

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, March 12, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: **90/03/12**

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

Amen.

Commonwealth Day

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. Thank you.

Hon. members, today is Commonwealth Day, and I am pleased to be able to share with you that March 26, 1990, will mark Alberta's 45th anniversary as a branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. May it be a reminder to each of us that we must strive to understand, preserve, and strengthen the precious parliamentary tradition which we share with the other states, countries, and provinces of the Commonwealth. A copy of the Commonwealth Day message from Her Majesty the Queen has been placed on your desks.

Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly His Excellency François Bujon de l'Estang, the French ambassador to Canada. His Excellency was appointed ambassador to Canada in January of last year and is making his first official visit to the province at this time. He has had a long and distinguished public career representing the government of France both at home and abroad. He is accompanied today by the consul general to Canada and other members of his staff. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees**

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52, I wish to table four copies of the annual report of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act. Copies will be delivered to members as soon as printing is completed, which we anticipate in about two weeks.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

**Bill 201
Alberta Environmental Rights Act**

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce a Bill, being the Alberta Environmental Rights Act.

This is the number one opposition Bill for this legislative

session, indicating the highest priority placed on the matter of environmental rights by the Official Opposition. It guarantees access to information about environmental issues, provides for timely and proper studies of environmental policies and issues as well as public projects, provides for public education, intervenor funding, freedom of information, and the right to be heard. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Ruth Grier and John Kolkman in preparing this material.

[Leave granted; Bill 201 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Might the Chair suggest that we do, indeed, follow through in numerical sequence of introduction, please.

**Bill 202
Recycling Act**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 202, a Bill entitled Recycling Act.

The Bill is our priority Bill. It is intended to bring forward a provincewide recycling program and to stimulate markets for recycled materials.

[Leave granted; Bill 202 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Foothills.

**Bill 203
An Act to Amend
the Business Corporations Act**

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 203, An Act to Amend the Business Corporations Act.

This Bill will amend chapter B-15 of the *Statutes of Alberta 1981*. This new section will give an official of the Registrar of Companies the power to demand an accounting from receivers and to apply to the court to have the receivership expedited in the interests of those affected.

[Leave granted; Bill 203 read a first time]

**Bill 204
An Act to Amend the Labour Relations Code**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce for first reading Bill 204, An Act to Amend the Labour Relations Code.

It is an amendment to that Act, whereby the right to strike will be granted to certain employees.

[Leave granted; Bill 204 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 205, Edmonton-Glengarry.

**Bill 205
Freedom of Information and
Protection of Personal Privacy Act**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I request leave to introduce for first reading Bill 205. This is an Act entitled Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Act.

One more time with feeling, Mr. Speaker: this Act is intended

to make it mandatory for the government to release information, documents at its own level and at any level of government, municipal or universities: anything involving moneys that are given to agencies or organizations by the provincial government.

[Leave granted; Bill 205 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre.

Bill 206
Community Health Centre Act

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 206, the Community Health Centre Act.

This Bill would enable a variety of low-cost, front-line community health centres to offer health care services by a variety of licensed providers on a salary basis. It would also enable government to directly fund the operational and capital costs of these nonprofit health care centres.

[Leave granted; Bill 206 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

Bill 207
Children's Rights Act

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 207, the Children's Rights Act.

This legislation will provide children with legal guarantees to their rights modeled on the Declaration on the Rights of Children passed by the United Nations. This Bill, when passed, will make a significant statement, and that is that we cherish the children in this province and we have an obligation to ensure that their basic needs are met.

[Leave granted; Bill 207 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

Bill 208
Rent Review Act

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask leave to introduce Bill 208, Rent Review Act.

The purpose of this Act, Mr. Speaker, would be to create a rent review mechanism as part of the Ombudsman's office. This rent review process would protect tenants from being gouged, and only increases which would be justified would be approved.

[Leave granted; Bill 208 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

Bill 209
**An Act to Provide for Equal Pay
for Work of Equal Value**

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 209, being An Act to Provide for Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value.

This Bill, when passed, will in some measure work to correct the economic inequities experienced by women in both the

private- and public-sector workplaces.

[Leave granted; Bill 209 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Bill 210
Ecological Reserves and Heritage Rivers Act

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 210, being the Ecological Reserves and Heritage Rivers Act.

This Act would require that the province of Alberta establish 17 ecological reserves to reflect each of the 17 ecological regions in this province, that these reserves be of adequate size. It would also require that the province of Alberta participate in the Canadian heritage rivers program.

[Leave granted; Bill 210 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

Bill 211
**An Act to Control the Sale of Products
Which Are Not Made in Conformity with
Alberta Environmental Standards**

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 211, which is titled An Act to Control the Sale of Products Which Are Not Made in Conformity with Alberta Environmental Standards.

This Bill would require a manufacturer outside of Alberta who manufactures a product in a method not meeting Alberta standards to label the product accordingly so that Alberta consumers would be alerted that the product was manufactured using environmentally unsound methods.

[Leave granted; Bill 211 read a first time]

Bill 212
Alberta Youth Conservation Corps Act

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 212, Alberta Youth Conservation Corps Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Act will establish a voluntary youth conservation corps to undertake conservation projects in Alberta's parks.

[Leave granted; Bill 212 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud.

Bill 213
An Act to Amend the Alberta Income Tax Act

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I request leave to introduce Bill 213, An Act to Amend the Alberta Income Tax Act.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to provide for a renters' rebate, taking into consideration the skyrocketing rents Albertans are facing today due to the increasing decline in the vacancy rate that is occurring.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 213 read a first time]

Bill 214
Non-Smokers Health Act

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Non-Smokers Health Act.

This Bill provides for the right of all Alberta employees, government and nongovernment, to work in healthy, smoke-free workplaces and would restrict smoking to designated smoking areas.

[Leave granted; Bill 214 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

Bill 215
Public Accounts Committee Act

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 215, Public Accounts Committee Act.

This Act would improve financial accountability in this province's public sector.

[Leave granted; Bill 215 read a first time]

Bill 216
An Act to Promote
Recycling Industries in Alberta

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 216, An Act to Promote Recycling Industries in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, this is an industrial development initiative aimed at promoting industries to process the waste which is gathered through some of the blue box programs. It includes procurement initiatives in the government but also recycling initiatives in the private sector. It provides that there should be no incentives available for virgin resource extractions which are not available to recycling industries in particular.

[Leave granted; Bill 216 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

Bill 217
An Act to Amend
the Labour Relations Code (No. 2)

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 217, An Act to Amend the Labour Relations Code (No. 2).

Mr. Speaker, when eventually passed, this legislation will prohibit the use of replacement workers during a strike or lockout.

[Leave granted; Bill 217 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

Bill 220
An Act to Amend
the Landlord and Tenant Act

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 220, being An Act to Amend the Landlord and Tenant Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would assist tenants by incorporating stronger security of tenure provisions. It would require the proper maintenance of property, better protection of security deposits, and this Bill also brings roomers and boarders under the protection of the Landlord and Tenant Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 220 read a first time]

Bill 221
Alberta Employee Investment Act

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 221, being the Alberta Employee Investment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides for a support program for employee investment in the businesses for which they work.

[Leave granted; Bill 221 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Millican.

Bill 228
An Act to Amend the Liquor Control Act

MR. SHRAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 228, An Act to Amend the Liquor Control Act.

This Bill will amend chapter L-17 of the *Revised Statutes of Alberta 1980*. It adds a new section which will allow civil action to be brought for damages against anyone who serves alcohol in contravention of the Act, particularly to those who are apparently intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, and includes them in full or proportional liability in respect of the award of damages.

[Leave granted; Bill 228 read a first time]

Bill 230
An Act to Amend the Irrigation Act

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 230, An Act to Amend the Irrigation Act.

Mr. Speaker, this would allow irrigation district boards to become involved in activities other than delivering water to irrigating farmers.

[Leave granted; Bill 230 read a first time]

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file four copies of a report that has been prepared by the Conflict of Interest Review Panel, which I appointed last year. An assessment of this report is being done by the government, but I wanted each member to have a copy, and that is being arranged now.

On behalf of all the members here in the Legislature I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the review panel: the chief judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta, the Honourable Edward Wachowich; Walter Buck, friend of most of the members of the Legislature; and Frank King from Calgary, who established himself in a high degree of efficiency in the manner in which he represented us in handling the Winter Olympics in 1988 in Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to give this report their attention. The government will be responding in due course.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Education had caught my eye as next on this.

MS BARRETT: Health. She switched portfolios.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry. Thank you. The Chair is locked to the wrong time warp.

Minister of Health.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table with the Assembly the annual report of the Alberta Dental Association for the year ended June 30, 1989, and the annual report of the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses for the year ended September 30, 1989. Copies will be distributed to all members. I'm also tabling the annual report of the Glenrose Rehabilitation hospital for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1988, the Vital Statistics annual review for 1988, the annual report of Alberta Hospital Edmonton for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1989. These reports have been distributed to all members previously. Additionally, I am pleased to table the audited financial statements for the Alberta Cancer Board and Alberta Hospital Ponoka for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1989.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table responses to questions 219, 227, and 233, outstanding from last year's sitting of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to file with the Assembly four copies of An Alternative Throne Speech for the Commencement of the Second Session of the 22nd Alberta Legislature, prepared the Leader of the Official Opposition, the New Democrats.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file four copies of the defeated recommendations of the standing committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and their proposers . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, due care. On this matter I'd like it submitted to the Chair, please. There's a concern that this is amounting to the submission of a minority report from the committee, which is in violation of our own Standing Order 65, as a matter of fact. So the Chair is not prepared to accept this before the House without review. Could the pages please convey it?

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Love to have one. [interjection] The page is behind, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: I think, based on the very same one that you

were . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. There's a bit of confusion. Would you please hand the document to the page behind you?

MR. TAYLOR: Based on Standing Orders . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, hon. member.

The Chair will reserve opinion until tomorrow.

CLERK: Introduction of Special Guests.

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, Clerk.

Perhaps now the Chair can table, pursuant to statute, Members' Services orders 5 to 17, 1989, and 1 to 3, dated 1990. Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, members have tree seedlings on their desks this afternoon. The tree seedling stickers and lapel pins have been provided by the Alberta Forestry Association and organizing committee for Peace River for the 1990 provincial forest capital. Each year the Alberta Forestry Association for National Forest Week designates a provincial forest capital; the designation recognizes a forest resource based community where private and corporate citizens have demonstrated a commitment to responsible forest management. May 6 to 12 is Forest Week, even though it's an all year long program, and Peace River has earned the distinction.

I along with my colleague the Hon. Al Adair would like to take this opportunity to recognize members of the provincial forest capital of 1990 organizing committee who are in the visitors' gallery. I'd ask them to rise as I call out their names: Michael Procter, the mayor of the town of Peace River; Joan Goldhawk, manager, Peace River Board of Trade; Frank Oberle, representative, Alberta forest industry; Chuck Geale, president, Alberta Forestry Association; Carl Leary, superintendent, Peace River forest; and Cindy Menu, secretary-treasurer of the organizing committee. Would you give them a cordial congratulations.

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

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly some 36 very patient grade 6 students from the Belvedere elementary school. They are accompanied today by their teachers Mr. Brian Christy and Mr. David Kun. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, or SAIT, is known across Canada for the programs it offers. We have in the government members' gallery today the president of the student union, Mr. Andre Mamprin, who represents those 8,500 students. I would ask Mr. Mamprin to please stand and be welcomed by the members of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you, sir, and to all Members of the Legislative Assembly some very important guests from the community of Barrhead. In the members' gallery we have 24 students from Lorne Jenken senior high school who are accompanied by their two teachers, Mr. Marvin Sheets and Mrs. Rosemarie Smith.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have visiting of us from Barrhead Mr. Robert O'Brien and his two grandchildren, who happen to reside here in the city of Edmonton, Erin O'Brien and Darcy O'Brien. All of our guests are in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise and would ask all of my colleagues to extend them a very warm welcome to the Alberta Legislature.

head: Ministerial Statements

Agriculture

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Shirley McClellan and I would like to advise our fellow Members of the Legislative Assembly that yesterday, March 11, marked the official kickoff of Agriculture Week in Alberta. Agriculture Week will continue through Saturday, March 17. Agriculture Week 1990 began unofficially last Friday evening when three outstanding Albertans were admitted to the Agriculture Hall of Fame at a ceremony here in Edmonton. Agricultural celebrations will continue in rural and urban centres across the province during the days ahead.

I wish to take this opportunity to encourage my colleagues and all Albertans to take time this week to consider the essential role agriculture plays in our lives. Agriculture is the engine that powers our province's economy, and the vigorous communities that are centred on farming and its related enterprises give the social fabric of our province its greatest strength. I urge the people of Alberta to take part in Agriculture Week activities held in their areas and to join us in the celebration of agriculture in our province.

Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, of course I would like to join with the Minister of Agriculture in congratulating those involved in this very important Alberta industry. I think we must recognize, though, at this time that the family farm is basically under attack. We know that there is going to be rural depopulation. The government's own document - I believe it was called Caring & Responsibility, the social policy - indicated there'd be 93,000 less people in Alberta between the year 1981 and the year 2001. We have seen the recent figures from the Alberta Wheat Pool saying that farm income in real terms would decline in the next year by some 52 to 54 percent. So while we want to encourage people to participate in Agriculture Week, we must not hide our heads in the sand. There are some real serious problems in agriculture in this province.

Over the years we have advocated a number of measures that we think would go some way to protecting the family farm, whether it be dealing with debt mediation, whether it be dealing with shared deficiency payments with the federal government, whether it be, frankly, recognizing that the trade deal is putting orderly marketing under attack. The minister and I may disagree about orderly marketing, but I can assure you there'll be less family farms if we don't have it, Mr. Speaker. It seems clear to us that there has to be some change in policies from Ottawa and from Edmonton if we're going to be celebrating

Agriculture Week in the future with a lot of people in rural Alberta, because if we don't change some policies, there are not going to be a lot of people left in rural Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Consumer and Corporate Affairs

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to inform the House that the 1989 Securities Amendment Act and its regulations will come into force March 15, 1990. This Act addresses many changes in the securities market, with particular emphasis on deterring the misuse of insider trading for the buying or selling of stocks and other securities. It also provides new rules regarding takeover bids that will protect the interests of minority shareholders.

This government has publicly committed itself to improving the environment in which the financial consumers and investors must operate. We want a fair and honest financial marketplace. We will do what is necessary to protect the integrity of that marketplace. These new rules will help do that. Anyone convicted of using insider trading information to trade stocks or other securities will face stiff penalties. Maximum fine levels will rise to three times the profit made from trading or \$1 million and/or up to five years in jail. Previous maximum levels were \$5,000 for individuals and \$75,000 for corporations.

The takeover bid legislation is to offer some comfort to investors of modest amounts. The new rules ensure fair treatment for the minority shareholder in cases where the purchaser is attempting to gain control of a company.

Mr. Speaker, I must emphasize the context in which this legislation is being enacted. While the Securities Amendment Act deals with the securities industry exclusively, the other areas of the financial products and services marketplace are being addressed by myself and my colleague the Provincial Treasurer. Last session this House passed legislation governing Alberta's credit unions. The Treasurer will be introducing legislation on loans and trust businesses, and I will be introducing legislation under the title of the financial consumer Act which will ensure that consumers receive more and better information to assist them in their decision-making. All these legislative initiatives arise from the government's recognition that the financial marketplace has become more complex and under constant review. Consumers require better tools to form the basis of decisions they will make. We will be offering these tools.

I look forward to discussing the details of upcoming legislation with members of the House.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm amazed: all these ministerial statements. Thank you, to the ministers.

Mr. Speaker, this may be the case. As we've gone through this Bill and debated it - and as the minister is well aware, we supported most of the recommendations - we did make some suggestions for improvements, I think specifically dealing with disclosure. I may look forward to the financial consumer Act. Maybe the minister is going to allude to that. Unfortunately, it may be the situation of closing the barn door after the horses have got out, because of what's happened in this province dealing with financial institutions. But most initiatives we will support, and we have, and we'll look forward to other matters the government wants to bring up.

I wanted to stress one thing, if I may. You can have the best rules and regulations in the world. Part of the problem we faced, especially with the Principal Group, was the enforcement.

You can have the best rules there, but if you're not prepared to enforce them, then they're not worth the paper they're printed on. So I hope the minister is concerned with this and that in future, while having the rules and regulations there, the enforcement will be just as tough so that we never get into these situations again.

Thank you.

head: Oral Question Period

Meech Lake Accord

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. It has been clear, I believe, for some time, perhaps over a year or so, that the Meech Lake constitutional accord is in serious trouble and will probably not be ratified by the June deadline unless there are changes made. I noticed over the weekend that the Premier made some comments that he fears for the accord and the future of Canada. He was talking about without what he calls a political accord. I want to say to the Premier that this time I agree with him; I also fear for the country. It seems there's growing intolerance in the country, from all aspects of the country, and I worry about where we're going and whether there will be a Canada if there aren't some changes made in this constitutional accord. I also worry about the overblown rhetoric that is occurring at this particular time. My question to the Premier, because I believe he can play a useful role in these two months. Is he prepared to recommend to other first ministers some changes to the Meech Lake accord that would make it more acceptable to a majority of Canadians?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the hon. Leader of the Opposition raise this matter, knowing that he and his party supported it unanimously when it went through the Legislature and that he and they are strong supporters still.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned. I'm concerned because of how strongly I feel about the potential greatness of this country. But this country will only be great and will only reach its potential if we deal within our country on a unified basis, if we concentrate on unity, and concentrate on working together in a Canadian way that has been marked by generosity of spirit, compassion for other parts of this country, for co-operation, and for wanting to pull together. In some ways right now that isn't happening. It bothers me, and I think that in the coming weeks and months there will be considerable stress and pressure on leaders in this country to see if we can't combat that kind of feeling.

So, Mr. Speaker, while the Meech Lake accord has gone through the House of Commons, is endorsed by three national parties, has been signed by 10 Premiers at one point, and has gone through eight Legislatures, there is still concern for the accord proceeding fully through to constitutional reform. I believe that while it is not perfect, it is that which we can achieve at this stage, and it gives us a springboard to go on and do so much more in such matters as Senate reform.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, we now have a report due from Senator Murray as a result of his trip across the country, as requested by all first ministers at the last First Ministers' Conference. I'm looking forward to that report.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I frankly believe that if

there aren't some changes, it will be dead, and perhaps we can save the best part of Meech with some changes. My question, specifically to the Premier. Would this government promote or support a political accord dealing with some changes to Meech at this particular time in an effort to save some of the best parts of it?

MR. GETTY: I don't know whether the hon. member really means save the best parts, Mr. Speaker. I believe, and I've been talking with other first ministers about the possibility of . . . Some have a view that there could be a parallel accord; others have the view – and I have discussed this with some and have discussed it recently publicly – to a political accord; that is, some type of an agreement between first ministers that at this stage wouldn't proceed through each of 10 Legislatures and the House of Commons because of the time frame involved. There is some work going on in that area.

But I think if the hon. Leader of the Opposition thinks reasonably about the period of time in front of us, the Meech Lake accord, as imperfect as it might be in some people's minds, is the one that could proceed through to make constitutional reform a reality and bring the many benefits that are in that accord to the people of Alberta and all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I'd urge that the hon. members, in speaking to constituents or people all across this country, emphasize the need for unity in Canada, that they emphasize the need for generosity of spirit, that they emphasize the need for caring about our nation and looking ahead to building a great country, not tearing it down.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the last sentiments, but I also recognize the reality of what's going on, and I honestly believe that if there aren't changes to Meech, it's going to be all or nothing. We're going to get the nothing situation.

So just to follow up, Mr. Speaker. Because of the time frame, the lack of time that the Premier is talking about, and because of the crisis to our country, will the Premier be urging the Prime Minister to call a First Ministers' Conference in the next month or so to see if changes can be made so that there's some support for a revised accord and, perhaps, for the future of the country? Will he be calling for that?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I have said this publicly, and I have said it several times in the last few days to the Prime Minister and other first ministers. I believe that since the Meech Lake accord was generated from 10 governments and the federal government and came to a decision and an actual accord amongst the first ministers, before it be allowed to end, if that was the possibility that might happen, the first ministers should definitely get together and see whether there were other options or alternatives that could be considered.

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

Rental Accommodation

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct the second set of questions to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Tenants across the province are struggling to cope with soaring rents and plummeting vacancy rates. Last Friday the minister said he's "watching . . . closely" – I believe I'm quoting right – the

situation in Edmonton and Calgary where the vacancy rates, according to our figures, are 1.9 percent in Edmonton and .7 percent in Calgary.

Well, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I'm not sure that renters are going to rest easy because he's watching the situation. I point out that it's a provincial problem because the rates are very low in Lethbridge, .4 percent, and .7 percent in Red Deer. So it's a provincial problem. My question to the minister: other than watching the situation in Calgary and Edmonton, will the minister indicate precisely what policies he's going to bring in to protect the renters of this province?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition. My colleague the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is looking at the areas in terms of rent review and various items such as that, and I would ask that the minister comment on it further.

In regards to my comments in terms of rental accommodation throughout the province, the government of Alberta has done some significant things in the last year to provide more opportunity. For example, our family first home program: some 18,000 people have taken that program and are now in their first home in Alberta. What that has done is released a lot of area of rental availability within the province, so that's been a very successful program, as just one example. There are others I could itemize as well.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, all the desk thumping in the world isn't going to change the fact that we have a serious problem for renters in this province.

Now, last October the minister told a standing committee of the Legislature, and I quote, "I believe that the marketplace should be allowed to have some tension." My question. Would the minister care to explain to the renters of Alberta how much more tense it's going to get before this government moves on it?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, as long as the hon. Leader of the Opposition doesn't get too tense, I think we can take the responsibility and move through this issue at the present time. Certainly there's tension in the marketplace at the present time. Rental rates are rising because of a couple of reasons. One, we've had an influx of population into Alberta. We've had an influx of capital from outside of the province that has bought a lot of our real estate. At the present time there's an economy that's growing and heating up itself, which creates more activity and more demand in terms of residential, rental, private accommodation as such. Those are the circumstances that create that kind of tension, and it's healthy. It's not an unhealthy thing in the marketplace. The most unhealthy thing is when you have maybe vacancy rates of 50 percent and everybody's leaving the province. That's not happening in the province of Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, people in Lansdowne Park have been forced up 20 to 40 percent, and the minister's talking about healthy. Where are they going to move to?

But my question, then, to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Rather than talk in rhetoric about how great things are, would this minister at least be prepared to bring in a fair system of rent review to make sure that rent increases are reasonable and that they're not gouging ordinary renters in this province?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs certainly identified the ultimate solution to the problem of rising interest rates, and that is rising development of accommodation. He's been working well and hard with the industry to try and make sure that takes place.

My responsibility is to ensure that there is a fair relationship between landlord and tenant. Yes, we're reviewing the Act to see whether or not there are changes we could make to assist individuals who have to make judgments regarding their accommodation and landlords regarding what they will do with those places in the market. We have established a task force, which should soon report, that consists of tenants and of landlords and which has talked to Albertans throughout the province. I'll be looking forward to their recommendations with regard to topics such as rent review.

Our preliminary review of circumstances in a similar situation in other parts of Canada would show that rent review has some difficulties. How do you administer it? Who, in fact, makes the determination on what's just and what's not just? How do you adjust for the fact, in Alberta in particular, where landlords have lost dollars over a period of time and are able in a moving market to reach an equal point? Who's to make all of those judgments, and how do you do it without expensive cost to the taxpayers? Having said that, there's no question about a need . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. Thank you, hon. minister.

Leader of the Liberal Party, please.

Forest Management Policies

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of forestry. Eight or 10 weeks ago the Minister of the Environment made a number of comments with respect to the ministry of forestry, most notably that there appeared to be an apparent conflict in him managing his department; also, that it was difficult to serve two masters, that of preserving forests and that of developing forests. Does the minister of forestry agree that there is this conflict with preservation and with development?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Is this, then, Mr. Minister, the reason you refused to allow your department staff to appear before the Al-Pac hearing process to make statements on preservation of fish or wildlife or forestry?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, on the second day of the hearings of the Al-Pac board I had one of my senior forestry people appear at the Alberta-Pacific hearing process and spend an hour and a half answering questions. In addition to that, the jurisdictional responsibility on water management in this province is divided between three responsibilities. One of the responsibilities is with the Department of the Environment in the province of Alberta. It's also with Fisheries and Oceans Canada as well as with Health and Welfare Canada. The testing that's done with respect to health of fish is done by Health and Welfare Canada working in co-operation with the province. My department collects the fish and sends them on for the testing that needs to be done. So there is no conflict whatsoever. The studies are there and speak for themselves.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Minister, if there's no conflict in your mind, would you define for this Legislature what your ministry's obligation is to the preservation of the forests, the wildlife, the land, the rivers, in this whole context of economic development of those forests? What is the definition then?

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Mr. Speaker, it's spelled out very clearly in my annual report year after year. Really my department is a conservation department, but it works with a variety of interest groups, some consumptive users and nonconsumptive users, whether it be in fish and wildlife – there are people who like to hunt; there are people who don't like hunting and like to watch. There are people who like a variety of things, and it's a competing interest, and my department works in that area.

With respect to conservation, we protect the forests from forest fires because it's far better to use that wood than to see it burn. So we conserve, but we also are responsible for proper management. Mr. Speaker, we're recognized worldwide for our management practices in forestry, and if there is some indication from the opposition that there is something that isn't right, bring it to my attention.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Red Deer-North, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Trade with Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. We're all well aware that the Soviet Union has been undergoing dramatic changes of late, and we're also aware that the Alberta government has some sort of memorandum of understanding with the Soviet Union regarding trade possibilities. Now, these types of agreements can be effective, or they can be just so much window dressing. I'm wondering: would the minister please tell us if he's actually doing some follow-up on this memorandum of understanding so that it'll be worth more than just the paper it's written on.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to leave the hon. member and Members of the Legislative Assembly with the assurance that it is more than simply window dressing. We have a number of agreements with the Soviet Union, one directly with the government of Russia that relates to agriculture. The Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs just recently signed another memorandum of understanding; I'm sure he would like to supplement my answer. But I want to leave the hon. member with the assurance that we as a trading province recognize that it is important that we have markets other than our own, and we're going to continue to work with those markets, especially as we go through the liberalization process in the Soviet Union itself.

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, not just the Soviet Union but in fact all of eastern Europe is opening up. Has the minister put all of his trade initiatives just in the Soviet Union basket, or is he also looking to the rest of eastern Europe, which has demand for product technology and marketplace incentives?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we're working throughout the entire world, whereby we trade with in excess of 140 countries. Eastern Europe is a very important part of those trading patterns that we presently enjoy within the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Environmental Standards for Pulp Mills

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bleached kraft pulp mills of the sort endorsed by this government use our rivers as sewers and our trees as grist for mills in Japan and the United States. On Friday we discussed the problem of fish samples having their dioxin levels recalculated by the Department of the Environment. Today I'd like to ask the Minister of the Environment about a list of 36 dates in the last two years on which Procter & Gamble was allowed by the department to exceed permitted levels for suspended solids. I want to ask in particular, in view of the link between suspended solids in dioxin and furan, if the minister would explain why we have standards in the province of Alberta if the companies are allowed to exceed them in any case.

MR. KLEIN: Well, with respect to the alleged 36 incidents, Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take that under advisement. I just don't have it at my fingertips right now, and we'll see what we can do to get the information.

But I find it very, very strange – very strange indeed, Mr. Speaker – that we would establish in this province the highest standards in the world relative to environmental protection as they relate to bleached kraft mills and other pulp mills and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place would stand up at a public meeting on Friday and say that there should be a moratorium on mills, but the one mill that he referred to, the one of Procter & Gamble, can go ahead – can go ahead. Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may be interested to know that that mill has been ordered to refit to bring it up to world standards, and it also will be one of the finest mills in the world in terms of environmental protection.

MR. McINNIS: Well, it is strange if the minister doesn't know about 36 dates on which the permit levels were exceeded by sometimes double the allowable level. The department's handling of Procter & Gamble is a very important yardstick of how much of this talk about state of the art in wonderful new pulp mills is to be believed by Albertans. So I ask the question that I asked the minister last Friday. Why is it that this department has failed to issue health warnings about unauthorized dumping and dioxin and river water that looks like this and smells even worse out of the Wapiti River? Why don't . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Pages, please remove the exhibit. [Interjection] Order please, hon. minister, until we get this business straightened away.

Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: I'm sorry. What was the question, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: No. I'm sorry. Thank you.
The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Centre.

Acute Care Funding

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health is radically changing the funding process for Alberta's acute care hospitals, which will make some winners and a lot losers in the hospital sector in the province. In fact, in this memo, which I'd be willing to file, Mr. Speaker, the vice-

president of finance of the University of Alberta hospital says that the model proposed by the Department of Health has a number of components which are not yet complete or accurate yet will reduce the hospital's funding by \$2.5 million. I'm wondering then . . . To the Minister of Health. Will she admit that this radical new funding formula is incomplete and inaccurate and will result in putting further strains on an already strained hospital at the University of Alberta and at regional and rural levels throughout the province?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, we have an interesting turn of coat with respect to the Member for Edmonton-Centre with respect to his continual position that he's taken in the Legislature that we increase accountability within our acute care funding system and also that we reallocate resources from our acute care side into the community side. Here we have him now looking at the acute care side, which in fact the province has been concerned about for some time because there is an inconsistency with respect to how we fund hospital cases and how we fund severity of illness across the province. I responded to the resolutions which had been placed by the Alberta Hospital Association, the Alberta Medical Association, and many others around the province that we needed to look at our system of primarily inputs into our acute care funding and rather start to be looking at outputs on that. That is the purpose of this study, and I will be working with the hospitals, who have certainly been part of the work that's gone on, on a steering committee relationship to date, and will be pleased to report to the House as the study proceeds.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, it's an interesting turn of coat of the minister, Mr. Speaker, who builds these huge hospitals and then squeezes down their operational funds year after year, particularly for nurses as well. Will the minister, who knows well that Albertans have just had enough of this government's cutting back services in the institutional and community side, have tolerated increasing waiting lists, have seen nurses leave the province, and now this hospital funding system is going to make the system a lot worse just at a time when the United Nurses of Alberta at a news conference today have said that improved wage settlements are not in the cards for them and they are getting angry about that – now, enough is enough.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Enough is enough indeed, hon. member. If it's a question . . . [interjections] Order please. Order. Does the member have the succinct question? What's the question?

REV. ROBERTS: [Inaudible] some clarification after question period, Mr. Speaker.

So given the serious implications of these cutbacks through whatever funding mechanism – as ever, inadequate as it is – how can the minister possibly go ahead and implement this when it will not either threaten patient care or force another nurses' strike in the province?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, indeed the issues within health are issues that are exceedingly complex and need to be managed in a careful and well-thought-out way. Through the acute care funding study we are actually getting measures into our funding for hospitals which will ensure that we can build incentives into our funding system in order that outpatient services will be rewarded in order that we can minimize the

amount of people being admitted into our hospitals and instead serve them on an outpatient basis. This is all part of the acute care funding study.

I just want to lay before the Legislature, too, the members who are part of the steering committee of this project. It includes four members from the Alberta Hospital Association; two members from the Council of Teaching Hospitals of Alberta, including the University of Alberta hospital, which of course is a teaching hospital in our province; representation from the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses and the Alberta Medical Association; and three representatives from Alberta Health. I have every confidence in the work of these people towards ensuring that our acute care funding system is in fact funding need and is in fact putting our health dollars where they have the greatest benefit for all Albertans. The complexity of the issues are some that I'm sure the hon. member and I will be walking through a great deal during this session of the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Environmental Standards for Pulp Mills

(continued)

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to return to the conflict of interest within the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife between that ministry's responsibility for promoting pulp mills on the one hand and protecting wildlife, fish, and forests on the other hand. Is that conflict of interest not the reason why this minister has so adamantly opposed the establishment of an open and public environmental impact assessment process for Daishowa, Weldwood, and Alberta Energy Company at least like the one that was done for the Al-Pac project?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the environmental impact assessments, I'll ask the Minister of the Environment to supplement my answer. But there should be no perception in anyone's mind about a conflict of interest. I thought I've explained that quite well in that there is a management of a resource, whether it be Fish and Wildlife or whatever. There are other jurisdictions that also have responsibility. There's responsibility in the river basin planning, which is under the Department of the Environment. The quality of the water in the river, whether it be from industrial or from municipal waste, is also under that department's responsibility. So there should be no perception in anyone's mind, Mr. Speaker, that there is any conflict within my department. But the Minister of the Environment may wish to respond to the environmental impact assessment process.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Premier pointed out in the Speech from the Throne, the whole environmental impact assessment process is being reviewed, and it's going to be strengthened. It's probably become one of the most comprehensive processes in this country, just as our mills are probably the safest in the country. Now, if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark is so concerned about the quality of pulp mills, I would remind them there are 176 pulp mills in this country. If he's really concerned, then he should speak to his Liberal buddies in Ontario, his Liberal buddies in Quebec, and his Liberal buddies in New Brunswick, and he'll really find out what belching, rotten, stinking, polluting pulp mills are all about.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the issue of conflict of interest, certainly Ralph Klein stated very clearly on January 9, 1990, that he felt that the minister of forestry had a conflict of interest. Is that conflict of interest not the reason why this minister has failed to hold an open, public environmental impact assessment into the forestry management area associated with the Al-Pac project?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: No, Mr. Speaker.

Environmental Impact Assessment Process

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, if I may, too, get back to touch on the question of conflict of interest with the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Is the fact that he realizes there's a conflict of interest the reason behind that he's not asked for an environmental assessment Act for all forestry management agreements – all forestry management agreements – not just the mills?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, that's the same question all over again, and there must be a little collusion going over there.

AN HON. MEMBER: They only had one researcher, I guess.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Only one researcher working on it.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to an environmental impact assessment on forestry operations themselves, we've had two class environmental impact assessments done on forestry operations. I gave a commitment that I was going to see that the public had a full and open opportunity to not only review forest management agreements but harvesting plans and to have meaningful input not just once but year after year after year. I've made that commitment, and I'll live up to it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, coffee parties aren't public hearings. Is this conflict of interest the reason why the minister is giving away one-third of Alberta to private companies for logging and pulp mills, whereas he should be working with Dr. West, the Minister of Recreation and Parks, establishing and promoting ecological areas and establishing more provincial parks in addition to the little one you did in Lakeland?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, you know, I can't believe that you can send information over there but they don't seem to understand it. We work very closely with Recreation and Parks in my department. In fact, where do you think the Lakeland recreation area is but in the Alberta-Pacific's area for forest management? I'm very supportive of that. I'm also very supportive of establishing natural areas and seeing more representative samples across this province made of the land base that we have. If you look at the percentage of national parks and provincial parks and protected areas in this province, there's no one that can even come close to us. And we're not satisfied with that. Working with a number of ministries in our government, the Premier is committed to seeing that we do have proper and full recreation opportunities and representative areas across this province. So, Mr. Speaker, any allusion that we don't is wrong.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood, followed by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

Nanton Spring Water Company Ltd.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's at this time of year that one is reminded of how good a glass of fine Nanton Spring Water tastes. Nanton Spring Water is located in the beautiful constituency of Highwood. Unfortunately, it was recently placed in the hands of a receiver. So my question today, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Will the minister assure this Assembly that his department will take active steps to ensure that Nanton Spring Water will continue to operate and employ people in the town of Nanton?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me leave the hon. member with the assurance, and indicate also my appreciation to him for his sincere interest in this issue, that we will do everything within our power to see that it does maintain itself in Nanton. We are working very closely with the receivers and with the individuals in the locality plus with the hon. member. I'm happy to receive any advice he might have to offer myself or our department as to how we can achieve the goal we both desire.

MR. TANNAS: Okay; thank you. Will the minister then support and encourage local Albertans in the area to invest in this business firm?

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to work with individuals from that locality and with my department and with the hon. member so that, as I indicated earlier, we can achieve the goals we both desire.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

Use of Replacement Workers during Labour Disputes

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll direct my question, I suppose, to the Provincial Treasurer. Today in Calgary there were 160 workers at the Lakeside Centennial plant that were locked out by management because the workers refused to accept a wage rollback. Now, given this government's penchant for handing out money in the red meat industry, we're not too surprised to learn that Lakeside Centennial has received some \$25 million in loan guarantees, \$15 million of which have been drawn down, and venture capital is involved in there to the tune of \$5 million as well. Just wondering: would the Provincial Treasurer commit that there will be no more public funds going to the company during the duration of the lockout or the industrial dispute?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I think that question should be properly directed either to the Minister of Agriculture or to the Minister of Labour. I wasn't too sure what point was being made here, but I don't think it's a question for the Provincial Treasurer.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I don't know who else handles public funds in the province other than the Provincial Treasurer. If you don't want to answer the question, that's fine.

I'll direct my supplementary, then, to the Minister of Labour. One need only look at strike situations in our province: Wittke in Medicine Hat and Zeidler in Slave Lake and Edmonton. I'm just wondering if the government would commit to introduce an amendment to the code. And if that's too difficult, to draft

legislation, would you adopt Bill 217, which would prohibit the use of strikebreakers during an industrial dispute?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, the Labour Relations Code in fact does build a balance in here. What it allows is for an employer, during a dispute, to hire replacement workers. Of course, it also allows those people who are on strike or locked out to go and find jobs for themselves in the meantime. So there is an economic balance on both sides.

I've looked at the experience across Canada in other codes. I've found, in fact, there's only one other province in Canada that does ban replacement workers, and that is Quebec. They've had it now for some 10 years, so it's a good example to look to to see what kind of effect there would be if an amendment were made such as the hon. member has suggested. In fact, it turns out that Quebec has one of the worst records in work stoppages across Canada. They have more days lost due to strikes and lockouts. In fact, after they brought in the very amendment that the member is suggesting, their time lost to strikes and lockouts escalated by 15 percent. So I think, from looking at the Quebec experience, it is not something that leads to labour stability. In fact, it seems to lead to more difficulty for the workers, who are, in fact, the ones who are most impacted by a strike or lockout.

MR. SPEAKER: Drayton Valley, followed by Calgary-Forest Lawn and Calgary-North West.

Sale of Alberta Government Telephones

MR. THURBER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few days there's been an ad appearing in some of the urban papers, primarily, that is criticizing the proposed sale of AGT or the supposed sale of AGT and raising some concerns to my constituents about the future of AGT as far as they're concerned. My question would be to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. Mr. Minister, do these claims have any validity or any basis in fact? Can you reassure some of my people about that?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I did see the ad to which the hon. member refers. I think it was very unfortunate, because it does contain a number of unwarranted claims; in fact, many representations that are just totally not correct. There are in fact changes, many changes, that are occurring in the telecommunications industry. Those changes are in fact worldwide, and those changes will impact upon AGT whether indeed it is a Crown corporation or under any other form of ownership. Those changes relate to competition, deregulation, and changes in technology which impact upon the need for capital. There are changes with respect to the regulatory regime. There are many changes, and therefore we are looking at all ways and means of addressing those changes and identifying the choices. But, in any event, we will be making that choice at some point which will reflect the real interests of Albertans in the telecommunications industry.

MR. THURBER: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, can you give any assurance to my constituents that these concerns are being adequately addressed before any supposed sale takes place?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member

that regardless of whatever option may ultimately be selected relative to AGT, under any circumstances rates and services will continue to be regulated in the public interest. Rural programs and services will indeed be safeguarded, and the best interests of employees will always be taken into account. At the same time, Albertans will continue to own and manage AGT in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn, then Calgary-North West, then Edmonton-Highlands.

OSLO Project

MR. PASHAK: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I think it's appalling that the federal government would create huge expectations among all Albertans, but particularly those at Fort McMurray, by promising support for the OSLO project and then, without any apparent consultation with Albertans, pull out of the project. They did this in advance of the final engineering studies, without the cost/benefit analysis studies being completed, and without any regard for securing a long-term energy supply for all Canadians. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Energy. What positive initiatives, if any, is the minister taking to reverse the federal position? Or is he just prepared to roll over and play dead when it comes to dealing with his federal cousins?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see that the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn appropriately supports proceeding through the engineering phase into the construction phase of the OSLO project. It is an important initiative not only for Alberta in terms of job creation and economic initiative, but it's an issue that's important to all Canadians as we see our conventional crude oil in this country declining.

We are looking at all the options. The OSLO participants have examined the current situation with regard to the federal government pulling out. All I can tell the hon. member is that it is unfortunate; I think it's shortsighted on behalf of the federal government. We will continue to point out to them the importance of this project. I can tell the hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn that I've had a conversation with the Minister of Energy for the province of Ontario pointing out to them, our biggest consumer of oil, Mr. Speaker, how important this project is to the future long-term security of their province.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At least the former Premier, Mr. Lougheed, was prepared to stand up for Albertans.

My question is to the Deputy Premier. Is he now prepared to admit that his government made a mistake by spending almost a million dollars of public money to help elect a federal Tory government when they treat Albertans so shabbily?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, how one ties in the fact that our government supported the free trade agreement with the United States and the OSLO subject, which has been adequately answered by my colleague the Minister of Energy, is beyond me, except in the minds of the socialists, who tie everything in together and everything government does is exactly the same thing. Of course we supported the free trade agreement, and we still support it, Mr. Speaker, because it is a good deal for Canada and particularly for Alberta. And I don't back down

from that one iota. I don't agree with the OSLO question, but that doesn't mean that I disagree with them on the free trade agreement. And unlike the members of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, who follow what their federal party says like blind sheep, we don't propose to do the same.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West followed by Edmonton-Highlands.

Environmental Impact Assessment Process
(continued)

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to return to the issue raised earlier by my colleagues regarding the conflict of interest within the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. The question that I would ask is this . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. BRUSEKER: If there is no conflict of interest within the department, could the minister explain, please, why he is unwilling to have an environmental impact assessment done on the Sunpine sawmill development in Rocky Mountain House?

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you. To the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, the issue of an environmental impact assessment for the Sunpine project near Rocky Mountain House is under consideration.

MR. BRUSEKER: Could the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, then, please explain how he resolves the conflict of interest that results from a government investing over a billion dollars in loans and guarantees to the forestry industry and yet the company's concerns do not meet our government standards?

MR. SPEAKER: May we have unanimous consent to complete this series of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed. Carried. Thank you.
Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: The answer's really simple, and I'll say it slowly. No project will proceed unless it's environmentally safe and meets the governments standards, period.

MR. SPEAKER: On points of order the Chair understands the possibility of having points of order from Edmonton-Jasper Place, also Westlock-Sturgeon, and the possibility of two other locations.

Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday in the House the Minister of the Environment stated:

If the opposition would do their research in the library rather than depending on the *Edmonton Journal* for their research, they might get the facts right. This report, [which he waved in the air] which contains full disclosure of the results, was tabled as a

sessional paper on May 24, 1988.

He went on to elaborate on the report.

Well, I did take him up on his challenge and went to the library and found, first, that the House did not sit on May 24, 1988; secondly, that there was no sessional paper ever tabled that remotely resembles the one referred to by the minister; and thirdly, the only thing that may be even close to it was a press release issued by Health and Welfare Canada. I wondered, in view of the conventions and rules of the House, if the minister might now table the document he waved around, thus ending the lesson in research.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment on the purported point of order.

MR. KLEIN: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I will take the matter under consideration and so advise the House, not that there is anything to hide, and certainly I can take the hon. member through the process that was followed at this particular time. In fact, Alberta released the results, a press release and a sessional paper, on May 24, 1988. The sessional paper number was 524/88 tabled on May 18, 1988, and at that time results were expressed in terms of whole fish and edible portions. The calculations used to derive the edible portions were based on advice from Health and Welfare Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. So I've given the hon. member the reference number, and perhaps he can do a little more research. Obviously, the *Edmonton Journal* is not going to print that kind of information.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Westlock-Sturgeon on a point of order for today. The Chair takes it that the previous information will be considered by both members.

Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, today when you asked for suspension as to whether or not I could file the lists of resolutions that had been considered in the standing committee on the heritage trust fund – I gather you will be coming up in the next day or two with the decision, but I wanted to put in my reasons for filing it, knowing full well that rules of orders 65(2) says that a minority report of a standing committee cannot be filed. This is not a minority report, I would say, Mr. Speaker, in that, first of all, it's not titled a minority report; secondly, there was no opinion expressed. All it is is a list of movers and resolutions that were not passed. Next, Mr. Speaker, those resolutions are available to the public now if you dig through the *Hansards* of the meetings we had over the past year. This just puts them all together in one area. So there are no secrets being given away. And, finally, Mr. Speaker, I think when people read the report, if this is also read in conjunction with it later, they will realize and they will understand the broad cross section of issues that our committee did attack and that all the report shows is what was approved. It doesn't show the broad discussion and the resolutions that were moved by various members on both sides of the House which were defeated.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Deferred.

Other points of order. With respect to the previous question period, the Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to your request that I examine the Blues with regard to a possible

withdrawal of a remark I made on Friday, I notice that I did say that the government deliberately hid the truth with regard to certain documentation and evidence. Well, I couldn't find any reference in *Beauchesne* to differentiate deliberately hiding the truth from misstating the truth or not telling the truth or deliberately misleading. I believe it's a contention I can prove over time and will attempt to do that. But in the context of what was said Friday, if the Premier felt that the remarks were directed at him personally, I want to assure him that they weren't, and if it be the wish of the Chair that I withdraw the remark, I'll do that.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll take it as withdrawn, hon. member? [interjection] We're dealing with Vegreville still, thank you.

MR. FOX: I then withdraw the remark, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

It's customary in such circumstances for the House to at least applaud the member for doing so. [applause] Thank you.

The Chair would also like to point out that in an examination of *Hansard* on page 9, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark was perilously close to giving the House considerable difficulty when a statement was made in the opening sentence that should have at least included the word "allegedly." Perhaps all members could take greater care with phrasing their questions in future. Thank you.

I think we're now headed to deal with a point of privilege. Edmonton-Jasper Place.

head: Question of Privilege

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a question of privilege. During the First Session of this Legislature the House approved an order for a return seeking a copy of the report on the survey of photolineation in the Oldman River region prepared by J.D. Mollard. On, I believe, the last day of the session the minister tabled a response indicating that the information provided to the department regarding Dr. Mollard's findings are summarized in a different report. It goes on to say: "Dr. Mollard has not prepared a specific report for the Department on photolineation in the Oldman River region." Consequently, the report was not tabled.

I would like to make a few points for the consideration of Your Honour. At no time did I specify that I was seeking a report prepared for the department. In fact, the request made was general, and it was and is an order of this Assembly. My motion was accepted by the minister and voted on by the House, and therefore it's an order of the House and not a matter of discretion. The suggestion in the material tabled was to the effect that no such report exists. I did re-examine the Oldman River dam Review of Greggs & Associates Report, June 1989, which was tabled by the minister, and it indicates very clearly that

Dr. J.D. Mollard prepared a preliminary regional geology report for the Oldman River . . . Dam Project that provided input on reservoir geology and erosion to Stanley Associates Engineering Ltd. and to their subconsultant Klohn Leonoff Ltd.

This indicates, Mr. Speaker, that the report was prepared, that it was prepared using public funds, and it is part of this research project which we're all very concerned about.

Just so members understand what we're talking about, this is the suggestion that there may be some instability in the geologi-

cal structure in the vicinity of the dam. So it's a very important matter.

I simply would make the point that when the Assembly passes an order, it's not an option whether the material is to be provided or not, and whether the material continues to be housed in the files of Stanley Associates or Klohn Leonoff Ltd. is not particularly relevant. This is an order of the House, and it is a document – it is a report – as acknowledged in the material filed by the minister, and it was prepared at public expense. So I'm speaking not simply of the public interest but the fact that there is an order of the Assembly which is not presently complied with and is, therefore, a breach of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has made some comments with respect to a purported matter of privilege, but as I recall, he did not cite any quotations from any of the rules associated with the House to verify, in fact, a matter of privilege with respect to this matter.

Mr. Speaker, as well, I want to point out at the outset that in a handwritten note dated March 8, 1990, to the Speaker, the member wrote, "the Assembly's order has not been complied with," and further, "I refer as well to the attached excerpt from the review of Greggs & Associates report, June '89, which refers at page 64 to a report prepared for this project."

Mr. Speaker, when this motion for return was accepted, a great deal of research was expended searching for a copy of the report on the survey on photolineation in the Oldman River region prepared by J.D. Mollard.

I was assured then that the government of Alberta was unaware of such a report titled "survey on photolineation in the Oldman River region." That assurance was provided by the consultants employed in the Oldman River project – namely, UMA Engineering Ltd. in association with Acres International, with Stanley Associates Engineering, with Klohn Leonoff – and was verified to me by my deputy minister, Mr. Ed McClellan, my assistant deputy minister Mr. Dan Bader, and my executive director of reservoir development, Mr. Jake Thiessen.

Upon that review and verification the response to Motion for a Return 201 was filed with the Legislative Assembly on August 16, 1989, as Sessional Paper 201/89, Mr. Speaker. The response was a clear one and a specific one. I quote from the response that was filed:

The information provided to the Department regarding Dr. Mollard's Findings is summarized in the "Review of Greggs & Associates Report – June 1989" which was previously tabled.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to emphasize the words "which was previously tabled." The response filed on August 16, 1989, goes on:

Dr. Mollard has not prepared a specific report for the Department on photolineation in the Oldman River region.

The response dealt very specifically with the words in the motion for a return prepared by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place and approved by the Legislative Assembly, asking for, "the report on the survey on photolineation in the Oldman River region." I repeat: the government's response provided by me stated that, and I quote again:

Dr. Mollard has not prepared a specific report for the Department on photolineation in the Oldman River region.

Our response, then, was very clear, Mr. Speaker: the depart-

ment has no titled "report on the survey on photolineation in the Oldman River region." If such a report under the title outlined by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place exists, it was unknown to those groupings identified earlier, namely: UMA Engineering Ltd. in association with Acres International Ltd., Stanley Associates Engineering, Klohn Leonoff; and it was unknown to my deputy minister, my assistant deputy minister, my executive director of reservoir development, and myself as the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

The response provided on August 16, 1989, by the minister responsible on behalf of the government was correct and was accurate. And, Mr. Speaker, that response remains correct and accurate today. Since Friday, when I received a copy of the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place's note to you, this matter has been completely revisited. Over the past weekend all of the groups or individuals identified have had to spend a great deal of time and money on another research review to either, one, verify the accuracy of the response provided on August 16, 1989, or secondly, Mr. Speaker, to determine that an error was made in the response of August 16, 1989, and further, if one was made, to explain to me how this happened and to identify to me those individuals who were responsible for the poor research and subsequent erroneous response that I was purported to have given.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I also spent considerable time working on a response from the government on the basis that an error had been made. If an error had been made, Mr. Speaker, I would have surely stood here today and apologized to the Legislative Assembly. Secondly, I would have taken immediate steps to provide the identified report to the Legislative Assembly. Thirdly, I would have asked the Legislative Assembly to determine if my purported breach of faith was cause enough for me to tender my resignation from Executive Council. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would have asked the Legislative Assembly to determine the course of the required disciplinary action against those on whose advice I filed a response to the Legislative Assembly.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that after a complete and exhaustive revisiting of this matter, the response provided on August 16, 1989, is in my opinion both accurate and very clear. I repeat, and I quote:

Dr. Mollard has not prepared a specific report for the Department on photolineation in the Oldman River region. If, however, Dr. Mollard prepared such a tabled report for himself or another client, I want to make it very clear that we are completely unaware of such and, secondly, we cannot verify the existence of such. If Dr. Mollard did prepare the so-titled report for either himself or another client, it is neither the right nor the prerogative of the government to either request such a report or to file such a report. The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place could have requested such a titled report from Dr. Mollard himself.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that my officials have attempted to contact Dr. Mollard this past weekend, but he was in both the United States and Canada and en route between various places in Canada and the United States, and to this point in time – and the latest note I have is one timed 3:10 as of today – we have not had an opportunity to ask Dr. Mollard if he did "a report on the survey on photolineation in the Oldman River region."

What is clear, Mr. Speaker, is this: if Dr. Mollard did prepare such a report, he did not – and I repeat "not" – prepare "a specific report for the Department on photolineation in the Oldman River region."

Mr. Speaker, it is not a minister's responsibility to presume or interpret what an hon. member is requesting or searching for when he proposes a motion for a return in the Legislative Assembly. A member's motives are his or hers alone. A minister and the government can only respond to the specifics of a question presented and to the specific question presented. The English language is a clear language, and all words contained therein have very specific meanings. The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place posed a question, and the government responded to the question presented. In his notes to you, Mr. Speaker, on March 8, 1990, the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place photocopied page 64 from a report titled Oldman River Dam Project: Review of Greggs & Associates Report, June 1898, and on this page the following words are printed:

Dr. J. D. Mollard prepared a preliminary regional geology report for the Oldman River Dam Project.

If the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place had written his question asking the Assembly to order the filing of a report titled "a preliminary regional geology report for the Oldman River Dam Project," the member would have been told that, number one, such a report exists under the title Preliminary Report on the Geology of the Oldman River Dam Reservoir Area; secondly, that the report was prepared by J. D. Mollard; thirdly, that the report is dated June 19, 1985; and further, that the report is a public report, and that it is available through Alberta Environment's library and has been available for several years.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, if the member had requested the library card catalogue number for the report, I would have provided it to him, and I might also question why the NDP would want \$1 million a year for research.

Mr. Speaker, the member raised a motion for a return. The Legislative Assembly approved the motion for a return, and the government provided a clear and accurate response. If the member was or is in search of a different titled report, it is the responsibility of the member to identify clearly what it is that he or she wants. In terms of the specifics of today, I can only assume that the member wants a report. What I cannot assume is the actual report that the member wants. I believe that we have been very accurate in our response, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that I have provided the explanation required by both your Chair and by the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this matter of a question of privilege is indeed a serious matter, and the rules – Standing Orders, section 15, and *Beauchesne*, section 114(1) and 114(2) – clearly state the importance of such a question. *Beauchesne* section 114(2) states that:

A complaint of a breach of privilege must conclude with a motion providing the House with an opportunity to take some action.

As such, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that in your ruling this question of privilege, firstly, be ruled not a question of privilege and be ruled out of order; secondly, that the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place be reminded of the serious nature of his allegations; thirdly, that he be directed to apologize to the Speaker, to myself, and to the Legislative Assembly; and fourthly, Mr. Speaker, that I be directed by you to determine the costs associated with this questionable question, and further, that I be directed to file a complete accounting cost needed to provide a second revisiting of this matter over the weekend. Mr. Speaker, the research included dealing with some extremely competent international engineering consulting firms located in America, in Canada. It included conversations as far away as Japan and in various parts of Canada and the United States to

ascertain and reaffirm the validity of the information provided in August of 1989.

I conclude with one statement. A question of privilege is the most serious question that could be presented in the Alberta Legislative Assembly, and I would ask for a judicious ruling in this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for the comments, both hon. members, and the matter will be taken under consideration.

head: Orders of the Day

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Moved by Ms Calahasen:

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

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

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

[Adjourned debate March 8: Mr. Martin]

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope my speech doesn't go on as long as the privilege from the hon. member opposite. I thought we were in the midst of a filibuster for a minute.

Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back in the Legislative Assembly, contrary to what just happened on the other side. It's always good to see those bright, smiling faces there and know they're here and ready to go on for the next six months and into the fall with the legislative session.

Mr. Speaker, we are to debate the Alberta Speech from the Throne, and I have it, of course, in front of me here. Needless to say, I was a little surprised. I've been told you should always be positive about everything that comes forward, and I said to the media the other day that certainly the environmentalists should be somewhat pleased because we certainly didn't use up a lot of paper with this particular Speech from the Throne. But if I ever saw the need for a change in government, with a government that has no ideas why it's here to govern other than it's so used to being in power, it came really clear in this Speech from the Throne.

I can remember at the start, whether you agreed with this government or not, Mr. Speaker, that they at least had a vision; they had an idea of why they wanted to be in power. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is no longer the case. If this is the best they can do after only sitting for two and a half months in the last 18 months, to come up with six pages of platitudes, then we are in serious trouble. At least this government is in serious trouble.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the report itself you have to read between the lines. They did indicate some situations. There are two or three I'd like to allude to. As I say, I'm trying to read between the lines and trying to figure out what they mean, and they're not very clear. Dealing with day care, we already know that they're changing the way day care is done in this province. It certainly wasn't perfect before, but there were some good aspects to it. As mentioned by my colleague, we

have some real concerns. It's all right to say you're going to help the people at the lowest end, and certainly they need help, but to dismantle the day care system and to make it almost impossible for people of middle income to achieve day care I don't believe is serving the purpose.

One of the things they allude to again, and we will have to find out as the session goes on, is that there will be "reforms to the social allowance program to encourage greater independence." Well, Mr. Speaker, whenever Conservatives, what I call the right wing of the Conservative Party, start talking about these cold words "greater independence," I've learned over the years precisely what they mean: they're going to attack the poor again. Their idea of creating greater independence is usually to throw more people off welfare, even though there aren't the jobs there, or bring in some grandiose thing like work for welfare that hasn't worked in other jurisdictions. Maybe they should look at what's happening in terms of Britain's move in that direction right now and the trouble that Margaret Thatcher and her Conservative government are in. But maybe I'm misjudging them, Mr. Speaker. If that's the case, why don't they lay it out and give us an idea in the Speech from the Throne rather than playing with these weasel words?

The third one that I just want to allude to quickly is "to reflect the new realities of telecommunications and advanced technology industries." Well, Mr. Speaker, that could mean almost anything. We're told it just has to do with the CRTC ruling a few months ago. I recognize that that is certainly a problem. Again, that's created by the federal Conservatives whom they can't seem to have much influence on. But I tell you this: we know the privatization of AGT is coming – whether it's in this session or the next one – because number one is that they love that word "privatization." They get excited over there, Mr. Speaker. There are not many words that will do it, but that's one of them. So again it's ideological, as this government has moved more and more to the right. This is one of the reasons, I think. But the other one is because of their mismanagement: they need some quick cash. We will have, by the budget, close to \$10 billion in consolidated debt. While this Conservative government is somehow supposed to behave as a business government that can manage things, they need some quick dollars. Alberta Government Telephones is worth something, Mr. Speaker, and now all the other Crown corporations that they've wasted money on aren't. So we know it's coming, whether it's this session or next. I was wondering at the time – the Premier says a decision hasn't been made; the minister says a decision hasn't been made. I know a decision has been made. It's when: the timing.

For rural members, if they want to look at privatizing AGT, it's there, Mr. Speaker. They're going to find out that the realities are that they'll pay a lot more. What AGT has done in this province, it has made meaningful service right across, whether you lived in urban or rural. The most expensive part, of course, is providing service to rural areas. All you have to do is compare what's happening with the private telephone system to the west, in terms of B.C. Tel, to know the type of service they get in the rural areas.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I alluded – and I just want to briefly do this – to the Canadian Constitution in question period today. I want to say that I agree with the Premier that right now is a very, very tense time in this country. It's tense, and I believe there's intolerance being shown in this country right across. There's overblown rhetoric from many quarters in this country, and I think the time has come for calm heads if we're going to move and keep this country together, as the Premier talked

about the unity of this particular country. What frightens me perhaps even a little more than overblown rhetoric – and it's always been there somewhat; anti-Quebec or, from there, antiwest or whatever – is the apathy that seems to be setting in about keeping the country together. For those people that think you can keep Canada together, and having Quebec leave and then the maritimes leave and this group leave and that group leave, with the pressures that we have, especially from the free trade agreement, to maintain a country called Canada, a partial country called Canada, I say to them that they're dreaming in technicolour. If we care about this country, we should be caring about what's happening in the next couple of months, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, I believe that the Meech Lake accord as it is now set up, there are some good aspects to it. But under the circumstances, going back to three years ago, I believe it is dead unless there are some changes, some changes that I think have to reflect, obviously, Senate reform, that have to look at aboriginal rights. I believe we have to take a look at women's rights, multicultural rights, and manage some changes, Mr. Speaker. A parallel accord within Meech itself – and I think this is a point that can be made to Quebec – would not affect their five minimum demands. As I was trying to make the case to the Premier today, we should look at some changes that would make it more acceptable to the majority of Canadians, because if we don't, that June deadline goes beyond us, as it looks increasingly like it will. It's not going to happen overnight, but perhaps it will be a process, Mr. Speaker, that could mean, frankly, the dismantling of this country called Canada, and I think all of us – at least I hope all of us – in this Legislative Assembly are very concerned and worried about that possibility.

To move on, the role of the opposition, of course, is to oppose. Nobody enjoys opposing this government as much as I do, Mr. Speaker, and we're accused – sometimes perhaps rightfully so – of being overly negative. But often the public only sees what goes on in question period; they have no idea of Bills and other debates that go on in the Legislature. I think we all wish that wasn't the case, but that is the reality, Mr. Speaker, of this legislative session. Mr. Speaker, that's one of the reasons. Our job is to oppose; that's what opposition means. But it's also to try to provide alternatives. The government may not like those alternatives, but ultimately, down the way, that's for the public to decide: whose alternative they agree with the most. And we do face elections every four years. The opposition tries with the various means they have in the legislative session and outside the legislative session to say what they would do or what vision, if you like, of the province they have. That's why we went to some trouble, whether all the members agree with it or not, to lay out our vision of the province, of what we would do if we were sitting there and they were sitting here, in terms of a vision of the province; if you like, an alternate throne speech.

We believe that we do have a vision – we'll have lots of time to debate this – for a healthy future and an agenda that would make that vision a reality for ourselves and for our children. We believe that a healthy future for Alberta means taking control of our economy and taking care of our environment. It means protecting and improving our health care services and strengthening our communities. It means, Mr. Speaker, wiping out the unfairness of a taxation system that hurts poor and middle-income Albertans. Above all, a healthy future for Alberta means the elimination of child poverty.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes that I have today – I

know that all the hon. members opposite are sitting on the edges of their seats waiting for this, especially the Provincial Treasurer – I will outline our priorities for the upcoming session and address the issue of an open and honest government, a principle that has sadly been absent during the tenure of this government.

Mr. Speaker, New Democrats – the Official Opposition – want and Albertans need a healthy economy. Over the past year, though, Albertans have watched the myth – I alluded to this earlier – that Conservatives are capable guardians of our economy. They've watched this myth explode. Tory attempts to strengthen the economy have been dismal failures, both in terms of immediate and long-term benefit to Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, consider the state of the red meat industry, notwithstanding Premier Getty's generous support of Peter Pocklington to the tune of some \$67,000,000 worth of taxpayers' money. Consider the handful of jobs created in return for the massive giveaway of our forestry resources, not to mention the potential long-term destruction of those resources and the surrounding environment. Consider also the disastrous effect that the free trade agreement has had on our farm economy. Mr. Speaker, New Democrats are working towards a stable, diversified, and – most important – sustainable economy. No more quick-fix efforts that benefit foreign companies, wealthy friends, and sometimes no one at all.

In the coming years U.S. demand for natural gas will continue to increase while production falls. The Conservative government has responded by expanding gas sales and making commitments for future sales that may in the future jeopardize our own supply. At the same time, when it's cheap, Mr. Speaker, at the lowest possible time for price, the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada says gas prices could double by the year 1995. During this session we will insist that the government assure Albertans of a domestic supply of natural gas, and we'll point out the folly of depleting one of our most precious resources.

Mr. Speaker, like other sectors of our economy, the energy industry is looking towards long-term stability. This is particularly critical as we witness a significant decline in the production of crude oil from conventional sources. Mr. Speaker, we say to the government that we will fight to ensure that any increased production from the tar sands and other heavy oil projects . . .

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

MR. SPEAKER: What possible point of order, hon. member?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, in *Beauchesne* there's a very clear reference, 473 on page 140, as far as reading speeches. I've been patient – seriously – for the last few minutes, but I have a document in front of me. I'm sorry to say I do have it. I don't know how it wound up in my possession, because it's not worth much. But, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, who is supposed to be an experienced parliamentarian, is reading word for word from this document. This is not a debate. It's . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. That's sufficient. In the opinion of the Chair, it is not worthy of the hon. member to be doing this in terms of what is happening here with the throne speech.

Would the Leader of the Opposition please continue.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. We're trying to present an alternative similar to the Speech from

the Throne. I will be alluding to other aspects. I know it bothers the hon. member, but I appreciate that he's relatively new and doesn't understand the decorum in the House.

Mr. Speaker, to go back to the energy industry, I want to stress about the tar sands that the environment is also absolutely crucial, and we will be demanding that. Also, I hope the provincial government does not jump into the fray, take over the extra money the feds are not going to put in and put it in in terms of guarantees, loans, and loan guarantees. If they want money, if we're going to move ahead with these projects, as we've said before in the past, there has to be equity involvement; in other words, no more giveaways. As the Treasurer is well aware, if we have a problem in the pulp industry and some of these others with loan guarantees, we have another \$2 billion sitting out there that could create real problems for us.

As we said before, we need a long-term economic vision that responds to local resources and needs. The key, as we've said in the alternate throne speech, is that working people, farmers, and other interested people need a voice in economic decision-making. I alluded to this last time, Mr. Speaker. As I've mentioned, we say that the end must come to corporate welfare, loan guarantees, and loans to friends of the government and corporations. That's not performance; that's not economic diversity. It doesn't work.

We've alluded to this many times, and we'll be bringing in private members' Bills in any aspect we can to promote, if you can, a recycling industry rather than subsidizing unsustainable bleached kraft based pulp industries. Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely crazy. It makes no sense at all that at the same time we're promoting a cheap tree policy through massive giveaways in northern Alberta, we're not promoting a recycling industry – most of it from the blue box in Edmonton, which is working very well. I'm told some 90 percent of the people are involved in there. Where does that go? The bulk of it is going off to Korea. We would like to use recycled paper here. Where do we get it from? The United States. If we're serious about job diversification, it would seem to make sense that we create this industry here with a deinking plant and some of the other things that would be going on. That makes much more sense than what we've done with the pulp mills in northern Alberta if we really want to create sustainable jobs.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we believe that one of the most serious threats we face for agriculture has to do with the free trade deal. The free trade agreement with the United States – we're beginning to see some of the problems a year later – has undermined the stability of the grain, dairy, egg, and poultry sectors. Orderly marketing will be out. We also know that they've removed oats from the Canadian Wheat Board, and that's only the first step along the way to dismantling the orderly marketing system. Now, I know all the free enterprisers in the Conservative caucus may say that's good. Mr. Speaker, there's absolutely no way a medium-size or small farm will exist without orderly marketing as we compete with subsidized grain in Europe and more recently from the United States. That wasn't supposed to happen, the \$900 million they gave their farmers. They were not supposed to go after our markets, but that's precisely what they did.

We will continue to push for action, Mr. Speaker, and try to jog up the government, push for action on interest rates and farm debt. We will also demand from the Treasurer, keep demanding, that we know what went on with this government and Mr. Peter Pocklington, because that's what has thrown the red meat industry into crisis. I say to the minister that we need

to look at that master agreement. We're into a lot of money from taxpayers. Taxpayers are paying for it. I say to the Treasurer that I believe – at least we were told by this government, you know, just a while ago that there was room for three plants. That was one of the reasons we gave the money to Pocklington, or at least that's what we were told in press releases. Now we're saying there isn't room for two. We look at what's happening, though: 25 percent of the hogs in this province are going out of the province unprocessed, on the hoof. So we believe there is room for at least two plants in this province.

But we have to get to the bottom of what we have to pay for the Pocklington Fiasco, Mr. Speaker. If we're into debt, there's no plant – I don't care if you're the most brilliant entrepreneur in the world; if you're walking in there with a \$100 million debt to take over that plant, Mr. Speaker, it's not going to be viable. That's why we want to know, and I don't understand the reluctance of the government to share it with us. People already know that they made a mistake, and the longer you hide it, surely the government should recognize the worse it gets for them. But I say to the Treasurer – who's here, and I appreciate that – that all the groups involved in this situation, including the hog producers, the workers in the plants, and the beef producers, should have a right to discussion about their future. They were told at one time that this would be the case, and I think there's some resentment, that they don't feel they know what's going on, and it's high time they did.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to move from there, as I say, while the Official Opposition and, I guess, all Albertans want a healthy economy, it's absolutely essential in this day and age that we also have a healthy environment. We know and it's been demonstrated that Albertans do care about their environment. In any poll I've seen or anything that's going on, the environment is right at the top in terms of importance to the people. This is a change, I expect, over the last two or three or four years, but long overdue, Mr. Speaker. Using the Edmonton blue box recycling as an example, Albertans, especially if it's made convenient, are prepared to do their part in cleaning up the environment. I say quite frankly to this government that it's time the government had the same commitment as the people of Alberta, and that is why during this session we have – and it was brought out today – a number of important environmental initiatives. Again, I want to stress that the environment Bill of rights that was introduced by my colleague from Edmonton-Jasper Place will grant every citizen of this province the right to clean air, clean water, clean soil, and the opportunity to enjoy these things. We'll guarantee that people have the right to information. I think that's absolutely important: the right to information, the right to be heard in matters affecting their environment. Albertans shouldn't be left out when it comes to having access to information on the environmental impacts of proposed projects, and above all Albertans should have the right, and they would under this Bill, to take polluters to court. We believe that is a very serious crime, when people are deliberately polluting the environment.

Mr. Speaker, there are of course other aspects and other concerns in the environment that we want to talk about this session. Specifically, we will seek safer standards for the transportation, storage, and handling of toxic substances. It is high time that we stopped endangering the public health and the health of employees who work with these materials.

I've already alluded to the recycling industry, what could be done there. But a simple thing, Mr. Speaker: the government

itself could be committed to adopt purchasing policies that favour reusable products or products made from recycled materials. I talked in the election about using reusable oil. We could use reusable paper – we certainly go through a blizzard in here every day – and that way again we are promoting the environment but also promoting jobs in the recycling industry, which makes more sense over a longer period of time. The government has to set the tone, has to set the standards, in doing these sorts of things.

Mr. Speaker, though we do run into problems, I'd like the government, now with at least a breather from Al-Pac . . . I said the government didn't want to proceed with this at the start. When we first raised this and the environmental groups raised that we need a public hearing dealing with Al-Pac, I remember very clearly the government saying, "We don't need this; we've looked into it." They were finally forced, kicking and screaming, into at least holding one public hearing. So I said the other day, if it makes sense for one project, surely it should make sense to have the same type of hearings for any other project, whether it be for Daishowa or all the rest of it. Because once we start these trends and start having furans and dioxins flowing into the river, defeating the way of life of aboriginal peoples – the traditional hunting, fishing, and trapping is gone; we're not looking at the tourism industry as others – you can't turn that clock back. I say to the government that they did the right thing finally with Al-Pac, but if it makes sense there, doesn't it make sense with the other projects. And, specifically, does it not make sense to have the forest management agreements opened up to environmental impact assessment so we know the deals we're getting into. This government should know that behind closed doors, when they get in with the corporate sector and make deals, they usually run into problems. You're giving away, Mr. Speaker. How do you create a recycling industry if you have a cheap tree policy in northern Alberta. It makes it very difficult. So we should assess this.

I would point out not only the time they're taking to review this, Mr. Speaker; I would hope the government would also take time to review many of the other very sensible suggestions they're making in here. Again referring to 9.4.5, it recommends a full public review of the [forest management agreements] be conducted after the work referred to in 9.4.4, but prior to the approval of the Alberta-Pacific mill.

Open it up. Let us now what we're getting into. It would be better for the government also in the long run.

Also, along with this – not going through all of them – in 9.4.9

it is recommended that the following changes be made to the EIA review process which might be used in the future.

One of the things I campaigned on in the election right out in Athabasca, Mr. Speaker, is that we should hold environmental impact assessments for any major project, and this is what they're saying. It makes absolute good sense for the future. I hope the government would understand that this makes good sense, not only for a sustainable future but it probably makes good sense economically over the long haul. We don't need to cut all those trees down overnight; they will be there. It's one of the few places in the world where we have a vast tract of virgin timber. It will be there, and we can certainly take our time with this and do it properly.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the things the New Democrats are going to continue talking about in this session. We'll continue to ask questions. We may not get the answers, but we'll continue to ask questions in terms of environmental

matters.

I'd like to talk briefly about the future for health care in the province. I'm referring to the Hyndman commission. [interjection] I know the hon. member has trouble reading, but he can probably try to catch up. Now, the Hyndman commission came back and said to us that even where we think we made gains, when you have a Conservative government you always have to be on guard for any social program that's been hard fought for over the years. Never ever take it for granted that it will be there. I say to you that I'm worried about the Hyndman commission. A former Treasurer of the province sitting there probably still has some clout with this government.

A couple of worries I have is that we went back in a Bill, Bill 14, where they brought in and said there would be certain basic services in the health care system. Certain basic services, Mr. Speaker. But all of a sudden they said private insurance could take over some of those other services. I remember – it was Mr. Moore who was minister at that particular time – raising those questions, saying this would lead to a two tiered medicare system. "Oh no, of course not; the hon. member's reading all sorts of things into this," even though we were reading the government's Bill at the particular time. I can't believe it was just an accident that they didn't read their Bills. I think it was a trial balloon to at least see if they could move into the two tiered system, similar to the British model, where you have a very limited, very basic service covered by health care and then, depending on your pocketbook or whether you can afford to have insurance, most of the services outside. But they were forced, because of us raising it and the outcry in the public, to back off Bill 14. Then all of a sudden I see Mr. Hyndman back in the Hyndman commission suggesting the same things. Well, I am concerned. I saw the Minister of Health and the Premier say, "Oh no, that's not really what they meant and they would not do it." I hope that's the case, Mr. Speaker, but I assure you we have some concerns about that and will be watching very carefully.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me say first of all that the government does spend enough money in health care. There's absolutely no doubt about that. We have to begin to spend the dollars wisely in health care. You can't build political hospitals all over the province, put up plaques, and then not have anybody who can service them. You can't get doctors and things like that. It's very expensive. We have the whole fee for service we didn't look into, again a very expensive system, assembly-line medicine, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things the Hyndman commission did, to their credit, was say that we have to move towards more preventative medicine, and that's true. One of the ways it can be done – working very well in some parts of the world and even some parts of Canada, and my colleague talked about it today – is that we want to shift our health care focus towards one of community-based care, and our proposed community health clinic Act calls for the local nonprofit clinics to provide medical and other health care services, with an emphasis on preventative and noninstitutional care.

In this session we will also be urging the government to take a look at our recent health care report for children in this province. I'll be alluding to child poverty in a minute. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. member from Red Deer or whatever will take the time to read the report, because it makes a lot of common sense. It might save some money for the taxpayers of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, also we will continue to press for accessible, fully

funded quality care for women and children who are victims of violence, and we will make that a priority. In a rich province – he Treasurer tells us that we have no problems at all; the economy's booming and all the rest of it. Then surely we can afford a toll-free crisis hot line as part of a program for battered women, abused children, and people who are suicidal. There's simply no excuse for not offering such basic help to Albertans in trouble.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move from there and talk, if I can, about the future. You cannot talk about a healthy future without talking, of course, about healthy children. But, frankly, for many of our children in Tory Alberta in the year 1990 the promise is grim. One in six Alberta children lives in poverty in this province. That's approximately 93,600 kids in jolly old Alberta in 1990. The infant mortality rate for these children is 50 percent higher than for richer children. You can go through the list, but poorer children have higher rates of chronic illness, death due to motor vehicle accidents and drowning; you name it. Poorer children are far more likely to have mental health problems and trouble in school. I don't find that a laughing matter and not many Albertans do, I would say to the hon. member over there, because that's the truth in this province. If he does want to see it, he can come around to my riding and take a look at it, and he won't find it funny.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. members opposite may not like to hear this. They don't want to know that this is the reality in this province, but it is the reality and it's well documented. Rather than doing nothing and saying there isn't a problem, we on this side of the House say that now is the time to act. As a result of that, we have introduced in this House a children's Bill of rights to ensure that every child has the right to a home, food, and clothing. It will guarantee access to health care and health education, including special care for child victims of abuse. Our children's Bill of rights will commit the government of Alberta – if they would be so good as to pass it, this serious Bill – to ending hunger, sickness, and neglect for our children. Mr. Speaker, we will also call, in that frame of reference, for the establishment of a children's health network providing services aimed at children living in poverty, children with mental health needs, child victims of abuse, accident, and injury, and children with diseases and disabilities. The network would work closely with community health, school, and welfare based programs.

Mr. Speaker, we will never deal with the problems of child poverty if we do not first address the issue of women in poverty. New Democrats will continue to fight for equal pay for work of equal value, more accessible and affordable day care centres, a living minimum wage, and maintenance enforcement reform. It's only by dealing with the broad and systematic causes of poverty through legislation we can bring in that we will begin to deal with poverty and give children from poor parents an equal chance to contribute to and share in Alberta's future.

Mr. Speaker, talking about the future, we have to also concern ourselves with healthy communities where we spend our time, where we live, where we work, where we play. As we mentioned in the alternative throne speech, most Albertans are justifiably proud of the communities they live in, but more and more many of our communities are facing serious problems without the power or resources to properly address them. Last session we talked about and brought in, after a task force, the idea of community-based decision-making at the economic level. Sometimes small is better. We've become megaproject junkies; we need a quick fix: if the economy is in trouble, oh well, let's

find another megaproject and spend lots of taxpayers' money, giving it to some corporate sector so some of it will trickle down. That's often not the answer.

Mr. Speaker, it was alluded to in the question period today that we also have to look at what's happening especially in our major cities – not only Calgary and Edmonton but Lethbridge, Red Deer for sure – with the plummeting vacancy rates and soaring rents. The government may have a philosophy that somehow the marketplace is going to mysteriously come out of the blue and overnight create a number of houses to bring the vacancy rate down. That's a triumph of ideology over common sense. Surely, Mr. Speaker, it is time to take a rent review board, not necessarily rent controls. If there's justification, as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs says, for increases because of the times in the past, that board could look at that; it could take that into consideration. But I cannot understand why it is that in some places there have been 40 percent increases among some of the most vulnerable people. I would say to this government and to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to forget about the ideology. That's part of it. We've got to bring on more rental units, but in the meantime what are we going to do? Say to the people too bad; if you can't afford it, just take it out of your rent or all the rest of it? The reality is that there is a crisis out there and it's getting worse, and I suggest to the minister that we look at some type of rental review and tenant protection. We alluded to that earlier.

We could go on and talk about what's happening in education. I won't spend a great deal of time other than to say that we're in danger of moving toward a two tiered system in education. The government says that they care and they're worried about rural depopulation, what the Alberta Wheat Pool says is a 54 percent decrease in real income. But there are things that could be done, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that with education most of the rural areas are moving more and more to property tax because the government's funding has not kept up. They've ignored their own reports, Mr. Speaker. The city areas can manoeuvre a little bit here and there, but in the rural areas some of the school boards should probably declare bankruptcy because they have no money; they have no tax base, Mr. Speaker. I say to you that has to do with the lack of government funding. The government may argue that they've increased it in dollars, but they haven't kept up over the years with inflation in terms of real dollars. Perhaps less to Peter Pocklington and more to the rural school boards and everybody would be better off.

The same things are happening in advanced education. I'm sure this government is going to see a few angry students around, because in *real* dollars at the postsecondary level in the last five or six years – in real dollars, when you take inflation, and remember institutional inflation usually runs higher so I'm probably being "conservative" in my estimates here – the decline has been 8.8 percent. So what does the government do? It tries to push more of it onto the students in tuition hikes. I say to them that in any modern economy that's worried about diversification, worried about job creation, you don't do it by cutting back and running a second-rate educational system. I'm not saying we're there yet, but I'm saying it's getting more and more dangerous, Mr. Speaker. You're having classes that are overloaded; you're having less research and pushing more onto the students. What it's going to come down to in the future is that whether you go to university or not, to use that as an example, it's going to come more and more in terms of how much money

you or your parents have rather than what's in your head. We reject that, because we think we're cheating our economic and social future if we allow this crisis in postsecondary education to continue.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of rural Alberta beyond the trade deal, we will be proposing a comprehensive disaster assistance program to replace what has become an ad hoc, short-term program. Sure, the government has reacted, as they did in Peace River, in rural areas, when things become bad enough. But it's often made on political decisions rather than having a comprehensive program there, and we will continue to push the government again to recognize the economic and environmental value of an ethanol industry.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude this part of it, we will continue to advocate that smaller community-based projects be given priority over megaprojects and big developers, and we will encourage the expansion in rural communities of tourism and postsecondary institutions to provide the training in that area.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just take a quick look at quality of health in the workplace. These figures are true: more than 1,000 Albertans were killed and nearly half a million Albertans were injured on the job in the 1980s. This is totally unreasonable. As I said earlier on, these are shocking statistics. As a result of that, we will be pushing the government to work for substantial increases in the number of occupational health and safety officers throughout the province, and together with the Alberta labour movement, we will press for a major overhaul of the Workers' Compensation Board and a commitment for funding for the Worker's Health Centre. I hope the minister will take that under advisement.

The workplace continues to discriminate also against visibly ethnic, disabled, or aboriginal people and women. We are committed in the Official Opposition to moving decisively in the area of employment equity to provide those groups with an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential in the workplace.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer would be disappointed if I did not talk about tax fairness in this province. Let me, first of all, say that we agree on something. We agree that the goods and services tax is totally unacceptable for this province and totally unacceptable for the people of Alberta. We recognize the absolute unfairness of any tax that ignores a person's ability to pay. I hope that's the reason why the Treasurer also is against that particular tax.

I have to tell him that I was in a debate with Mr. Andre on – I forget what the name of it is; the gong show or whatever – *Crossfire*, CBC. I was told that I was only a second stringer there, though, because they wanted to get somebody from the government. I'm sure that they asked the Treasurer or at least his office. I was surprised that nobody from the government benches – I was told this – would go there and debate Mr. Andre about the unfairness of the GST. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, as much as I enjoyed the debate, I would have liked it better if the government who is in power had taken that debate on. This is a political fight. The only way that federal government, whether they're in the same political party as this government or not, is going to back off is if they feel they are not going to win seats in this province and across the country. They have to feel the pressure, and I say to you quite frankly that they don't yet. They know that it's unpopular, but their theme has become, "If we're unpopular enough, we must be doing something right," instead of listening to the people. They believe that they have two or three years to the next federal election, and by that time

people will forget about it. I say to you that once you have this tax, it's going to be very hard to get rid of it. No matter whether it's at 7 percent or 6 percent or whatever the percentage is, it will go up; it will not go down.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

For the right reasons, Mr. Treasurer, we will agree on this one. That's why I've said in the past that if they want to promote a nonpartisan approach to this tax fight in Alberta, we'll work together on it and fight over the next number of months. They certainly have the support of the Official Opposition. I wish they would take that under advisement, because it is a political fight.

At the same time, we can't crow too much here because we have an unfair taxation system. The Treasurer and I have had that debate before, and I expect we'll have that debate many times again, Mr. Speaker. But I say it is frankly disgraceful that we have a provincial income tax, in these figures we dug out, that will let some wealthy Albertans off the hook completely while at the same time it collects taxes from the poor. Let me explain to the Treasurer what I'm talking about. We dealt with Stats Canada. The last time we have figures for is 1987. These are unpublished figures. There were 600 wealthy Albertans who did not pay one single penny in taxes. At the same time this was occurring – Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee this happened. The Treasurer may not like it. [interjection] That's the point. Why? A lot of tax loopholes. I'm talking about the provincial income tax. There are too many tax loopholes, and that's the responsibility of this government. At the same time, there was \$50 million collected from people making \$15,000 or less. Now, what is the fairness of a system that collects \$50 million from people making \$15,000 or less at the same time that 600 people making over \$50,000, most of them a lot more than that, don't pay a single cent? No wonder people are upset with taxes, Mr. Speaker. The unfairness of it is evident to most people.

At the same time, too, we looked, and that balance is still there. I know we've had this debate, but at one time in the early '70s, when this government came to power, roughly 60 percent of the taxes paid came from individuals and roughly 40 percent from the corporate sector. At one time in the '50s it was 50-50. In that same year that I'm talking about, 93 percent of it was coming from individual taxpayers in the province and only 7 percent from the corporate sector. Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable, it's unfair, and people are not going to put up with it any longer. I say to the Treasurer – I don't know what's coming in this budget, but I fear it will be a continuation of those same trends – that if he's really looking for extra revenues, if he's looking for fairness where he can give ordinary taxpayers a break, he has to take a look at that system. He's well aware that in the United States, where Ronald Reagan is the conservative's darling and their hero, even Ronald Reagan looked at the corporate sector in the United States, said that profitable corporations weren't paying any taxes, and he brought in a minimum tax on them. Surely if it was good enough there, it should be good enough here in jolly old Alberta. Frankly, as I say – and I would really stress this to the Treasurer – it's time working Albertans got some of the breaks instead of the wealthy individuals and corporations in this sector.

I still have 20 minutes or so, Mr. Speaker, and I know that the hon. Member for Red Deer-North or Red Deer-South or wherever he's from wants me to go on because he enjoys it so much.

Let me take some time to conclude and say to this government that they may sit there, bring in a Speech from the Throne of six pages, and basically say: "Gee, we have a rosy economy, and we've done everything right. We're the best in Canada; we're the best in the world; we're the best in the universe. There's nothing much that has to be done other than *six* pages and a few Bills here and there. Everything's all right." I say to this government that they are not listening if they believe that is the case, Mr. Speaker. People are saying to us, "Enough is enough," that it's time for a change in this province if they can't do any better than that.

The hon. members over there think they're invincible. They've won a few elections, not through good management or anything. But a lot of governments in the past, Mr. Speaker, have thought they were invincible, that three years down the way people are so used to voting Conservative that the X will go there no matter what. I say to them that they're not listening to people very carefully then, and I'd say to this government that it's time you got your act together. Six pages of platitudes is a damning indictment of this government, Mr. Speaker. If they want to govern in the future, they'd better do better. But I also say that with their philosophy they may find that difficult. Conservatism is on its way out all across the world right now. Just like the poll tax will deal with the Conservatives in the . . . [interjections] They talk about the east. The social democrats are the main opposition party there, Mr. Speaker. If you want to talk about that, it's the social democrats who are doing well, not the conservatives. [interjections] I woke the Treasurer up, Mr. Speaker; thank God. Well, we even got a reaction from Red Deer – where?

AN HON. MEMBER: Red Deer-North.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that it's time these people left, and we'll prove in the next couple of years that it's time we had a new vision for this province. That's what the people are demanding, that's what the people are going to get from the Official Opposition, and that will be shown three or four years down the way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to get my act in order here and get everything in order.

MR. FOX: Tell your colleagues to get their act in order.

MR. DECORE: They'll get their act in order, hon. Member for Vegreville.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments about the Meech Lake accord and the matters that are moving too quickly, I think, in that area. I was disappointed that the Deputy Premier didn't agree to a special debate on this issue, disappointed because the polls that have been taken recently indicate that Canadians, Albertans included, are mystified, are uncertain, need education, need to be told about the details of the Meech Lake goings-on. They also show in these polls that Canadians have lost confidence in all political leadership – this is an important fact: all political leadership – with respect to the resolution of the constitutional problems facing Canada. I thought that on that basis it was important, then, to have some discussion on Meech Lake.

I'm worried, Mr. Speaker, when I see that the Leader of the

Opposition, now the Premier of Ontario, brought forward a report on Senate reform that indicated he and the party he leads didn't agree at that time with equal representation. I'm worried about the kinds of things our Premier can do in talking about a Triple E Senate reform after Meech has been concluded. If I'm worried about the leader of the Liberal Party in Ontario in that regard, I have even greater concern about the leader of the government of Quebec and his commitment to a Triple E Senate and particularly the "equal" part of a Triple E Senate.

I wish that the Premier would have come into the Legislative Assembly and allayed the fear I have and I think maybe other members of this House have with respect to that issue of Senate reform. Maybe it would be more palatable. Maybe it would be comforting for Albertans to know that our Premier or Deputy Premier has in fact received some kind of assurance from Mr. Bourassa or Mr. Peterson that they will accept the concept of Triple E. Maybe it would have been totally soothing *if* the Deputy Premier or the Premier had come in and said: "Look, we've had a discussion. We know that this is going to fly. We've had informal discussions. There is no problem with respect to the reforming of the Senate." Maybe it would have been easier to have accepted the distinct society and immigration provisions in the Meech Lake accord and so on. But at the moment those explanations are not being given. Albertans are not satisfied. The people in my constituency, Mr. Deputy Premier, are not satisfied, and perhaps you can address that issue if and when you stand to debate.

It's important that every sector of Alberta speak to what they expect in terms of this constitutional logjam. I'm delighted that the Premier has given us some indication that new directions are being taken by him. He talked about a political accord this morning on the radio. The Leader of the Opposition has followed it up today with some questions, but I'm delighted that the Premier has taken some action.

Why is the reform of the Senate important for Albertans? Well, if you look back at the study Professor Mansell in Calgary and Professor Percy at the University of Alberta have done on the issue of moneys paid to Ottawa and benefits received back by Albertans, since 1961 Albertans have paid \$100 billion – I have to underscore that: \$100 billion from 1961 to 1985 – more than they have received in any kind of benefits from our national government. By contrast, for that same period of time Ontario has only paid \$17.7 billion and British Columbia \$3.78 billion. We're getting hosed.

MRS. OSTERMAN: And Mr. Chrétien was part of it.

MR. DECORE: We're getting hosed, madam. There's something that has to be done, and I want an assurance – and I hope the Member for Three Hills could help us with that debate – that Senate reform will come forward, that the Premier does have that assurance verbally from both of these Premiers that this will happen.

Mr. Speaker, two things were missed in the Speech from the Throne, in my view. One was the issue of renters, and I applaud the comments the Premier has made with respect to revisiting the tax credit system program for renters in Alberta. It is a matter that continues to get more serious. It's not just in Calgary and Edmonton, as the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out; this is happening in all urban centres in Alberta. I don't want to see – and I think that I speak on behalf of the great majority of the constituents of Glengarry; they don't want to see rental review boards. That's not the way to solve this

problem, because that skews the system. So I think it works even worse in the end by having that process of rental review. What we need is a tax credit system and what we need is – and I think this is even the most important point – an availability of rental accommodation units that take that vacancy rate up higher. Three percent is what is supposed to be healthy, according to CMHC. It's below 1 percent in Calgary and 1.9 percent in Edmonton.

The result of this inability to meet the demand is that rental groups are forming. They're deploring the fact that rental gouging is taking place. Some of those groups are talking about rental review boards. But if we can't get the marketplace stimulated, if we can't get over the recession shock that has affected developers in not providing the supply of rental units, then we're going to continue with the misery.

Mr. Speaker, I note one other item that's of great importance, and that is the affect of the GST on rental accommodations. Every time a landlord calls for a plumber or something to be done with respect to the building the tenants are in, the GST is going to be added. There is already some evidence showing exactly the affect that this will have on increased rental rates in our own province. We'll be speaking to that in the days to come.

The other issue that I wish the government had given more attention to is the issue of agriculture. Agricultural leaders are telling us that there will be a drop in agricultural income of about 50 to 70 percent. The Premier of Saskatchewan has brought forward drastic measures to deal with this concern. I think that our province should come forward with programs and plans to deal with this matter in the same way. In the last Speech from the Throne the government identified agriculture as its number one priority, number one industry, but nothing has been said with respect to the likelihood of this 50 percent reduction in farm income.

The throne speech talks about spending money to access international markets for business. Why not spend some money to access international markets for agriculture? I met recently with a registered calf/cow operator who said that he must market his cattle alone, that the government has no assistance or program to help in the marketing of those registered cattle in the United States or other parts of the world. I think we should do more in that area and in other areas, and that's a good way to start.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that the Treasurer has left, but the issue of fiscal responsibility continues to be a matter of great importance for Albertans. If you look at the statistics of the number of civil servants in our province compared to the average in other provinces in Canada and compare it to Ontario, it's extraordinary; it's unreal. We have one civil servant for every 33 Albertans. The provincial average, all the provinces combined and averaging them out, is one in 52; one civil servant for every 52 people. In Ontario, it is one in 73. I think we've got a bloated system. I think the system needs some sort of efficiency mechanism to review and get things under control, and we've suggested in the past and will continue to suggest those efficiencies audits. Our government spends 15 percent more per capita than all of the other provinces averaged out, and we spend 28 percent more per capita than the province of Ontario. But look around. Have we got a Cadillac system that is so much better than Ontario or the other provinces? I think not.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, our last budget showed a deficit of some \$682 per person. If you compare that to the average of all the provinces in Canada, you find that that average across Canada is \$119. If you look at the cost of debt servicing, three years ago the cost of debt servicing expenditures in our budget was 1.7 percent. It is now close to 10 percent. The accumulated deficits of our province are reaching \$10 billion. The unfunded pension liability of our province is about \$9 billion. It is time to pick up our socks and do something worth while in terms of fiscal responsibility.

I want to debunk the constant use of the word "diversification" and the success the government feels they're having with respect to the issue of diversification. In 1973 9.6 percent of the working population of the province of Alberta was employed in the manufacturing sector. In 1989 only 8 percent of Alberta's population was employed in the manufacturing sector, and this in spite of billions of dollars the government has spent on encouragement or attempts to stimulate this diversification philosophy that they've brought forward. They have been totally unsuccessful in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to press the government for openness. The issue involving Mr. Pocklington where three agreements have been signed by the government and Mr. Pocklington with respect to a hog processing plant in Picture Butte and with respect to Gainers: those three agreements have not been laid out, given to Albertans for study and review to see exactly what the transaction was. When you go to the trough, when you go to the government for taxpayers' money, it seems to me to be imperative that that arrangement be made known to the people who are having to put up the money. Freedom of information legislation exists in all except four provinces in Canada. Only last month the province of Saskatchewan – Mr. Deputy Premier, I don't know if you noted that – gave notice that they will be bringing forward freedom of information legislation. That will leave three, Alberta being one of them. We're just out of step in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, the reference to stewardship in the Speech from the Throne was an unfortunate use of words. Stewardship in terms of fiscal responsibility has not been the case. Stewardship in terms of diversification success has not been the case. In fact, we're going the other way, and the evidence is clear that we're going the other way. It's time the government got a lot smarter with respect to fiscal responsibility. It's time we got our house in order. It's time that the pride and the envy other Canadians held for Albertans be restored. That envy is gone; it's gone because of the stewardship in the last five years particularly, the not very good stewardship of this government.

Our party will continue to press for fiscal responsibility. Our party will continue to press for openness. Our party will continue to press for some excitement and direction and planning in terms of the things Albertans need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make some comments and reflections on the Speech from the Throne and on some of the reflections that have been made on it even this afternoon. Given the present hour, I would beg leave to adjourn debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

Assembly sit this evening or for that matter any evening this week.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

[At 5:29 p.m. the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is not proposed that the

