

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Title: **Monday, June 12, 1989 2:30 p.m.**
Date: 89/06/12

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks as legislators for the rich diversity of our history.

We welcome the many challenges of the present.

We dedicate ourselves to both the present and the future as we join in the service of Alberta and Canada.

Amen.

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you today and through you to members of the Assembly a visitor from the House of Commons in Ottawa. She is seated in your gallery. Our visitor is Audrey McLaughlin, Member of Parliament for the riding of Yukon Territory. Mr. Speaker, she is chair of the New Democrat caucus in Ottawa. It's been a pleasure to visit with her today, and we ask her to come back again several times.

head: PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplemental report to the special committee report presented on Friday, June 9. This supplement will include the Standing Committee on Public Affairs, with Mr. Clegg as chairman and Ms Calahasen as deputy chairman. All members of the Assembly serve on this committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous leave of the Assembly to deal with a motion relating to the report just presented to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: I would therefore move, Mr. Speaker:
Be it resolved that the supplemental report to the special committee report presented and concurred in on Friday, June 9, 1989, be now received and concurred in and that the committee recommended therein be hereby appointed.

[Motion carried]

Bill 7
Farm Credit Stability Fund Amendment Act, 1989

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 7, Farm Credit Stability Fund Amendment Act, 1989. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of the Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, all members are aware that in 1986 this government introduced the farm credit stability program. The intention of that program and its special fund was to provide much needed long-term financing to the farming community, reinforcing Alberta's stand that agriculture is our number one economic priority. In doing so, we extended more than \$1.7 billion to the farming community on 9 percent money.

This piece of legislation responds again to that much needed demand, extending by two years the date, to June 30, 1991, and adding \$500 million potentially more to the fund.

[Leave granted; Bill 7 read a first time]

Bill 5
Department of Health Act

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move first reading of Bill 5, the Department of Health Act. That Act creates the new Department of Health, which will emphasize the effective and co-ordinated delivery of health services for all Albertans.

[Leave granted; Bill 5 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the 1987-88 annual report for the Department of Tourism, Alberta Tourism.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 1987-88 annual report of the Department of Career Development and Employment.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a report of proceedings of the 79th annual general meeting of the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association, as required by statute.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to table the Public Service Employee Relations Board annual report for '87-88 and the 15th annual report, 1988, of the Alberta Law Foundation.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table copies of the 1987-88 annual reports for Westerra Institute of Technology, Grant MacEwan Community College, Keyano College, and the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly today the 1988 annual report of the Advisory Committee on Heavy Oil and Oil Sands Development

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the 1987-88

annual report for the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislature two school groups from Sherwood Park. They're both from the same school, the Father Kenneth Kearns school. They are situated both in the members' and public galleries. We have a group of 24 students under the leadership of teacher Mrs. Anna Eliuk and also a group of 27 students under the leadership of Mr. Bruce Plante, and they are joined by the bus driver Mrs. Dianne Pritchlow. I would ask that the students and the teachers and bus driver stand so that we can extend to them the very warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly 40 bright and enthusiastic students from Annie L. Gaetz school. They are accompanied by their principal, Mr. Ron Hitchings, and a teacher Mr. Norm McDougall, as well as three parents, Cal Maier, Deinie Vasseur, and Linda Bresee. I would ask that they stand in the members' gallery and receive the warm reception of this House.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 26 grade 10 students from social 10 and 13, two classes from Central High Sedgewick Public in Sedgewick, Alberta. They are seated in the members' and the public galleries and are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Greg Martin and their bus driver Pastor Nolan Haring. I would ask that they stand and receive the cordial welcome of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Occupational Health and Safety.

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a special day today for some 20 grade 10 students from the St. Joseph school in Whitecourt. Many of them are here for the first time, and they're accompanied by their teacher and school bus driver. They're seated in both galleries. I'd ask them to stand and receive the welcome of the House.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Oil Production Quotas and Prices

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer. After that slight miscalculation of the '88-89 deficit by 127 percent, we are definitely concerned about this Treasurer's predictions going into the next budget year. You know, he tends to put on his rose-coloured glasses, and I would suggest he's wildly optimistic about oil prices. OPEC now has lifted its overall production quotas to 19.5 million barrels from 18.5 million. Even at that there are still OPEC nations that are cheating on this particular quota. So clearly most economists now are saying there's going to be a downward pressure on prices. My question to the Treasurer in view of these recent events, will the Treasurer be reassessing what looks like a wildly optimistic projection for the

price of oil, and will he be doing it during this session?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta, of course, at all times receives new inputs and continuously looks for new information upon which it can recommend policies and provide information to the people of Alberta. One of the key indicators that we use in the budget, of course, is the price of oil, the \$19 U.S. price. It seems to us, as I said in the House Friday, that that price is fairly reasonable given the fact that we're now essentially six months into the calendar year and the price has held fairly stable over that period.

Mr. Speaker, I think all members should know that when we do give that forecast, we are essentially providing a message to Albertans that with the best information we have, that's the forecast we're going to use. As I've indicated before, it is a composite forecast, involving not just the price of oil but also the price of gas to some extent. Albertans then have an opportunity to judge upon which basis we make our calculations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member can't have it both ways. I recall in 1986 across the way suggesting to us that we should give the price forecast. "Give us the price forecast; give us a look at what you're doing." So we did that, and I think all Albertans appreciate that we're up front and give as much information as we reasonably can give so that the people of Alberta can judge and provide a great deal of confidence in the forecast that we have. Without that, I think the opposition member would be on the other side of his two-handed policy.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we want a price projection, but we want a realistic one. That's the whole point of what we're talking about.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter, because oil traders cited in a report published this weekend agree that Kuwait's fight for a higher production quota could soften oil prices for the rest of the year. In fact, some of them are predicting \$10 a barrel. Ten dollars a barrel. Now, my question to the Treasurer is a very simple one. Is he not concerned that he's going to make as bad a projection as he did last year and be out 127 percent again?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I watched very carefully the words of the Kuwaiti Oil minister Sabah, who said very clearly that while they would not be bound by the production levels set by OPEC, he also said a very important fact, and that is that in no case would Kuwait allow the price of oil to fall out of bed because of their production. And I think that's the sense that's developing among the OPEC producing members. What the member also forgets, Mr. Speaker, is that the world demand for liquid hydrocarbons, particularly in the United States, has increased more rapidly than most forecasters had believed.

Now, we have seen in our own province the demand for our natural gas moving to an all-time record volume production in 1988, with very firm prices. The only restraint on our export into the United States market right now, Mr. Speaker -- and that's a very strong opportunity for us, as I said on Friday -- is the capacity of the pipeline itself. Now, the private sector's responding to the price mechanism, the private sector's committing new investment to ensure our natural gas gets into the marketplace, and what I can say is that OPEC now knows that they are as dependent upon the price of oil as are the rest of those oil producing countries such as Alberta, and they're determined to maintain that price.

Now, with respect to the forecast, Mr. Speaker, I have before me -- and all members can obviously go to the same sources as I do and pick up the price forecast. The high price forecast for the last period when we did the budget was Thomson McKinnon, who forecast \$19.75 for the calendar year, a higher price yet for the fiscal year ahead; Paribas, \$19.00; Smith Barney, \$18.85; Morgan Stanley, \$18.50. So we're right in the middle in terms of our price forecast, Mr. Speaker. It's a matter of public record. All experts have come . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Provincial Treasurer.
Final supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, how many times have we heard this from this minister before? The point we're making: you were out 127 percent last time. Why in God's name should we ever listen to you again in these projections? And if the price does slide, the \$10 scenario, the worst price scenario -- the question I have is: what contingency plans does this government have if it slides to those levels?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it must be the Monday morning blues for the Member for Edmonton-Norwood. I mean, we do not have the same sort of doomsday scenario that the member is talking about. We've gone on to tell you already through our budget presentation that in fact the dependency on oil and gas in this province has dropped dramatically. We have a diversification taking place in our economy, and I know the member didn't like it, but just Friday, for example, our unemployment figures came in, 6.9 percent, the lowest unemployment number ever.

MR. MARTIN: What's that got to do with it?

MR. JOHNSTON: What it has to do with it, Mr. Speaker, is this: more and more revenue in our province is coming in from traditional forms of sources. The heritage fund provides \$1.3 billion, the gas prices and volumes are up, the prices are firm, and we are now well into the year in terms of our forecast.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.
Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

Budget for Public Affairs Bureau

MR. MARTIN: Thank you. After that gobbledygook I'll move back to the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

The debt of this government at the end of this fiscal year is going to be close to \$10 billion, this from the great fiscal organizers across the way, the great Conservative government, Mr. Speaker. I notice that one thing that went up significantly was the public affairs advertising budget. Why, it just went up 85 percent. Surprise, surprise. I want to ask the Premier: how can the government possibly justify this obscene expenditure in view of the serious deficit that we have?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, one of the processes that we go through in the Legislature is to have Committee of Supply, where you call each minister responsible for certain areas. There's a minister responsible for the Public Affairs Bureau, who in estimates would go into some detail the reasons for the budget and the budget growth. I can only tell the hon. member

that the government has a responsibility to make sure it's communicating with the people, and we're going to do that in every way we possibly can.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that they like spending taxpayers' money giving their message. We saw it during the federal election, and now we're going to see some more of it. That's the point I want to make. My question to the Premier. Isn't it true that the reason you want this extra money is to give your political message in the fall? That's what this is all about it, isn't it?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we'll see about that, and we're going to watch. Just like the promises that they made before, we'll see.

My question, then, to the Premier, and I want him to think about this because we can check *Hansard* lately. Isn't it true, then, that they want this money to begin orchestrating a political agenda which is going to lead to further tax hikes for Alberta families, and there's going to be cutbacks in people services after that huge deficit that they've given us?

MR. GETTY: They won't have trouble checking *Hansard* for this one, Mr. Speaker. The answer is no.

Loan Guarantees

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, we're now faced with a government that has an \$8 billion accumulated deficit, and they say, "Trust us." We're now faced with a government that has a \$9 billion liability in terms of unfunded pension liabilities. During the last few years and particularly during the course of the election, a number of promises were made with respect to loan guarantees. Those total now some \$3.5 billion. This could have a terrible impact on Albertans if they go wrong. It is unfortunate that the government continues to refuse to release details of these arrangements. My question is to the Premier. I would like to ask the Premier whether he will continue to insult Albertans by hiding these agreements and not making the full terms of our obligations, should they go bad, known to Albertans. Would he undertake to release all such information?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the government provides all the information it possibly can. In some cases the Legislature decides for itself here, through the motions for a return system. In each case when those matters come up, the House judges, tries to decide whether the information should properly be released -- is there some competitive or other reason why it might not be? -- and then we decide.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, is the Premier going to take the same line that the minister of career development took with the Principal matter, saying, "Trust me; we'll look after your affairs, and it's not necessary that you know the specific items of the agreements," thus getting ourselves into the kind of difficulty that we did with Principal?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, actually in a way the hon. member is merely repeating his first question, and I answered it.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, would the Premier or the minister in charge of finance, the Provincial Treasurer, be prepared to agree that by not knowing this information and pegging a lot of these loans and guarantees to the so-called cyclical industries, Albertans could be put into terrible difficulty if things go bad?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I understand the propensity of the opposition members to want to see things go bad, but the government has a great deal of confidence in the future of this province; it has a great deal of confidence in the people of this province. Therefore, we're prepared to take the financial muscle of the government and place it beside the people and allow the people to build this province for the future. You can see it now with the billions of dollars of investment flowing into the province. You can see the confidence that's flowing across Alberta. You can see the economic statistics. You can see the unemployment statistics, and you just know that the people of Alberta with the government of Alberta are working together to build this magnificent province.

MR. SPEAKER: Cypress-Redcliff, followed by Edmonton-Centre, then Calgary-North West

Agriculture Ministers' Meeting

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. In this Assembly Friday last the minister said that he would be meeting with his federal counterpart in Edmonton this morning. I wonder if he can share any information with the Assembly from that meeting this morning.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I could confirm that the Hon. Shirley McClellan and myself met for approximately two hours this morning with the Hon. Don Mazankowski and the Hon. Charlie Mayer and discussed quite a variety of things that impact Alberta agriculture, some of which we had on the agenda, some of which they had on the agenda. The main areas of the discussion centred around the Canada/Alberta soil conservation agreement; the Western Grain Transportation Act or, in short, the change of payment process; the Canada grains drought program; the Canada/Alberta hail and crop insurance program; and the Agricultural Processing and Marketing Agreement. For the last part of our meeting the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs joined us, and we discussed a variety of other projects important to the Alberta economy.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In view of that it finally figured out how to rain along the eastern border of Alberta in the last week, I wonder if the minister can share with us if any advancement was made on the drought insurance program with the federal government towards getting more drought money to the farmers, similar to what there was in Saskatchewan, and indeed what happened in the Crow benefit offset negotiations?

MR. ISLEY: With respect to the Canadian grains drought program I'm still confident, as I said Friday, that the federal government will fulfill the commitments they made to our producers. However, one thing has changed since Friday. They have now opened negotiations requesting us to consider participation in the program. We at this point in time have made no commitments. With respect to the method of payment, basically

the four options were discussed. I think there's general support for moving towards a change, especially in view of the fact that the Minister of Agriculture for Canada has stated publicly on a number of occasions that they will attempt to remove anything that will hamper value adding in the industry in Alberta.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. I wonder if the associate minister can inform the Assembly if any negotiations were carried on towards an enhancement of the crop insurance system in Alberta.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would report to the Member for Cypress-Redcliff and to the Assembly that definitely that was discussed at our meeting this morning, and as I had indicated before, I think last week, we have had a provincial review. We now have a national review paper out. We discussed that this morning: the distribution of it, the reports that are flowing back from that. We expect to discuss that review at our meetings at the end of July, so we did spend some time. We remain firmly committed to an improved program for our producers.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by Calgary-North West.

Increase in Health Care Premiums

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government can't be trusted to keep its election promises of no new taxes when the budget just last week announced increases in health premiums for Albertans by nearly 10 percent, on top of a 28.5 percent increase in health premiums just two years ago. On the other hand, most provinces, including Saskatchewan, which has a gross provincial product much less than ours, charges its citizens no premiums at all. Will the Minister of Health, therefore, not agree that this flat, regressive health premium tax not only breaks promises but is unfair to average Albertans?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: No, I will not agree, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the premium is a dedicated fee for a public health insurance fund and is not a tax.

REV. ROBERTS: Call it what you will, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just wondering further to this though, whether in the minister's estimates for the Department of Health it is the administration costs and the communications budget which are rising in some cases over 100 percent in her department estimates. Does the minister agree that this health premium or tax or whatever you're dinging Albertans for is actually going to pay for her rising departmental bureaucracy?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact, the premium increase, which is asked from those Albertans who can afford it, is an increase which is substantially less than the cost of increases that are provided through the health care fund: 16 percent versus 9.7. The increase is less than the rate of inflation over the period since the last increase was called for, and I believe it's a reasonable request to ask Albertans to contribute 5 cents for individuals and about 11 cents for families towards the wonderful health system that we have in this province.

REV. ROBERTS: I wonder if she would use the same logic for the 28 percent increase two years ago, when they cut programs.

But maybe the Premier has some more compassion and more sense of fairness in this issue. How can the Premier stand in his place and be trusted when he knows it is unfair for a family with a taxable income of \$10,000 . . .

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

REV. ROBERTS: . . . to pay the same amount in health premiums as a family with a taxable income of \$100,000? Now, how is that fair?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has already had explained to him by the Minister of Health, this is a health care insurance program, and these are premiums. Might I say that the real story that the NDP would try to have people hear is that somehow everything can be free.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

Dominion Glass Plant in Redcliff

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people in the Cypress-Redcliff constituency are very concerned, and particularly the citizens of Redcliff are concerned, about the glass industry in Redcliff disappearing. The effect on a small town the size of Redcliff would be devastating both in terms of the loss of people and the tax base that they provide. It appears the minister and the local MLA have been unsuccessful in averting the movement towards closure of the glass industry. My question is to the minister of economic development. Is he aware of the seriousness of the situation in terms of economic loss of over 300 jobs and a loss of an integral part of the provincial recycling program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's because of the strong representation of members such as the Member for Cypress-Redcliff and the Deputy Premier that we have had meetings with the principals included in this company, and we have given them a commitment as it relates to government support so that we can retain these jobs in the Cypress-Redcliff constituency.

MR. BRUSEKER: I understand that you've met with the company, and apparently the offer was made previously. Is there a plan developed to save the plant, to keep the plant open, and keep the jobs in Alberta to keep our economy strong?

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BRUSEKER: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Will he treat this as a priority and work with ministerial colleagues, including the Minister of the Environment, to examine all the issues, including environmental recycling and potentially amending the Beverage Container Act to stimulate the glass industry and encourage the company to remain in Alberta?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing and have been doing over the last number of weeks under the leadership of the Deputy Premier. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. I can't hear him from here.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we have been doing and will continue to do, because we recognize the importance it does play to the community involved. We are going to continue, and in an aggressive way, to meet with management and the employees to do everything within our power to ensure that those jobs are kept within the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Lesser Slave Lake and Calgary-Mountain View

Oldman River Dam

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. I was one of 15,000 people at Maycroft Crossing in southern Alberta yesterday who came a very long distance to express their concern about the environmental impact of the Oldman River dam project. They came to seek an end to the process of political decision-making that doesn't consider environmental issues first, and that's the message. I'd like to know if the Premier has been sufficiently moved by this overwhelming public concern to change his position on the Oldman River dam.

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. member has his own idea of the facts and numbers and so on and why people were there, but I would just say to the hon. member that there is no change in our position on the Oldman River dam.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, it's not enough to ignore environmental issues until they blow up in your face. In view of the importance of this matter I wonder if the Premier has been informed of a new geological survey, prepared by Greggs & Associates Geological Consultants, which concludes that the instability in the bedrock structure of the dam contains a potential safety risk to the public.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the Oldman River dam has had a tremendous amount of scientific study, preparation, planning, and now work going on. We believe it's important for the people of Alberta that this dam be continued and completed. The management of something as precious as a water resource is extremely important, and the government is making sure that happens.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, in view of the possibility that this project, if the government won't listen, may be halted by the courts, has the Premier at least instructed work to begin on some alternatives, perhaps scaling down the project so that something might be salvaged in the event that the courts take over where the leadership is lacking?

MR. SPEAKER: That question is hypothetical, because the courts are indeed dealing with at least three issues . . .

MR. McINNIS: Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Thank you very much.

Therefore, that question's out of order.

The Chair recognizes Lesser Slave Lake, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

Northern Alberta Tourism

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question to the Minister of Tourism, please. Lesser Slave Lake constituents are very interested in tourism. I know there are community tourism action plans being developed throughout the province of Alberta, and I would like to know how these plans will affect tourism in northern Alberta.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is very definitely, very positively. Some very innovative ideas are coming forward from those community tourism action plans, not only in northern Alberta but throughout Alberta. I might add that over 110 communities have completed theirs and another 100 communities, almost complete.

MS CALAHASEN: Second question. What tourism initiatives are occurring in Lesser Slave Lake in terms of government and, as well, the private sector?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I would undertake to provide the Member for Lesser Slave Lake with a list of projects that are coming out of the community tourism action plans that are in her constituency. I do not have them with me. But very definitely the communities that are being funded by the community tourism action program, that are matching that with their own dollars and then challenging the private-sector and nonprofit groups in their community to achieve the goals within those action plans, are making good headway. Many that are taking place we don't know about because we've funded them at the local level for those local initiatives, but any we do have that are bigger in size or more regional in nature we'll work on a project-by-project basis with the proponents, and those are the ones I will give you a list of.

MS CALAHASEN: Can the minister indicate if these initiatives are being dealt with in an expedient manner?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the community tourism action plan is a community plan. They set their own timetable of how they're going to complete the goals in their plan. We respond to them only on a request basis, to facilitate them and, as I mentioned earlier, on the bigger, more regional projects to give them a project number and to assign a facilitator and to have that facilitator work with that community or private-sector proponent to expedite that project.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Calgary-McKnight, then Calgary-Foothills, Edmonton-Avonmore, Calgary-Fish Creek, Westlock-Sturgeon, and West Yellowhead. Calgary-Mountain View.

Federal Stabilization Payments

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last December the Provincial Treasurer said that Alberta would get \$270 million in a stabilization payment from Ottawa. It was supposed to be so good it was money in the bank and he included it in estimating last year's deficit. Well then, like public faith in Conservative governments, this \$270 million just sort of

disappeared. It kind of faded away. Instead of \$270 million we ended up with only \$75 million. To the Provincial Treasurer. Since this was one reason why his estimate was out by 127 per cent last year, how can we have any confidence that Alberta will get \$195 million from the federal government this year, as projected in the budget estimates?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member is asking for an explanation as to what happened, I'd be more than pleased to provide that to him. But if he wants to get into the normal kind of rhetoric that we see from that side, I can play that game too. I think, being such a constrained person on Monday -- and I know we'll have opportunities to discuss in many forms the principles of the budget -- I'll simply indicate . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's terribly annoying to hear the chattering from across the way. The Member for Edmonton-Highlands is always shrill in her presentation, I know. The Member for Edmonton-Norwood always has the blues on Monday. Now the Member for Calgary-Mountain View wants a lecture on how the stabilization plan works. Well, I have no choice but to give that little lesson to the member.

Let me begin, Mr. Speaker, by reminding the Member for Calgary-Mountain View that of course Alberta, certainly since 1973 when the price of oil shot up dramatically, made more than its fair share of contributions to the rest of Canada. Certainly through oil pricing and certainly through a contribution in a variety of ways, Alberta has always been steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that Canada has an opportunity to grow when Alberta grows. At the same time, in November of 1981 Alberta was one of the key members of the constitutional group at that time that suggested clearly and supported wholeheartedly the concept of equalization. Equalization is a very important part of the fiscal federation. At the same time, so is the stabilization. Now, the Speech from the Throne talked about the necklace, Alberta being the jewel in the necklace of federation. Let me go onto . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Provincial Treasurer, I agree that Alberta is the main jewel in the necklace of Confederation, but I'm starting to choke.

Supplementary.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To take a long speech and make it short, we have no basis to have confidence in his figure. I'd like to ask why it was that he included \$195 million in his budget estimates when the same \$195 million figure doesn't appear in the estimates of the federal government for this fiscal year.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the rather lengthy reply, but this issue must be put in the context of fiscal federation. When I referred to the necklace, I was going to go on to refer to stabilization being a very unique part of the federal fiscal plan that we're into as being the insurance policy for the jewels in that necklace, and that's how it's operating. Let me point out that the contributions of Alberta have been extensive, as I've indicated, and we intend to make the fullest possible claim, protecting the interests of all Albertans under the stabi-

lization claim. That claim would have us receiving something over \$500 million, in the last numbers we've produced to the federal government.

It should be noted, Mr. Speaker, as I have said time and time again, that the federal government has no need to make that payment until December of 1990. Now, through good negotiations on behalf of many members of this government, including support from the federal MPs -- well, most of the federal MPs -- we have been able to commit the federal government to making a payment to us which recognizes, first of all, that the "may" in the legal words becomes "shall." The federal government will make the payment once we come to a conclusion as to how much money is due. That's why \$75 million has already been received this year, and we reflected that in last year's calculations. Now, the balance of that, Mr. Speaker -- \$270 million minus \$75 million equals \$195 million. I'm sure even the Member for Calgary-Mountain View can come to that conclusion. That money is put in the budget as well, for this year's forecast. I don't have to remind the members across the way that December 1990 is two fiscal years beyond March 31, 1990. So obviously the federal government doesn't have a provision for it, and obviously what we've had to do in terms of our negotiations is push the debate out further.

What we're doing in terms of the honest, fair way we presented ourselves to the people of Alberta, certainly in this past election and received a strong endorsement from the people of Alberta -- we are simply showing to Albertans how this money will be collected. Make no mistake. We will proceed with all effort to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's claim from two years ago is \$540 million, of which we've received 13 percent so far. To the Provincial Treasurer. What's the basis on which we can feel confident that we're going to get this remaining \$444 million when the track record is so poor in this claim?

MR. JOHNSTON: Oh, to the contrary. Wouldn't they like to see us fail again, Mr. Speaker? That's really what this opposition party is about. The Premier identified it perfectly: this party is the party of failure; this is the party across the way that thrives on doom and gloom. That's not the attitude we take, quite to the contrary. We are optimistic, we negotiate positions with the federal government, and we're determined to get that money for Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight, followed by Calgary-Foothills.

University Credit Transfers

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Premier. The Premier and his government have rightfully identified education as the key investment for Alberta's future. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any coherent strategy to ensure that our educational institutions are capable of meeting this responsibility. For example, the government has increased support to university transfer programs in our colleges, while the University of Alberta is at the same time considering quotas on enrollment. My question is: can the Premier

indicate where he believes the graduates from these university transfer programs should go when no university spaces may be available after the two-year period?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the estimates of the Minister of Advanced Education will be dealt with today, and I would expect the hon. member would want to raise that matter with the Minister of Advanced Education.

MRS. GAGNON: Again, to the Premier. I'm not sure that my question involved moneys necessarily; I was talking about provisions for these transfer students when they arrive at the university door.

My second question again is to the Premier. Another problem involving university transfers is the fact that many students are not able to receive full credit for courses taken when transferring to university. What steps is this government taking to ensure a coherent and consistent credit transfer program?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could respond as the minister responsible for advanced education. My estimates will be before the committee tonight, and I'd pleased to get into some detail, but I can assure the hon. member that the government of Alberta has as its first priority education, certainly postsecondary education. I can assure the hon. member that access to postsecondary institutions for certainly the year 1989-1990 is assured.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, that is not the answer to my question either. I'm concerned about the students who have taken a two-year program at Mount Royal, for instance, and afterwards their credit is maybe not recognized and there is no space for them at the university.

My third question, then, is again to the Premier. I believe there is clearly a need for a more rational, forward-thinking approach to postsecondary education. Will the Premier consider the creation of a nonpartisan committee with representatives from business, academics, and the general public to consider the structure, funding, and goals of our postsecondary system to ensure that we are better able to meet the needs and aspirations of our young people?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises one potential avenue that a government might look at, and because she's raising it here in the Legislature, I will take a look at it for her. But I'm sure that when she discusses the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education this evening with the minister, he will be able to help her to understand better the preparation of the postsecondary institutions that will allow them to make sure that the students transferring into the universities will have the ability to make that transfer effectively.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would like to point out something at this stage to the member who raised the questions. In terms of the rule of anticipation during question period, when we come to the estimates it is indeed not proper to be asking questions of the department whose estimates have already been designated for this evening. The Chair has allowed it on this occasion, but in future as we work through the estimate process, questions related to that department will not be allowed to be asked in question period on that particular day.

Securities Industry Regulations

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. There have been many concerns raised by the public, and in particular in Calgary-Foothills, with regard to the monitoring of brokerage firms and the securities industry in general. Can the minister advise what action he is taking to ensure that investors in Alberta are being protected?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, it's an important question and one which has been faced by securities organizations throughout the country. In Alberta over the past couple of years the Securities Commission has been reorganized to split the judicial function from the administrative function. There has been a series of actions taken by the Securities Commission itself to ensure that we have one of the more fair and honest operating marketplaces. I might add for the member's interest that the Cashion report, which was put in place in January, has now given us a number of steps that we can consider for further action, some action which I expect to be announced in the not too distant future.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister again. In recognition, sir, of the fact that there are only four of the many brokerage firms that fall under the Alberta Auditor's jurisdiction within the province, is there anything that the minister can share with us on some form of an interprovincial information-sharing package that may be evolving where there are other brokerage jurisdictions?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is quite perceptive. There is in fact a need for complete information sharing throughout the country in terms of the activities of stock exchanges and securities commissions. We did sign an information-sharing agreement between the provinces -- we being the Provincial Treasurer and I -- within a few days of my taking responsibility for this portfolio. There are as well some intergovernmental negotiations now continuing regarding what's being called harmonization, or bringing together the legislation. As a third item, I would mention to the member that the securities administrators across the country are meeting at least twice regularly to share information and to determine action that might be necessary by joint jurisdiction that's governed through stock exchanges that cross boundaries.

MR. SPEAKER: Final.

MRS. BLACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the minister again. Will the government commit to making changes to its current policy to tighten up insider trading rules so that small business investors can be assured that no one has any unfair advantages?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, there's no question that there's a need to constantly be diligent in watching our stock and securities exchanges that take place in the province. The fast-moving marketplace has made it essential that we do keep up to date on action in that respect, so in the interests of that I can tell the member that shortly, within a couple of weeks I hope, we will be introducing legislation in the House that will deal with insider trading and in fact with a series of other issues related to securities and to the stock exchange.

Family Support Strategies

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, we have heard often of the Premier's commitment to the family and his numerous public statements of the importance of children being cared for by their mothers in the home, including his November 1986 presentation to the First Ministers' Conference in which he stated: we believe the best quality child care comes at home. In view of his public stance, how does the Premier defend the current Social Services policy of requiring the healthy mother of a healthy four-month-old infant to seek work in the paid employment force?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that's the responsibility of the Minister of Family and Social Services, and I'd ask him to respond.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any such instance, and if the member would like to bring a specific example to my attention, I'd be happy to look at it.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, this policy was in fact addressed during the election and has been in place for a number of years, approximately one decade. Will the Minister of Family and Social Services, then, look into this policy, re-evaluate it, and change it?

MR. OLDRING: Again, Mr. Speaker, I assure the member that if she had an example of a specific incidence, I'd be happy to look into it.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, is the minister then saying that if in fact this policy is in place, he will commit himself to changing it immediately?

MR. OLDRING: Again, the minister said that he would be prepared to look at a specific situation if the member opposite would like to bring it to my attention. But I'd like to talk about our commitment to the family, Mr. Speaker, because it's second to none in the nation, and I welcome the opportunity in this Assembly when they bring it up and ask the question to be able to tell them about some of the initiatives we are taking as a government and to tell them about some of the initiatives that we're . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows quite well that it was our Premier that brought the concern of the family to the attention of his counterparts across this nation, and it was through the leadership of our Premier that other provinces have decided that they, too, are going to make a commitment to the family, and it was through the leadership of our Premier that we're going to be participating in a family symposium come this July in Regina. I can only say . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, I don't apologize for the enthusiasm that I bring to this response because we're doing some good things on this side of the House, and again . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.

Let's now recognize the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. [The time for question period expired] Question period has expired. Might we have unanimous consent to carry on with this

series of questions? Do we have unanimous consent?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.
Calgary-Fish Creek.

Impaired Drivers

AN HON. MEMBER: This better be good, Bill.

MR. PAYNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I regret I'm not prepared to comment in advance on the quality of the question, but I do appreciate the forbearance of our colleagues today.

At the Federation of Canadian Municipalities convention in Vancouver last week the federation called the impaired driving problem in Canada a national crisis and passed a resolution calling for greater enforcement across the land. Members will be aware that the provincial Solicitor General has been quoted as favouring the immediate removal of a driver's licence where a driver has been charged with impaired driving. My question is: can the Solicitor General advise the Assembly as to what progress he's made in convincing his government associates as to the wisdom of his own personal position?

MR. FOWLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to advise the hon. member that last Thursday was the first introduction of our fight against impaired driving program, when the department introduced the video entitled *The Party's Over*, a video which was in fact made in Alberta for Alberta purposes. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities in Vancouver has recently addressed the matter, and while I do not concur that it may necessarily be a national crisis, there is no question in this government's mind that it is a very, very serious problem in this province as well as others.

The overall strategic plan that we will be introducing covers four areas, which are enforcement, education and prevention, community action, public awareness, as well as research. This is a \$1.3 million program which we know will in all probability make Alberta the toughest province in Canada in which to escape drinking and driving.

MR. PAYNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, if we weren't facing the tight squeeze with the bell today, I would like to have asked the Solicitor General for some additional details, and perhaps we can do that on another occasion. However, I would like to address a further supplementary, if I could, to the Attorney General. I'm wondering if he could respond to what I see as a widespread perception in our province that our courts are rendering judgments and sentences that are at times inconsistent and oftentimes far too lenient in impaired driving convictions.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the courts and our justice system are based on the Rule of Law which has as its premise that everyone that appears before the court is treated equally. On that basis I'm not sure where the hon. member's coming from in terms of inconsistency in terms of sentencing. Our Department of the Attorney General monitors judgments. If there is a perceived significant difference from the norm, the case is reviewed on its merits to find out whether under a rule of law there was an error made. On that basis an appeal is made. In the terms of . . . Perhaps the inconsistency is that every judge is a human being.

and his perception of the evidence as it's put forward, and in each instance the evidence is always different in each case -- there may be some inconsistency. On those bases we would hope that the judiciary has the same understanding, compassion, and concern that all of us, I'm sure, in this Assembly have towards impaired driving and its seriousness as an offence.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MR. PAYNE: I'll pass.

MR. SPEAKER: Two points of order. Minister of Advanced Education, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order, I rise somewhat reluctantly, because I seem to be doing it most every day following question period. This is directed to you, Your Honour, with reference to a question put by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre where he said, and I quote: the Premier can't be trusted. I draw your attention to Standing Order 23(i). I quote: "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member."

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to see the Blues. My intention was to ask how it is that the Premier can be trusted when, for instance, in his own constituency at Stettler there would be some who would make \$10,000, a few others would make \$100,000, and they are all taxed equally by this health premium. I would like to know the sense of fairness, the trust, that can dictate such an unfair policy, in my view, so I was inquiring how it is that the Premier can be trusted. Now, if the minister didn't hear the "how it is" part, I can't explain that, but that was certainly the intention of my question.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the point of order stands, and the Chair refers all hon. members back to the discussion that . . .

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order in the press gallery please.
Mr. Speaker is standing.
Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair refers all hon. members back to the discussion that occurred at the end of question period on Friday. That's page 166 in *Alberta Hansard*, where we went on at great length about the various terms that had been used in terms of last week in the House. The Chair at that time was dealing with words such as lie, deliberately mislead, and so forth. At that time the admonition was given to the House in terms of the various quotations in Standing Orders and also in *Beauchesne*. And, indeed, the Blues do read the Member for [Edmonton-Norwood] saying that "This government can't be trusted to keep its promises." In the next question it's also there as well, with respect to the Premier. Now, that's been ruled out of order in terms of last Friday. The Chair also heard the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway at one stage in the debate shouting out a similar phrase, "can't be trusted."

Now, hon. members, indeed, there are the references, so let's go through them again. If we couldn't have time to read them over the weekend, we can certainly read them again right now.

Again, under Standing Order 23:

A member will be called to order by Mr. Speaker if that member

Let's go on down to section (h):

- (h) makes allegations against another member;
- (i) imputes false or unavowed motives to another member;
- (j) uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder.

So that's the sections from our own Standing Orders, which all hon. members realize take precedence. Then *Beauchesne* 491; here we go again:

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

So I'm sure you can read that again.

The point of order stands. The Chair points out on that ruling that it might involve a substantive motion of the House. The Chair also points out that if this continues, members are going to be called to order in question period, and if it indeed persists, then the question will be taken away.

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

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This concerns the ruling of the Chair during question period that my question to the Premier was hypothetical. I appreciate that there is a court case before the courts at the moment, and it was my intention not to ask about the case itself but, rather, whether the Premier had instructed that work begin on some alternatives to this point in time. I appreciate that you only get one kick at the cat; I was trying very hard to frame the question so that it would relate to previous actions by the Premier, not to something that happens in the future. And I wonder, if I did err in that, if the Chair could guide me in terms of how to deal with this problem in future.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: On this particular point of order, Calgary-Buffalo?

MR. CHUMIR: Just a simple observation, Mr. Speaker, that the question, in essence, seemed to be one in the nature of asking about a contingency plan; that is, not whether or not something might be done in future but whether something is being done now in respect of potential events. That seems to me to be contingency, and contingency questions of necessity have to be in order, Mr. Speaker, or we wouldn't be able to ask about anything in relation to the future.

MR. SPEAKER: On this particular point of order the Chair was trying to follow very closely, as is the case with all the questions, but in this case, with regard to -- I could almost use the words "treacherous waters" -- having to deal with a matter which, as far as the Chair knows, has about two or three court cases somewhere in progress . . . And indeed, the way that the last question was phrased here does seem to involve a lot of hypotheticals:

Has the Premier at least instructed work to begin on some alternatives, perhaps scaling down the project so that something might be salvaged in the event that the courts take over where the leadership is lacking?

In the opinion of the Chair that, indeed, was a hypothetical. But

the Chair agrees that it's very difficult to try to deal with issues in this matter because of the sub judice convention, and also in this case it was the opinion of the Chair that it was a hypothetical. The Chair will try to listen even more closely in future. Thank you.

Point of order? On which issue?

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat concerned that we're going beyond *Beauchesne* in terms of what is legitimate, in terms of slogans or phrases that one can use. Certainly that "governments can't be trusted," Mr. Speaker, is a new one, that we find that unparliamentary. I know under that one section you can almost say that anything's imputing motives. The Treasurer certainly imputed motives, and I just take that as the give and take of the session.

One of the things we believe strongly on this side is that this government can't be trusted, and that's a political point that we're trying to make. We don't think that should necessarily stop us from political debate, because where does it stop? Pretty soon the only thing we'll be able to do is stand up and tell them how wonderful they are, Mr. Speaker, to get through a question period.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair is indeed willing to receive representations from House leaders in terms of this whole area. But with respect to this point of order the Chair has to point out that under *Beauchesne* 318(1) "a point of order cannot be raised on a point of order," but the general issue might be valid discussion material for the House leaders with the Chair.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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 9: Mr. Hawkesworth]

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, this motion has to do with supporting this government's fiscal policies. I'd like to know what those fiscal policies are. In fact, I'd like to know, really, if this government knows where it's headed with its fiscal policies.

I'd like to first of all look at the figures that have been presented to this Legislature on which this so-called, purported fiscal policy is based. Mr. Speaker, the other night the Provincial Treasurer told us that this fiscal year we could expect to have a deficit in the order of around \$1.5 billion. Well, it's very interesting that for the first time in a long while he's changed the accounting practices to understate the value or the size of that provincial deficit. This year he's stopped counting in the spending this government's doing and the heritage fund capital projects, so that all of a sudden this deficit looks a lot -- it's big enough, large enough, but it's a lot less than he would have us believe it to be. Instead of \$1.5 billion, I think it would be the truer that he go back to the accounting policies used a year ago and count in the spending under the trust fund, \$141 million, just so that we can compare across years and across the entire government spending in this province. That would bring the total over \$1.6 billion.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's just only the beginning of it. In order to arrive at this figure, the Provincial Treasurer has provided us with some more so-called information in terms of the revenue that they're expecting to be brought into this Provincial Treasurer's pot. They're estimating based on \$19-a-barrel west Texas crude in estimating their income for royalties. Well, Mr. Speaker, if this government had learned by now that they'd be far better to estimate low on that side than high, we'd have a much more realistic picture in front of us. It was only a year ago when the Provincial Treasurer tabled a similar budget. It was obvious that that year started strong, just as this one has, in terms of the oil price, but started to slip badly about the middle of the summer, and the rest of the year was a disaster. I would have thought it would have been the better part of prudence for the Provincial Treasurer to have included a much lower figure in his estimates, basing his estimates on a much lower figure and a much more realistic one, given the recent experience. But I guess some people just can't learn from their experience. It would have been far better for him to have estimated a lower amount and made the adjustments accordingly. I think this Provincial Treasurer overestimated that revenue by probably around \$200 million.

As I've just pointed out, this Provincial Treasurer back in December said that the people of Alberta were going to get \$270 million from the federal government in stabilization payments -- \$270 million, Mr. Speaker. And what did he get? Seventy-five million dollars; he was out by \$200 million in that estimate. And being asked to explain the error this afternoon, he was unable to do so. And being asked to explain how he could then put money into the pot for this year based on his recent experience with the federal government, he wasn't able to answer that question either. The federal government, Mr. Speaker, has not put this money in their estimates. Now, if this is such a valid claim and it's been standing there for some time under negotiations, you would have expected the federal government to have made some acknowledgment of an interim payment. We're only talking here \$195 million. We're only talking about the portion of a total claim being made by the province against the federal government, a claim around \$540 million.

I don't know why the federal government, if it's a valid claim, should be dragging their feet the way they are. But the fact is that we have not received this money, and I think the Provincial Treasurer is way out to lunch in including that figure as \$195 million in this year's budget. Now, I would be happy if he got it. More power to him if he got it. But there's no evidence, and he couldn't point to any this afternoon himself, to justify that figure being contained in our budget books. So, Mr. Speaker, I think he's highly optimistic to expect to budget for \$195 million. It would seem to me that the figure he placed in front of us is way, way, way off base.

Mr. Speaker, if you add \$141 million in the capital projects, if you reduce, as I think would be realistic, to expect that the oil royalties would be down by close to \$200 million, along with -- let's just for the sake of rounding off these figures include in that the reductions in the bonuses and sales of Crown leases, another highly optimistic figure. And if we were to deduct the \$195 million, even if we were to expect a small amount of that from the federal government, nowhere near \$200 million, anybody in adding those figures up can conclude, Mr. Speaker, that the Provincial Treasurer's deficit estimate will be a lot closer to

\$2 billion this year rather than the \$1.49 billion which he's included in his figures in front of us.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is only part of a trend. This Provincial Treasurer has not got it right yet in the four years that he's been Provincial Treasurer. Last year he was out by over 127 percent in his estimate. Given just what's in front of us as we're this far into the fiscal year, seeing that the revenues are unlikely to be nearly what he's anticipated them to be, the fact is, and we can reach only one conclusion, that the deficit is likely to be closer to \$2 billion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it would have been better, I think, for this government to have leveled with people now rather than to put in these figures which I think are bordering on the realm of fiction. I mean, this is not a fact. Given the number of documents that the Provincial Treasurer wants to have circulated on this Budget Address, I think he should get an award for the best-selling fictional work in the country. The fact is, we'll be closer to a \$2 billion deficit, and whatever fiscal plan this Provincial Treasurer has, has to be thrown out the window. First of all, because his projection is so far out for this year, as it has been in each and every other year and, as well, the fact that they're so far off the so-called fiscal plan that they tabled in this Legislature a year ago.

In fact, the Provincial Treasurer has stopped giving any kind of fiscal plan, and I don't know why that might -- well, I can guess why that might be. The fact that we are so far out will indicate to me that there's no other choice that this government seems to have arrived at other than to dramatically slash spending of essential people services and increase taxes in next year's budget. Well, I would say to the Provincial Treasurer -- I know that he's looking at this fiscal plan that lies shattered around him, and he's going to start trying to pick up the pieces -- that if that's the kind of solution he's looking for to solve this particular problem, Mr. Speaker, it's entirely the wrong solution for him to be looking for. That is, for him to try and balance this budget within two fiscal years is totally unrealistic, and it would wreak tremendous hardship on the people and the economy of this province were he to try to do so.

So I'm hoping that in the interim, as he starts to put together a fiscal plan that's realistic, he will keep in mind a number of factors. First of all, it's important to ensure that the underlying economy of the province is strong. That has to be the first priority of this government and has to be the first priority of any government in putting together its fiscal plan. Even the Provincial Treasurer has admitted that if he were to slash spending and increase taxes dramatically this year, it would be too much for a fragile economy to bear. Well, I think that that's probably at least one good decision, at least one recognition of what's going on in the province, that it's not as strong as they would have us believe, that in fact it could not absorb that kind of a tax increase or spending decrease.

I would hope that the Provincial Treasurer begins to realize that the situation Alberta's in now is not the situation it was in five, six, and seven years ago; that the underlying strength of the economy is far less strong than we have been accustomed to over the years; that for him to try and balance the budget in two years will be a disaster for the people of the province and for the economy of the province; that it makes a lot more sense for him to take the longer view in terms of ensuring that the economy remains strong and that over time -- not in an overnight manner -- they address this deficit. There are lots of ways that they can do it, and over the next few days and months we will be repeat-

ing many of the positive suggestions we've made as to how this government can find revenue, can stop spending money wastefully in this province. If they did only those two things, they could go a long way, a long, long way, in making the adjustments that are important in terms of this long-term fiscal plan.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would only say this: the fiscal policies that we have in front of us don't amount to very much at all in the way of a fiscal plan. Their fiscal plan ends March 31, 1990, according to the budget in front of us, and at that point we're going to have a major problem. It's wrong for the Provincial Treasurer to expect that that can be adjusted overnight. It's been a long time coming. This problem has been created by this government over many, many years; they've gotten us into this mess. But I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Provincial Treasurer to try and solve that problem in a dramatic way, trying to balance that budget by major tax increases and cutting spending of essential public services will not do what he thinks it will do in terms of solving this problem. The only way that he can - he's got to ensure that the economy remains strong, to cut wasteful government spending, not essential services. And there are lots of ways to increase revenues that would make this tax system a lot fairer in this province than to simply hammer once again the average Alberta family. So if he's looking at putting together a fiscal plan for the coming years, Mr. Speaker, he's got to bear in mind that those have to be essential principles in that reconstruction of this province's shattered financial situation.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if, before I start, I can revert to introduction of visitors for a brief moment.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree to the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

(reversion)

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce in the gallery several members from the Redcliff Legion who are attending the federal convention in Edmonton. I wonder if they'd rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

(continued)

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to participate in the budget debate. I must say, I think it's the first time that I've had any more than one constituent in the gallery when I've made a speech in the Legislature, so I guess it'll have to be good.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of talk over the last couple of days. We've heard a lot of questions in question period about the government breaking promises relating to the throne speech and the budget debate. We've heard, let's say, a lot of words.

Whether they're tied together and mean a lot, time will tell.

We heard the Provincial Treasurer say that 40,000 new jobs were created last year in Alberta on top of 65,000 previously, and I think that tells that we're now at as high a level, or a higher level, than what we were during the boom times. It's something that we can be justly proud of. It's something that private industry in co-operation with government has done; not government creating jobs for the sake of creating jobs, but private industry in co-operation creating jobs, long-term jobs, steady jobs. We also have the announcements of the pulp plants and other announcements that we've heard lately that will create more long-term jobs not even counted in that amount.

Well, let me deal specifically with my constituency. There's a group in my constituency called Dunmore Wood Preservers that cut lumber and use it for fence posts and some rough lumber sales. I've worked with them over the last couple of years getting rights for timber cutting in areas and meeting, as of late, with the minister of forestry and the Minister of Recreation and Parks to talk about long-term supply. This is an industry that was started by a father and his son that had no government money in it. They started it; they put everything up to start it, and they've been in operation for some 20 years and have grown considerably in the last five. But it's a clear sign of a group of people that have put everything into what they're trying to do. They have provided a good product, and that has found its place in the market. It shows that it can be done without a lot of government assistance. But they're at the stage now where they need the government assistance to get areas where they can cut the wood and process it for use so that it can be exported throughout other parts of Alberta as well as the south and into Saskatchewan. In time, if they can achieve enough supply, obviously they're looking at the American market, across into the States, in the fence post business.

We also have Alberta Energy at Redcliff, where the base is in Redcliff and much of the work is in the Suffield Block. I met with the Redcliff manager a couple of weeks ago, and he gave me some interesting numbers. In Alberta Energy there, the total pay in their various divisions, the oil and the gas, is approximately \$4.6 million under contract labour. Now, that's contract labour, it's either directly or indirectly with other small businesses. Salaries are approximately \$6 million; their total expenses for that one portion of their operation are \$21.7 million. Out of that is expansion, where they believe what they're going to be expanding to in the future. Now, we see a lot of job growth in that industry, especially if they can start to market some more of the natural gas that they have on supply.

We also have another major industry that a question was asked about in the House earlier today related to Dominion Glass, now known as Consumers Glass, and the problems there. I should say that I've worked with the company and with the union and union personnel for a number of months relating to some problems at that plant and a request for assistance. I was pleased to be part of a committee that met with the chief executive officer of Consumers Glass, who came to Alberta to find out the existing programs that we had and how it would affect his plant so that they can make their business decision related to the future of the plant. I know that the labour situation at the plant is stable. The labour is one of the most productive, if not the most productive, in the industry in that particular area. We have a large supply of gas, and at a good price, and we impressed upon him our desire to keep the industry, obviously, and what we could do to assist in that manner. I think we did as

much as can be done; the ball is now in their court. I'm glad the member brought it forward, because it shows that the letter that I circulated last week -- obviously, some of his contacts in the constituency did take time to read it and bring forward that there was a meeting, because some didn't know that. So it looks like at least somebody read the letters, which were posted late last weekend.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about education in the budget and that the amount of money spent on education in Alberta, approximately \$3,300 for each child, is a large amount. That doesn't by any means say that it's the right amount or the wrong amount. There is a great deal of money paid out to school boards for equalization payments, for grants, and one can readily argue if we should be moving faster towards the 85 percent of the funding allotment in education. That obviously is an argument that we can carry on in a few days when the Department of Education comes forward for the estimates in the budget.

But when we get into equity payments, we have vast differences in what school jurisdictions can provide or have the ability to provide through their own taxation versus those that have higher assessments. I know in my own case I have a couple of districts that are having problems with the equalized assessment. Because of the number of students and the assessment per student, their grants have gone down. I think, being a smaller school, we still have to continue to look at that and be concerned about that, so that it doesn't affect to a great degree their ability to provide a proper education to that student. We have many things, and I know schools within the county of Forty Mile in the MD of Cypress where the school districts of Cypress have participated in long-distance learning and find them very effective and very useful when they have low numbers in subjects.

I was able to participate in something, Mr. Speaker, that I wish there was more of. A month ago the Grassy Lake school -- I think it was grades 10 and 11 -- participated in a student exchange with Quebec. I can remember that happening many years ago when my sister was in school. I hadn't known that to happen in the area since, and that's probably 10 or 12 years. I wish more of that happened -- just to talk to those young people and hear what they said after they had been to Quebec and come back, and to hear what the Quebec people had said when they came here. I recall some of the comments. They came from an area right adjacent to Montreal, and they couldn't believe it would take so long to get from the airport to the town they were going to, because they came from Calgary to Grassy Lake. Then when they took them to Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park for a barbecue, they couldn't believe you could go over so much ground and not see anybody, that every two or three miles you might see a house. They had never seen anything like that before, and that well outlines how important those kinds of exchanges are to holding the country together and for young people to understand and to believe how each other works and what goes on in other parts of the country.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of discussion about agriculture and about the programs. That's why I asked the minister the question this afternoon about what discussion went on between him and the federal Minister of Agriculture relating to the drought program, because that's a program that people in my area feel may not have been fair to them. They feel we were in very much a drought restricted area, as much as those in Saskatchewan, and indeed we didn't get payouts equal for much of the area as compared to the area that got paid in Saskatchewan adjacent to us. I look forward to some resolution on that.

Mr. Speaker, I should say, too, that in the constituency there have been some new developments related to secondary processing of agriculture. One of the ones that is just starting that I look forward to a lot of promise and a lot of exporting from is Amazing Grains. It's taking normal grains -- wheat, beans, and some others -- and making them into a product that's for sale for health foods. Apparently, it's from the States. These grains down there are taking off and providing quite a market in the health food market. We're hoping that that same kind of market opens up here.

We also have an interesting thing going on with Alberta Sunflower Seeds Ltd. that is taking the trade name Spitz for marketing their sunflowers as an eating product rather than birdseed. They're having some problem with the registering of the name because there's apparently somebody in Ontario that also wants that brand name for a product. These sunflowers were given away in Lethbridge at the recent Ag Expo a few months ago, and received rave reviews on the taste of them. We're told they compare well to the major brands we see on the shelves now. So if you see a picture of a big sunflower and the word "Spitz" on it, it'll be an export of Bow Island. You know, we export things other than people like the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. Maybe this will be easier to get rid of than he is some days; I don't think it'll get under your skin as much either.

The other industry related to agriculture in the constituency that's very important is the greenhouse industry. I look forward to discussing the greenhouse industry with the minister when it comes to his estimates: a program for rejuvenation of the existing buildings, energy efficiency, and whatever else is in that program. I think I'll leave most of the discussion on that to another time.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of words about depopulation in rural Alberta. This was a discussion during the election, and it was a discussion before the election. Every time we run low on students for schools, this question comes up: "What are we going to do?" Obviously, it was a question that was asked during the election. I think of my own family, in that in our family there was my father and mother and seven children. We look around the area in Bow Island and the areas outside of the town, for example. We still have the same number of families. Sometimes it's the father and the sons haven't stayed to farm, but I think that's only the case in one or two. The remainder have sons on the farm, married, but instead of five and six children, there are two and three. I think we make a lot of talk about the pamphlet the government produced saying that the population of rural Alberta shows a decline. It's true it shows a decline in numbers of people. But does it show a decline in families? Nobody's quantified it to show if it shows a decline in families. I think if we look closely at most cases, the amount of families hasn't dropped drastically. It's the amount of children each family has that's dropped.

One of the questions asked of me during the election was, "What are you going to do about rural depopulation?" I said: "I've done everything I'm going to do about rural depopulation. I have three children; that's it," and that it was up to others in the hall who wanted to have more children or who hadn't had children yet. It was up to them to do the rest about rural depopulation.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about roads. During the election, there was a lot of talk about the secondary road program. Why are we paving every road in rural Alberta? I suppose we from a rural

area could say, "Why are we paving every back alley in the city?"

AN HON. MEMBER: Why, indeed.

MR. HYLAND: Why, indeed. But it all seems to be necessary. We look at the announcement in the budget: \$500 million for the street assistance program; a great deal of money. We look further down. The addition to the secondary highways program, which would relate to the paving: \$18 million. Now, that's a big difference. I think we have a right to have some paved loads in rural Alberta.

Just for those that don't know what a secondary road is, it's a designated road within a municipal jurisdiction, usually a main road, and it's designated according to priority. These secondary roads that will be paved, for example in the county of Forty Mile, amount to a little less than 9 percent of the roads, of which about a third are paved. So it's not paving thousands and thousands and thousands of miles of rural Alberta, as was said during the campaign and indicated after by members in the Assembly. It's a percentage of the roads in rural Alberta, roads leading generally to markets.

It's important that when they're paved, they're paved to a high standard. The old style of what was normally called Saskatchewan pavement or Japanese pavement doesn't work. All it does is keep the dust down on your road. The minute weather changes, the road has a road ban on, so you can't haul a load. Farm trucks now are getting larger and larger and have to have a 110,000-pound road to stand up. So I have said that when we pave them, even if we don't get as many paved as we'd like, we'd better make sure we pave those we do to a high standard so they last for 20 or 25 years, rather than paving them just to say they're done.

Another program I was happy to see announced in the budget, Mr. Speaker, was the private irrigators program. That's a program that was developed by the irrigation caucus committee. It's a program where irrigators in other parts of Alberta, rather than the irrigation districts, will get a chance to receive some government funding for irrigation development. I see that happening all over Alberta. I think where you'll see it become more predominant is in areas adjacent to a lake or river where a farmer or rancher can see that he can sprinkle a couple of hundred acres and provide feed for his operation. I think that'll save him depending on somebody else for supplying his feed, and I think you'll see that all through the province. I'm happy to see that there. It sometimes takes quite a few years to develop programs.

Mr. Speaker, I also note the amount of money in the budget for home care, the dramatic increase. I look forward to seeing that implemented. I look forward to discussing with the local health unit in southeastern Alberta how they feel that program will affect them in the delivery of their service. I should say too, Mr. Speaker, that a group from Medicine Hat, the Cypress View Foundation, is looking at doing a study on building a senior citizens' self-contained unit in Redcliff, some 45 beds or thereabouts. It'll be a different kind of unit because it'll have a unique level of care. The suggestion came out of the Mirosh report for a unique level of care somewhere between an ordinary lodge and a nursing home. I don't mean it'll take away patients from the nursing home, but it'll provide a home for those who need very little assistance and could still be in a homelike setting. I look forward to that study, and I look forward to what

ideas people come up with about a unique level of care and what exactly that can encompass. It's obviously very important to the town. It'll be very important as a trial project for Alberta in that we will have an opportunity to try something that's not tried anywhere else.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago in this Assembly we passed my motion relating to forming a border commission to discuss common interests and problems with the state of Montana. As a result of a couple of meetings a Bill was passed in both their Assemblies putting their side of the border commission forward, and the motion here did our side. I should note that we've had several meetings since then and have had good contacts with the state of Montana. This year is the state of Montana's centennial. I and the citizens of Cypress-Redcliff would like to wish the citizens of Montana success and continued co-operation with Alberta for the next hundred years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join this debate on whether or not we should support the government's fiscal policies. I would like to congratulate the Member for Cypress-Redcliff on the breadth of his view of government policy. It's always been my belief that a Conservative might have extra children in order to support the Conservatives' family program, and here it is that we're learning today that in fact he's had three children in order to support the problem of rural depopulation. I might ask him at this point: what have you done for us lately? And I am putting that in the context of the fact that my wife and I are expecting a child any moment now, and I will happily be making a much more timely contribution to both of those programs on behalf of this government.

Mr. Speaker, it's with some regret that I must state that I will not be able to support Motion 4 requesting the Legislature's support of this government's fiscal policies. While there are many weaknesses in this government's current budget, the most overriding weakness, I would say, is the current deficit leading to and accumulating to a debt problem. This deficit is so much larger, the accumulated debt is so much larger than anything most of us could have imagined in the heady days of the 1970s and early 1980s. If I had stood before this Legislature and said that we would even have a deficit in 1989-90 of \$1.4 billion, let alone the deficit that we just experienced in the prior fiscal year of \$1.7 billion, people would have said that was an impossible prediction. They would have been aghast that anybody would have considered that to be a reasonable prediction in the late '70s, early 1980s. But in fact it has occurred. We not only have a deficit projection by the Treasurer of \$1.4 billion for this year, we have a deficit, in fact, last year of \$1.7 billion. Add that to the deficits of the two previous fiscal years, and we're looking at an accumulated deficit 11 months from now, 10 months from now, of \$8 billion.

But that's only part of the picture. Through creative accounting the Treasurer has very carefully excluded from his total debt projection, his total debt assessment in fact, upwards of a \$9 billion unfunded pension liability. What does that mean? Currently this government has a pension liability in the order of \$10 billion or \$11 billion; that is, \$10 billion or \$11 billion that we must pay to people currently subscribing to a variety of public service pensions over the next number of years, 20-25 years.

That \$10 billion or \$11 billion is in today's value, present value. So in fact by the time it is paid out -- and it will be paid out of current tax revenues each year -- it will amount to perhaps as much as \$20 billion to \$25 billion. Currently invested against that amount of money is a sum of about \$2.5 billion.

Outstanding in addition to that is about \$9 billion that is debt. No matter how it is accounted for by this Treasurer, no matter what name this government wants to place on that \$9 billion, it is unfunded. There is no money placed against it; there are no investments accruing as it accrues. In the legislation covering pension administration it states very clearly that this government can -- it doesn't have to; it can, and of course it will now -- take its share of that \$9 billion straight out of the General Revenue Fund. That means taxes. The \$8 billion accumulated deficit that we will experience by the end of this year will be paid for out of taxes in the future, and that \$9 billion unfunded pension liability will be paid for out of taxes in the future. You add those two figures together and you get a debt of \$17 billion.

You can hide it however you want to hide it. Back-bench MLAs, when they're questioning that Treasurer in caucus, should be asking that question, because your government for the next three years at least will be responsible for dealing with that kind of debt. You've created it. You have to deal with it, and you shouldn't allow your Treasurer to trick you into believing that it's much lower than in fact it is. Not only that, but the \$1.4 billion that I've added into the \$8 billion accumulated deficit by the end of this year is undoubtedly low.

My colleague to my right, Calgary-Buffalo, mentioned late last week the problem of the estimation of lease sales income, clearly inflated. There is also the problem of an overestimated price for oil, clearly inflated. We are not looking at a \$1.4 billion deficit; we are very likely looking at a \$1.6 billion to \$2 billion deficit this year. And what that leads me to conclude is that, in fact, this government's deficit really is out of control. One might feel more comfortable in confronting it if we could see a plan of action, steps that are being taken to overcome that deficit, to reduce that debt. We do not; quite the contrary. The Treasurer will throw out the idea, "Well, we have the Heritage Savings Trust Fund," and somehow that nils out all of that problem. It doesn't nil out all of that problem.

We're told time and time again that there is \$15 billion in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, but there is not. Two and a half billion of it is in the Kananaskis golf course, the Walter Mackenzie hospital. Maybe some of the new members, some of the new Conservative back-bench members, can tell us how it is that you can sell those for cash, for change, to create jobs, because none of the old members have been able to tell us that. That is spent money: \$8 billion of the remainder of that fund is spent money to the extent that it's been invested in five Crown corporations. It's lines in the ground for Alberta Government Telephones; it's constructed housing units for Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They may be assets on paper, but you're not going to be able to liquidate them in any fashion to achieve money to pay off the kind of debt that we're talking about in this budget debate. The Heritage Savings Trust Fund is more of a liability now in terms of this debate, because the government keeps throwing that out and making people believe, making its own managers believe, that they actually have money that they do not in fact have. That money has by and large been spent. It is gone, and we are left with a \$17 billion debt to contend with. Future generations must contend with it.

I believe that the federal Conservative Minister of Finance premised his budget, as weak as it was, on one important possibility, and that was that if we can hold the line on new expenditure, then the growth in the economy can catch up to us and it will allow us eventually to overcome the deficit and debt problems. Now, in the absence of any other alternatives -- and certainly we haven't seen other alternatives on the part of this government -- in the absence of some other alternative, at least that might be an objective that this government could have pursued. But it's very disconcerting to note that the overall total expenditure this year estimated over last year's actual is 7.4 percent. That is at least double reasonable projections for inflation and at least double reasonable projections for growth. And so the Treasurer hasn't even been able to meet that reasonably minimal expenditure objective in the hopes that economic growth and development will actually catch up to the expenditure levels of this government.

What that amounts to, Mr. Speaker, is extremely poor fiscal management. No, we do not want to cut important people programs, social programs, education, investment in the future through small business, high tech, research and development. We do not want to cut in areas like that. But there are areas of frivolous expenditure that this government must look at cutting and has to be aggressive and determined in doing so. Well, it isn't. This budget does not address the question of expenditure reduction. It does not address the question of keeping expenditure within some reasonable guideline, which would be economic growth projections or even inflationary projections for the coming year.

What I hear instead, and I still hear it -- I remember how shocked I was the first term that I attended this Legislature, when an extremely senior cabinet minister stood up in defence of that cabinet minister's budgetary estimates session and said, you know, how proud he was that he was here in the early '70s when the first government of Alberta expended more than \$1 billion in a single fiscal year, and how proud he was that he was also here as minister of the first department of a government of Alberta to expend more than \$1 billion, and how proud he was that now he was standing up as minister of whatever department it was at that time saying he was the first minister of that particular department in the government of Alberta to ever expend more than \$1 billion. I can remember my sense of outrage at hearing that from a cabinet minister, who instead of bragging about how much more money we spend than any other province in the country and how significant it is that he can find a way to spend \$1 billion in a single year in a single department should have instead been saying, "We spend a lot less money a lot more efficiently than any other government across this country."

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

My point is, Mr. Speaker, that there is not a conviction across the way, that perhaps I even saw one or two budgets ago, to manage this government, to take hold of its expenditures, to take hold and to throttle its deficit and its debt. Instead, I find a very disquieting reluctance to aggressively pursue the fiscal problems facing this province. I do not see it in a change of attitude. I still hear members of that government talking about defending a budget, the budget of the Environment, as being good -- why? -- because we spend more money per capita than any other province in the country. There are other measures that this government must begin to apply to its fiscal regime. Just

spending more money per capita is not the same -- and it is not good enough -- as spending less money more efficiently than any other jurisdiction in this country.

One glaring omission in this budget and in this government's fiscal policies is aggressive accountability techniques, aggressive management accountability programs. There are a number that I would like to mention briefly today.

The Auditor General's powers. I'm sure all the members of this Legislature will note that when the federal Auditor General presents his case to the public, it captures the headlines. The most recent report of the federal Auditor General, Kenneth Dye, focused on, among other things, the overexpenditure on Canada Place. Why is it, we might ask ourselves, that that Auditor General's report does capture the headlines and that our Auditor General's report doesn't? It isn't that our Auditor General is any less capable -- he is every bit as capable -- but he is limited in the powers he is given with which to review the expenditures of this government.

All our Auditor General can do is take the estimates as approved by the Legislature and determine whether each item of money in those estimates has been spent as directed by the Legislature. Therefore, if he's given a million dollars for some component of education, he can say, "Yes, that million dollars was spent on education," or "No, it wasn't." But he cannot say that the million dollars was spent on education and could have been spent more effectively, more efficiently; we could have received greater value for that money that we spent on education than we did. Well, those powers do not exist for our Auditor General: value for money powers. They do exist for the federal Auditor General. And it is as easy as a stroke of the pen for this Treasurer, encouraged by that back bench, to get that kind of responsible fiscal provision, management accountability provision, in its management regime. It won't do it. Why is that? Because it's tired and it is weak government. Tired government does not want to be held accountable. Strong government seeks out accountability. What we have to understand is that unless you have those kinds of management provisions in place, things happen that otherwise wouldn't have happened, and money is spent less efficiently than it otherwise would have been spent. The Auditor General's powers.

The Public Accounts Committee. The Public Accounts Committee should have been one of the most powerful and significant standing committees of this Legislature. Instead, it is a sham. It is not given the budget by this government to meet to discuss every single department's prior year expenditures. I've sat on that committee for three years. We're not allowed to sit between sessions of the Legislature, and therefore we had in the first year I was there, if I'm not mistaken, the opportunity to discuss four departments out of about 25 departments' prior year expenditures. The next year we discussed about six and the next year we discussed about seven or eight out of 25 departments' prior year expenditures. What I know about management is that if we have managers in this room being called to account and being asked questions, they will think differently and manage differently than they have in the past.

Again this government, tired and weak as it is, will not implement processes such as strengthening the Public Accounts Committee of this Legislature in its ability to review prior year expenditures. It should also be given the power to call witnesses, to call deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers, to call outside experts to comment on the expenditure of any department it chooses to comment upon.

Finally, we know that cutting costs requires a great deal of rigour and a great deal of focus. It means not letting any opportunity slip by which you could cut costs. And sometimes it's difficult for internal department management for political management to be as aggressive with its own preferences as it should be in the exercise of cutting costs. For that reason, I would ask that this government consider establishing a task force, a special task force, that could look into department expenditures, that could take it outside the personal regime or the personal empire of a given cabinet minister, a given bureaucracy, and ask to have outside experts come in and review the expenditure of each and every department. That in fact is being done now at the University of Alberta with a great deal of success. It has to contend with fiscal pressures; it has taken the responsibility to contend with those pressures. I do not see this government undertaking that same level of responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, there are a great number of reasons why it would be impossible for me and my caucus colleagues to support this budget, the fiscal policies, such as they are, of this government. The deficit/debt situation, which we believe to be out of control, is one of them. Equally important the lack of new, aggressive, rigorous, creative accountability techniques, which are fully within the grasp of this government to implement and to pursue, is another one of them.

All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that this budget is an embarrassment to this government. It should be construed by this government as being an embarrassment. It is in fact I think, a much worse budget than budgets I have seen presented even by this government in the past. It represents tired government, it reflects tired government and it is, among other things, an affront to the people of this province.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it is with distinct pleasure and pride that I rise to speak in the Assembly for the first time. It is also with a great deal of respect that I make my first speech among seasoned legislators on both sides of the House and under your keen direction, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate you on your reinstatement and I know I share the sentiments of the hon. members of this Assembly when I say your appointment is met without surprise but with a sincere sense of reassurance and appreciation.

I also wish to extend my acknowledgment to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of this province for her gracious presentation of the Speech from the Throne. We are indeed fortunate to have such a fine Lieutenant Governor, and I look forward to her continued involvement in our legislative process.

As well, I would like to take a moment to recognize my predecessor, the former MLA for Smoky River constituency, the hon. Marvin Moore. Most of the members of this Assembly are aware of the fine work Mr. Moore accomplished on behalf of his constituents and on behalf of all the people of Alberta through his distinguished service in various cabinet portfolios. We as a constituency are thankful for the representation he provided, and I am completely aware of the challenge that lies ahead of me as I endeavour to take his place. Mr. Moore was the original MLA for the Smoky River constituency, first elected to this Assembly in 1971, and I stand before you today with the honour of delivering only the second maiden speech in the history of this constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the Smoky River area, which I have the privilege to represent means a great deal more to me than I can begin to describe during the time I have been allotted this after-

noon. I have been asked by the people of my constituency to represent their best interests, and I will make every effort to honour their request with uncompromising determination. This is my first priority, and I think it is therefore appropriate that the diversity, strengths, and people of this constituency be the subject of my first speech in this Assembly.

As I was in the constituency over the weekend, I spoke to many individuals who were extremely pleased with the content of this past provincial budget, delivered by the hon. minister of finance last Thursday. I believe the 1989-90 provincial budget is concrete evidence of this government's commitment to responsible fiscal management. We are determined to achieve a balanced budget through controlled expenditures while maintaining basic service and without unnecessary tax increases. I congratulate our Premier for his outstanding leadership and the hon. minister of finance for his insights. I know the people of Alberta are thankful for the wisdom and leadership they provide concerning these matters.

As I reflect on the Budget Address, the message that came to me with great clarity was one of challenge and opportunity. These ideals are not new to Albertans. As the settlers of the Smoky River area traveled to their new homes in the early 1900s by way of the Grouard and Edson trails, they were no doubt struck by the challenges that lay ahead and by magnificent possibilities leading to security and prosperity. They came with the dreams of establishing productive farms and a new way of life for their families. We realize now that they made the best of their opportunities, and today we enjoy a better standard of life because of their efforts. The settlers of this era were born far away from the unbroken but promising land in Alberta in the Peace River country, with such diverse countries as England, Norway, France, Poland, Germany, and the Ukraine as their birthplaces. They approached this new land with commitment and with vision. Today we still benefit from these rich ethnic origins of past generations, but perhaps even more importantly, the Smoky River constituency is characterized by residents that have inherited a sense of commitment and vision. For this I am thankful, Mr. Speaker. It is the very reason why I look to the future with a confidence that Albertans will continue to enjoy an even better way of life in the future.

Like other areas of our great province, settlers first came to take advantage of the bountiful, rich farmland, and the agricultural industry was solidly the cornerstone around which the economy of the Smoky River area was built. This is the industry that initiated economic growth in our province, and it will continue to be the precious and vital part of our existence. It was in those early years and following decades that the Alberta grain industry enjoyed a reputation envied throughout the world. In fact, in my own constituency through the 1940s the Sexsmith area was recognized as the grain capital of the British Empire.

The grain industry has been good to the people of Alberta and Smoky River, but those relying on it for their livelihood have also experienced more difficult times. It is through these trials and periods of declining and distorted markets that producers have appreciated the direction, foresight, and provisions this government has provided. Initiatives such as farm credit stability, the farm fuel distribution allowance, and the farm fertilizer price protection have been utilized by my constituents, in most cases making a great difference to the survival of the average family farm. Recent budget announcements have revealed commitments to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers in the 1989-90 fiscal year of more than \$600 million. This includes a

program that reduces diesel fuel costs, a necessary initiative that my constituents have already expressed appreciation for.

But gone are the days when the Alberta agriculture industry was solely centred on the harvesting of grain. There are now many opportunities in the production and processing of products that have come from the prairie fields. In particular, Mr. Speaker, I am thinking of the potential and existing diversification going on within my constituency in regard to canola crushing and alfalfa processing. Despite the current difficulties in the Alberta canola industry due to poor crush margins, the plant in Sexsmith remains eager and ready to take advantage of an opening into the American market. The alfalfa processing operation in Falher is an exciting example of agricultural diversification. This plant is adopting a bold and progressive process known as cubing. New marketing opportunities with this product will soon be paying dividends to the entire Falher area.

The agricultural opportunity involving honey production was heated some time ago to the point that the constituency now holds the title as the largest producer in the province. In fact, the town of Falher, some 250 miles northwest of Edmonton, has called itself the honey capital of Canada, and perhaps the entire world. This government has supported these efforts by providing \$700,000 in 1989-90 for Alberta's participation in a new, national tripartite honey price stabilization program. However, despite the volume of honey production from this area and helpful government support, the industry is not without its obstacles. A recent federal government decision has restricted the importation of queen bees from the United States, leaving local producers to seek other expensive and poorer quality purchases elsewhere. Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious problem, and we will continue to seek courses of action to attempt to alleviate this situation.

The agricultural diversification efforts of my constituents do not end here. I would point out two other initiatives, such as bison and game farms, which are found in the area surrounding Clairmont, Valleyview, DeBolt, Bezanson, and Harmon Valley.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the areas of secondary agriculture-related industry. Entrepreneurs and visionaries in this section of the local economy will further recognize the opportunities of the Smoky River area and the capabilities of its people. I stress that entrepreneurs will bring these future projects into reality, because that is the way of this government. We have seen through this budget a government that seeks to help provide the environment, the economic climate that makes entrepreneurs willing and able to turn dreams into reality. Entrepreneurs in the business sector have always shown a great deal of initiative and drive throughout Alberta and in our constituency. This is reflected by the fact that more Albertans are employed today than ever before. Small businesses are healthy and looking into the 1990s with extreme optimism. A sizable group of small businessmen and businesswomen and self-employed tradesmen have committed themselves and their customers and communities in a way that has made me genuinely proud. They have been an inspiration to civic and provincial leaders in the constituency, having proven themselves not only durable but extremely successful.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. members of this Assembly are all aware of the growing importance of the forestry industry in our economy. In total, \$3.5 billion of forestry investment will create about 10,000 construction jobs and over 4,000 permanent jobs for Albertans. The Smoky River area is rich in wood, and I would very much like to see this sector of the local economy

developed even further. We must endeavour to bring further forestry processing operations to the constituency, adding to those that already exist.

As everyone who has been in the Smoky River area will quickly realize in passing pump jacks, pipelines, and storage tanks along the side of the highway, the energy industry is of great importance to our local economy. Oil and gas production in the Valleyview, Falher, and Sexsmith regions has added vitality and diversification in a way that has positively affected small and big business alike. The energy industry has made significant gains in the past year, and the positive momentum is now with us. We in the Smoky River constituency are appreciative of the government's continuing work within the industry to ensure that the investment climate remains attractive.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that many other members of the Legislature have had your ear concerning the topic of free trade. I feel compelled to contribute my own observations concerning the agreement's impact on my constituency. I have admired the provincial government's courage and leadership regarding this issue. The economy of the Smoky River area is, to a large degree, dependent on export markets, hence we stand to benefit from the further opening of the American market. This is especially true in the case of the energy industry, as we see the natural gas exports to the United States having grown about 80 percent in the last two years.

I look forward to working with this government to seek out and promote further opportunities to the south. I believe we've taken for granted for quite some time a resource that is really just beginning to be explored. In many ways we awoke to the potential of tourism in the early 1980s. Alberta realized we had more to offer visitors than just the Rockies, that we could offer the world and ourselves all sorts of unique and wonderful tourist destinations within our own province. I am pleased to report that the Smoky River constituency has become aware of the limitless opportunities in tourism as well. Programs like the community tourism action planning program, along with the initiatives of many constituent residents, has boosted the local tourist industry to absolutely new heights. While tourists continue to enjoy obvious attractions such as a fishing trip to Sturgeon Lake or Snipe Lake and relaxing at one of the many truly scenic campgrounds, we as a constituency have a good deal more to offer. It would be a pleasure to describe each of these tourist attractions, but I will limit my comments to just a few of those many sights.

The Francophone population in the Falher, Girouxville, Donnelly, and McLennan regions is the largest in Alberta. Among the many French cultural facilities and attractions in this area is the Girouxville museum, which is one of the most reputable in northern Alberta. Donnelly is home of a unique genealogy and historical society, which possesses extensive records of Canadian Francophone settlement in northern Alberta and throughout all of Canada. The society has roughly 10,000 pages of northern Alberta history that has never been published, in addition to a fine collection of archives.

The Smoky River area is also privileged to promote the Keleskun Hills dinosaur beds as one of the first discovered and the best of its kind within the province. Our tourism opportunities, such as the Smoky River ski hill, the mighty waters of the Smoky River, and the blacksmith museum at the provincial historical site in Sexsmith help attract tourism dollars that otherwise would be leaving the area and the province.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the pace and direction of our

Alberta economy at the present time. I make this statement in light of last week's budget address and the many talks I have had with individuals from every sector of the economy during the recent election campaign who have expressed optimism, the people who are the closest to the economic pulse of this province. Albertans are determined to succeed, building on our strengths and expanding into areas we have not yet taken full advantage of.

Mr. Speaker, I feel pleased and proud to sit with a government that identifies with businessmen and businesswomen, the farmers and the labourers of this province. Members of the government, unlike some of this Assembly, understand that there is always room for improvement but that we need to build on a foundation of realistic optimism and encouragement. I would challenge the members of this House who continually paint a gloom and doom picture of this province, of our economic prospects, to take a page out of the life of the average Albertans that I met with. They characterize and reflect the attitude of this government, and that gives me reason to feel positive about our leadership and our direction.

We are fortunate to have a variety of government and community programs that help not only the financial needs of Albertans but also the many other needs that are not measured in terms of dollars and cents. Education is an investment in the future that can rarely be overestimated. It is the top priority of this government, as is indicated by the 5.5 percent increase in per pupil grants this year. Total operating support for basic education has increased over 8 percent. We've helped the students of today and tomorrow by providing top-notch facilities for their learning environment. In addition to school renovations in Sexsmith and Valleyview, expansions have occurred in high schools in Donnelly and Falher. Of particular interest to my constituents are budget expenditures for education, including several program enhancements that recognize the needs of children in Alberta. Funding, for example, of a distance education initiative increases to more than \$11 million and will provide area residents with opportunities that simply were not available to them previously. This is the type of innovation and creativity that will keep Alberta education ranked as the best in the country.

The preparation of tomorrow's leaders is a huge task, and there seem to be as many theories concerning the best strategy to educate students as there are teachers. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very involved debate, but I do want to petition my fellow colleagues in this Assembly that we as legislators focus on fine-tuning our method of education to provide students with the tools and insight to become leaders in society and not followers. An employer business-oriented perspective is perhaps missing from our education. I am eager to pursue this ideal during the time and opportunity that I serve as an MLA.

Education is a high priority, as is health care, Mr. Speaker. I commend the government for recognizing and acting on the needs of those depending on the health care system in both urban and rural areas of Alberta, with a health care expenditure increase of 6.7 percent this past year. A new hospital was just completed in McLennan, and funds are being allocated for construction of a new hospital in Valleyview. These communities and residents in the surrounding area are thankful for the government that has honoured its commitment to the health needs of all Albertans indiscriminately. It seems that both opposition parties have other ideas concerning regional health development in rural localities. Mr. Speaker, is it reasonable to close rural

hospitals and ask individual people in need of medical attention to travel a distance of two or three hours or more to the nearest health care facility? Some of the members of the opposition would seem to think so, and I openly question their rationale. We perhaps see a case where political reasoning has outweighed basic health considerations for all rural Albertans.

We can also be proud of the care we extend to our senior citizens, with more than \$90 million in new funding to enhance quality of life for those Albertans. The respect attributed to seniors through the variety of life-enriching programs offered by this government has provided them with opportunities and benefits we'd be hard-pressed to find in other provinces and other countries. The budget has allowed for the construction of a new senior citizens' home in Nampa, and I look forward to the development of additional facilities in Falher and Sexsmith.

With roots in rural Alberta, Mr. Speaker, I understand the importance of good families. We in the Smoky River constituency appreciate this government's commitments to the irreplaceable institution. Strong families built our province, and strong families will play a major role in providing resourceful, independent citizens that we will depend on for stability in years ahead. Substance abuse is a continuing threat to our families and young people. I fully endorse the government's initiative in establishing an Alberta family and drug abuse foundation.

Another matter of concern in our province and in fact in the world, Mr. Speaker, is the environment. Our petrochemical, pulp and paper plants, and other heavy industries can only proceed with the utmost adherence to our high environmental standards. In Alberta we are looked upon with much respect throughout all of Canada and the world for the direction we have taken with environmental initiatives. The 9 percent increase in the budget of the Department of the Environment maintains Alberta's record of spending 25 percent more per capita on environmental programs than the average of other provinces. But we simply have too much at stake to stop with the measures that have already been introduced and enforced. Our striving for excellence in this area should be a balanced approach. This is a very emotional issue, Mr. Speaker, and emotions must be tempered with clear, rational analysis. I would hope that the members of this Legislature would be willing to join us in seeking out this fine line and ensure that we provide future generations with an environment that has been properly managed.

The people of my constituency are impressed by the government's decision to allocate \$100 million to accelerate the existing program for paving nearly 15,000 kilometres of secondary roads. We look forward to the advantage these improved roads will bring to our farms, our businesses, and our families.

It is also appropriate to point out that the Smoky River constituency is home to one of the most innovative and progressive Indian reserves in Alberta and Canada. I have very much enjoyed the opportunities to visit the Sturgeon Lake Reserve just west of Valleyview to see first hand the recreational, educational, and economic achievements directed by leadership there. Recently this band secured a contract to proceed with a chopstick production plant that will result in unprecedented economic growth and gain to the area and its people.

The residents of my constituency have also benefited from the government's action to help Albertans obtain affordable housing. The Alberta mortgage interest shielding program and the Alberta family first-home program will be utilized to a great extent by needy individuals and young families within our

constituency.

I know that Senate reform continues to be a high priority with this government, and for good reason. In the future I, along with many members of this Assembly, look forward to sending the first elected Senator to Ottawa. The people of the Smoky River constituency are overwhelmingly in favour of Albertans leading in this role to bring about progressive and historic changes within our Senate.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would add that this is an exciting time to serve as a Member of the Legislative Assembly and an exciting time to live within the province of Alberta. The budget has provided the people of Alberta with prudent fiscal management and a realistic opportunity to enter the 1990s with the most diversified and stable economic base this country has seen. Given this hope, I hope the original settlers of the Smoky River area, my constituents, will make the most of their opportunities. We will see economic growth in this region and an improved standard of life. I pledge to humbly honour this effort and the confidence of these people with consistent committed representation. I am proud to be the Member of this Legislative Assembly representing the Smoky River constituency and proud to be an Albertan.

Thank you.

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

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome this opportunity to address the budget and look at it in the context of the throne speech which we received a couple of weeks ago. The budget and the throne speech are the blueprints for the implementation of the philosophy and the policies of this government. Overall we note an air of optimism and commitment to social programs for the coming year. However, I've been in this Legislature now three years and remember a similar kind of optimism three years ago which was followed by an incredible obsession with reducing and eliminating the deficit. I think we can pause and reflect upon the past and know that it may well foretell the future. So I am deeply concerned at this time that even as we speak today about the increases in some funding, next year the concern with the deficit will take over.

Even as we do look at the increases we see in this budget, we may see that many of them are simply returning to a pre-1987 level and certainly do not take into account in many cases the cost of living increases, never mind increasing the programs in accord with the increased demand. When we look at AADAC, which in this budget seemingly has an 18 percent increase, we see that it is only 11 percent over the 1986-87 budget, and that FCSS funding is increased only 2 percent over the 1986-87 expenditures, \$32 million compared to \$31 million three years ago. We have to have similar concerns about education and health care and social services, that these aren't really increases, although they certainly aren't in keeping with the increase in need.

The government continues to hold to a traditional pattern of taxing: 92 percent of the tax base from individuals and families and only 8 percent from corporations. The Treasurer continues to hold to an optimistic prediction of the price of oil, \$19 a barrel, although we hear today that that may be way off base. He also holds that out of that high rate of pay for oil, there will be increased activity in the oil fields. These are in no way guaranteed.

What is lacking is a commitment to restructuring the tax base, something that we would ask for. Instead of increasing medicare premiums for families and individuals by 10 percent, the Treasurer needs to increase taxes on corporations to a basic level. I think we can see from this that the government has misplaced priorities. They have targeted individuals and families with tax increases and program cuts while the corporate sector, they feel, must be protected from tax increases in order to promote a good business climate. The government seems to not be able to overcome its belief that the only way to deal with the deficit is to cut spending instead of looking at new and innovative ways of taxing.

What I believe is being abandoned by this government is the social contract, a contract which holds that governments are charged with balancing the public good with the right to private gain, that through the social contract we in government provide a minimal level of dignity to all the citizens, that we administer a fair taxation system, and that we protect the vulnerable from abuse and exploitation. Through the social contract we commit ourselves to co-operate for the public good to create a society marked by our commitment that all citizens shall have a life of basic human dignity, a society marked by our care and concern for our fellow human beings, a care and concern that recognizes that we are not all created equal in our abilities and potentialities and situations of birth but we are created equal in our human dignity and our right to live with dignity and self-respect.

In order to create such a society, we agree to limit our freedoms. We create laws and rules, and we contribute personal resources through taxation to create a social infrastructure that addresses the needs of all our citizens and eliminates the exploitation and abuse of some. At the same time, we create an environment that promotes individual initiative and development. The struggle through history has been to achieve the balance between these two thrusts. Increasingly, however, in the western world we see an abandonment of our commitment to the social contract, to this goal. Instead we see an increasing commitment to competition, to survival of the fittest, and to an adherence to the belief that we are, in fact, all created equal in our abilities and that individual failure to succeed, and even in some cases to survive, except in the most extreme cases is due to personal failure.

The trade deal signed with the United States is a betrayal of the federal government's commitment to the social contract and is a total commitment to private gain: the bottom line, profit; the image of government as a corporate board of directors who manage rather than govern, who manipulate rather than empower. Such an orientation focuses on profits, not people. It looks to personal failure and refuses to acknowledge systemic causes, and it values winning and success in its narrowest form instead of care and justice.

What is absent in this desire to create the good life is the reflection upon what it is that makes life good. Evidence of the failure of the government to honour the social contract comes to us in two ways. One is the unending supplies of letters in our mailboxes asking for funds to aid the poor, the homeless, the sick, the illiterate, the abused, and the violated and to protect our environment. Surely in a society as rich as ours food, clothing, shelter, basic literacy, and personal safety should not be matters of charity but a matter of right, a commitment by government to guarantee certain basic human rights and dignities to all.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

The second piece of evidence comes from the government themselves. We hear it often in this House, and it is the increasing reliance on the volunteer sector to provide for the poor. So we have food banks and secondhand clothing stores for the homeless, for the sick, including unending appeals for funds for research into any number of illnesses. Mr. Speaker, I look to the day that the military has to appeal for charitable and volunteer dollars and hours to fill its research commitments. We get appeals for aid to promote literacy and volunteers to work to teach people to read, and our women's shelters and our sexual assault centres depend on volunteer hours and dollars in order to aid and protect women and children who are assaulted and abused. Increasingly, this government fails to honour its commitment to all of us to care for and protect those who need it -- and I believe the commitment is to all of us -- and to promote the public good. I believe this is the result of broken promises and misplaced priorities.

Let us look at some of the government's commitments and priorities. The Premier has spoken at length of his commitment to strengthening family life and has two initiatives funded in this budget. The Premier's council on the family has initial funding of \$236,000, and the family life and drug abuse foundation has an additional \$250,000. Sounds good, but when we look at the real programs to support families, another message is given: FCSS funding, a paltry .9 percent increase over last year's funding and, as I said earlier, only a 2 percent increase over the 1986-87 funding, in spite of cost-of-living increases and increased demands for services. We see no commitment to mental health services for children, yet we know that early intervention may allow these children to remain at home, a tremendous saving over institutional costs, never mind the saving in terms of parental anguish and lost potential of children.

We see an increased commitment to shelters, a new shelter in the Peace River region, but we also see -- and I quote from the budget estimates -- money to maintain the current level of service. Shelters have been repeatedly promised 100 percent basic service funding, but that level of funding is not yet forthcoming. So shelters have to raise money through runathons, bingos, casinos, and volunteers are burned out looking for scarce dollars to operate shelters, never mind funding treatment programs for children and support and follow-up programs for mothers. Five million dollars, we are told, for battered women. The Racing Commission gets \$7 million. One has to question the government's priorities.

In another area the government has committed \$200 million to an endowment fund for family life and drug abuse and an additional \$250,000 for planning. None of us would or could minimize or deny the problem of drug abuse or the importance of family life. However, families face many problems other than drug abuse. Poverty affects family life. One in six families in Alberta and 93,000 Alberta children live in poverty. Poverty kills, poverty cripples, and poverty limits opportunities and destroys hopes and aspirations. I would just quote a recent publication that says:

Infant mortality is twice as common among poor children;

Twice as many poor children fall behind in school.

Children who grow up in poverty run the risk of remaining second class citizens all their lives.

I would ask the Premier to focus on poverty as a family issue and that he make the eradication of poverty a priority of this government. Indeed, it would ameliorate and remedy many of

the other problems, including drug and alcohol abuse, that we see.

Another area of family life that the government must address is assault and violence in families. Fourteen percent of women in Edmonton who are in a relationship with a man are battered. Child sexual abuse: we really don't know the magnitude of it, but the majority of offenders are persons in the family or trusted people. Child physical abuse is the third major cause of death. We have no idea of the extent of long-term injury and damage done to children who are abused within the family setting. We also know that children who witness violence are victims also. Many of them at the young age of six or seven are walking time bombs, and we see them later in our prisons and in our mental health care facilities.

The key to prevention of future problems is intervention and treatment today. It is the most cost-effective program we can implement. We cannot ignore these problems in family life. If we're going to have an endowment fund, let's split drug abuse from family life and deal with the issue of drug and alcohol abuse with long-term funding for treatment, education, and research. But we must also look at family life protection and enhancement as having many other determinants and risks that must also be addressed.

This government has also failed to honour the social contract in other areas. We see significant cuts in funding to small business and employment opportunity programs. Certainly we have heard over and over again that small business is the backbone of this province, that in fact that is where the majority of jobs are created, 90 percent or more, yet we see a reduction in funding to these programs. We are told to help those that need help, but we have cuts again in programs to help make self-sufficient native and Metis groups. We see in the budget that huge increases have gone to public relations and promotions, probably to sell this budget.

When we look at the area of economic development, again we must pause. A report from Economic Development and Trade, Aerospace, which we were handed last week, reveals that 20 of the 60 companies listed have defence contracts. Militarization seems to be held up as an economic development and job-creation strategy. However, we know job creation, indeed jobs, in the military industry is expensive. For example, EDO Canada, a company involved in military endeavours, got \$2.3 million from the federal Department of Communications, \$2 million from its own company to create 10 jobs. The research indicates that a billion dollars spent in the military creates only a third as many jobs as those that would be created by the same billion dollars spent in teaching or social services.

In addition, we see that the government has cut STEP and PEP programs. But we also see a commitment to tourism as a job-creation strategy. However, many of the jobs are part-time or short-term jobs at low levels of pay, often \$4.50 to \$6 an hour, certainly not a living wage and nothing to give one hope for the future. We have to say: where is the government's commitment to create jobs that are permanent, full-time jobs at a living wage with a future? It's all right to say that we've created a lot of jobs, but if they're short term, low paying, and without a future, all we do is build a cycle of hopelessness.

I would also comment on an increasing dependence on defence-related jobs. A reliance on these jobs, which are so costly, is often done at the expense of other jobs. It also means that moves toward peace and disarmament are met with some degree of consternation because closures of these industries and

installations are done without regard for the workers displaced. In addition, our research dollars are being redirected into what can only be termed as offensive defence research instead of life-sustaining and -enhancing research. We have to look at how much of the money goes to our universities and how dependent they have become on the military for funds.

In this vein, I would like to raise the issue of the defence research establishment at Suffield and would ask the government what assurances they will give us that as the recommendations of the Barton report are implemented, including the destruction of the toxic materials stored there -- is there a commitment to ensure that the people and the environment will be protected? And will the government bring forth the grave concerns raised by Alberta about both the environmental impact of this defence research station and our complicity in the chemical and biological warfare race that is escalating at the international level? Surely alternatives can be found to the escalation of development of these horrible weapons. A suggestion I heard given just the other day to some people at an international conference was that perhaps we could consider making the antidotes to these weapons available to the International Red Cross and the World Health Organization to deal with the threat of chemical and biological weapon usage and in this way disarm. What we need is creativity and commitment to finding peaceful solutions to international disputes, not getting into the fray and making money off it to boot.

We see in this budget an increased commitment to the women's council and Women's Secretariat but a lack of commitment to implementing the many recommendations from those bodies: programs for immigrant women, including translation and training services for shelters, English as a Second Language programs that are flexible and that can meet the needs of immigrant women, resources for native women, and action to overcome the inequity suffered by women and the poverty that women and children live in because of this inequity. Initiatives in these areas are strangely absent. The council and secretariat are useful only if the government takes seriously their recommendations and acts upon these recommendations.

We must be particularly concerned about the Premier's unwillingness to eliminate discrimination in the widows' pension, discrimination on the basis of marital status. Indeed, funds to widows' allowances have been cut by 17 percent in this budget, in a time of an aging population. In addition, we see that assistance to the aged has been reduced and Aids to Daily Living support has been reduced by 25 percent.

In conclusion, I would ask the government this question: where is your commitment to the common good? Without the government's willingness to limit the powers of the powerful and wealthy, we have a society that views some groups of people as dispensable, that the rights of certain groups of people need not be protected. In the years to come we need a fair taxation system and a commitment to care for all of our citizens. This is the nature of the social contract, and because this budget does not honor the commitment to the social contract, I do not support it and ask that it be defeated.

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to make my maiden speech, I find it difficult to express the feelings of pride and anticipation that occur at this moment. It will have to suffice to say that both new and veteran members know how tremendous this feeling is.

I would like to thank the Honourable the Lieutenant Gover-

nor for her guidance to this House in the Speech from the Throne. We are fortunate to have such a fine individual to serve as our vice-regent.

May I also congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your second term in this important position. Although I've had a limited time to observe this Assembly, I've been impressed by the confidence and the knowledgeable manner in which you carry out your duties.

Finally, I would like to make reference to my predecessor and personal friend, the hon. Dr. Neil Webber. Dr. Webber was an active government member with a long and very distinguished service record to the people of Alberta, having served as the Associate Minister of Telephones and also as cabinet minister for Social Services, Education, and Energy. I am sure that my constituents are expecting active participation and hard work from their new representative. I am truly humbled by the honour of being selected to serve as their representative in this Legislature after him and will remain cognizant of the trust and the confidence that's been placed in me by my constituents.

For those members not familiar with Calgary-Bow -- and it has been some time, over 13 years, since the last maiden speech -- I would like to just take a little bit of time to describe the constituency. Calgary-Bow is situated in northwest Calgary adjacent to the Bow River, and it runs from the city limits to Louise Bridge at 10th Street N.W. It has all the beauty of a prairie river valley with an abundance of trees and colourful gardens. A bicycle path near the river runs the length of the constituency and is enjoyed by ever-growing numbers of people who are cycling, jogging, and walking. In the early mornings the fishermen are trying their luck in many of the Bow's famous fishing spots.

Calgary-Bow encompasses the communities of Bowness, Montgomery, Point McKay, Parkdale, St. Andrew's Heights, and Hillhurst. Each neighbourhood has a distinct identity which serves to make up a very diverse constituency. For example, Greenwood Village is a large, friendly, mobile home community right across from the Olympic ski jumps. Bowness started as a group of country homes that grew into a separate town, which was joined to the city of Calgary in 1965. Bowness Park is one of the oldest recreational areas in the city. A lagoon and canoes make it a very popular gathering spot for everyone. There are many beautiful homes that line the riverbanks.

Montgomery was started on farmland just after the war. It has a Shouldice area, which was donated by the famous Shouldice family, and it has there a park and arena. It has facilities for soccer, baseball, football, tennis, and picnics. Point McKay is a newer neighbourhood with fashionable town houses and high-rise condominiums. It has many young professionals that dwell there.

A survey of the age range in the constituency shows that the residents of Calgary-Bow have a higher proportion in two categories: the babyboomer years of 25 to 44 and the senior years. The constituency currently has a slightly lower proportion of young adults and children. However, I've noticed lately a growing trend towards young families buying homes from retiring seniors, so changes in the constituency are beginning to come. Hillhurst, Parkdale, and St. Andrew's Heights are areas where we see this taking place. The constituency defies a label. It's residents are from all walks of life. We have professionals such as doctors, lawyers, architects, university professors, businesspeople, tradespeople, nurses, students, and storekeepers all living in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to make a few comments on the initiatives outlined in the provincial budget. Many concerns were brought to my attention during and after the election, and it's reassuring to see that the government has anticipated and responded to many of those pressing concerns with several budget initiatives and programs. Although MLAs are elected to enact policies that will benefit all Albertans, I also have a special duty to my constituents. On this basis, I will be taking a special interest in the programs that relate to seniors, students, small business, and the family.

As I noted previously, Calgary-Bow has a higher proportion of senior citizens among its residents, and this is a growing trend right across Canada. The new gray wave means that the proportion of citizenships will continue to increase as a proportion of the population by the year 2000. Thus one of the continuing issues will always be adequate housing. New options for seniors housing will be explored in the next few years. It's generally accepted that our retired citizens would prefer to remain in their own communities in order to maintain their friendships and their family ties. I am very pleased to see that a new home improvement program for seniors, called the independent living program, will replace existing programs. This type of assistance is of great help to seniors who are trying to maintain older homes on their reduced income.

There is funding for a new housing option mentioned in the annual budget which intrigues me. This government has two pilot projects to study the potential for garden suites. These are compact, independent structures which can be set up on the same lot with a single-family home and occupied by the senior member of that family. It seems to combine independence with support: the best of both worlds, with tremendous economic advantages to both. I understand that they've been a great success in other countries and look forward to the outcome in these trials. These are forward-looking projects implemented by Premier Getty with his concern for the family and particularly for the seniors of our province.

Calgary-Bow has, however, traditional options which are also necessary as people become unable to live independently. We have three large nursing home complexes and six senior apartments. There is a need for additional housing of this type, and they are now looking at a new lodge/nursing home complex for the Bowness and Montgomery areas. The services to seniors must also be maintained, and the existing balance between paid and volunteer help may change in the future.

There are several seniors' centres and clubs active in my constituency. In addition to social, craft, athletic, and educational programs, several of these groups have outreach programs for other seniors who live in the community. These outreach programs provide volunteers and paid workers to help with the house and yard work, enabling many seniors to remain in their own homes. As much of the heavier work is beyond the capability of seniors, young people are usually hired. This outreach program helps provide relief from heavy duties for seniors and much-needed employment for younger people. We have a large number of students from SAIT, Mount Royal College, and the University of Calgary, and they are eager to take these opportunities. The provincial summer temporary employment program has been particularly useful in this regard. It is an example of government encouraging employment with programs that match the complementary needs of both seniors and young people.

May I move that we adjourn the debate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the House in agreement with the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is proposed to deal this evening in Committee of Supply with the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education, and I would move that when the members assemble at 8 o'clock this evening, they do so as the

Committee of Supply.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

[The House recessed at 5:30 p.m.]

