

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, March 25, 1991** 2:30 p.m.
Date: 91/03/25

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

At the beginning of this week we ask You, Father, to renew and strengthen in us the awareness of our duty and privilege as members of this Legislature.

We ask You also in Your divine providence to bless and protect this Assembly and the province we are elected to serve. Amen.

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

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

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present the report of the special committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed pursuant to Standing Order 49(1) to recommend to the Assembly the list of members to compose the select standing committees of the Assembly.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 268 An Act to Amend the Members of the Legislative Assembly Pension Plan Act

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 268, being An Act to Amend the Members of the Legislative Assembly Pension Plan Act.

This Bill would bring the pension eligibility of MLAs into line with the philosophy and practices applied to the province's other public service pensions by requiring that members could not receive pension benefits until after they had ceased to be Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 268 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the discussion paper prepared by the Automotive Working Committee and the attached news release with a schedule of public meetings established to obtain full public input.

MR. SPEAKER: The Solicitor General.

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to table two reports today: Policing in Relation to the Blood Tribe, and the criminal justice system and its impact on the Indian and Metis people of Alberta. The report of the commission of inquiry, Policing in Relation to the Blood Tribe, outlines 38 recommendations to help improve relations between the Blood tribe and law enforcement agencies. The Report of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and Its Impact on the Indian and Metis People of Alberta contains 338 recommendations to ensure that Indian and Metis people receive fair, just, and equitable treatment at all stages of the criminal justice process in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to table the 1990 annual report of the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my distinct pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 40 young ladies, the Alberta Girls' Parliament. The girls are representing the Guides in Alberta, the 4-H clubs, CGIT, and the Junior Forest Wardens. The parliament is in its 20th year, and they are sponsored by the Girl Guides, Alberta council. The girls are accompanied by Marlene Lapierre, June Martin, Dawn Bradshaw, and Betty Buckner. I would ask that our guests, who are seated in the public gallery, stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Beverly, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly seven young ladies who are members of the 133rd Guide Company. They are seated in the public gallery and are accompanied by their leader Carol Moeller. I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly 22 members of the 165th Guide Company and three members of the 165th Pathfinder Unit. They're accompanied by their guider Celia Palmer and three parents: Nesta Sawdon, Judy Schmutz, and Rolf Mueller. If they would stand in the public gallery and receive the warm welcome of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Solicitor General.

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct privilege to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly members of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and Its Impact on the Indian and Metis People of Alberta, who are in your gallery today. The task force was chaired by Mr. Justice R. A. Cawsey of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, and task force members include: Mr. Michael Gallagher of the Correctional Services of Canada; Chief Superintendent Cleve Cooper, representing the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Mr. Leroy Little Bear of the Indian Association of Alberta; Ms Cynthia Bertolin of the Metis Association of Alberta; Mr. Arnold Galet of the Alberta Solicitor General's department; Ms Janet Franklin of the Alberta Attorney General; and task force administrator, Mr. Patrick Delaney.

As well, we are joined today by the Commission of Inquiry: Policing in Relation to the Blood Tribe. I welcome Assistant Chief Judge C.H. Rolf, sole commissioner of the inquiry, and Mr. Dave Alexander, administrator of the inquiry. I would ask the task force and inquiry members to rise and receive the cordial welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I have the pleasure to introduce to you seven Scouts from the 117th Scout group at

McDougall United Church in the district of Acadia in the constituency of Calgary-Egmont. The seven Scouts are accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Kes Dubauskas and also by one other parent, Mrs. Ingram. I'd ask that they rise and receive the recognition of the House.

head:

Oral Question Period

Provincial Budget Projections

MR. MARTIN: The public accounts for 1989-90 have just been issued, and they prove once again how totally deceptive, incompetent, and misleading this government really is. The 1990 public accounts show that the Provincial Treasurer's established record of being wrong about Alberta's deficit remains intact. He's consistent about his inconsistencies; that's for sure. He was out by a billion dollars in 1987, a billion dollars in 1988, a billion dollars in 1989, and now almost a billion dollars in 1990. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my first question to What's-a-billion Dick. Since the Provincial Treasurer has promised us a so-called balanced budget on April 4, can Albertans expect him to remain true to form and deliver a balanced budget, give or take a billion dollars?

2:40

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, of course Albertans are looking forward to the comment from the government which will take the form of the Budget Address on April 4. As I've said before, Albertans believe in this government's plan of action, which has dealt with a very serious deficit problem triggered by low oil prices in 1986. Through that period of recession, which was probably as deep as any we've had in Canada, we have presented a plan of action to the people of Alberta. The backdrop to that, as all Albertans know, is in fact the variability of energy prices. We do not have any control over energy prices. They are set off the international markets. That is the one item which has caused our budget to be off course when it comes to the bottom line. The revenue side entirely has caused that problem. All members and all Albertans know that it's extremely difficult to control a budget which is exposed so much to international variability. That has been the heart of our problem.

What I can say, however, is that the predictability on energy prices is now starting to return. You saw that over the course of the past year. In fact, you've seen that over the course of the last two years, and we're suggesting that more predictability will come back into the budget picture for the '91-92 year.

MR. MARTIN: Well, the fact remains: with all the excuses the Treasurer wants to give, he's out a billion dollars almost all the time.

The budget document that he brings down every year has become a political document rather than a serious one telling us about the financial statement of this province. It's deliberately meant to mislead us, to overestimate the revenues that he's talking about. My question to the Treasurer is simply this: does the Provincial Treasurer really believe that the taxpayers of this province will trust his upcoming budget given his abysmal record four years in a row?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I won't get trapped in the rhetoric of the Member for Edmonton-Norwood. The people of Alberta will get the facts on April 4. They have an understanding of what this province has done. It's a two-part phase. On the one hand, we've attempted to manage the revenue flows

to the province of Alberta. I've already explained that, in fact, the backdrop of energy prices has been subject to tremendous volatility. The unpredictability of energy prices has been at the heart of our revenue forecasts, and they have been off. We admit that. We understand that. Albertans understand that.

We have brought discipline, Mr. Speaker, unlike the socialists across the way, who, if they ever got to be in charge of expenditures, would blow them out of their ears. We have brought to this government a discipline on expenditures. If you look at the numbers . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You're off a bit.

MR. JOHNSTON: Now, the member says that we're off a bit. If you look at the numbers on expenditures, the facts are that when I brought the budget in for the current fiscal year in March of 1990, the forecast to actual is only out less than 1 percent on expenditures, because we have put in place a plan which controls the size of government, which deals with the deficit, and which does not unload the tax costs on the backs of Albertans. We've been able to do it with this plan, a process of gradualism, a process of management.

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

Final for the Leader of the Opposition, without using such phrases as "deliberately misleading."

MR. MARTIN: Well, being totally incompetent then. It's got to be one or the other.

MR. SPEAKER: Let's have the supplementary question.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, he talks about discipline of expenditures. Tell us about Gainers. Tell us about NovAtel. Tell us about the Principal Group. Some discipline.

One of the reasons, besides overestimating the revenues - and we've talked about this - is the use of special warrants: a total of \$1.8 billion over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't matter what they give you on budget day; they'll go behind closed doors and spend it. Again, my question is simply this: does the Provincial Treasurer really think he has any credibility at all with the upcoming budget when soaring special warrant spending makes his budget projections totally and absolutely meaningless?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, one thing that a budget does is talk about the future opportunities in a province. It talks about the economic strengths, talks about the job creation, talks about the way in which an economy is diversified. It presents a plan of action. Now, the Member for Edmonton-Norwood gets hung up on these accounting numbers. Let me make it very clear, though, that the economics of this province as we go into the next budget speech will be without compare anywhere in Canada. That in itself is a remarkable success story. The people of Alberta have drawn together since 1986 with a clear mandate to turn this economy around, to deal with the sharp changes in revenues, and to bring together an economic profile which provides jobs for the youth in this province, meaningful jobs for others, and returns economic strength to the private sector, where it should be. That's why there's such a difference of opinion between us and the socialists across the way.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, we are concerned with numbers. When you run up an accumulated deficit of over \$10 billion, we should all be concerned with numbers.

Financial Reporting Practices

MR. MARTIN: The Auditor General's report is a scathing indictment of this government's financial manipulation and secrecy. [interjections] Boy, they're getting a little wounded over there. I'm sure it was just a coincidence that they both came down the same day, Friday, after question period. Albertans are painfully aware – and we'll talk about discipline of expenditures here – of this government's bailout of companies like Gainers, Softco, Northern Steel, and most recently the NovAtel fiasco, and we could go on and on: fiascos that have and will cost Albertans hundreds of millions of dollars because of this government's incompetence and secrecy. We find that one of the Auditor General's first recommendations is that the government table the financial statements of these companies and others in the Legislature so that Albertans can see what has happened with their money. It's called democracy and open government.

MR. SPEAKER: Now we're going to call it question period. Now we're going to have the question. You've had a minute of preamble.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSTON: How much time does he get, Mr. Speaker?

MR. MARTIN: Oh, now he's the Speaker of the House, is he? You can be as incompetent doing that as you are as Treasurer.

My question to the Treasurer: will the Treasurer now, for once, follow the advice of the Auditor General and respect Albertans' right to know about their money, or will he continue to ignore it so his government can continue to hide the huge mess it's made with these corporate fiascos?

MR. JOHNSTON: That's going too far, Mr. Speaker. That's absolute nonsense. I could think of a few other words which would be nonparliamentary. Let me make it very clear to the people of Alberta what it is the Auditor General did say. Very clearly, he said that the way in which the province has disclosed the facts and presented its information and a variety of other information with respect to the way in which this government operates has been done on a consistent basis, has been fairly represented. He has expressed an unqualified opinion about the way in which the government has operated. Now, that is the fundamental message that all Albertans have to look at first of all, and that is what he has said clearly and unequivocally.

We always take advice from the Auditor General. He looks at the way in which this fairly large government operates. He brings to our attention items which could be adjusted, which we can improve on, and we accept that advice. That's how we've operated. In fact, the Auditor General points very clearly to how fast we have operated in some cases in response to his recommendations.

To say for a second that this government's going to be bound in dealing with the unusual is wrong. We have to be a responsive government. We have to be able to move rapidly to save jobs in the case of Gainers, and I'm surprised that the Member for Edmonton-Norwood has so little thought about those people

in his constituency that work there. We want to save those jobs, and that's why we have to take some risks as a government. We will continue to do that as long as it's within the financial . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. [interjections] Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: The only reason those jobs are in jeopardy is that he handed out millions of dollars to Peter Pocklington, and that's a fact. Let's look at Gainers specifically.

MR. SPEAKER: The sound system will come on in a moment.

MR. MARTIN: He says the Auditor General's "unqualified opinion." Mr. Speaker, the public accounts show that Gainers alone cost Albertans some \$38 million from October 1989 to March 1990 because of this government's decision to bail out its good friend Peter Pocklington, not to mention that the accounts reveal taxpayers are on the hook for another \$70 million. My question to the Treasurer is simply this: is it the Provincial Treasurer's position that the right of Albertans to have a full financial statement on Gainers is less important than his government's interest in hiding the poor deal it made?

2:50

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again let me correct the record. This line of misinformation is going to confuse Albertans. They want to hear from us about what we're doing, and here it is. This government provides all information on all subsidiary corporations, all Crown corporations which it operates. If the Auditor General wants us to include it in the public accounts, of course we'll do that. We file the information here so that the operations of the government are entirely well-known, and secondly, the Auditor has the right to look at these financial statements and does that in the case of all Crown corporations.

The only provision I would make there is that if the corporation, in fact, is in litigation, then of course we would not want to prejudice our own position, and in the case of Gainers, Mr. Speaker, we are in litigation. We have an immense number of actions against the former owner of that company, possibly totaling close to \$100 million, and that's because we are taking control of this situation: protecting the taxpayers' dollars while saving jobs for this province and ensuring that the producers of hogs in this province have a place in northern Alberta to ship their animals. We have a concern, not the kind of lacklustre performance the Member for Edmonton-Norwood would take.

MR. MARTIN: You're the ones that took him to litigation. You could put it out in the public. Everybody knows that, Mr. Speaker.

He says he always follows the Auditor General's advice. For the umpteenth time the Auditor General has said about unfunded liabilities: lay it out as part of our financial statements. Now, I want to ask this very simply: will the Provincial Treasurer come clean about unfunded liabilities with Albertans, follow the advice of the province's own Auditor and deal with this liability in a proper way? Yes or no.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, let me say that the member obviously hasn't read the recently tabled documents. I know they're thick and weighty. I understand that in our intent to provide full information to this Legislative Assembly, I'm sure it will take him some time to digest it. But just for his own

assistance with respect to contingent liabilities, if he looks at section 2.7 of the public accounts, therein he'll find all the information with respect to pension liabilities, with respect to credit union obligations, with respect to guarantees. It's all in here. I know he'd like to take the easy course and mislead Albertans, but the information is disclosed right here, and it's disclosed consistent with all other governments and with the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountant recommendations.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, members of this Assembly received on Friday the Auditor General's report. It is a scathing indictment against the government. It talks about a huge provincial debt, it talks about a huge unfunded pension liability, and it flags yet again the government's refusal to provide financial information to Albertans. One of the most important recommendations in this document is that there be more financial information made available to Albertans. My questions are to the Premier. Mr. Premier, will you undertake to introduce legislation as soon as possible to make Albertans aware of every kind of financial involvement in all initiatives that the government takes so that we have a clear picture about what's happening in this province?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the hon. member understands what happens in the Legislature. The public accounts cover every single financial transaction that the government conducts, right down to individual invoices, which can be called, and cheques. There's a postaudit and a preaudit of the government's handling of its payments and its financial transactions. There's both before and after. Then we put in place a Public Accounts Committee. At this government's initiative, we take a member of the opposition and make him chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, and the Public Accounts Committee can go over every single penny in the public accounts. Now, the hon. leader of the Liberal Party obviously doesn't understand what has been going on and what is looked on as one of the best possible ways for financial disclosure and scrutiny in North America. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order on both sides of the House; thank you very much.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm getting a little tired of the hon. Premier belittling members of this Assembly by saying that they don't know. The first recommendation in this document calls on the government to take some action, calls on them to make amendments, quick amendments, so that we can find out what's going on. Don't put this over, Mr. Premier. Tell us, yes or no, whether you're prepared to take action now or whether you want to shuffle it under the rug like you always do.

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker. He has repeated his first question, only he's made it worse by showing again how foolish he is about what actually happens. Every single financial transaction of the government is placed in the public accounts, and then those documents are reviewed under the chairmanship of a member of the opposition, not the government. They can go into every possible thing that the government does financially. Now, if the leader of the Liberal Party can't understand that, perhaps he should just sit in on Public Accounts and learn what's going on. I can't help it if he is sloppy about presenting his questions or his motions for returns and so on and the House can't deal with them. That's not my fault; that's something he does.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, talk about sloppy: a government that has a \$10 billion unfunded pension liability, a huge provincial debt. You're sloppy, Mr. Premier, and your government . . .

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Hold it right there. Members on both sides of this House better start getting back to basics, and one of them is that you don't start yelling across the way at "you," "you," and "you." It's always through the Chair, and it's directed at the minister by portfolio. But it's through the Chair. All of you who have been participating in large measure in the question periods are guilty of getting into that. Now, let's stop this nonsense. Question period could be adjourned at any time.

Now, finally, let's have the short, succinct question.

Provincial Fiscal Policies

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, given that the provincial government has been rather quick to criticize their cousins in Ottawa for creating their huge national debt, I'd like to know from the Premier whether he will direct his Treasurer to come forward with a clear plan, a believable plan, and a quick plan to deal with the huge debt of this province.

MR. GETTY: As the Provincial Treasurer said today and as we have said in the House before: in 1986, when the government experienced a loss of some 3 and a half billion dollars of resource revenues, the kind of drop that no other province in the history of Canada has ever experienced, we set in place, laid out the plan, moving from that period to now on a steady basis, to bring the accounts of this province to a balanced budget and then, obviously, into a surplus position. It's been before this House for five years. It's been in the Legislative budget package that's been put out. We are now achieving what we've set out to do: first, build the strongest diversified economy in the entire country, perhaps North America, and, secondly, achieve a balanced budget. This is the year when those things are coming together.

Now, there's no magic, Mr. Speaker. All the things we all want to do in terms of having strong health programs and social services and education can only be handled one way, and that's when you've got the people working in a strong economy. I mean, the money doesn't appear from nowhere. We've got a strong economy that's the envy of North America, and that's because of this government's plan working.

3:00 Private Line Telephone Service

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister of telecommunications and research. Constituents in the St. Paul area are saying goodbye to the party line forever and hello to all the benefits of a single line service. My question is: how many Alberta homes or areas are still awaiting private line service?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, in September 1987 this government, on the initiative of our Premier, launched individual line service in order to ensure universal accessibility to a fully digital electronic system. It will be the first of its kind in North America. To answer the specific question, we're nearing completion with respect to that program. There are, I think, a little more than 100,000 subscribers in total that have to be hooked up. As of March 1 over 96,000 will have been hooked up. We're well on schedule towards the completion.

MR. DROBOT: Supplementary question to the minister. How much longer will it be until the line installations are completed and all Albertans can enjoy the benefits of private line telephone conversations?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we're well on schedule toward the completion. We believe that the final hook-ups to individual homes within Alberta will be completed this summer, and perhaps by late summer, early fall there will be a fully automatic, fully digital, fully electronic system throughout Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for West Yellowhead.

Kananaskis Golf Courses

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In his report tabled last Friday the Auditor General repeats his concerns about the lack of public disclosure regarding financial arrangements between the government and Kan-Alta Golf Management, which operates the Kananaskis golf courses. It is completely unacceptable for the government to continue hiding this financial information from Albertans, especially when you consider that Kan-Alta is lobbying the government to allow them to build yet another golf course in Kananaskis Country. Can the Minister of Recreation and Parks assure the Assembly that when the 1990-91 public accounts come out in a year's time, the concerns of the Auditor General will be addressed by having the revenues, expenditures, and liabilities associated with this Kan-Alta contract properly accounted for and reflected in the public accounts?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, we're working with the department to look at the accounting principles that we have adopted in directing a very successful building development in Kananaskis Country, something that the people of Alberta will be very proud of in years to come. It did not meet with the Auditor General's perusal of their accounting practices but, indeed, had saved the taxpayers of Alberta a considerable amount of money in the way it was built. We will, I assure the member, work and communicate with the Auditor General's department to ensure that the taxpayers' dollars are properly spent in Kananaskis Country.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Kan-Alta Golf Management is lobbying this government for approval to build an additional golf course and club house in the ecologically sensitive Evan-Thomas Creek area and given the very limited opportunity for public input thus far, will the Minister of Recreation and Parks recommend that a public hearing by the Natural Resources Conservation Board be held before this proposed golf course is approved and allowed to proceed?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, to set the record straight, there has been extensive public input into the development of Kananaskis Country in years past. The Evan-Thomas area was identified at that time as a high-use recreational area, and the development of a golf course, if and when it meets all of the tests of our environmental scrutiny, the Evan-Thomas area, as I say, is consistent with that direction. If the individual was really

concerned, he would have been at a public meeting that was held down in Calgary, an open meeting, advertised three weeks ahead of time, on this golf course going in the Evan-Thomas area. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, watch your chitchat, or I'll remove you from the speaking order in question period.

Calgary-*Buffalo*.

Loan Guarantees

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the kidder, I mean the Premier. Taxpayers were on the hook for over \$2.7 billion of guarantees at March 31 of 1990, as we propped up such financial stalwarts as Alberta-Pacific Terminals, Ski-Free Marine, and Gainers Properties. The Auditor General's recent statement that the province's annual losses from guarantees and indemnities are understated is like being told that lawyers charge money. The Auditor General points out that the method of recognizing losses is misleading and that management can and, I would add, obviously does control the timing of losses. Now, to the Premier: since the Auditor General says that the losses are understated, will the Premier instruct that all guarantees be reviewed immediately so that the true losses can in fact be calculated?

MR. JOHNSTON: Let me say that the Auditor has given us some recommendations for the way in which we should handle loan guarantees. We believe as a government that the priority we've assigned to guarantees to enable, for example, the agricultural sector to become strengthened through the period of uncertainty with a very large number, close to 2 and a half billion dollars worth, of guarantees now outstanding for farmers and still further money outstanding for students to allow them an opportunity to go to university and colleges is the way in which governments should operate. We have done that to stabilize the way in which our economy has performed, and in fact, it's been a worthwhile exercise. The economy is now working well. So guarantees should be used for these purposes, and the largest amount, Mr. Speaker, is for the agricultural sector.

With respect to disclosure, again I have to draw the Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*'s attention to the public accounts. These were filed on Friday morning, and in there is a full analysis, full details of all the public account guarantees as reported. If there are losses - and there's been a few of them, not very many, just a few - those are reflected in the so-called nonstatutory or nonbudgetary expenditure. They're accounted for in the normal process, consistent with all other years and consistent with other government disclosure.

The only recommendation the Auditor comes up with is that maybe we could take the charge and, instead of putting it into the nonprogram expenditure, allocate it to the other departments, and we're considering that right now.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, it would have been a little more straightforward just to say: no, we're going to ignore the Auditor General's recommendation.

MR. SPEAKER: Let's have the question, not the comments.

MR. CHUMIR: To the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker: I'm wondering whether the Minister of Agriculture would tell us

why a \$15 million guarantee to Centennial Foods of Calgary was recently converted to a \$15 million loan under circumstances . . .

MR. JOHNSTON: That's an entirely different issue, Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: . . . which scream out manipulation to avoid recognition of a loss, as the Auditor General's been telling us.

MR. JOHNSTON: The second question is unrelated. [interjections]

Crow Benefit

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. The proposal Freedom to Choose as it relates to the Crow benefit has been around for some time. It's been discussed by farm organizations; it's been discussed by neighbours in the coffee shop. Now they're asking: where are we at with the proposal? I wonder if the minister could indicate to the House what action he is now planning on Freedom to Choose.

MR. JOHNSTON: Now, that's a good question.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. The hon. member is right. Freedom to Choose has received substantive debate in the agricultural community. Some concerns have been raised with respect to certain parts of it. Very recently we put out an addendum to Freedom to Choose to address some of the concerns. The addendum deals mainly with the relationship between landlord and tenant. It takes a new look at the factor that was used in irrigation and provides further information on the so-called dilution issue. This debate is now starting to spread across the prairies, as this is a possible solution to the Western Grain Transportation Act. It is the number one topic on the agenda of the federal/provincial ag ministers meeting in Kananaskis Country this summer. It appears to be moving in a positive direction, and I hope we can continue that process.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, it's anticipated that if the proposal Freedom to Choose is approved by this government, the Alberta Crow offset program will be discontinued. I wonder if the minister could indicate how many dollars it would save the Alberta government if that were discontinued.

MR. ISLEY: If we were to achieve paying the producer the money that is currently going to the railway and hence be able to cancel our Crow benefit offset program, which is really in place to counter a subsidy, it would be an annual saving to the people of Alberta in the neighbourhood of \$50 million.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

3:10 NovAtel Communications Ltd.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whether it be taxpayers losing their money in Myrias, thanks to this government, or in GSR, big losses at Chembiomed or NovAtel, we've been getting an awful lot of bad news out of the Department of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. The Auditor General's report tabled Friday was devastating in saying that that department was not on top of its financial monitoring. Problems are compounded by the minister, who, particularly as far as NovAtel is concerned, hasn't acknowledged that he knew what was going on with that company. Will the minister

acknowledge that he was made aware of the Auditor General's serious criticisms of his department last summer, or would he have us believe that he only learned about what was going on in his department last Friday, just like the rest of us, when we received the Auditor General's report?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that it was even earlier than last summer that I became aware of some of the concerns the Auditor General was proposing to raise in his report. The report is for the year April 1, 1989, to March 31, 1990. We had been working with the Auditor General's staff from the standpoint of implementing a number of different changes in order to standardize the type of monitoring and evaluation systems that had been in place. Those went in place in April and then were finalized in October. The Auditor General has indicated to us and I believe indicated to the public through the media conference that indeed he is totally satisfied with the changes and the way in which the department has addressed the Auditor's report.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given these severe monitoring problems identified by the Auditor General, of which the minister acknowledges that he was informed, and given the tremendous embarrassment NovAtel caused the minister last September because he or apparently no one else knew what was going on with that company, did the minister take any steps over the last six months to keep himself informed of potential or real losses at NovAtel? If so, what steps were they?

MR. SPEAKER: Just the one set of questions only. Thank you. The first set.

MS BARRETT: He could have said what steps . . . [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: Watch your language, hon. member.

MR. MARTIN: You're the referee, not a participant.

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me?

The Chair believed he detected some swearing going on in the House. *Hansard* will be checked.

Hon. minister, please carry on.

NovAtel Communications Ltd. (continued)

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, with respect to NovAtel. It has been a subsidiary of the AGT commission, and while a subsidiary of the AGT commission, it reported through that commission. The commission itself was not responsible to my department but rather was responsible directly to me as minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Environment Council

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Environment Council of Alberta spent 18 months on ice while the government failed to appoint a chief executive officer. In the past year there's been a further freeze on the activities of the public

advisory committee while an organization review was under way. Last Thursday the chief executive officer informed the public advisory councils that they had been disbanded. That was in the context of a précis of a report by Coopers & Lybrand which the minister and the CEO cooked up. I would like to ask the minister what sense it makes to blame the public advisory committees when it took the government 18 months to appoint a CEO and their first action was to suspend the PACs over the last 12 months? Why blame the council when the government has been holding things up?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, nothing was cooked up. Dr. Natalia Krawetz was hired as the new chief executive officer of the Environment Council of Alberta to strengthen that organization, give it a sense of direction, a sense of purpose, and I think she has done a tremendous job in achieving that objective. What Dr. Krawetz has done, and I accepted her recommendations fully, was to replace the public advisory committees. I think there were a dozen or so of these committees, about 200 people involved in all, going out on their own and conducting studies here and there on various aspects of the environment and tabling reports that often didn't go very far. I said to the CEO: let's give this organization some strength and some direction. As a result of a management consultant's report, we brought in a system whereby public advisory committees can be formed to study very, very specific projects related to environment protection and enhancement, and we think that this new approach will be much more workable.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, it was almost two years ago when I first met the minister in his office and suggested that that appointment should be done on a nonpartisan basis, like the Chief Electoral Officer, the Auditor General, and the Ombudsman. Now, in the absence of such a commitment and with the sacking of the public advisory committees, you can't escape the conclusion that it's a political agenda here. My question is a very simple one. If he's interested in reform rather than a political agenda, why doesn't he table the amendments that are sitting in his drawer and the reorganization plan before he starts tearing the agency apart?

MR. KLEIN: The hon. member doesn't understand, Mr. Speaker. We aren't tearing the agency apart; we're strengthening the agency. We're giving it purpose and meaning.

The chief executive officer of the Environment Council of Alberta I think has done a commendable job. As a matter of fact, I think it's worthy of note that one of the strongest proponents of this reorganization and the way it was presented was the policy adviser to the NDP, and she's in full agreement. So I don't know what the hon. member is complaining about. One of his friends and colleagues is in full support of the proposal.

Since when, Mr. Speaker, did we start to accept every harebrained suggestion put forward by the NDP socialists. If we did, we would surely be bankrupt.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

Technology Industry Support

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In dealing with the Department of Technology, Research and Telecommunications, the Auditor General says that "the Department lacks coordinated and defined objectives and the systems needed to monitor properly the activities." Now, I think the taxpayers of

Alberta find that rather frightening, especially in light of the \$900 million to NovAtel, \$13 million to a risky supercomputer firm, and the list goes on. My question to the minister is this: given that the white paper Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985 to 1990 has expired, will the minister undertake to deliver to this House a comprehensive plan indicating the extent and the objectives of government involvement so that we have some rhyme and reason to government involvement in the high-tech industry in this province?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that if the hon. member would just refer to the earlier comments by our Premier and the Provincial Treasurer about this economy – notwithstanding the fact that the two main engines, oil and gas and agriculture, are still fairly dormant in certain respects at least, the economy of this province is the strongest in North America, and the advanced technologies are playing a major role in that. You may want to talk about the one, two, or three that have not made it from the standpoint of proving their technology in a commercial way, but I would point to the fact that there are 50,000 Albertans who are employed in the advanced technologies in this province in 1,100 different companies. The growth is at the rate of 10 to 12 percent per year. It's one of the reasons that this Alberta economy is the strongest anywhere.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess I can interpret that as a no. So my second question to the minister will be simply this: will the minister admit that if there had been proper monitoring, which the Auditor General says did not occur, in fact there would have been less risk and less exposure and less loss of taxpayers' dollars?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, there always was monitoring. What the Auditor General wanted to do was to standardize the type of monitoring systems that were there and the data base that would be utilized for it. That was the purpose of the comments, and as I indicated, our staff has been working with his staff in finding and indeed have found the solution to that. The advanced technologies do bring risks, and they are risks that we are going to have to take in a measured way if we are in fact going to compete in a global marketplace. Research and development and high tech are critical to that. We are making progress in the technology commercialization program in my department. The success ratio with respect to the assistance that has been given for the commercialization of technology is in the area of 95 per cent, and that's a pretty good record.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

3:20

Free Trade

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canada's Cinderella crop, canola, has played a significant role in the development and diversification of our agricultural industry. One of the issues that the free trade agreement with the United States was to address was the movement of canola oil and its products into the new and large health-conscious market in the United States. My question to the Minister of Agriculture: what is the status of the tariffs on the movement of canola oil and its products into the United States, and indeed has the free trade agreement had any significant bearing on the movement of the product?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has identified what is viewed, I think, in the industry as a good news story under the

free trade agreement. As of July 1, 1991, 50 per cent of the tariff will come off canola products, crude and refined oil and canola meal, crossing into the United States, and as of January 1 the balance will be eliminated.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also to the Minister of Agriculture. One of our sweetest industries in Alberta and one of the largest and significant contributors to agricultural diversification has been the honey industry. Fully 40 per cent of the honey that's produced in Canada is being produced in Alberta. I would like to know and the beekeepers, particularly that are located in the Smoky River area, would like to know: has there been any progress made in the opportunities of accessing queen bees particularly from the Hawaiian market? At the present time the way the honey operators . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Unrelated.

MR. FOX: That's two completely different topics.

MR. SPEAKER: The two topics are clearly related, if you were listening closely.

MR. ISLEY: In response to the hon. Member for Smoky River, I am pleased to report that Minister Mazankowski has made the decision to allow the queen honey bees to move in from Hawaii only, not the major border to the south. If certain other parts fall together, we may get it in place in time for this spring, but I'm not promising that at this point in time.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands.

Lottery Funds

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not surprisingly, for the umpteenth year in a row the Auditor General has recommended that the lottery funds are to be considered public money and should be handled in this manner; in other words, he recommended that the money go into the General Revenue Fund so that accountability processes are exactly the same as all the other public moneys dealt with by this Assembly. I'd like to ask the minister responsible for lottery funds for one good reason that this government has not complied with the request, that you can now predict on an annual basis in the Auditor General's report, to make this fund accountable to the Assembly. Just one.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, selective editorializing is always a dangerous thing, and my good friend from Edmonton-Highlands I think is probably guilty of that. If all members would refer to the Auditor General's report, the sections dealing with the lottery fund, pages 64, 65, and 66, there are perhaps two very important statements contained therein that I would just like to have read into the record: number one, "It is acknowledged . . . that amounts deposited in the Lottery Fund are included in the Public Accounts," something we've been stating for years, and secondly, the last line with respect to the overview of the lottery fund is the statement from the Auditor General saying, "My legal concerns in this regard have been dealt with." My reading of this gives the government a very, very good rating with respect to its operation of the Lottery Fund.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, the minister switched subjects midstream. The fact of the matter is that the Auditor General was very unhappy that the lottery funds weren't complying with the Financial Administration Act. So you know what the government did? They brought in an order in council that exempted the Lottery Fund from having to comply with the Financial Administration Act. My question is very similar. What is it about the Lottery Fund, also known publicly as the slush fund, that's so scary that this government won't bring it before the Assembly for deliberation prior to expenditure?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the government is very proud of the Lottery Fund and the thousands and thousands of individuals who benefit from it. One more time, I think selective editorializing by my friend from Edmonton-Highlands is really of interest. The Auditor General basically says at the conclusion, after going through all the sections, that one of the things that could be done is that you could then transfer the lottery funds out of the General Revenue Fund to the Lottery Fund. We would then have arrived at exactly the same conclusion we are at today without the burden of an increased number of public servants. The taxpayers of this province are consistently telling us: reduce the number of additional unnecessary manpower, streamline processes, and deliver programs to the people in the most efficient and effective manner in which it can be done. That is exactly what the government is doing. We're responding to the needs of people.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: A number of events occurred earlier in question period. The first group will be dealt with; the others will be dealt with when the Blues have arrived as to what indeed the comments and the exact words were.

The first one deals with the matter where the Leader of the Official Opposition was quoted as saying: "It's deliberately meant to mislead us, to overestimate the revenue that he's talking about." I realize that we're early in this sitting, but I am certain that all members of the House will take due care with respect to some of their hyperbole. These statements which are found in *Beauchesne* listed under do not use: let's not use them. Remember that this is a parliament, that we're not out there trying to fight an election in any of our constituencies.

In the matter of "deliberately mislead" you can refer to Standing Order 23(h), (i) and (j). Of course, this is where we would call to order if you make "allegations against another member" or impute "false or unavowed motives to another member" or use "abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder." Of course, there are other citations: *Beauchesne* 489 and others as well. I'm sure you don't need me to remind you of that. However, I'm sure you can read it. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, and not have to regurgitate it here in the House.

The other thing is *Beauchesne* 491: "The Speaker has consistently ruled that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken." At this time the Chair remembers that the Leader of the Opposition was admonished at the time. Hopefully it won't occur again in future sessions of the House, let alone in question period.

As to the other matter, when the Blues arrive, the Leader of the Opposition and I perhaps will be dealing with it formally in this House.

**Point of Order
Imputing Motives**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Which is, hon. member?

MR. MARTIN: Standing Order 22.

MR. JOHNSTON: Twenty-three.

MR. MARTIN: Twenty-three. Thanks, hon. Treasurer.

Mr. Speaker, when I was talking, I was not imputing motives to individuals, and the Speaker is well aware that that's what *Beauchesne* talks about. I was talking about government policy and how they present the budget when they're a billion dollars out. So that was the point I was trying to make, not to impute motives to any individual.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. No point of order, but thank you: point of information.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Government Motions**

Adjournment for Easter Recess

4. Moved by Mr. Horsman:

Be it resolved that when the Assembly adjourns on Wednesday, March 27, 1991, at the regular hour of 5:30 p.m., it shall stand adjourned to Thursday, April 4, 1991, at 2:30 p.m.

[Motion carried]

3:30

head: **Consideration of His Honour
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.

[Adjourned debate March 22: Mr. Nelson]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McCall.

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to stand and recognize the phenomenal efforts of the present government. The outline of the Speech from the Throne, given so well by His Honour, does offer many challenges, and it certainly gives the people of Alberta the agenda of the government. The thing that we need to recognize is that the government is a caring government. It is interested in the activities of our families in the province of Alberta. It's interested in the challenges offered to us by the business community to ensure that the people of Alberta continue to have the highest standards in education, health, and standard of living.

When I hear that the leader of the Liberal Party talks about financial responsibility and everything like that, waves his wallet

around, goes out and rolls wheelbarrows around, Mr. Speaker, that's what I call irresponsibility. We recognize that the Legislature is a place of adversary. The adversary is caused in many respects through the shenanigans and the discussions – I should use a nice, polite word – in the main from members of the opposition. Some of us like to respond to them in kind.

It's interesting that the leader of the Liberal Party on Friday discussed the fact that certain members weren't in the House when he was discussing things, yet he's rarely in his seat. In many cases he's suggested that these are government's trained seals. Well, I suggest that the trained hyenas over there should maybe enter into their seats at the same time.

MR. McEACHERN: Oh, watch the language, eh. What kind of crap is this?

**Speaker's Ruling
Parliamentary Language**

MR. SPEAKER: Hold it. Hon. member, retract what you just said.

MR. McEACHERN: When he retracts what he said.

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member.

MR. McEACHERN: He just called us trained hyenas, and that's not acceptable behaviour in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair expects . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Okay; I withdraw what I said. I apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. I'll have you stand and do it when I finally get a chance to sit down here, without you shouting back and forth at the Chair.

MR. McEACHERN: I apologize, Mr. Speaker, but he should too.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, let's not sound like petulant children. Thank you for the apology.

Hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, will you also be kind enough to stop that language and withdraw what you just said?

MR. NELSON: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw, and I would also ask that maybe the trained seal comment made on Friday be withdrawn.

Debate Continued

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, it's easy for the leader of the Liberal Party to make certain suggestions in this House relevant to the caring concerns that the government has with regard to the people of Alberta and suggest that many of the programs are irresponsible, ill thought, and so on. Yet when all he can do is dream up more irresponsible, nonproductive schemes such as waving the wallet or pushing a wheelbarrow, now you can see what productivity is all about.

We had some comments that suggested that members of this Assembly do not know what productivity is and that we do not have productivity. Some of the comments that are made from time to time with regards to our Speech from the Throne, their budgets: possibly we could look at them as being not in the form of productivity. Let's examine how we do business in the

House. Many members speak to the Speech from the Throne to discuss issues in it, maybe to rebut the comments made by other members from time to time. Similarly, when we have our budget presented, we comment on the items in the budget. I think we all generally know that.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the leader of the Liberal Party talked about productivity. I want to dwell on that for some time. Members of this Assembly in general terms keep exceptionally busy by working in the Assembly, working in their constituency, working on committees, going out and seeing to the needs of Albertans. At least, I know that government members do that. They are caring and continue to care for all Albertans no matter what their political stripe is while they sit as members in this House.

Discussion was made with regards to dealing with budgets, how we talk about public accounts, and so on. Well, Mr. Speaker, if the members and the leader of the Liberal Party would attend to these budget discussions, public accounts, and other things and ask the correct questions instead of standing up and giving a speech, posturing, being adversarial, maybe – just maybe – they might get some questions asked, and maybe there'd be some productivity on that side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, we'll talk a little bit about productivity. It's interesting that they stand up and talk about the Auditor General. The Auditor General states: during the past year I have particularly been pleased with the action taken by government in response to my previous recommendations. When we talk about the productivity of the government and when we can get those kinds of responses through the Auditor General, I would suggest that we're not only assisting him in doing his job, we're also seeing to it that the government and its members are keeping their productivity at the highest level.

All of us need to direct our energies to developing our province, not tearing it and members apart. We need to continue to see to the needs of our citizens. I know that when we start tearing things down here, we're tearing our citizens down, and I'm sure the hon. leader of the Liberal Party doesn't want to do that too often. At the same time, that's a reflection that he gives. Let's all try to join hands and build on our strengths and deal with the needs of Albertans and not necessarily with the nonaffordable wants that the opposition socialist parties suggest continually.

Mr. Speaker, I have the opportunity to travel the province, to talk to various groups in the province, people that I'm not necessarily tuned into all the time because I have an urban constituency. The general consensus that I feel from everyone in the province – it doesn't matter whether they're in the farming community, the business community, in some social agency, or in the city, in the urban settings; they all want us to stop this adversarial business in here.

They want us to deal with the issues in a positive sense and stop wasting money. Yet when you see the waving of the wallet and the wheeling of wheelbarrows, I look at this and then I examine the expenditure suggestions that are coming from the opposition, the Liberals, I wonder in amazement how they can sit there and ask some of the questions and do some of the things they do. It's just absolutely obnoxious.

3:40

We talk about the rigidity of our parliamentary systems, the dire need for change. The citizens of our province are deter-

mined to have change in our parliamentary system. Well, Mr. Speaker, if we didn't have some rigidity and some rules in here . . . Unfortunately, some of them don't know what to do with the rules; they think they shouldn't be there. As far as I'm concerned, the irresponsible manner in which some of them deal with the issues in here is just absolutely – again I'll use the term – obnoxious.

You talk about party discipline. Well, Mr. Speaker, unlike the trained whatever over there, in our party we get a consensus. The consensus developed in a caucus. As far as I'm concerned, caucuses give every member the opportunity to discuss the issues that are on the table from their constituents. I don't see the Liberal Party standing up and voting on two sides of an issue. I have never seen that. As far as I'm concerned, it's not only a red herring that's brought up by the leader of the Liberal Party, it is brought up to again show some irresponsible press demands.

Then we enter into the waste of time. Well, I have to admit that sitting in here a lot of times is a heck of a lot of wasted time, and listening to some of the garbage that comes out of there is even worse. Mr. Speaker, if we wanted to deal with the business of the House in the most efficient manner, we could save the taxpayers of this province millions and millions of dollars instead of the charade that is entered into by that group of socialists over there. The carrying-on with some of them, the debate, the repetition, and the off-the-line discussion is just incredible. So I would suggest that when we get into our debates on the various issues, we should stick to them. They talk about 25 days of budget: 25 days of budget and they say that they can't get any information from the government. That's a lot of hooey. The reason it's a lot of hooey: instead of standing up and posturing and giving a speech on their socialist ideals, possibly if they stood up and asked the appropriate questions that deal with the financial records of the government, maybe they'd get somewhere and they'd get some answers. Sometimes I wonder if some people have the intelligence to ask the correct questions. I'm not sure they do.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about some of these issues. It's right here in last Friday's *Hansard*. I quote the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. "I recognize that there are MLAs that need opportunity to sort of get up and find their wings." He goes on to suggest . . . Well, I can't use that word now because it was ruled out of order, yet he got away with it.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House nobody's pulling anybody's chain or string. I think they better look at their own house, especially when the Liberal leader suggests that somebody's pulling the string or chain. Maybe they should have a look at their own string pulling or chain pulling. I'm sure we all recognize that the people on the government side of this House generally get up and speak their minds. I can assure you that when the issue needs it, this member does it. It doesn't really seem to matter whether it's giving the government a little bad time or sending some messages and some truthfulness over to the opposition. I would suggest that with some of these things the member should practise what he preaches and let go of the strings and see if we can't find some changes over there.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry suggests that things are . . . Well, he says, "hides things under the table." I'd like him to say some of these things outside, because it might not be appropriate, and the ministers might have something to say about it elsewhere. There is plenty of opportunity to deal with the issues in this House in a nonadversarial way. You know me; I always deal with them in that manner. I try to be honest, and I can assure you that I always am. I'm very productive in my constituency, and I can assure you of that.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the decorum in this House, the regulations and the rules that we go by. I wish some others would appreciate the real decorum that we have in here. We talk about motions and Bills, and periodically the Premier stands in his place during question period and suggests that the members have every opportunity to get information. The problem with that is that the members do not ask the right questions. The leader of the Liberal Party knows that he can get information if he can convince the Legislature by debate that there's an argument for his case. I haven't seen him do that at this point in time.

MR. WICKMAN: Sure has you on the run, Stan.

MR. NELSON: I wish that other member that's bleeping would stop his whining and crying too. Maybe he could get somewhere if he discussed the motions and questions in place and voted appropriately and stopped his whining and crying. He doesn't know what he speaks about usually.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the most severe things that we have on our hands today, as we all know – it's discussed in the Speech from the Throne – is the issue of the unity of our country. Here we have a party, and they're all following their leader; that is, suggesting they don't want to participate in the discussion on reform of how we deal with the country. His comment is:

The Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest already has it determined. He already knows what is going to happen, and that's the reason I didn't want and we didn't want to participate in that committee.

Well, Mr. Speaker, whether they participate in the legislative committee that will seek the views of all Albertans with regards to the makeup of Canada and the position of Albertans is their business, but we here were all elected to represent all Albertans. Quite frankly, I can't understand the Liberals. On one hand, they suggest that Alberta should be an equal partner, that Albertans believe in a strong Canada, that they are a party of reform and progressive change. Well, I've never seen such a statement. That has been shown not to be accurate according to other comments made by the member. The Liberal Party, no matter whether it's provincial or federal, doesn't know what they're doing. On one hand, you've got the Liberal Party in Quebec talking about the political autonomy of Quebec, which means the possible breakup of this country. Then you've got the Liberal Party in Alberta even suggesting that Alberta is an ally of Quebec: to decentralize thus break up this country. Now, you talk about hogwash.

We think that putting together the select committee to have input into the determination of the future of this country is important, but to suggest or presuppose the position that will be taken by this all-party committee after input from all Albertans is not only unjustified but is ludicrous to say the least. To suggest that Liberals do not participate in this committee – they have no reason whatsoever to whine and complain through their nonparticipation – then to suggest that the government is trying to tear this country apart by visualizing the decentralization in Ottawa and other things is totally not useful for the discussions that will take place within the context of the public hearings that will be heard in this province.

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. Alberta wants to be an equal partner in Canada, with an equal say for all provinces in the manner in which we do business. We want to be in a Canada

that does have a strong national agenda that will enhance the opportunities for all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, we have many issues facing us in government, and certainly none are any larger or looming than the financial strength of this country and this province. I believe that the government has and is setting agendas that will see to the balancing of our budget in a form that will see this province clear of debt at some point in the future.

Then the Liberals talk about the huge national debt created by the Conservatives. Well, Mr. Speaker, they talk out of both sides of their mouth. On one hand, they're saying spend, spend, spend. Look at Ottawa. Who started this humongous debt? Who created it? Let's go back to Mr. Trudeau and John Turner and the Lalonde group, who raped the province of Alberta of \$80 billion or so during the times of growth in the energy region yet still created these national debts. Look at the Liberal Party in Ontario during their term of office. My goodness, they had a booming economy, and they were still budgeting debt instead of removing it. You don't do that in a burgeoning economy, create debt, because when things slow down, then of course you're going to create additional debt if you wish to keep your programs.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's high time that the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry in particular, as leader of the party, re-examine some of his comments that were made in this Assembly, because I don't believe that he really believes that the government is doing some of the things he suggests other than that they're nice and easy for political posturing with the media and so on. Let's be honest with Albertans. I mean, anybody can give away stuff, including free memberships. I don't know whether anybody's going to take them; I suggest they won't. Let's be honest with Albertans instead of trying some unconscionable political posturing.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I'd like to advise the hon. member that his time has expired.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly glad that I'm able to follow the Member for Calgary-McCall and not be followed by the Member for Calgary-McCall. I don't know if I could stand up to such a tongue-lashing as the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall just dealt out to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. However, I am pleased to stand and participate for a short period of time on the Speech from the Throne.

As the Member for Edmonton-Belmont and, indeed, for a number of colleagues in my caucus I want to start by thanking Her Honour the outgoing Lieutenant Governor for the years of service that she gave to all members of this Assembly. I know that when I was first elected – the procedure and process in this place at times can be pretty intimidating, and the first time I had the opportunity to meet the former Lieutenant Governor, she was more than generous in her words of counsel. Certainly at the number of social occasions that we had as members of the Assembly with Her Honour, she always treated us all very fairly and welcomed us into the job that we had to do. I do want to convey my thanks to her.

I also want to congratulate the new Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Towers. I was very interested to see his nomination. Given the number of people that had been nominated, I found it an interesting choice that he should be nominated as Lieutenant Governor for our province. I want to wish him well in his years of service that he will have.

4:00

You know, when he came in and read the Speech from the Throne, I was really quite impressed. I thought that as a rookie he did a pretty good job. He was filled with enthusiasm, filled with spirit, all kinds of intonation and inflection in his voice, but I must attribute that, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that he is a rookie, not to the fact that this throne speech, or the 'drone speech,' is filled with wonderful content. You know, in the seven and a half pages we had before us – my goodness, it was a little bit difficult to get through some of the time because it seemed like we were having a lot of repetition, most certainly without some of the same promises but certainly the same words being repeated over and over and over again.

You know, what was the word? As if we had to remind ourselves all the time, this theme word in the speech was "challenge." I counted them up; I circled them; I highlighted them. Thirteen times the government uses the word "challenge" in this Speech from the Throne. That doesn't include the five occasions in the Speech from the Throne that the government has headlines: Fiscal Challenge, Economic Challenge, Environmental Challenge, Social Challenge, and The Constitutional Challenge. We've got them almost now committed to memory they were repeated so many times.

Mr. Speaker, with due respect, my constituents would not disagree with the challenges that the government has outlined. They, too, would see that there are indeed at least five challenges: fiscal, economic, social, constitutional, and environmental. But they might be seen by my constituents from a different perspective than what the government sees these challenges as being. In my constituency the fiscal challenge might not necessarily be that which the government subscribes to. We look at the institutions that require the funding and the opportunity to go ahead so that we can have the important facilities that benefit all of us. We don't see those funds being distributed in a manner that we think is going to benefit all of us.

Last fall we had a petition by more than 4,000 residents of northeast Edmonton that was tabled in the Assembly calling for the upgrading of the Royal Alexandra hospital because we need that facility in order to meet our medical needs or our medical challenges. We have a facility in Edmonton that serves northeast Edmontonians that can't accommodate, quite frankly, the need that we have. The facility that was designed to take in 35,000 emergency patients a year in the last year I've got figures available for took in almost 80,000 emergency cases. There's a challenge that this government must deal with. A challenge that the constituents of Edmonton-Belmont and a number of constituencies in northeast Edmonton put out to the government is: meet that challenge. It's an important one to all of us.

We've got challenges in the educational system. We have new developments going and growing throughout our city in the north end, in the southeast, in the southwest, out in the west end. We have all kinds of development going on by the developers that build the houses, and yet we see that without the proper infrastructure we're going to suffer shortly, very soon, with a lack of the educational infrastructure in those communities. That, too, is another challenge that must be met by this government.

What about an economic challenge? Just before coming back into this session of the 22nd Legislature, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of my constituents from a number of groups: the Neighborhood Activity Association of Belvedere and a number of the senior citizens' groups in my constituency. For a good number of those folk economic challenge means how do you get to the end of the month, because they haven't got

sufficient funds coming in to meet their needs. What about single moms on welfare, a single mom that had a choice between buying the daughter's winter coat and her coat? The choice came down to her daughter getting the coat; she stayed in on cold days because she couldn't afford to buy a coat for herself. Now, we tell that person to go out and get a job. It's all well and good for us to say that we can go out and make that application, but if the coat is in poor repair or it's filthy, it's very difficult to go out and have some degree of pride in your ability and in yourself and hope to get a job. There's part of the problem. So for many of those folk, the problem they have, their economic challenge, is how to get from the 1st of the month to the 31st of the month or even the 28th in a month that is very short.

We talked about minimum wage here not too long ago. Just last week we had the opportunity to ask the Minister of Labour a couple of questions about minimum wage. Right now if you work 40 hours a week, with minimum wage you get \$9,000 a year gross, not net. Gross in the other fashion too: a gross wage because it doesn't even come close to meeting the poverty line. Do we have any kind of a commitment from the government to review in the Legislative Assembly the wages for the working poor? The Minister of Labour, and previous to that the now Minister of Energy when he was the Minister of Career Development and Employment, told me: "Well, yes, there is a review that goes on. The review goes on on a regular basis; behind closed doors cabinet reviews the minimum wage regulations." That, quite frankly, isn't good enough. To go from \$3.80 an hour in the early 1980s to \$4.50 an hour in 1988 is an increase of 70 cents over eight years, an increase of less than 10 cents a year. How often was that wage reviewed? How often did cabinet review that wonderful amount of money that was being paid to the working poor? I don't know that it was reviewed at all. How can I tell? How can the working poor tell? The problem is that we can't and they can't, and therefore sometimes you just might be able to escape some of the responsibilities you've got as a government to look after the needs of the Albertans who really do require assistance.

In economic challenges as well we see that the current Minister of Career Development and Employment is going to be introducing an Act to amend – that will totally gut, in fact – the Manpower Development Act. I'm not sure if it's going to be called the industrial training Act or the apprenticeship and industry training Act or what it will be called, but there again, Mr. Speaker, we have new economic challenges for workers who will be going out trying to compete for jobs they want to hold, jobs that they may or may not have the skills to hold. The proposals as they were delivered at least last fall were that we could very well see a number of those occupations that currently require a certification process becoming deskilled, so that when workers go out into the industry and apply for a job without certification, they don't have to be paid the carpenter's rate or the electrician's rate or the plumber's rate or the pipe fitter's rate because they won't have that certificate that says that's exactly what they are and that's what they're entitled to. They may have a little bit of skill acquired over time throughout a number of jurisdictions, but they won't have one skill that they will be able to sell in the marketplace.

Why are we doing that? Why are we making that change? Who asked for the change? I don't know of too many folk that have come forward that requested the change. Syncor hasn't; I understand that Syncrude is opposed to it. I know that certainly all of the tradespeople that I've talked to are opposed to it. I've talked to a number of people in small business, and they're

opposed to it. Now, I know that the large companies like Shell are in favour of it. They can maintain their work force. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association to some degree are in favour of it. But for the most part, even the program that the government spent I don't know how many thousands of dollars on taking industry workers through this introduction level of the legislation – 83 percent of the employers were opposed to the proposed changes. So why are we pushing through this proposed change to the Manpower Development Act? It's going to become a new challenge, a new economic challenge for those workers that will soon be in the work force.

4:10

The environmental challenge. In northeast Edmonton the environmental challenge means perhaps a garbage dump or a landfill station. We've had any number of proposals. My colleague from Edmonton-Beverly was certainly one of the folk who were actively involved in the Aurum dump trials. He had a number of constituents coming to his office to speak about the problems that Aurum dump would create. I've had a number of constituents come to my office about the problems of the proposed northeast site. I'm sure the Member for Clover Bar has some comments that he would like to make about the proposed dump site that may or may not go into the northeast zone. There again an environmental concern where for the longest period of time we didn't have any concept of a regional landfill or regional waste disposal system. For the longest period of time we let too many things interfere, shirking or shrugging off the responsibilities we have to make sure that we've got a safe waste disposal system for all Albertans, not just people in the northeast end.

Transportation systems. While we have public transportation systems in the city, they don't go far enough. We have yet to encourage increased ridership on LRT systems, yet when we talk about increasing urban environment changes, when we have increasing pollution coming into urban centres, we should be doing more to involve the creation and utilization of those public transportation needs. That would go a long way to cleaning up our urban environment and the smog that we put into our urban environment.

The social challenges. I wish that my constituents had the opportunity to address some of the members of this Legislature about some of the problems they see as being the social challenges of the 1990s, because they will tell you that the problems in the area of social programs are not being addressed and that they're not being met. Programs that are designed to assist a good number of people are being slashed. Programs that help community support services are being cut. Programs that help students that come out of universities for the summer have been cut by \$10 million – from \$20 million down to \$10 million for STEP – yet at the same time the government says that it's not just a blind obsession that leads them to try and balance the budget. "Fiscal responsibility is not a blind obsession," it says on page 2 of the Speech from the Throne. If it's not a blind obsession, then it is at the very least some ideological myopia, because it's very shortsighted that the government would be cutting the number of programs that it's cutting in the area of summer temporary employment, in the areas of programs that assist batterers and battered women. We're told that it's really not a blind obsession. Well, I suppose if you're sitting back waiting for the assistance cheques to come through or for those government programs that assist you with your further education, you might think a bit differently. You might say that it is a blind

obsession that's causing these pains and these difficulties right now.

The other area that the government speaks of in the Speech from the Throne is the constitutional challenge. Well, I had the opportunity to serve on the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. We spent a good deal of time going out and examining the Alberta Election Act and what would come from that, the constituency boundaries. You know, the reason we went out is not because the government wanted to really have an awful lot of input in the area of electoral boundaries, but rather that we had a decision that came out of British Columbia that was related to the Constitution. Madam Justice McLachlin had decided that there had to be a certain permitted variance of not more than plus or minus 25 percent. That was a decision that was based on the Constitution of the land. What did we get after we came back after all of those public hearings? What we had was the government that came back with the proposal that said, "Well, we believe this will withstand any other constitutional challenge." It did not subscribe to the decision that Madam Justice McLachlin made, Mr. Speaker, but: it might withstand a challenge at a later date. You see, we ignored a constitutional ruling.

For what reason did we ignore that? To this day I haven't been able to pinpoint it succinctly enough to be able to articulate it, but I think that over the course of time I will be able to follow along with the decisions that the government made in December, with the process that's going on now between the commission and the electorate, and with the eventual response from the court in Alberta on that matter. I think I'll be able to put something together, but I wonder if what we're doing with this new constitutional challenge isn't somewhat along the same lines. Are we trying to find out from Albertans what it is they want in their Constitution? Are we trying to spend a period of time doing something – doing anything – to give the perception that we are indeed concerned about the constitutional forces that are out there? If what we're going to do is go out and simply take in a period of time and have a number of Albertans come before a commission and then come back here and do whatever we will anyways, then I wonder if that's not really a waste of time.

Indeed, we do have a constitutional challenge out there. It's perhaps going to be the most important issue that this Legislature addresses not just in this session but in sessions to come, because we are talking about the potential for a very different Canada. We are talking about the kinds of opportunities that we grew up with, that we now know, being changed. We may be talking about different divisions of power between the federal government and the provincial jurisdictions. Why are we talking about that? Are we talking about that because we don't trust the federal government? Are we talking because we just want to have more power? Do we want to balkanize our country? Mr. Speaker, I believe that's the most important issue that we're going to address, and I do want to wish all of my colleagues who will be on that committee a great deal of patience and a great deal of understanding and a great deal of luck, because I think all of those members are going to need that. From a political perspective that may very well be the most important challenge that, as I said, this Legislature will face.

Mr. Speaker, there are, as I said, a number of other challenges that we see. There are challenges that we will address throughout this Assembly. They will relate to labour, to agriculture, to health care, and they will certainly relate to social services. We look forward to the opportunity to debate not only the budget but pieces of legislation that ministers will bring forward,

because this is the forum where those debates go on and where those challenges are at least addressed, if not met to the satisfaction of all members. We look forward to the next number of months, being in here and exchanging information with all members.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

4:20

MR. ELZINGA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. May I, too, add my words of congratulation to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor Mr. Gordon Towers and also extend warmest congratulations to an individual who has consistently dedicated himself to the welfare of this province. You and I had the opportunity for a short period of time to serve with him in the House of Commons, and the tradition in which he serviced his constituency is well known. I'm sure he's going to continue with that outstanding tradition in servicing all of the province of Alberta.

As other members have done, I too wish to pay tribute to Her Honour, because she has set just a superb example for all future individuals to follow in that role and also for all Albertans to follow, whereby she did truly commit herself to serving this great province of ours.

Mr. Speaker, a number of individuals have spoken in response to the Speech from the Throne. I, too, wish to do that. The challenges have been outlined in the Speech from the Throne, as have our thoughts as to how we as a province in partnership with the people of this great province are going to meet those challenges and how we're going to take advantage of the great strengths we have within the province of Alberta.

We've heard a number of concerns, but I think it's important that we always view the opportunities and the challenges we have within this province in the context of the assets that we as a provincial government and as a people within the province of Alberta are presented with, because if we examine the strengths we have as a province, we can be so, so thankful for the many blessings we have. One of the greatest strengths we have within this province is the work ethic, whereby we do take deep pride in our involvements whether it be in this Legislative Assembly or in our work field. I've always admired the dedication of Albertans in attempting to put their best foot forward.

So often, though, Mr. Speaker, we're not aggressive enough in selling the goodness we have within this province. It's interesting, too, that in working with the small business community we just conducted a survey as to what served as motivators. I must share with you that I was delighted at the outcome of that survey of those involved in the business community in that the prime motivator – and I'm sure it would hold true of those involved in pretty well any community – was simply to have fun, whereby they could participate in a meaningful way in their vocation but also enjoy what they are doing. The second, naturally, was to make money, but thirdly, a very prime motivation was to build a lasting organization. When we examine the contribution that the small business community makes to our way of life within the province of Alberta, they are to be saluted, because over the last six years they have created 60 percent of the employment opportunities within the province of Alberta. That is why we have worked hand in hand in ensuring that they do have a climate of productivity within the province of Alberta.

Earlier in question period some of the difficulties we have gone through as a provincial government were referred to. I look back, as I'm sure a number of members in this Assembly

do, to when I first entered provincial politics in 1986. As the Premier indicated today in question period, we had a budgetary shortfall of some \$3.5 billion which we had to wrestle with. Contrary to what some members might say – they suggest it is shortsighted that we attempt to balance our budget – quite frankly, I think Albertans are demanding that we balance our budget. Rather than leaving a legacy of debt to future generations, like some other governments, we've got an obligation to our young people to ensure that they do have a sound fiscal policy put in place by this government so that they have their future assured.

Mr. Speaker, I again look back to 1986. We had unemployment levels in the area of 11 percent-plus. We had a massive budgetary deficit, and quite frankly, confidence was lacking. Well, that's not the case today. If we examine the dynamism that is taking place in the province of Alberta, people are confident about their future. Alberta is one of the most if not the most dynamic growth place in all of North America. The major financial institutions are suggesting – and the reason I stress "major financial institutions" is because these are not our own figures but figures from outside, reliable sources – that we're going to continue to lead economic growth in all of Canada. We have in excess of some \$20 billion worth of projects on stream contributing to that economic growth. We're a young province, whereby in excess of 50 percent of our population is under the age of 30. We're a highly educated province. On a per capita basis we've got one of the most highly educated populations anywhere in the world. The reason I stress that again is so that we recognize what a superb environment we live in within the province of Alberta. You know, if we were to take heed of all of the accusations that other parties might throw at us, we would think that things were to the contrary, but we've got some of the best health and educational systems anywhere in the world, and we're committed to maintaining that excellence.

Mr. Speaker, we've also involved ourselves in putting in place a superb infrastructure in both communications and transportation. We're going to continue with those thrusts, and we're going to continue working in partnership with our Alberta population.

Just as it relates to working in partnership, and shifting for a moment to our own departmental responsibilities, last year we worked with in excess of 35,000 clients. We have regional offices, and we work very closely with Albertans because we place an emphasis on trade and investment, recognizing the importance that trade plays as it relates to job creation within our province, also recognizing that if we are to continue to enjoy the growth rates within the province of Alberta, we're going to have to expand our horizons. I'm going to deal with that in a little more depth in a moment, but I wish to share with you that it is one of the positive trends that is taking place within the province of Alberta whereby individual Albertans are recognizing that we have to have markets other than our own.

Another very positive trend within the province, especially within the small business sector, is that more women are becoming actively involved with their own businesses. Quite frankly, on a per capita basis women are making a greater success of their involvement than men are, because they're more detailed. Another interesting trend is that a good many of the major corporations are looking at diversifying outside of our major metropolitan areas, the reason being that they have found that employment stability is greater when you get outside of some of our major populated areas.

Mr. Speaker, if you'll allow me, I wish to deal for just a moment on the issue of trade. With the consent of my colleague

next, who is the Minister of Agriculture, I'm going to revert to that portfolio just for a moment to underscore again, as I have done consistently in this House, how important trade is to the province of Alberta. There are some who suggest that we should be an island unto ourselves, that we should build a wall around ourselves, that we shouldn't have participated in the free trade agreement with the U.S. It's interesting to note, too, that the Canada West Foundation just came out with a paper indicating the fallacy of job losses that have been preached by some; how on a two-year report card it has had a significant positive impact on the province of Alberta and on Canada in general.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Just dealing with trade, though, we export so, so much of our commodities: 80 percent of our wheat, 80 percent of our beef, 60 percent of our pork, and 50 percent of our barley. The reason I throw those figures out is simply to make us very much aware of how quickly the face of farming or the face of our province would change if we didn't have markets other than our own. Manufactured goods total about 30 percent of our export products. Mr. Speaker, that is why we so actively supported the free trade agreement with the U.S. That is why we as a government are so active in the promotion of our goods in the Pacific Rim, and that is why we are going to make sure that we make inroads into Europe as they unify and go through that unifying process.

Let's deal for a moment, too, with the budget. As I indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, we had a massive budgetary deficit in 1986, but because of the dedication of this government and because our expenditure control is the best of any government in Canada, we are hopeful that we can come forward with a balanced budget. That remains to be seen on April 4 when the Provincial Treasurer brings down the budget. That is our goal and our determination, but recognizing, as the Provincial Treasurer indicated, that there are a number of external forces that we have to take into account. For every \$1 change in the price of oil it is suggested that on a yearly basis it does have an effect of some \$100 million on our budgetary considerations. For every 1-cent change in the exchange rate, it is suggested by economists, too, that that does have a \$35 million impact on our budgetary considerations. So contrary to what some might suggest, we have to offer these projections, and we have been fairly accurate. Notwithstanding that we have not been right on the mark, we have been fairly accurate in our projections. I'm sure that will hold true on the budget that is brought down on April 4 of this year.

4:30

Let's look to the future too, Mr. Speaker, as we wrestle with some of the challenges that have been outlined in the Speech from the Throne, and share with you some of our thoughts as it relates to that future and some of our desires. I'm sure that collectively we do share the common desire to maintain what we consider a very competitive tax regime within the province of Alberta: the small business community has one of the lowest taxation levels of any province throughout Canada. We want to see that that competitive tax regime is continued. We're involved – and we hope to come forward with some specifics in three or four weeks – in conjunction with the lead minister, the Minister of the Environment, as it relates to an overall waste minimization policy so that we can work more closely with the

municipalities and the private sector in doing away with some of the waste that is generated by our population.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Municipal Affairs has worked very closely with many, many communities in developing local development initiatives. This is an area where we want to place greater emphasis on local communities, whereby they themselves can indicate the thrust that they wish to follow. It's so important to recognize the theme through all of what we are doing: we're doing it in partnership with the individual residents in this great province of ours.

I wish to close on three thoughts. One, as it has been asked in the House on a number of occasions, to indicate the support that we have offered through loan guarantees to a number of individuals within our community. I do so again, in stressing the partnership theme that has been developed, because if we look at where our support has gone . . .

MR. FOX: Down the drain.

MR. ELZINGA: "Down the drain," the critic for Agriculture from the New Democratic Party says, just when I was about to say that there are 30,000 farmers that have benefited from the farm credit stability program. I'm glad the hon. member is on the record as saying that's down the drain. That's our commitment. That's our commitment, Mr. Speaker, a commitment to the agricultural community that is second to none anywhere in this great country of ours.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, our commitment to the small business community, whereby our interest shielding program had a take-up in excess of 20,000 small businesspeople; the Agricultural Development Corporation, which has in excess of 8,000 clients; the Alberta Opportunity Company, in excess of 5,000 clients; our export loan guarantee program; the Alberta capital loan guarantee program; or student loans. We've involved ourselves. We've involved ourselves to a large degree in making sure that the economy turned around, and because of that involvement we're number one in economic growth in Canada right now. We recognize that there are going to be some failures, and we respect that we're going to have to counteract as best we can to offset those failures. We're doing that, and we're working closely with the communities concerned.

If you look at the job creation that has taken place to the present day since 1986: in excess of 90,000 jobs. What an enviable record, Mr. Speaker; what an enviable record. I recognize that we have had a role to play in that. Quite frankly, I'm proud of the role we have had to play in that, if one examines that we've got the best economy in Canada. Diversification is a reality within this province, just looking at the job creation statistics I've just shared with you. It's the best place in Canada to invest, whereby we have in the vicinity of \$20 billion to \$25 billion worth of investments taking place. We've got the best record as it relates to fiscal management. If you look at our involvement in program spending over the last number of years, all increases took place towards school boards, postsecondary institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, and local health units. Our own program spending has decreased but our commitment to these worthy causes has increased, and all of that in addition to reducing our deficit and then continuing with the lowest taxation of all of Canada.

I'm not going to dwell on other commitments, because we are making headway. We're making headway to make sure that we can leave a legacy that our future generations will be very proud of. In doing so, as I'm sure all members feel, I close with a note of gratitude to the individuals whom I have the opportunity to

represent. I speak directly to the residents of Sherwood Park, and it is with a great deal of honour and humility that I say to my colleagues here that I appreciate that I can represent them in this Legislative Assembly. Notwithstanding the fact that I know on a good many occasions we banter across the House and we have different philosophical beliefs, I have deep respect for all members within this House and the legitimacy in which they present their views, even though they might be contrary to our own.

It is with gratitude that I close and indicate that I look forward during this legislative session to coming forward in a meaningful way with solutions to the many challenges that we have presented in our Speech from the Throne. A good many of those challenges will be met head-on when we introduce our budget on April 4.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, I, too, would like to take this occasion to extend my congratulations to the Hon. Gordon Towers on his appointment to serve Alberta as our Lieutenant Governor. I'm sure that he will meet the challenge of his responsibilities, and I wish him well.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech makes reference to a number of challenges that are before us in this province, and it's those challenges that I would like to address this afternoon. Before I do that, I would like to make a few comments about the throne speech itself. It's understood that a throne speech generally is a vague document, but the throne speech this year and the throne speech that we had before us last year are an indication that the government really has no particular direction or objectives. It's a statement, in fact, that the government has no vision of which direction it's taking this province. The throne speech talks about the economic challenges before us, and indeed I certainly agree that there's an economic challenge in the province. It's interesting to note that this province was debt-free in 1986, but today we are \$12 billion in the red. I think the myth, then, that the Conservatives are good managers of the economy has been exposed.

The mismanagement of the economy in this province, with giveaways for ill-conceived projects and to corporations and friends of the government, must be stopped, Mr. Speaker. The real challenge, I think, of this province is that we cannot continue to give this corporate welfare, continue with the loan guarantees to corporations and to friends of the government. If we're going to deal with the economy and prosper in this province, I think we have to start there.

The throne speech also makes reference to the quality of our work force and talks about enhancement of education, training, and certification programs. I have difficulty understanding what that statement means when at the same time the government is proposing legislation that in effect is going to dilute the apprenticeship program in this province, which I believe will not only weaken the qualifications of our work force but also will make the workplace a much more unsafe place for our working people. That, Mr. Speaker, suggests to me that if the government is really looking for prosperity in this province, then the least it should do is not use our workers to develop that prosperity. Of course, we know whose side the government is on, and certainly it is not the side of the ordinary Albertans.

4:40

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, if Albertans are to have a healthy economy, then it's absolutely necessary that we also have a healthy environment. Every citizen of this province I believe is entitled to clean air, clean water, clean soil, and the opportunity

to enjoy those things. A healthy economy also means healthy people, and it's my opinion that it's not just for those that can afford a health care program; I think we have to be concerned about those that cannot. To continually increase the health care premiums of this province or, in fact, to suggest the possibility of a two-tiered system in this province I think is not going to be dealing with the health of our citizens. Accessible, fully funded, quality care for women and children who are victims of abuse must be made a priority. We cannot talk about a healthy economy if we don't talk about a healthy future for our children in this province. It is a statistic which I'm sure we are all familiar with that one in six children in this province lives in poverty. That amounts to almost 94,000 kids that are affected here in Alberta. The mortality rate of these children is some 50 percent higher than that of children of rich families. Poor children have more chronic illness, have more mental problems, and difficulty in school. That is the reality in this province, and it's well documented.

We cannot deal effectively with the problem of child poverty if we don't first address the issue of poverty of women. Mr. Speaker, the throne speech does not address the need for equal pay for work of equal value. It does not address accessible and affordable day care centres. It does not address a living minimum wage and maintenance enforcement reform. Those are all necessary if you're going to deal with poverty. Until the government begins to deal with the broader base, the broader issues and causes of poverty, through legislation – only then can we begin to deal with poverty and give children from poor families, poor parents, an equal chance to contribute and to share in Alberta's future.

Now, I raise these issues because they talk about the healthy economy, they talk about the challenge to our environment, and they also talk about our social challenge. I believe all those issues, while spoken about in the throne speech, fail to tell the people of the province really what action the government is going to take. They talk about:

prevent violence in and out of the home, provide for recreational and cultural opportunities, encourage independence and dignity for all Albertans.

Well, Mr. Speaker, one need only look at the report that the mayor's task force in the city of Edmonton just released shortly. It tells us the difficulties that we are experiencing, particularly in the northeast part of the city of Edmonton but certainly not exclusively. I think the problems that this report addresses and speaks to can be, of course, found in northeast Edmonton. I think they could be found in other parts of Edmonton, but more seriously I think they can be found in almost any major urban centre in Alberta and perhaps in our rural areas as well.

There are major, major problems in this province that deal with the poor. I have difficulty when I hear my colleagues, particularly from the government side of the House, speak. Sometimes I feel that they've either got their heads in the clouds or in the sand, because they really don't understand or appreciate the difficulty, that there are people out there that are in difficult straits in this province.

The government has identified very properly the challenges that are before us, but as I say, I don't see any kind of indication as to what and how they're going to deal with it. They talk about recreation and the family in the throne speech, but what has the minister of social services done for the poor people of this province? He's reduced, by and large, their standard of living. Recreational grants that were available to children in families on social services have been decreased or cut in some

instances. Is that the way we're going to deal with help to families? I think not, Mr. Speaker.

I think the government, before it brings down this budget, before it really seriously talks about family and all the concerns that it addresses in this throne speech, must really first address their own approach to how they are going to deal with poverty in this province and the people who really need assistance. Peter Pocklington and the other corporate welfare recipients in this province don't need that kind of help. I think there are people who need and should be getting the assistance of society, of the people of this province, whom we should be able to help, and I'm really quite angry when I see the reports of what's happening in northeast Edmonton. I know that while it's there, it's throughout the province. One must only drive around the city, go into other urban centres to see the poverty that exists in this province, yet somehow the government doesn't seem to recognize this. Certainly the members that I hear in this Assembly don't seem to recognize the difficulty that exists in this province for the poor.

It's a challenge, Mr. Speaker, that the government seems to have found. I only hope that the government, having identified those challenges, will now search for answers and deal with those who need the help from all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Banff-Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to have an opportunity today to participate in the consideration of the Lieutenant Governor's Speech from the Throne. As I believe virtually all members who have spoken before me have begun, I would like to also begin by congratulating His Honour on his appointment and congratulate him as well on his presentation of his first Speech from the Throne. He is indeed a warm and ingratiating gentleman. He will serve Her Majesty the Queen and this province exceedingly well in his duties as the Lieutenant Governor. I'm certainly looking forward to seeing him many times in this House.

I could not go on without congratulating Her Honour Helen Hunley, who served this Assembly and the people of the province of Alberta so well in the six years that she held the office of Lieutenant Governor. I only had the opportunity to view her presence at close quarters for a two-year period of time, but I was extremely impressed by her diligence, her energy, and her enthusiasm for the position. She certainly has contributed exceptionally to this province, and I'm sure His Honour will take a number of lessons from Her Honour in discharging his duties.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you for the leadership that you show through the Chair. Debate often becomes quite heated in this House. I think that's because all members are genuinely attempting to represent their constituents to the best of their ability. The job that you have in attempting to keep order in this House and to ensure that we do move forward is an extremely important one, and you discharge it in a very remarkable way; a very positive way, I might say.

4:50

We have heard from a number of members reference to the word "challenges." Some have even stated that the word is used too many times in the Speech from the Throne. I take issue with that, Mr. Speaker. I think that challenges are indeed what we as elected representatives must deal with on a day-by-day

basis, and we must continue to have a positive approach to those challenges. This government's approach, I think, is extremely positive. It's a positive response to issues management, and it shows a vision. I think the success of this type of approach is evident today and reflected in the Chamber in that we have 83 seats and 59 of them are served by members of this government. I think that shows the commitment that Albertans have to the free enterprise system that is inherent in this government, and I think it is that positive attitude that is shared, certainly by my constituents in Banff-Cochrane constituency.

On the issue of a positive attitude, Mr. Speaker, I had a unique opportunity last evening in Banff to take part in the opening ceremonies for the Canadian Disabled Ski Championships. I was absolutely flabbergasted by the enthusiasm and the will of the some 100 participants that I saw last evening. These championships will be ongoing this entire week at Sunshine Village in Banff national park in the Banff-Cochrane constituency. I think it's really unfortunate that more of us won't have the opportunity to go up to that hill and watch these participants, all of whom have either significant physical or mental disabilities but who have met the challenge and participate at an extremely high level. They exude confidence, a confidence which comes from meeting challenges and moving forward.

Obstacles, Mr. Speaker, are opportunities, and that's what the challenges before this government and the people of Alberta are all about. They are opportunities for us to excel. They are opportunities for us to find solutions that make sense in this decade and will put us in a position to continue to lead the way into the 21st century.

The Speech from the Throne also talks about stability, and that stability in Alberta comes from a confidence in our future. We in this province are so well off compared to even our brethren throughout this country, but even more so beyond our national borders. Again I had an opportunity over the weekend to speak with some international athletes who were competing in a biathlon championship at the Canmore Nordic Centre. I'd like to relate to you and to all members of the Assembly one very poignant discussion that I had with a young lady named Svetlana Darydova, who is the reigning world champion in the women's biathlon.

She expressed to me her great pleasure at spending time in our beautiful province. She told me about the comparison between what is going on in our province, where there is so much of a positive nature from the point of view of our industrial development, our natural resources, our people and our involvement in what is going on in the province, compared to what she sees in her native Russia. Without saying so in so many words, Mr. Speaker, she certainly gave me the impression that the great test of socialism in Russia has failed abysmally. In fact, one example she gave of the distress that she feels for her own country was that as she was traveling from Edmonton to the Canmore Nordic Centre, she saw a train going by. It was a cargo train, and she presumed that it had grain and that that grain was going to the British Columbia coast and would then be going to her native Russia. Her comments were very poignant. She was so concerned that a country such as hers, with tremendous grain farming, with tremendous resources, could not so much as bring that grain in from the fields and process it for the people who needed it in that country. She indicated to me that she felt a great deal of sadness in seeing those grain cars moving toward the ocean and onward to her country and frustration with the fact that her country could not produce a better effort and take care of the people in the Soviet Union.

It is interesting as well, Mr. Speaker, that the major cities in the Soviet Union seem to be the worst off and have the most extreme conditions. There are so many people who have gone to those cities looking for a better way of life. In Moscow, in Leningrad, and in the other major centres in the Soviet Union they are suffering from near famine. The only areas that have sufficient food supplies are the rural areas, and that is due to the fact that they are self-sufficient, that they are independent, that they are self-reliant. I would humbly suggest to you that those are some of the attributes that make Alberta such a wonderful and such a positive place to live, where our citizens have a natural bent for self-reliance. They live in a system that gives them the opportunity to excel, gives them the opportunity to make the most of themselves and their families. I'm pleased to be part of a government that gives our citizens that opportunity.

When we talk about some of the challenges that are identified in the Speech from the Throne – I only want to concentrate on a few, Mr. Speaker, because there has been so much debate already. On the topic of the fiscal and economic challenges, of course the reason that Alberta is doing so well today when the rest of our country is in a recession is because we have diversified our economy. I'd like to concentrate on one aspect of that diversification, and that is tourism.

At present, tourism is our number one industry worldwide, and it could very easily become Alberta's number one industry by the year 2000. Our developments in tourism today, Mr. Speaker, are based on the concept of sustainable development. Previously, if there was an economically viable alternative, a solution, that was the main criterion for making a decision. I don't think that is the case anymore in this province. I look at the Natural Resources Conservation Board and the draft environmental protection and enhancement Act which have been brought forward by this government as concrete proof that today we must look at not only the economic viability of a project but also the impact on the area where the project is going and the cumulative impact beyond that immediate area. I would focus on one area of development within my constituency that is a prime example of this concept, and that's the developments that are proposed in the Bow corridor.

5:00

Mr. Speaker, the world of recreation today is focusing on the game of golf. We have some 10 or 11 projects proposed in the Bow corridor as destination resorts, most if not all of which have a golf course component. There is certainly an opportunity to develop sensitively in the Bow corridor. That opportunity will recognize the existing industry, the existing opportunities for economic growth that we have in the corridor, and then take into account this focus we have on tourism and the opportunities we have. It will primarily review what the impacts of such development will be on the Bow corridor. This is an area of the province which has incredible potential but is also incredibly sensitive due to its elevation and the fact of the mountains surrounding the entire corridor. Any development in that area must take that sensitivity into account.

Moving from that Bow corridor, Mr. Speaker, to another area of the Banff-Cochrane constituency that can very easily see a very positive input from tourism is the proposed western heritage centre in Cochrane. We have a new trend in Alberta and elsewhere – certainly Alberta is moving this trend forward as quickly as anywhere else in Canada – and that's to cultural tourism. The western heritage centre at Cochrane will provide an opportunity for all those who do not have a familiarity with

Alberta's ranching and rodeo past to learn about that past and to participate in activities which bring that past into the future.

I'm very excited, Mr. Speaker, about the imminent commencement of construction for the western heritage centre, and I will endeavour to keep all the members of this Assembly up to date on the construction. The western heritage centre is hoping to be open in May 1991, and it will certainly be a very positive addition to the province of Alberta and specifically to the Banff-Cochrane constituency.

I noted in the Speech from the Throne a focus, Mr. Speaker, on the quality of our work force. In the past year that I have had the opportunity to chair the Alberta Tourism Education Council, I have seen the focus on delivery of service and quality of work force move forward and become stronger and stronger in this very important component of our Department of Tourism. I want to certainly express my congratulations to the hon. Member for Red Deer-North, who served as the chairman of the Alberta Tourism Education Council from its inception in 1987 to last year. His leadership gave me very large boots to fill, and I've been trying to fulfill those obligations to the best of my ability.

The Alberta Tourism Education Council is an industry-driven organization which is made up of people throughout the tourism industry, our educational institutions, and the government of the province of Alberta, working co-operatively to attempt to identify those areas in the tourism work force that must be prioritized so that the people who come into this province or our own people from Alberta who travel throughout the province to our tourism destinations are given the best service that is possible to ensure that they come back, and not only that, but that they tell their friends about everything we have to offer.

The Alberta Tourism Education Council is creating standards for a number of job descriptions within the tourism industry, Mr. Speaker. The first that was prepared as a standard and is now being certified is the food and beverage server. We have identified through the Alberta Tourism Education Council some 100 to 120 job descriptions that could be subject to standards and then a certification process. I think this is an indication of how complex the tourism industry is here in Alberta, and I look forward to working with my colleague the Hon. Don Sparrow, Minister of Tourism, to ensure that this very positive process continues.

I have had an opportunity to present certificates to people from the industry who have attained a passing mark in the standard in which they are involved in the industry, and the sense of accomplishment that is evident when you make these presentations to these individuals shows how important it is that we continue with this process. Many of the people in the tourism industry have not done exceptionally well in academics, Mr. Speaker, and to give them the opportunity to take an examination, to achieve a passing grade, and then to have something that they can bring with them along their employment route, if you will, whether that be to another job laterally in the tourism business or moving to another level within tourism, is very important to them and very gratifying to the Alberta Tourism Education Council.

I'd like to move on to just talk about the urban and rural issue in this province, which has been identified I think more by the opposition than by the government. I don't think there is an urban and rural issue in this province, because in order for this province to be vital, in order for this province to be vibrant, and in order for our economy to be as efficient as it can be, we have to have a very positive urban and a very positive rural economy. By the diversification strategy of this government I believe we

are working in the right direction. We are attempting to ensure that those who live in the rural areas of the province have access to service to the same extent as those who live in the cities, and we recognize that those who are in the cities must have those opportunities for jobs and for growth. The two go hand in hand, and I think this government is moving in the proper direction by recognizing the dichotomy of Alberta and ensuring that there is equal opportunity regardless of whether a person comes from the urban area or the rural area.

As we are talking a little bit about the rural areas, I'd like to congratulate this government on its stand on agricultural matters. In the Banff-Cochrane constituency the main type of agriculture is ranching, and certainly the ranchers I have spoken to would prefer to have less government involvement. They wish to have at best a safety net in times of stress, when matters beyond their control take over, but they do not want to have a system that leads them to dependence. They want to ensure that we have a system that gives them the opportunity for self-reliance. I think this is an important factor, and this government must keep that in mind constantly. Regardless of the requests that are made for assistance, we have to always ensure that the assistance we are giving is intended to allow people to get off assistance and to be self-reliant rather than to lead the people of Alberta toward dependence on government.

5:10

In terms of the environmental challenge, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Minister of the Environment for his very positive initiative in bringing forward to this House last June the draft environmental protection and enhancement Act. This Act will put nine separate pieces of environmental legislation under one Act and will actually result in 10 pieces of legislation under one Act when the water resources review is completed and the Water Resources Act is introduced in the House, likely in the spring session 1992.

I had the very positive opportunity to serve the government and the people of the province of Alberta as the chairman of the Environmental Legislation Review Panel in the fall of 1990. This was democracy in action, Mr. Speaker. This process that has been initiated by the Department of the Environment gives Albertans an opportunity to review, discuss, and bring forward positive suggestions on a very important matter of policy for the province of Alberta. I think the process is a very positive one. As I spoke last week in support of the Member for Calgary-Glenmore's Motion 202, I would just like to say again that the fact of involving the public at the very first opportunity on major policy matters is a positive for this government, and it is being received very receptively by those Albertans who are impacted by those policy decisions. Participatory democracy is the trend today, and we have to ensure that we do provide Albertans with the opportunity to participate.

As I mentioned last week, I'm not sure that the degree of participation that Albertans are requesting now and are getting from this government will be the type of participation they'll be asking for three or five years from now, because there's a heavy burden to participating in democracy. It requires setting aside time, doing the homework, doing the research, and being able to then articulate your view to government through a panel process, as we had with the environmental review panel, or through discussion groups. It nonetheless requires that ability to articulate and that ability to take the time and effort to learn about the issues so that you can have a positive contribution.

I'd like to wrap up my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by talking about the constitutional challenge that we face in the province of

Alberta and including in that the challenge we have with native affairs. I'm very pleased to have been appointed to the newest caucus committee in the government, on native affairs, and it's particularly important to me as a member . . .

MR. TAYLOR: It's about time. Not your appointment but the committee.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, hon. member.

This committee, Mr. Speaker, is extremely important to me in Banff-Cochrane constituency because I do represent two reserves, the Sarcee and the Stoney. As the hon. member has indicated, it is about time that we dealt with native affairs issues in a very positive and proactive way.

That is part of the larger constitutional challenge that we have in this country, and I'm pleased with the initiative of this government in establishing the select special committee on our constitutional future. I've had the opportunity to travel to each and every one of our provinces and both of our territories and to recognize the very special place that Canada is. I think the failing of the Meech Lake accord last year points in one direction to us: that Albertans and Canadians as a whole wish to participate in the future of this country. This special standing committee will give them the opportunity to do that. I think one of the main matters that we will hear back from that committee is that all parts of Canada, all provinces must have effective input into the future of this country and that the future should not be determined by the federal government and one, two, three, or four provinces. Rather, the people of Canada should indicate to their provincial leaders what they want to see in the new Canada, and those provincial leaders must articulate and bring forward those comments to the other provinces and to the federal government to ensure that we have a consistent approach. It would be a shame, Mr. Speaker, for this country to be lost in the rhetoric of nationalism, and I sincerely hope that the people we have on this select committee will deal with their responsibilities in a positive manner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to congratulate the new Lieutenant Governor and wish him well in his term in office supervising the activities of this government.

The throne speech fell far short of anybody's expectations for what would be a reasonable, an aggressive, a creative, an innovative throne speech, the kind of throne speech that would be required by Albertans for the challenges, for the issues that are facing this province today. But if it were generally a poor throne speech, Mr. Speaker, it is in particular a poor throne speech to the extent that it addresses environmental issues. I found – it was pointed out to me, actually – one of the highlighted environmental initiatives in this throne speech to be a very great irony. In this government's arrogance, it is going to – and we'll believe it when we see it – structure seminars to teach teachers and students about the environment, to raise their awareness. If there is a group of people in this society, in this province today, who have awareness about the environment, it is teachers and it is students. It is very, very interesting, the irony: in fact, it should be the government that is organizing seminars conducted by teachers and students for MLAs on that side of the House to increase their awareness of environmental

issues. This government has been arrogant in many ways on many occasions in many of its policy initiatives or lack of policy initiatives, but its arrogance was highlighted in that particular statement.

5:20

This throne speech is woefully inadequate when it comes to environmental policy. Of all the significant environmental issues facing us today, there is one in particular that I would like to address in my response to the throne speech. We are aware that there are environmental issues of grave concern, a range, far too many of them facing this province today: northern pulp mill development; the status, cleanliness, and health of our rivers; the manner in which we manage our forests. Mr. Speaker, without belittling any of those issues, I believe there is an issue facing us today in Alberta and people around the world that in some sense must and does take precedence over most other environmental issues. I am talking about the issue of global warming and the contribution that man-made, person-made, carbon dioxide, CFCs, and other gases such as methane make to what is becoming a very, very serious global warming, greenhouse effect issue.

Much of the debate – and there has been debate – about whether or not this phenomenon is occurring must and should be laid to rest by the recent report of the international panel on climate control of the United Nations. This panel of literally blue-ribbon scientists was structured by the United Nations with one thing in mind, and that was to come to the heart of the global warming issue, to determine whether or not, in fact, global warming is occurring, whether or not that process is being created by our human activities on this planet, what the projected consequences will be, and finally, what steps should be taken by jurisdictions to do something about that important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I note that we have run out of time today.

MR. SPEAKER: No; you still have 10.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh; okay.

This committee, the international panel on climate control, very clearly highlighted, among other things, its one overriding conclusion. It said: we are certain that global warming is occurring and that it is being enhanced and exacerbated by man-made, person-made, gases. Mr. Speaker, it also said that its prediction is that within 35 years, by the year 2025, the world's temperature will have increased by one degree centigrade. Now, there are those who will say, "What is one degree centigrade?" I remember the Minister of Agriculture last year joking in an extremely unacceptable and macabre way that, well, on a day like today – and it was a winter day – wouldn't we like to have some global warming? One degree is significant to this extent: the difference between today and the last ice age is four degrees centigrade, and that took literally thousands upon thousands of years to occur. A one-degree centigrade increase in the temperature of the earth's climate, the earth's atmosphere, within 35 years can result potentially in literally catastrophic economic, social, and of course environmental dislocation.

The international panel on climate control made some general comments about the serious economic and social implications of global warming of this magnitude. They said that worldwide we could expect an increase in the sea level, shifting of climatic zones before there is sufficient time for adaptation, water shortages in dry areas, and a new class of climatic refugees. In Alberta, Mr. Speaker, we would expect the increased risk of drought in southern Alberta; that is to say that climate regions in the world will move north. We could expect the increased risk of forest fires; concern, therefore, should be anticipated with respect to regeneration of forests. Climatic zones in this province could potentially move much faster than the rate at which natural vegetation changes could move to adapt to them.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta has a special responsibility in this issue. There are those who will argue that this doesn't seem like a particularly overwhelming or powerful statistic, but I would like to point out to the members of the Legislature that we Albertans, two and one-half million of us in a world of five billion, produce no less than one two-hundredths of all of the carbon dioxide produced in the world today.

Mr. Speaker, what that does is raise two very important points. First of all, I believe that in a province like Alberta, because we contribute that significantly to this problem, we have a moral obligation to do something about it. We are a society of sophisticated, well-educated people. We are a society that in the world today is without question relatively wealthy. We are a society that therefore has the human and financial resources to fulfill this moral obligation and to provide leadership throughout the world in overcoming this problem.

Perhaps equally important, not more important but certainly equally important, and perhaps a greater incentive for this kind of government is that we have a huge economic stake in the fossil fuels industry. If the world suddenly becomes as concerned about global warming as it has in the past about a variety of issues, such as bleached kraft pulp mills – and I could go on with many of them – it is extremely conceivable, Mr. Speaker, that the demand for fossil fuels, for that mainstay of our economic success, could become massively and quickly restructured.

Mr. Speaker, I note the hour, and perhaps it would be appropriate for me to call to adjourn debate at this time.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the business of the House tonight will be second readings of Bills on the Order Paper. In the event that those Bills are dealt with in an expeditious manner, perhaps we will return to the throne speech.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:27 p.m.]