

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, September 8, 1993**

**2:30 p.m.**

Date: 93/09/08

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our province and our country.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, I have the privilege to introduce to you today His Excellency Johannes Fietelaars, ambassador of the Netherlands. The ambassador is accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Fietelaars; Mr. van Aerssen, the Netherlands consul general in Vancouver; Mr. Rikki Dootjes, honorary consul based in Edmonton; and Mrs. Dootjes. I would ask now that our distinguished guests rise and receive the warm greetings of this Assembly.

Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce three industry representatives who are part of the Beatrice Foods announcement this morning. These are industry representatives that'll play a key role in the usage of the material that is produced by Sunland Foods in their cookie manufacturing. These are industry representatives who are representative of the Alberta agricultural industry. It is my pleasure to introduce to the House Dr. Bruce Jeffery, representing the Alberta Canola Producers Commission, Mr. Bruce Webster of the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers Association, and Mr. Andy Kovacs of the Alberta Soft Wheat Producers Commission. I'd ask them to stand and receive the usual recognition of this House.

head: **Ministerial Statements**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the minister of advanced education.

### International Literacy Day

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is International Literacy Day. We presently have 63 volunteer tutor literacy projects in operation. These projects are supported by dedicated volunteers on a one-to-one basis with the learner. To date 7,206 adult learners have received more than 254,000 hours of instruction.

We also have in place one of the most comprehensive literacy policies in the country. Our adult learning and development policy directly addresses the needs of adult learners who have difficulty reading and writing in everyday situations.

Today, in conjunction with the federal government through the national literacy partnership strategy, I'm pleased to announce that three more literacy projects will be funded at a total cost of \$277,098. Since 1987 a total of over 100 innovative literacy projects have been funded through this joint program at a cost of approximately \$5 million in federal and provincial funding.

In this day and age adult literacy is vital to an efficient and productive work force. Adult literacy programs bring us closer together not only in the marketplace but in the home as well. The Alberta government is proud of its role in bringing literacy to so many adults each year.

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

MR. DECORE: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, 1989 statistics from the federal government, in reviewing people 16 to 69 years of age in Alberta, indicated some startling statistics. The first was that there was a 71 percent top category listing of Albertans with respect to reading and 72 percent in terms of Albertans being in that top category of numeracy skills compared to 62 percent in each category for the national average. Clearly, then, Alberta professionals, those people involved in education, have to be congratulated for the work that's been done in literacy and numeracy teaching.

But I think much more needs to be done when we have 29 percent that need help in reading, 28 percent that need help with numeracy, if you travel Alberta, as I have, and you have seen and experienced the pockets of illiteracy that exist, particularly in some northern communities. Much more needs to be done.

Illiteracy is expensive. The Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy noted that in terms of lost productivity there are some \$4 billion of losses to Canada a year. The Ontario Public Health Association report of 1989 indicated that illiteracy leads to unhealthy living and working conditions and inappropriate use of medical and health services.

Mr. Speaker, we need to have a government that's sensitive to ESL, that's sensitive to ensuring that all of the resources that are necessary are given to education from K to the postsecondary institutions. We are falling in that regard. We have fallen in terms of our gross domestic product in comparison to other provinces, and we need to beef those areas up.

Thank you, sir.

head: **Oral Question Period**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the first issue that I wish to raise is a point of order that I'll discuss at the end of question period.

### Beatrice Foods Inc.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, today the president of the bakery division of Beatrice Foods indicated that his company made no threat, veiled or otherwise, to locate their cookie factory outside of Alberta if the Alberta government failed to come up with a \$2 million sweetener, the loan guarantee. Last week the minister of agriculture made it clear in this Assembly that the loan was necessary to keep Beatrice from going to Chicago. I'd like to ask the minister: given that the loan guarantee was not a factor from the information that we have from Beatrice, why was it, Mr. Minister, that you made the statement that you did in this Assembly last week?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question, because the question, basically, is one of great importance to the entire agricultural community as well as the city of Edmonton. The point that the president of Beatrice Foods made was that indeed the loan was part of a package, a package which included low taxes, good working conditions, good location, as well as the loan guarantee. It was part of a package, and that's the important ingredient that the president of Beatrice Foods alluded to.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, this is, I think, on this side of believability. The clear impression that the president has left Albertans with is that this huge multinational company, that doesn't really need assistance but got assistance from this Conservative government, didn't think it was necessary to have a loan guarantee of some \$2 million to keep it from going to Chicago. Why, Mr. Minister, did you insist? Why did you have to give them a loan guarantee of \$2 million?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the president of Beatrice Foods also said was that there were many offers from many states and provinces in Canada: offers of free land, offers of tax concessions, many, many offers. The package that they were able to come together with in Alberta was the best package that was put together from Beatrice's perspective. That's why they located in Alberta.

From our perspective, Mr. Speaker, it's important. During the most recently completed campaign farmers told us time and time again: "We don't want handouts. We don't want grants. What we want is a fair return for our product." Today we have representatives from at least three of the farm organizations who are here in support of this project, who feel very strongly that this allows them the opportunity to market their product at an enhanced value.

2:40

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, month after month of consultation that the Conservative government went through in terms of its outreach to rural Alberta, in terms of its outreach to the companies of Alberta, each of those sectors said: "Don't give loan guarantees. Stop the loan guarantees to corporations, because we've lost \$2.1 million, Mr. Premier." Now, I want to know, Mr. Minister, why there's a conflict, and there is a conflict between what you say and what Beatrice says. Beatrice said that they didn't need the money; you shoveled it out. Why?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important to note that this loan is fully repayable. This is simply an ADC loan. We have 11,000 loans through ADC. Is the hon. Leader of the Opposition suggesting that we should not loan money to our agricultural community? This is an opportunity for farmers to achieve a better return for their product. It is one of the best opportunities we have ever had in this province, and this is what farmers have asked for. We have just gone through a campaign that said: farmers are asking for value added; farmers are asking for the opportunity of diversification. This fits that criteria perfectly.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

### Child Welfare

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government's lack of response to the Children's Advocate report on child welfare confirms that this government has more desire to protect their perks and patronage than to protect children. Further proof that the government wants to downplay the advocate's report is their refusal to print more copies to meet the demand. My questions are to the Premier. Copies of the report have run out, yet people across the province and across the country are asking to buy the report. Why won't the government allow a second printing, since the public is willing to pay for them?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that there is such demonstrable public response to the report.

MR. DECORE: Because you never did anything on this.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, what the hon. Leader of the Opposition says is not quite true, and I'm going to have the Minister of Family and Social Services respond as to precisely what is being done.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, the report is available in my department and also available in the library to the public, and if the demand is high enough that we need to produce additional copies, then as the minister I'm willing to review that.

Specifically to the report itself, Mr. Speaker, I am in the process of developing a short-term action on the recommendations and also a long-term plan, which I will be introducing to this Assembly within a short while.

MS HANSON: Mr. Speaker, to the minister of social services or to the Premier, I guess. I'll go back to you, Mr. Klein. Will the Premier tell us if Albertans can access the report through their local libraries, community halls, and drop-in centres?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member, I just don't get involved in those details, but I'll have the minister reply.

MR. CARDINAL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the report is available in the legislative library and also in my departmental library, that people can have access to. Again I indicate that if there is such a high demand for the report and the public seem to be willing to pay for the report, then I'm willing to review it.

MS HANSON: Has the minister met with the advocate to get his ideas on how to distribute this report to as many people as possible?

MR. CARDINAL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The plan as far as distribution of the whole report and our recommendations was jointly done with myself and the Children's Advocate.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

### Liquor Sales

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for the Alberta Liquor Control Board. Many people in Alberta recognize the tremendous opportunity that now exists as a result of the privatization of the sales component of the ALCB. As a result, they are literally lining up to get licensed. Is the minister considering some form of supervisory panel to ensure

that we do not experience such problems as poorly distributed or financed stores, as we have seen in the Iowa experience?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, there has been a tremendous outpouring of interest in this initiative. We've had over a thousand inquiries at the ALCB offices in both Calgary and in Edmonton. One of the chief parts of this policy is that it's open to all Albertans on a private enterprise model. We understand that Iowa went through this four years ago, and everybody had an equal opportunity to establish liquor store outlets. They had about 800 and some responses in the beginning that set up stores, and certainly the market found its level, because there's only so many opportunities there, and it's down to about 435 today. We are setting up an application form with general guidelines and information, and if people meet the requirements of this, they have the opportunity to assess the market based on what they estimate the volumes would be and the interest would be.

I cannot step into the model of private enterprise, that's driven and fueled this economy in this province for a hundred and some years. I think it's high time that we redefine the role of government and put it back in the marketplace where it belongs, where they make the proper analysis and get on with doing business. I know of lots of people that open pizza stores, that open shoe stores . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We'll have to leave something for a supplemental.

Supplemental question, please.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister give us some indication as to the relationship between the current wholesale prices and the current retail prices?

DR. WEST: I appreciate that I went on at length, but sometimes I have to spell out free enterprise to some of the members in the Assembly on the opposite side.

One of the largest questions asked by the people phoning in is exactly the question that the member brings forward: what will be the wholesale price coming from the Alberta Liquor Control Board? We are working on that formula at the present time, and we'll be indicating that in a short time. Certainly there'll be some concession to the wholesale price. The market will drive the pricing system after that because each and every person that accesses one of the outlets will be buying at the same wholesale price. We won't in the future be having different wholesale markups to different sectors of the industry. Therefore, after it reaches its level, the free market system will drive the price that the consumer achieves.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville, followed by Bow Valley.

#### **Gainers Inc.**

MR. VASSEUR: Mr. Speaker, as recently as September 3 the Premier committed to privatize government-owned businesses. The government's involvement in Gainers continues to disrupt natural market forces. This situation continues to cost Fletcher's a considerable amount of money. It continues to cost the hog producers a considerable amount of money. It continues to cost the taxpayers of Alberta a considerable amount of money. My question to the minister of agriculture: will the minister promise to terminate its involvement in Gainers, sale or not, by the end of the year?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister.

**2:50**

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Friday I had made a ministerial statement that laid out the plans of this government very clearly, and we plan on staying with the plan that was laid out. Our objective is indeed the concern of the pork industry. We must serve the needs of the pork industry. We have 1,200 employees at Gainers in Edmonton. These are people who have families and have responsibilities. We have to be tuned in, and though you may not be concerned about the employees in Edmonton, we are. Our government is concerned about the people of Edmonton as anywhere else. We do have a commitment. We have laid out our plan on Friday, and it is our objective to stay with that plan.

MR. VASSEUR: Mr. Speaker, the 1,500 jobs over at the ALCB weren't that important just a couple days ago.

My supplemental to the minister. It's my understanding that a recent audit commissioned by a prospective buyer valued Gainers at \$5 million. How can the government justify a total taxpayer involvement in Gainers in excess of \$125 million today when an independent audit values Gainers at \$5 million?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, we're still living in a free enterprise country, and we have authorized a process that will determine the true value of Gainers. To be pulling numbers out of the air is hardly a responsible way of dealing with an issue. It is our intention to go to the free marketplace to establish the true value of Gainers.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

#### **Workers' Compensation Board**

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the minister in charge of the Workers' Compensation Board, the hon. Mr. Day. I understand from talks with stakeholders in the agriculture industry that the Workers' Compensation Board is attempting to institute vertical classification in the agriculture sector. This would mean that the canola producers who contract to a canola crusher would be forced to pay the same WCB rates as the crusher. Another example is a feedlot operator would be forced to pay the same rate as the meat packing industry. Agriculture is an extremely important part of our economy, and I feel that this could lead to disaster in a very fragile sector. Mr. Minister, I would like to hear assurances from you that WCB will not institute classification of beef, pork, poultry, canola, or any other agricultural suppliers.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I happen to share some of the concern that's just been raised by the Member for Bow Valley. One of the areas that the WCB has been successfully addressing in terms of concerns of industry is the whole area of streamlining assessment rates. In doing that, the meat packing industry, for one, is being looked at and discussions are going on because more and more we're seeing feedlots developed right in conjunction with the actual meat packing operation, and that's what we're looking at, in terms of streamlining the rates there. I want to assure the member that he could pass on to his constituents that we are excluding farmers who operate feedlots that are arm's-length from the actual meat packing industry, and this would go

also with other agricultural industries. I can assure them that these types of agricultural industries are not going to be brought under, that they are going to be excluded, and that any discussions that are ongoing, as there are right now with the meat packing industry, any changes will only be done in full consultation with all people taking part.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, followed by Calgary-Currie.

### Women in Poverty

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One year ago the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues released a comprehensive and disturbing report on the failure of the supports for independence program to help women become self-sufficient, and that was before the recent cuts were made to social assistance. Considering that half of the recipients on assistance are women and given that 40 percent of all recipients are single parents, most of whom are women, my questions are to the minister responsible for women's issues: why has the minister remained silent over these cuts to social assistance when his own advisory council pointed out 18 months ago that the rates were inadequate? Why hasn't he spoken out on behalf of these women?

MR. MAR: As those programs are administered by the Minister of Family and Social Services, Mr. Speaker, I understand that he wishes to make a response to that.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to respond to the issue, because I've always indicated to this Assembly that we are very sensitive. We know that we are going to increase the budgets, and we have increased the budgets, in fact, in high needs areas. The hon. member mentioned specific areas. Employment and training, for an example: a \$9 million increase this year in the budget. Employment exemptions and people going back to the work force will have an increase of \$2.5 million. I can go on with the increases in the high needs areas that will address the issues the hon. member is concerned about.

MRS. SOETAERT: I'll try this again. This is a report done by the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, which I believe is the hon. minister of culture and multiculturalism's jurisdiction. So all I'd like to ask is: would you have a look at this, and would you possibly deal with some of their recommendations?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to look at it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, followed by Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

### Liquor Sales (continued)

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to Dr. West regarding the sale of the ALCB stores and a question that's coming up because of the changes in the marketplace. Currently when we have distributed liquor on these retail sites, these are large centres, freestanding stores, or existing rented facilities in shopping malls. I'm wondering: are there any restrictions, Dr. West, on the opportunity for freestanding liquor kiosks on sites where they meet the zoning requirements in order to respond, perhaps, to changes in the marketplace?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I like the personal touch.

I believe the question is directed to those that are looking at the opportunities that exist out there to set up some freestanding liquor outlets not related to any other such buildings. That opportunity exists, but you must first of all comply with the zoning that's in the area. You must comply, of course, with the general application requirements that do state – I was just going to see here where it says:

The applicant must comply with all applicable municipal bylaws, zoning or development requirements, fire, health, safety and building codes, and hold the necessary business licence or permit before the retail . . . licence will be issued.

The other thing that comes up is that it must be located in a permanent facility. It may be a freestanding facility or developed in conjunction with another commercial facility. So as long as that operation you just said meets these requirements and the person has a class D licence, any Albertan can look at that and set up a freestanding liquor outlet.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. BURGNER: Yes, sir. My supplemental question follows on the line, then, that if an organization has a primary line of business and chooses to open a secondary line in those freestanding capacities, would that be entertained as appropriate?

DR. WEST: Again I reiterate: it must meet the general guidelines. Each licence has an individual responsible for it. They must apply as an individual and not as some collective association, and they must identify the persons involved. Outside of that, if they meet the requirements of this, the answer to your question is yes.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

### Machinery and Equipment Tax

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Getty and Klein governments have procrastinated for over a decade on finding a resolution to the ongoing debate of the appropriateness of the machinery and equipment taxation. In light of the serious ramifications to municipalities of \$67 million; school jurisdictions, through the school board tax, of \$73 million; and the school foundation of \$35 million; also the uncertainty it creates in the marketplace, making long-term financial planning impossible, my question is to the Premier. Will the Premier commit that the tax reform commission alluded to in the Speech from the Throne will deal conclusively with this issue?

3:00

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, yes, hopefully.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Talking out of both sides of one's mouth?

My supplementary question to the Premier: in the interests of providing a fair and balanced outcome on the machinery and equipment tax, will the Premier promise that the tax reform commission will be truly representative of all Albertans affected by this tax including municipal, educational authorities, heavy industrial, and Albertans? I, please, would accept a straight answer.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, to provide a straight answer, yes. I think that the tax reform commission is truly representative of a cross section of Albertans.

### Young Offenders

MR. PHAM: Mr. Speaker, rising public concern over youth crime, especially of violent nature, has prompted the Minister of Education to call a special conference on the issue later this fall. The Calgary public board is presently reviewing new policies governing school safety, a timely project in light of the incident of escalating school violence at Forest Lawn high school. I also learned that the number of youths charged increased by 70 percent between 1987 and 1991, and during the same period violent crime by youth increased by 179 percent. In 1991 young offenders committed 8 percent of all murders in Canada, a ratio that remained constant throughout the 1980s. My question is for the Minister of Justice, the Hon. Ken Rostad. Some U.S. jurisdictions have instituted laws whereby the parents of young offenders are civilly liable for any damage or injuries caused by their children. Has your department considered similar legislation, and if not, why not?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the present law does not allow parents to be civilly charged for wrongs that their children have committed, but there is dialogue certainly that that is something that should be looked at. There is the discussion paper put out by the federal government relating to the Young Offenders Act. I would certainly welcome from my perspective, and I'm sure on behalf of the federal government, any representations any people may have in relation to that specific issue but also more broadly the Young Offenders Act.

I might mention in the context of young offender charges that 14 percent of the young offenders charged under the Act commit crimes of violence. About one-half of those are of the slap/punch mode. The other half, which of course are much more serious, certainly need to be looked at. If there's any way that we can abrogate them getting to court or committing those, I'd welcome that.

MR. PHAM: My supplementary question is for the Minister of Education. Many of my constituents have expressed great concerns over the safety of our schools. Mr. Minister, what action are you going to take to prevent violence in our schools?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I certainly share the hon. member's concern with respect to incidents of this very, very serious nature. It's my understanding that the most recent of these occurred between two gangs who chose school premises as the site for the conflict. However, it is my understanding that the school officials of the Calgary board of education are co-operating with the justice system in the investigation of this most recent incident, and they are to be commended for that co-operation and their effort.

As Minister of Education I have indicated to school boards that I have met with, including those in Calgary, that if they can identify regulations or legislative changes within the purview of Alberta Education that need to be changed to make it possible for school boards to deal more effectively with these types of incidents, I am certainly open to those recommendations, because I think we all want the schools to offer a safe and secure environment for our students.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

### Special Education

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities put out a report card in which it evaluated the implementation of

its recommendations by the different government departments. The council judged that the Department of Education had done a particularly poor job in that regard. Now we find out that program unit grants to early childhood education students with special needs ranging from severely to mildly disabled have been cut by 8 percent. I would like to ask the Minister of Education why he didn't consult with the Premier's very own council on the status of persons with disabilities before deciding upon this cut.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to comment on the report, which was recently received by all members in the Assembly and by the government. I think that we should look at the report overall in terms of its comment on the actions of government. Certainly there has been considerable progress. In fact, government is commended for that on the part of many departments, led by the department of transportation. In addition to that, the Department of Education has in excess of \$140 million being directed to the needs of students with special needs. We are one of the few provinces which is developing a set of criteria to provide definite measures of the progress that's made within the education system on the part of disabled students. We take the report as constructive comment, and we are continuing to act on fulfilling the recommendations from that council.

With respect to the program unit grants, this was part of an overall budget decision. I would like to remind you, Mr. Speaker, and remind members of the Assembly that we are still providing a considerable amount of money in program unit grants, which can result, depending upon the qualifications of the student, of in excess of \$20,000 per year being provided in assistance to these students.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears to me that the Minister of Education hasn't quite answered the question, or perhaps he hasn't yet consulted with the Premier's very own council, so my supplementary question is therefore directed to the Premier. Will he direct the minister to put a moratorium on these cuts until he has consulted with the Premier's own council?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll take the question under advisement and consult with the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona.

### Tornado Damage

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the minister responsible for disaster services. A most devastating tornado destroyed numerous farmsteads in the area northeast of Holden. The aftermath left people homeless and left debris scattered for many miles. As a result, the total destruction has taken away the ability to generate revenue for many farmers in that area. Buildings that housed livestock were swept away, and crops were severely damaged by the wind. Has the minister received a report of the destruction, and if he has, does that report acknowledge the extraordinary costs with respect to the contamination of crops?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question and also thank him for inviting me to tour the site right after the tornado. It is a sad situation to have so many of

the homes lost. We have asked the county of Beaver to give us a more detailed assessment of the cleanup problems in the area. We have not got the report as yet, but I expect to have that report shortly. As soon as we do, we'd be able to respond to it.

3:10

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, the county of Beaver has spent a considerable amount of money on manpower cleaning up the site. Will the minister indicate today whether he is willing to cost share the extraordinary costs of cleanup with the county?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, when I toured the area, I spoke to a number of the people involved that had lost their homes. I made it quite clear that those facilities that could be insured of course would not be covered but any extraordinary costs such as cleanup of crops, yard cleanups, and things like that we would be involved in. I've also asked the county of Beaver to quickly analyze the feed samples of the contaminated fields to see if there is any harm towards livestock feeding. Certainly we would be cost sharing with the county on some of these things that we can do for the people that lost their facilities.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

#### Advanced Education Board Appointments

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a result of the Auditor General's report on NovAtel all departments have been ordered to review the process by which they make appointments to the province's boards. Reports indicate that a consultant has been hired to prepare position descriptions and criteria for appointment to all the boards of governors of postsecondary institutions in Alberta. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development. Will he explain to this Legislative Assembly why his department is taking so long to reform this appointment system while appointments continue to be made under the old system?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, it's true that we are reviewing the process by which board appointments will be made. I'm not sure whether the hon. member wants us to rush into that or what point he's making, but all I can say is that we're in the process of doing it and that we plan to be very careful about the process that we put in place so that we can ensure that we have good people appointed to govern our postsecondary institutions.

MR. ZARIWNY: I think my point is pretty clear. The Alberta Liberals proposed a plan that would allow all-party legislative committees to make the appointments on a cross-representation basis with an open nomination process. My question to the minister is: why did he not cut down on the expenses to the Alberta taxpayers by adopting our system?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear on something: there is an open nomination process. Anyone who wants to nominate a member to serve on a board in this province is perfectly free to do so. Let me assure the hon. members that if they choose to submit a nomination, we'll take it into consideration even under the present circumstances. We receive nominations from student bodies, we receive them from the existing presidents, we receive them from board members, we receive from people who just send in nominations for themselves, and from time to time, in a cross section, those people are appointed.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross, followed by Calgary-Bufferlo.

#### Medical Research Funding

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health. The Labour Day weekend has become a weekend of giving. Hundreds of Albertans in Calgary, Edmonton, our villages and towns donated a considerable amount of money, and a lot of volunteerism in time and effort went into telethons that raised, I think, upwards of a million dollars for the research and treatment of muscular dystrophy. Can the minister explain why we need telethons to raise money for important medical research and, more importantly, how these fund-raising initiatives affect the overall provincial budget?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly there was a very successful telethon held on the weekend in Alberta. I think the fact that Albertans give so generously to such a serious health issue as muscular dystrophy certainly indicates their willingness to help and their generosity. I would want to take this opportunity to congratulate the organizers of the telethon and to thank all of the people who participated so generously.

Medical research is not directly under the mandate of Alberta Health, but the Alberta government has a very strong commitment to medical research through the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. The foundation presently does support three scientists at our facilities who are working in that area. We have a health research and innovation fund that commits about \$800,000 worth of research projects a year through our department. Certainly if any applicants meet the criteria under that, they are looked at. I should also inform the member that there are four hospitals in Alberta working directly in the work of specialized clinics for muscular dystrophy.

Again, I think I must just reiterate that the generosity of Albertans in contributing to many of these fund-raising activities is recognized and certainly appreciated and certainly goes a long way to research to solve some of these diseases.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to hear the answer of the minister. I didn't realize that it's not under the mandate of your department. Does your department have any plans to assist the Muscular Dystrophy Association or any other group with these fund-raising efforts in the future?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, many societies and foundations across the province do support activities beyond what is provided by government departments and government programs, and Health is no exception. Most of that funding is dedicated to research. We support the efforts of all of those groups. I should just remind hon. members that Alberta Health supports all medical and hospital services to Albertans. We don't directly fund research, with the exceptions that I outlined and of course for the very specialized case of cancer research, which the Alberta Cancer Board is directly involved in. I believe very strongly it's important to involve the community, and we will continue to support the groups' activities, whether they're for muscular dystrophy research or any other. I think it's a long-recognized view of Albertans that they want to contribute and help these organizations, and we'll continue to support their efforts.

### Administration of Justice

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, on August 31 of this year the Minister of Justice announced a dramatic increase in the court tariff, in some cases an increase of as much as 250 percent. Now an Alberta woman who wants out and wants the children out of an abusive relationship must pay \$420 in court disbursements alone when she sues for divorce and division of matrimonial property. That's double the old rate. My question to the Minister of Justice: what steps will the minister take now to ensure that low-income Albertans are not denied access to their own court system?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct in the sense that the fees have been increased, and in fact they've been increased so that some of the Alberta justice system can be saved through a user pay. We, in fact, provide many, many services and facilities to ensure that justice is taking place. The fees that are paid towards that are very, very minimal. In a particular instance of somebody not having the wherewithal to meet those fees, we also have an arm's-length group called the Legal Aid Society of Alberta, where application can be made to assist in those instances.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, we'll be looking forward to seeing what accommodation is being made in legal aid to cover these kinds of hardships.

I want to ask specifically: what will the minister do to relieve hardship in those particular cases; for example, dependent adult trustees who are required to file court documents not on a single basis but on an ongoing, regular basis?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the Dependent Adults Act is not under my purview, but again there is a responsibility for anybody that takes a trustee position on someone else's behalf to make an accounting for the moneys in their jurisdiction. The person making the application does not pay the costs. It comes out of the estate of the dependent adult. I guess it's a case in point again that someone who has the wherewithal and requires the Justice services should in fact pay. If there's an instance where they can't pay, I said that there's already a mechanism set up to in fact accommodate that.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

3:20

### Liquor Store Buildings

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the minister responsible for the Alberta Liquor Control Board. Many of these stand-alone Alberta Liquor Control Board buildings would make suitable buildings for municipal governments. My question to the minister is: will municipal governments be permitted to acquire these stand-alone buildings that you're divesting the province of?

DR. WEST: The existing buildings and leases in Alberta that are owned and operated by the ALCB today will be made available through a public tendering process. Complete notice in all the dailies and the weeklies throughout rural Alberta will occur, complete notice of the properties listed and what they comprise of. All Albertans can tender on these processes, including municipalities.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplemental question?

MR. TANNAS: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister then: will these municipal governments who are going to be permitted, then, to tender be given special preference from the provincial government and the minister?

DR. WEST: Absolutely not. They will be on the same basis as all Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period having expired, the Chair would recognize the hon. Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

### Point of Order Reflections on a Member

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I rise under Standing Order 23(h) and (i) with respect to certain statements made by the hon. Deputy Premier on Friday, September 3. There was a debate that was in process. During the course of that debate the hon. Deputy Premier stood and made the following comment. He said:

Now, the Member for Calgary-North West really is a veteran in the Liberal caucus. He's exuberant; he's enthusiastic.

At that point there was an interjection. Based on that interjection, the Deputy Premier made the following comment, and it is this comment that I take issue with: "It seems," he said, "he's also attracted the fancy of at least one member on the other side."

Mr. Speaker, the reference, as I understood it at the time, was to the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. This comment is inappropriate. This comment is wrong. This comment can easily be interpreted as being sexist. I'm sure that the hon. Deputy Premier did not and I know that he didn't intend to be malicious. I didn't raise the issue when it arose because I wanted to check with my colleague the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert to see if she, too, had felt the same way, that this was a comment about her. She did feel that way. As a result of how she felt, she sent a letter to the Deputy Premier indicating that his comments were wrong and hoped that he would apologize. I have checked with my colleague and have discovered that no such apology has been tendered. This is unfortunate, this is something that shouldn't happen in this Assembly, and I would ask that the Deputy Premier stand and apologize to my colleague.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has raised a point of order under 23(h), which says "makes allegations against another member," and 23(i), which says "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member." Then the hon. member basically quoted, but incorrectly, from *Hansard* of September 3, 1993, page 77, on a point of order raised by this member with respect to certain statements made by the Member for Calgary-North West.

I would like to put into the record the correct quote: "Now, the Member for Calgary-North West really is a veteran in the Liberal caucus" Now, I don't know under 23(h) if that's making "allegations against another member" or imputing "false or unavowed motives to another member." It says, "He's exuberant; he's enthusiastic." Once again, I don't know if that's making "allegations against another member" or imputing "false or unavowed motives" to another member. Then in brackets is the word "interjections," not the word "interjection," as pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition. It goes on to say, "It seems he's also attracted the fancy of at least one member on the other side." On the point of order I also stated farther down, "We all know that on Friday hon. members, at least in the opposition, tend to get a little giddy and tend to take a few liberties."

Now, on Friday morning I was standing exactly the way I'm standing now addressing the Chair, as is the custom of this House. I have sat on this side of the House for a number of years. On the other side of the House has been a member of this Assembly who has sat here for a number of years as well. Mr. Speaker, in the past, invariably when ministers speak, there have been interjections from at least one hon. member on the other side, and on our side of the House we affectionately refer to him as the thumper. The member we're referring to is the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, who invariably pounds on the desk halfway through many answers provided by ministers on this side of this House.

On Friday morning such was the case when I made the statement:

Now, the Member for Calgary-North West really is a veteran in the Liberal caucus. He's exuberant; he's enthusiastic.

There were interjections.

It seems he's also attracted the fancy of at least one [other] member on the other side [of the House].

The member I was referring to was the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Facing the Speaker as I am, hearing the noise on the other side, it's an incredible, incredible statement on a point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition today. For an hon. member who I cannot see in facing the Speaker to assume that I would refer to her, when I don't even know who she is, when for years the shadow that I've had in this Assembly is the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, who constantly thumps on the desk and who we refer to as the thumper – it's that member that I was referring to. Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order, and I have absolutely no intention of apologizing to anybody because I most certainly on Friday morning, September 3, never once even considered the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. For someone to send me a letter asking me to apologize to that person whom I've never even considered is really the ultimate of vanity and silliness.

MR. SPEAKER: I think there are two points to be made with respect to this point of order. I think it's obvious from what the hon. Deputy Premier has said that there has been a misunderstanding as to the facts involved in this matter, but probably more important is *Beauchesne* citation 321. I know that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said why it wasn't raised at the moment, but points of order are required to be raised at the earliest possible opportunity. I would assume the rationale behind that is so that the events are fresh in the participants' minds at the time.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Referring to a Member by Name**

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair has an opportunity of also speaking about a point of order or a point of procedure or a point of something in this Legislature. Something happened over the long weekend. I don't know whether it's the length of the adjournment, but starting on the opposition side, hon. members referred to Premier Klein, and then we moved to the government side with Mr. Day and Dr. West. Hon. members, there are no members here who have names unless they've misbehaved in a very drastic way. Then they have names, but until that happens, they have constituencies or portfolios. The Chair would ask all hon. members to refer to personnel in this Chamber, seated at these desks, either by their ministry or by their constituency and forget their names.

The hon. Deputy Premier.

**3:30**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, today is the day designated for the receiving of certain messages from the Honourable the

Lieutenant Governor through the Provincial Treasurer, and I would now move that we recess until 4 o'clock this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the bells will ring at 1 minute to 4, so members shouldn't wander too far away from the Chamber. Would the galleries please be cleared during this recess so that the people who are intending to come to hear the Budget Address may have seats when they arrive.

[The Assembly adjourned from 3:33 p.m. to 4 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order in the Assembly, please. Would members please take their seats.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I have received certain messages from His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, which I now transmit to you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

MR. SPEAKER: The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1994, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1994, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required from the lottery fund under the Interprovincial Lottery Act for the 12 months ending March 31, 1994, for the purpose of making payments to support initiatives related to recreation or culture or for other purpose in the public interests and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1994, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required from the Alberta heritage savings trust fund for the 12 months ending March 31, 1994, for the purpose of making investments pursuant to section 6(1)(a) of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act

in projects which will provide long term economic or social benefits to the people of Alberta but which may not necessarily by their nature yield a return to the Trust Fund

and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Please be seated.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Government Motions**

4. Moved by Mr. Dinning:  
Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the estimates, and all matters connected therewith be referred to the Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried]

5. Moved by Mr. Dinning:  
Be it resolved that the Assembly do resolve into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

[Motion carried]



## 7. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the 1993-94 capital fund estimates, and all matters connected therewith be referred to the Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried]

## 8. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 58(6) the number of days that the Committee of Supply will be called to consider the 1993-94 capital fund estimates shall be two days.

[Motion carried]

## 9. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the 1993-94 estimates of proposed investments of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division, and all matters connected therewith be referred to the Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried]

## 10. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that the Assembly do resolve itself into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider the 1993-94 estimates of proposed investments of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division.

[Motion carried]

head:

### Budget Address

## 6. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that the Assembly approve in general the fiscal policies of the government.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the Klein government's message to Albertans today is plain and simple. We laid out a plan on May 6. Albertans endorsed that plan on June 15. We're on track, and we're sticking to the plan. There are no surprises in the budget I am introducing today, no surprises because the budget plan we set out in May was and is the right plan for Alberta. It reflects the principles our people cherish, the priorities they value, and the policies they expect. In preparing the May 6 budget, we listened to Albertans who told us loud and clear: get Alberta's financial house in order. The result was a reasonable and achievable plan for balancing the budget. We listened to Albertans during the election campaign, and once again their message was clear: stick to the plan; make it work.

During the election campaign the Klein government made a promise to listen. Today, 126 days after the budget was introduced and one very successful provincial election later, a promise made is a promise kept. The Klein government listened to Albertans when they said, "Stick to the plan," listened when they said, "Keep us directly involved in your decisions," and we will keep listening every step of the way.

Before we get into the details of the budget for 1993-94 and the actions this government has taken to keep the plan on track, I want to speak briefly about the destination we have set out to reach, because, Mr. Speaker, Albertans need to know that there is a

destination, that what we are engaged in is much more than a plan to cut spending and achieve a balanced budget.

Just what is that destination, Mr. Speaker? It is a vibrant and prosperous future for our province and for our children. It's a better Alberta future where our children are not heavily burdened with the debts from the past. It's a future where Albertans are free from unnecessary rules, red tape, and burdensome taxation, able to take control, to work together to set a new course for the future and design the route to get there. It's a destination with a thriving economic environment where Albertans and Alberta businesses create new opportunities, new jobs, and new wealth. The destination is basic public services with quality and affordability as their hallmarks, sustainable communities, strong families, a safe and lasting environment.

Finally, the destination is a new way of doing government business, where people rely less on government and more on themselves. It's a government, a public sector that seizes new ideas, focuses on results, and gets the job done. It's a government that works with Albertans to position us on the eve of the 21st century to take advantage of every opportunity to compete, to reach our goals, and to succeed. That's the destination we have set out to reach, and we can only reach it if we are prepared to do what has to be done now: to balance the budget, to get spending in line, and to change the way we do things. Albertans want nothing less, Mr. Speaker, and they deserve nothing less.

The throne speech talked about the "winds of change" sweeping across this province. With the budget plan the winds of change are moving us ahead decisively and deliberately to a new financial future for the province. The pace of change has been quick, and it's been clear. We began with reducing the size of government. We started at the top: cutting the size of cabinet, cutting the salaries of ministers, and cutting the salaries of deputy ministers. We have fewer government departments today. We set up the Financial Review Commission to open the books on the province's finances and to give us their advice, and we have implemented almost all of their recommendations. We held a budget roundtable in March, and the May 6 budget reflected what we heard. We passed the Deficit Elimination Act to back up our budget plan. It requires government to follow a four-year schedule of annual deficit reductions. By 1996-97 Alberta will balance its budget. Overspending will end. Albertans and their government backed up by a legislated deficit elimination requirement will ensure these targets are met. We acted on the Deficit Elimination Act's requirement for regular, quarterly budget reports to Albertans and took action to keep the budget on track. We released the first of those quarterly reports on August 19, and we didn't delay. We took action when it was needed to keep the balanced budget plan on track. We saved \$130 million this year alone through our first line of attack, eliminating waste and duplication and streamlining government.

#### 4:10

We said that we would involve Albertans in directing the process of change. A Health roundtable was held in August with follow-up roundtables to come this month and next. Education will hold their roundtable discussions in October, and plans for postsecondary discussions are under way for later this year.

We said that we would set up a tax reform commission to answer one important question: what can we do to improve Alberta's competitive tax advantage? Today I am announcing that the commission will be up and running by September 30. Mr. Jack Donald of Red Deer has agreed to take on the challenge of chairing the commission. I expect to see their report by the end

of December, with action on their recommendations beginning in the 1994 budget. Full details of the membership and terms of reference will be released in the next few days.

We said that we'd strive for greater efficiency in all government operations. I can advise the Assembly that negotiations with Ottawa are under way to have the federal government collect Alberta's corporate tax. No justification remains for both federal and provincial governments to be in the corporate tax collection business.

We said that from now on the spending of lottery funds would require the approval of the Legislative Assembly, and today I am tabling the estimates for lottery fund spending as part of the budget package.

We spelled out the need for business plans, the need for government to operate less like a traditional bureaucracy and more like a successful business, and we extended that expectation for business plans to all departments, agencies, and organizations receiving significant government funding. Mr. Speaker, this is not just idle talk. Those business plans are well under way and will form a key component of our budget plans for 1994. Let's be clear. Those plans are not just wish lists. They are built on the assumption that government spending will be reduced by a minimum of 20 percent by 1996-97.

The plan for '93-94, finally, called for us to reduce the consolidated deficit by some 22 percent, or nearly \$700 million, and to do that with no tax increases, no new taxes, and no sales tax. We have taken action, and we are on track to meet that target, Mr. Speaker. Those actions have set a pace for change that has taken some by surprise. We don't always expect our governments to move quickly, to set out a plan and stick to it, but that's exactly what we have done. All of the actions we've taken are part of Ralph Klein's government's plan for change.

In spite of our record of fast paced and decisive action, we've heard some people say that there is no plan, that government is making willy-nilly cuts, and worst of all that they're making more and more cuts as they go. We've heard people say, "Stop making any more cuts until you have a master plan." "Lay out 50 locksteps to the end point and stick to those steps," we've heard them say, "regardless of what happens along the way." That's not a plan, Mr. Speaker. That's sitting under this dome and deciding that we have all the answers. That's not the Klein government's approach. Instead, we have a plan with a clear destination, with targets, and with four key strategies for getting us there: to legislate and enforce a four-year balanced budget program, to set clear priorities and stick to them, to act on Alberta's economic development strategy, and to change the way that we do business. That's the plan. It involves Albertans directly and relies on their creativity and their ideas to get us to that destination.

It's the kind of plan Sir John A. Macdonald had when he vowed that one day Canada would be linked from sea to sea by a single railroad line. Sir John A. was very clear in what the destination was to be. He handed his dream to courageous and uncompromising engineers, explorers, and railway workers, who charted the course and laid out that ribbon of steel across this country. He did not give up when the going became difficult. When faced with the imposing Rocky Mountains, he and those determined railway pioneers didn't stop and say: it's too difficult; let's just build a railway from the Atlantic to Canmore. No; they kept their sights firmly fixed on the destination, not on the obstacles or the twists and turns but on the destination, and because of that, Mr. Speaker, they succeeded.

In the coming weeks and months much of the focus will be on the obstacles we face: on budget cuts and the pain they cause. Every time specific decisions are made, there will be those who

say: don't do it; make the changes somewhere else or don't make them at all. There will be times when we will look at the obstacles and say: it is too difficult; let's take the quick-fix approach. The quick-fix is taxation, Mr. Speaker, and more of it. That is not the route that we are going to take.

Some have already said, when we've only just begun, that we should give up and simply raise taxes. Those people forget that this balanced-budget journey is not just about money; it's about reaching a new destination. Increasing taxation, focusing on the revenue side rather than the spending side, will only perpetuate a system that, quite frankly, has fallen short of what Albertans expect of their government.

We've spent increasing amounts of money on education and health, yet people readily acknowledge that we're not getting the results we expect for our investment. We've increased social welfare spending by 53 percent over the past four years, and what have we done for those people's lives? Have we broken the cycle of welfare and poverty? Have we guaranteed a better life for their children? Again, Mr. Speaker, we have fallen short. As someone at the Health roundtable said: you can't keep doing things the same way you've always done them and expect different results. We can and we must expect different and better results. We can and we must change the way we do things now so that those better results are possible, and we must not lose sight of the destination we've set out to reach.

Mr. Speaker, with the support of Albertans we will continue to use our budget plan, the Deficit Elimination Act, and our economic strategy to move toward our destination one measured step at a time.

Today I want to update Albertans on the steps we've taken since the budget plan was introduced in May. As I said at the outset, the message is: we're on track. We're going to stay on track. Albertans have told us loud and clear to stick to the budget plan, to stay the course, and that's exactly what we will do.

I also said that this budget contained no surprises. Mr. Speaker, over the course of the next three years that will be the new normal for budgets in Alberta. As we move ahead with quarterly reports and with corrective action when it's needed, budget speeches like this will be old news. As we stick to the plan, move with three-year budget targets, and keep consulting with and listening to Albertans, the budget news will simply be: they're sticking to the plan.

#### 4:20

Today, Mr. Speaker, I can report that decisive action has been taken on each of the four strategies in the plan. First, on the financial side. The information I am tabling today gives a full report on all changes made to the '93-94 budget plan and the action we've taken since May 6. Actions we laid out in the May plan have virtually all been implemented, and we are on track to meet our target. Changes to the numbers come primarily as a result of new information and changes in accounting policies. These changes update, they do not alter the plan we spelled out in May. In August we released the results for the first quarter, and we took corrective action to keep the budget plan on track. Today I am tabling the consolidated financial statements for 1992-93, last year's statements.

Mr. Speaker, 1993 is a turning point, the end of a period of overspending and the beginning of a new course for getting Alberta's financial house in order. From now on financial statements like these will be an important part of the Klein government's commitment to be open and to be accountable to Albertans, to tell it like it is when it comes to the province's financial situation, to tell it early rather than wait until it's too late,

and to be accountable for the results. We started that process by creating the Financial Review Commission. We made a commitment to follow through on their recommendations. A number of those recommendations address major changes in accounting policies and the need for clear, simple, and regular reports to Albertans about the state of our financial health. With the release of these financial statements we are taking a further step to implementing those recommendations and meeting our commitment.

The consolidated financial statements for last year highlight the seriousness of our challenge. The news is not good. Last year the province's financial picture did not improve; in fact, it got worse. With the changes in accounting recommended by the Financial Review Commission and the Auditor General, the last year's consolidated deficit stands at \$3.77 billion, and Alberta's consolidated net debt is \$11.82 billion.

To highlight the significance of the accounting changes, Mr. Speaker, \$390 million of the increase in the deficit is due to these policy changes. On the consolidated net debt side, almost \$6.3 billion of the increase is caused by accounting policy changes. The single biggest change in accounting policies has to do with how we treat pensions paid to members of the public service as well as those in our police services, our fire services, to municipalities, and to our teachers. Without pension liabilities the deficit for last year was \$3.41 billion. Before changes in accounting the deficit number for last year was very close to the forecasts we set out in the May 6 document.

To address the province's serious financial situation, we have two important plans under way. The first is a long-term plan to eliminate unfunded liabilities in the public-sector pension plans. With agreements now in place, agreements and legislation unanimously approved by all parties in this Legislative Assembly, we will eliminate unfunded pension liabilities, but it will take 40 to 70 years to complete the task, Mr. Speaker. For that reason, pension liabilities are not included in the four-year balanced budget plan controlled by the Deficit Elimination Act.

The second plan is the budget plan, and on this plan Albertans will see quick action on government spending and quick action to eliminate the deficit. By sticking to the budget plan, staying the course this year, we will have taken the deficit down to \$2.44 billion and we will have taken a tough but essential first step to getting the province's financial future back on course.

Mr. Speaker, the following are the key facts about Alberta's 1993-94 budget. There are no tax increases, no new taxes, and no sales tax. Alberta's consolidated deficit will decline by \$714 million before accounting changes. That's 22 percent lower than last year. Our new deficit estimate of \$2.44 billion for this year is slightly lower than the one we projected on May 6 of \$2.48 billion. We're on course and we will achieve the target.

On the program spending side, our updated '93-94 budget now calls for cuts of \$672 million in program spending, a reduction of 5.3 percent over last year. On the revenue side, we now expect our total revenue to be \$11.462 billion. That's a slight decrease from our May 6 forecast. We all know that oil prices are down, Mr. Speaker, and as a result, our forecast for oil prices for the year has been adjusted down to \$18.75 U.S. a barrel. At the same time, natural gas prices have been higher. Overall the Department of Energy has lowered its resource revenue forecast by \$77 million to \$2.434 billion. With our determination to be conservative about resource revenues, we are leaving our forecast for budget planning purposes unchanged at \$2.314 billion. This follows the Deficit Elimination Act's formula which requires that oil and gas revenue forecasts be set at the average of the last five years' actual

revenues. For this year this still leaves a \$120 million cushion against any future weaknesses in energy prices.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, for this year's budget is that we are on track. We will follow through on our determination to attack the deficit on the spending side, and we will have taken that difficult but essential first step towards eliminating deficits altogether.

Today I want to highlight three areas targeted for reduction in this year's spending plan: Family and Social Services, Health, and reducing waste and duplication across all areas of government. Action in each of these areas demonstrates the scope and the seriousness of the challenge we face to get spending in line, because none of the reductions we've made have been easy and most of them have touched the lives of Albertans, Mr. Speaker.

The first line of attack in our budget was to save over \$130 million by eliminating waste and duplication and reducing the size of government. Mr. Speaker, I can report that our target will be met. The total operating budgets of 12 departments have been reduced, and two departments' budgets remain essentially flat. The civil service has been reduced by 2,639 positions, a reduction of 7.8 percent. This change has not been without cost. The past few years have been difficult for Alberta's public service. These dedicated and capable people have been asked to meet the ever expanding expectations of government with fewer and fewer resources. The future offers change. With business plans for each government department, our employees will have a greater certainty and a clearer understanding of what businesses we are in and what businesses we are not in. Government's focus on results will allow them to channel their creativity, their innovation, and their ideas to help get the job done.

The difficulty of staying the course is highlighted by the reductions we've made in this year's budget for social welfare benefits. We are determined to reduce spending in social services by \$150 million. We do not make those decisions lightly or easily. While most of the focus has been on cuts, we must not lose sight of the need to seek better solutions, better outcomes for people on social assistance, better ways of caring for our children. We need solutions that provide a ladder out of the social welfare system and a path to self-reliance and productive employment, and for Albertans who cannot become self-reliant, Mr. Speaker, we must have a system which provides them with support and dignity to live their lives to the fullest. This is no easy task, but it is a task we must work together to achieve.

#### 4:30

Health is another area where savings were targeted in the 1993 budget. In July we announced specific actions to reduce health care spending by 67 and a half million dollars. Specifically, funding for acute care hospitals was reduced, caps were put on funding for allied health care services, a least-cost drug option program was introduced, and the date for increasing health care premiums was moved to September 1. Much of that action was in addition to the targets announced in May and was essential because spending had increased beyond our original budget plans. Following Red Deer's Health roundtable, decisions now must be made on how further savings will be achieved to meet the budget target. I expect those decisions to be made very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, those are the financial highlights for Budget '93.

I want to turn to the three other strategies in our budget plan. The second strategy is to set clear priorities and to stick with them. As I said earlier, budgets are about more than just numbers. They're about people, they're about action, and for the Klein government they are about change.

Change is only just beginning in our two key priority areas of Health and Education. Spending in both of these areas has outstripped the wealth-generating capability of our economy. Quite simply, the costs in these two areas are growing faster than our ability to pay the bills. If we don't restructure these two vital services and reduce the costs, we will not be able to meet our objective of offering Albertans quality and affordable health services and education programs.

The Health roundtable in Red Deer sent a clear message that we can improve outcomes in health and spend less money, but that means fundamental change to Alberta's health system as we know it today. Most importantly, we saw a willingness to make those changes: to set aside old ways and to search for new solutions. That process will continue with a series of roundtables this month and in the month of October, and the result will be a plan for rebuilding the health system, a plan built by Albertans working together with people in the health care system to ensure quality affordable health care.

In education preliminary discussions have been held at the postsecondary level, and roundtables are planned for this fall for both basic and postsecondary education. The outcomes of those roundtables will set a new course for education in this province. That new course will involve fundamental change: change in the way we organize and deliver education, change in how we define basic education, change in how we fund the process and the results. A first major step was taken this past August when my colleague the Minister of Education announced the amalgamation of 35 nonoperating school jurisdictions.

Our third strategy is to act on Alberta's economic and job creation strategy. On the economic side we're also seeing change and a steady growth in Alberta's economy. According to the latest statistics, Alberta's economy grew by 2.2 percent in real terms in 1992 compared to just seven-tenths of 1 percent for Canada. In spite of some upbeat growth forecasts for Alberta by private-sector organizations, we're sticking to our original projection of 3 percent growth for 1993. The July 29 forecasts from the Conference Board of Canada point out the value of staying away from the quick fix of increasing taxes. Tax increases in other provinces have had a negative effect on their prospects for economic growth, Mr. Speaker. Alberta leads the way in projected growth and is the only province whose forecasts weren't adjusted downward since April. The reason: Alberta has a solid budget plan, a competitive tax position, a determination to attack the deficit on the spending side, not on the tax or revenue side, and a positive economic environment that builds investor confidence.

We're determined to keep Alberta's economy growing at a steady pace, and we're going to do that by following through on the strategy outlined in the Premier's address in April entitled *Seizing Opportunity* and reinforced recently in the throne speech. That strategy is to build on our low tax advantage, build on our strengths in agriculture, energy, forestry, tourism, small business, and high technology, strengthen our Alberta Advantage and sell it aggressively around the world: market Alberta as the place to live, to invest, to work, and do business. The strategy is to move ahead decisively with our fiscal strategy, to deregulate and streamline government, to eliminate the deficit and balance the budget.

There are some very positive signs that our strategy is working, Mr. Speaker. Energy investments are exceeding our original expectations. We have strong sales of natural gas to offset the impact of weaker oil prices. Net farm income is estimated to be a record \$1 billion, up 14 percent from 1992. The most recent data on jobs show that employment in Alberta is rising again. Employment in the well-paying manufacturing sector has risen by

over 9,000 jobs since December. In June Alberta's total employment set a brand-new high record. Despite these positive changes, it will take some time before we can expect the unemployment rate to improve significantly. As I said in the May budget, there are no quick fixes when it comes to employment opportunities. Our strategy must be long term to build a strong economy, to create opportunities for businesses and industry to locate, to build, and to grow in Alberta, and to keep building the skills and competitiveness of Alberta businesses and our people.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the fourth strategy in our budget plan is to change the way government does business. Once again the Klein government isn't just talking about change; we are taking action. We're redefining what government does and what government is. We've announced and taken action to privatize delivery of Alberta registry services, and by taking that action, we will improve service to Albertans and open up opportunities for small businesses across this province. We've taken the bold step of privatizing retail liquor sales, and we've heard strong support for that action. This is what Albertans want to see: government focusing on what government should do and must do and government getting out of business the private sector should be in, creating new opportunities for businesses in Alberta, and streamlining government.

In the coming months Albertans will see further moves to change the way this government does business. This fall we will announce three-year budget targets. Departments are already at work on business plans that will outline long-term goals and program objectives, spending requirements that match our financial plan, and specific means to measure results and performance. We will continue to ask with each and every program request: is this the business that government should be in? If someone else can do it better, government must step aside and let others take over. Where government has an essential role to play, we have to look for new ways of achieving the results we want at a lower cost to Albertans. At the end of the process we will have a government much less involved in the day-to-day lives of Albertans where government intervention comes as a last resort rather than a first resort.

Those are the highlights of the actions we have taken to date on the budget plan and of the specific changes we've made in the budget for 1993-94. Our work has just begun. At the budget roundtable last March one of the participants said that Albertans need a message of hope. Without hope we won't be prepared to endure the struggles and the sacrifice that will be required to balance this budget. Mr. Speaker, that hope comes from knowing that there is a destination. That destination is a better future for Alberta. That destination is a thriving Alberta economy; quality, affordable social programs; and a secure financial future. That destination is sustainable communities, strong families, a safe environment, and a better future for our children. We can only reach that destination by struggling through the immediate challenges that lie ahead. As we move toward that destination, there will be times when we will despair that we ever set out on such a difficult course. It is always this way when you blaze new trails or when you navigate uncharted territory, but that does not mean that we will retreat. It does not mean that we will lose sight of our destination. We will keep our faces turned toward the future.

**4:40**

On election night Premier Klein's simple words captured the essence of what it means to be an Albertan: given the choice between the past and the future, Albertans will choose the future every time. That is what we are all about: moving forward, refusing to give up or to take the easy way out, believing that

anything is possible in Alberta if we have a destination in mind and the will to get there. That's what Alberta's first Premier, Premier Alexander Rutherford, meant when he said that Alberta wasn't a place for pessimists. Today he would say that Alberta has a tremendous optimism, a popular belief that things are possible here. That's not just a popular belief; that's the Alberta reality. Things are possible here. They're possible because since the early days of this province Albertans have dared to struggle and dared to succeed. We can stay the course. We can balance the budget. We can create a better future for Alberta, for all Albertans, and indeed we will, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung, the Opposition House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Chair understand the hon. member to be moving that motion on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has moved on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition that debate be adjourned on this item. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

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

Moved by Mr. Severtson:

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.

Moved by Mr. Decore that the motion be amended by the addition of the following words: but that the Assembly condemns the government for failing to develop a comprehensive fiscal plan which presents proper budgetary and human service priorities, since the most severe budget cuts made by this government have been extracted from Albertans who form the most unfortunate and vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, the poor, and the disabled.

[Adjourned debate September 1: Mr. Woloshyn]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to rejoin the debate on the Speech from the Throne on the amendment as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. I was extremely disappointed to hear that the hon. Liberal leader felt that the throne speech amounted to bragging. However, the opposition leader is an expert on bragging. He did all of his before the people of Alberta had their say, and the people of Alberta have spoken clearly and decisively. Their bragging didn't amount to a hill of beans. It doesn't surprise me, therefore, that the Leader of the Opposition did not like what he heard in the throne speech.

The throne speech proved very specifically and very decisively that this government does in fact have a plan and that it is acting on that plan. The comments from the hon. Treasurer this afternoon reinforced that fact.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition has been begging, in fact pleading and praying, that we would abandon our plan for the future. After all, it was that plan that caused them to lose the election. While they were looking to the past and boasting about their next Alberta, under our Premier we had the foresight to be explaining to Albertans where we must go and how we were going to get there. In other words, we looked to the future.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did we do it?

MR. WOLOSHYN: You'd better believe we did it. Perhaps the Liberals can change their signs not to "next time" but "sometime after the next three or four or five times". [interjection] I would not count on that if I were across the way, Mr. Speaker.

The Speech from the Throne very explicitly combines our plan for the future with the four commitments that were made: to balance the budget, to let the private sector create meaningful jobs, to reorganize government to make it more efficient, and to consult with the public as we proceed. Mr. Speaker, the people of Alberta spoke loud and clear on June 15, 1993. They gave our government a strong mandate to balance the budget through spending reductions, not increasing taxes. This government has turned the magnifying glass onto itself to develop a better way to plan its budget. We have accepted the recommendations of the Auditor General and the Financial Review Commission. Today for the first time we are implementing consolidated financial statements. We have implemented quarterly budgets to let Albertans know where we stand financially. Again, the opposition does not want this. Why? Because it simply proves that we are on target and shows where the corrective measures need to be taken to stay on target. In other words, this government is accountable.

With respect to public consultation, we have made a commitment to that particular process, and we will continue to do it. The Premier reintroduced his access to information legislation last week with the intention of using a public, and I repeat, a public process to bring together interested groups for them to have the opportunity to let this government know what they would like to see. We don't think for one moment that this Bill is a perfect solution, as the Liberals refer to their leader's private member's Bill as being perfect. We want the opinions of all interested Albertans before we enact this important piece of legislation.

Speaking about changes and improvements, Mr. Speaker, we have revamped the committee system to allow the public the opportunity to participate. I'm very pleased to report that that public participation is there and growing. As a matter of fact, I'm very pleased to see that some of the opposition members attend these meetings in order that they can get accurate information, something their research has difficulty providing. The standing policy committees bring together the public, the MLAs, and the cabinet ministers not only for debate but to put forth on the table what it is that we're doing. This is an open government. Our goal is simply to prevent bad legislation. By allowing public input, we will receive the best ideas, not just those from the opposition, because they certainly are far from best, but from all interested groups. We are reviewing the Alberta heritage savings trust fund publicly. The fund belongs to all Albertans, and we feel they must have a say in its future.

4:50

The most important part of the public consultation process will be the roundtables. We must review the mandate of all programs

and departments, especially Health and Education. The groups most upset about the roundtables are the Liberals and the special interest groups, who make a living from criticizing the government. The roundtables are set up so that we can work together – I repeat: so that we can work together – to arrive at solutions, something that we have in place, something that is working very well, which can be attested to by the success of the recent roundtable on health in Red Deer and the roundtables that are coming both in health and in education. Mr. Speaker, you can just check the list. All Albertans are being invited to become involved and in fact are doing so, giving the government some very good information to ponder.

A government's role is not to create jobs; however, governments can be influential in how jobs are created. Government-created jobs are usually just temporary measures, and the problems remain. What we are proposing is to have the role of government allow private enterprise to create jobs. These jobs would become more effective and, hopefully, permanent. To that end, Mr. Speaker, and that is reflected in the budget and the throne speech, this government is committed to keeping the taxes as low as possible. We're also committed to reducing the red tape and regulations that inhibit small businesses and cause entrepreneurs to look elsewhere at times because of the long lists of regulations. Those are going to be under review, with the specific intent that we can have a climate that is more conducive to investment and to continuing investment in Alberta.

We are also trying to avoid the raising of personal taxes. People across this province have indicated to all politicians that the limits of taxation are getting near. Some of the critics from across the way suggest that if this government continues to cut taxes, people will be begging for a tax increase. I quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, find that very, very difficult to accept. I don't ever recall talking to anyone in my constituency who felt that the taxation level was not yet high enough. Increasing personal taxes reduces consumer spending. That's how you hurt the economy. Our government has reiterated its commitment to no new taxes, no increased taxes, and no sales taxes.

Mr. Speaker, this government has made great strides in reorganizing government. The people of the Stony Plain constituency were very pleased to see that the size of government is being reduced and that the efforts to reduce the deficit are in fact becoming effective.

I believe that Albertans are very accustomed to a high level of service. However, I think they are also very aware of the fact that there is a limit as to how high this service can go, and I think this government is going to find the balance that is acceptable to Albertans and, most importantly, affordable to Albertans also.

We have already reduced the size of government. Starting at the top, the number of cabinet ministers has been reduced. Deputy ministers and ministerial staff have been reduced. Salaries of ministers and senior officials have been either reduced or frozen, and the size of the government work force, as has been indicated in today's budget speech, has been reduced by over 2,000 positions, most of them through voluntary packages.

Mr. Speaker, we're getting out of business where there is no need to be in business. When we announced the privatization of liquor stores, the Liberal leader was astounded to see hard liquor for sale in stores so fast, but the public reaction, the business reaction, and even the police service reaction was: it's about time.

I take great pride in being a part of this government as we move into the future. The throne speech outlines our plan and our commitment to Alberta. We will balance the budget by reducing the size of government, not by taking more money out of taxpayers' pockets. We will consult with Albertans at every

opportunity to ensure that we are following the direction of the people, not just small, special interest groups. We will reduce the red tape and regulations; that will allow businesspeople to flourish in Alberta. Our taxes, Mr. Speaker, are the lowest in Canada, and we will keep them there.

In conclusion, I look forward to following His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech from the Throne. I know the expectations are high of this government, and I know we have the ability and the determination to succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My association with this Legislature began some years ago. As a high school student I was hired over several summers as a groundsworker – we were called labourers in those days – to cut the grass and to tend the flower beds around this building and other government buildings in the area. Ernie Stowe, the then head gardener, gave me some rather basic advice. Because government ministers of the day occupied offices with a bird's-eye view of the grounds, they could keep an eye on the summer help, and they seemed to take great delight in reporting any of us found not paying due attention to our jobs. This was a source of continual embarrassment to the head gardener. To avoid that, Ernie's advice was that you should keep your head down and at least pretend to be working or get the blazes out of sight. Given the attention the media has given politicians of late, I can see that the same advice offered outside this Chamber is equally applicable inside the Chamber.

As the newly elected Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, I am pleased to reply to the Speech from the Throne. As proud as I am of our constituency and its citizens, I'll resist this opportunity to sing its praises and will depend on a future handout prepared for each member to do that for me. I'm sure my constituents will understand, for there are far more pressing issues that need the attention of this Assembly, and I speak specifically of our education system.

The Speech from the Throne makes a number of references to education. It speaks of the need for well-educated citizens and rethinking the way education is provided. I couldn't agree more, Mr. Speaker. There is a serious need for us to revisit the notion of schools and the notion of schooling. We need to remind ourselves that schools are first and foremost intellectual centres. Whether a primary school, a high school, a college, a technical school, or a university, schools are first and foremost intellectual centres. Their focus on intellectual activity distinguishes them from all our other institutions. Hot meals may be served to students in schools, but schools are not restaurants. Physical education may be offered in schools, but schools are not recreation centres. Students may receive health services in schools, but schools are not health clinics. Schools may provide students with a safe haven, but schools are not homes, nor are they shelters. I fear that we have somehow forgotten this basic notion.

5:00

We have turned to our schools and demanded more and more: more programs, more services, more responsibility. In doing so, we and they have become confused and uncertain as to the role that schools and instructors and the public should play in our tax-supported education system. The result is that schools have been detracted from their task of fostering the intellectual development of students. Hard pressed for funds and afraid of offending, our institutions have not been able to say no and have not been able to meet expectations. The resulting criticism of education from

kindergarten to postgraduate school has become a national sport. Individuals in this province have made an avocation of school bashing. Our schools are compared with Japan, Germany, and anywhere else that the critics can find a test on which our students don't excel. Our colleges and universities are berated for offering courses that somehow or other offend the corporate agenda.

On this continent we have watched as the nation to our south retreated from the bold notion of public education into private schooling. We've watched as the rich, armed with their vouchers from the public purse, march off to private schools, adding their own resources to create the kinds of schools that all children deserve. We've watched the public schools, robbed of popular support, struggle and cope with too many students for whom private schooling is not an option. We've watched public schools take on the high cost of special-needs students that private schools will not enroll. Intellectual pursuits in our province's public universities and colleges have been singled out for a special form of attack. Evidently intellectual development, it seems, is to be replaced by vocational development. It is clear that the government, as evidenced by its proposed funding cuts and the way it will coerce discussions at its upcoming roundtables, has completely dismissed intellectual development as the legitimate domain of higher education.

Many legislators and some of their managers in our province have long been suspicious of colleges and universities. Now, with the lack of funds as their excuse, they will seize the opportunity to legitimize their anti-intellectualism. They may well destroy our system of higher education in the process. Education for hire is the new rule. "Buddy, can you make a buck?" will now be the criterion used to judge successful professors and instructors. The medieval traditions of the universities will be left behind as colleges and universities prostrate themselves to market forces, the free enterprise university with research sanctioned by Xerox.

True to the technical model it advocates, nothing will be left to chance. Each course is to become part of a massive assembly line. Outcome measures, performance objectives, and productivity counts will make sure that any deviants who enter our schools in the mistaken notion that there they may engage in an open search for truth, explore a wide range of ideas, or speculate on reality will quickly be brought to heel. There is little room for openness, unplanned discussion, spirited debate, the free flow of ideas, pursuit of intuition, or divergent speculation. Any researcher who cannot couple the concerns of research with corporate sponsorship will soon learn that it is research that brings in money from outside that really counts. Like their lower-school counterparts, our schools of higher education, dispirited by underfunding, buffeted by a tax, and held ransom by provincial financing, will likely succumb. It is especially disturbing that the opportunity for the public to seriously examine adult education in our province at the roundtables will be lost.

Other provinces, like British Columbia, have departments of advanced education that take leadership seriously. Ours seems content to concern itself with management concerns. While other departments speak of helping individuals develop their potential, ours speaks of performance objectives. While others speak of helping citizens achieve their personal goals, ours speaks of maximizing productivity measures, and while others try to define needed-knowledge bases, ours tries to define outcome measures. Maybe we do need some outcome measures, Mr. Speaker, not the minutia that will likely be the results of the work of the bureaucratic education managers but maybe some real-world measures. Maybe we should judge our success in how many citizens hold public library cards, in the number of books each citizen buys in a year, in the number of museums Albertans visit, in the number

of trips to the theatre we make, in the number of art galleries we view, in the number of newspapers we read, in the number of dollars donated to those in need, in the number of hours we spend volunteering, in the amount of waste we are each responsible for eliminating.

The advanced education roundtables are a disservice to all Albertans, especially to those who labour in the interests of students. There is every indication that they are a charade, an expensive public relations exercise to legitimize the government's decision to cut 15 percent from the postsecondary school budget over the next three years. Albertans, especially our students, deserve better. Is it any wonder that political cynicism is at an all-time high?

An unfortunate result has been a muting of the voices that should be speaking for public education. The notion that an educated citizenry was basic to democracy and that this education was so basic to democratic life that it should be provided all from the public purse was born on this continent. The notion that the tax-supported schools would bring together all youth regardless of financial or social background and instruct them as one was our idea. The notion that education should be available well past the learning of the rudiments into adulthood was created here. The notion that the free market of ideas should dominate colleges and universities was adopted for our institutions. Now is the time for those muted voices to be heard. To paraphrase an often used keyboarding practice phrase, now is the time for all good friends to come to the aid of education.

This is literacy week. What better time for those who have profited from tax-supported schools, which includes most of the members of this Assembly, to return to those schools and renew our obligations? What better time to visit schools to read to children, to accept college and university invitations to spend time learning about the daily life of our college and university students, to talk to school trustees, teachers, boards of governors, and professors? What better time to learn firsthand how shallow some of the criticisms are and the damage they do? Now is the time to rededicate ourselves to our public schools.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

5:10

MRS. FORSYTH: Mr. Speaker, before I embark on my first ever speech in the new role as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to extend to you the most sincere congratulations on your election as Speaker of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate and praise His Honour the Lieutenant Governor. His Speech from the Throne will serve well as a checkpoint for future reference as we carry out our tasks and responsibilities on behalf of those who elected us to form this government, for the throne speech highlights the priorities and agenda that this government has put forth and has committed to seeing through. A few years from now the awesome responsibilities that the people of Alberta have vested in us may tempt or force us off the course that we have charted. It is at these times that we can look at the Speech from the Throne to find guidance and wisdom that will keep us focused.

Mr. Speaker, my compliments to the hon. Treasurer. You've kept your promise, and you've stuck to it.

The people of Calgary-Fish Creek constituency who elected me to serve their interests in this Chamber will like very much the tone that the Lieutenant Governor outlined in his Speech from the Throne. The citizens of Calgary-Fish Creek are by and large a very young lot. If you believe it, nearly 80 percent of them are under the age of 45; 78.3 percent, to be precise. Even more astounding than this is the fact that 27.2 percent of Calgary-Fish

Creek residents are under 15 years of age. So when the young parents of these children hear that this government is bound by legislation, that being in the form of the Deficit Elimination Act that will do away with the consolidated deficit in four years, they are assured that their children won't be paralysed by a huge debt. When His Honour the Lieutenant Governor proclaimed in his speech, "We hand our children and grandchildren a clear title instead of a huge unpaid bill," I knew immediately that this would please residents in the Calgary-Fish Creek constituency. They realize that a few sacrifices will have to be made to achieve this, but they recognize that they are necessary if the welfare of the province is to remain intact or, better yet, improved. Perhaps I should clarify something, Mr. Speaker. I believe I have one of the greatest constituencies in the whole province, keeping in mind that there are 83 MLAs who will also tell you the same thing.

As I reflect upon the Speech from the Throne, I am at once encouraged and excited at the direction this government is taking. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor stressed the theme of A Change for Albertans. There are a staggering 49 bright new Members of the Legislative Assembly whose collective aim, be they on this side of the House or that, is to change Alberta for the better by working side by side with the citizens who elected us to this Chamber. That is the reality of this change, Mr. Speaker. It is a change in the attitudes of the politicians whereby they are willing to let the people make more of the necessary decisions on policy direction. I reiterated a little quote throughout my campaign that I vow always to take into consideration while representing Calgary-Fish Creek, and it reads like this: Sometimes we are so busy telling people what we are going to accomplish that we forget to ask them if that's what they want us to accomplish.

Mr. Speaker, I just had the opportunity to witness the fruits of the change in the way government carries out its business. I sat on the health roundtable in Red Deer and found the process and what it produced remarkable. I have always had a personal conviction that if you want to know the best way to do things, you should consult those who are actually doing them. Call these the people in the trenches, if you will. On August 26 and 27 our Health minister and various other members of this government received invaluable input from the people in the trenches, being their doctors, nurses, board members, or orderlies. There was also a positive contribution from the customers of health care in the form of suggestions and proposals from the ordinary citizens who will be affected by these decisions. This is the consultation process that will make this province prosper.

Mr. Speaker, this consultation process has always been applied and shown merit in an area that I consider to be of the most dire importance. When I spoke earlier of how many young families make up the Calgary-Fish Creek constituency, I am sure you might have guessed that education is a foremost priority of the people I represent. I am also sure that this sentiment does not cease beyond the borders of the Calgary-Fish Creek constituency, for it is our educational system that plays such a vital role in the development of Alberta's children. To be sure, the children of Alberta enjoy a pretty good educational system. However, most Albertans I have come in contact with, especially those from Calgary-Fish Creek, are not satisfied with pretty good. Our city and our province did not get to where we are today by being content with pretty good. They demand that the institutions that cultivate young minds into the future leaders of this province be the best in Canada and the best in the world.

Now, some might try to tell you that the way to go about this is by pumping more money into the education departments' budgets. That is an ideological mentality in existence out there: more taxpayers' money with better services, be it in the realm of

education, health, social services, or whatever you have. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, that mentality does not exist on this side of the House. The members of this government realize that such thinking is far too simplistic to meet the demands of this province as we approach the turn of the century. We have declared our intent to find more creative, innovative, and cost-effective ways of meeting the educational needs of our children.

I have heard some great ideas come out of both education ministers' departments. I have also heard some great ideas from the educators themselves, and possibly of more importance, Mr. Speaker, I have heard great ideas come from the citizens whose children the system is intended to serve. There are a lot of excellent proposals on the table. Some of them have already been implemented, and some are still in the deliberation process. Since I am the mother of two teenage sons that are making their way through Alberta schools and a taxpayer, I am encouraged by what I foresee in the future of Alberta education. The future ought to reflect a back-to-the-basics theme. There has been a whole gamut of experimentation in our schools in the past decade or so. Some of these experiences have been profitable; however, some have proven inadequate. Many of my constituents have pointed out the seemingly high number of days off in the curriculum due to professional development days and workshops for teachers. The merit of these should be examined to ensure that the teachers and in turn the students are getting maximum benefits from these seminars. Essentially, there is a demand from those that I represent to move away from the frills and extras and strive for fundamentally sound reading, writing, and arithmetic. I must say that I agree with them, and I hope that I will be able to adequately address their concerns in the Legislature as a member of this government.

The final issue in the forefront for Calgary-Fish Creek constituents is one that I can readily identify with. There is a very strong, very broad consensus that the federal Young Offenders Act needs to be substantially toughened up. Youth crime is steadily on the rise, and there is a strong argument to be made that the leniency of the Young Offenders Act is largely to blame. The average citizen is outraged by the relative slap on the wrist that convicted young people, many of them repeat offenders, are receiving for serious crimes. They also represent the fact that they can no longer feel safe for themselves or their children.

Now, this is where it all ties back to some of our educational woes, Mr. Speaker. Much of the crime is going on in the schoolyards. Imagine how difficult it must be to live in an environment marred by guns, knives, and drugs. I am convinced that reforms to the Young Offenders Act are badly needed and will go a long way in approving a safe atmosphere in our schools so students can excel in their studies. This is why I have committed myself to the cause of working towards the promotion of a youth justice committee which has reforming the Young Offenders Act as its chief objective.

Of course, this is an area of federal jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, but that should not deter any government from making our views and suggestions for change very clear. We can work with the federal government to make these amendments a reality. I was quite encouraged by Prime Minister Kim Campbell's recent visit to Edmonton, in which she announced her intentions to reform the Young Offenders Act. I applaud her intentions, and hopefully she and her government will follow through on them, just as the government has done and is doing with its election-time promises. Albertans in Calgary-Fish Creek demand that they be transformed into action so that our streets, schools, and neighbourhoods will once again be safe.



Mr. Speaker, I have thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to bring forth the concerns of the citizens of Calgary-Fish Creek. They have high hopes for their government, their city, and their province. They realize of course, as I do, that success does not come easy, but then again I doubt that they would expect that it would. I shall close with a reference to a quote made by the first ever Premier, Alexander Rutherford, that was highlighted in the Honourable Lieutenant Governor's Speech from the Throne. You recall that Mr. Rutherford boasted: "We are a hopeful people. We have no pessimists in Alberta. A pessimist could not succeed." Well, there are a whole lot of optimists in Calgary-Fish Creek, and I'm an optimist that the future holds good things for us.

Thank you.

5:20

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought we were running out of time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in reply to the amendment to the Speech from the Throne. Also, I want to convey my sincere congratulations to Mr. Speaker on his election to a very necessary and demanding position in this House.

As a rookie member this will be indeed a new and exciting experience for me, as I am sure it will be for every rookie MLA elected in the June 15 election. It is somewhat overwhelming at times, but as they say, we'll soon learn the ropes and begin to feel more comfortable. I look forward to many vigorous debates and invigorating speeches. Most of all, I hope and pray that jointly we will be able to do something about the mess our beautiful Alberta is in financially. Otherwise, it will be our children and their children who will bear the burdens that we are placing upon them.

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to my maiden speech. It is a privilege to rise in this Legislature and give my first speech on behalf of the citizens of Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont. It is at a time like this that I am humbled by the responsibilities these citizens have placed before me, but I promise them to do my best to deserve their trust.

Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont is located in northeast Edmonton. It includes the northern half of the old town of Beverly, which amalgamated with the city of Edmonton in 1961, as well as the newer areas to the north, namely Hermitage and Clareview. Beverly itself was originally a coal mining centre. The tipple was located at 42nd Street and 120th Avenue and supplied coal for the town and surrounding communities. The old community consists of a variety of established and new housing. Newer areas to the north consist of a mixture of multiple and single-family dwellings and on average tend to attract younger families. The level of services has been improving. The twin arenas facility at the new Clareview recreation complex is a welcome addition, and the new John D. Bracco junior high school has filled a growing need, although a high school problem may loom in the future. In short, this is a diverse and vibrant area.

Commercially the area is also diverse. To the east, in Strathcona industrial park, is a sizable number of industrial enterprises, including such large ones as Celanese Canada Inc. and Lafarge Canada Inc. More central is the light industrial area of Kennedale, which still has land available for development and, in some cases, redevelopment. The former old retail district along 118th Avenue is somewhat of a mixed bag. However, promise is shown by recent plans of local merchants to follow in the footsteps of those of Old Strathcona and of 124th Street to revitalize the area.

I hope my enthusiasm for the corner of Edmonton in which I live has not deceived you. Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont is not the new utopia. Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont has problems, big problems, problems that we in this Assembly can take steps to help solve and in so doing help solve similar problems in other urban areas. Alas, Mr. Speaker, I hear few concrete proposals to this in what the government put forward in the Speech from the Throne. Local leaders have long been frustrated in their attempts to improve the quality of life in northeast Edmonton by encouraging projects of which we can be proud. Instead, we get landfill sites, we become neighbours to jails, and we are victims of a scandalous, low-rent housing policy, a policy which sees low-income people living as outcasts. In more ways than one, northeast Edmonton has long been treated as a glorified dumping ground, and it will take more than the dynamism of the local citizens to turn that around.

Let's consider some specifics. Mr. Speaker, property crime is rampant in northeast Edmonton, and about 80 percent of auto thefts and break and enters in Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont are committed by youths aged 12 to 17, to the point where the level of youth crime has reached a crisis proportion. This crime must be curbed before it gets totally out of hand, but while community policing and prevention programs such as Neighbourhood Watch are vital ways to reduce this type of crime, the real solution involves providing young people with positive outlets for their energy and positive ways of coping with frustrations.

In short, we should seek prevention through providing more attractive and productive life-styles. In recent years I have been fortunate to be associated with organizations such as the Second Chance for Youth Association and the Abbotsfield youth project. These groups strive to get dropouts back to school and to raise self-esteem by giving youths something creative to do. Whatever support we can give now to these and similar organizations can only lead to human and financial savings in the future.

Contributing to the problems of youth is the problem of family violence. Community and family services reports that its Beverly office had nearly double the rate of home violence reported of any other Edmonton office except one. It indicated that 75 to 80 percent of its cases had a family violence factor, compared to other CFS offices which are reporting 35 to 50 percent. Our figure is far too high. This Assembly must find ways to support local agencies more vigorously and encourage, both morally and financially, provincial and civic administrations to find ways to solve this critical and tragic problem.

Mr. Speaker, crimes of violence and property are products of many causes, not the least of which are feelings of frustration and despair. These emotions can be fueled by such conditions as unacceptably high unemployment, a current situation which cries out for large-scale job creation. The creation of jobs must be through true diversification and the facilitation of small business and industrial development. For example, industrial land in Kennedale lies largely undeveloped simply because it is not being promoted. Development here would create a great number of jobs for residents of my constituency and neighbouring constituencies.

On April 22 of this year the hon. Premier rose in this Assembly to announce a nine-point plan, which he put forward as a program of fiscal restraint, administrative reform . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. Pursuant to Standing Order 4(2), the Chair is required to adjourn the House at this time, it being 5:30. I just want to let you know that you will be the first to be recognized when this matter is next called so that you can complete your remarks.

[At 5:31 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

