

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Friday, June 9, 1989 10:00 a.m.**  
Date: 89/06/09

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**PRAYERS**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We, Thine unworthy servants here gathered together in Thy name, do humbly beseech Thee to send down Thy heavenly wisdom from above to direct and guide us in all our considerations.

Amen.

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY  
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chairman of the committee I'd like to table the report on the members of the select and standing committees of the Legislature.

head: **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my intention to move, following Routine Orders and before the calling of Orders of the Day under the provisions of Standing Order 40, the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly pay tribute to the hardworking farm families of Alberta for their significant contributions to our province's past, present, and future on this special day observed in rural communities throughout Alberta as Farmers' Day.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in tabling four copies of a news release dispatched by Alberta Agriculture yesterday saluting Alberta's farm families and recognizing that today is Farmers' Day in Alberta.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1987-88 annual report of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 15th annual report of the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation, also the 1987-88 report of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research, copies of which have been distributed to the members.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, I wish as chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council to file four copies of two pub-

lications: the Community Survey Handbook and A Study of the Youth of Northern Alberta and Entrepreneurship.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly the 1987-88 annual report of Alberta Public Safety Services.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table with the Assembly four copies each of the following annual reports: the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism annual report for '87-88, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation '88 annual report, the annual report of the Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts, the annual report for '87-88 of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council, and the 1988 annual report of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to table the 1986-87 annual report of the formerly named Department of Social Services. I would point out that this report was sent to the Members of the Legislative Assembly some months ago so that there would be no delay in the information being provided. Again, in keeping with the government's commitment to providing full and complete information to the members of this Assembly and the public in general, I am pleased to table the 1988 annual report of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee, an important watchdog committee which monitors the activities of facilities licensed by my department.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the Members of the Legislative Assembly the winners of the Alberta Sport Council's Year of the Coach essay contest, their parents, and coaches. The Year of the Coach essay contest was developed to heighten awareness of the positive contributions Alberta coaches make to sports in the province of Alberta. I would ask that the winners, their parents, and coaches rise as I call out their names. They are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I ask the members to hold their warm welcome until they've been introduced.

The winners are as follows: Tara Duduman, who is in grade 3 at Jessie Duncan elementary school at Penhold, her parents, Ian and Karen Duduman, and her gymnastics coach, Jeff Meadows; Cary Williams, who is in grade 5 at Westlock elementary school in Westlock, his parents, Wayne and Linda Williams, and his swimming coach, Mrs. Anne Jamieson. Also here today is Shaun Wold, a grade 9 student from Alliance school, Alliance, Alberta, his parents, Dale and Sylvia Wold, his coach, Barney Olsen, and his wife, Lorrie; and finally we have Marlayne Erickson, a grade 10 student from Wm. E. Hay composite high school in Stettler, her parents, Robert and Phyllis Erickson, and her swimming coach, Larry Nielson, and his wife, Joan. I would ask all members to extend a warm welcome and congratulations in their traditional manner.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, it's my special privilege today to introduce to you and through you to Members of this Assembly special visitors from Denmark this morning. In our gallery we

have a Mr. and Mrs. Hans Nielsen and their Canadian, in fact their Albertan, indeed their Grande Prairie guides, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Boyce. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly 74 students from St. Hilda school. I believe they are seated in the members' gallery. They are accompanied by teachers Mr. Burke and Mrs. Lecky-Perron and parents Mrs. Vicky Bastide, Mrs. Penny Lamnek, Mrs. Sally Stewart-Leach, Mrs. Pat McIntyre, Mrs. Helen Trelenberg, Mrs. Anne Bosse, Mrs. Audrey Tailleux, Mrs. Betty Clutterham, Mrs. Jannie Edwards, and Mr. John Wiszt. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the members of the Assembly I would like to outdo Edmonton-Avonmore and introduce 82 students from Brookwood elementary school, located in the city of Spruce Grove. They are accompanied by their teachers Beth Willett, Rubin Bauer, Sharon Higgins, and parents Mr. Welch, Mrs. Soice, Mrs. Day, Mrs. Bosse, Mrs. Brewer. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

#### head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

##### Taxation Policy

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. It should be rather obvious to everybody now that this government can't be trusted to keep its promises. Say anything before an election and during an election and then have your real agenda after. In case I misquoted, I have along their commitments here in a nice *Journal* ad. In one of them it says:

In fact, because of Alberta's economic strength, Don Getty says, "There is only one direction Alberta taxes will take, and that direction is down."

Just the opposite has happened. Some taxes have gone up; none have gone down. Why didn't you tell the truth during the election?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we've dealt with the matter before. As I've told the hon. member and the people of Alberta, we had been referring to income taxes. [interjection] Mr. Speaker, if the hon. members don't like it, that's tough.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it's not tough on us; it's tough on the people of Alberta. It doesn't say anything about income taxes in there.

But let me look at another one. In the 1987 budget the government brought in what they called a temporary flat tax rate. They said "temporary." I notice it's still there. Why didn't they remove this tax if they said taxes were going down? Why, again, didn't they tell the truth to the people of Alberta?

MR. GETTY: All hon. members, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, know that the government removed part of the temporary tax this last year.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the point we're trying to make is

that this is an election commitment. I'm asking the Premier: why would you put out and spend all this money on something if you had no intention of following through? Why, again, were you lying to the people of Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I know how uncomfortable the opposition is with trying to draw up some terrible catastrophe that was coming in the budget and to have found all their predictions fall apart. In fact, what we have is a budget that has the best people services in Canada, the lowest taxes in Canada, meets our commitments, and moves to a balanced budget. That's the best we've provided.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order. Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: Well, I like to give the hon. member exercise. He doesn't get much else to do back there.

##### Budget Deficit and Fiscal Policies

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to follow up. They can pound all they like, but Albertans know exactly what they said. My question now to the Treasurer; maybe we can get some truth from the Treasurer. I go back. I know his picture isn't on this, but he is the Treasurer. He said that eventually we would be . . . Our consolidated debt, I want to point out, is now going to be, after this budget year, close to \$10 billion, and this budget year our deficit will probably be another \$2 billion, and in here it says very clearly:

Alberta's fiscal management plan will result in balanced budgets by 1991. This plan is not only on target -- it is \$500 million ahead.

Now we learn the truth in this budget, Mr. Speaker. I ask the Treasurer: how can Albertans ever again think that this government has a serious fiscal plan?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that the people of Alberta understand that this government is a government that represents good management and strong fiscal responsibility. We are the ones who took the tough actions in 1987. We addressed immediately the problems which were facing us as a result of sharp oil price changes in that period. Now the economy is emerging, and now the economy is strong, and now the investment dollars are flowing to this province. The people of Alberta understand that plan, and the statistics are supporting the plan that's now in action. We know that we can manage the size of our expenditures. When I spoke last night, I pointed out very vividly that in fact the expenditures of this province over the past four years are on average only 1.3 percent. That's an amazing record. We took the tough action. We made good management decisions. I can tell you that this government has faith in the future of this province. This province is on the rebound again.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, what claptrap. Ten billion dollars in debt in the last number of years. Again, was this a commitment or not? Was the Treasurer aware that they were putting this out, and if he was, why didn't he stop them when he knew full well that they weren't going to reach that balanced budget the way they said in this commitment?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, let me clarify for the member across the way, who is throwing these numbers around very casually, that this province on balance does have some debt, and we are dealing with that problem. We are the ones who are going to take on the challenge of reducing the deficit and eventually reducing that debt. But you know, the facts of the matter are this. New investment is coming to this province. Now, the Member for Edmonton-Norwood always says he's the one who protects jobs. Quite the contrary; the policies of this government are the ones that generate jobs, protect jobs, and generate long-term investment.

It's amazing; this morning, Mr. Speaker, the current unemployment rates in Canada were released. Now, I know the member doesn't want me to recite them, but they know they're very dramatic information that this Assembly should see. What it shows, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. Order please. Save some ammunition for the final supplementary. Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this Treasurer's been wrong so many times. Their fiscal strategy is getting on their knees and bowing to the sheikhs of the east; that's their fiscal plan.

But I want, then, Mr. Speaker, because I don't believe even this Treasurer believes the things that were in that budget -- I believe that honestly -- to ask this Treasurer, because of the debt and all the rest of it, knowing what happened in 1986-87, will he give his solemn commitment here that in the budget coming up in probably less than nine months, there will be no increase in taxes on average families and no cutbacks in the people services such as education, health care, and social services . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the people of Alberta know the commitment of this government. We have always maintained the lowest possible tax regime of any province in Canada, and we do not have a sales tax in this province, 8 percent taken out of the working folks' pockets. I'll tell you about the agenda of this province. The member across the way likes to talk about the secret agenda. We have an agenda, and that agenda is to get this economy growing, to get investment dollars flowing into this province, to have the lowest unemployment, second only to Ontario, in Canada, and to have a very strong, vibrant opportunity, with high education expenditures, great medical services, and some of the finest opportunities for the youth in this province of anywhere in Canada. That's our agenda. It may well be a secret agenda because it's not the one that they want, but it's the agenda the people of Alberta want, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, by the end of this fiscal term and during the whole of the period that Mr. Premier has been in his job, in his position, we now have an accumulated deficit which is equal to \$3,300 for every man, woman, and child in Alberta. The Premier made promises, commitments, to Alberta during the course of the election, and one of those commitments was that there would be no increase in the deficit. My question to the Premier is this. Why has he betrayed the commitment to Albertans, now seeing that the deficit has gone up when he said it would not go up?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is making

some comments. I don't think he knows what he's talking about, and I can't respond to something in his mind.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has a very short memory.

I'd like to ask the Premier: why during the election, sir, did you continue to promise to Albertans that your government's plan to do away with our deficit by 1990-91 was on target? Why did you make those statements? Why did you fool people, sir?

MR. GETTY: As I've said before, Mr. Speaker, I normally notice in the Legislature that when members have a very weak position to place, they tend to yell and raise their voices, and this member is following right along with the Liberal normal tactics. The Provincial Treasurer dealt with this matter last night and dealt with it very effectively.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, is the Premier aware that the moneys now required to service debt are 42 percent higher this year -- that's to \$825 million -- and is he prepared to admit that this lack of fiscal planning is going to have Alberta entrepreneurs not have the confidence in the Alberta economy and people outside Alberta having the same lack of confidence because of his lack of commitment, his lack of action, his no plan?

MR. GETTY: Again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is showing that he doesn't know what he's talking about. He's done that over a period of time, and now he confirms it in the Legislature. In fact, the statistics that the hon. Provincial Treasurer's talking about today were explained last night in the budget: billions of dollars of investment flowing across this province; confidence strong and healthy in this province; the unemployment statistics released today showing the best employment statistics since 1982; as the Provincial Treasurer pointed out, 1.3 percent average increase over the last four years in program expenditures, the best in Canada. This government has just presented the best people services budget in Canada, the lowest taxes in Canada, met all our commitments, and it's too bad they just don't like it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Table, has he got one more? Okay, thank you.

Member for Banff-Cochrane, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

### Employment Statistics

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night in this Assembly we heard that the employment figures in Alberta were very positive for last year. Last year is last year. This is a very important issue for the people of Banff-Cochrane, and I would like to ask a question to the Acting Minister of Career Development and Employment: what are the statistics for 1989?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. minister. Thank you. Perhaps all of the House could give the courtesy to the members that they expect to receive themselves.

Mr. Minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If there ever was a situation in a case or a better example of a situation of promises made and promises kept, the area of economic revival of this province, as seen through the unemployment figures in this province, is probably the most dramatic one. This morning we were informed from Statistics Canada that our actual unemployment rate in the province of Alberta for the month of May 1989 was 6.7 percent. That is down a full 1.4 percentage point from the previous month. That's the lowest level of unemployment that we've had in the province of Alberta since April of 1982. We also have 1.236 million Albertans employed; that's the highest level ever in the history of this province.

MR. EVANS: Supplemental question, Mr. Speaker. Summer is here; this government has made a commitment to the youth of this province as our future. Again, a question to the acting minister. May I please have statistics on student employment in Alberta?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, according to the figures provided to us this morning by Statistics Canada, the amount of students, young people, employed in this province -- and all members will recall that in the Speech from the Throne given on February 17, 1989, the Speech from the Throne of June 1, 1989, and the Budget Address presented last night, a major commitment of this government was to the skills enhancement and employment of the citizens of Alberta. I'm pleased to report that according to Statistics Canada, we had 100,000 Alberta students employed in the month of May. That is a new record in the history of the province of Alberta for the month of May, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EVANS: Second supplemental, Mr. Speaker, again to the acting minister. This government has indicated that it has made a commitment to rejuvenating the economies of Edmonton and Calgary. Let's hear what the statistics are for those areas.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, even more dramatic than the figures that I've talked about for the whole province of Alberta are the figures that you can see here in the city of Edmonton. In April of 1989 the unemployment level in Edmonton was 9.5 percent. As of today the unemployment level in the city of Edmonton is 7.6 percent, a dramatic reduction.

In Calgary, Mr. Speaker, those figures have reduced themselves unemploymentwise from 7.3 percent in April to 6.5 percent, and there is a clear indication as to why this has happened. A major, major reason, of course, is the economic development strategies of this government in this part of Alberta. But, secondly, the more positive leadership that we now see in the city of Edmonton under Mayor Cavanagh is a direct reflection of this.

MR. SIGURDSON: A point of order at the end of question period, please, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair hasn't recognized the member yet.

The Chair will recognize the following order: Calgary-Mountain View, Calgary-Buffalo, Calgary-Glenmore. Thank you.

## Budget Deficit and Fiscal Policies

*(continued)*

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year in his financial plan of 1988, on page 23, the Provincial Treasurer included the heritage fund capital projects in estimating the true budget deficit of the province. Last night he fudged the figures and gave no similar estimate for the true deficit figure in the current financial year. Will the Provincial Treasurer now admit to the Legislature that the combined deficit for last year was over \$1.9 billion, rather than the budgetary deficit figure the Provincial Treasurer gave to the Legislature last night?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am the last one who wants to deal with the confusing statistics. We could obviously present all kinds of information. Let me simply reveal that obviously the focus of this Legislative Assembly in terms of budget, in terms of program position, is always on the General Revenue Fund. Now, there are other expenditures that take place across government agencies, including the heritage fund, and the heritage fund expenditures were referred to in the budget speech last night. But all members know that the expenditures out of the capital projects division of the heritage fund do not have a call on the General Revenue Fund, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, in terms of disclosure we thought it was just as fair to show the impact of the General Revenue Fund, because that's where the general management, the general interest of the people of Alberta is focused.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, each year they count the income from the heritage fund. This year they don't any longer count the expenditures under the fund. Will the Provincial Treasurer now come clean to the Legislature and confirm that the combined deficit for this year is really \$1.634 billion and not the lower figure he tried to foist on us last night?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, you could, of course, consolidate for disclosure purposes a variety of different funds, and of course those are consolidated at the end of the year when we file the annual report of the province here in the Legislative Assembly, but I suppose that if you took the same analysis that the member across the way has just presented, you would also note a very interesting statistic as well: that under this current budget that I presented on behalf of the government last night, under your numbers, the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, in fact, you would see that we reduced our deficit even more dramatically on a year over year basis this year, as a result of the combination of those numbers.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: It's still not as good as he tried to paint the picture last night.

I want to know why the Provincial Treasurer is deliberately trying to switch the figures this year for the first time and hide the true combined deficit figure from the people of Alberta.

MR. JOHNSTON: No, Mr. Speaker, there is no attempt here to hide information. I am sure that through the debate here, which will ensue over the hot summer months ahead, we'll have ample opportunity to look at a variety of other funds that are being used by the government to cover expenditures. We have used this disclosure: previously, and as I've indicated before, this is consistent with other governments in terms of how they disclose

their expenditures, provides for intergovernmental comparisons. We all know we'll have an opportunity in just a few days to debate the heritage fund as well. So you see, this information is on the Table. Anybody who has any understanding of the way in which financial information is disclosed would understand that, and I'm sure over the next few days I'll have an opportunity to give the member a lesson again.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Calgary-Buffalo, followed by Calgary-Glenmore, then Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is developing a national reputation for creative accounting which misleads rather than informs. Last year's creativity was reflected by, amongst other things, \$18.50 a barrel oil. This year we have \$19 a barrel oil, and major oil companies are using \$17 to \$17.50. But more spectacularly the Provincial Treasurer at page 30 of his Budget Address has estimated that sales of Crown leases will bring in \$525 million this year, which is an increase of \$75 million over last year, when in fact these revenues for the two months of this fiscal year to date are down \$50 million from last year. They are down 43 percent on the basis of figures that I have right here from the government. I'm wondering how the Premier justifies his government predicting a \$75 million increase in Crown sales when the figures for the two months to date reflect a decrease of \$50 million, which would result in a decrease of at least \$200 million for the whole year.

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, let me just give a couple of facts here. As I look at the calendar, it's now June 9. It's a Friday. We're now six months into the year. We have given to Albertans the best guess we have as to oil prices. I've been in consultation with my colleague the Minister of Energy. The oil price is not just an oil price, but it's a composite index of oil and natural gas as well. I think we can say that the price of oil will be fairly close to \$19 for the 12-month period that this budget covers. And how can we say that? Well, the first six months of 1989 have already shown the price of oil to be well over \$19. I think the prediction this year is closer than we have ever been before, and this government knows two things: it believes that the industry, when it sees that price confirmation in place, will bring the activity back to this province because it's the best place to be. And we know, Mr. Speaker, as we said in the budget speech last night, that the optimism in the natural gas sector in terms of the expansion into the American markets will give us a dramatic . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order. It's interesting to note that in this Legislature, as in the last, Friday mornings seem to generate even more of the fun and games and the babble. Nevertheless, in actual fact perhaps the noise could be cut down a bit so at least the rest of us could hear what the answer is.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, we've had \$20 dollar a barrel oil, and the land sales are down 43 percent. I'm wondering whether the Premier can think of any reason and tell us why his government is predicting that land sales are suddenly going to get hot when there's no indication, and his government isn't even predicting, that oil prices are going to go up and when we have a drilling industry which has almost ground to a halt. Is there a Ouija board in operation in the cabinet room?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, both the industry and the people of Alberta know that this government bases its decisions on facts. We consult with the private sector on a day-to-day basis with respect to our information. There is a blend of prices. The price we used is far above some prices coming out of the New York and London markets and Saudi Arabia. I notice today that the press in Calgary is saying that the \$19 amount is within reason. It shows their optimism. It shows their view of the future.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to land sales let me point out that in 1987 we forecast, I think, \$300 million. Lo and behold, it was \$750 million. I didn't hear the member criticizing us at that point. We have faith, we have confidence, and the industry is going to rebound in this province.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, Mr. Speaker, these numbers are clearly totally unacceptable. I'm wondering whether the Premier will instruct his Provincial Treasurer to do the right thing and now, here, one day after he presented his Budget Address, present a new budget update which will reflect an increased budget deficit of \$200 million to account for what is going to be a decrease in Crown lease sales rather than an increase, as his numbers . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. JOHNSTON: I guess, Mr. Speaker, we have optimism. We in fact believe that our deficit will improve over what's been reported here because of the strength in the oil and gas sector. The land sales will come back in this province in the fall of this year; you can be assured of that. And don't forget that this fiscal year carries through to March 31, 1990, and the forecast for 1990 in oil and gas prices is even more bullish than what we have put in our budget.

### Health Care for Seniors

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, our government, in the throne speech and now in the budget speech last night, advocated independence for seniors. In the budget speech last night there's a significant increase of funding for home care, up 44 percent to \$47 million. This is indeed a significant amount of money. Would the Minister of Health please tell this Assembly whether this money will be targeted specifically to seniors?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question because not only have we told Albertans about the importance of getting on with some of the important choices to support their independence; we have followed through on our financial commitments as outlined in the budget last evening. Certainly our home care increase of 44 percent will be targeted at seniors, and I'm very proud to be part of a budget process in which overall spending will ensure that seniors are supported by \$1 billion in our expenditures in this province.

MRS. MIROSH: Will seniors be able to access home care on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week, or is it still just the usual five days a week?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I will have to check on the exact time allocation for the programs. There are different uses of the home care dollars as we support the variability of access and the variability of needs across our province. So I will dou-

ble check on that for the hon. member and get back to her.

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you. While home care is indeed very important, what plan does the minister have regarding implementation of the long-term care report with the recommendations towards co-ordinating other programs?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, again we get onto the issue of the commitments we have made to Albertans. In the general policy framework of the social policy paper that we described, we supported the whole issue of choices for individual Albertans and support them in making those choices. We followed through with the establishment of the long-term care committee. I applaud the Member for Calgary-Glenmore as the chairperson of that committee who did some very fine work in consulting across our province. Thirdly, we get into the whole issue of health choices: the expansion in our budget last evening of long-term care with respect to community choices, which will get some of our seniors out of institutions, will delay some of them moving in, and move in programs like wellness for seniors, day adult programs, and homemaker training. But as well we're working on the institutional side, with a patient classification system which will now blur the lines between nursing home care and auxiliary care and ensure that we can serve Albertans well within the fiscal management position of this province.

#### Confidentiality of WCB Files

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House the minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board said this, and I'm quoting from yesterday's Hansard: "I'll apologize for the Workers' Compensation Board and for myself . . . if I in fact erred." Now, that apology might be considered an apology by our Liberal friends, but it most certainly is not by New Democrats.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, I'm sorry, hon. member. The apology was there in terms of privilege yesterday and withdrawn, and it was accepted by the House. Therefore, that's really pretty skittish ground. The Chair looks forward to hearing the question. [interjections] The Chair looks forward to hearing the question from Edmonton-Mill Woods, not from the whole caucus, thank you.

MR. GIBEAULT: My question to the minister is simply this, Mr. Speaker: given the gravity of the matter involving the violation of a citizen's right to confidentiality, will he now do the honourable thing today and issue an unreserved, unqualified apology to Mr. Spencer?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I think my comments in *Hansard* stand.

MR. GIBEAULT: Well, having passed up that opportunity to re-establish some integrity, will the minister now take this opportunity to stand in the House and do the honourable thing and resign?

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, final supplementary to the

Premier, who has to, I'm sure, appreciate that the public must have some basis of trust in cabinet ministers, ministers of the Crown. I would like to ask the Premier this: what course of action is he going to take in this matter? Will he ask the Workers' Compensation Board board of directors to launch a prosecution against the minister for this violation, or will he ask for his resignation? Which will it be?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has surely got himself off on some wild goose chase. But I would say this to the House: as I understand, the House dealt with the matter of privilege on its own basis yesterday. I understand that. But I want to recall to the hon. members my announcement that I've asked the minister to review with the Workers' Compensation Board how its staff, officers, and others disseminate information and for him to report back to me, and we will deal with any recommendations he might have.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Gold Bar.

#### Drug Abuse Treatment

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For some months now we've heard passionate statements from the Premier about the need to strengthen and protect family life and in particular to deal with the tragedy of drug abuse and our urgent requirements for our intervention and treatment. The government and the Premier raised expectations in the public about this treatment being available. Now we're finding the promise is broken, as the budget changes from being a \$200 million fund for immediate treatment programs into a \$250,000 study program -- another year, another study, another promise shattered. My question is to the Premier. Why the sudden need to study the issue, when the Premier was so insistent during the campaign that the drug situation in Alberta needed immediate action? Why the stall?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member draws conclusions that are completely false. The government has announced that there will be a \$200 million endowment in the heritage trust fund, much as we have the medical research endowment in the heritage trust fund, and that it will deal with family life and drug abuse. It will make, I'm sure, an outstanding contribution to the education, treatment, research into the problems of drug abuse that is so widespread in our society these days. We are committed to that, and we will do it. We want to make sure that it proceeds on a reasonable, stage-after-stage accomplishment. We're going to do it with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education and the Minister of Family and Social Services working together. There is no change in our commitment. We have the planning going on, we have AADAC working with us as well, and our commitment to fight against this scourge is as strong as ever.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, another promise broken. Surely we know what needs to be done. When, in the Premier's mind, will there be treatment facilities available for the young people of this province? When will they be here?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Health may well want to deal with this in some additional way. But as the member knows, the government will be proceeding to pro-

vide education, research, and treatment services to the best of our ability, because we feel so strongly about this matter of drug abuse and its impact on family life in Alberta.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to supplement the Premier's response. I think as we look to the very important role that AADAC has played in this province -- and I'm pleased that the budget for AADAC as noted in the estimates book will be increasing by close to 20 percent this year. That will include the enhancement of treatment capabilities within the AADAC program. Nonetheless, I believe, and the Premier has stated very effectively, that it's very important to talk to stakeholder groups across this province, to talk to experts, to talk to Albertans to determine how we can get the best value for the wonderful endowment out of the heritage fund, which of course will stay in the heritage fund, and the funds from it will be able to support this very important initiative that we intend to do well for the people of this province.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, we can't talk about AADAC. We're in catch-up there. They had \$29 million in '86-87. We're just now reaching back to where the cutbacks occurred.

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, my question again is to the Premier. What happened to the Grande Prairie centre, the 50-bed centre that's been put on hold, that's been on the program since '86? And what's happened to the centres that the chairman of AADAC spoke about that were going to be in Edmonton and Calgary this fall? Where have they gone, Mr. Premier?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to deal with both of those, as will the chairman of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, when our estimates are before the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Rocky Mountain House, followed by Vegreville.

#### **Albertans in China**

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to be appalled and very concerned with the events that are going on and have been going on in China. We know that there are or have been a number of people from Alberta working on the Dinosaur Project in a northern remote area of China as well. I would like to ask the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism to bring the House up to date on the events as far as these people are concerned.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I know that all Albertans share the concern for the situation in China, and it gives me a great deal of pleasure to inform the Assembly this morning that the five Canadians who were working in China connected with the Dinosaur Project are all safe. The individuals include Don Brinkman from the Tyrrell museum in Drumheller and a freelance photographer from the same city, Mike Todor, who along with two gentlemen from the National Museums in Ottawa were working in the northern, remote regions of the Gobi desert. We've been able to contact them through the efforts of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and through External

Affairs. They are now safe in a home in Beijing and will be leaving Monday. Another individual from Edmonton who was in Shanghai working on a film project there is also going to be able to leave Monday. We're very, very glad to be able to report that. They've all been in touch with their families, and things are fine.

MR. LUND: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, we know that this was an ongoing project between the two governments. Would the minister bring us up to date on the status of the project?

MR. MAIN: Yes. Mr. Speaker, there has been some misinformation about the Dinosaur Project and the attitudes towards it. Let me say this: the Dinosaur Project is an ongoing project of a scientific and research nature that's based on a people-to-people basis. The current political climate in China, however, does make it impossible for the work to continue in that location. But there's a great deal to do based on research that has been conducted over the last three or four years, and work will continue in Edmonton, Drumheller, the high Arctic, and Ottawa as we in the government continue to monitor the situation in China.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We also know that there were a number of students from Alberta studying in Heilongjiang province. To the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Would you please bring us up to date on the status of these students?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to do so. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to obtain landing rights for Canadian military -- air force -- aircraft in the city of Harbin. Therefore, plans have been made to transport the students to the eastern seacoast city of Dalian, and from there charter aircraft from Hong Kong is being retained by our government to transport the students and their staff advisers back to outside the People's Republic of China, I think to Hong Kong or to Tokyo, from whence they will be returned to Edmonton. All families, I should advise the Assembly, have been contacted by the University of Alberta and by the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. So far as we are aware, everything is proceeding so that the safety of the Alberta students can be assured. That is something I would like to leave with the Assembly before the weekend.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Vegreville, followed by Edmonton-Kingsway, Drayton Valley, Westlock-Sturgeon.

#### **Agricultural Diesel Fuel**

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While welcoming the 5 cents a litre break on diesel fuel provided in the budget, I think farmers in Alberta are very skeptical about the way this government makes decisions about important farm programs. I might remind you that in 1987 when grain prices were rock bottom and farmers desperately needed cash, the Conservatives took away the 5 cent benefit, and in 1989 when the Conservatives needed votes, they brought the benefit back. I'd like to ask the Premier why the political needs of the Conservative Party to cut

spending in 1987 and to buy votes in 1989 are more important than the real needs of Alberta farmers.

MR. GETTY: They aren't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FOX: The record speaks for itself. The Premier and his government voted against my motion in 1987 to restore that benefit. Taking the Premier at his words, if the decision wasn't a political one, I'd like to ask him what calculations this government did to determine that when grain prices and net farm income were rock bottom, this program for farmers should be cut, while in 1989 when grain prices are improving, that the program should be restored.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, these matters are always judgment. The Minister of Agriculture may well want to supplement my comments, but let me just tell the hon. member that the government decides on a reasoned basis, balancing the needs of our budgetary restraints and budgetary dollars with the needs of Albertans.

MR. FOX: I'd like to ask the Premier if it's his newfound love of rural Alberta that's responsible for this program, and if it is, will the love last long enough to assure farmers that they won't lose this 5 cent a litre benefit in next year's budget?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I recall back in 1985, when first talking about the potential for returning to public life, how I established for myself and with our party that agriculture is the number one priority of this government and this party, and that hasn't changed.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway, Drayton Valley, Westlock-Sturgeon, Calgary-McKnight, Edmonton-Jasper Place, Edmonton-Meadowlark.

#### **Budget Deficit and Fiscal Policies**

*(continued)*

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 1986-87 budget the combined deficit was estimated by the Treasurer to be \$2.33 billion. It turned out to be \$3.44 billion, an error of some 48 percent. The next year his error was 45 percent, fortunately in the right direction, but this last year the error was 127 percent in the wrong direction. I ask the Treasurer how can anybody believe his \$1.49 billion deficit figure in this budget, particularly when we know that he's not counting the heritage trust fund and that it should be \$1.63 billion?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I know that over the next few months here we'll have an opportunity to discuss the fiscal plan, talk about the numbers. And I hope that over the next two months as well, I'll be unable to unravel what it is the member just said.

MR. McEACHERN: I understand that the Treasurer is a bit slow with figures, but perhaps we can try this. In the December 6 update of his budget, he said that the deficit would be \$1.37 billion; that is, the combined deficit. His budget figures last night show that it was \$1.9 billion. Would he like to assure the people of Alberta that his mistake had nothing to do with lying to the people before an election?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, he's going to get my competitive juices flowing here with those kinds of words.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair's own competitive juices are flowing as well. That's the third member today who's used the term "lying," or words to such effect. That just absolutely has to stop. Response, please, Provincial Treasurer, to the question.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm taken aback and shocked by the accusations of the member. We maintain the decorum in this House, and I think you can see that from across the way there's no respect for the parliamentary traditions. We're trying to present a reasonable fiscal plan to the people of Alberta, trying to get the message across to the good folks in Lethbridge in particular so they understand the programs of this government. But as I understand it from across the way, what they would do is reduce the taxes on cigarettes, would cut back on the social programs. It is this government that has the conscience, that is the caring government, as we said before, because we want to maintain those programs and we're doing it with a balanced position, because the economy of this province is very strong, the tax regime is extremely low, and the people of Alberta have faith in this government.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we have unanimous consent to complete this series of questions and also to have the Minister of Agriculture give supplementary information on a matter that was raised yesterday?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, every prognosticator in the country for the last four months has indicated that the Alberta economy will grow at the slowest rate of any province in Canada, yet the Treasurer continues to stand up here and mislead the people of this province by saying that we've got the healthiest economy.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, hon. member. "Mislead" is unparliamentary. Please withdraw it.

MR. McEACHERN: I'll withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I would give some free advice to the member. I mean, if you're going to ask questions of that order, you're giving us a great opportunity to tell the good people of Alberta just what it is I'm going to tell him now; that is, that this economy is one of the strongest economies in Canada. Last year the growth rate was 7.7 percent, the highest in Canada, and the lowest inflation rate.

Lo and behold, what did we find out this morning? Now, I know it shot down their game plan. I know they don't want to talk about diversification, the great things that are happening in this province. Here it is, Mr. Speaker: the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada, 6.9 percent. People are at work. People are enjoying themselves. They're convinced that this government is doing the right thing. This economy is going to



grow much further than 3.5 percent next year. You can quote the doomsayers all you want. This government knows that the growth rate will be above 3.5 percent; it will one of the strongest there is. Let me make it very clear. This government is optimistic about the future. This government is blending policies which will ensure that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Minister of Agriculture, and the question had been raised by the Member for Vegreville, if the Chair remembers correctly.

### Federal Drought Assistance Program

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. Member for Vegreville raised a question with respect to a federal drought assistance program. I'm not sure why he's raising it in this Legislature rather than discussing it with his Member of Parliament, who just happens to be the Minister of Agriculture for Canada. The program, for the clarification of the hon. member, that was announced for grain farmers last fall was announced by the federal government. Money has already flowed to some of the producers from the federal government, and I would anticipate that they will fulfill their commitment to the agricultural community.

MR. FOX: The question was: what negotiations have gone on between the Alberta government and the federal government in Ottawa regarding cost sharing of this program? Because the federal government allocated a \$425 million to \$850 million commitment. I'd like to ask the Minister of Agriculture: is it this government's intention to use Alberta taxpayers' money to fund Brian Mulroney's election promises? Yes or no?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, may I repeat? The program was announced by the federal government. It is being delivered by the federal government. I'm assuming they're going to fulfill their commitments. Since I've been the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Alberta, under my definition of negotiations, I would say my direct answer to your question is none.

MR. SPEAKER: Now then, points of order. First, Minister of Advanced Education, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Edmonton-Belmont, and who knows who else. Advanced Education.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rose during the question period on the point of order with regard to a statement made by the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition -- and I quote his words: "Why, again, were you lying to the people of Alberta?" -- in reference to a question to the hon. Premier. Far be it from me to cast any aspersions on the House, but it would appear almost as though this is becoming so regular in terms of this hon. member rising that it should almost perhaps be on the daily Routine. I am very concerned about the language used by the hon. member, under *Beauchesne*, both 489 and 492, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, that matter which most members of this House and certainly the hon. leader traditionally have followed, and that's our own Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j). So I would, with respect, bring it to your attention and request the hon. Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his unparliamentary language.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member is upset when we bring the truth here. I was talking about these particular promises that have been dumped. I was not talking about him lying to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. Leader of the Opposition. [interjection] Order please. Same difficulty with an exhibit in the House. Perhaps you could leave it on your desk, fold it up, and carry on with your point. But the specific issue is the unparliamentary language.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the point -- I did not say that they were misleading or lying to this Assembly. I was talking about election promises, Mr. Speaker, and if they're not committed and people say it, what other term do you want me to use then? That's precisely what the people of Alberta understand. I was not doing it here in terms of misleading the Assembly. What I was doing was talking about election promises. I think there's a big difference, and I think the hon. member knows that.

MR. SPEAKER: Unfortunately, Leader of the Opposition, in a moment, having read the Blues, first you will see that indeed unparliamentary language was used. But let me also say that in the first two instances, because it came up three ways in your questions, you were careful enough and successful enough in crafting your words that you were within order when you said, "Why didn't you tell the truth during the election?" That was in the first and second questions. By looking at the terms in *Beauchesne*, that appears to somehow be acceptable in those sets of terms, but in the last question it is not acceptable to say, "Why . . . were you lying to the people of Alberta?" So you were able to craft it in one sense in the first two but struck out on the third strike. So in that instance would the member be gracious enough as to withdraw it?

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I think there is a difference when you're talking to the people of Alberta and when you're talking in the Assembly. I'd like a ruling on that. But, Mr. Speaker, a lie is a lie. If you're going to rule that that's unparliamentary, what they did to the people of Alberta, I'll say they were distorting the truth, then, and withdraw "lying."

MR. SPEAKER: I'm afraid, hon. member, "distorting" is also unparliamentary.

MR. MARTIN: No, it isn't.

MR. SPEAKER: Four ninety-two. [interjection] I'm sorry, hon. member; we're still with the leader. All right.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect, the sixth edition of *Beauchesne*, section 491, states:

The Speaker has consistently ruled that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken. No language is, by virtue of any list, acceptable or unacceptable. A word which is parliamentary in one context may cause disorder in another context, and therefore be unparliamentary.

Now, in the list that follows under section 492 I see both . . . The preamble that goes before the list says:

The following expressions are a partial listing of expressions which have caused intervention on the part of the Chair.

Now, "distort" is there; "lie, liar, lied, lies, lying" are there. But

it doesn't say "unparliamentary", Mr. Speaker. It's the preceding list, under section 490, that says it's unparliamentary, not under 492. So the interventions and unparliamentary language are two different things.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, with due respect, hon. member, you've made your case in support of the Chair, thank you very much. Section 491 has said:

The Speaker has consistently ruled that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken.

The Chair really does not feel that "lie" or "deliberately mislead" fit within the category 491, thank you.

And in 492 you see that the list is there in terms of intervention, and indeed we are having interventions and there will be more interventions if these phrases continue to be used. For example, in the rest of question period the Member for Calgary-Buffalo was guilty of using the term "misleads." That will be called to order. Again, the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway used the term "mislead"; that also we could call to order. And this indeed will be what the practice is as we get into week two of this particular sitting. The Chair has allowed a certain amount of leeway in terms of week one because of new members. Nevertheless, the offences are not being caused in the main by new members. Surely members of this House, I know, will take care to give some consideration over the weekend to more skillful ways of using the English language in terms of dealing with question period.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I could go down . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. Order please. [interjection] Order. The Chair is indeed willing to allow some slight amount more of debate to continue on the point, but that's about it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in view of your ruling -- I've got the book in front of me -- I'll withdraw "lying" and say that they deceived, debased; they were arrogant, ashamed of their past actions, depriving, dishonest . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. That is more than enough, and that is really not worthy of your office, I'm afraid. [interjections] Order please in all parts of the House.

The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Jasper Place on a point of order.

MR. McINNIS: Thank, you, Mr. Speaker. My point is covered in many citations, but I think 409(5) of *Beauchesne* is the clearest

The matter ought to be of some urgency. There must be some present value in seeking the information during the Question Period rather than through the Order Paper or through correspondence with the Minister or the department

In question period the Member for Banff-Cochrane, not once, not twice, but three times asked for statistics on employment which, it just so happens, are in a news release issued by somebody in the government today. In fact they all have them on their desks. I think these statistics are published by Statistics Canada, issued by a news release from the department. Surely it isn't necessary to bump the rest of us off question period so they can be reiterated here during these proceedings.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, if I may on that point of order. Surely we have heard time and time again that there is time for ministerial announcements after question period. I don't think it's deliberate, but maybe, Mr. Speaker, your kindness and tolerance with freshman MLAs asking the questions -- and they may be the only ones able to be talked into it by the minister, that should know better, to ask these puffball questions. But I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you rule occasionally that these things can be ministerial announcements after question period and not during question period, trying to bump the opposition off questions that are important.

MR. EVANS: On this point, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the member; across the floor, the issues of employment are particularly important to the people of Banff-Cochrane. All employment in this province is an important issue. The members of the opposition have indicated on numerous occasions that it's one of their priorities. I'm flabbergasted that the members of the opposition are not concerned enough to listen to this information being made public in this House. [interjections] More importantly . . .

MR. SPEAKER: All right. The tradition is to speak briefly to points of order, thank you, and also that they be heard without interruption. Banff-Cochrane is still there. Then there is Edmonton-Meadowlark, followed by Edmonton-Kingsway, and that will be sufficient on this matter.

MR. EVANS: More importantly, Mr. Speaker, because Banff-Cochrane is such a tourist area, we have an incredible number of students from this province and other areas in the country converging on our constituency during the summer period. It's extremely important to the members of our constituency to know what is happening with student employment.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark, followed by Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to support my colleague from Edmonton-Jasper Place in his motion which, in a general sense, chastises back-bench government MLAs for diminishing the impact and wasting our time in question period with what would perhaps be called frivolous or unnecessary questions. I think it is very important for new members of the Legislature, for back-bench government members who have been here before, to be reminded that question period plays a very significant role in the accountability process for government in this Legislature. What I know about good government, about strong government about the kind of government that perhaps this party once provided an awfully long time ago, is that it would not resist an opportunity for adequate and appropriate accountability but in fact would welcome such an opportunity because that kind of accountability does not make any government weaker; it makes it stronger.

Therefore, I believe and I find that a number of the questions over the last six days in this Legislature from government MLA backbenchers have been highly inappropriate. They have offered an opportunity for blatant political propaganda on the part of ministers, and they have sought -- I'm getting to the point Mr. Speaker -- information that could better be sought and more appropriately be sought through other vehicles available to MLAs at this point. I offer motions on the Order Paper and

written questions, or personally go and talk to a minister.

As for the Member for Banff-Cochrane's concern that he communicate publicly certain information to his constituents, a legitimate concern, a ministerial statement to that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for the advice and direction. Perhaps you could wrap up the point of order.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A ministerial statement after question period is still on cable TV and will still communicate that, but it will not take time from question period. I think it is very, very important for a member like the Member for Banff-Cochrane and some of his colleagues earlier this week to understand that he only diminishes himself and diminishes his party by raising questions like that. Some of these questions, in fact . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Let's not complicate the process any more.

Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: I'll try to be brief, Mr. Speaker. I think a lot has been said, but it's important to point out that no one is denigrating the importance of the unemployment statistics and certainly the need for jobs for people -- unfortunately, you've been accepting 8 and 10 percent unemployment as if it was acceptable -- nor the questions about China. These are important topics. We're talking about the manner in which they are introduced into the House.

Now, if there are some important questions that need to be answered for this Assembly, then fine, the opposition asks them.

But those are not important questions in the sense that they could not be stated perfectly clearly and perfectly adequately by a minister standing up and making a simple and short ministerial statement at the end of question period. Therefore, you waste a lot of question period time asking puffball questions, quite frankly, because there is no give and take there. You just ask a patsy question and he gives a patsy answer, and this goes on and on. There's far too much of that.

MR. SPEAKER: The original point of the point of order was with regard to whether the matter was of some urgency in terms of question period, and members raising that should also then take the same yardstick and apply it against their own questions no matter which part of the House they happen to be sitting in. In terms of the urgency with respect to the matter as raised concerning employment statistics, this matter, the Chair assumes, was raised within the last day or two and therefore would seem to be a matter of current interest no matter which quarter of the House it would be raised in. Therefore, the Chair does not regard the original point of order as being valid.

The additional comments that have taken place with regard to puffball questions, for example: again, some considerable thought should be given to those comments. In terms of the general flow of question period that has been redesigned, thanks to the input of the House leaders of all political parties, it now means that many more members are able to get into debate in terms of question period. All hon. members here are elected to represent their constituencies. Whether they be government or from another political party, all members have the right, other than those on the front benches of the government, to raise questions with regard to the whole province let alone with regard to

their own constituency. As I look at the statistics compiled by the Table as to those who have been able to get into question period from all political parties, the government members are far and away behind in terms of the actual numbers of questions raised.

For any member to make an assessment as to the quality of a question as raised from any quarter of the House is, indeed, that member's personal prerogative, and one is entitled to their own opinion. But in the opinion of the Chair now that we come to the end of about -- what? -- the sixth question period, I really believe the whole process has been greatly enhanced and allows many more members to get in. Especially with regard to new members of the House, they would get in, whereas oftentimes they would probably have to wait weeks before they would be allowed an opportunity to start to develop their own skills with regard to question period.

The comments with regard to ministerial statements. The Chair has no control over directing the government to issue a ministerial statement. That is within the prerogative of the government.

Thank you, hon. members. Perhaps now we can go to Edmonton-Belmont on a point of order.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point of order relates to the same matter but under a different section of *Beauchesne*. It's section 410(5):

The primary purpose of the Question Period is the seeking of information and calling the Government to account

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that the information was readily available in the minister's office. This morning I went over and collected it, and here I hold the unemployment statistics for the month of May. One would wonder why the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane couldn't do the same. Now, in his . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. The point of order that you are now raising under another section clearly relates back to what the Chair has just ruled on. I'm sorry; this is out of order.

MR. SIGURDSON: I made that statement . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry, hon. member; it's out of order.

Now, earlier in an exchange between the Leader of the Opposition and the Chair, the Chair was intemperate in its remarks in response to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition then started to read down a number of terms. The Chair overreacted to the fact that that was far too many terms to be sort of read out all of a sudden. Therefore, the Chair made some comments with regard to the Leader of the Opposition and his office, and the Chair with respect and sincerity apologizes to the Leader of the Opposition.

#### head: MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 40

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40, the Chair recognizes the Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion, I believe, has been distributed to all members of the Assembly for them to assess the urgency of it. If I may just read it again before commenting briefly on the urgency:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly pay tribute to the

hardworking farm families of Alberta for their significant contributions to our province's past, present, and future on this special day observed in rural communities throughout Alberta as Farmers' Day.

I think it fair to say, without going on at length, that regardless of the political party in the House, all hon. members in this Legislative Assembly recognize the importance of farm families to our province's economy, recognize that this great province was built and developed as a result of the hard work of our pioneers, and we share a commitment to work together to develop policies. I think that because today is Farmers' Day -- it's being recognized throughout rural communities in the province, celebrated, in fact, by school holidays in some communities -- it is appropriate for this Assembly to approve this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Vegreville has put to the House the request for unanimous consent. All those in favour of granting consent, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Speaking to the motion, hon. member, if there are additional comments to be made.

MR. FOX: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, it is Farmers' Day. I know there are a number of rural members in this Assembly that would dearly love to be out with their constituents attending the various functions -- ball games, parades, barbecues, et cetera -- to help local people celebrate Farmers' Day and pay tribute to people. But alas, we have an overriding public responsibility that requires us to be in the House. For that reason, I bring the motion to the House so all hon. members have a chance to express their appreciation of farm families in Alberta.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, might I, too, pay a word of tribute on behalf of our two ministers of Agriculture by way of the news release they issued today recognizing the important role our agricultural community does play to the way of life in the province of Alberta. We underscore that by recognizing today is Farmers' Day, so that all Albertans will recognize the outstanding contribution that is made by a very important segment of our society. We pay tribute to them in a very sincere and tangible way today, this Friday.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, just to repeat some of the words of the minister of economic development and as chairman of the caucus committee on agriculture, I'd like to support the motion. I well remember this holiday a number of years ago when I was in school and I thought how unfair. The city kids got to think about agriculture, got to remember agriculture, got a day off. We got a day off from school to go to work on the farm. I see some over there nodding their heads. I guess there were others that were in the same predicament. As time goes on, it becomes something more than an extra working day on the farm, and in many areas of the province there is occasion to celebrate. I would like to lend my support to the passing of this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to add a voice to the well-crafted motion by the hon. Member for

Vegreville and its support by the government benches, and also to express my party's support and tribute for what farming has done and what farm families have done for Alberta, but possibly also to do more than just thank farmers and farm families for the past and for the present. Really, we would be breaking faith with them if we didn't also dedicate ourselves to the preservation of the family farm and, maybe more important, the preservation of number 1, 2, and 3 farmland, the very asset any country in the world would give eyeteeth to have, what we have here in Alberta. Yet on the idea of short-term gain, whether it's gas plants or industry or a town, the government and maybe some of us in (he opposition also are guilty of often forgetting the real dedication we must have to preserving food-producing land into the future and the family farm.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, ever so briefly, because I'm one of the city kids who had the time off and haven't had the opportunity to go out into rural Alberta to celebrate, along with my rural colleagues, the barbecues and the picnics and the parades that go on to celebrate Farmers' Day. So as an urban member I want to congratulate the hon. member for moving the motion, but also more importantly, to thank the farmers of our province for providing us with the quality of life we enjoy in the city.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Is there a call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[Motion carried]

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might we have unanimous consent to revert briefly to the Introduction of Special Guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to introduce a group of 59 school students from the Jean Vanier school in Sherwood Park. They are here with their teachers Sister Beaudoin and Jim Ziebart. May I indicate to them on a very personal basis my deepest regret that I'll not be able to have a photograph with them, because I'm supposed to be at the official opening of Visionwall Technologies at 11:30. Because of the proceedings, it's been delayed somewhat. But I do wish to indicate to them our warmest welcome here in the Legislative Assembly and to leave them with the assurance that we are going to send them each an individual photograph to commemorate their visit. I would ask if they would stand and receive the warm welcome of this Legislative Assembly.

### head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

4. Moved by Mr. Johnston:  
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly approve in general the fiscal policies of the government.

[Adjourned debate June 8: Mr. Martin]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it's going to be fun to deal with this budget. There's so many holes in it, I don't think we'll run into any problems in terms of parliamentary language.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be positive right at the start. As I did last year, I always appreciate the performance of the Provincial Treasurer. He can take an indefensible case and talk a lot. Pretty soon you wonder what he's talking about, but he does it very well. So I say again that listening to him last night, he read that budget extremely well. In fact, I'd give him an A-plus for reading well. I also always appreciate the Provincial Treasurer's enthusiasm. Even what he's saying, he always looks animated and, as I say, he does it with enthusiasm. So as they do on a report card, I would give him another A-plus for showing enthusiasm on the job. Mr. Speaker, I notice that his colleagues on the government side usually pound hard in the Treasurer's speech, and they usually pound hard when he gives his philosophical commitments here in the Legislature. So I think I'd give him a B-plus for getting along well with his colleagues.

I guess though, Mr. Speaker, we have to get to the crux of what this budget is all about. As I said earlier, I believe this is a totally, totally dishonest budget, and I say to you -- there's no other way you can say it -- that they did not keep the promises during this election. As I noted in question period, those were commitments, a whole page, given to the people of Alberta. Now, if that's not a pledge or promise, I don't know what it is then. Does that mean that in election campaigns we say anything, do anything, put anything out in the paper, and it doesn't mean anything? That should be an absolute, solemn promise to the people of Alberta. If you can't do that, you should not promise it, and people would respect that type of honesty. Because to come back to what I was talking about, there's that cynicism developing about politicians. And this is one of the reasons, and we've seen it in the last three elections in this province. We saw it in '86 with this government, we've seen it just recently with the federal government, and now we're seeing it again with the provincial government. How else are you going to expect people to react, Mr. Speaker, if you can't even believe election promises?

Now, I'd just like to quote again what was said, what those promises were, from this form. It says:

In fact, because of Alberta's economic strength, Don Getty says, "There is only one direction Alberta taxes will take, and that direction is down."

How could you be any clearer on a commitment than that? In fact, as I'll point out later and I did in question period, the opposite has happened.

The new commitments will not interfere with Alberta's plan for a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, 10 weeks later they come back in here and say: Whoops, just a minor mistake; it's going to be at least another year before we can look forward to a balanced budget. I say to you that surely they knew that 10 or 11 weeks ago. Why put it out if you didn't intend to follow it? Or, and I quote:

Alberta's fiscal management plan will result in balanced budgets by 1991.

Again, the same point must be made. Now they're not going to follow that commitment. It's now up to 1992, and I doubt that it's ever going to come about, frankly, unless they change their particular policy.

Now, the point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is this. These are not promises that our Premier made orally. These are not promises that could have possibly been misquoted, because I know this government always says they're misquoted. This is a paid political ad by the party, so they can't be misquoted on it. They are promises that appeared in black and white in full-page Conservative election ads that appeared across this province. And these promises have been broken in this budget -- there's absolutely no doubt about that -- firstly, because taxes didn't go down. In fact, the only way they went was up -- at least some of those taxes. It's increased taxes on medicare premiums, a regressive tax. Call it what you want, but it's a regressive tax. It's increased taxes on tobacco. I'm not debating whether that's an appropriate tax or not, but the fact is if there was a commitment made there would be no taxes. It's laid out increases in fees for government services and permits and, I think, above all, what was supposed to be a temporary tax in 1987. It certainly did not eliminate the remaining portion of what was to be a temporary surtax on personal income.

Mr. Speaker, that's clear, that's happened, so that's a breaking of promises no matter what you want to call it, whatever name you want to give to it. That's clear. Secondly, the government, black and white again, has abandoned its plan to eliminate the deficit by 1991. You know, people thought they could have the best of all worlds. They could have all these bizarre campaign promises from the Premier, balance the books and lower taxes. Well, we could call it Magic Getty or Magic Johnston if they could do that, because the reality, as we in the opposition knew, was that that was impossible. But they didn't tell people that. Again: say anything, do anything during an election, but above all, have your real agenda after.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the figures in the Budget Address are used to mislead the people of Alberta about the size of this year's combined budgetary deficit. It was brought up by my colleague from Calgary-Mountain View. Interesting that they changed it this year. All the times before, the capital projects spending to the General Revenue Fund deficit was included. All of a sudden -- whoops, Magic Johnston goes again -- it's not there; different figures. Well, why would they do this? Why would you fudge the figures like this, other than not wanting to get the truth out to the people of Alberta how bad our finances are? The combined deficit is actually \$1.63 billion in this next year, not the \$1.49 billion noted in the budget speech.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

They are now talking about balancing the budget in 1991-92. As an aside, just before I get into that, I'm always amazed by this Conservative government, the rhetoric they use. You know, I thought this was supposed to be a fiscally responsible government, a conservative government, Mr. Speaker. But you notice in the rhetoric when you go through that budget, when they justify things, it's always how much they're spending. Always how much: why we spend the most in Canada, why we spend the most in the world. They never talk about the bang for the buck or the quality of service; it's just how much money they're dishing out. But that doesn't surprise me, because the programs are not being well run. We are fiscally irresponsible, and it doesn't matter how much money you throw at a problem if you haven't got it together. That's the reality.

But let's look, Mr. Speaker. They're still talking about balancing the budget by 1991-92. Well, if this is to happen with

the route that this government's taking now with this budget, then I suggest the real hidden agenda will come about even more dramatically than now. Remember in 1986, you campaigned on something. All of a sudden our fiscal problems were greater than we anticipated. All of a sudden we had to have cut-backs and a billion dollar tax-grab from Alberta families. Unforeseen circumstances, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'd remind you now that our deficit is a heck of a lot bigger than it was back then. So I say the leopard hasn't changed its spots. We're going to pay the price down the line. I don't think there's any doubt about that. So the people are well aware that this is merely a stopgap budget and one that attempts to hide the government's real agenda for the future.

As I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, just as the government waited for one year to pass after the 1986 election to hammer Albertans with a billion dollar tax-grab, complete with cuts to vital people services, they know this will happen again. The people of Alberta are not going to believe them again. Surely as night follows day, this is coming. When we look at the figures of the government, it's interesting, with the consolidated debt -- people aren't aware of this, but since 1986-87 to the present time under this great, fiscally responsible government, our consolidated debt is close to \$10 billion at the end of this budget year. That's a lot of money. That's almost a whole year's budget, and that's not talking about what the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry was talking about; the pension funds aren't even included in there. Now, I recognize they don't all come due at once, but we have some serious problems, Mr. Speaker. And all the rose-coloured glasses and all the optimistic talk and all the rosy projections do not take away that fact that we have a consolidated debt of almost \$10 billion. Our combined deficit is over \$8 billion in those periods of time.

Mr. Speaker, to come back to the theme I wanted to talk about and flow into that. Before we get to that, though, are the broken promises. The government says: we haven't broken any promises. Well, let me just remind them of a few. On February 17 this government promised -- promised, Mr. Speaker -- an enhanced crop insurance program for Alberta farmers, a promise that was not repeated. It was not repeated in the June 1 Speech from the Throne, and for good reason. Their federal cousins who also made promises have reneged on theirs. The federal government now has reduced its commitment to crop insurance by \$100 million a year, \$25 million dollars of which will be taken from Alberta. I say to you that there is no provision in this budget to make up those lost moneys, so we can safely say that this promise has gone right out the window like so many other Conservative promises.

Mr. Speaker, the government also promised on February 17 an \$80 million matching funds endowment for advanced education in this fiscal year. Well, lo and behold, that \$80 million has now become a commitment worth only \$8 million. Only \$8 million this year. Is that breaking your promise? I guess you can judge for yourself.

The December financial update delivered by the Provincial Treasurer is another broken promise, a promise that \$270 million in federal stabilization payments would be applied to the 1988-89 budget. Do you remember that? Well, we find now that this is only \$75 million. Surprise, surprise. Is that a broken promise? It was put out in the financial statement in December. Can you judge? He goes on to say that Alberta is expecting the remaining \$195 million in the 1989-90 fiscal year. But I would remind this government and this Provincial Treasurer that this

payment appears nowhere in the federal budget. Remember, they just had a budget. You'd think if that was an expense they'd agreed to, the \$195 million, it would be in their budget. Nothing in there, Mr. Speaker. So where is he going to get it? Out of thin air? The point I make is that these are just a few examples of this government's broken promises and dishonesty.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

In the environment, Mr. Speaker, the budget also reflects this government's broken promises on protecting the environment. While the budget for environmental impact assessment review has increased by 27 percent to \$460,000, there's absolutely no commitment to help ordinary Albertans effectively make their own case in defence of their health and their own environment. There's lots there for the companies, lots there for the government to get the technical help; nothing for average people that are concerned about the environment. This government obviously doesn't care that it's important that people be given the tools they need to participate fully in decisions that have a profound impact on their lives. Mr. Speaker, I would remind this government that that is the essence of a democratic society.

Now, during the election we tried to lay out, we think in a very responsible way, an alternative to the way this government was going. We knew we couldn't follow the Conservative example and make wild promises as we went around the province, that we knew would have to be broken and the government knew would have to be broken. Instead we presented well-reasoned priorities that addressed the real needs of Albertans. Our agenda included detailed plans and how we could pay for our commitments without increasing the budget deficit. And we were the only party that even attempted to do that.

These commitments, just to bring them back to members' attention, included a 3, 6, 9 farm interest rate program to help farmers survive the serious farm debt crisis. We included a plan to restore educational funding that has been ravaged by inflation and government cuts, while eliminating user fees and taking responsibility for 85 percent for the cost of education. I'd remind this government that if education is pushed onto the local taxpayers, it's still the same taxpayers. We're not saving anything. We also talked about establishing high-quality child care worker training standards and providing the means for worker skill upgrading. We put in a program to remove gender-based wage discrimination in the public service and Crown corporations through a comprehensive and affordable pay equity initiative. We also talked about the establishment of a primary health care trust fund to examine affordable health care delivery options, ensuring that Alberta will meet the health care challenges of the future. And we said how we would pay for them. We meant what we said then, Mr. Speaker, and we would have brought this here, not the broken promises we've got from this government through two elections.

Above all in this last provincial election, Mr. Speaker, we talked about tax fairness. Taken together, the figures from the Provincial Treasurer from the past three budget years show that personal income taxes accounted for 95.5 percent of total government income tax revenue, with corporate income taxes adding up to a tiny 4.5 percent. When this government came to power there was at least some semblance of fairness. There was roughly 60 percent that came from individuals and 40 percent from the corporations. But we've gone steadily the other way. These figures are the net of the tax credits available to individ-

ual and corporate tax filers. This is the only fair way to look at this, and this is a statement not just coming from the Leader of the Opposition but a statement made many times -- many times -- by the Provincial Auditor.

The budget read to us last night makes no progress, no progress at all, Mr. Speaker, in righting this wrong. This imbalance, frankly, remains scandalous, and I can tell you that average taxpayers are upset about it. We showed during the provincial election campaign that fair taxes would not only fund our campaign commitments but would allow the government to extend a child tax credit of \$525 per child to families with average income. We talk about families. That's action, Mr. Speaker; that would have given them a few extra dollars to deal with toughening economic times. That's something that could have been done if there was any political will towards the family.

Fair taxation includes large, profitable corporations paying their share, not taxing them out of business but getting into focus with what's happening in other parts of Canada and the world. Even in the United States -- Ronald Reagan, the darling of the Conservatives -- all corporations have to pay a minimum tax, Mr. Speaker. And that's a point we made during the election campaign. It also includes a direction of the Alberta royalty tax credit, and focusing that to those companies which have a genuine need for it, the smaller independent Canadian companies. This measure alone would save the people of Alberta about \$220 million a year, and that isn't chicken feed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's look at the deficit and the debt. I've said this many times, but it bears repeating: why do we have it? Well, we have it because of this Conservative ideology of this government. You know, I've sat in this Legislature, and I'm always amazed that if you say certain words, how excited these people get. "Privatization": they shake with excitement. The only thing that gets them more excited is when they say "deregulation." Well, we talked about it, and I say to you that what happened in the price of oil and gas was the absolute and total triumph of ideology over common sense, Mr. Speaker.

I can remember sitting in here, and all the Conservatives and their friends in big oil: Oh, we've got to have deregulation; deregulation of oil will solve all our problems; we'll be prosperous beyond all our wildest dreams. And I remember that all of a sudden they went and got it; they got deregulation. But even if you're a fervent Conservative that believes in deregulation, surely you use a modicum of common sense. That's why I wasn't, as you may recall, one that supported the Western Accord; we'd checked with economists, and almost every one of them said it looked like the price of oil was going down. Now, for the life of me -- in 1980-81, when over 51 percent of our budget came from oil and gas, why we would want to go into deregulation when the price was going down evaded me. Shrewd business types, Mr. Speaker, shrewd. And we've paid the price all the way through since then.

That's why, during the '86 election, whenever I'm asked -- you know, they talk about the national energy program. Nothing could have been worse than what happened after deregulation. Not that the national energy program was a bad one, but this has decimated us even worse. The point that I make . . . [interjection] Well, if the hon. member looks, 51 percent of our budgets -- take a look at our provincial revenues since 1981 and you'll see. Just do that as your own little lesson, hon. member, the new one. Take a look at it and see how much money we've lost. So deregulation has been an unqualified disaster for our

provincial revenues.

Mr. Speaker, they used to talk a lot about diversification when they had the money rolling in. They didn't do it. But more important, panic time: how do we get the economy rolling once the revenues stop flowing and all the rest of it? Well, I guess we shovel out money to the corporations; they're our friends, and they'll do all these sorts of things for us. In that period from 1981 up to 1987, over \$12 billion was given away. Wouldn't it be nice to have some of that back now? Did you see all the job creation that flowed from that? I certainly didn't. So when this government starts to orchestrate and blame everybody else for living high on the hog, let's remember, hon. members, where this deficit and this debt came from. The blame rests with this government, Mr. Speaker, right here in this Legislature. That's the reality of it. Now, because of that, there is no doubt that we now have serious problems. It looks like they're going to get worse with this budget we've just talked about.

Mr. Speaker, they talk about a fiscal plan. A fiscal plan. What a joke that is: a floundering government with its fiscal plan. Well, I call the fiscal plan the rose-coloured glasses phenomenon: see no evil, hear no evil, everything's rosy. The other thing I would call it is our OPEC strategy. We get down on our knees every day and pray that somehow the sheikhs in the Middle East are going to pull us out of the doldrums. Be honest. That's their fiscal strategy in this province with this government. That's the reality of it; there's no mistake about that. I say to you, as brought up earlier in question period, does anybody really believe anymore the Treasurer's predictions on revenue? You know, in '86-87 he said we'd have \$3.4 billion or \$4 billion. I could go on, but he was 48 percent out that time. In '87-88, as my colleague pointed out, we did a little better on the other side: 45 percent. We're only 127 percent out now. I say to the Treasurer, with his projections he's made since he's been Treasurer, I hope and I pray he doesn't go into the psychic business, because we are going to be in a great deal of difficulty, at least those people who believe in psychics.

Mr. Speaker, his predictions have been wildly, wildly inaccurate. And he's saying now -- I'm interested the Minister of Energy is here, because wasn't it just a couple of weeks ago I read that the Minister of Energy went down to New York to talk to the pooh-bahs there and get an idea of where things were going? He came back and said whoa, it doesn't look too good in the next year; prices could go down; that's what all the people in New York are saying. Now all of a sudden in the budget they're changing their tune. They're wildly optimistic. As pointed out many times -- and we did during the election -- the Conference Board of Canada and most other indicators aren't nearly as rosy as this government.

We're encouraged too, Mr. Speaker, that the unemployment rate is down, because it's human faces on that unemployment rate. But if they want to base it on that, if they want to base all this recovery on those budget figures this month, they are going to live and die by those figures as it goes up in the future, because that's what most people are predicting. It's going to happen right across Canada, and they'll remember the stands they were pounding, I assure you of that.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that there is a problem with the deregulated market they asked for, trying to predict what's going to happen with the price of oil. It's very difficult. In that I give some sympathy to the Treasurer. But I think he always tries to put on his rose-coloured glasses and make the best out of it to get through this budget. He was wildly wrong last time,

Mr. Speaker, and it wouldn't surprise me if he's wildly wrong again. But even if he's right, our deficit is still going to be extremely high. It's like a crapshoot, though. If he's wrong, it's even going to be worse. So even in the best of situations, even if he's dead on, we have serious economic problems. And that's why I do not trust this Conservative government. I've watched them. I've sat here and watched them. Just as in '86 they had a hidden agenda, and got around to it in '87, I say when I look at a close to \$10 billion consolidated debt, does the average Albertan really believe that these people are not going to be back at you with severe cuts in people services and tax hikes at ordinary people? I think Albertans know this full well.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to watch Magic Johnston balance the books, lower taxes, and enhance people services over the next two or three years. It's going to be an amazing thing to watch. We're going to watch for that hidden agenda that started in this budget and this throne speech. We're going to be vigilant, because no longer can this government believe that Albertans are just going to follow them like a bunch of sheep into the next election. They're watching them very closely this time.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we in the Official Opposition look forward to this debate about this budget which has started on the road to broken promises and, I suggest, will continue in the future. Not even Magic Johnston, with all the gobbledygook in the world, is going to be able to pull them out of this one.

I thank you for your time here in the Legislature today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Advanced Education, followed by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. GOGO: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity of speaking to Motion 4:

Be it resolved that the . . . Assembly approve in [principle] the fiscal policies of the government.

Mr. Speaker, to have the opportunity of speaking in the budget debate is, I think, always an honour. It becomes more of an honour when one gets to follow the Leader of the Official Opposition and has the opportunity of taking issue with various comments -- and I guess that's what debate is about, Mr. Speaker -- by other members of the House, particularly the Leader of the Opposition who, I think, had perhaps the ideal speech. I don't know who prepared it. But his timing, with respect, was all wrong. Here we have a classic example.

I would begin by saying the one thing I agree with the hon. opposition leader on is the way he's rated the Alberta Provincial Treasurer. He's given him two A-pluses and a B-plus. I would concur, Mr. Speaker, with the Leader of the Opposition, because that's how I rate our Provincial Treasurer -- two A-pluses plus a B-plus. And I'm sure all members of the House would agree with that.

MR. FOX: No, it's three A-pluses, John.

MR. GOGO: I believe, Mr. Speaker, there's been an amendment by the Member for Vegreville to make it three A-pluses.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are many members who are not prepared ever to accept the verdict of the people of Alberta, and surely March 20 decided in a very substantive and substantial way what the people of Alberta thought about the various political parties running. The Leader of the Official Opposition has made a variety of comments, and I would like, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, to respond to some of them.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

First of all, I heard so often such terms as "the working Albertan," whatever the working Albertan is, as though it's somehow exclusively within the domain of the Alberta New Democratic Party. Today we hear now about "the average Albertan." Now, I again, Mr. Speaker, have some difficulty with that word "average," the average Albertan, as though it's the exclusive domain of one of the political parties of the House. The word "average" can be very dangerous, as was evidenced a few years ago in my own constituency. We have the famous -- or infamous, depending on your political affiliation -- Oldman River. It has, most of the time, an average depth of 18 inches. Now, most people would understand averages are made up of a variety of highs and lows. But this one particular individual of no known political persuasion -- at least I'm not going to quote it -- accepted the average and walked across the Oldman River, which had an average depth of 18 inches. His body was found a week later. He fell in an eight-foot hole because he was sold on this matter of averages. And today we've heard from the Leader of the Opposition: the average Albertan. Well, I have some difficulty in understanding what is meant by that term "average."

Now, much has been said -- and I would concur with the Leader of the Official Opposition. I mean, elections come and elections go and promises are made. I don't question that. In the maritimes, Mr. Speaker, when the stakes go up along the highway, you know an election's coming. When the stakes are taken down, you know the election's over. Now, we're not that way in Alberta at all. I think we say on the hustings when we're seeking the mandate of the people: "Here is our offer. This is what, if we're elected, we're prepared to do." And I challenge . . .

MR. McEACHERN: No tax increases.

MR. GOGO: . . . I challenge the Member for Kingsway, and others, Mr. Speaker, to point out -- and I want to come to his comment in particular, and I hope *Hansard* shows that he has recently shouted with a cupped hand "taxes"; I want to refer to that in just a moment -- what the government has responded in the Provincial Treasurer's budget last night. I learned a long time ago . . . I've been around this Assembly -- in some people's opinion too long; but it's 14 years. I recognized in a very significant way what happens when you get your . . . in the wringer; you know, when you get your head out, and you're hanging on that limb. And here we have a classic example of the Leader of the Opposition, who has yet to learn that he who lives by the crystal ball has to learn to eat ground glass, because he has campaigned and maintained that certain things would happen in the province, and they haven't happened. Now, today, whoever prepared that speech, they've got the right speech for the wrong province, and certainly at the wrong time.

He talks about the hidden agenda. Well, with 14 years in the House not being in cabinet, I always wondered about a hidden agenda. I thought, "Here I am in cabinet; I'm going to find a hidden agenda." Mr. Speaker, there is no hidden agenda. I mean, I can't find a hidden agenda, and these inferences are continually made that the government -- so-called big, bad government -- has a hidden agenda. I don't know what they're referring to, but I want to comment on some very specific allegations made.



For example, the Leader of the Official Opposition said the throne speech, February 17, talked about, and I quote, "enhanced crop insurance." He turns right around and in the next breath says the government has failed to deliver or to maintain, the inference being that they're doing away with it. The hon. member knows full well, certainly on the advice of the Member for Vegreville, who's an expert as the opposition critic of agriculture, that the agreement on the crop insurance is in place for five years, cannot be changed by any party unless it's agreed to by all parties -- that's in place -- 50 percent paid by the federal government, 50 percent by the farmers in former premiums, and the administrative costs picked up by the province of Alberta. It cannot be changed, and yet the hon. leader said this morning, and I'll check the Blues, that the government has failed to deliver on doing something. That's already in place. I would question the advice the hon. leader is getting.

Mr. Speaker, reference was made to the environment. As the first province in Canada to have a Department of the Environment, as, I believe, a province that has maintained over so many years the cleanest air and cleanest water in the country, reference was made a few minutes ago that this budget did not refer to or spend money on the Department of the Environment. And very clearly in there -- maybe a 9 percent increase is not enough for some people. Nine percent is a pretty meaningful increase when inflation is running at 3.5 percent. That's in last night's budget: a 9 percent increase in terms of environmental protection. Reference was made that you didn't help the farmers; "you," I assume, being this government. Yet very clearly in the budget speech there is \$600 million committed directly to the farmers of this province.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there is much said about families and no reference to families. Well, in last night's budget speech -- I don't know what the hon. leader's definition of family is, but here we have health care expenditures. I know of nothing closer to family than health care. There will be more than \$3.5 billion, or \$4,100 per household, in Alberta. Now, if that's not commitment, Mr. Speaker, to healthy families, I don't know what is. Secondly, there's a 44 percent increase in home care. A 44 percent increase in anything is significant but particularly with regard to home care and our seniors. A new home improvement program for senior citizens and now a total commitment to about 200,000 Albertans who are senior citizens of over a billion dollars: I don't know of another province in Canada that does that. A 24 percent -- that's one-quarter -- increase in funding for women's shelters. And for those dedicated Albertans who take on other people's responsibilities as foster parents, there's a 10 percent increase. Finally -- and this zeros directly in on the Member for Edmonton-Norwood, who was very critical of the day care system in Alberta -- an increase of more than 20 percent in the day care subsidy rate for low-income parents.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if that's not an indication of a government that cares, I don't know what is. To have the opposition this morning, in response to the Provincial Treasurer's budget speech last night, be critical, I don't know what else could be done. Assuming he's talking about increased funding, what else could be done? No, Mr. Speaker, I have some great difficulty with the hon. Leader of the Opposition's comments by way of criticism. I don't argue that in other places and other times his remarks may be appropriate, but he sure miscued this morning by bringing them before this House by way of criticism.

Let me summarize, Mr. Speaker, because I know there are many who would like to get into this debate, some of the com-

ments related to last evening's budget. Reference was made to a government that was not balancing its budget. I think the Treasurer was fair to us and said that our intent was to have a fiscal plan in place in such a way that we would balance the budget by a given time. Now, government had to make a decision. Are services to Albertans more important than a balanced budget or not? The judgment of the government was that delivery of services was more important. So now the Treasurer is suggesting it will be another year before there is a balanced budget. Is that so bad? I think that's honesty, Mr. Speaker. We should be proud of the Treasurer, who is prepared to say to the people of Alberta, "It's going to take us a little longer, but our commitment is still there; we will balance this budget."

On page 12 of the address, Mr. Speaker, a very significant item, because again, the Leader of the Opposition referred to it, and that was interest that we pay out. I draw hon. members' attention to the fact that, sure, we've had to borrow. How are we going to operate without having the resources? The only alternative is increased taxes. Yet as one can see by the chart on that page, we have a government of Canada which is paying some 35 percent of its revenue in the form of interest on debt, other provinces at 12 percent, and Alberta at 8. In other words, other provinces are 50 percent higher. Now, nobody likes to pay interest for anything; we all like to receive it. But surely in terms of carrying out governmental responsibilities and having programs in place, if you run short of money, obviously you must borrow it. So it's interesting to note that the amount paid out by Alberta compared to other jurisdictions is substantially lower than other parts of the country.

Reference was made -- I heard, I believe, from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway -- about no increase in taxes or an increase in taxes. I rose myself today on that very point. An hon. member was accusing the Premier and others of lying to the House about increase in taxes, and let's reiterate very clearly a couple of points. Alberta has always had and perhaps always will continue to have the lowest personal income tax in the country. I think that's an honour we can all be proud of, Mr. Speaker. Now, in this year's budget there was no increase in income taxes. The hon. members across the way want to relate a tobacco tax. Why don't they talk about booze? Why don't they talk about alcohol? It's indexed now by Ottawa. Because it goes up, are we guilty of raising the taxes? To attempt to use the argument -- like, if Edmonton Transit must raise their fares, is that an increase in taxes? The government of Alberta has raised fees and licences. What's so unusual about that? Surely that's a necessary cost to doing business, and you don't equate that to raising income taxes.

Health care premiums have gone up, but we continue to call it the Alberta health care insurance plan, the operative word being "insurance." As long as we deem to have an insurance plan, is it unrealistic to have a premium? I recognize that we are only one of three provinces that have premiums. The point is that we have a premium, and there's been a increase in the premium of about 10 percent. Now, for an hon. member to equate that to an increase in taxes is really stretching it, Mr. Speaker. I think, finally, the proof of the pudding is obviously in the eating when the statement is made -- and it's true that an Alberta family pays about \$1,350 less in provincial tax than a comparable family in Ontario. That's got to be meaningful. I'm surprised there's not a huge lineup waiting to get into Alberta just because of the low personal income taxes.

So in summary, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say, as the MLA for

Lethbridge-West, how proud I am of my colleague the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, Dick Johnston, our Provincial Treasurer, who had a very difficult time in these very unpredictable times in terms of nonrenewable resource revenue, who had not only the courage, not only the tenacity, but the honesty to put together a very meaningful budget that's going to take us not only through 1989-90 but into the '90s and on toward the 21st century. We can be very proud indeed, I believe, of having a Provincial Treasurer who is up-front, who is honest, and in very responsible terms puts a working plan in terms of economic and fiscal policies for this province for the years ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the first observations I'd like to make have already been referred to by members of the opposition. I think they're worthy of being highlighted, underscored: the issue of the jiggery-pokery involved in the way numbers are used in one financial statement and then changed in the next financial statement. I think it's pretty clear from the financial plan in the last Budget Address the Provincial Treasurer spoke to and spoke from, when he talked about a combined deficit of \$835 million, which was adjusted by \$500 million and ended up being adjusted again. He included in that financial plan on page 23 of his 1988 address heritage fund capital projects of \$164 million. Very conveniently those figures in the debt column for heritage fund capital projects are not included. You can only come to one conclusion, and the conclusion is that the Provincial Treasurer has done everything in his power, along with the government, to minimize what we all know is a debt that's totally out of control. But that's jiggery-pokery; that's not the proper accounting way to do things. You know, if there was another year that passed, perhaps some of us wouldn't have noticed this. But this is so clear, so blatant that it has to be underscored.

When you add this to the fact that our own Auditor General -- and I talked about this before -- and the Institute of Chartered Accountants, by way of memo from a special committee of theirs, says that we should be including unfunded liabilities insofar as they relate to pensions in our statement of assets and liabilities, we are in very big trouble. It doesn't matter how rosy a picture the Provincial Treasurer attempts to paint; the fact is that we are in trouble. The deficit is out of control. The plan isn't there to show the kind of way we're going to wrestle down this deficit.

The other observation from the 1988 address is that the Provincial Treasurer at least attempted with some words and figures to show that there was a plan for deficit control. In the 1989 address, Mr. Speaker, there is almost no reference to any kind of a plan for deficit control. It breaks down, comes down to a trust-me scenario: trust me; everything's going to be okay; we're going to get lots of moneys from energy revenues, and we're going to be able to come through this problem all right. Well, the government's track record is not good in that regard.

So the first point, Mr. Speaker, is that the financial statements themselves are suspect. No businessperson would promote these kinds of financial statements in this way.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

The second point I wish to make is with respect to the claims that the economy is strong and vibrant. Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer has been looking through rose-tinted

glasses, and he hasn't seen the things that are happening around him. He hasn't heard that just a few days ago the Conference Board of Canada said that the projected growth rate for Alberta would be 2 to 2.5 percent. He says that it's going to be 3 to 3.5 percent. When you're talking about 1 percent in the scheme of that kind of magnitude, that's enormous. He doesn't even attempt to reconcile those figures. He doesn't even attempt to say, "Well, the figures of the Conference Board looked at this and this and this, and they should have looked at this and this and this." There is no attempt to do that reconciliation. The effect is that everybody that's looking in terms of money, capital moneys that might otherwise be invested in Alberta are saying: "Hey, what's going on in Alberta? These guys are monkeying, fuzzifying their financial documents, and they're also trying to monkey and fuzzify and do a little jiggery-pokery on what the economic growth in the province is going to be." You can't fool people that way. That, then, is the second point.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the members opposite to challenge us, every member on this side, on this issue. I was struck by the hon. Minister of Advanced Education's comments when he talked about honesty with respect to the deficit. It's honest to say that we weren't right when we talked about the deficit. The deficit -- and now we're being honest -- is going to be a year longer in being wrestled down. Here's the challenge. Why does a Premier of this province go from point to point, from community to community during a general election and then in other communities in a by-election and say that there will be no increase in the deficit? Why does the Premier go from community to community during the course of a general election and say that we're on track with respect to bringing down the deficit, that we'll do away with that deficit by 1990 to 1991?

Mr. Speaker, it's just a few months ago that those statements were made, and I would like to suggest to members opposite that they knew and the Premier knew that those facts were incorrect. Challenge us on this. I invite the Minister of Advanced Education to talk about honesty in that context or anyone of you to talk about honesty in that context. You haven't been honest. There is no honesty. It isn't honest when a Premier, a leader of a party -- and I wrote down the expression that the hon. minister used just a few moments ago when he said, "Elections come and elections go"; you make offers during the course of an election. I've never heard that kind of admission before. I've never heard somebody saying, "Well, you know these elections are all puffery, and the statements we make during the course of those elections don't mean anything." [interjection] That's the implication, sir, of what he was attempting to do, and you know it, sir. You know it. And the thing is that when you talk about honesty . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Through the Chair, hon. members.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, when you talk about honesty, when you talk about a deficit not increasing, don't come back and try to fool Albertans by saying, "Well, we'll handle it next year, later." That's not being honest. And it's not being honest to say that there would be no increase in taxes and then to come back to this Assembly, to come back in front of all these people in an accountability session and say, "Well, I didn't really mean that; I meant income taxes." Why wasn't he explicit during the course of that election? The mandate that this party opposite got was to keep the deficit from going up. They didn't do it. Their mandate was to hold the line on taxes, that there would be no

taxes, and the Premier even said that taxes might go down. They didn't do it. They continue to fudge on those issues, and they're going to be held accountable for them.

Mr. Speaker, it used to be that when a Premier of our province said something, people listened. People accepted what the statement was. People believed that he knew what he was talking about. People accepted the fact that the statement had validity and strength and purpose, and that it wouldn't be dishonest or improper. Albertans expect that of their political leaders. They saw that, I submit, in the kind of statements that former Premiers of this province made in the Social Credit regime and the previous regimes of this party that's now in power.

Mr. Speaker, the effect of what has happened is that no Albertan can now believe in the statements that our Premier makes. When he starts talking about taxes or deficit reduction or he starts talking about economic projections, nobody can believe him. To me that's a very sad situation for Alberta. It's sad because we're looked at by others across Canada in a very different way. They look sideways at us. They look at us and say: "Well, the leadership in that province isn't very honest. We're not sure we want to deal with that kind of a province." Again, I say to every member opposite: all of you challenge us on this point of honesty with respect to taxes and deficit. And you can't come out with any other conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, members of this Assembly, than that it is dishonest in the way that the whole election process was handled with respect to taxes and deficit.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of revenues is an important one when as much revenue is relied upon from the nonrenewable resource sector as we in Alberta rely on. It's important to be comforted and feel strong about the reasons for the projections. It's important to see some kind of evidence, some sort of corroboration that comes forward that says, "Here's why we think the price of oil will be \$19 per barrel." There is no corroboration. There is no attempt to show some strength to that statement, and I submit that there is a definite, an overpowering need to find that kind of strength, that kind of comfort, when the Provincial Treasurer was so desperately, so improperly wrong in his last projection, in his last Budget Address. He was almost \$2 out on a barrel of oil, and for every dollar there's \$100 million translated into revenue in Alberta.

MR. ORMAN: Give us your projection.

MR. DECORE: All I'm asking is that you be honest, Mr. Minister. All I'm asking is that you look at the *Economist* or the *Globe and Mail* or at any statements that say that it is not likely that barrels of oil will be \$19.

MR. ORMAN: What's your number?

MR. DECORE: What's my number? It's a lot less than \$19.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order in the House. The member has the right to be directing his comments through the Chair, but I'd suggest that he does them through the Chair. I also call the Minister of Energy to order for interrupting the member.

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm hitting a raw nerve, and I'm delighted that the Minister of Energy is worried and concerned about this. I'm delighted that he's feeling the same kind of discomfort that I think all Albertans should feel on this issue

of the value, the price, of a barrel of oil. Look at the statements that come out of the *Economist*. Look at the statements that have been made recently in the press about how they say that this recent blip in the price of oil will not last, that that is dependent upon the Valdez situation and the situation with OPEC, that OPEC is now falling apart again, and the price of oil is expected to go down considerably. Look at those statements, Mr. Minister; I invite you to do it. Do a little reading on the side, sir.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you have a Provincial Treasurer and a provincial government and when that provincial minister of finance looks to his colleague the Minister of Energy for some information on the value of a barrel of oil, let's feel some strength, let's see some evidence, let's see some corroboration. There is none. And I say, sir, that we're in store for difficulty down the road in the same way that we now see difficulty, and that difficulty came about as a result of the statements made in 1988. We don't need that kind of flattery. We don't need that puffery that is attempting to fool businesspeople and Albertans when it's not the case and particularly when the track record doesn't show it to be the case.

Mr. Speaker, the danger here is that what's going to come because the government is out of control with respect to its plan to wrestle down the deficit is an immense tax increase or immense cutbacks in programs or, I would like to suggest, some attempt to ride on the back of this VAT, the value-added tax that the federal government is going to improperly and unreasonably impose on Albertans, that the government is attempting and will do something to try to piggyback on that.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that economists are very much concerned about at this time is the possibility of a recession. Economists say that we've been riding a high in the world for seven years, that in terms of the way they view things, the consumer confidence that exists in Canada and the United States at this time, all of the signs point to the possibility of a recession. Albertans, when they trade, trade 75 or 80 percent of their exports with the United States. If they're in the glue, we're in the glue. If they have difficulty, we have difficulty. When we start talking, Mr. Speaker, about diversification, when we start talking about sending our manufactured goods to other places in the world, it seems to me that we should be doing everything in our power to set that up, to properly establish the export opportunities. I think that means that you look at things like research. You see how it is in the area of agriculture, where we're surpassed by not very many, if any at all. I think we're the best in the world. You look to see in that area of agricultural research if there's something we can do to hurry it up, to get it out into the international arena to allow our farmers, to allow Albertans, to benefit from it. But we see from this budget, Mr. Speaker, that there's a 35 percent cutback in agricultural research. It doesn't seem to me that that's a plan that will protect us if we find ourselves in difficulty, as these economists suggest.

With respect to the dealings that we're going to have with a country in recession, if that recession comes -- and as I said, there seems to be evidence that it will -- we should be doing things to make sure that there's a plan for retraining and employment development. There will be some adjustments because of free trade, employment adjustments, but we see from this budget, Mr. Speaker, that there is a 10 percent cutback in career development and employment. That doesn't seem to me to be a very good plan either. So in areas of international export activity we are also having a cutback in this budget. How, then,

are we going to protect ourselves? How, then, do we plan to make sure that Albertans are shielded from this kind of difficulty? There is no plan.

Mr. Speaker, to me the most unfortunate part of this whole debate comes back to, again, me underscoring the point that whenever the Premier of our province stands up in this Assembly or whenever he appears before a room full of oil executives or people who may be affected by food banks that need some extra consideration and he makes a statement to those people or any people, people aren't going to believe in what he says. I consider this to be a great tragedy, because I think that this now has taken us from the kind of custom and expectation that Albertans have always had of their Premiers. He's broken faith. He's betrayed commitments. If you betray a commitment now, Mr. Speaker, you'll betray a commitment later on. I expect it. All Albertans can expect it.

Thank you.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, I welcome a chance to speak on this budget.

Can you smell it in here? I smell a little bit of mendacity in here today. I smell a lot of mendacity. I've heard talk here, real agendas, hidden agendas, broken promises, misleading Albertans. And, you know, I've read this budget document again and again, and it's a good budget. It's what was promised to Albertans. So now we're going to do some nit-picking and fine-tuning on what exactly are taxes? The Premier said there would be no taxes. No taxes ever again in our lifetime or no adjusting of fees for service or what?

Well, when you run in a municipal election, what taxes do you talk about? It's pretty simple: business tax and property tax. That's what you talk about in a municipal election, in a city, a town, county, wherever. And what taxes are you talking about in a provincial government? You are talking about a sales tax, which we don't have. There's none in here, and we've never wanted one. Or are you talking about income tax or corporate and business tax? There is none in here. How many times do we have to tell them? It's not in here. I think you've got to go to Murphy's Law number 6: anytime you make something so simple that no one can misunderstand it, someone will.

We've heard this old NDP promise, this old threat, this old talk again and again: the way we solve all our woes is we tax the corporations, and then everybody would be happy. We'd all live in paradise; we'd all have lots and lots of money, and the average guy wouldn't pay any taxes. That does sound wonderful, and I thought: well, why don't we do it? Then I stopped and did the fatal thing. I stopped to think. I thought: where have they done it and it worked? Well, Saskatchewan had that NDP government for all those years, and they were going to tax the corporations. I remember year after year after year they never had any jobs. They had no corporations. Where did they go again and again? The young people left the province and came to Alberta. At one point they were thinking of putting a sign on the Saskatchewan border: would the last one leaving here please turn out the lights. Really. Calgary was flooded with these people from Saskatchewan. I remember that one winter you couldn't buy a job in that province. They had to come to Alberta. But they were doing a good thing. They were taxing those corporations, except they didn't have very many to tax. They had no jobs, and their young people had to leave the province, leave their homes, could not live in the city where they were born and raised and had their relatives and their roots.

They had to leave.

If you really get down to it, if you take the most extreme in the world, a good NDP government in Saskatchewan in years gone by, where you had vast amounts of land, vast amounts of natural resources, everything going for them, they had no jobs. If you take Hong Kong, this strange little place on the edge of China, smaller than the city of Calgary, no land, no natural resources there, this crazy little place called Hong Kong doesn't have any corporation taxes, very low income taxes. They pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, and they're one of the largest producers and production areas in the entire world. And you think that maybe this idea of taxing the old corporations, socking it to them, squeezing the old lemon to get the last drop of juice, ain't that good an idea after all.

Of course, if you get right down to it, let's start comparing right here in good old, dear old Canada. What do we have here? As far as tax, in Alberta we pay \$900 less per family than Saskatchewan. Now, that's the neighbour on that side of Alberta. Maybe that's just a coincidence. Let's check another province. On the other side we've got B.C.: \$1,100 less tax per family than B.C. Well, goodness, maybe this is just western Canada. Let's take the mighty giant back east, Ontario. We pay \$1,350 less per family than Ontario. Heavens to Murgatroyd. Maybe we're doing something right.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the last session; oh, that was a horrible session. We had the Leader of the Opposition getting up again and again, him and all of those hon. members, questioning the Hon. Rick Orman to the point of inferring that he was a liar, because he kept going: "Where are all these new jobs you're creating? Where are all these job-creation programs? Where are those jobs?" And holy smokes, they're here: 1.186 million people employed in this province, the highest ratio per thousand people in the Dominion of Canada, 40,000 new jobs. We're down to 6.7 percent unemployment. Maybe that was the hidden agenda the Premier pulled on the unsuspecting people of Alberta, where unemployment is down. What a mean hidden agenda. Good gracious.

We had the hon. leader of the Liberals get up and start talking about confidence in Alberta. Let's talk about confidence. I won't go into the sorry mess that the city of Edmonton's got behind them. There is no plan for them in the foreseeable future, in their lifetime, of ever getting out of the debts they've got. And I don't know what they're going to do for the rest of us when they finally bring on that misbegotten Genesee: phase 1 of the plant, \$600 million. Every electrical user in the province of Alberta is going to have to pay. My constituents are going to have to pay for somebody's mistakes out at Genesee, going against all logic, all sense.

But, anyway, let's talk about confidence in Alberta. There'll be \$10 billion investment by 1995 in this province. I would say that anybody that's putting up about \$10 billion either has got to be a dang fool or they must have some confidence in this province. As far as confidence in this province, we've got business investments that are up 50 percent over the past two years. Those folks are either very foolish or they must have some confidence. Then let's get down to those dumb manufacturers. They must be silly or they must have some confidence in us: up 80 percent.

Tourism is up 20 percent in the last two years. And this tourism thing, we throw this off so lightly. My goodness, do we not realize how valuable tourism is? In the city of Calgary it's one of our largest employers. They don't employ the ones who

are coming out of the universities. These are the people who haven't had formal training. A hotel of 600 rooms will hire almost 400 employees. That's larger than some of the largest plants that we bring into this province at a cost of billions of dollars. These are people who otherwise would have a difficult time getting a job, and here the tourism industry, the hotels and the restaurants, creates these jobs for these people to support their families.

And I tell you, we had problems. We were hitting a 40 percent vacancy rate in the city of Calgary, and it was scary, real scary. They had hundreds of millions of dollars invested in these hotels and restaurants, and there we sat because the trend had changed. Before, the tourists used to come through Calgary, spend the night, go to Banff, come back, spend the night, and go back to where they came from. Unfortunately, Banff got pretty smart, and they got their own hotels, and suddenly they were not stopping in Calgary. We suddenly realized how valuable these tourism dollars were. The hotel owners down there were hurting; they were hurting bad. This government -- and we caught a lot of flack for it; oh my gosh, the idiotic things that were said regarding the white sands and the stuff that was said about Kananaskis Country. But it's working. The vacancy rate in the hotels is suddenly going down; they're coming back. One of the places they're going is Kananaskis, thanks to this government and the wisdom they had in tourism, in putting some bucks out.

I've heard these strange conflicting ideologies, ideas, at one time castigating this government that we were fiscally irresponsible and the next time that we're not creating jobs; we don't care that these people don't have jobs. This is the Official Opposition. Then I read their document. They were against the Husky Upgrader at Lloydminster. Doug Cherry, look out. I'm sorry. He's sitting in his place, isn't he? And you think: they're against it; how can this be? Maybe I'm mistaken, but I've read their white paper. I've got it in my briefcase right here if anybody else wants to read it. They are against the government assisting, promoting, or doing anything to get the Husky Upgrader on. Yet we have billions of barrels -- billions; do you hear me? -- of heavy crude oil that the refineries in this province cannot handle. It's too heavy for them. There's an eastern refinery, and they don't want it. Our pipelines have trouble transporting it down there. So what do we do? Leave it in the ground?

One of the benefits from this old heavy crude oil, by the way, is that after you run it through and you kind of separate it and you get all the naphtha, the benzene, gasoline, a little propane, and whatever else, all these good things, out of it -- I'm not sure what all they get out of that stuff -- you get a by-product called asphalt, asphalt that you pave your roads with. You'd think that in this province with all the heavy crude oil, we sure must have a big surplus of that old asphalt. When we built the Deerfoot Trail in the city of Calgary, this province with these billions of barrels of heavy crude oil couldn't get enough asphalt to pave the road. We used a concrete base with asphalt over the top, supplemented the asphalt with concrete.

But if the Husky upgrader's there, we will have enough asphalt to pave pretty well all the roads that we'll ever think of paving. Then every time the U.S. has a big program of road widening, big highways, we can sell that asphalt and bring revenue back into this province. As far as getting into the big projects, it seems to me that in that same white paper they didn't want to go into Syncrude, the oil sands, and the petrochemical

industry. Yet they say that they want jobs. There is a little mendacity there, sir.

Anyway, let's get onto this last little bit; I think I'm going on a little too long here. We've had a good luck story, probably one of the best good luck stories in North America. The pulp and paper mills have chosen this province as a place to go. We're not the only ones who have aspen trees. You can go to Oklahoma, Louisiana. A lot of states have a lot of trees, but they've chosen to come to Alberta, maybe because they've got confidence in this province. Maybe they don't figure we're going to tax them out of existence.

With this good luck story, one of the nicest stories we've had, we're going to be getting about \$3.5 billion worth of investment here in the very near future. So what do we hear? We hear these horror stories going around about the fear of the toxins. It sounds like every plant will be pumping toxins all day long; every one will be pumping bleach into the rivers. I beg these hon. members, if they're doing this out of political necessity, don't. It's not good for the province. If you're doing it out of ignorance, please go and get the hon. Minister of the Environment to bring you up to date on how this is handled. It's handled the best in the world. They're not pumping it in; they're putting it into tanks to recycle it.

As far as stripping the land of the trees, that was the other thing that came up, was spread around this province. We have fear that the whole north will be as bare as the Sahara desert. My goodness, just go out to Hinton, go out to Edson. They've had pulp and paper mills there for the last 25 years. And guess what? The area is so treed that you've got to go and look to find the area where they're taking the trees down to make the paper and pulp out of. As they chop these down, they move over, they replant. We're putting in, I think, a 30,000 acre tree farm to have seedlings.

MR. TANNAS: A nursery.

MR. SHRAKE: Yeah, we're putting in a nursery.

By the way, these aspens grow fast. I've got some in my back yard. I don't know where they come from. I looked, and they have slowly crept over most of my backyard. Being a little lazy and not liking to cut grass, I'm going to leave them go. Maybe I can save . . . [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I think we can be proud that this budget has had no hidden agenda, no dirty surprises, except for us poor smokers. I don't know why they always pick on us smokers. I'm going to quit smoking some day, and then you will have to raise property taxes.

I just want to wrap up on this last . . . [interjection] One fool at a time, please. I think I'll just wrap up on this one point. I've heard them calling for fiscal restraint, fiscal restraint. I would like them to go through the budget, and I hope they will do this; I hope that the official leaders, after all the mendacity they hit us with, won't shirk this thing. What is it you would cut that we're being so fiscally irresponsible? Are you going to cut that 5 percent increase to education, our priority? Are you going to be cutting out money to the women's shelters, the little break we gave to the farmers on diesel, the cost of their fuels? Are you going to be cutting the home care? Are you going to be cutting the program to the seniors? Let's hear them speak up on it. I'd like to hear; I really would. Are we going to cut the assistance to the handicapped, the women's shelters, day care? I could go on, but I'm becoming redundant here. What exactly

will they cut, if they seem to be so concerned? Because we're on target. We laid out a game plan. We're ahead of the plan to reduce our deficit by 1991.

If we were a good NDP government or a good Liberal government, in days gone by -- and if I'm wrong, somebody tell me what province did it -- when they got a deficit, they did not cut it. They carried on and just borrowed money. The federal government, with the help of the NDP and the Liberals, kept borrowing, and now out of every dollar they collect in taxes, they pay 35 cents for interest. So, anyway, we have a plan. The plan is working. We're on target. If they feel that we're spending too much, please tell us what program they would cut.

I used the word "mendacity." I know Ernie Isley knows what it is: if you're ever out in the feedlot walking about, don't step in the mendacity.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure at this point whether I need to spend the time correcting the misconceptions and the wrong information placed on the record by the previous speaker or whether to spend my time putting on record the accuracy and changing the information that was tabled by the Provincial Treasurer last night. Let me just simply say to the hon. member that if he wants to know what fiscal responsibility is all about, perhaps he'd like to look at the record of a government in Saskatchewan that tabled 11 straight years of a budget without a deficit. In fact, when they left office in 1982, they left the people of Saskatchewan with a budget surplus and debt free. Maybe he would like to consider that a fiscally responsible government. He should maybe go look at what was happening in Saskatchewan under an NDP government. He failed to mention, Mr. Speaker, the budget surpluses in British Columbia under the New Democratic government there. Perhaps he would consider that being fiscally responsible. You want to know where the budget deficits occur in this country. Certainly in British Columbia they should go see what's happened under the Social Credit government. They should go to Saskatchewan and see what the Conservative government has done in that province since 1982.

Anyway, we're here in Alberta, and we're debating the Alberta budget. We've been reassured so frequently by this government that they're on track and they're on target. I'd like to know where this target is going. It's a moving target, it seems, every time we turn around. Certainly last night convinced me, without any cause for misunderstanding any longer, why it was that the previous Legislature was dissolved without a budget being tabled. The last budget information we had from the Provincial Treasurer was provided in a forecast back on December 6, 1988, and it was based on that estimate that this government went into the provincial election and assured everyone in the province that we were on track, we were on budget, we were on target. I remember taping a little debate on cable TV with the hon. Minister of Education, and I asked him, "Are you going to keep your commitments that have been made in these ads in the newspaper?" He said: "Look; there's no need to worry. We're on track; we're on target."

Well, just to take a look at comparing what we heard last night with what we heard on December 6 from the Provincial Treasurer, he was out by half a billion dollars between December 6 and last night, June 8. I can't believe that in six months, just based on the end of the budget year, between December and March 31, 1989, someone could be so far out. It makes you wonder how much of the other information being provided to us

is equally as accurate. If it's equally as accurate as that, I wouldn't put any reliance whatsoever on anything that's been provided to us.

As I pointed out in question period earlier this morning, Mr. Speaker, the government has gone to some pains here to paint as rosy a picture as they can, to the point of changing the reporting methods to the Legislature as to how they calculate the budgetary deficit. A year ago, in 1988, they included revenue from the trust fund. Revenue income was included, and they also included as part of that, naturally, the spending under the trust fund capital projects in order to come up with a combined deficit. It was a practice that they'd followed in this Legislature for some time. After all, what other provincial government has a heritage trust fund. We're so happy and pleased to be able to talk about what a benefit it is to the province that it's only natural and fair that you should at the same time, when you're spending money under that fund, account for it as well.

What happened last night? We still have the heritage fund investment income recorded, but what about the spending and the capital projects under that fund? All of a sudden they've disappeared. And what is the effect? The effect is that the budget deficit is less than it would otherwise be. Simply by taking it out, we're not going to count any more the spending on capital projects. We have to borrow for it, or we have to forgo income from the trust fund in order to pay for it. Nevertheless, we're not going to count that any more; we're going to close our eyes to that little figure in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, if we simply went back to the practice that this government followed a year ago and just corrected the books so that there's no fudging of these figures, what would we find? We would find that the deficit for the fiscal year ended just this past March was \$1.9 billion and not \$1.7 billion, which the Provincial Treasurer reported to us last night. If we include the \$141 million estimated for the expenditure of capital projects in this fiscal year, the budgetary deficit rises to over \$1.6 billion. It's not as rosy a picture as the Provincial Treasurer wanted us to see last night. It's only another small factor, but by the time you include this change for the last two fiscal years, the change is over \$300 million, which is, in my view, no small sum whatsoever.

It's also interesting to note -- perhaps it doesn't mean a lot to the members here -- the fact that last year in comparing where Alberta sat in relation to all the other provinces, including the cost of health care premiums, the Provincial Treasurer referred to the full-year cost of those premiums. It doesn't look so good, so last night he changed it to a monthly figure instead. It's all part of an attempt to put as rosy a complexion on this budget as possible. But it is far from rosy. In fact, it's quite red: red ink all over the figures presented to us.

The estimates for the present fiscal year include a number of tilings which I think the Provincial Treasurer may regret including or certainly if he didn't include them would probably be a much more realistic figure. For example, in his budget update on December 6, 1988, we were going to get \$272 million from the federal government under stabilization payments. In fact, it was money in the bank. It was so good that we were going to get that money that he included it in reporting the deficit at that point in time, December 1988.

But we get to the figures that were reported to us last night, and \$272 million has all of a sudden disappeared. Instead, \$75 million was all that we received from the federal government. Not to be disappointed by that particular turn of events, the

Provincial Treasurer has included \$195 million as part of his estimates for the present year's budget. Now, I don't know where he gets that figure, but to the best of my information there was nothing, absolutely nothing, in this federal budget that would indicate that Alberta could expect to get \$195 million under stabilization payments. If he's lucky and he succeeds in getting a portion of that, that's fine and so much the better, but I think he's being highly optimistic in predicting \$195 million.

Given, Mr. Speaker, the fact that I understand the hon. Government House Leader would like to introduce a motion and given the hour, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous leave of the Assembly to deal with a motion, copies of which have been circulated to government and opposition House leaders and agreed to, I believe, for presentation at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent of the House to

revert to government business?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Government House Leader.

Moved by Mr. Horsman:

Be it resolved that the report of the special committees appointed June 1, 1989, pursuant to Standing Order 49 be now received and concurred in and that the committees recommended therein be hereby appointed.

[Motion carried]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, by way of advice to the Assembly for next week, on Monday it is proposed to continue the debate on the budget in the afternoon and in the evening to move into Committee of Supply for consideration of the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education. For advice of the members of the Assembly, in dealing with estimates, we will proceed roughly in alphabetical order. Of course, the opposition can designate departments for Wednesday afternoons.

[At 12:57 p.m. the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

