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Alberta's Record Budget

AN ADDRESS BY

Hon. A. O. Aalborg

March 12, 1966



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Hon. E. C. Manning:

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are happy to have you join us once more for another "Tele-Facts" program.

Last week, your Provincial Treasurer, the Hon. Mr. Aalborg, brought down in the Provincial Legislature, the largest budget in the history of this Province. The fact that such a program could be produced without any increase in taxation, and without any public borrowing, indicates the tremendous development and progress we are making in our Province. I felt certain all of you would like to hear, first-hand, the highlights of the largest budget in Alberta's history. I am delighted to have with me tonight, Mr. Aalborg, who is here to tell you about it now. Mr. Aalborg . . .

Hon. A. O. Aalborg:

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On Friday, March 4th, I had the great pleasure and privilege of presenting on behalf of the Government, the Provincial Budget for the coming year, to the 1966 Session of the Legislature now in progress.

This evening I would like to give you a summary of the main highlights of that Budget.

The annual Budget for the Province of Alberta for the year ahead which I have submitted for the consideration of the Legislature provides for a record breaking increase of \$188,193,049 above the Budget for the present fiscal year which ends on March 31st.

Total estimated expenditures in the Budget for the next year which ends on March 31st, 1967, are \$681,975,911 as compared with \$493,782,862

for the current year ending this month. Stated in round figures, which are far easier to remember, total expenditures for 1966/67 are \$682 million as compared with \$494 million in 1965/66 for an increase of \$188 million, or about 38%, and are equal to about \$455 for every man, woman and child in the Province.

The total Budget for the coming year is approximately equal to the combined total of all the Budgets of the Province from 1905 to 1947, the first 42 years in the life of the Province, and it is also interesting to note that the Budget for the year ahead is more than twice the Budget for 1961/62, only five years ago, which was \$337 million.

The Budget for the coming year reflects the dynamic and very rapid economic growth of the Province during the present decade — a decade which, particularly in Alberta, can be called the soaring sixties!

It is a fabulous Budget for a fabulous Province!

You will recall that late last year Premier Manning announced the details of the Government's proposed new program for a new generation of progressive people. The increased expenditures proposed by the Government in the budget presented to the Legislature on March 4th are all in keeping with the objectives of this modern and creative program for a new generation of Alberta people.

Huge increases are proposed for investment in education in order to ensure that our most valuable asset, the human resources of our young people may be developed to their fullest potential; and money is provided to set up a new Department of Youth. During the year ahead the Department of Education proposes to spend \$155 million as

compared with \$116.5 million during 1965/66 for an increase of about \$38.5 million. This includes about \$98 million for the Foundation Program of School Finance, \$20 million more than the current year. It also includes \$24.5 million for the University of Alberta, \$6 million more, for operational grants only and not for new buildings and equipment which I will mention later. Nearly \$5 million has been included for Junior Colleges, an increase of \$3.5 million, and substantial increases are also provided for the Institutes of Technology at Calgary and Edmonton.

The Department of Health plans to spend \$145 million during 1966/67 which is nearly \$25 million more than in 1965/66. This includes \$98 million for the Alberta Hospitalization Plan for an increase of nearly \$13 million. It also includes \$10 million for subsidies in the voluntary Alberta Medical Care Program, which will be renamed the Alberta Health Care Program, about \$7 million more than in 1965/66 for this purpose, and it also provides over \$5 million for Nursing Homes.

The Budget for next year provides very large increases for financial assistance to municipalities and also makes provision for a new program of tax discounts to reduce the burden of property tax on home owners. Direct financial assistance to municipalities will amount to \$176 million which is \$40 million more than in 1965/66. In addition to this very substantial increase in financial assistance to municipalities, the Budget also includes \$15 million to pay a property tax discount of \$50.00 to every municipal ratepayer who is the owner of the home in which he lives. These important features of the Budget will make it possible for all municipalities to meet the rising cost of their programs in 1966 with little or no

increase in mill rate, and will cut the tax bill for thousands of home owners this year.

The Provincial Budget for 1966/67 provides record breaking increases for constructing new highways, bridges and public buildings. The Department of Highways proposes to spend about \$79 million for an increase of nearly \$11 million. This includes \$37 million for building new main highways; \$7.5 million for freeways and structures in cities; \$7 million for new bridges, and \$1 million for a new program of building roads to Provincial Parks. The Department of Public Works proposes to spend nearly \$135 million as compared with \$73 million in 1965/66 for an increase of about \$62 million. This includes \$115 million, more than twice as much as in 1965/66, for the construction of new buildings. This greatly enlarged construction program includes \$22 million for new buildings on the Edmonton campus of the University of Alberta; \$16 million for new buildings on the Calgary Campus and \$9 million for new buildings at the Technical Institutes operated by the Department of Education at Calgary and Edmonton. It also includes \$8 million for hospitals and other new buildings for the Department of Health; \$7.5 million for new construction at the Schools of Agriculture and for other buildings required by the Department of Agriculture as well as \$4 million for the construction of the Provincial Museum and Archives Building at Edmonton which is the main Centennial project of the Province for 1967. The construction program of the Department of Public Works also provides \$4 million for construction of new buildings required by the Department of Welfare including \$1.5 million for new homes for senior citizens.

The Budget for next year proposes larger expenditures for cultural activities and for parks

and other recreational facilities, and also includes a gift of \$5 million to the Alberta-Glenbow Institute at Calgary in order to retain in Alberta the very large and valuable collection of the Glenbow Foundation and to ensure that the work of this Foundation will be continued on a permanent basis.

The Budget for 1966/67 makes provision for large increases for the further development of roads, airstrips and other projects in the far flung northern areas of the Province. Five million dollars, twice as much as in the current year, has been included for this purpose. Also included is a loan of about \$15,000,000 to the Alberta Resources Railway Corporation to begin construction of a railway line to serve a rich resource area south of Grande Prairie. This railway will be constructed under an agreement with Canadian National Railways which provides for repayment of the loan in full, with interest, by CNR.

At the beginning of my remarks I pointed out that total estimated expenditures in the Budget of the Province for 1966/67 have soared to \$682 million which is 38% or \$188 million more than in the Budget for the fiscal year 1965/66.

These greatly increased expenditures will be paid by estimated revenues of \$613 million which will be received during the year, and the estimated deficit of \$69 million will be paid from the surplus funds of the Province which have accumulated from the operation of the Government in previous years.

No new taxes will be introduced and no direct borrowing will be required.

The estimated total revenue of \$613 million for 1966/67 is \$142 million higher than in 1965/66 and includes the following main items among many others: \$257 million from natural resources;

\$95 million from personal income and corporation taxes and estate taxes; \$64 million from the gasoline tax and motor vehicle licenses.

Like all Budgets since 1935 the Provincial Budget for 1966/67 clearly illustrates the principles and policies which the people of Alberta expect their Government to follow and which have guided this Government in all of its endeavors.

The proposed increase in expenditures for education, for a new Department of Youth, and for assistance to the Cities in constructing freeways, illustrate the keen sense of responsible leadership and the positive and progressive attitude of the people and the Government of Alberta in meeting the challenge of changing times and conditions with new and improved programs that are in keeping with modern standards and requirements.

The increases which are proposed for the construction of more new highways and public buildings and for financial assistance to municipalities reflect the far-reaching benefits which constantly rising revenues from the orderly development of our abundant natural resources are bringing to all the people of the Province.

The proposal to raise the rate of subsidies in the Alberta Health Care Program is tangible evidence of the firm and continuing resolve of the Government to bring a high standard and full range of health services within easy financial reach of every individual and family residing in the Province.

The proposed tax discount for home owners indicates the strong desire of the Government to relieve the burden of taxation whenever and wherever possible.

The proposal to increase expenditures for the

further development of roads and airstrips in northern areas and to expand the community development program for the advancement of the native Indian people of these areas demonstrates that this Government has full confidence in the bright future of all regions of the Province.

In serving the people of Alberta for more than thirty years the Government has been guided by the basic principle that the purpose of democratic government is to give the people the results they want from the management of their public affairs. This long-standing policy has brought the people and the Government of Alberta to the very favorable position which we now enjoy, and has made it possible to provide a Budget for the year ahead which can best be described as a fabulous Budget for a fabulous Province!

Hon. E. C. Manning:

Thank you very much, Mr. Aalborg. Ladies and Gentlemen, \$682 million is a lot of money. Our responsibility, as your government, will be to see that, during the ensuing year, this money is spent in a way that will assure you a dollar of value for every dollar spent. Keep in mind also, that we couldn't begin to have this kind of Budget if we were dependent upon taxation as the only means of public revenue. Out of the programs we have followed in this Province of preserving your public resources for you and developing them in your interest, we have been able to arrive at this situation, where you can all benefit from these returns in such large amounts without the imposition of heavy taxation on our people.

Thank you for looking in on the program tonight. I hope if you have any questions, you will let us know. Join us again next week, same time, same channel. Thank you and Good-Night.