

TELE-FACTS

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Youth Ministry

AN ADDRESS BY
HON. E. C. MANNING
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Hon. E. C. Manning:

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Tonight I'd like to discuss two matters relating to the new Provincial program that we will be recommending at the coming session of the Legislature; but before turning to these matters, I have been asked by a number of our viewers to clarify one further point with respect to the home-owners' tax discount that I talked to you about on previous programs. The particular enquiry is this: What about the case of home-owners who are purchasing their homes under an agreement by which taxes are included in the monthly payments? The basic principle governing the home-owners' tax discount is that the home must be owned by, or be in the process of being purchased by the owner, and the owner must be actually living in the home. As long as these two essentials are met — whether the taxes are paid in a lump sum by the owner, or included in the monthly payments he is making on his home — this is purely a matter of mechanics, and we will be working out the most practical method of taking care of these cases to ensure that all home-owners who qualify will be able to benefit by the home-owners' tax discount.

Turning to the matters I want to talk about tonight — in preparing our new program for Alberta, we have given a lot of thought to ways and means of improving the democratic processes, including the procedures whereby you can indicate more clearly to your government the results you want from the management of your public affairs. I think you will agree that we have tried hard over the years to develop in this Province a practical working democracy. It has never been our viewpoint that governments know better than

the people themselves what they want from the management of their public affairs; and so we have done our best to keep in close touch with all of you, through your elected representatives, as well as through the other channels of communication between you, the people, and we, your government. I believe we can say that these efforts have been successful on the whole, but there's always room for improvement, and we're determined to make further improvements, with your help.

We want to see an even greater recognition given to your right to express your wishes through the democratic processes and to make those processes as simple and as workable and effective as possible. You will agree that the more people are able to exercise their right to ask what they wish from the management of their affairs and have their wishes respected, the greater the measure of responsibility which they naturally must assume for the results of their democratic freedom of choice. This responsibility, I am sure you, as the people of this Province, are prepared to assume. In any of these matters, we will do our best, as your government, to provide you with factual information that will help you choose wisely and well; for after all, this is the key to a strong democracy.

I have already told you of the greater use that we propose should be made of plebiscites, as democratic expressions of your wishes, and of steps we propose, to simplify such plebiscites. In addition, we are undertaking a review of Provincial Statutes and regulations, to eliminate, as far as possible, restrictions and requirements which interfere with individual freedom of decision and action. The objective is to reduce laws

and regulations to the essential ground-rules that are necessary for the protection of society as a whole. This is a complicated and difficult task, but with your co-operation. I am confident that we can make a goodly number of worthwhile improvements. Our goal, as I have said, is to ensure that Alberta will be a Province where democracy is really made to work in the day-to-day public affairs of our people.

The second matter I'd like to talk about tonight, particularly concerns all of you young people who are residents of this Province. It is a pretty interesting fact that in Alberta, over one-half of all of the population of this Province is 25 years of age or under. We have a much higher percentage of young people than the national average in Canada; and it is to those of you in this age group that I want to speak now. I think I would be right in saying that many of you have been pretty much "browned-off" by the trends you have seen in public affairs in this country in recent years. You have not been impressed by the amount of political bickering and wrangling that occupies so much of the time of Parliament, while the business of the country is neglected or treated so often as if it were merely a political football. As young people, your interests are naturally in the future and what it holds for you, and you must wonder at times if the older generation, in charge of the nation's public affairs, hasn't lost touch with your aspirations and hopes for the future. While perhaps there isn't much that we as a Province can do about the national situation, I want to assure you that as far as Alberta is concerned, we are determined to make this the Canadian Province in which young people will have the greatest opportunity to fulfill their ambitions and aspirations; and in

all constructive efforts to that end, I want your active participation and help. Alberta is a logical Province to fill this role. As I have said, we have more young people in Alberta than the average across Canada as a whole. Alberta is a young Province. We have a vast variety of resources. We have a great deal of industrial and commercial development, and we are going to see a lot more in the days ahead. Now this all means numerous job opportunities for young people with ambition, and who are willing to assume responsibility. No matter how you look at it, this is the Province of Canada with a future, and that makes it a young man's Province which no other area in Canada can match.

We've tried to create in this Province the facilities necessary to make Alberta the best Province in Canada from the standpoint of young people with an eye to the future. Our educational facilities are excellent and they are consistently being further improved. Most of our schools are modern and well-equipped. We have more facilities in the fields of vocational and technical education in proportion to our population than any other Province in Canada. We now have 50 vocational schools, and our technical institutes certainly are among the finest in the country. As you probably know, the Northern Alberta Technical Institute in Edmonton is the largest of its kind in Canada. The Southern Alberta Technical Institute has a splendid record and we now have a program of major new construction there that will make these two Technical Institutes unexcelled in this country.

In the field of Apprenticeship Training and In-Service Training, our program in Alberta exceeds that of any other Province in Canada on

a population basis. Our University facilities at both Edmonton and Calgary campuses are excellent and they are being expanded rapidly. We have, in this Province, numerous scholarships and bursaries — The Queen Elizabeth Fund and the application of the Federal Students' Loan Fund. All of these provisions create a situation in Alberta where no student with ambition and ability need to be denied an opportunity to obtain technical or university education, for lack of funds.

Now, to all of these existing provisions we are proposing to add, at the coming session of the Legislature, as I have already told you, a special Ministry of Youth. This Ministry will be yours to further your interests and to help you realize your fondest hopes and aspirations for the future. It will foster and encourage all forms of constructive youth activities and youth organizations. We already have in this Province many fine youth organizations, such as Four-H Clubs, Junior Achievement Groups, and many others. I want to make it clear, that our intention is not to have the Youth Ministry do things for young people, but rather to help you young people do things for yourselves. We want to stimulate youth interest and participation in self-development, training for leadership in all spheres of social, cultural, business, and public affairs. We want to see that special emphasis is placed on self-reliance and individual initiative and enterprise and responsibility. I believe that our young people in Alberta are among the most self-reliant in Canada. I was very interested to see the result of the survey that was reported recently in the local press — the survey among Grade 12 high-school students across Canada. Among the interesting matters reported was the attitude toward government control of business. Alberta's students

showed the strongest free-enterprise inclinations, with 65% supporting the view that there is too much, or just the right amount of government control. This compares with 53% across Canada as a whole. The report goes on to say that to the statement, "Government should stay out of business which can be run by private enterprise", Alberta gave the most emphatic "yes" — from 72% of our Grade 12 students, as compared with a national "yes" from 57%. You young people of this Province are entitled to a great deal of credit and commendation for the evidence that you show of your self-reliance and independence. You don't want to be dependent on the State — you want an opportunity to do things for yourselves. And this is our purpose in establishing this special Youth Ministry.

In addition to the things I have mentioned, we want the Youth Ministry to concentrate also on developing a Sports program for young people of Alberta. This is a part of the zest of youth and it's a good thing. We hope that this Ministry can help to encourage Sports programs which will provide opportunities for a large number of young Albertans to get involved in these things, and then we want to give them some assistance if they are able to go on and compete in National and International meets, and so on.

Our time is about gone, young people. I have mentioned these things because I want you to look on this Youth Ministry as something especially for you. We want you to take an active interest in it. I hope you will write and give us your ideas and your suggestions; and let's work together to make this another important "first" for Alberta. Address your letters to "Tele-Facts", Box 2300, Edmonton, and be sure to join us again next week.