

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, March 15, 1991**

**10:00 a.m.**

Date: 91/03/15

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head:

### Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Father, on this day of a new beginning, we ask for Your guidance in the responsibility we have undertaken and Your help in fulfilling our duties.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly may we faithfully serve all Albertans and, in serving them, serve You.

Amen.

Hon. members, would you please remain standing. As is the practice in this House since the House last sat, we memorialize the members who have died. In this case there are two former members whom we remember on this day. Edward Philip Benoit passed away January 22, 1991. He represented the constituency of Highwood, was first elected in the 1963 general election, re-elected in the 1967 and '71 general elections, and served until 1975. Charles Duncan Drain passed away January 27. He represented the constituency of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest and was first elected to this Legislature in the 1967 general election, re-elected in the '71 general election, and served until 1975. Let us observe a moment of silence in their memory.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Amen.

head:

### Statement by the Speaker

#### Brevity in Oral Question Period

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will respond to the arms for question period in just a moment or two; thank you.

On the desks of all hon. members there should be a letter dated March 15 from myself which deals with the matters of parliamentary practice, question period, the Order Paper, and introductions. With the indulgence of the House, I would read just one portion of that, which relates to question period.

The Chair has taken note of the increasing length of the preamble to questions during question period. A random review of *Hansard* indicates that six-sentence, 125-word preambles often precede the actual question, with some preambles reaching eight sentences and 160 words. Although *Beauchesne* clearly indicates that supplementary questions should need no preamble, *Hansard* again indicates preambles to supplementary questions running to four sentences and 70 words – no matter how quickly they're spoken. In order to preclude intervention by the Chair this session, the Chair would request that all members familiarize themselves with *Beauchesne* section 409, with particular emphasis on 409(2), which reads, and I quote:

The question must be brief. A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence. A long preamble on a long question takes an unfair share of time and provokes the same sort of reply.

A supplementary question should need no preamble.

In addition, the Chair would remind hon. ministers that the replies should be as brief as possible.

Also on the desks of all members is the Commonwealth Day message from Her Majesty the Queen as head of the Commonwealth.

Lastly, hon. members, yesterday marked the 12th anniversary for seven members of this House who were first elected on

March 14, 1979. On behalf of all members, I hope that we will extend congratulations to the following members: Calgary-Currie, Bonnyville, Three Hills, Calgary-Fish Creek, Macleod, Fort McMurray, and Calgary-Egmont.

head:

### Notices of Motions

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice of motion under Standing Order 40 that at the end of question period today I will seek unanimous consent of the Assembly in order to deal with the following motion:

That the Legislative Assembly of Alberta recognize and extend congratulations regarding the world-class athletic achievements of Mr. Kurt Browning, three-time men's world figure skating champion, and the rink of Mr. Kevin Martin, winner of the 1991 Canadian Labatt's Brier.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 40 to request unanimous consent following question period to deal with the following motion:

Be it resolved that when the government motion for consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's speech is called for debate, the Speaker put the question forthwith and that the House leaders be directed to convene an emergency meeting to determine a method of using the Assembly's time to deal with the urgent and pressing matters of the provincial deficit, the state of the province's education and health care systems, and the lack of action by the current government.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice pursuant to Standing Order 30 that after the daily routine today I'll request leave to move to adjourn the ordinary business of the Assembly in order to discuss the critical financial situation affecting women's shelters.

head:

### Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table responses to written questions 313, 314, and 315 posed by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to file with the Assembly a copy of a news release issued today challenging levels of government to become involved in plain language and also our plain language discussion paper now under way with initiatives in Alberta.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the response to Written Question 445.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table responses to motions for returns 370, 371, and 393.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table with the House a response to Question 397.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the annual report of the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses for the period October 1, '89, to September 30, '90. I'm also tabling the financial statements for the Northern Alberta Children's hospital for the period ended March 31, 1990. Finally, it's my pleasure to table responses to motions for returns 220, 300, and 400.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file the responses to Motion for a Return 412 and Written Question 443. As well, I'd like to voluntarily file under section 37(3)(b) of the Standing Orders the second anniversary report of approved projects under the community facility enhancement program. Finally, I'd like to table the sixth annual report of the Wild Rose Foundation for the year ended March 31, 1990.

**10:10**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table the annual report of the Alberta Public Safety Services for the year ended March 31, 1990.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to receive permission to table the responses to written questions 402 and 404.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table documents from Forestry, Lands and Wildlife indicating that Canadian Forest Products Ltd. three times, in December and January, violated important logging regulations, to be met by a government response which first considered only minuscule fines and then, in turn, commuted these to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. [interjections] Hon. member, we still abide by the rules in this House; thank you.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a group of students who are in the gallery today. They make up the Forum for Young Albertans. There are 36 of them with us today. They are accompanied by their executive director, Blair Stolz, and two chaperones. Included in this group are two students from the province of Saskatchewan. These are high school students from all over the province who excel academically and are active in their schools and communities, and they consider it an important part of their education to be aware of provincial and municipal issues that affect their communities and province. I would like the House to give them a warm welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Drumheller.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly Dr. Douglas Jackson, director of Canadian studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. Dr. Jackson was present yesterday for the opening of the session and joins us today to observe our Legislature in action. Dr. Jackson is sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I'd now ask him to rise and receive the cordial welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the House the newly and recently appointed and reappointed members of the Alberta Multicultural Commission, whose job it is to steer government's new initiatives in this area. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd like them to stand as I call their names and then receive

a warm greeting from the House. They are Dora Lam, Joseph Matthew, Ernest Houle, Orest Olineck, Craig Curtis, Tom Eapen, Manmohan Sandhu, Laurent Lamoureux, Adolf Kulpe, Tessie Oliva, and the secretary and executive director of the commission, Manuel da Costa. On behalf of myself and the Member for Redwater-Andrew, the chairman of the commission, I'd like to welcome them to the House today.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 44 students from St. Anne school who are accompanied by their teachers Ms Jeanne Nelson, Mr. Shawn Carson, and Mrs. Roma Martiuk. I would ask that they stand and the Assembly give them the usual warm welcome.

head:

### **Oral Question Period**

#### **NovAtel Communications Ltd.**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. On this first question period we have to focus on the government's incompetence and bungling. You may recall that the government issued the Telus prospectus in which it indicated that NovAtel, a subsidiary of AGT, would post a \$4 million profit. Lo and behold, then it was a \$17 million loss, and now we find out that this company is going to lose the taxpayers of Alberta some \$204 million – total incompetence by this government. My question to the minister is this: given that the government owned NovAtel until October of 1990, what explanation does he have for Albertans about this massive screwup and loss of taxpayers' dollars?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member, for using that last phrase in this House. Thank you.

The hon. minister.

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader talks about the focus of this the first question period and this the first question. I think the focus is this: that this government has not – and I won't use his word – failed insofar as the economic diversification of this province. Here we are, an island in a sea of recession; diversification is working, the advanced technologies are working, and telecommunications is working.

Insofar as the question itself, we have responded in a very responsible way with the information as it became available. At all times we relied upon the best information that was available to us. We have acted in a decisive way with respect to that information. The management committee is in place, it's reviewing NovAtel and its complete situation, and we will expect that the responses to that will allow us to rejuvenate, refocus, and restructure this company.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, some responsible way: \$175 million to buy a \$200 million deficit. That's really responsible, a shrewd business deal. Shrewd, Mr. Speaker. My question to this minister: because this seems to be just the start, what guarantee will the minister give Alberta taxpayers that millions more dollars of taxpayers' money will not be squandered on this company?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I've indicated that we have set about an action plan. We have directed the management committee of this company to reassess where the market is at from the standpoint of technology. Yes, it is a very significant

loss but not an unusual loss from the standpoint that other telecommunications companies are experiencing like losses. I refer the hon. members to the *Financial Post* this morning, where a leading telecommunications expert has indicated the losses that have occurred elsewhere and indicated the difficulty of a competitive business. The results are disappointing, and we're doing something about it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, you sold a profit-making company that was making money that could have covered the losses. That's reality. We don't have money for education, health care, the poor, anything else.

I want to ask this minister a serious question. When the Principal Group minister lost \$150 million, the Premier fired her. Will the minister do the honourable thing with this massive amount of money lost and tender his resignation to the Premier right now?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be a minister of this government and of what it's done for the economic situation of this province compared to the rest of Canada and the world.

If the hon. member would look at the record and look at the AGT and the NovAtel situation as a whole, he would see that neither AGT nor NovAtel returned a dollar to the General Revenue Fund of this province, to the taxpayer. Through the privatization of AGT millions of dollars have been injected into the General Revenue Fund. We have a 44 percent interest that has in fact appreciated by \$120 million since the day of the privatization. We've received \$13.5 million by way of dividends. The privatization of AGT was a total success for the taxpayer of Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if an answer like that wasn't so sad it would be funny.

### Special Warrants

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Let us move from the gross mismanagement and sheer bungling of this government to its secrecy and continuing attempts to present false financial information to the taxpayers of this province. Every year this government uses budget day to try and present the image that the deficit is under control but historically has done this by overestimating revenue and underestimating spending. However, as the government's estimate of the deficit goes down, its special warrant spending goes up. In 1990-91 alone this government spent \$600 million more in this way than it said it would in its 1990 budget. My question to the Premier is simply this: will the Premier tell Alberta taxpayers why we have this out-of-control special warrant spending? Is it clumsy incompetence at budgeting, is it to mislead the people on budget day, or is it a combination of both?

10:20

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows from the period of time he's been in the Legislature that this government and all governments present a budget and then during the course of a year there are unanticipated expenditures required. It happens in the parliamentary system throughout England and Canada. We are faced with things that are unanticipated, such as the nurses' settlement, which required a great deal of money, forest fires, disasters that require funding where we help

Albertans, and they need help. In those cases I think it's being responsible government. If we have more students in the schools, we make sure the dollars are there. It happens.

I should point out to the hon. member that that is a small percentage of the total budget, and in fact there are lapses from some departments that make up in a large way for these special warrants.

MR. MARTIN: This whole government's lapsing, Mr. Speaker.

My point to the Premier is simply this: special warrants are for emergencies. Let's look at the figures: \$188 million by special warrant, '86; \$286 million in '87; \$369 million in '88; \$392 million in 1989; \$600 million – a total of \$1.835 billion through an undemocratic means. My question to the Premier: how does the Premier justify this amount of money, \$1.835 billion, being spent by undemocratic means in the last five years?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, in a way I answered the question when I replied to his first question. This is something that happens in all parliaments. We deal with a budget at budget time, and then, during the full course of a year, there are unanticipated expenditures. They are then dealt with. You help the people of Alberta when they need help. Then those special warrants are dealt with through the Assembly. So there's nothing strange about this. Nobody likes special warrants, but we're prepared to be there to help Albertans when they need help.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in Britain they beheaded a king for doing this. He should have lived in Alberta now.

Mr. Speaker, this is clear. The government sells a fairy tale to Albertans on budget day and then overspends like a drunken sailor and closes doors throughout the year. My question to the Premier: how does the Premier expect Albertans to believe his upcoming budget, talking about a balanced budget, when they have such escalating overspending in the last five years? How does he expect Albertans to believe him?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member isn't correct. There have been years during the period of time he's discussing when we have come in much lower than anticipated expenditures. So the hon. member is just incorrect. Perhaps the Provincial Treasurer, when he returns from the finance ministers' meeting, may want to deal with this in more detail, but the hon. member has to realize that this is a fact where the government helps Albertans when they need help.

### NovAtel Communications Ltd.

(continued)

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the minister responsible for telephones. I was surprised to hear him say that AGT going private was a success. In fact, it was a horrendous nightmare, and the nightmare continues now with NovAtel. The Alberta taxpayer had to pay \$159 million to buy that company back. It had to pay \$21 million to cover some previous losses. It had to do loan guarantees to AGT of some \$525 million, \$175 million in loans from the Alberta loan fund. My first question to the minister is this: given that the minister is responsible to the taxpayers of Alberta, given that he's supposed to be a steward to look after their money, will he accept responsibility for not having done his homework, for not having looked in on

the financial situation . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Order. The acoustics must be bad at that end of this Chamber. The final question, without another paragraph inserted, hon. member.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. The question, succinctly.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I want the minister to agree that it was his mistake and he's responsible for it.

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the information that was relied upon by this minister and this government was reviewed by two auditors, two national accounting firms – they audit them – 11 national underwriting firms in Canada. On that basis we relied upon that information, and that was the basis for the decisions we made. I believe those decisions were correct decisions in the interests of the taxpayer.

If you look at AGT before, Mr. Speaker, you will find that it was mired in debt; 90 percent of its assets were debt. We put that out. It required \$2 billion to \$3 billion in additional capital investment. All of that has been removed for the taxpayer, and the taxpayer is a winner on AGT.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Supplementary.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, given that we now have an \$880 million infusion of money for loan guarantees . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order in the whole House. Thank you.

MR. DECORE: . . . and given that Albertans don't want any more surprises, will the minister guarantee, will he assure Albertans that there are no more surprises, that no more moneys are going to have to be paid to NovAtel to prop them up even more?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, what I will say to the hon. member is that an action plan is under way. It was under way from the moment we reacquired this company. That action plan involves a complete reassessment of NovAtel in all of its aspects. We will be studying that, and decisions will be made by the management committee in conjunction with that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Final.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, given that the minister can't give us that assurance, given that he can't give comfort to the Alberta taxpayer, is he prepared to call on the Auditor General to go in there and do a complete financial and business assessment and tell us whether or not it should be shut down or its business plans changed so they make sense for Albertans? Is he prepared to do that?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, talking about people not doing their homework, the hon. member should know that the Auditor

General already reviews those things within NovAtel.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member for Red Deer-North. [interjection] The discussion is at an end on that one. Thank you. Red Deer-North.

### Employment Statistics and Initiatives

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Career Development and Employment. In light of the fact that it appears there's an ongoing trend for Alberta to have the lowest unemployment rates in the country, as indicated by predictions from four major banks and the Conference Board of Canada, which says that Alberta will experience positive economic growth in spite of recession in other parts of the country, my question and my concern to the minister is: in light of the ongoing efforts to balance the budget, has the Provincial Treasurer approached the minister and asked him to reduce his emphasis on career development and retraining programs in light of our present low unemployment rates?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to answer that question, because I wouldn't want to endanger the Provincial Treasurer's budget by any means. But I would indicate that I certainly recognize the trend. I'm glad the opposition is aware of the latest unemployment stats. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, thank you. Thank you, hon. members.

Mr. Minister.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the opposition recognizes that Alberta is enjoying the lowest unemployment stats in Canada, 7.6 percent. They're right for a change. I'm pleased they do realize that.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the emphasis will definitely be on career training. There will be some \$100 million allocated in this department's budget alone; in excess of \$100 million, I might add. Perhaps the Minister of Advanced Education would wish to supplement, because I'm sure there'll be extra incremental dollars as well within his own department.

10:30

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister indicate to us, in light of the incoming investment and also an incoming migration of workers into the province, if this is having a negative impact on Alberta's labour force?

MR. WEISS: I'm confident, Mr. Speaker, that, yes, while there was an in-migration of some 3,800 in January and some 3,000 in February, the Alberta skilled work force will be able to adapt to that, and those that have the necessary skills and training will continue to have the best jobs that are available.

I might add that through the Department of Career Development and Employment we're going to be introducing an Alberta apprenticeship and industry training Act, which we believe will commit to and enhance the ongoing benefit of training for all Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

### Hazardous Waste Disposal

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In dispatching an official from his department to Quebec to negotiate the importation of hazardous waste PCB-contaminated soil, the Minister of the Environment said yesterday that that shipment would have to await the expansion of the plant facility, that we wouldn't be able to take the waste until the expansion is made. The minister has made the link between the expansion and the importation of waste. I simply want to ask him if he will justify his previous decision to exclude that issue of importation from the review of the expansion. Is this another Al-Pac two-step so we hide the issue from the public?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I see the hon. member is just as paranoid as ever. Moving up to the front benches hasn't changed his demeanour at all.

Mr. Speaker, I made a comment yesterday that indeed some months ago the province of Quebec approached the province of Alberta to accept some PCBs that had been rendered harmful through a fire at St-Basile-le-Grand, and those negotiations haven't resulted yet in a response from Quebec. It would be up to this government to once again decide if we were to accept those PCBs. Certainly we're in a position of accepting those that are in liquid form; however, because we are in the process now of conducting an environmental impact assessment relative to expansion of the plant with relationship to solids, we are not in a position at this particular time to accept the solids from Quebec or even from within this province. It has absolutely nothing to do with the question of possible, and I stress "possible", importation of hazardous waste.

MR. McINNIS: As tempting as it is to respond to the insult about paranoia, I'm conscious of the Chair's admonition about preambles and will get right down to it.

The point is the review process that Albertans have on this project. In the first instance, he takes away the issue of importation; secondly, he's refused to allow the Natural Resources Conservation Board to hear that process. [interjections] I would like to know, in view of the fact that the . . .

### Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Hold it. Thank you. The admonition applies to interjections from all sides of the House, government members. I know that this particular member likes to also indulge in this kind of thing. So I think, for all members of the House, we'll all be quiet to listen to somebody else so that when you get a chance to stand up, somebody will be quiet enough to listen to you.

The question, please, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

### Hazardous Waste Disposal

(continued)

MR. McINNIS: The Natural Resources Conservation Board passed this Assembly. It was touted by the government as an independent review process. Why has the government refused to allow this whole issue of importation expansion to go to the NRCB for review?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I really don't know where the hon. member is coming from, as usual. I have said time and time again: if indeed the matter of importation of hazardous waste is to become part of the government's agenda, it will not

become part of that agenda until there is full consultation with Albertans. I've also said that there would be a process established, very likely through the NRCB, to have public hearings, as there will be public hearings on the expansion of the plant itself, and if indeed the matter of importation reaches the government's agenda, there will be public hearings on that particular aspect as well. That should alleviate any fears the hon. member might have.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

### NovAtel Communications Ltd.

(continued)

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to address a question to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications following up on NovAtel. We purchased this company not even three months ago for \$159 million, and we learned recently that we've got a \$200 million loss. My question to the minister very simply is this: how is it that we just now know that we've got a \$203 million loss when we bought it only three months ago?

MR. STEWART: I think you just take that up with the auditors, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member can do that. We received the information on Tuesday evening; we disclosed it publicly on Wednesday morning.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, responsibility flows to the top, and that's this minister right here.

The question I have, then, Mr. Minister, is this: why is it that the company was allowed to account for sales before they actually had the money in the bank? What's with the funny bookkeeping going on?

MR. DECORE: Blame the auditors.

MR. TAYLOR: Tell them you're a lawyer, not an accountant.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, it's a strange question from the hon. member. I don't know how to even respond to it, quite frankly.

The point is that we received information as to those losses. We disclosed it publicly, immediately. It is part of the action plan, in any event, to review all the financial aspects, all the management structures of this company, its competitive position, the state of its technology. All of that reassessment's been done. Our objectives are clear, and the action plan to be carried out by the management committee is clear, and that is to refocus this company, to restructure it and to rejuvenate it, because it can be a big player, as it has been before, in the telecommunications business for Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Athabasca-Lac La Biche, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

### Pulp Mill Emission Standards

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. We all know that Alberta has the highest environmental standards in Canada in relation to pulp mill effluent. I would hope that our government can again be a leader, like in many areas, and push for the establish-

ment of Alberta's standards across Canada. Now, the socialists to my left can play a key role here. [interjections] In fact, I'll challenge them to get their colleague in Ontario, who has 25 pulp . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Hold on.

AN HON. MEMBER: You should get a gong, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: An hon. members suggests that I should get a gong for the *Gong Show*, or is it for something else?

Hon. member, the question, please.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the hon. minister is: can he give assurance to this Assembly that he will initiate the necessary action to move forward and get Canada to establish standards like Alberta's?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member, because I've said time and time again that people who come to this province from other jurisdictions and criticize our standards ought to look first in their own backyard, especially in the province of Ontario where they really do have rotten, stinking, belching, polluting pulp mills.

I would be very, very happy to take to the Council of Ministers of the Environment a proposal that the national standard be established not at 2.5 kilograms per air-dried tonne of chlorinated organics but at a minimum of 1.5, which is the standard in Alberta. Two point five is the standard that is now being proposed by the national government. I think it would serve the pulp industry very, very well indeed if all the jurisdictions in this country were to achieve the standards that Alberta has achieved.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary: will the hon. Minister of the Environment give assurance to this Assembly that he will pass on the necessary information to the Official Opposition so they can fax that information to Ontario so they can meet our standards down the road somewhere?

MR. KLEIN: I'd be very, very glad. Certainly it will all be contained in *Hansard*, and perhaps they can send it along to the province of Ontario, and the Liberal opposition perhaps can send it along to the province of Quebec. Maybe those two provinces will be able to see what is happening in the province of Alberta and follow our lead in establishing the best achievable standards in the world.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

10:40

### Family Violence

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Premier. Daily we are confronted with the injury and sometimes death of women and children at the hands of men who do or have professed to love them at the same time that courts mandate treatment and expert and community workers state that treatment of offenders is an essential part of the work to eradicate violence in the family. To the Premier: will he now demonstrate his commitment to ending violence in the family by directing his ministers to fund treatment programs throughout the province?

MR. GETTY: Of course, Mr. Speaker, nobody condones or in any way accepts this part of our society where we have abuse of children or any member of a family. In our government we have three departments really that work together in this area: the Department of Health, the Department of Family and Social Services, and the Solicitor General.

I would ask perhaps the Solicitor General to respond, but other ministers who are involved may also wish to.

MR. FOWLER: Supplementary. Mr. Speaker, I've just received a report from the department that indicates that there are 25 separate components of our program with respect to family violence that have been and are in place at this time. It is my belief that we are showing a true commitment to this very serious social problem in this province, and it will take some time for that commitment and the actions under those commitments to show the positive results that we want.

I would hasten to add that the harder we dig and root out these problems in society, these abusers of family, of wives and children, the more we are going to find of them. So it's going to be more evident as time passes by that these people will be rooted out through our initiatives and receive greater recognition than in the present.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, they need not only recognition but treatment.

Given that the city of Edmonton task force reports that one man treated successfully saves the system \$40,000 a year at the same time that the Changing Ways treatment program is asking for the same amount to treat 100 men thereby saving the system as much as \$4 million a year, will the Premier now recognize that funding treatment programs shows good fiscal sense by stating here today that the province will take responsibility for treatment of batterers and that the Changing Ways program will not have to close its doors due to lack of funds?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I understand the representation from the hon. member, and I believe the Solicitor General actually answered her question when she first placed it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Calgary-Forest Lawn.

### Water Quality in Calgary

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A private developer has just received approval from the Alberta Planning Board to proceed with a major development, including a golf course, an equestrian centre, and 750 homes near the Elbow River on the western outskirts of Calgary. The city of Calgary's drinking water supply could be jeopardized by such a massive development, and for this reason it is opposed by the city of Calgary and nearby residents in the Springbank area. My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Given that the minister promised earlier this week to consult municipal governments and all Albertans in decisions which affect the ecological integrity of our river basins, why did this minister not order an environmental impact assessment including public hearings before this massive Elbow River valley development was allowed to proceed?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is way, way, way ahead of himself. There are processes that have to be

followed in any endeavour of development, whether it's industrial development or municipal development. The first step is to go through the process of land use redesignation, and that involves a series of public hearings at the municipal level. The second step is to go through the development permit process, to get actual development permits for the project, and that could involve again another set of public hearings through the Development Appeal Board. It's after those municipal approvals have taken place that the Department of the Environment gets into the act.

Now, I have received a letter from the mayor of Calgary. I have asked my department to examine in detail that letter, to take all the concerns expressed in that letter into consideration, and on the basis of that to do a preliminary environmental evaluation, and we will see where we take it from there.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but there's no mention of an EIA in the minister's remarks. I have a letter from him to one of my colleagues in which he says that ministerial consent was granted to this project. My question to the minister is: how could he justify doing this without insisting that a proper environmental assessment study be done in the first place?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong, wrong, wrong. What we did was an evaluation not of the project per se but of the sewerage treatment process that was proposed, and as a result of a preliminary evaluation of that sewerage treatment process, we did indeed determine that it meets acceptable municipal standards. But as a result of the letter received from the mayor of Calgary on March 5, I have instructed my department – and this must hopefully make the hon. member happy – to do a further evaluation of the project in total to determine if in fact a full-blown environmental impact assessment will be necessary.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-McKnight.

#### **Advanced Education Funding**

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Colleges in Alberta have been overwhelmed by a landslide of applications for next fall. At Mount Royal College in Calgary they only have 3,000 spaces for 7,500 applications. Similar situations exist at Grant MacEwan, Red Deer, and Grande Prairie, where thousands, literally thousands, will be turned away. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. Mr. Minister, what are you telling prospective students and their parents when they call you and say they are disgusted with your government's funding policies? Are you telling them to go to Ontario or to go to the U.S.?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons, I think, for tightening up access to the postsecondary system is the very success of our institutions. We have the highest participation rate in the country in terms of postsecondary education and, as matter of interest to the hon. member, also the highest number of degrees per capita in the country.

I believe we still have space for those students within our system of colleges, technical institutes, and universities to which the hon. member is referring. I would point out that I rely on the institutions to set those admission standards, and I expect

them to accommodate the applicants. In all fairness, we're talking about September 1991, and I think that is a fair time away from the present.

MRS. GAGNON: My second question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, why didn't yesterday's throne speech indicate a commitment to accessibility to postsecondary institutions? Is that because your government is willing to see thousands of qualified Albertans turned away, shut out?

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I may respond. In reference to the throne speech, clearly this government is committed to continuing its policy not only of quality but access. Mention is made in the throne speech, which will be announced in the budget I'm sure, about a new tuition fee policy indicating that there must be funds available in the postsecondary system to maintain that quality. I think that commitment by the government yesterday in the throne speech will be honoured.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane, followed by Edmonton-Highlands.

#### **10:50 College Degree-granting Status**

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to continue this line of questioning by addressing my question to the Minister of Advanced Education. This government has consistently committed to the education of our young people and those who are moving through the system. However, the waiting lists at our universities are getting longer and longer. In fact, as I understand it now, the preregistration average required to get into university is 75 percent. My question to the minister is: would he take the bold step of moving forward and granting degree-granting status to other institutions of higher learning in this province to assist our young Albertans to have that degree that they can use to move out into the workplace?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it's always very tempting to take bold steps; however, one wants to be very cautious before they embark upon those.

With reference to degree granting, that is a very valid question. It should be pointed out that we have some very great success stories now: a baccalaureate nursing program at the University of Alberta and Red Deer College, Keyano College in Fort McMurray, and Athabasca U. We do have some of those in place.

I am committed, as stated earlier, to a decision on the whole question of degree granting prior to the end of 1991, and I intend to keep that commitment.

MR. EVANS: Well, I'm pleased to hear that response, Mr. Speaker, but I'm concerned about those students who will be attempting to enter institutions of higher learning in September. Pending this report, does the minister have any interim measures that he would bring forward to the House today?

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do hope it's remembered by hon. members that for a province with only 8 per cent of Canada's people, we do have the four universities plus the three private colleges that grant degrees in Alberta. There are a fair number of opportunities now.

The whole question of whether or not degree granting should be granted to the college system surely must depend on the merit of that degree in the interest of the students. I'm

reluctant to proceed at this time with that, bearing in mind the advice I'm receiving from both the Universities Co-ordinating Council and others who quite frankly have the interests of the students at heart.

#### **Education and Advanced Education Funding**

MS BARRETT: In the fall sitting of the Assembly the Official Opposition called on the government and particularly the Advanced Education minister to bring in a revised budget to avert the crisis that is now happening not just through universities but throughout colleges and technical institutions. The fact remains, Mr. Speaker, that including this year's budget, funding in real terms for those institutions has fallen by 14 percent since 1987. Will the minister now agree that in fact it is a funding problem that rests with him and his cabinet that is causing this crisis and not the students and not the Students Finance Board?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I do believe it's important to point out, not only to the hon. member but to members of the House, that on a per capita basis Alberta is amongst the leaders in Canada with postsecondary funding. I mean, it's very clear that the province of Ontario is ninth out of 10.

Now, I continue to urge the government to maintain as its number 1 priority education along with health, and the government agrees. We're approaching budget time, which will be in the next few weeks according to the Treasurer, and I can assure the hon. member that at that time the Department of Advanced Education will get due deliberation in this House with regard to funding.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister might be interested to know that the Ontario government in a tough time has found a 7.3 percent increase on a per-pupil basis. That's the way this government ought to review education.

My supplementary question is to the Minister of Education, who apparently governs a department that is now the fifth lowest in Canada when it comes to funding on a per-pupil basis. Will the minister explain to Albertans how it is that it can still be argued by the government that education is a top priority when funding has fallen three points in the last one year?

MR. DINNING: As I've pointed out in this Assembly in the past, we spend on average in this province some \$5,300 per student. Each of those 5,300 dollars comes out of provincial and local taxpayers' pockets. When you consider that in a classroom of 28 or 29 students, Mr. Speaker, we have close to \$150,000 to \$160,000 of taxpayers' dollars being invested in our children's education in each and every classroom in this province, I consider that a very substantial investment by all Albertans in quality education for our young people.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

#### **Hazardous Waste Disposal**

*(continued)*

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 18 the Minister of the Environment announced unequivocally that the \$60 million expansion of the Swan Hills waste management plant, and I quote: is for Albertans to ensure that we have the best means in place to deal with wastes generated in this province. We now are all at a loss to understand how the minister could forget this statement and advocate importing 1,500 tonnes of PCBs from Quebec. In the absence of any other

obvious explanation, could the minister please explain whether this is some new, subtle negotiating strategy to try to convince Quebec that in fact there is a reason for them to stay in Canada?

MR. KLEIN: Where is all this coming from? This must be coming from the *Edmonton Journal*, because, you know, it sounds like a fairy tale to me.

Mr. Speaker, I gave a speech to the First Nations conference yesterday, and I talked about the leadership that the province of Alberta has demonstrated in environmental protection. I said, and rightfully so, that this is the only province in Canada to have a facility as phenomenal as the special waste management facility at Swan Hills.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. KLEIN: Right. And I said: "If you don't believe me, ask the people in Quebec who are now stuck with a whole bunch of PCBs. Ask the people in Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories and British Columbia who are asking us now to accept their waste because they can't site one of these things." And we have one.

I simply said that some months ago Quebec asked once again if they could ship the PCBs that were rendered harmful through the fire at St-Basile-le-Grand, if we would consider once again accepting those PCBs. I sent an official down to begin discussions with the people of Quebec. We haven't received the response from the Quebec government as of yet, and if we receive a response, it will once again have to go through government to decide whether in fact we will receive those PCBs. That is to set the record straight.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the minister could please explain to us why he would consider for one moment that Quebec should get the benefits of its industrial enterprise while he turns around and asks Albertans to accept the risks of transporting and destroying the toxic wastes created as a result of their industrial enterprise?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, there was a resolution by this government some time ago that we would indeed accept those PCBs on humanitarian grounds. Because of an election in the province of Quebec, they wanted to get rid of those PCBs much faster than we were willing to accept them. Therefore, they tried to send them off to Wales, and of course the longshoremen in Wales refused to unload them. The election was then held. The PCBs ended up in the Prime Minister's home constituency of Baie-Comeau, and once again the province of Quebec came back to us and said, "Would you accept them?" I've already given the history.

I would like to explain something else, Mr. Speaker, because I think this is very, very important. When we're talking about this whole issue of toxins from other jurisdictions, it might be of interest for the hon. member to note that the Northwest Territories now ship all their hazardous wastes from the northern border of Alberta to the southern border of Alberta, all the way through this province, to a special hazardous waste landfill in Oregon. In other words, it goes all the way through this province. Wouldn't it make sense, even to the hon. member . . .

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



### Child Abuse Treatment Programs

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about providing counseling for children who have been victims of sexual abuse, there are a number of points that need to be made on both sides of the issue of contracted agency versus fee for service. We've been told that two critical agencies within the Department of Family and Social Services have or soon will be cut. One major concern that has not been dealt with is how much added responsibility and stress the department is planning to dump on the already overburdened frontline child welfare worker who is unlikely to be trained to deal with child sexual abuse. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Will the minister confirm to this House that his department will be cutting the hours of operation to the 24-hour child welfare crisis unit, a move that will force clients in crisis . . .

11:00

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Whoa. You got the question in.

MR. OLDRING: No, Mr. Speaker, we aren't cutting the 24-hour crisis line.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister then confirm that he has instructed his department to disband the child welfare consultation unit, which is the unit frontline workers rely upon for support in more complex cases?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is making every effort we can to make sure that the frontline resources are just there, on the front lines, to respond to the families and children that are in need. As the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar knows, we as a government and we as a department have made that a very high priority. We're focusing those resources on the front line, and we're going to continue to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The time for question period has expired. The Chair wishes to thank members on both sides of the House for their co-operation. We've finally been able to get many more members involved in question period.

Before we go on to the rest of our routine . . . [interjection] Order please. The Chair appreciates your comments, flip as they are and humorous as they often are, but perhaps on a one-to-one basis, hon. member.

Might we have the unanimous consent of the House to revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
The Member for Clover Bar.

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

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 55 visitors from the constituency of Clover Bar. I'd like to welcome students from the Fort Saskatchewan elementary school who are accompanied today by Mr. Alexandruk, Mrs.

Clark, Mrs. Derejko, Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Fischer, Mrs. Katchur, Mrs. Paxton, Mrs. Barley, Mrs. Peltonen, Mrs. Hale, and Mrs. Laverdiere. Our guests are seated in the public gallery. I ask them now to rise, and I would ask the House to extend our traditional warm welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: A Standing Order 30 request, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

head: **Request for Emergency Debate**  
**Women's Shelters**

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request that we adjourn the business of the Assembly to deal with the critical financial situation affecting women's shelters. If I can speak briefly to the urgency of the matter . . .

MR. DINNING: Briefly, please.

MR. MITCHELL: You don't think it's a problem, Jim?

MR. SPEAKER: Order. With due respect, at last report the Chair was here, not over there. Thank you.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the hon. minister believes this is an acceptable situation; I don't know.

Mr. Speaker, family violence is gaining on us. We're losing ground here. The Solicitor General attested to this this morning. Many people in our province are caught up in this tragedy. The incidence is increasing. The circumstances in shelters are critical. We're in a crisis, an emergency situation in many of our communities. Last year 5,376 families were turned away; three women or children were turned away for every one sheltered. We're talking about women and children who are, every day, beaten and abused in their own homes and for whom there may be no refuge or shelter in our province.

Mr. Speaker, there are three questions that I believe we need to have answered today. Does the government believe this is a crisis? Because I do, and I believe our communities do. Does the government believe that this situation is an acceptable one and should be allowed to continue as we are doing? The third and most important one is: will the government commit to addressing this intolerable situation immediately to resolve the problem?

MR. SPEAKER: The Official Opposition.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the context of information that was mainly not revealed by government ministers this morning, I can certainly attest to the need for this kind of debate and also the need for a lot more information and a commitment by the government to make sure that two out of three applicants – that is, two out of three battered women – are not turned away from shelters. I mean, this is not a light-hearted issue; it's a serious problem. We also learned this morning that the government is not prepared to put more money into the treatment of batterers, which means that the problem is going to get worse.

Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker. I believe that this subject has been hidden from public view for many years. It's been almost taboo to talk about. In the last few years the opposition has made this an issue that needs to be talked about and needs the address of the government itself in a concerted fashion. There are a lot of women and children who are suffering at the

hands of those who say they love them. I think we need to make this a top-priority issue and get some active resolutions under consideration. I speak on behalf of all of my colleagues.

Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the opportunity for debate on this subject exists today. This matter was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. The hon. member wants to debate it today, and the whole point of a Standing Order 30 motion is that there is no other opportunity for debate. Debate can take place today. It's clearly, despite the fact that it is a serious issue, something that this Assembly can debate today in the throne speech debate.

On the other hand, I note we'll shortly be dealing with the request by the leader of her party to abandon the throne speech debate: very puzzling.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Under the provisions of Standing Order 30 the Chair has listened to representatives from each caucus speak. The Chair has also had opportunity, having received the notice, to have research done with respect to previous occasions when early in a sitting a similar request was made. The Chair would point out, however, that the issue is being dealt with because of the opportunity for debate. It is not being dealt with because of the sensitivity of the issue and the whole matter of women's shelters in particular.

However, on March 15, 1985, again on April 4, 1986, and on March 21, 1980, similar situations arose in the House. To quote Speaker Amerongen from April 4, 1986, very briefly:

I'm not aware of any precedent in the long history of Canadian parliaments where a motion or a proposal of this kind has been found to be in order early in the throne speech debate, and here we are not only early in the debate; we haven't even started it yet . . .

Under the circumstances, I think it would be wrong to establish as a precedent that this kind of motion should be made in the early stages of the throne speech debate or even before it starts, and I'm therefore obliged to say that the motion may not be put.

The Chair concurs with my illustrious predecessor.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: The first request under Standing Order 40, the Member for Rocky Mountain House.

### **Figure Skating and Curling Championships**

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion that I'm seeking unanimous consent for today is:

That the Legislative Assembly of Alberta recognize and extend congratulations regarding the world-class athletic achievements of Mr. Kurt Browning, three-time men's world figure skating champion, and the rink of Mr. Kevin Martin, winner of the 1991 Canadian Labatt's Brier.

Mr. Speaker, Kurt Browning's gold medal performance yesterday at the men's World Figure Skating Championships in Munich, Germany, is an athletic achievement that all Albertans can be truly proud of. In his performance last night Kurt completed three triple-combination jumps, a feat that has never been done before in competition. Even though he did not use his famous quad yesterday, I must mention that he is the only person to use it successfully in competition. The win marks the third time in a row he has won the world championship. No Canadian has ever achieved such a high level of accomplishment in this field. Kurt is a native of Caroline, Alberta, where his

family still lives. He began his career in the Rocky Mountain House Figure Skating Club before he moved to Edmonton to practise with his coach, Michael Jiranek, at the Royal Glenora Club. Kurt is preparing now to represent the province and Canada at the 1992 Olympics in Albertville, France. Mr. Speaker, he is truly an outstanding ambassador for Canada.

**11:10**

The second athletic achievement that should be recognized by the Legislative Assembly is the rink of Kevin Martin who took first place at the Labatt's Brier curling championship in Hamilton, Ontario. This team consists of Kevin Martin, skip; Kevin Park, third; Dan Petryk, second; and lead Don Bartlett. Martin's rink will advance to the world curling championship in Winnipeg later this month and will also represent Canada in the 1992 Winter Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Legislative Assembly congratulate these Alberta athletes and recognize their outstanding contribution to the world sporting community.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Chair of the Official Opposition caucus it is my pleasure to extend on behalf of my colleagues our congratulations to Mr. Kurt Browning on his winning of the men's world figure skating title for a third time and to Mr. Kevin Martin, winner of the 1991 Canadian Labatt's Brier. These are very talented Albertans and are certainly an inspiration to all of us, so it is with a great deal of pride that I offer our congratulations on behalf of my colleagues. We'd also like to wish Mr. Martin and his team the best of luck in the world curling championship.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members. The Chair is engaged in the midst of a flurry of notes here and has inadvertently allowed a certain matter to proceed. The last speaker should not have spoken just yet, but if indeed the unanimous consent of the House is given to proceed, those comments will then, of course, have been in the record.

All those in favour of granting unanimous consent for the matter to proceed, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The matter is carried.

Thank you for your comments, Edmonton-Calder.

Moved by Mr. Lund:

That the Legislative Assembly of Alberta recognize and extend congratulations regarding the world-class athletic achievements of Mr. Kurt Browning, three-time men's world figure skating champion, and the rink of Mr. Kevin Martin, winner of the 1991 Canadian Labatt's Brier.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to say on behalf of our caucus that we're prepared to support the motion that has been put forward. It's an extremely good motion that recognizes again that talent that keeps emerging out of all parts of Alberta. Even though he trains at the Royal Glenora Club here in Edmonton, the City of Champions, Kurt

Browning's home is, in fact, Caroline, Alberta. Again, on behalf of our caucus we're proud to support the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion as proposed by the Member for Rocky Mountain House, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Let the record show unanimously, and the Chair will communicate in the usual fashion. Thank you.

The leader of the Liberal Party.

### Parliamentary Reform

Mr. Decore:

Be it resolved that when the government motion for consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's speech is called for debate, the Speaker put the question forthwith and that the House leaders be directed to convene an emergency meeting to determine a method of using the Assembly's time to deal with the urgent and pressing matters of the provincial deficit, the state of the province's education and health care systems, and the lack of action by the current government.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, amongst Albertans the call for parliamentary reform is loud. Yesterday I spoke at a symposium of the social sciences faculty at the University of Calgary, and most of the questions and concerns were with respect to the issue of reform. The motion that I am proposing and asking members to consider today is to deal expeditiously with the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is an area in dire need of reform. I believe that this is an anachronism. We have the possibility of some 10 days being allocated to speak on all sorts of things, which denies time to MLAs, particularly opposition MLAs and backbench MLAs, in dealing with private members' Bills and resolutions. I'd like to see accountability. I'd like to see if the freedom of information Act is a good idea or a bad idea for it to be actually voted on. That kind of reform is needed, and time is needed to allow that to happen. This motion calls for the debate on this document to end quickly and to allow us to get into the pressing business of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I looked into *Beauchesne*, and the definition therein contained for a Speech from the Throne is summarized very clearly. It is that the speech sets out the causes for summoning MLAs. Causes to me presume problems that exist, the challenges that have to be met, plans that have to be put forward. That wasn't done in the Speech from the Throne. It is a fluffy document that doesn't provide plans and challenges and action. I think it's important to get to the plans, to get to the action, to get to the Bills. I'm asking that members of this Assembly start moving on reform, and this is a good basis to do it.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a request under Standing Order 40. Those in favour of granting unanimous consent for the matter to proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails.

head: **Orders of the Day**

MR. SPEAKER: Having called Orders of the Day, I've received yet another request that we might revert to Introduction of Special Guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

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

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the indulgence of the House. I would like to introduce through you and to you to members of the Assembly four student leaders from my constituency who are visiting the city and were here yesterday to attend the opening of the Legislature. They are from four high schools. They are Willy Rosner from the Crowsnest consolidated high school, Lisa Skierka from Livingstone school, Nicki Schoening from the Matthew Halton school, Erin Mitchell from St. Michael's school. I'd ask them to rise and please receive the due welcome of the members of the Assembly.

head: **Consideration of His Honour**  
head: **the Lieutenant Governor's Speech**

Moved by Mr. Paszkowski:

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

To His Honour the Honourable Gordon Towers, 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.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it is with considerable pride that I rise today on behalf of the constituents of Smoky River to move His Honour's Speech from the Throne. In so doing, I am afforded the privilege of being the first member of the Third Session of the 22nd Legislature to extend congratulations and appreciation to our newly appointed Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome His Honour to his duties, representing Her Majesty the Queen in our great province. We welcome the respect and the decorum that he has already exhibited in his new position, and I was particularly encouraged by his wisdom and foresight he offered us in his first Speech from the Throne.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the gracious manner in which the previous Lieutenant Governor fulfilled her role during her term. On behalf of this Assembly I express my gratitude for her dedication to the province and wish her health and continued success.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I think it's appropriate for me to offer my sincere appreciation for your wisdom in the Chair. I've had the opportunity in my two years in the Assembly to witness your equitable and unprejudiced judgments, and I'm thankful for the manner in which you preside over the activities of this Assembly.

I'd also like to thank the Premier for allowing me the honour to move this Speech from the Throne. I do so on behalf of all the constituents of Smoky River, which I represent in this government that I am proud to be part of. The constituents of Smoky River are politically informed and are very much aware of the issues facing Alberta today. On this basis I firmly believe that yesterday's throne speech contained many important directions not only for the province as a whole but for the people of the Smoky River constituency. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reflect on some of these directives.

#### 11:20

The Speech from the Throne contains six priority areas, the first of which is the fiscal challenge we face. The challenge is presented in this manner: to make strong steps towards a balanced budget while encouraging the creation of private-sector jobs and maintaining our commitment to health care, our education system, and our social service needs.

The use of our tax dollars is essentially the summation of the fiscal challenge that all governments face. The question of how much and on what do we spend our public funds has never been so critical to our nation or to our province. As a government we are committed to ensuring that tomorrow's Albertans have the opportunity to decide where their tax dollars are spent.

Mr. Speaker, despite the formidable obstacles the area of fiscal challenge is not a doom and gloom story for our great province. My constituents say to me, "Spend our tax dollars wisely, reduce our deficit, and don't raise our taxes." I can tell them that as a province we are making great strides in this area.

Early in the year we welcomed reports predicting that Alberta would lead the country in terms of economic growth. We now see that these predictions were accurate. While the rest of Canada remains mired in a recession, Alberta's economy proves resilient. Since the onset of the national economic slowdown, net migration to the province has jumped considerably, yet Alberta's unemployment rate continues to be the lowest in all of Canada.

Government spending is in check. Since the 1985-86 fiscal year, program spending has only increased by an average of 1.8 percent, half the rate of inflation. Most of the other provincial governments are increasing program spending by up to double the rate of inflation. In addition to this, Albertans continue to have the lowest taxes in all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, when my constituents ask about fiscal responsibility, I respond with some of our successes in areas of spending restraint, deficit reduction, employment gains, and taxation. But I am convinced that we need not only respond with a strong account of our record. We must also listen to the comments and advice of our taxpayers and consumers of this province. This government has a proud history of gaining direction and insight from the grass roots, and development of our fiscal policy must continue in this tradition. It must constantly be checked against the voice of everyday Albertans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn my attention to the second related priority in His Honour's speech, which deals with the challenge of economic development. It pleases me to realize that the topic of Alberta's economic development affords many positive comments. The single most significant reason for realized provincial economic gains can be credited to the

diversification of our economy since the oil slump of the '80s. Over the past four years the share of private investment in industries outside the energy sector has climbed an amazing 65 percent, reaching \$10 billion in 1990. This development has transpired because the government of Alberta has consistently encouraged a stable and attractive atmosphere for economic growth. Progress has been made by pursuing economic strategies which allow for flexibility in the marketplace rather than those that suffocate private investment. I credit our Premier and our Minister of Economic Development and Trade for excellent leadership in this area. Our economic policy has always reflected an understanding of the importance of big business and small business working together to provide economic gains, and this understanding has also contributed to our success.

The local economy in my constituency is a good example of this concept. During the 1950s, '60s, and '70s large oil companies such as Gulf and Shell and Esso sought out oil fields in the Smoky River region. As the oil industry became further established, small local oil field service companies started up throughout the region. The major oil companies quickly became familiar with the quality of the service that these businesses provided, and a good working relationship between the two was born. Today hundreds of these small oil field service companies offer long-term employment to thousands of area residents. These small local businesses exist because large companies, which had expertise, experience, and capital, came to the Smoky River region to open the oil fields.

Today my constituency faces a similar prospect for economic growth and diversification through the establishment of major forestry projects. I must congratulate the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife for his leadership in guiding the positive development in this area over a very short period of time. Much headway has been made, yet with careful management of this resource tremendous growth potential must continue to be pursued. As a case in point my constituency with its existing infrastructure, geographical location, immediate forest resource, and skilled labour force is ideally suited to the establishment of major forestry projects. With the establishment of major forestry projects, existing and newly formed small business will prosper. Under the leadership of this government big and small business alike will find the Alberta market to be well balanced with an attractive tax regime and an open and fair attitude toward business of every size and every capacity.

While dealing with the topic of business I'd like to make some comments on our government's trade policies. I was very pleased that the throne speech offered substantive, positive direction with respect to this area. Establishment of global trading blocs is perhaps the most critical economic development of our day. To a large extent the future economic performance of every province, state, and country will depend on successful trade relations. As a government we recognize the importance of establishing these trade relations in North America and the Pacific Rim as well as Europe. Our participation in the Pacific Northwest Economic Region is a step in this direction, as is our position on the U.S./Mexico free trade negotiations. As a nation and as a province we must have a strong voice at these talks in order that Alberta can position itself in the North American trading bloc.

Recently I was able to travel through southeast Asia with representatives of the Economic Development and Trade department, and throughout my visit, Mr. Speaker, I was constantly impressed by a huge market for Alberta energy, forestry, and agricultural products. Not only did the businesspeople and government officials express a willingness to

purchase Alberta products, they also looked to Alberta as a prime location to invest through the establishment of new businesses and industry investment in existing Alberta-owned businesses. Our tourism destination, of course, is well known throughout that whole region. It is my conviction that as we approach the next century, the difference between moderate and exceptional economic development for Alberta will depend on meaningful diversification and our ability to then market new products such as telecommunications equipment and the traditional resource products such as oil and grain to global markets, particularly those that are located in the Pacific Rim.

When we speak of economic development in Alberta, we have to address the area of agriculture. The Smoky River constituency, as most every other area in the province, was first opened and developed through the determined efforts of our pioneer farmers. This early era was followed by some prosperous years in the agricultural community. Today the prosperity is not so easily accessible, but the effort of our producers in industry is just as determined and relentless. As a government we believe these efforts will pay off as we endure a period of transition in the agricultural industry. Change in agriculture is occurring in all fronts, from international trade to farming and processing technology, to the management of agricultural business. What is critical for us as a government is to seek out ways by which we can capitalize effectively on these changes. I believe the agricultural community must become more market responsive. We must grow and produce agricultural products based on current and future market needs rather than simply selling what we have always produced.

### 11:30

It is also obvious that we must also continue to work towards the elimination of trade barriers. To this point GATT negotiations have failed us, but we must not give up. While we apply pressure to create a level international playing field for agriculture, this government needs to help the producers and industry reduce our dependence on grains and oilseed exports for further diversification in our production by adding value here, right in Alberta, for our agricultural products. I believe this government has adopted a wise position on greater self-reliance in the agricultural sector. Our role as government is to see that the farmers are given the right tools, such as information, technology, and competitively priced inputs, so that producers can manage their own operations in response to the market signals.

This doesn't mean an end to government support. We as a government see the continuing need for programs such as those offered through the disaster assistance for flooding and drought, which have benefited producers not only in my constituency but throughout most of Alberta. Rather, we as a government must reduce the amount of ad hoc, short-term funding assistance in favour of more emphasis on market-oriented safety net programs such as the recently announced gross revenue insurance program. As with our efforts to initiate changes in the method of payment for the Crow benefit, we are attempting to keep the revenue and the decision-making process, Mr. Speaker, in the hands of the farmer, where it really belongs.

With respect to these challenges of the agricultural industry, of particular concern to my constituents in the Smoky River area has been the honey industry. The honey industry in Alberta is primarily located in the large Smoky River area. This industry continues to have difficulties. However, with the support and progress of our government we have made tremendous strides. Hopefully, with the ability to import Hawaiian queen bees, this industry will once more return to the status it had once assumed.

The cattle industry through the years of difficulties, of international subsidies and their negative impacts on grain, has remained strong, and it's been a bright spot in our agricultural economy. The price continues to remain stable, and demand for Alberta beef is high. Government-sponsored delegations promoting Alberta beef in the United States and all other parts of the world have had an immediate impact on our export revenue.

Mr. Speaker, from our oldest, most established economic sector I move to one that we've really just begun to explore, that being Alberta's young, dynamic tourism industry. With each passing year this industry becomes more and more important to our provincial economic development. In the next century it could very well be the world's number one industry, and we are gearing up to compete for international tourism dollars. Our major capital projects are of first-rate quality and well known throughout the whole world, but I am impressed by this government's attention to promoting tourism activities in communities throughout this province. In my hometown of Sexsmith, for example, the Department of Tourism has provided funding for the redevelopment of a 1926 theme for the whole downtown core. Our local tourism efforts include preparations for the Alaska Highway 50th anniversary in 1992. Thousands of Canadians and Americans traveling to Alaska each year pass through our Smoky River constituency, particularly in Valleyview, which is known as the portal to the Peace.

The Environmental Challenge is the third directive outlined in the Speech from the Throne, and the challenge is spelled out to us very clearly. Our intent is to balance economic development and environmental protection while maintaining our quality of life and our environment. Through this statement of commitment I believe that we as a government are adopting a bold and responsible mandate, a mandate that we are already meeting. During the past fiscal year Alberta's per capita environmental expenditure was the highest in the country. Furthermore, I'm proud of our government's comprehensive approach to environmental responsibility and accountability. It's not simply the Department of the Environment which initiates programs and policies to protect our precious natural resource; rather, every government department is pulling its weight. For example, the Department of Agriculture has adopted a concept of environmental sustainability as a key objective in all agricultural planning and policy development. The goal: to conserve the environment and the resource base upon which agriculture depends.

Mr. Speaker, various other departments, such as Economic Development and Trade; Health; Forestry, Lands and Wildlife; Energy; Tourism; and Recreation and Parks, have all incorporated similar principles into their policy development process, and this is truly a credit to our government. With respect to the environmental challenge, I believe we are on the right track. The progress that we've made can be attributed to an effective combination of input and counsel from the people of Alberta and the leadership displayed by the minister and our Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased that the throne speech reaffirmed the government's commitment to meet the social needs of Alberta. My constituents have always expressed an appreciation for the excellent health care system that we have here in our great province. Along with the appreciation, they express concerns about the allocation of funds and finding the proper balance between rural and urban interests. In my particular case, the community of Valleyview has some particular concerns. These challenges will be met through the coming years.

Like agriculture and health care, education is another exciting area. We are in education in an area of transition. We face a number of challenges, such as the question of management of our educational tax base, minority language education, and modifying our curriculum to meet the needs of the students, advanced education facilities, and the Alberta marketplace. Under the leadership of our Minister of Education this government is taking some innovative steps to develop a wider range of course concentrations in high school, particularly in the area of the sciences, which will allow for a greater level of expertise and proficiency at the postsecondary and graduate research levels. The management of our education is a difficult challenge. As we see today, the task usually contains several tremendously complex issues which often have no easy solution. As a government we may not have solved all the education problems of the day. However, through deliberations and the process of weighing options, I've been impressed by the minister's commitment to seeking out solutions that are as fair as possible.

On the topic of social change I would like to take a moment to discuss the area of community development. Education, health care, and social services are certainly the pillars of our social policy. However, a healthy local community must be the foundation on which these pillars stand. The Lottery Fund is one way in which this government works to enhance and enrich the health of community and family life in Alberta. Last year more than 2,500 lottery grants provided over \$100 million in support of cultural, recreational, sport, family, and community endeavours. Clearly, the positive impact of these widespread and diverse benefits is enormous. Libraries, museums, wildlife and conservation projects, amateur sport and athletic events, historical resources, tourism, agricultural societies, recreation, and the arts all receive important benefits from lottery revenues. The minister responsible has established a tremendous approach to administration of lotteries, and Alberta communities from one corner of the province to the other share in receiving these benefits. As a province we should be proud of our lottery program. It is certainly one of the best of its kind in the entire world.

#### 11:40

As I have just mentioned, a strong sense of community is critical to the economic and social development of this province. The same can be said for the health of our nation, Mr. Speaker. I would like to spend a moment discussing the need for a committed national community and co-operation in the coming months. Thankfully, we have a Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs who has anticipated the need for public consultation as we attempt to sort through the constitutional maze that we may find ourselves in. I compliment the minister for establishing a committee and a process of hearings which will address issues such as language, our political institutions, the division of responsibilities, our fundamental rights and freedoms, and the very nature of our federal system. As elected representatives of this province it is our obligation to explain to Albertans the importance of participating in these public hearings on our constitutional future. It is my hope that through these hearings we will arrive at an understanding of who we are as Albertans in the Canadian context and what kind of nation we want in the future. From this point we can carry on with the task at hand of building our nation.

Mr. Speaker, as our Lieutenant Governor alluded to just yesterday, we are living in exciting times with the change and transition that surround us. As a government the challenge that

we face is to keep pace with the change yet maintain stability. The pace is generated through the energy and determined efforts of Albertans. The stability and direction must come from government initiatives and policies that anticipate and reflect the needs and trends of tomorrow and respect the heritage and conventional strengths of our past. I believe the direction outlined in the Speech from the Throne is right for this province. Under this government's initiatives economic diversification will continue. Social commitments will be met. Questions concerning our nationhood will be addressed, and through the transition stability will be maintained.

Thank you.

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to rise today on behalf of the constituency of Calgary-Bow to second the motion of the hon. Member for Smoky River. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to our newly installed Lieutenant Governor, His Honour Gordon Towers. May your years of service to the great province of Alberta be exciting and rewarding. I would like to compliment His Honour on his presentation of the Speech from the Throne. Sincere best wishes as you begin the most important phase of your career.

I would like also to take the opportunity to congratulate the former Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. Helen Hunley, for her many contributions to our province. Her Honour served the people of Alberta with much grace, dignity, and warmth. Her term of office encompassed many of Alberta's proudest moments, from the Olympics of Calgary to the royal visit last June. I would like to wish her every happiness as she enters private life. Helen Hunley has set an example of dedication to duty and service to her government and her monarch which is an inspiration to all Albertans.

I would like to thank our Premier, the Hon. Don Getty, for the opportunity to second the Speech from the Throne. Under our Premier's leadership this Third Session of the 22nd Legislature promises to be stimulating as the Assembly and indeed all Albertans begin to meet the many challenges of this time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my best wishes to you. Yours is not an easy role to fulfill. I know I speak for all the members when I say we admire the very sincere and competent way that you handle the affairs of this Assembly. Your fairness and your dedication set very high standards for the members of this Assembly to emulate.

May I also pay tribute to the Canadian armed forces and especially to the Albertans who served so admirably in the coalition forces during the Persian Gulf war. Due to their courage and their participation a greater tragedy was averted and a peace was achieved. Many of these brave men and women came from the city of Calgary and, indeed, from the constituency of Calgary-Bow. The people of Calgary-Bow are especially proud of one of their members, Lieutenant Colonel Donald Mathews. Lieutenant Colonel Mathews is a former student of mine and was the leader of the Canadian armed forces pilots who participated so ably in the defence of the Persian Gulf countries.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I move to the body of my comments, I wish to congratulate my colleague the hon. Member for Smoky River for his insightful and thoughtful address which opened the debate on this most significant throne speech. The hon. member serves his constituency very well, and I know that his constituents are very proud of the fine work that he does in their service.

If you were to visit the constituency of Calgary-Bow, you would encounter quite a broad spectrum of Albertans, from young people to some of the province's seniors, from students

starting out to professional and business people who are well established, from new immigrants to our wonderful province to those descending from our pioneers. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Speaker, you would find people from every walk of life, and because of this fact I consider myself very fortunate in that I believe I receive a very accurate and balanced voice from my constituency. They tell me what Albertans want from their government. With this in mind I am pleased by what we have heard in the Speech from the Throne. Firstly, I believe that the directives of the throne speech are consistent with the priorities being expressed by my constituents, and secondly, I believe that the throne speech showed a very balanced view and approach to these areas.

As my colleague has already made note of, the fiscal challenge facing our government is an area of particular interest to Albertans. Therefore, I'm very pleased that fiscal responsibility remains a top priority for this government. Our record of controlling program spending is commendable, and any other provincial government in Canada would be thrilled with this record. In fact, the program spending increases have been kept to 1.8 percent since 1985-86. However, we cannot rest on these laurels; we must press on with our program of fiscal responsibility. Mr. Speaker, it is worthy to note that we are on the track to accomplish this task, despite impediments such as cuts in transfer payments from the federal government or increasing inflation rates. I also think it deserves mention that we are managing to control government spending without jeopardizing the very areas that I believe and my constituents believe are of particular importance. Education, health care, social services, seniors programs, and the environment have all been set out in the throne speech as areas that will not be compromised.

As has already been noted in the throne speech and my colleague's speech just previously, the economic challenge facing our government is considerable. The adversities facing our businessmen and women are numerous and increasing. The competition is stiff. Innovation and change are rapid. I would like to encourage the government to continue with its economic strategies for diversifying and enhancing our provincial economy. I believe it is working and that Albertans are now more than up to the challenge facing them in this respect.

Alberta currently averages over 1,400 new business incorporations per month, and since 1985 business investment in industry outside the energy sector has increased by 65 percent. One need only look at the forecasts for private industry to see that Alberta is the place of choice for businesses and investment. As part of this trend many companies, like Shell and TransCanada PipeLines, have moved their head offices to Calgary in the past few years. There is little notice in Alberta of the recession that has beset the rest of Canada and indeed North America. Our economy is growing and diversifying and in so doing has become the healthiest in the country. In the past two years our export of value-added products to the United States has doubled. Even taking into account the influx of people into our province in search of work, our unemployment rate has dropped to where we now have the lowest rate in all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the constituents of Calgary-Bow and I understand the importance of agriculture to our province's economy, and I would like to encourage the government to continue working with our province's producers to help them meet the many challenges facing the industry today. In short, I applaud the directives from the Lieutenant Governor for the government

to continue working with businesses both big and small, all communities both rural and urban, agriculture, and labour to foster Alberta's economic prosperity. Together I believe we will continue to build and improve our economic situation here in Alberta well into the next century.

The Speech from the Throne had as a very main tenet an emphasis on the environment. Over the past few years we have seen much focus placed on the environment by society. People are becoming more and more aware of the preciousness of this asset, and subsequently they are becoming more and more aware also of the harm that can beset it. This interest has grown to the point where a very significant portion of our population lists the environment at the top of their concerns. Calgary-Bow is no exception. Nowhere is the fact more prevalent than in Calgary-Bow, Mr. Speaker, and indeed throughout our whole city.

11:50

We pride ourselves on a variety of activities that are held at various times throughout the year to enhance and preserve our environment. There is a Clean Calgary environmental picnic, where Calgarians gather not just to enjoy themselves but to learn about enhancing and protecting their environment. There is also a biannual collection of hazardous household wastes and products. The annual river cleanup is another event in which Calgarians pitch in to help protect our beautiful riverways. Calgarians, from small children to seniors, walk along the riverbanks helping to pick up the trash while volunteer divers clean up the debris in the riverbed. The people of Calgary have a deep appreciation for this natural area along the Bow and Elbow rivers, and they make excellent recreational use of the resource as they jog, walk, or cycle on the pathways. The annual river raft race takes place for the most part in Calgary-Bow. This is a fun-filled event enjoyed by rafters and spectators alike. It's activities such as these which help to emphasize the importance of this natural resource to my constituents. Mr. Speaker, the people of Calgary-Bow are committed to doing their part in helping to preserve our environment.

Calgary is actively involved in promoting waste management and recycling products. I would like to just briefly expand on these, Mr. Speaker, as I think there are some important points to be brought forward. I'm particularly proud of the way we have grasped the concept of the recycling loop. That is, we start by emphasizing waste reduction. If we can initially reduce the amount of waste we are producing, we have a head start on what we have to recycle. At the same time as we emphasize waste reduction, we're working on developing markets for recycled products. We know that if there are no markets for the recycled goods, it will result in huge stockpiles which will create more problems than those we're trying to solve. The city of Calgary very wisely has started two pilot projects for the collection of recyclable goods. The entire issue of recycling will be researched carefully before a citywide program is put into place. The constituents of Calgary-Bow support this more reasoned approach.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans are well qualified to identify environmental problem areas and to help in solving them. For these reasons I was especially pleased to see the public consultation that went into the development of the upcoming environmental legislation. The environmental task force, chaired by the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, was an important part of this process. I would like to compliment the task force on the way in which they conducted hearings throughout the entire province. They held meetings to hear from as many Albertans as possible. This shows that we are a caring and a listening government.

The hon. member was also good enough to attend an environment night which I held in Calgary-Bow recently. There he was able to speak to my constituents, answer questions, but most importantly, to listen to what people had to say. I believe this kind of consultation will result in legislation that people will be happy with and proud of. I also believe that this legislation will be the mark for all other provinces to measure their success against.

Mr. Speaker, the continued commitment to education by the government is a recognition of the importance of young Albertans to this province. In these times of fiscal restraint and social change it is very important to provide education with the resources necessary to ensure that young Albertans receive the skills needed so that they may be able to compete successfully in the world marketplace. Through education our young people will ensure that Alberta maintains its prominence as a leader in Canada and indeed throughout the world. Our education system must be accessible and fair to all our youth, and postsecondary education must remain an option for those who wish to pursue it.

Another area outlined in the throne speech is the challenge of meeting the social needs of Albertans. It pleases me to see that our government remains dedicated to this very important area of responsibility for Albertans. As I mentioned earlier, I enjoy a broad cross section of people in my constituency. One of the more significant groups in terms of population is the seniors. Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that the seniors segment of our population is growing. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as the gray wave. The Alberta Bureau of Statistics estimates that as of June 1990 Alberta is the home of approximately 220,500 persons aged 65 and over. Needless to say, this is a very significant portion of our total population.

I am pleased that Alberta can boast a very strong record in terms of provisions for the seniors of our province. Of all the six provinces that provide an income supplement to seniors, Alberta's is the most generous. Our government also provides an Alberta widows' pension program for low-income widowed persons between the ages of 55 and 64. The only other province providing such assistance to this group is Manitoba. Alberta's seniors also enjoy benefits such as property tax reductions up to \$1,000 per year for homeowners and up to \$1,200 in rental assistance for seniors renting private accommodations. Again, not all the provinces have such programs and none are as generous. There is the home improvement grant, which can provide up to \$4,000 in grants for seniors with incomes under \$25,000 per year.

Our seniors have their health care insurance premiums waived, and Blue Cross benefits are provided. The extended health benefits program covers a portion of the costs for eyeglasses, dental care, provides hearing aids, medical and surgical supplies, and rehabilitation equipment. No other province has such far-ranging coverage. I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but there are some other areas that I would like to address, and my time is limited. Let me just say that as society witnesses a growing portion of our population falling into the 65-plus age bracket, Alberta seniors are in an enviable position compared to other seniors in Canada, and I'm pleased that the emphasis on our seniors won't be forgotten. The provision for seniors proves once again that this government is a caring government.

I am pleased to see the government's continued commitment to health care in the throne speech. The constituents of Calgary-Bow are very pleased with the excellent health care system that all Albertans currently enjoy, Mr. Speaker, and my constituents are supportive of our government's endeavours to

provide Albertans with equal opportunity to attain and maintain their good health. With the rising demands on our health care system and the increased pressures on limited resources, this objective would remain a difficult task. However, we're not saying that it's impossible. Already we are seeing some very positive initiatives in Calgary-Bow stemming from the tighter fiscal responsibilities. The need for restraint is resulting in the emergence of innovative ideas and methods that would otherwise have perhaps remained unexplored.

One such innovation, developed by a staff member of the Foothills hospital, has resulted in inquiries from all around the country. It involves a very simple strap and a technique that ultimately reduces the need for an expensive patient hoist apparatus.

Our hospital boards are dialoguing with each other as they try to minimize duplication of services and as they seek to maximize the effectiveness of their resources and facilities.

Another example of this is a proposed plan which would involve the services being combined for the Colonel Belcher hospital with those of the Holy Cross. This plan will see a new geriatrics wing added to the Holy Cross hospital, which would then incorporate the services now offered at the Colonel Belcher. This would be a real step forward as it would avoid duplication and provide better services to our veterans, with a full-scale hospital at their disposal. The net result of this kind of innovation and planning is more efficient and cost-effective programming, which can only benefit all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to turn my attention to the last directive from the Speech from the Throne, The Constitutional Challenge. It would seem that the future of Canada as we know it is in a very vulnerable state. Several watershed decisions will be made in the very near future, and I believe it is the government's responsibility to be prepared for these decisions, whatever they may be. To this end, I want to endorse the consultation again taking place with Albertans concerning the evolving state of Canada's Confederation. It is imperative that we be sure of how Albertans feel and think with regard to these issues, for the course we choose today will drastically determine our steps tomorrow. We must seek to pursue a course that is acceptable to all Canadians. To my way of thinking, a Confederation is not worth having unless all parties involved are willing, and any Confederation without the support of all participants is doomed to failure.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I would like to make a few comments on the government's commitment to continue negotiating treaty land entitlement claims and the plan to establish a single agency to provide funding for the arts.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to our past record in settling native land claims. I would like to congratulate the Premier for the leadership he has given to the settlement of aboriginal land claims. In the past year we have seen the Metis Settlements Accord legislated and put in place. I was proud to attend the signing of this agreement and also the Whitefish band land entitlement. Our Premier was honoured by the Whitefish band for his efforts on behalf of Alberta's native people. It's through his leadership that Alberta has led the way in negotiating these settlements.

#### 12:00

Secondly, I look forward to the consolidation of the lottery funding for the arts. I think it will result in improved service and support for arts and artists in Alberta. Calgary-Bow has many gifted artists living in the constituency. These artists, authors, dramatists, and musicians, just to name a few, make an



excellent contribution to our society, and I was very pleased to see that our government recognizes this contribution in the throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, I want to once more congratulate the new Lieutenant Governor on his recent appointment. I look forward to him visiting the constituency of Calgary-Bow and being able to meet some of the best constituents in all of Alberta. Also on behalf of the constituents of Calgary-Bow, thank you for the guidance and direction that you have outlined for the government in your Speech from the Throne. To reiterate, I believe that the directives have been thoughtfully and sensitively chosen. They accurately reflect the priorities of my constituents, and they outline a balanced approach to the issues. Having witnessed your obvious concern for Alberta and her people, as exhibited in the throne speech, I look forward to serving under your counsel and as a member of your government in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to second the motion moved by the Member for Smoky River. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, before moving adjournment, I would advise the Assembly that on Monday we will continue with the throne speech debate in the afternoon. In the evening we would propose to move into some consideration of interim supply matters. If those could be dealt with expeditiously, we would then return to the throne speech for further consideration.

[At 12:02 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

