

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, March 14, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/03/14

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

### Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

### head: Introduction of Bills

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Bow.

#### Bill 7

#### Change of Name Amendment Act, 1990

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 7, Change of Name Amendment Act, 1990.

The purpose of the amendment to the Change of Name Act is to remove discrimination on the grounds of gender with respect to name change and to authorize a change of name for children of annulled marriages.

[Leave granted; Bill 7 read a first time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 7, as introduced by the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

### Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I have pleasure today to table with the Assembly copies of the annual report for the year ended March 31, 1989, for the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Members received copies of this report shortly after its release back in September.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to table four copies of the annual report for Alberta Career Development and Employment for the fiscal year 1988-89.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to table with the Assembly the annual report for Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation covering the period ended March 31, 1989, the annual report for the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute covering the period ended March 31, 1988, and the Farming for the Future progress report for the period ended March 31, 1988. These reports were previously distributed to all members.

### head: Introduction of Special Guests

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to my colleagues today a very special group of people from Honolulu, Hawaii, and also from California. These special guests are visiting not only Edmonton but parts of Alberta, and they're also visiting the Chinese community of Edmonton with the thought of putting in place an exchange between the Chinese communities of Honolulu and Edmonton. I'd like to introduce them, have them stand and then be recognized by the members of the Legislature. First of all, I'd like to introduce Larry and Mimi Ching. Larry is the president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, and also the president of the Liberty Bank. Wendell Pang is the vice-president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. I'd like to introduce the others, and then I'll ask the members for their recognition. May Lowe is the 1989 Narcissus Queen for Honolulu, along with her mother, Helena. I'd like to introduce Elsie Umaki, from May Investment; Roger Hong; and Viola and Frank Ong as well. Viola is in the real estate business, and Frank is retired from the Defense department as a chartered accountant, where he learned a lot of interesting items. Mr. Speaker, I'd like the Assembly to recognize them and welcome them to our Legislature here today.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a visitor from the municipal district of Rocky View, a member of that council, Mrs. Jean Isley. I'd like her to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 31 women from the Women's Canadian Club of Calgary. I would like members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming this group of 31 women, who are sitting in the members' gallery. If they'd rise, we'll welcome these people today.

### head: Oral Question Period

#### Oldman River Dam Federal Court Decision

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday again we saw an example of the bungling and mismanagement of the Oldman River dam by this government, where some \$250 million of taxpayers' money is at risk. Now we see from the comments yesterday that they're arrogantly going to defy the law, and yesterday the minister of public works tried to convince us that he didn't have to stop construction of the Oldman River dam despite the Federal Court of Appeal's unanimous decision to quash the approval allowing construction in the first place. My question is to the Deputy Premier. Doesn't this government realize that this government no longer has a permit for construction of the Oldman River dam?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition should know, having had it explained to him yesterday, that the court has dealt with the federal government on this matter, that the government of Alberta intends to appeal the decision. In the meantime, the government is committed to assuring that the water needs of southern Alberta are met. I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition and members of this Assembly that as a member from southern Alberta we are

intensely interested in assuring that there is an adequate water supply for the people of the southern part of this province. That's what we're doing, and that's what it's all about.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, you should have gotten your act together 10 years ago.

Now, my question, then, to the Deputy Premier, who is a lawyer. It says clearly in there that there is not a permit for construction. How does he continue justifying construction when to do so shows contempt for the Federal Court of Appeal's ruling?

MR. HORSMAN: The attitude of the government towards the federal court is a matter which will be explained in the appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada as soon as it is possible to get that matter on. It is clearly the view of this government that the court was in error in its judgment and that they have tried to apply retroactively rules which came into place after the commencement of the procedures for the construction of the Oldman dam. It's all very well and good for members from Edmonton with a secure water supply for this community to have less concern for those of us in southern Alberta, but this government intends to do what it can to manage the water resources of this province to ensure that southern Alberta is not deprived of those water resources.

MR. MARTIN: The Deputy Premier knows more than the Federal Court of Appeal. He said it today, Mr. Speaker.

Now, my question is this. When the same thing happened with the dam project in Saskatchewan, the Conservative government in that province halted the dam. They understood the law, Mr. Speaker. The Deputy Premier at that time said in the Legislature, and I quote: "This government believes in this project . . . but this government also believes in obeying the law." Why doesn't this government believe in obeying the law?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Leader of the Official Opposition in this Assembly is more concerned with scoring political points and more concerned with playing to different audiences than to the people of southern Alberta and should take a different approach to a matter as vital to the future of the southern part of Alberta as water. You cannot live without water. The communities of Medicine Hat through to the Rocky Mountains require the management of water so that people can live and so that farms can thrive. If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to continue making these political points, fine, but the fact of the matter is that we intend to proceed with the construction of the dam. We intend to appeal and to do everything possible to make sure that water resources are managed properly and that the people of southern Alberta are not deprived of water.

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

#### **Auditor General's Report**

MR. MARTIN: They can thump all they like, the lawbreakers over there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, continuing with bungling and mismanagement, we'll turn over to the Provincial Treasurer. This Treasurer likes to crow about the financial state and the financial health of the province, but he also likes to hide the true financial status

of this province, puts on his rose-coloured glasses and away he goes. Yesterday the Treasurer went to great lengths to defend the reputation and integrity of the Auditor General. Maybe he should start to listen to the Auditor General. Again, the Auditor General recommends that the province should be including future pension obligation liabilities when it calculates the province's net financial worth, and that would change the province's finances from a consolidated net surplus of \$5 billion to a deficit of \$3.5 billion: only 8 and a half billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. My question: would the Treasurer now admit that this more accurately reflects the true financial position of this province?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate an opportunity to express our appreciation for the work of the Auditor General. In fact, contrary to what all members of the opposition believe, we do work very closely with the Auditor General; all ministers work, in fact, and accept his recommendations. Now, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry tried to have the Auditor General ousted yesterday. Of course, we objected to that, clearly. We do say, though, that since there has been a reference to the Auditor General's report, let me indicate very clearly that the recommendations are important recommendations to us. They are not significant in the size of the government, and really the Auditor General did not find much wrong with the management systems that are in place. As I've said repeatedly, there is no qualification of his opinion on the disclosures. This is significant. Despite how much effort he may take to look across a variety of departments and a variety of agencies, when it is all over at the end of the day, there are no qualifications in his report with respect to the consolidated funds of this province. Now, what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? It means that in his professional judgment we have displayed appropriately the assets and liabilities of this province. He has said that quite clearly, and to suggest differently is simply misleading the House.

Now, what he has said with respect to the pension plan, Mr. Speaker, is that in his view it may be more appropriate to display the pension fund liabilities on the actual face of the balance sheet. But there is no real reason to do that. There is no fundamental basis for it. The Institute of Chartered Accountants, who give dictums in this area, postulates if you like, have not come down with any particular position in that area. They're looking at it. There may well be a recommendation, but at this point the disclosure put forward by the province with respect to the pension fund liability satisfies the Auditor in terms of disclosure – no qualifications – and satisfies contemporary disclosure of other provinces across Canada. To suggest otherwise is absolutely wrong.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: I guess they only appreciate the Auditor General when he agrees with the Treasurer.

Mr. Speaker, is it not the case, though, that that 8 and a half billion dollars difference will have to be paid out by the province and that reflects the true reality of the province's financial status?

MR. JOHNSTON: My goodness, I thought he was going to have a little heart attack there on the issue. I know he's concerned about his own pension. We have seen these people time and time again trying to protect their pension plan. This

is probably the only asset they'll have once they retire from this Assembly, and I can appreciate their concern, Mr. Speaker, because they're not going to be here very long.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear. We have provided clear disclosure of the liabilities; we haven't hidden anything. We have followed the way in which these assets and liabilities are disclosed by other governments, the way we have disclosed in this government over the past, year after year. Certainly through the good years of the Conservative Party, since 1971, we've disclosed it in this fashion, and we have disclosed it on the balance sheet in a footnote. All the information is there. It's not hidden; there's no attempt to confuse the picture. But it is disclosed, I repeat, in accordance with sound accounting principles, and the Auditor has confirmed that.

MR. MARTIN: As usual Deficit Dick evades the question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let's see where else they cooked the books. Another big-ticket item, and the Auditor General has brought it out again: dealing with deemed assets, which is almost \$3 billion. We're not going to sell – it may come as a shock to the Treasurer – Kananaskis park. As a result of that, would the Treasurer admit that in fact we're overexaggerating the heritage trust fund by almost \$3 billion?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, it's good to see that in fact the member has read the Auditor's report. It's probably the first time in a decade he's taken the time to look at it. From time to time in this House and through the debates on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund in committee – my colleague from Cardston, the chairman of that committee, will attest to that – we have had this debate about whether or not the deemed assets of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, those important assets which are so unique to this province, which mean so much to many of these constituencies around here and should not be belittled the way the member for Norwood has done, have been disclosed in a very specific way. We're very fortunate in this province to have that heritage fund. Now, I know that other parties would like to spend it, as would the member for Norwood, or disburse it in some other fashion; that would be the member for Glengarry. But I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, we're the managers, we're going to keep it in place, and we're going to make it work.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Perhaps the hon. Treasurer will continue to be a good manager and refer to members in the House as Edmonton-Norwood and Edmonton-Glengarry.

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, please.

### Shelter Allowances

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, thank you. My first two questions are to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, responsible for housing. Housing groups in Toronto and British Columbia have concluded after assessment that rental rates in B.C. and Toronto – and we can assume the same thing will happen in Alberta – will rise to about the level of \$50 extra on the average for renters because of the GST. The homeowners in Alberta have been treated generously, and I applaud the action that the Premier is going to take in reviewing the issue of renters. In 1983 and 1987 shelter rates for people receiving social allowance were drastically cut because the argument at that time was that there was plentiful housing; there was lots of rental accommoda-

tion.

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

MR. DECORE: My question, then, to the Minister is this: given that the government and the minister are reviewing this rental assistance program, will the minister add as a consideration the drastic effect the GST is going to have on renters in Alberta?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. I want to say this on behalf of the government: we are definitely against the goods and services tax and the effects it will have not only on home builders, homeowners, renters, but on all of the citizens of Alberta. So we want to make that clear in this Legislature at this time as to where we stand. Secondly, working it into the formula: yes, we are, in terms of that consideration. The matter is certainly one of concern that I have with regards to the construction industry. We know, and all of us know in this Legislature, that rental accommodation is very tight at the present time, caused by the fact that we have a growing economy in the province of Alberta, that some 42,000 new jobs have been created in this province in 1989, that some 30,000 new people have been added to the labour force. That's what's causing the difficulty. The answer to the hon. leader, Mr. Speaker, is yes, that's a major consideration in the formula in terms of expenditure and meeting that demand in the housing industry.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder, because of the intense pressure that renters in Alberta are now facing: would the minister commit to the fact that this matter needs immediate attention and that a program will be brought forward during this spring session to deal with Alberta renters?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs may wish to speak in terms of any kind of legislation related to the question. My job is to try and enhance the opportunity for rental accommodation in the province; I intend to pursue that. One of the programs that's been very successful up to this point in time is the family first home program that has put 18,000 people into their home for the first time. That's alleviated some of the pressure on rental accommodation. The other areas we hope to emphasize are in the area of senior citizens' homes and special needs homes across the province. Last year we enhanced that area by some 1,400 units; we intend to work towards the same objective for the current fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MR. DECORE: Is the minister going to respond?

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, thank you.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as shelter allowances have been reduced over seven years, 1983 and '87, and inasmuch as they were reduced because of what was then believed to have been a glut of rental accommodations, now that's not the fact. Will the Minister of Family and Social Services agree that these shelter rates for people on social assistance, some 150,000 Albertans, need to be changed immediately for their benefit?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I would want to assure the hon. member that we're monitoring the situation very closely. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Carry on, hon. minister, please, through the Chair.

MR. OLDRING: We recognize that more and more of our caseloads are reaching the maximum allowable amount under our existing programs. The member knows only too well that this government is committed to introducing some new social reforms in this session, and I would want to assure him that we'll be making the appropriate adjustments to our rental allowances at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Member for Rocky Mountain House, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

### Transfer Payments Reduction

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my constituency there is a very urgent need for extended care facilities. As a matter of fact, the four communities involved have proposed about 170 beds, and even though we haven't broken any ground, they're all spoken for. We know that the federal government has been cutting back ever since about 1982 on the transfer payments. Also, in my constituency there are a number of citizens who are on social assistance, a number of families requiring the services of Family and Social Services. Now, on February 20 the Minister of Finance for Canada announced in his budget speech that the government of Canada would be unilaterally cutting down the amount of moneys being made available to Alberta under the Canada Assistance Plan Act and the associated agreements. To the Attorney General. Does the government plan to take any action to protest the federal government's action?

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Could he at least get the first couple of words out? Thank you.

MR. ROSTAD: When the federal Minister of Finance brought down his budget, our government responded that all governments must be cognizant of the need for fiscal restraint and to address deficits. We in Alberta recognize that we must, of course, do our part. However, we also want to ensure that the federal government knows that unilateral action against Alberta, or, in the case of the budget, against the three particular governments, is not willingly accepted. British Columbia has initiated a reference to the British Columbia Court of Appeal which addresses the Canada assistance program and its contractual relationship, and we have instructed our officials to join in with that action against the federal government.

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. What is the nature of the court action, and when will it be heard?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the court action is a reference, and it's being carried by the British Columbia government with the province of Alberta and the province of Ontario joining in the action. There are two questions that have been put to the

court to answer, and we expect the proceedings will take place approximately the middle of May. We just want to ensure through this action that Albertans can be comfortable that we will get what we think is owed to us through our contractual agreements with the federal government.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

### Procter & Gamble Pulp Mill Emissions

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On July 20, 1988, the then Minister of the Environment, the Member for Barrhead, issued a news release with the results of dioxin testing of sludge, effluent, and other materials at the Procter & Gamble mill site. It found extraordinarily high levels of dioxin and furan, especially in the sludge in the settling pond: 280 parts per trillion dioxin, 3,607 parts per trillion furan. The minister acknowledged yesterday that hundreds of thousands of kilograms of this material had been allowed by Alberta Environment to be dumped into the Wapiti River in excess of the permitted level. I want to ask the minister today if this information about the toxic nature of the sludge was taken into account before the department decided to allow the dumping in the Wapiti River.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the whole issue of dioxins and furans and chlorinated organics only became an issue in 1985, and we only started to know something about them in 1988. As to the extent of a detailed investigation into the quantity of dioxins and furans, I really can't answer that question at this particular time, but I will undertake to find out how much investigation there was into dioxins and furans at that particular time, understanding not much research had been done anywhere, in fact, in the world.

Mr. Speaker, this whole issue of what happened in 1988 is of some concern to our government, but I think the point that needs to be made here is that we are getting better. We have told that mill of Procter & Gamble that they will have to refit to world standards and give us an action plan before their licence to operate is issued. All of these issues relative to chlorinated organics, dioxins, furans, and so on will be taken into account before the permit is issued. The point is, Mr. Speaker, that we are getting better. We are addressing the whole issue of compliance and enforcement. If I can point out, a lot of things have happened in the past, and governments have acknowledged the mistakes in the past. If we didn't, we wouldn't be addressing the environmental concerns the way we are addressing those concerns today.

Mr. Speaker, just one final point. I would like to point out and maybe take the members of the NDP back to their respected leader, the hon. Ed Broadbent. One thinks back, and perhaps if he had been more concerned about the environment in his home riding of Oshawa, then we wouldn't have . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. minister. Thank you.  
Supplementary, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: I understand that what happened is that one of the two sludge ponds had been sealed because it was contaminated with PCBs from another incident, and therefore Alberta Environment allowed Procter & Gamble to override the whole system and let the whole shooting match go into the river. Now, I simply want to know if this minister will today ack-

knowledge the link between those suspended solids and the dioxin and furan, if he will acknowledge that those two things are connected and that the department knew about it.

MR. KLEIN: As I said, Mr. Speaker, we will investigate the situation, but I will point out again – now listen carefully, will you please, hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. We will investigate the situation. There was very, very little research being done in 1988 relative to dioxins and furans. I don't know at this particular time the extent to which those investigations were carried out, but I will find out, if the hon. member would just be patient, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Edmonton-Calder, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

### **Shelter Allowances**

*(continued)*

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. The minister stated earlier in this Assembly today that he will be making some adjustments to social assistance. This government has been cutting shelter allowances by as much as 48 percent since 1982, so we're very pleased that he's finally going to make some announcement. I would ask the minister, however: can he assure this Assembly that he will not simply take food allowance to increase shelter allowance and that in fact he will actually increase the money available for shelter?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, again I pointed out that we are looking at some major social reform, and yes, we'll continue to address all those essential needs, not only food and shelter but clothing and medical and all the other things that we provide as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no commitment, though.

People on assured income for the severely handicapped are also faced with rising rental costs, and many of them are paying more than 50 percent in rents. Will this minister make a commitment to increase the amount allocated to people on AISH so that they can get their basic needs met as well?

MR. OLDRING: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I'd want to assure the member that AISH is going to be a part of this reform, but I would want to remind the member again and point out that Alberta is one of three provinces in Canada that even has a program of this nature. The province of British Columbia has one. They provide considerably less. The province of Ontario has one. They provide marginally more for singles; they provide less for couples. I'd also want to point out that both the province of British Columbia and the province of Ontario are both means and assets tested. Here in Alberta at this time, Mr. Speaker, we are only means tested.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark, followed by Calgary-Fish Creek.

### **Procter & Gamble Pulp Mill Emissions**

*(continued)*

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of the Environment said that Procter & Gamble was consciously allowed to exceed total suspended solids emission standards "but only at high river flow" times. This presumably meant that the river's capacity to dilute these effluents was at some kind of maximum. Is the minister not aware, on the contrary, that during July and August of 1988, a period during which TSS, or total suspended solids, standards were exceeded 30 times, in fact river flow was only 40 percent of long-term averages for July and August?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark doesn't pay attention when I'm answering a question addressed to me by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. Had he been paying attention, he would have heard the answer.

MR. MITCHELL: Is the minister saying that he didn't say: "At that point the department allowed the operation to continue but only at high river flow periods"? On the contrary, is the minister not aware that, in fact, river flow during July and August of 1988, when there were 30 cases of going over TSS standards, was only 20 percent of the flows achieved during peak runoff periods other times of the year, spring.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, at this particular point I am not aware, nor was I aware in 1988 – as a matter of fact, I wasn't even aware of the location of the Wapiti River in 1988.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Cardston, followed by Edmonton-Kingsway, and then Calgary-Buffalo.

### **Syncrude Equity**

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Energy. It becomes obvious that the government is giving some consideration to following the recommendations of the select committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act to explore the advantages of disposing of its equity position in Syncrude. That being the case, could the minister give us some idea as to how he might arrive at the equity that we have in Syncrude at this time for the sale of it?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, in 1975 the government made a decision at that time to participate in the Syncrude project based on an economic strategy based on the fact that we thought at that time that in the early '90s there would be a decline in conventional crude oil production. The decision was to proceed, and it was the right decision. I should point out that Syncrude has delivered in excess of \$1 billion in royalties to the province of Alberta. As a Progressive Conservative government we believe, Mr. Speaker, in that we met the economic objectives set out in 1975, that it is now time to pull out of the private sector our participation in this project and allow it to proceed without government investment.

As the hon. member indicated, his committee recommended that we do sell the asset. I should say that we will not sell this asset, our interest in Syncrude, unless we get a price that is satisfactory to the government, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the

value of that asset, I do hesitate to put a price tag on it at this particular time. I prefer to see offers than to set a price that may set a criterion for negotiations. The final decision on the value will be determined by the government once we receive offers for our interest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Supplementary, Cardston. [interjection] Cardston, thank you, not Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister. In that the heritage fund carried the investment of some \$512 million in Syncrude, it would seem that the fund should reap any benefit. Could the minister confirm that this would be the case and that it would not flow through to the General Revenue Fund or to OSLO or to some other oil sands development? Perhaps the Provincial Treasurer may want to supplement that.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, at this particular time the asset is held by the heritage fund, and the dollars would flow back to the heritage fund. The decision on what to do with those dollars thereafter would be something that we would be making as a policy of this government. With regard to flowing those dollars to OSLO, I should say that we are not selling our interest in Syncrude to facilitate coming up with our share of our commitment to the OSLO project. That decision was made mutually exclusive of the decision to sell Syncrude.

As was indicated yesterday by our Premier, Mr. Speaker, there is interest in further investment in Syncrude by the province of Ontario. I'm fairly optimistic. The government of Ontario held a 5 percent interest in the Syncrude project for some three years and continues to hold a fairly significant interest in the Suncor project. So the precedent is there, and any suggestion that the interest by the province of Ontario in OSLO is not legitimate certainly is not indicative of the precedent that they've set in supporting long-term energy supply/demand balance in this country.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

### General Systems Research

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two months ago in one of the financial fiascos for which this government is becoming famous, \$31 million of taxpayers' money in all likelihood went down the drain when General Systems Research was put into receivership by this government. Because of the hard work of the receiver it's my understanding that GSR is on the verge of being sold to a consortium of three companies, only one of which is Canadian. To the self-proclaimed good money manager. Would the Treasurer admit that Alberta taxpayers stand to lose every cent of the \$31 million when GSR is sold to a public company?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Stewart, the minister responsible, is in Ottawa today attending to government business with respect to a variety of important issues, and as a result I will have to take that rather curious question, which I haven't decoded yet, under advisement.

MR. McEACHERN: And this is the guy who understands our finances in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MR. McEACHERN: Over the past few years this government has doled out the \$31 million to GSR on . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. McEACHERN: I get two statements before my question. [interjection] Would you explain the rules?

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the rules are simple. The four corners of the boxing ring are there, there, there, and there, and after that it's up to yourselves.

Now, the difficulty in this case is – hon. members, please don't heckle the member until he at least gets his question out. [interjections] Well, with due respect to the opposition members in the House, let's have a little trade-off here to let the backbenchers get their questions out, too, before we start heckling, my friend from the southern climes of Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll try again. Over the past few years the government has doled out this \$31 million to GSR on an ad hoc basis, mostly to cover the operating losses, while the company was continually starved for cash to commercialize its technology and promote sales. In a report Touche Ross indicated that it would take a commitment of \$26 million over five years to get this company off the ground. Now, to the House leader. Will this secretive government now commit itself to releasing the Touche Ross report and the Technology, Research and Telecommunications study on GSR so that Albertans can judge for themselves why this government cost them \$31 million?

MR. HORSMAN: A most unusual question to address to a House leader. [interjections] My goodness. The question was addressed to me as House leader, and it doesn't fall within my responsibilities to answer that question. I will take the question as notice for the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

### Gainers Loan Guarantee

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Provincial Treasurer. Although the Provincial Treasurer and other government prestidigitators have been telling us that the province's guarantee of Gainers' liability was \$55 million, we know from the latest public accounts that they're being economical with the truth. The guarantee was not for \$55 million; it was for \$55 million plus interest, resulting in a liability of almost \$59 million at March 31, '89, a year ago. I'm wondering whether the Provincial Treasurer will tell us whether the \$55 million loan is still outstanding, and has full interest been accumulating to date?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo has been working on his thesaurus over the last six months. I'm not too sure whether I should be offended by that word or not, but I'll check.

The question was raised already, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the size of the accrued interest which attaches to any loan. Again, I won't bore members with a simple accounting position on accrued accounting. The Member for Vegreville finally came

around and understands it. If only the Member for Calgary-Buffalo would spend the time on *Hansard*, he probably could understand it as well.

I would only indicate, with respect to the question specifically, that the loan continues in the same form with our guarantee behind it. Of course, the interest accrues daily because that's what happens on all these loans. When they're not paid on a daily basis, interest must accrue on a daily basis. Since payment takes place annually, the accrued interest must increase between payment dates.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, I wonder whether the Provincial Treasurer can then tell us why he didn't advise Albertans that if interest runs at 12 percent, the Alberta taxpayers will owe \$66 million instead of the alleged \$55 million by the end of this month and will owe \$83 million if we hang on for another two years, as he said is very possible with respect to Gainers. Why didn't you tell taxpayers that instead of telling us we had a \$55 million guarantee, Mr. Speaker?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm one who follows high-tech applications, but I can assure the member that if I were to have updated information on every government guarantee on a day-to-day basis, I'd have to have a display screen here in front of me. It wasn't that we were misleading anybody. These interest rates accrue on a day-to-day basis, and the guarantee was on the principal amount. All communication obviously talks to the principal amount because it assumes the amount is going to be repaid, as we have assumed and as has happened.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Glenmore, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

### **Special Education Programs**

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In view of the many social issues and problems endured by young people these days and the pressures that teachers have with regard to these students and social problems, it appears that the community schools want to and can fill this gap. The community schools wish to supply an opportunity for all agencies such as police and social services, career development and parenting, and they all come together to discuss these problems. To the Minister of Education. It appears that the community schools have expressed some frustration with their role in co-ordinating these various programs and these various departments. I wonder if the Minister of Education would help these students beyond the responsibility of education.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member because she focuses on a part of our education system which is very important; that is, community schools and the ability of the school in a community to meet not just the educational needs but the social needs, the recreational needs, and in some cases the health needs of the community. So I can assure the hon. member that the budget the hon. Provincial Treasurer will bring down next week will continue to provide full funding for those community schools.

I also want to tell the members of the Legislature that we're moving to the next generation of community schools in the case of high need schools. We targeted our dollars on schools in communities that have unique inner-city-like high needs to meet

the needs of the kids who attend those schools: kids who come from families with lower incomes, new Canadian families who may not have the English language skills. I'm proud of this initiative that the two boards in Calgary and the two boards in Edmonton are taking on our behalf on a pilot basis to meet those unique needs of children in schools who come from families in inner-city-like neighbourhoods.

MRS. MIROSH: Further to the Minister of Education. You did mention special needs students. There are also handicapped students and other special needs students who wish to integrate into the schools. How do you plan on developing programs for them?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, as hon. members are probably aware, in November in a speech before the Alberta School Trustees' Association I announced that the government would undertake a wholesale review of special needs education, special education for our kids, because the concern had come to us that school boards were not able and were concerned that they were not able to fully meet the needs of children with special education needs. So in co-operation with my colleagues the Minister of Health and the ministers of Family and Social Services as well as school trustees and teachers and other groups around the province, we are focusing our study on the funding and the cost of special education and on the co-ordination of services that are provided by provincial government departments and community agencies as well as the outcome. What are we expecting to accomplish with special education? How best can we meet those needs? In the end, how can we measure how well we met those children's needs? So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, we are doing our best as a provincial government to meet the unique and special needs of these kids in our schools.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

### **Metis Association of Alberta Funding**

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the minister responsible for native affairs. Yesterday the minister indicated that his officials had not made him aware of the serious failure of the Metis Association of Alberta to comply with terms and conditions of funding agreements they have with the Department of Municipal Affairs. I hope that in the time that's elapsed, he's been able to determine whether those officials were either sloppy, lacking in diligence, confused, or simply intentional in not bringing these problems to his attention. Can the minister now inform the Assembly this afternoon: will his government take steps to recover all moneys improperly spent by leaders of the Metis Association?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, it's with great pleasure that I stand and have the opportunity to answer the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. The sloppiness, the lack of diligence relate to the hon. member, not to the officials. If the hon. member would bring forward any evidence of any misspending by the Metis Association of Alberta, I would be delighted to sit down and discuss it with him.

There was a forecast of a shortfall for the Metis Association of Alberta of approximately \$280,000 – \$230,000 of which were funds from the federal government, which had not been received yet and therefore were not put into the forecast, as well as \$100,000 that was coming from the framework agreement that

we had recently signed with the Metis and had also not been put into it. I can assure the hon. member, to save him his second question, that the Metis Association has not spent any government funds on their newspaper.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we have the unanimous consent to complete this question, but also then to hear from the Minister of Health in response to a question as raised by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore on a previous occasion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Supplementary, Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't understand how members of his own department didn't draw to his attention the department's specific rejection of support of *Native Network News* and that the MAA has directed approximately \$200,000 of its core support to *Native Network News*. His department officials have also indicated that the MAA was proposing to use money that they hadn't spent on the framework activities to cover its operating deficits. So I'm going to ask the minister again, in view of the close relationship that this government has with leaders of the Metis Association of Alberta: are they going to recover money that has not been properly spent, or are they simply going to leave it, cover it up, or not deal with it properly in order to protect their friends from any political fallout?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, those are pretty serious allegations, and I would challenge the member to put forward any documentation other than innuendo that he has through members of the Metis community who have a little problem with the Metis Association of Alberta. I challenge him to do that. There was no government money spent on those newspapers. The letter he refers to was a letter drafted up through the department when they were dealing with the Metis Association for, as I just mentioned, the potential shortfall that they might have had in their budget. However, I also explained what wasn't taken into consideration. There was funding. The Metis Association also put on an austerity program in early '89 for that contingency. Now, I am not disputing that they may have put some money into the newspaper; that is their problem. It was not government funds. I challenge the member to put up or butt out.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would ask all hon. members to refer to *Beauchesne* 409(7):

A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.

This is the second day on which this issue has been brought forward in this manner. The Chair would expect that the Member for Calgary-Mountain View will indeed be able to produce some form of documentation to the Attorney General.

#### Family Violence

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore asked me a question with respect to a program with respect to wife batterers. At the time, I didn't realize that she was referring to the program that has been in existence at the Calgary General hospital. Although I have not

received any formal request for support for the program, I look forward to getting that. Since the program has been operating in the hospital for several years, I'm a bit puzzled by what I've read in the newspaper over why that hospital didn't identify the program within their overall funding priorities in their global request to the Department of Health. Nonetheless, I'm looking forward to receiving the proposal and will certainly review it in the fullest context of both the institutional and the community side before responding back.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In view of the fact that one in 10 men in a relationship with a woman batter that woman, I'm wondering if the minister will also commit to ensuring funds in other areas of the province to programs for abusive men.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to look, first of all, at the complement between the community and the institutional side. But, secondly, our approach to mental health issues, particularly on the community side, has been to address the person as a result of whatever may have been the cause of their mental health difficulties. Certainly there are programs in place where we are dealing with the outcome of someone who's very much in distress because of an input of several things, like family violence, sexual abuse, those kinds of issues. Certainly I will look at this program in that context when we review it and when I receive it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Order please. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, are your guests at least partially still in the House?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, half are in, half are standing, and part have gone. [interjections]

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

Would the House give unanimous consent to change our procedure for a moment to allow the minister to at least introduce a few of his students?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

#### head: Introduction of Special Guests (reversion)

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the Members of the Legislative Assembly. We have with us today some 55 grade 10 students from Lorne Jenken senior high school in Barrhead, who are accompanied by their two teachers Mr. Allan Shipton and Mr. Merlin Flock. I would appreciate my colleagues in the Assembly bidding them a cordial hello this afternoon as they visit our Assembly.

#### head: Question of Privilege

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, yesterday I deferred my comment with regard to a matter brought forward to the House by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, and this is now my statement in that regard.



Hon. members, the authorities are absolutely clear that criticism of the Speaker's actions may not be raised in debate except upon a substantive motion on notice. Reference is made to *Beauchesne* citation 168(1) and to *Erskine May* at page 325, and it is necessary to note this for the record of this House. However, a statement as to the matters raised by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon and the privileges of members that the Chair seeks to protect would appear to be in the interest of all members of the Assembly.

It is the right of all members of this Assembly to unfettered access to the House. In particular, elected members also have the right to be on the floor of the House and its lobbies. The general public and the media have access to this building as a matter of courtesy; they do not have the right, for example, to be on the floor of this Chamber and its lobbies. Throughout the year and throughout this building there is considerable opportunity for media coverage and interface with members.

Over the past few years the press gallery has grown substantially; it now numbers almost 50 or 55, depending on the day, including TV crews and equipment. The Alberta press gallery is at least the third largest in the country. The media situation with respect to offices and services is second to none in the country. Three years ago the old media room behind the Chamber press gallery was required for television and audio equipment for the better service of members and media within and without this Chamber. In its place, after the assorted debris – and I won't go into listing exactly what all was found within the press media area. But in its place individual small offices have been provided for the media and provided free. A media conference room has long been provided on the first floor of this building.

The press gallery has always been available inside the House and has a current seating capacity of 22. When there is overflow, we make accommodation for that, as well, in terms of this House and making the proceedings of this House available to the public. In 1986 I personally directed the upgrading of the audio connections, for media convenience, in the gallery and also to their offices on the first floor. Last week, after consultation which has been ongoing with representatives of the Alberta legislative press corps, clean TV cable coverage of question period was provided to media offices on the ground floor free. Extra pages and extra staff have been hired to convey media messages to members within the lobbies or the House, and to the best of our knowledge, there has been no interruption in terms of conveying messages from the media to members in the House. Media access to all members is available throughout most of the building and the annex at most times of the day or the night.

The Confederation Room can no longer physically accommodate the second largest provincial press gallery in Canada. This was evidenced last summer when over \$2,000 of damage was done in a scrum by some TV cameramen who stood on the tables in that room, were asked to get off the tables once, refused, and stayed on top of the tables.

The real problem of member/media interface occurs in the half hour after question period. The area outside the Chamber main door is inadequate, unlike Saskatchewan or Manitoba where they have ample floor space beyond the main doors of their Chamber that would help to accommodate the press scrum, which the Chair agrees is there to be available to the members. In terms of our inadequate space outside those doors, this constitutes a problem not only in terms of access for the members in and out of the Chamber; it presents a problem in

terms of access for the media as well. It presents a problem in terms of safety with regard to the staircase, of someone accidentally falling down there and injuring themselves quite severely. It provides a problem in terms of fire exit when all of that area is in a state of such congestion. Another consideration to be taken into effect: the media corking of the bottle, if you will, at the top of the staircase is indeed a threat to the security of all hon. members.

Rules were put in place after incidents on opening day and Friday. Various members complained to the Chair that some of their guests were physically blocked and bumped by the media. One of our members was struck in the face – I assume inadvertently – by a television camera lens, and the media also at the head of the staircase blocked guests and members exiting the Chamber. This is even more serious: the Lieutenant Governor was jostled and bumped off balance at the foot of the staircase by a media person on opening day. On Friday various members of this House were impeded by the media as they left the Chamber.

No media person has been prevented from an interview – no media person has been prevented from an interview – and especially not by the Sergeant-at-Arms or by this Chair. Rather, areas have been designated to ensure the safety of the members, media, and visitors.

There is no *prima facie* case of privilege on the grounds raised by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. In the opinion of the Chair, if anything, in the media scrum blockade after question period, the rights of all members to freely access the Chamber and its environs are at question.

Thank you, hon. members.

#### head: **Motions Under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: Yesterday in the House notice was given under Standing Order 40 by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands, and under Standing Order 40 Edmonton-Highlands is recognized.

Ms Barrett:

Be it resolved that this Assembly makes clear its desire to make this Legislature as freely accessible to the public as possible and our willingness to facilitate public appreciation of our proceedings and work. To ensure such openness, the Assembly agrees to declare the third floor hallway around the Chamber open to the public through removal of all recently erected impediments to access and by redesignating the Confederation Room a combined MLA and media room for the purpose of allowing reporters access to members.

MS BARRETT: I did distribute copies yesterday, you will recall.

I'm requesting unanimous consent to deal with this motion today, Mr. Speaker, and I will make succinct arguments with respect to the urgency; that is, why it needs to be dealt with today.

In the first instance, as you will see, Mr. Speaker, there are enough motions on the Order Paper to take us into the next calendar year at least. In the second place, Mr. Speaker, since the decision was made on February 14, 1990, to remove the media's right to conduct interviews in the room adjacent to this Chamber called the Confederation Room, there have been anticipated, and in fact, difficulties for reporters to talk to members of this Assembly to discover the nature of debates that

occurred herein. There has also been difficulty in speaking with our staff in the lobbies that were designated for purposes of discussions with both media and staff.

I refer the members of the Assembly to *Hansard* of the Members' Services Committee of February 14, 1990, in which this matter was indeed clarified by pages 190 and 191. Indeed, it was the assumption of the committee that members of the media would have access to members of the Assembly, at the very least in the opposition lounge, and it was also understood, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. We're speaking to urgency. We're not debating the motion. Thank you. Urgency.

MS BARRETT: That's correct, Mr. Speaker. I'll just conclude what I was about to say. . . . and with respect to being able to deal with staff and the public.

The urgency is that if the matter is not clarified, the situation is going to get worse. Mr. Speaker referred just a moment ago to an incident that occurred last summer when a story that had been the focus of national attention for some two years finally broke in this Assembly. It was an extraordinary circumstance. I would like to argue that the urgency of this situation with respect to the importance of debating this issue and allowing all members of the Assembly to decide the right of access of reporters – whose job and duty it is to report on our activities, our proceedings, and our work to the public – is being impeded at the moment, and because of that, none of us is able to communicate properly through the media and ultimately deal with our staff as well. For that reason, if the order that has passed holds with the interpretation that has currently been applied to it, we could be in this Assembly for three, four, or five months under the current situation which, on top of everything else, poses hazards to the public, members of the media, and members of the Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40, is there unanimous consent given? All those in favour of proceeding with the motion as put forward by Edmonton-Highlands?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: Fails under Standing Order 40.

#### 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 12: Mr. Day]

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with real joy and anticipation that I look forward to making comments on the Speech from the Throne today. It was, as you are very well aware, a unique speech in light of the fact that it was not one which looked back, as most throne speeches do in most Legislatures, but in fact was forward looking, showing direction and purpose. And in keeping the speech brief, it showed underlying our intention to have less government intervention and not more. I appreciate also that I'm going to be assisted in my reflections today by comments made by the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition in reflecting on their own speech from the throne reflecting on our Speech from the Throne. That will be able to assist and guide me today.

I have to admit that I was wondering: what is the strategy; what is the strategy of a leader of an opposition when you're going to be addressing a Speech from the Throne and when you're going to be reflecting on the government record, a government record which continues to show an economy that is responding dramatically, that continues to show a decrease in the unemployment rate – as a matter of fact, today as we speak we have the second lowest unemployment rate in the country – a government that has been successful *in* diversification to the point that we have . . . One of the obvious reflections: we've got construction and building, both residential and commercial, in the province that is virtually unparalleled. How do you respond to good news I guess is the question that was on my mind as I was waiting in anticipation for the Leader of the Opposition to give a response to our Speech from the Throne. How do you respond to good news?

I'm going to make a confession to you here today, Mr. Speaker. I'll confess this before my colleagues, and I hope they aren't disappointed with me as I make this confession. Some days before the Leader of the Opposition spoke and commented on our own Speech from the Throne and on our good record, I had a pang of fear, I confess.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, no.

MR. DAY: Yes, it's true; I did. A fear of the approach that he might take, because I thought that for so many years previously there has been no positive response from the opposition. There's been no innovative ideas. There's been no good reflection. And yet I thought this year it could change. This year they might come out with something positive. This year they might even come out with something factual. It was in a moment deep and dark one night, in a particular moment of deep lack of confidence in myself – I confess that – that that thought flitted across my mind: what if they come out with something good?

Well, as I listened to the Leader of the Official Opposition the other day, I realized the fear was totally unfounded and it was silly of me to even speculate along those lines. So then I thought, well, there's going to be nothing positive coming out; what, then, is your strategy? What will be the strategy of the opposition as they look to our record, a record that is not perfect – far be it for me to say that any person, let alone any government, is perfect – but one that is good and strong, a good and strong record? What's the strategy? Part of the strategy . . . It failed me at first, but we were entertained here with a session which we can title "Read along with Ray." What it involved was not a speculation directly on our Speech from the

Throne but rather a line-upon-line, word-by-word literal reading of a presentation that was prepared by the opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. That's an inappropriate comment. You were brought to order about that the other day on a point of order, hon. member.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make no further reference to reading then. I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member, and that was inappropriate. Just carry on.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it was certainly not intended to be so, and I appreciate your bringing it to my attention.

I contemplated on the strategy of responding to the speech from the throne from the opposition. Something did kind of impact on me, and that is that the reflections being made by the Leader of the Opposition were, in fact, in place before our Speech from the Throne was ever even public. In fact, what we heard, then, was a dissertation on a speech that had not even yet been heard. And I thought: well, now, that is remarkable strategy. But then the completion of the strategy became obvious to me.

When you're faced with a good record and when you're faced with good news as was brought out in our own Speech from the Throne, the strategy of an opposition in desperation was this. That is, take one of the good-news stories, but don't call it a good-news story and don't reflect on the statistics. Attack it as if it never happened, and then hope in desperation that your supporters will never question where you're coming from. And then six months down the road bring out the government facts and statistics and say that your attack on that program gave rise to the good results.

I guess that must have been the strategy because, in fact, that's what we heard, Mr. Speaker, in terms of reflection on our Speech from the Throne and our record: a series of bringing up elements of our good record saying that they weren't happening, providing no factual information to back that up, and then hoping in desperation, I guess, that nobody would ever look twice at the comments being made. It reminded me of some Don Quixote-like character stumbling around in the fog and thrashing through the marshes, jousting with phantoms and windmills and wild imaginations. That's what came to mind as I listened to the musings of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Now, the first thing that came to mind on these reflections on the Speech from the Throne as I looked at this was a comment made by the Member for Edmonton-Norwood saying that our Speech from the Throne reflected a shift to the right – a shift to the right. And he went on to say that all the rest of the world is abandoning the small "c" conservative approach. Mr. Speaker, I could only stare aghast in wide-open wonder at such a statement. The entire world – we're not talking about a shift to the right, Mr. Speaker; we're talking about the world abandoning the left, abandoning it in droves.

Mr. Speaker, grade 2 elementary students are familiar enough with the headlines today. Whether you're looking at the Soviet Union abandoning socialist policies, whether you're looking at eastern Europe rushing in droves to abandon a socialistic scheme that has ruined them, or whether you're looking at Nicaragua, a favourite place of one of the members opposite, they've abandoned the socialistic regime that has crippled their

countries, and we're seeing an abandonment to the left. A wholesale abandonment of the left, Mr. Speaker, and we hear these reflections. It's amazing.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

As I reflect on one of the first statements made by the Leader of the Opposition in reflecting on our Speech from the Throne, he said this. Here's what his government would do. In the face of a wholesale abandonment of Marxist/Leninist policy, here's his statement verbatim: we will take control of the economy. Can you believe that, ladies and gentlemen in this House today? The NDP said – and I guess I shouldn't be surprised because it reflects their Marxist/Leninist roots – they will take control of the economy. In a day when even their hero, Mr. Gorbachev, is having to bring in western technology and even western businesses like McDonald's to try and get them to a fact where they release the economy, our socialist members here say: we will take control. That's a staggering and a frightening statement, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I think we need to be specific as we look at the Speech from the Throne. We heard comments, just as an example of what I said, where they fabricate a straw man and try and get us to fear it and provide no statistics, no facts backing up the statement, and hope nobody will check it out.

The Member for Edmonton-Norwood reflected and said, "Consider also the disastrous effect that the free trade agreement has had on our farm economy." So I waited for statistics, which I knew didn't exist, but I thought: he'll at least try and drum some up. Nothing. On to another windmill in a wild imagination. He said: consider the disastrous effects that free trade has had on our farm economy. He did narrow it down to "farm economy" because he knows the figures are undisputed in every area of the economy, even in one short year, as far as the positive effect the free trade agreement has had. But specifically on agriculture in the last year, since the free trade agreement, Canadian agricultural exports to the U.S. are expected to show and are showing an actual increase over 1988. And that's despite the interest rate fluctuations that we see from Ottawa. The dollar value of Canadian beef exports grew in 1989. StatsCan figures that up to November '89 there was a 27 percent increase in the value of the beef trade between the two countries. And they call that disastrous; I guess they were hoping for a hundred percent increase. A 27 percent increase, Mr. Speaker, and they call it a disaster. Tariffs on all agricultural products exported to the U.S. declined by 20 percent under the agreement, and that is a saving of \$20 million for exporters of Canadian agricultural products. And they call that a disaster. No facts; no figures: just wild fantasy.

As we move along through the reflections on the throne speech, we hear about not wanting to sell off any of our natural gas. Our customers to the south of our border are looking for natural gas. Our members from the ND Party say, "Don't sell any of it off." They even make the reflection that prices could double by 1995, and well they could. "No, let's sit on this gigantic supply." Some industry sources are even talking that there could be, on a conservative estimate, if I can use that word, upwards of 30 or possibly 40 years of natural gas supply to be able to be sold out there on the open market. I would like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that 30 to 40 years from now, because of the breakthroughs in fusion research, anybody who is sitting on a 40-year supply of natural gas isn't going to have anywhere to dispense it. So the opposition members are saying,

"No, don't accommodate the markets, but just sit on it until it's not worth anything." The supply is there, and we are dealing responsibly with the supply.

We go on, as we look at the throne speech and reflections on it, to an incredible statement about "massive giveaway of forestry resources." Were there facts to back it? Were there figures to back it up? Nothing, Mr. Speaker. Again, jousting at phantoms and stumbling through the fog. Absolutely irresponsible statements not backed up by fact at all, meant to somehow terrorize people who aren't aware of the facts.

As we talked about the environment in our throne speech, we backed it up with fact. Harvesting companies, any companies harvesting timber in this province, are responsible for reforestation. In fact, we have the most aggressive and the toughest reforestation process in Alberta of anywhere in this country, possibly in North America. The requirements for trees planted per acre must be proven; Forest Service standards back them up. The new forests that are growing, that have been replanted, are capable of producing 30 percent more wood than they did when they were first cut. The forest companies can only move into the mature stands that are out there and harvest them. In fact, we're replenishing the green lungs of this province. This year alone some 20 million trees were harvested – now, the NDP says we're giving away the resources – and 31.5 million were replanted. That's a 30 percent increase in the green lungs of this province. And what do we get? We get wild statements saying that we're not reforesting, that these resources are being depleted. It's a shame, Mr. Speaker, that such statements could be made and nothing in place to back them up.

Well, we can go on, and we will. As the Leader of the Opposition continued to waver back and forth and joust with his phantoms, he talked about the environment, talked about pulp mills. Mr. Speaker, it is so obvious that Alberta has led the country when it's talking about pulp mill development. It's led the country in the whole area. You know, they still refer to bleached kraft mills, the old bleached kraft mills, these members of the opposition, as if that has something to do with Alberta. Those mills only exist and only continue to belch their toxic fumes in areas represented down east by the Liberals and by the members of the opposition. We have a much higher standard in Alberta. We've got standards that force mills, looking at the whole area of pulp mills, to install the chlorine substitution systems that are now a world standard because of what we have set. We're the first province to legislate the use of these expensive and highly effective systems, including the oxygen bleaching process. Even representatives from Sweden, which is of course the place of worship for all good socialists, even individuals from Sweden are coming over to investigate our standards. And it has been reported that they are hoping – they're not even saying they'll do it – that in their country they'll be able to have our standards in place maybe by 1992, standards that we have in place today.

What did the Leader of the Opposition comment when he talked about environment and some of their fabulous ideas? Remember the strategy: they don't have any ideas, so they look at something we've got, pretend it's not there, then fabricate it, and hope that they somehow get the credit for it. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, said that they'll seek safer storage of toxic substances. They're still in the Dark Ages. We are the province in this country that has a facility at Swan Hills. We don't store these things; we destroy them, Mr. Speaker, in a high-tech, environmentally sound way. What do they want to do? Keep storing them. Well, I don't know where they're going

to store them, but that's what they want to do. We destroy them; they want to store them. They're behind the times in a very sad way.

They talked about future health care in Alberta and talked about quality universal health care. Mr. Speaker, we are the government that has clearly guaranteed quality universal health care in Alberta. There's a Hyndman report that's out there, a report not of this government but for this government to consider, which we're actively considering. We had the foresight to have that report done, with thousands of submissions coming in from around the province, and we're here to say that we're going to and will maintain our high standard of quality universal health care in this province.

Well, we could go on and on, and as I said before, we will. You know, Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely irresponsible for any member of this Assembly to stand up in this House and say that the promise of the future for children in Alberta is grim. What an irresponsible statement in terms of a reflection either on our Speech from the Throne or the state of affairs in Alberta – absolutely irresponsible. When people are wanting to emigrate here to Alberta in the tens of thousands because they see the possibilities and they see the infrastructures in place, people across the way have the nerve to try and discourage people by coming out with ridiculous statements and no basis in fact to back them up.

They talk about poverty. As a matter of fact, one of the Liberal members has a Bill on the Order Paper. It's going to do something, Mr. Speaker, that has never been done in history, but she's going to be the first one to do it. She is going to eliminate poverty. Eliminate poverty, Mr. Speaker; that's wonderful. Now, we added up on a little calculator, just on a bare-bones cost, what would be the cost alone of some of those proposals. They come out in excess of a billion dollars. So billion-dollar Betty is going to eliminate poverty – that's going to be an exciting process to watch – and balance the budget. We're talking about our wallets; that's what this is all about, Mr. Speaker.

When we talk about protecting and we talk about looking at the care and concern of our children, we deal with fact. You know, the Leader of the Opposition talked about an affordable and accessible day care system. Again what's the strategy of the opposition? Well, when you see something good and you can't admit that it's good – you can't give credit where credit is due – pretend it doesn't exist. In fact, if you're talking about an accessible and affordable day care system, Mr. Speaker, we have, right here in Alberta, the least expensive day care system in this country for people wanting to access day care. And I talk about accessible. We have the highest vacancy rate in our day cares: a 20 percent vacancy rate. So again the strategy is, pretend it doesn't exist when in fact it does.

Another statement here, as they reflect on our Speech from the Throne and our goals in talking about caring and responsibility when we're referring to Albertans. What's the statement made by the opposition? Here's their blind statement: we will "press for increases in social assistance." Will "press for increases" – no qualification, no statistics; just, hey, increases. We've set a record in this province for caring for people who need to be cared for, and we've set a standard in terms of helping people to help themselves. The members opposite, in the face of this bottom-line reality, which they ignore – and the bottom-line reality, Mr. Speaker, something that all social services' administrators and ministers must deal with in every state and province in the western world, is this: the more you

raise the level, the more people come in on the system. That's a corollary that is a direct equation.

What we're challenged with, Mr. Speaker, is caring for the people who need to be cared for and in such a way that they're not going to become dependent on the system. But what does the member across say? Just raise the rates; just go ahead, raise the rates, raise everything, and pull more people into the system. In fact, two years ago we became the first jurisdiction in the country to actually lower the rates in one particular area, and that's some of the rates applied to – and I say this carefully, so the members opposite don't go into some fit of apoplexy here – single, healthy, employable people. Okay; I'm not talking about anybody else but single, healthy, employable people. We actually lowered those rates, Mr. Speaker. And what has happened? The number of people on assistance in that category has dropped; it has gone down. It shows that corollary, that in certain areas you need to deal with the problem directly. I'll have to say it again, because they'll leap up and say we're not caring for children and we're not caring for the sick. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking single, healthy, employable people. We realize the reality that the higher you raise the rates and the more generous they are, the more people you pull into the system. In that category we lowered some of the rates, and the number of individuals in that category has dropped. [interjections] Fact. They don't like hearing fact, and they don't like being faced with reality.

They talk about adequate, affordable housing. And I notice they've been careful. Though what they're talking about is rent controls, they've been careful to avoid that little phrase because they know that most Albertans understand the impact of rent controls. As a matter of fact, if I could read from one of their own socialist gurus well known to them, social economist Assar Lindbeck, here's a direct quote of his. This is one of their brothers, and he says this about rent controls:

Next to bombing, rent control seems in many cases to be the most efficient technique so far known for destroying cities.

Now, that's one of their socialist gurus making that comment. In the study from which he quotes this, there are many examples of failed rent control policies ranging across six countries over the last 50 years. It shows that rent controls result in poor maintenance, fewer renovations and modernization, and a serious deterioration in the quality of dwellings. And then here we are, a shocking study – again from the great shrine of socialism where they love to bow and worship. A Swedish study showed that during just one four-year period of rent control, 215,000 houses were actually pulled off the market: less space, less affordable housing. But no, they want to continue to plunge into the abyss of socialist darkness.

What are we doing, Mr. Speaker? Well, they didn't want to acknowledge that under the minister of housing's responsibility we assist seniors, we assist low-income individuals, we assist those who are handicapped: we assist people who need assistance when it comes to housing. To this point in time we have, under the rent supplement program, some 1,075 units that were provided to people in the low-income bracket – income tested – and another 1,300 to 1,400 units in which there were people renting facilities who were not income tested, not low-income people. We've put on the market almost 1,200 units on the basis that these people were capable of making arrangements to purchase the low-income units in which they were living. We give people in this province, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity for ownership. People who were previously in a low-income rental situation: an opportunity for ownership. We assisted them with

a 95 percent mortgage, 5 percent down, and paying some \$700 towards legal fees for buying their own accommodation; a successful plan to help people in previously low rental situations realize ownership. There have been some in those cases who couldn't even come up with the 5 percent, and in some very specific cases they were even assisted.

Accommodation. Young couples throughout this province, underneath the brutal interest rate policy of Ottawa, not being able to afford to purchase their homes, we came out with an interest-shielding program which the members opposite, the socialists, said would not even interest people. You know, we've only got 18,000 couples in the last year who've moved onto that program, who have houses today, who've been shielded from an outrageous interest rate policy. And what do these folks across the way say? Rent controls. Out of the Dark Ages.

Then they move into tourism. I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition thought: "Here's a brilliant idea. Here's a fabulous idea." He said, "New Democrats will advocate smaller, community-based projects." Do you know where he got that, Mr. Speaker? He got that from our own community tourism action plan, and we reflected on it in our throne speech. That's where he got that idea. You know, in Alberta there are 429 communities that would be available to access that plan. Do you know how many out of 429 came forward to access it? Only 426 communities; only a participation rate of 99.3 percent. Small, community-based projects: he seized onto the idea, couldn't admit it was ours, and he's waiting in the wings to announce that it's his statement that has somehow caused it to come into being.

Then he moved to WCB and Occupational Health and Safety. Again in our throne speech we talk about responsibility and caring. He reflected, and he talked about people being killed in Alberta. But do you know, he left something out, Mr. Speaker. He's talking here about overhauling WCB, which we have done. One of the results has been an over 20 percent decrease in those killed on the job in the last year. Over a 20 percent decrease in one year; would he give us credit for that? Oh, no. He just talks about people being killed and doesn't talk about how things are working. Overhaul WCB? We've done it, and by the end of 1990 our projection is that the length of time for an appeal will be less than one month. A new imaging system is in place that will save some \$80 million a year, and an extra \$30 million a year will be saved by 1992 just by accident prevention. I congratulate the minister, who sits here today as we discuss these things, for the tremendous initiatives in this area. Another good idea . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: And more people working than ever.

MR. DAY: Yes. Thank you, member. And more people working than ever. And so it goes, on and on.

We talk about the deficit in our throne speech. The Leader of the Opposition says that an NDP government would respect taxpayers' money. Well, since they've never had the opportunity to destroy this province by governing it, we'll have to look at a province where they did. In the seven years before the NDP was booted out of Manitoba by the taxpayers there, Manitobans saw, under NDP rule, an 87 percent increase in government expenditures. Spending rose twice the pace of inflation – 39 percent faster than the growth of the economy – and Manitoba's debt under an NDP socialist outlook more than doubled from \$4,500 to \$9,200 per Manitoban. And they say NDP policies are going to respect tax dollars? That's a joke.

AN HON. MEMBER: Try B.C.

MR. DAY: I have one member saying, "Try B.C." I lived in B.C. for the first year of the NDP dictatorship there in 1972, and like a lot of people in B.C., I fled for the greener, opener, stronger, and freer pastures of Alberta.

Again, just quickly, the old NDP bugaboo: corporate tax. And here he says that corporations aren't being taxed. Well, if anybody is interested in facts – and I know Albertans are – in 1985, 25 percent of all corporate tax in Canada was collected in Alberta, and even given that, in 1987 Alberta increased corporate tax by 36 percent. I'm not saying I'm in favour of that, but in fact we did it; we increased corporate tax rates by 36 percent. While others might have been lowering tax rates to offset their own base-broadening tax structures, Alberta maintained its 15 percent.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your deliberation today.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make a few comments about the throne speech. Let me start by saying what a profound disappointment in general it was, because for basically – and barely – six pages it must have set a record for lack of substance in a government throne speech.

You know, normally speaking, I thought the idea of a throne speech was that the government would take that opportunity to identify some new initiatives in all the various departments of the government. But a lot of departments didn't even rate a mention in this throne speech. Several of the departments for which I am the New Democrat critic, for example, weren't even mentioned in here: multiculturalism, no mention; occupational health and safety, no mention; workers' compensation, no mention. Clearly this government has simply run out of new ideas, Mr. Speaker. It's an old and tired government, and it's on its last legs.

This throne speech said at one point that educational needs are the top priority of my government, for the future success of this province lies in the success of the children. So I want to tell members of this House that in Edmonton-Mill Woods, which is a young suburban community, we have an urgent need for two new public junior high schools, and I trust that this nice statement in the throne speech will translate on budget night to concrete financial support in the way of generous capital funding that will allow the words of the throne speech to translate into a solid commitment that will meet the educational needs of the students in Edmonton-Mill Woods. We'll be watching that very carefully on budget night, Mr. Treasurer. I trust there will be provision for that; that the Speech from the Throne is not simply empty rhetoric and that the government does in fact put educational needs as a high priority. I can assure him that the need in Edmonton-Mill Woods is very urgent, and I encourage him to ensure that the resources in the capital funding of the budget are appropriate and enough to ensure that the public school board has those resources that they need to meet those pressing educational needs.

Mr. Speaker, prior to the opening of the session I held a community consultation with constituents in order to hear their concerns, and I have to say that many of them will be disappointed by this throne speech because it simply doesn't address many of those concerns that they brought to my attention. One

family wanted to see seat belts in buses. They knew of a very serious injury that was caused to someone in a school bus. A student suffered a serious injury; they didn't have a seat belt. We have a seat belt law for automobiles, and she said to me – and I agree – "Why don't we have that same protection for our children in school buses?" No mention of that in this throne speech.

Another comment the same family mentioned is that in light of the increasing rents that are being faced by Albertans in this province, why do we not have the reintroduction of the Alberta tax credit for renters. Again no new initiative or return to an initiative in this throne speech in that regard.

A third issue they brought to my attention was the fact that insulin that is required by diabetics in this province – they increasingly have to pay very expensive prices for that insulin, and it places a great hardship on the family. Again the throne speech doesn't seem to recognize that need of the diabetics in our province.

Many constituents have also expressed to me, Mr. Speaker, concerns about the ongoing shoddy treatment they receive from the Workers' Compensation Board in this province. As I mentioned, there's not a single new initiative mentioned in the throne speech about that, and I would like to know why that is. If this government is so out of touch with the long-suffering workers of this province, surely they could suggest some improvements in the throne speech. I would like to suggest to this government, if they've run out of ideas themselves, that a sensitive government would have said in the throne speech that they would look at indexing the disability pensions which haven't been increased for years. That would have shown some compassion. That's not in here. Or they could have announced that they want to have a new environment of co-operation instead of confrontation, and they could have said that they are going to have representatives of the labour movement and from injured workers' organizations appointed to the board. It's not in there either, Mr. Speaker. So what other conclusions can we come to except that this Conservative government simply doesn't care about injured workers and their families?

Other constituents spoke to me about the housing crisis they are facing. Rents are skyrocketing, and yet there's no indication that the government will take any action in this throne speech. There's no initiative for any kind of mechanism to control or review rents. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, that simply shows that this government's interests are with the wealthy, with the large corporations, and not, certainly, with working families, single-parent families, people who have limited incomes and have to pay the increasingly usurious rents that are being charged by landlords in this province. Certainly it would have shown some compassion, some concern, to simply have some mechanism in place that requires landlords to justify their increases beyond the cost of living. That's hardly asking for too much, I don't think, Mr. Speaker, given the rates of increases that have gone up 40 percent in some cases.

So there's no action in terms of dealing with the rental crisis people are facing. It'd be bad enough if the government simply ignored the problem, but even worse, this callous Conservative government has added fuel to the fire by selling off a great number of Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation rental units despite an acute shortage of such accommodation in Edmonton and other parts of the province. Mr. Speaker, this is nothing short of utterly shameful and disgraceful.

Other families spoke to me of the difficulties that they face living in poverty. "Poverty," Mr. Speaker, is a word I don't see

in this throne speech. Maybe it's not in the Conservative vocabulary, but it's a fact of life to many of my constituents and many people around this province.

I want to go on and mention that Mill Woods is a very vibrant multicultural community. We're very proud of that. It's a great place to live when we have people from around the world sharing their cultures with each other and living together in harmony. It's a great disappointment to many of us to see that despite recent attacks against some of the visible minority community members, there are no new initiatives in this area in the throne speech. I have to wonder if Albertans haven't, in fact, lost faith in the government of Alberta and, in particular, the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. In fact, it's not surprising that the *Edmonton Journal* recently called for his resignation, to which I can only add, the sooner the better.

Other parents, Mr. Speaker, expressed their concern to me that their son was not receiving speech therapy services. He was a victim of bureaucratic bungling on the part of this government when they transferred speech therapy services from the Department of Education to the Department of Health without consultation with the parents who were going to be affected by this. This young citizen and many others like him need speech therapy services, not government rhetoric, and they need it now.

Mr. Speaker, many other issues were raised by my constituents. Environmental concerns. They brought to my attention that they had a great deal of anxiety about the pulp mill mania of this government: cut down all the forests of northern Alberta and build pulp mills, and we'll think about what the prospects might be somewhere down the road. That's simply unacceptable, and we're glad to see the decision to suspend going further with the Al-Pac project because of environmental concerns. It's people, ordinary citizens who organize themselves in grass-roots organizations like Friends of the Athabasca and many others, who have finally put the pressure on this government to see the light of day. For that we want to thank those citizens, and only hope that this government learns that environmental concerns are a top priority for the people of this province. We're not prepared to sell out our environment to make a few bucks in the short term.

Another issue, Mr. Speaker, that was brought to my attention during this community consultation was that people are very, very anxious about the day care system of Alberta. Many parents made the point to me that with these changes in operating allowances, many parents will simply not be able to afford day care. Rates will be so high that one of the parents will have to stay home to look after the children or they will have to go into babysitting operations, and they fear for the children's safety and well-being. We know, Mr. Speaker, that this government does not believe in universal benefits for citizens. I mean, that's part of their philosophy, that only the rich deserve to have good quality services. We don't accept that, Mr. Speaker. Our view is that important services, especially when they apply to our youngest citizens, must be of high quality and must be available to all. We urge the government to adopt that policy, to back off from this proposal to gut the day care system in many cases, and have a proper consultation with parents and ensure that we do, in fact, have the highest quality day care service for the children of this province. They deserve nothing less.

Another thing, Mr. Speaker. At this community consultation I had a delegation of students from Holy Family school. Their concern was the prospect that some of them will have to be bused out to another school. I went to a meeting at Holy

Family school, and I got a very clear sense of the importance the students attach to their school, the way they feel so close to it, and the family environment at that school. Many of the students were on the verge of tears in trying to explain their concern about the prospect of having to be bused off to another school and then coming back, possibly for shop and home ec, and then being bused back out and bused back to their home at the end of the day. It's a situation that in large part has been perpetrated by this government which has had inadequate provincial support for education for many years. It's now put the Edmonton Catholic school board and others in a position of having to make decisions that could compromise educational quality because they've got to concern themselves so much with pinching the pennies that this government doles out in such a miserly way. Mr. Speaker, this problem has got to be addressed.

Another concern that was brought to my attention was the question of the minimum wage in this province. Mr. Speaker, people tell me they can't live on it. They told me: "How can it be that we have in Alberta, at \$4.50 an hour, a minimum wage that's no better than Prince Edward Island, the poorest province in this nation? Can we in Alberta, with the resources that we have here, not do better than the poorest province of this land?" I put that to the government, and I trust that they will take that under advisement and come forward with a proposal to increase the minimum wage to a rate that Albertans can all be proud of.

What about taxes, Mr. Speaker? Well, many of my constituents talk to me about that as well. Many of them feel that the tax system is grossly unfair. They know that according to reports in the press, hundreds of people in this province with incomes in the tens of thousands — if not over hundreds of thousands — pay no tax, and they have to wonder about the fairness or the unfairness of that kind of a situation. And yet we don't see a single word in this throne speech about any government initiative to try and make the tax system fairer. It continues to be the case, and many people are increasingly becoming disillusioned with the tax system in this country, that the working person has to pay such a high level of tax. Yet we can't even bring in what they did in the United States under one of the most conservative presidents they ever had, Ronald Reagan: a minimum tax for the wealthy and for the corporations. Why can't we do that here? Why is it that Conservatives here in Alberta can't even bring themselves to do what Ronald Reagan put forward in the United States? Ronald Reagan's not my greatest model, but surely the Conservatives here, who I know followed his every word for the years he was there, could bring themselves to look at that and use that as a basis for making the tax system very much fairer.

Mr. Speaker, those are a few of my comments on the throne speech, and I wish I could have been more positive. As I said, it was a disappointment. It didn't touch on so many different government departments. I can only conclude, as many of my constituents did, that this government simply is running out of ideas. We only have to hope that during the course of this session some of these ideas that my constituents have brought up will be heard by this government. It's a government that claims they listen to the citizens of this province. Hopefully some action will be forthcoming to make this province what it should be: one that is characterized by justice and fairness for all.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to participate today in the speech from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, and in doing so would like to echo the congratulations of

colleagues to the Lieutenant Governor for the fine job she's done and, indeed, to my colleagues from Lesser Slave Lake and from Banff-Cochrane who moved and seconded the Speech from the Throne in such an eloquent fashion and who, I may say, are providing this Assembly with new life and new ideas. I look forward to working with them in the future.

I would also like to say to the Speaker of this Assembly that we appreciate the difficult and sometimes trying job that he has and the lonely position, albeit a great position, in this province that that position holds. I would like to express on this day, when the Speaker and I and other members of this Assembly have our 11th anniversary here, how much I have appreciated over the years the contribution he has made through his time on the Senate committee and the various other aspects of government that he's participated in.

Mr. Speaker, my remarks today I wish to put in the context of change – change in the world; change in the country; change in this province – because it is only in that context that we can understand how this Speech from the Throne came about and how farsighted and how innovative and how of the times this speech in fact is. Since our last sitting of the Legislature we have seen more change in this world than many of us have experienced in our lifetime. We look, obviously, at Europe, where decades of the Soviet and Communist regimes have now fallen, have now changed, and where the people are demanding new and different forms of government. We've seen governments in other parts of the world change as well, in different forms. My belief is that that kind of change is indicative of the rapid movement of our society today. No government can serve the people, no matter how wise its politicians, no matter how efficient its bureaucrats, that attempts to take unto itself the responsibility for all aspects of society. We're simply moving too fast technologically, too fast socially, and too fast in terms of the needs of the people to think that any one small group of humans in any one of our political structures can look after all of those needs.

The reason, Mr. Speaker, why the countries in this hemisphere, why this province and this country have managed to succeed and keep on top of the change is because we, in fact, delegate responsibility to our citizens. We have companies. We have organizations of a volunteer nature. We have labour unions. We have other bodies that make decisions in the general framework that we co-ordinate. And it's my firm belief that unless we as a government here, as a government in this nation, continue to provide that kind of co-ordination that allows for the greatest ideas, the best motivation, and the keenest minds of our nation to deal with the change that is going to face us more in the next 10 years than it has in the previous century, we would not long serve the needs of the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, in that context I'd like to speak for a couple of minutes about the Constitution of the nation, about Meech Lake and Senate reform. I would refer to the comments made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry in his response to the Speech from the Throne, where he dealt with the issue of Meech Lake in terms of the national context. Inasmuch as he raised the issue, inasmuch as he underlined the need for Senate reform, I agree with the hon. member. However, the implications that were left by his speech, that in some way this move towards a constitutional change for this nation was something that would jeopardize our place in Confederation or would stop this Assembly's dedication to Senate reform, I firmly and strongly disagree with.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, on the question of constitutional reform and the Meech Lake accord much has been said. I have had the opportunity from this Assembly both to serve on our Constitution committee in the years of 1981, as the country stood at the brink of change and of difficulty, and to watch us reach our constitutional accord of 1982. I also had the honour with you, Mr. Speaker, of serving this province and this nation as Chairman of the Select Special Committee on Senate Reform, where we met with every caucus of every province in the nation. I can tell the hon. leader of the Liberal Party or others who maintain in some way that the Meech Lake accord is a step backwards in terms of Senate reform that the greatest single problem in 123 years of Canadian history has not been the details of Senate reform or even talking Canadians into a Triple E Senate, albeit a difficult problem. The greatest single problem has been getting the topic of Senate reform high enough on the first ministers' agenda that it in fact has a possibility for change. When you and I were crossing this country, Mr. Speaker, when you and I were talking to Canadians from coast to coast, we well found out that while Senate reform was a priority in this House, this was the only province that had begun to see that as a priority, with the exception, perhaps, of Prince Edward Island, that at that point had a fairly farsighted document on the topic.

Today, Mr. Speaker, what has happened is that this province's lead has made it a nationwide issue, one which people in all parts of the country have some concern with and where a number of provinces have already agreed with our formula regarding this nation from the report we presented to this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, if I recall those discussions correctly, you were the one who coined the phrase "Strengthening Canada," the title of the report and, indeed, the end we want to achieve by Senate reform.

It's been said that the Meech Lake accord, because of its distinct society clause or because of the unanimity provision in the accord, would cause us some difficulty. In that respect I would like to note Gordon Robertson's remarks of late. Gordon Robertson, the former Clerk of the Privy Council, the author of the book on Senate reform that's been well respected across the country, indicated that that is in fact a myth. Today we have an amending formula where the Parliament of Canada has an ultimate veto, as does two-thirds of the population of the country and seven out of 10 of the provinces, all of which have to agree in order to achieve constitutional change. Mr. Speaker, I don't know that in anybody's mind here we could realistically see change to Senate reform happening and it being agreed to by the federal government if Quebec did not agree or Ontario did not agree or any other significant part of our population did not agree.

Senate reform, for the first time in the history of this country, has been put on the top of the first ministers' agenda by Meech Lake. For the first time in 123 years the federal government has agreed that in fact the provinces should, even in an interim way, play a role in the appointment. We took advantage of that to ask all Albertans how that appointment should take place. Yes, I'm as frustrated as the next Albertan that the Prime Minister has not yet chosen to recognize that selection by Albertans. But it was the Meech Lake accord that made that possible. Without that we would not be at this level of discussion with Senate reform, the possibility would not be on the horizon, and we would be back to where you and I were, Mr. Speaker, some years back, where Albertans believe in the topic but Canadians



generally see other priorities. Now that is a priority for the nation.

I would also like to speak briefly about the other merits of Meech Lake, and I must agree that we have not done enough to communicate the other merits. Within the context of this rapid change I speak of, the change we're going to have to be ready to meet, one necessity is that the government that's closest to the people is able to make those decisions. Meech Lake moves more ability into the provinces to do that than any single constitutional change I know of in the history of our nation. We would for the first time have an ability to negotiate agreements with respect to immigration, which will be a crucial issue as our provinces age, as this province ages, and as we need to try and deal with immigration in the best interests of all Albertans. For the first time in history, the Meech Lake accord gives us a say in the appointment of Supreme Court justices, the court that is increasingly making decisions about the life of all Canadians but only with appointments from the federal jurisdiction. This Meech Lake accord gives the provinces the right to opt out of programs in exclusive areas of provincial jurisdiction, with financial compensation. That is a major requirement for this province and for others in the future if we are to meet those needs that this change will bring to us.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am a supporter of this accord, which I believe will not only serve to unite the country, to bring back into Confederation all its members, but most important to the members of the Assembly, would give us the ability to make those choices for Albertans and have that say in the national process. Most of all, it will for the first time give us a mechanism, a national focus, and a commitment to deal with the issue of Senate reform, now something clearly wanted by not just Albertans but other Canadians as well.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to other parts of the throne speech, I know the citizens of Calgary-Currie, who I've been privileged to represent these years here, would be pleased to see the emphasis on the environment. There's no question that today, worldwide, we have reached a recognition that we can't just develop without looking at the consequences. As opposed to the comments of the last speaker, I believe this province can stand on the record from recycling programs in the Beverage Container Act through the environment councils and environmental authorities, through the items in this Speech from the Throne that underline the commitment to make sure projects go through a process that's fundamental to Albertans. I believe the government can stand on as good a record as any that exists in this nation and that in fact we have led the way with regard to environmental programs. We have much to learn in the area of the environment, as do all parts of the world. We have much scientific evidence to gather yet and to deal with. But this throne speech speaks to that need for change and in ways that will address that.

Mr. Speaker, in my own area of jurisdiction, the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods talked about the issue of rents. Yes, we've seen rents increase recently. We have seen them do that because this economy is moving, employment is going up, and we have a circumstance in this province where again the diversification, the initiative of the people and, I believe, the leadership of the government has helped us to develop a momentum that is giving opportunities anew to our citizens. There are some difficulties with respect to individuals on fixed incomes or low incomes, and this government had the foresight a year ago to establish a committee to take a look at our legislation to make sure it's in keeping with the times and the

needs, to establish a series of programs which now in fact house and help individuals, from the senior citizen housing programs, native and rural housing programs, the supplement programs that exist currently, through to the mortgage interest subsidy and the assistance we initiated during the election campaign that was much opposed then by members of the opposition because they believed we were spending money uselessly. Today the wisdom of those programs is shown by the fact that we must have incentives to help get people into accommodation and to move people through that system so all Albertans can live comfortably in that respect. I look forward to discussing that issue further as we deal with this change in the future.

I might say that the answers to problems are never simple, and that's why we dealt with them in the ways we have. We look forward to further review of legislation and programs at the earliest opportunity. However, one thing that should be pointed out is that the rents today on average are only beginning to equal the rents of some eight years ago, and that of course is because we were in a boom period at that time. They dropped, and now they're coming back to the position that they were. We have to watch the situation, but it's not one this government has been unaware of, uncaring of, or unconcerned with.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of change, the Speech from the Throne deals with that need for individuals in our community to have the ability to make decisions. Again, in my department there is legislation we will be putting before this House to try and ensure that we utilize people in industry and consumers to be watchdogs on various aspects of our marketplace to make sure there's fairness and honesty there. I would ask for the House's consideration when those Bills come before you. As indicated in the throne speech, the primary one will be the financial consumers Act, in which we look at giving consumers the tools to make the decisions that are increasingly difficult in this financial marketplace and, in fact, in our community as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to say what a privilege it has been to represent the citizens of Calgary-Currie in this Assembly for these many years now. I look forward to the session to come, with all our minds focused on the change that's necessary, the sensitivity that's there, and the ability to operate. I would again say I am happy, willing and, I hope, somewhat able to debate aspects of this speech through the context of Bills and resolutions and the budget that will be presented in the months to come.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm responding to the Speech from the Throne. Of course we have the document here in front of us. When I look at this document, I have to reflect a while back to the early '70s when we had a government that was energetic and fresh, when we had a government that would come down with a throne speech that was very comprehensive, that would lay down certain programs and would spell out what the government's vision was for that particular day. I can recall people – disabled persons, the elderly, workers – getting excited about the throne speech. They wanted to get copies of it, they wanted to go through it, they wanted to say, "What's in this?" Normally we did see things in there that indicated or reflected on what was back then a fresh government. But we look at this particular throne speech, Mr. Speaker – it's six, six and a half pages – and it's not what I would call a blueprint. It's not a master plan, not a vision, and to me that's

what a throne speech should do. It should present a vision. It should recognize that 1990 is the first year of the last decade leading up to the 21st century.

I would suppose it's easier to refer to what's not in the throne speech rather than what's in the throne speech. I can look at areas. I'll take this opportunity to touch on multiculturalism first, as the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism is in the Legislative Assembly this afternoon. I see no reference to multiculturalism. I see no reference to protecting the rights of minority groups, other than the amendment to the Individual's Rights Protection Act to protect those with mental disabilities. That is one initiative that is good in the throne speech. However, when we look at the ethnocultural communities that have been crying out, asking for, and demanding leadership from this particular government, it hasn't been there. I've seen other levels of government. I've listened to the Prime Minister of this country come out forthright and speak on behalf of the ethnocultural groups that are facing some difficult times. I don't see the Prime Minister taking the position, "Well, it's not our responsibility." I think when we talk in terms of individual rights, minority rights, we have to recognize that we all have a responsibility as leaders to protect those rights.

I haven't heard any statements from the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism which have put the whole question of the Sikh turban issue in a positive manner. I haven't seen any positive statements come forward from the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism that deal with the question of all the various pins – and more pins are being produced, particularly in southern Alberta – calendars, sweatshirts, and on and on that are not in what I would call very good taste, which in fact indicates that there is a lack of understanding, a lack of respect, on the part of some people toward the rights of others.

I haven't heard a defensive statement, a positive statement, coming forward from the Premier of this province in regard to minority rights, to individual rights, particularly those rights that are given to all of us, including the visible minority. There seems to be a reservation or a hesitation to understand what Canada is all about. Canada has a special fabric. It's a multicultural mosaic. It's a society where we encourage immigrants, and when we encourage them to come over here, we make it clear that they're allowed to bring their values. We encourage them: "Bring your beliefs. Bring your values. Bring your traditions." We go to Heritage Days, to various festivals, and we enjoy their performances. However, Mr. Speaker, that's a very, very small part of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is recognizing that all members of society have the right to participate equally, all members of society have the right to that protection given them by the Individual's Rights Protection Act, by the Bill of Rights, and by our Constitution. This government has failed sadly, very sadly, in that particular area, and I'm saddened by it. I'm saddened when I meet with ethnocultural groups and they express to me their disappointment that they're singled out, treated differently by some people within our society. They ask me: "Where is our government? Why is our government not there standing up for us?" I would hope the minister would take those comments into serious consideration and sometime in the near future, hopefully this evening, hopefully tomorrow, will stand up and in fact tell the ethnocultural groups what they have to hear, what we should all be telling them.

I look at the document, Mr. Speaker, and look for any reference to municipal affairs. I don't find it. There used to be a time when government recognized at least to a degree that

they were into a partnership with municipal government, but that doesn't seem to be the case anymore. Now we have a case of government treating itself like a senior level of government rather than recognizing that all of us as elected representatives, whether we're trustees, civic elected representatives, provincial, federal, are the same. We're all there to represent people, and we're all there basically to represent the same people.

Municipalities are telling me: why is this government transferring dollars or redirecting funding into programs like the community facilities enhancement program that they direct, that this government directs, while at the same time they're reducing the commitment to requests that have been made under other programs like the community recreation/cultural program, the family community and support services, where we've seen in terms of inflation slowly those dollars have started to shrink? In fact, with the community recreation/cultural program, we've seen those dollars reduced and reduced dramatically. The municipalities are not being treated as an equal partner. I think we as a province or this government as a province, like so many other provinces, ask for equality. They ask to be treated on an equal basis when they deal with the federal government. The municipalities are requesting the same respect and the same treatment from this particular government.

Mr. Speaker, when I go into the Speech from the Throne and into the documentation here, I see references made to various headings. One heading, for example, is Fiscal Responsibility: Managing the Treasury. While I read that, I keep in mind that we have an accumulated deficit that is approaching \$10 billion. A deficit that five years ago was half a billion dollars is now 20 times what it was at that particular time. In other words, in a period of five years we've allowed a deficit to accumulate twentyfold.

I also have to think in terms of the pension liability, which is estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 8 billion dollars. When we talk in terms of fiscal responsibility, it's pretty difficult to say that the government acts as a steward for Alberta on many fiscal matters when they can't get a handle on their own fiscal responsibility. I see reference made to the goods and services tax, references made to the high interest rate, which do threaten to cripple the economy to a degree. I see that in print, but I don't see the action that should follow up, the strong leadership that should come from Alberta as far as negotiating with the federal government.

I see other instances of the type of fiscal responsibility or fiscal management that this government will utilize. Let me refer specifically to one instance in the Auditor General's report. Mr. Speaker, when this House was dealt with a question during question period on lottery funding, for example, the minister responsible for lotteries referred to the Auditor General's report and referred to one sentence. He referred to "selective" reading. There was an instance of selective reading where he stated very specifically "that the Amendment Act, when proclaimed, would eliminate my previously reported concerns," making reference to what the Auditor General was saying. However, he failed to read on and point out:

However, legal advice recently received concludes that the Act provided only a partial solution to my concerns and that most of the problems remain.

Mr. Speaker, I think that indicates how one particular department handles what I call a slush fund. Some may refer to it as funny money, something like the funny money we see in that game in Barrhead, the game that's called "Ken Works for You."

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to touch a bit on the references to the economy. We talk in terms of a healthy economy, but at the

same time we fail to recognize or ignore the fact that we have an unemployment rate of 8 percent. With an unemployment rate of 8 percent, to me it does not spell out to be a very healthy economy.

We talk in terms of providing funding or loan guarantees and financial assistance to some of the corporate giants. We've seen it happen with Gainers. We've seen it happen with other projects. We see a real thrust toward the megaprojects, particularly when it comes to the expansion of the forest industry. But at the same time we seem to fail to recognize, or the government seems to fail to recognize, that the backbone of the economy is the small businessperson. Again, there is a token reference made to the small business community, but there's no indication that they can look forward to any relief or any new initiatives. We talk in terms of diversification, but I don't see that diversification happening, Mr. Speaker. The thrust towards developing further megaprojects and becoming dependent on the forest industry along with our oil and gas industry I don't think is really diversifying the economy. It's not really recognizing the possibilities there are for the high tech and other types of small business opportunities that are there.

We see reference made to the environment, and I would feel every one of us in this room recognizes that probably the most important concern to virtually every Albertan today is the environment. We hear that over and over. We are beginning to recognize it. The government is beginning to recognize very, very slowly that it's something that can't be ignored; it's something that isn't going to blow away. People are demanding environmental controls. They're recognizing that further down the road we have other generations coming on stream. They're our resources, and we have to have a healthy, clean environment for them. In the corporate community we see examples of corporations such as Superstore and Safeway taking the initiative and showing leadership when it comes to environmentally friendly products.

I have to admit that our Minister of the Environment has made some attempts, but I don't feel he has gone nearly as far as he should in working with environmental groups. Rather than respond to what people out there are saying – waiting for them to demand government intervention – I believe the government should be showing leadership. There should be no question of any hesitation about the process of public hearings, for example, when it comes to an environmental assessment study. That should just be part of the program. There shouldn't be any question about an environmental Bill. That should go without saying.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the most important parts of any throne speech is how the content of that throne speech relates to people. There is reference made, *The People: Responding to the Need*. Let's look, for example, at the references made to health care, and at the same time we do that, let's look at what's happening in the health care field. Let's look at the beds that are closing in some of the large active hospitals because of lack of funding. Let's look at the Hyndman report that advocates a two-tier system, where we'll see two levels of health care if the Hyndman commission report is implemented. We see rural hospitals that are still underutilized, where portions of them haven't been converted into other uses such as long-term care. We don't see any indication or any thrust toward a system of health care that would take into consideration regionalization, rationalization. There's no thrust toward an ambulance airlift system, for example.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I can go down the people program, and it talks in terms of education. Postsecondary education is referred to and the need for a review in such areas as tuition policies. But at the same time, in my constituency office in Whitemud – and I'm sure it's very true in many constituency offices throughout Alberta – students are coming forward and saying they're concerned. They're concerned about their right to access postsecondary education. Their perception is that it's becoming more and more a chosen opportunity for the elite few. They're faced with tuition fee increases, very high increases. They're faced with quota systems. They're faced with the need to obtain much higher marks. In some cases, I would venture to say, marks are at the level that many of us sitting here who have attended university possibly would have some difficulty gaining access by these new standards that have been imposed, because we haven't dealt with the whole question of postsecondary education.

I look, Mr. Speaker, at the social service programs. Despite the fact that there is lip service paid to social service programs, at the same time the government has not dealt with the question of food banks; they're still out there. The homeless are still out there. We see problems with the levels of funding for people on social assistance. Rents go up. Their level of income is very, very low. They're barely making ends meet – in some cases not making ends meet.

There was a question raised earlier on in the House today about the assured income for the severely handicapped. That has been \$720 a month, and it's been pegged at that level for the last six years. We see the Workers' Compensation Board pensions. That had been pegged at a rate for the last three years without any increases. I don't believe social services or the so-called people programs are something we can pay lip service to. Any type of government that recognizes there is a certain dignity to going out there and being part of society has to recognize that there are disadvantaged people. There are people that are going to turn to society, that will turn to government, and government has to be prepared to respond. By and large, members of society do not object to a reasonable portion of their tax dollars going to provide sufficient levels of services for those people that don't have the same opportunities as the rest of us.

I look under people programs, Mr. Speaker, at the whole question of Family Day. We've experienced a Family Day. I would hope that this government will look at that piece of legislation and admit that they went wrong in certain areas and that they would work to improve those areas. Family Day occurred throughout Alberta with most if not every retail store throughout the province open; at least a very major portion of them denying many people the opportunity of staying at home and enjoying Family Day with their families. Many people had to work that particular day, such as federal employees, for fear they would lose their holiday come August. So there again we saw another large group of people that were denied the enjoyment of Family Day.

We also recognize that Family Day, I think, is more than just setting aside a particular day and calling it Family Day. At the same time, we have to recognize that some people don't have the opportunity to enjoy Family Day because of circumstances, whether it be because of having to exist below the poverty level or, in some cases, because they don't have the opportunity to gain access to their children because we don't have legislation that will ensure that both parents have the guaranteed right of

access to their own children.

I don't see any reference under people's programs to the Premier's council on the status of disabled Albertans, but I'm optimistic that that will come forward during this particular session.

Mr. Speaker, we look under the portion that makes reference to Alberta in Canada: *Defending the Constitution*. I was optimistic when the Premier made some references to some encouraging news from Ottawa that something was going to happen with the proposed Triple E reform'. We were going to see some acknowledgment that Alberta had gone out there and chosen, selected who they felt was the person they wanted to represent them in the Senate. We saw the documentation yesterday. That particular documentation from the Prime Minister I don't think cleared the picture up any. I don't believe the Prime Minister has taken seriously Alberta's effort to enhance the Triple E Senate.

I look at the Meech Lake accord where from 70 percent to 80 percent of Canadians, probably a larger portion when we talk in terms of percentages in Alberta, are saying that the Meech Lake accord is not acceptable in its present form. We don't see this government taking the initiative and saying that we have to recognize there are 10 provinces and all provinces have to be treated equally and that we have to scrap that which isn't workable and strive toward something that is acceptable to all 10 provinces. That document then, in fact, would become something that could be respected by all and agreed by all.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk in terms of again presenting a vision, a blueprint . . . As I conclude, I want to conclude on a note that I am truly disappointed by this document. I'm truly disappointed by the lack of vision of this government to present to the people of Alberta what they're asking for: a blueprint, a vision, something they can look towards and say that during this particular year we're going to see this occur, we're going to see that occur.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that during this session, with the assistance of the Liberal caucus, we're able to drive home certain points and that this government will listen and will say, "Well, we've made mistakes, but we're going to learn by your wisdom," and seriously consider some of the pieces of legislation we propose, some of the motions that are being proposed. If that's done, possibly we'll all be better for it.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude. Thank you.

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

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd first like to congratulate the mover of the speech, the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, and the seconder, the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, for the tone which they set for the rest of us to follow in debating the throne speech. I would also like to congratulate the Lieutenant Governor for her delivery of the speech. As I understand, her appointment was extended to, I think, January of next year. This, then, might be the last speech she would give as Lieutenant Governor in this House, so last week we may have witnessed a moment in history in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, there is one advantage to being in the Legislature for a number of years and hearing throne speeches for almost 15 years. In a couple of weeks will be the 15th anniversary of my election to the Legislative Assembly, and several other members that are still in the Assembly, that of March 26,

1975. Through that time, obviously, I've heard a number of throne speeches. Maybe one advantage of being a regular government member: you spend a lot of time in the House, you hear a lot of speeches. You remember some of them, and some of them you don't remember.

But I find the interesting thing being said since the Speech from the Throne was delivered is that there's criticism of the speech being six and a half pages long. I can remember, and I'm sure if members would go back and look at their speeches from times before, they criticized the speech for being too long, too wordy, too much in it. "You covered all the departments; why did you cover all the departments? You covered all the history; why did you cover all the history?" Now today we're getting: "You missed one department; why did you miss it? You didn't cover this? Why didn't you cover that? There's too little said about this." It's a strange mix, Mr. Speaker. No matter what you put in a speech, whether it's long or short, there's criticism that you've missed or haven't missed something, or something's out, or there's isn't enough about it.

A Speech from the Throne is supposed to be an outline. The member who spoke previous to me referred that some members in the Assembly haven't been to university. He, I guess, is one; I'm another. But I did learn in grade 9 English from a teacher that made us write paragraphs and paragraphs and essays. The one thing she tried to teach us: you have to have a brief outline before you write your story. This is what we have in the Speech from the Throne: a brief outline of the activities of the government in the coming year – very little in it about what happened previously, but activities that will happen in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard some comments about the community facility enhancement program and how it was unfair for municipalities that they didn't have input into it. Well, I guess every MLA in every area works differently. The one advantage of the community facility enhancement program: there's a lot of little groups out there, be they a group to build a playground at a school or in a community area, that before could never get any funding because if it didn't fit under recreation or if the city council or recreation board didn't feel you should have it, you didn't get it. Now at least these groups can go somewhere and apply, either to an area, through the MLA to the minister, through a number of ways, and receive funding for small projects – not big projects but small projects. The money isn't being funded by the provincial government, going to a municipal council, then going to the recreation board and then, when the facility is built with provincial money, those at the opening standing up with puffed up chests and saying: "Look what we built for you. We built it. We did it." And the little guy over there got nothing. At least this is an opportunity for the little groups to work on their small projects, to have something they can point to proudly and say: "Look what we got. We worked at it; we worked together, and we achieved something."

Mr. Speaker, also in the Speech from the Throne is the phrase, and I think it's a very good phrase, "Democracy in Canada is not unconstitutional!" I find it very strange, and I can't understand how it can happen, but the Minister of External Affairs of this country, who is also an MP in the province of Alberta, saying things that are quoted – and it must be right, because I got this clipping out of one of the major dailies in this province, and one would believe that the quote must be right. The minister is quoted as saying, in the House, I believe: we join in recognizing as historic the democratic decision taken by the people of Lithuania and now by their parliament. It's interesting that he recognizes that as historic, because where is

that member in encouraging the Prime Minister to appoint Mr. Waters as our Senator, who was duly elected by a million plus people of this province as their choice to sit in the Senate of Canada?

Mr. Speaker, we see things happening in parts of the world where people are taking in hand the democratic right to vote. There was an interesting program on TV last night about a minister in Romania who because of his stand on personal issues was one of the keys to triggering the revolution that happened there. We see the support of that. Why is that different from our stand of wanting to elect both Houses in our federal Parliament?

Mr. Speaker, I was interested in listening to the participation from the hon. Leader of the Opposition yesterday when he commented on the Speech from the Throne and did a recitation of another speech that was around too. Especially, I was interested in the portion that said:

You can't build political hospitals all over the province, put up plaques, and then not have anybody who [services] them. You can't get doctors and things like that.

We hear the opposition constantly saying about the need for medical services in Alberta. Has he now come forward and tabled his party's stand on services in rural Alberta? Does that now mean that in my constituency a hospital gets shut down? I now have people driving 50 miles to see a doctor and then another 30 miles or more to the closest hospital. Does that mean that the hospital in Milk River or Bow Island gets shut down, that we go to Lethbridge or to Medicine Hat, to a regional centre with regional boards? As one of the other members in the opposition just related when they participated in the Speech from the Throne, it's nice to have that on record so that when the next election comes along, we can remind people in rural Alberta about their interest in the cities – not rural Alberta but the major cities in Alberta where they feel everything centres. Let them wake up and smell the coffee. Let them come out to rural Alberta and see how vibrant it is and how we live out there in spite of the distance we have to travel.

MR. DOYLE: They should live in West Yellowhead.

MR. HYLAND: But they're going to close your hospital too, hon. member, because you're not a big enough regional area. Just wait.

Also, Mr. Speaker, when the hon. leader of the Liberal Party, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, was speaking, he made reference in his speech to spending money – "Why not spend some money to access international markets for agriculture?" – indicating that he recently met with a registered cow/calf producer who said that he must market his cattle in the states alone. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Agriculture has a section that I've sometimes heard criticized in this Legislature as a duplication of that which exists in economic development, where they have people responsible for certain areas of the world. We have people responsible for agricultural trade in the United States, and we also have people responsible for agricultural trade in Mexico and Central and South America.

I was privileged to be with the Minister of Agriculture on an agriculture mission to Mexico just a short time ago. We went to three provinces in Mexico promoting the exportation of registered cattle from Alberta, breeding stock and bulls. Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting things we were able to attend while we were there was the first national meeting of the Hereford association of Mexico. It was held in Chihuahua, and the minister spoke at it. Also, during that same time they had

a sale where 42 or 43 registered Hereford bulls purchased from various farms and ranches in Alberta were sold as part of this meeting of the Hereford association of Mexico. So it does exist. The member should know, and I'm sure the member will be interested in discussing with the Minister of Agriculture when his estimates come up in this House the amount of money and the number of people dedicated to exactly that business of seeing and assisting those people who export agricultural products to various parts of the world. I should note that on that agriculture trade mission were three people from the industry exporting either live cattle or semen or embryos into Mexico. In rough numbers, I believe very close to the neighbourhood of 5,000 purebred animals were exported into Mexico and Latin America in the last year. Included in that, obviously, is a great deal of payments to farmers here and also to the trucking industry that moves the animals down there.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, also in the speech the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry made comment about the actions the Premier of Saskatchewan has taken toward supporting agriculture, the support he has for that, and that we should do something the same. But I would remind the hon. member that I don't think Saskatchewan has a guarantee of right around a billion dollars to farmers where they can go to the bank and borrow money and have it guaranteed by the province for periods of up to 20 years.

As chairman of the government agriculture caucus committee, I had the pleasure of chairing a meeting where about 15 members of the caucus committee were in attendance and about eight or nine members of the Canadian Bankers' Association, Alberta branch. They were fairly senior vice-presidents, resident in Alberta, of the various national banks as well as the Treasury Branch, discussing with us the state, as they see it, of agriculture finance in Alberta. That's not to say that we don't have any problems, but the comment was made there that the financial position of farmers in Alberta, because of the involvement with the guarantees, et cetera, is in far better shape than those elsewhere. Because of some of the actions that were taken, being direct loans to farmers without bank involvement, because of other actions, the financial positions of farmers elsewhere aren't as good as the financial positions of farmers in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, during the late summer I had the opportunity of attending the chamber of commerce annual meeting in Bow Island. One of the things the chamber did this year that was different from any other was a profile on six businesses in the town: how the businesses got started, how they'd grown, and what they do. Most of the businesses are related to agriculture and agriculture development and the finishing of an agricultural product.

The group that's known as the Bow Island Corn Marketing corporation is six or seven farmers who started to grow grain corn and had to have a method of marketing it. So they formed a company to market this grain corn partially to the distillery, partially to feeders, and wherever they could. As a result, they have also contracted corn to other growers beyond the initial shareholders. All these shareholders are active farmers, and they sell this corn, as I said, to various areas. Interestingly enough, one of the directors and shareholders of the corn marketing corporation spoke about their company. Some facts – and I assume they're true; he said they were true. The value of a pivot circle of corn. A standard pivot circle is 130 acres.

The spin-off value of a bushel of corn sold in the local liquor store as whiskey or vodka or whatever is worth – the value of one bushel makes about \$575 worth of liquor, out of one bushel of corn. So if you have a hundred bushel crop, your net worth of that acre grown, if you had the full value of it, would be \$570,573, or \$7,500,000 for a pivot circle. If all the corn that was distilled last year was consumed in Alberta, it would have been a value of \$316 million to the industry from those acres of corn. But the value the farmer gets out of a 750 millilitre bottle is about 10 cents. So along with the raw product there's a lot that becomes added to it before it ends up being the finished product that we see on the shelf. Ten cents would be a small fraction of what a bottle of liquor would be worth in the liquor store today.

Another company that is just starting out is in Bow Island. This is what I believe we're going to see in agriculture: local shareholders, local people, farmers putting their money where their mouth is and starting small businesses where they can reproduce a product, and they use that product in sales. This

industry is called Classic Grains, which is owned by probably 16 to 20 people locally that have all put their money up. They are through a method roasting grain – sunflowers, lentils, wheat, and other grains – and selling it in the health food market for health food, for salad toppings, et cetera. This industry employs five to seven people. Some people may think that is not very big, but for a small rural agricultural town it is a big employer. It's just starting, and its future looks bright.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[At 5:27 p.m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]