the failure of programs that have not been initiated by this government or programs that are not sufficient to meet the needs of those persons at the lower end of the income scale. Edmonton-Whitemud is a riding that has good civic services. The schools are great, the recreational facilities are great, and the roadway systems are great. Those civic services are in place because Whitemud has been known to elect conscientious aldermanic representation in the years that have gone by.

Mr. Speaker, it's a mix of people from many walks of life. Yes, I admit that there are smaller numbers in Edmonton-Whitemud who do face poverty levels, as compared to some of the other ridings in the urban centres of Alberta. But in addition to those on social services, in addition to those who live in low-income or subsidized housing, we go to the wealthy and powerful, who also reside in that particular riding. The Premier of this

province is a constituent of Edmonton-Whitemud; the Provincial Treasurer. I'm sure there are others sitting on that side of the House and on this side of the House who are my constituents, and I may not be fully aware of it. But I do have an invitation to any of you who are residents of Edmonton-Whitemud: the constituency office will be open.

In my travels in Edmonton-Whitemud in recent months and in the months prior to that, the thing I find most remarkable is that people are asking, requesting, or demanding honest, open government. They are saying, "We are not getting honest, open government," and they are becoming disillusioned by promises that are made by politicians at the provincial level, by promises that are made by politicians at the federal level. They can't understand what is wrong with government when, on one hand, government will promise no increase in taxes, more programs, and two months later we see a total flip-flop. We not only see that within this particular government; we see it happening at the federal level, and people do lose their respect for the political system. It is particularly disturbing when you go to high schools, like Harry Ainlay, and you hear that from students who say: "Why should I become involved in politics? Why should I become concerned, when I can't look up to my political leaders and have the respect I should?"

Mr. Speaker, I look at the throne speech of February 17. I look at the throne speech of June 1. Neither throne speech to me is what I would like to see in a throne speech. What I would like to see in a throne speech, what I feel a throne speech should be all about: it should be a vision, a document that is clearly a vision for this year and for future years. It should be a blueprint. It should be a master plan. It should address those many pressing problems that face Albertans, problems such as workers' compensation. We can go out in the front of the Legislature Building at this particular time, and there may still be people out there protesting, unless they've already been removed, as they were removed the other night. There is something wrong when we have a large Crown agency like the Worker's Compensation Board that is drifting along and had two board members out of a total of 11, nine positions vacant, until just the other day, when I believe it was six who were appointed, still leaving three or four more that are vacant. Of those who have been appointed, there is not that representation that should be there, that representation that should be addressing the concerns of the Terry Spencers, who we had here in the public gallery earlier this afternoon.

I can look at multiculturalism, which is another area that is dear to my heart, Mr. Speaker. I've heard talk about a multicultural plan. There is a Multicultural Commission in place, and this plan should have been brought to us some time ago. I now hear it could be four weeks; it could be six weeks. I'm not sure if we have a chairman of that particular commission any longer, because the previous chairman is now a cabinet minister, and I'm not sure exactly how that particular commission is functioning. But those who represent the ethnocultural communities, Mr. Speaker, are asking this government for some direction, for the opportunity to participate, to bring about multiculturalism in this province, multiculturalism in the truest sense. There was a previous minister of multiculturalism that I had a great deal of respect for, who seemed to have a handle on multiculturalism and did take some great strides. That, of course, is the hon. Horst Schmid.

Another area of concern that has to be looked at is transportation, Mr. Speaker. We have transportation problems in the urban centres. We have transportation problems in the rural

areas. We have a government that is saying, "We're going to pave every secondary road." I still haven't seen any reviews of accident rates as to which highways in fact need improvement. Possibly those highways that are already paved need dollars spent on them rather than simply making a blanket promise that we're going to pave every secondary road in Alberta whether it needs it or not, whether it's going to provide a roadway for a half a dozen people, 200 people, 400 people, whatever the case may be.

I also look, Mr. Speaker, at municipal affairs. Municipal affairs to me is a partnership between the provincial government and the municipalities, a partnership where the provincial government is working with the municipalities, a partnership that will recognize that the urban centres have some real massive problems in terms of infrastructure. There are problems in terms of environmental concerns right here in the city of Edmonton, the North Saskatchewan River, which cannot be resolved by the city itself. It takes that partnership; it requires that partnership.

We have a government that continues to insist that the bulk of dollars that are provided to municipalities still are granted with those strings attached. When are we going to grow up and say to the municipalities, "You're capable of handling your own affairs; here's X number of dollars based on a formula, based on a per capita formula," rather than saying, "Here's X number of dollars for the police force, so many dollars for the library, so many dollars for transportation." Municipalities, elected representatives at the civic level, are very capable of making their own decisions.

We have a government that is annoying municipalities by threatening to hold an election on a senate nominee in conjunction with the fall civic election. Municipalities throughout the province are saying: "We don't want that. We don't want that interference. We don't want that distraction." I have still not heard this government say that they will honour that wish of the municipalities.

Earlier this afternoon we had representation in the galleries from the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, which is an excellent concept, a concept, incidentally, that was proposed six months prior to the period of time that Rick Hansen came into this city, Rick Hansen, who promoted the cause of physically disabled persons a great, great deal. But that's two years ago, Mr. Speaker, and I am concerned, and there is restlessness out there. There are disabled persons who are saying, "What's happening?" They recognize that this is a pet project of the Premier, and they appreciate that hands-on approach from the Premier, but they want to see concrete action. That concrete action is going to have to start happening pretty quickly, otherwise those consumers are going to become disillusioned with the premier's council.

I can look at other areas that may not fall within the areas I've been asked to address on an ongoing basis by our caucus, but I do want to touch on some of the others that are dear to me. Social Services. I find it deplorable, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to have a system that allows for the homeless, allows for poverty, allows for food banks. On the one hand, we have a heritage trust fund; on the other hand, we have people that still have to line up and practically beg for their food. There is something wrong when in a province like Alberta, with our supposedly wealthy natural resources, we would allow people to lose their dignity to that degree.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I can look, Mr. Speaker, at health care. I've sat on hospital boards in the past, and I feel that I have a pretty good feel for some of the things that happen. I can look at past years when this government was building little hospitals throughout Alberta in all the various constituencies, and some of them now are very, very underutilized. There have been no steps taken to rationalize that space, to regionalize hospitals. We hear about long-term care and community-based programming. I read some excellent stuff in the Mirosh report, but I haven't seen it happen yet. There is some optimism in the throne speech. I know if the member that prepared the Mirosh report had the opportunity to implement it, it probably would have been done. But she can't do it herself; she has to do it with the support of her colleagues. I'm not sure that support has come down, because I still have not seen those changes that were proposed take place.

I also look, Mr. Speaker, at a number of other areas. I look at the fear the family farmer has, how much more difficult it is for him to continue. I look at one of the subjects that has to be dear to all of us, Mr. Speaker, and that's the environment. We continuously hear that expression of concern coming from people who say, "What is happening in the province of Alberta that we allow the megaprojects, the pulp and paper plants that are threatening our environment, without the proper environmental impact assessments?" People are expressing concern about reforestry programs. People are concerned because the very lakes, the very rivers they could use for recreational purposes 10, 12 years ago can no longer be used, and a fear that more and more of our waters will be spoiled.

Our quality of air is slowly, slowly becoming more and more polluted. We can look at concerns that are addressed to me even by grade 2 students at the Westbrook school, sending me letters. Every one of those students in that grade 2 class sent me letters saying: "What are you doing, Mr. Wickman? What are the other people in that Legislative Assembly doing about the CFC problem, about the threat to our ozone layer?" And what is being done? I've seen other provinces take some action, such as the province of Ontario, but I haven't seen that commitment made by this particular government.

I look, Mr. Speaker, at the question of management/labour relations. It's not that long ago that we had an illegal nurses strike in the province, an illegal nurses strike that was initiated because this government insisted on imposing a piece of legisla-

tion that did not allow those nurses their basic labour right, and that is the right to strike, so they chose to do it in any case. We can go back a couple of years ago and we can look at the Gainers situation, which speaks for itself.

Mr. Speaker, we can look at economic diversification. It appears to me at times that economic diversification to this government is putting a pulp and paper mill beside an oil well. Economic diversification to me means diversifying into high technology. It means diversifying, providing incentives, creating a stimulus for the small businessperson. It does not appear that this government recognizes that the backbone of our economy within this province is the small businessperson, and the small businessperson will create jobs at a much lesser cost per job than we see result from the loan guarantees, the funding, the grants that are provided to megaprojects.

Again, Mr. Speaker, leading towards my conclusion, I look at that February 17 throne speech. That's not a blueprint to me; that's not a vision. I don't see a vision of Alberta. I look at the throne speech of June 1. Again, I don't see a blueprint; I don't see a vision. Mind you, the June 1 throne speech is worse actually than the throne speech of February 17. It's taken away some of the things that were in there previously.

Mr. Speaker, to be frank, I do have some problems with the wording of the amendment. If I were to draft it, I would draft it in a more positive, enlightened fashion. Nevertheless, because it does meet that basic intent of condemning this government's failure to act on those much-needed programs, for that reason and that reason alone I will support that amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, considering the hour, I would move that we adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, by way of advice to the members, the House will sit tomorrow evening, when the throne speech debate will again be the business before the members.

[At 10:07 p.m. the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

