

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, March 27, 1992** 10:00 a.m.  
Date: 92/03/27  
[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased this morning, as a result of the negotiations with Alberta teachers and the department recommencing, to present petitions from teachers, 75 in number, from the Banff community high school, the Banff elementary school, the Exshaw school, Elizabeth Barrett elementary in Cochrane . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. The Chair is well aware that there are going to be a number of petitions on this important issue. Perhaps we could just say the number of schools in one's constituency rather than listing every single place.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, there are 75 teachers who have signed these petitions, and I'm pleased to present them today.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions urging the government to come to a quick, equitable, and fair solution with teachers over their retirement fund. The petitions are from 10 schools signed by 237 teachers. Nine of these schools are within my riding of Edmonton-Meadowlark, and one is just outside.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Drayton Valley.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a petition signed by 21 teachers at the Greenfield elementary school asking for a fair solution to the teachers' pension situation.

MR. SPEAKER: Drayton Valley, followed by Grande Prairie.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to file petitions on behalf of 137 teachers from 10 schools in the constituency of Drayton Valley to achieve some solution to the pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, if I could further file petitions on behalf of my colleague the hon. Member for Whitecourt, seven schools from

the constituency of Whitecourt represented by 123 teachers on the same basis.

Thank you.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce petitions this morning from 11 schools in the constituency of Grande Prairie signed by 203 teachers with my best wishes for an early solution to the problem.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to give notice that under Standing Order 40 I will seek unanimous consent to consider the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly congratulate Dr. Samuel Weiss and doctoral student Brent Reynolds, both of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Medicine, for their breakthrough research in brain cell research.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

### Bill 9

#### Nova Terms of Service Regulation Validation Act

MR. HORSMAN: On behalf of my colleague the Minister of Energy I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Nova Terms of Service Regulation Validation Act.

This regulation limits the quantity of natural gas that may be delivered at designated delivery points and has other features which will be dealt with in second reading.

[Leave granted; Bill 9 read a first time]

### Bill 12

#### Natural Gas Marketing Amendment Act, 1992

MR. HORSMAN: I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Natural Gas Marketing Amendment Act, 1992, on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Energy.

[Leave granted; Bill 12 read a first time]

### Bill 10

#### Energy Resources Conservation Amendment Act, 1992

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave today to introduce Bill 10, the Energy Resources Conservation Amendment Act, 1992.

This amendment, Mr. Speaker, would allow the Energy Resources Conservation Board to establish and/or participate in joint panels with agencies in other jurisdictions. Additionally, the ERCB, as you may be aware, currently can apply to a court to restrain a person from continuing an activity requiring board approval. This amendment will allow for the ERCB to not only restrain but also enforce its orders through the court.

[Leave granted; Bill 10 read a first time]

### Bill 11

#### Petroleum Marketing Amendment Act, 1992

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave also to introduce Bill 11, the Petroleum Marketing Amendment Act, 1992.

The purpose of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to clarify the authority of the Petroleum Marketing Commission to enter into a wider range of activities and transactions to fulfill the commission's responsibility on behalf of the Crown, and also it would give the commission sufficient authority to deal effectively with over- and under-deliveries of Crown royalty crude oil.

[Leave granted; Bill 11 read a first time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would move that Bills 10 and 11, moved by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to file with the House today two reports: the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation annual report for the period April 1, 1990, to March 31, 1991, and the eighth annual report of the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves for the period April 1, 1990, to March 31, 1991.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table in the Assembly today the 1990 annual report of the Environment Council of Alberta.

**Point of Order**  
**Tabling a Cited Document**

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I refer the Chair to *Hansard*, page 103, where the Minister of the Environment promised to table a document referred to in debate on Wednesday regarding *Toward 2000 Together*. I'm still waiting.

MR. KLEIN: Well, it's only been a couple of days.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for bringing the matter to the attention of the Chair. Actually, when that's undertaken, it's usually the custom to have it delivered the same day. Perhaps the minister would be good enough to have that done today.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**  
**10:10**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly 63 bright young students from Riverview school in the Drayton Valley constituency. They are accompanied by a variety of teachers and conscientious parents and guardians, and I would ask that they rise in their place and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly two individuals from Sherwood Park, one of whom is a high-ranking official in the Sherwood Park chamber of commerce, Lillian Dykes, another individual who is active in the chamber, Chuck MacIntosh. Would they stand and receive the usual kindness of the House in welcoming them.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Cypress-Redcliff I'm pleased to introduce Ken and Marsha Lorber. They are visiting from out of country, from our neighbour to the south, from Portland, Oregon. I understand they're here on a cross-border shopping expedition. We welcome them. I ask them to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**  
**Gainers Inc.**

MR. MARTIN: I'd like today to return to the Pocklington fiasco. If I may, I want to quote a statement of the Provincial Treasurer yesterday where he says, and I quote: "We have nothing to hide. We're going to get it out in the open through the court process." Well, I'd like to file with the Assembly copies of correspondence between the lawyers of the government and the lawyers of Peter Pocklington. In this correspondence the government asks that certain documents be kept off the public record in the court case. Freedom of information, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Treasurer is simply this: given that the Provincial Treasurer said yesterday and has indicated many times that detailed information about the Pocklington fiasco would come out through court proceedings, why has the government thrown a veil of secrecy over these documents?

MR. JOHNSTON: First of all, the strategy with respect to how a court action, or several court actions, unfolds of course is, as you well know, controlled by the rules of this Assembly, which dictate that we have to be extremely careful about how we comment or outline the position which any one of the participants in an action may take. This is sub judice convention, Mr. Speaker, and clearly the Member for Edmonton-Norwood, even with his limited understanding of this process let alone the legal process, should know that.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, these are public documents. This Treasurer got up in the House yesterday and said that it would come out through the court proceedings, and now he refuses to answer, and we find out that the government is saying: don't make public these documents. Freedom of information for Pocklington, and the rest of us don't know what's going on.

My question to the Treasurer is simply this: what does the government have to hide? Why are they keeping these documents behind secret doors?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, again, the Member for Edmonton-Norwood simply adds to his own confusion when he tries to draw freedom of information into this question, because all freedom of information legislation that I've seen, Mr. Speaker, provides that the sub judice convention will prevail. It's quite well understood in all parliaments across Canada and certainly in the Mother of Parliaments itself that court actions of course are separate from the parliamentary process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me make one general point, however, and that is: if we were at all concerned about the information that is in our files that we will at some point make public, we would not have embarked upon the legal process knowing full well that at the end of the day, at the end of all the discoveries, the hearings, the court action itself, that information would be made public. To reveal it at a different time would simply prejudice the

government's position, and even the Member for Edmonton-Norwood has stood time and time again saying to us: when are you going to get on and sue Mr. Pocklington? Well, we have gone on and sued Mr. Pocklington in about seven different actions, which total well over \$75 million, a significant amount of money, protecting the taxpayer of Alberta, securing our interests in the fixed assets of that company, and finally, ensuring that jobs continue for over 1,000 Edmontonians in the Gainers meat packing operation.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if you'd made these documents open and aboveboard to begin with, maybe we wouldn't be in this deal with Pocklington. Behind closed doors you make secret documents; behind closed doors you make secret deals with your friends. It's the same old story with this government.

My question to the Treasurer is simply this: doesn't the fact that they don't want to release these documents have everything to do with their political embarrassment and nothing to do with the court case at all, Mr. Speaker? That's what it's all about.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, if you want to enumerate political embarrassments, let me start with Edmonton-Norwood.

There is no political embarrassment here at all. We entered into a normal, conventional guarantee. When guarantees are effected, at some point you have to understand that you may have to take action to secure your position. We secured the position against fixed assets of that entity. We are now securing positions under the master agreement, which allows us to take other actions, and finally, now that we've been inside the company and have it going on a good course with new opportunities for that company, we have found certain actions are necessary on behalf of Gainers as well as against the former shareholder. We have embarked on those actions. As I said, a considerable amount of time has been spent to ensure and sort out the position of the government and the Gainers company. Secondly, a tremendous number of legal actions have now been embarked upon against the former shareholder of that company to ensure that the assets of the province are protected and the assets of Gainers are secured, and then, Mr. Speaker, we'll go on to ensure that we can sell that entity into the private sector, where it belongs.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, they'll be keeping it behind closed doors until after the next election for sure.

### Provincial Budget

MR. MARTIN: From one political embarrassment to another. Mr. Speaker, a year ago this week the government was all too eager to bring down a so-called balanced budget a few days before their party's annual convention. Now, a year later, with the annual deficit nearing probably \$2 billion, the government does not have the political courage to bring down a budget before the same convention, a budget that will undoubtedly show that last year's budget was a sham, that makes a mockery out of good financial planning. My question specifically to the Treasurer is about his government and him, where he said that he would keep special warrant spending in line this year. My question simply is this: how does this government justify over \$400 million in special warrant spending without the approval of this Legislature?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, first of all, it is in the Financial Administration Act, and it is a matter of accepted parliamentary principles that from time to time on an emergency basis the government, through orders in council, has the right to spend money by special warrant. The use of special warrants is clearly defined, Mr. Speaker, defined by an unusual or unforeseen expenditure which calls upon the government to take some action to ensure or protect certain interests which are unforeseen.

Now, from time to time we've been called upon in this government to respond in a necessary fashion to deal with floods, to deal with droughts, to deal with unforeseen circumstances in agriculture, as we did this past year, responding to assist the people in agriculture across this province at a time when prices were falling rapidly. When there was a need for the government to move in to shore up the family farm, then the government moved. I'm saying to the Member for Edmonton-Norwood that if he doesn't like that kind of action for the farm community, then stand up and say so. As a matter of fact, the special warrants this year would have only been 2 percent, one of the lowest levels there was ever in the province of Alberta, except for the call on welfare payments. Welfare payments were . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. [interjection] Hon. minister, thank you. We really want to get a few members in. Supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if this government had brought forward a realistic budget last year, they wouldn't have \$400 million in special warrants. Deliberately overestimated the revenues; deliberately underestimated the expenditures: that's why your welfare costs have gone up. My question is simply this to the Treasurer: isn't it true that last year's budget was pure politics and that the revenues were deliberately overestimated?

10:20

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, that in fact is not the case. We had that debate on last year's budget. We set forth this time last year the assumptions on which we moved, but you don't even have to be an economic genius to know that last year at this time most people were expecting the Canadian dollar, for example, to move below the 84-cent level towards some other amount. Instead, it went to 89 cents. Nobody in the opposition, and I've checked the record, had predicted that kind of change. Mr. Speaker, as well, we had an uncertain oil price regime whereby the Gulf coast war was on – Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, America drawn into a conflict on the Gulf coast – which sent different kinds of signals to the oil market.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in the area of natural resource revenue everyone well knows that it's extremely difficult to forecast that. In this past year it's been the case of natural gas changing more rapidly than we expected. We'll deal with those issues, Mr. Speaker; we'll deal. We have the economic opportunity to deal with it in Alberta. Our economy is very strong. We've generated an awful lot of new jobs in this province. Investor confidence is here, and compared to other provinces who are now bringing down their deficits . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjection] Thank you. Now we'll have the final supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the only people that believed the government's budget last year were the Treasurer and maybe the Premier. Nobody in Alberta believed it, and now we find out.

Now I see the Premier – and I take it that the Treasurer knows what he's saying, at least I hope so – is going around saying: well, gee, we're warm, compassionate people; that's why we're going to have a deficit. Last year they were hard fiscal managers, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Treasurer is simply this: how can Albertans believe anything this government tells them when it comes to budget matters?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of trying to deal with this rambling set of questions from the Member for Edmonton-Norwood, who obviously has no anchor for his own policies and is desperately searching for some way to criticize the government for its good efforts, let me say, first of all, that we brought in a very good budget last year, which was at the end of a financial plan, a plan which we set out and described to Albertans, started in 1987-88, which carried us through the six-year period . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. JOHNSTON: . . . which reduced our expenditures and got the economy going. That's what this government did. Against the recession in '86 the province of Alberta had to come back from a very, very serious economic hit, and we did it. Look at this kind of economy we have now.

Secondly, we have controlled the expenditures of this government. We have controlled it . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.

I'm sure hon. members will refrain from catcalls, because all it does is lengthen the answers in many cases.

The leader of the Liberal Party, Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I haven't given . . .

MR. SPEAKER: No, I'm sorry, hon. member. [interjections] Order please.

Edmonton-Glengarry.

#### SAIT Advertisement

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the province of Alberta is participating in a program of upgrading Albertans who are on social assistance. In conjunction with that program, SAIT has set out advertisements in most Alberta newspapers inviting people who are on social assistance to apply for trade upgrading. It sets out prerequisites or conditions of application. The first prerequisite to apply for this program is that you must be a male. I'd like to know from the minister responsible for social services why women can't apply. What's wrong with this?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I don't write the advertisements for SAIT, nor am I responsible for the programs at SAIT. There was absolutely no consultation with me.

MR. DECORE: This is an initiative taken by the Department of Family and Social Services. It's an initiative taken by your department. I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, that the minister doesn't

know anything about it. Is the minister committing himself to righting this wrong immediately?

MR. OLDRING: I'd be happy to look into it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to send the ad over to the minister now. All I'm asking is: are you prepared to agree that this is a wrong that needs to be righted immediately and this program will be stopped to allow men and women to participate?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I've just told the leader that I'm not familiar with the ad, that I didn't write the ad, that I'm not responsible for their programs but that I would be happy to look into his concern if he would as much as extend me the courtesy of sending it over. If he was that concerned, I don't know why he didn't get it to me yesterday.

MR. SPEAKER: Grande Prairie.

#### Teachers' Work Stoppage

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the city of Grande Prairie today we have the city public school system in its 10th day of a strike situation. The frustrations are starting to mount, and it's starting to show in the students and their parents. Questions are coming through to me with respect to the damages being done relative to the education of the students and what programs are in place to keep the education process alive and well under the conditions of the strike. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education to bring the Assembly up to date on what his department is doing with respect to the education of these children.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the government shares the hon. member's concern about the education of these children. This is a labour matter that is between the local of the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Grande Prairie public school board. My colleague the Minister of Labour could answer questions on the matters relating to labour.

On the education side, Mr. Speaker, in response to the Grande Prairie public's request, we have ensured through the Alberta Distance Learning Centre that for all grade 12, 30-level courses distance learning materials are in the classrooms and are available to students today. For grades 10 and 11 we are receiving orders each and every day from the Grande Prairie system and filling those orders overnight and shipping them out so that they're available in the classroom the first thing the next morning. I am advised that in grades 7, 8, and 9 plans are being prepared right now for correspondence for as early as next week, that study sessions are ongoing in grades 4, 5, and 6, and that for those students in kindergarten to grade 3 day care services are being provided to those parents who are requesting them.

DR. ELLIOTT: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. We have students in Grande Prairie who are already enrolled in universities across Canada for this fall, and they do require special textbooks and special programs. I was wondering what the arrangements are to accommodate these special situations?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any specific concerns in this regard, not any specific individual cases, but I can assure the hon. member and all members of this Assembly that the Distance Learning Centre and the officials in our department stand

ready to be of assistance at any time and in any way that we possibly can.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

### Education Funding

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education has denied his responsibility for the proper funding of education by saying that school boards have, and I quote: an insatiable appetite. The Calgary board of education will have to increase local taxes by 9 percent in order to deliver basic programs, yet they'll still have to cut six kindergarten teachers and at least 14 English as a Second Language teachers. My question to the Minister of Education: just which of these programs does he consider to be greedy?

MR. DINNING: Well, neither, Mr. Speaker. I simply said in the Assembly the other day that the Calgary public school board has increased its spending, on average, over the last three years in the order of about 7.2 percent, while the provincial taxpayers' contribution to that same school board budget has grown by 6.9 percent per year for the last three years, and I think that's a significant contribution by Alberta taxpayers. If the hon. member would like to suggest other areas that ought to be cut, I'd certainly be willing to listen to his suggestions about areas of spending that ought to be cut.

MR. PASHAK: I'd be pleased to do that, Mr. Speaker. The minister knows full well that although grants have gone up for school boards, per-pupil grants have actually decreased. Here's my suggestion to the minister. In spite of his rhetoric about increased grants the new two-count system of establishing payment means that the Calgary public board expects only a 1.8 percent increase this year. Many boards, such as Westlock and Fort McMurray, also oppose the two-count system. Well, to the minister: will he now make a commitment to fairness by agreeing to make the two-count system optional and only for those boards which will benefit by it?

10:30

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is now obvious where the New Democratic Party stands on funding the likes of education. They're willing to fund education of students who are not in classrooms. That's what they're saying if they don't support the two-count system: that they're willing to support education of students who are not in classrooms.

Let's look at the record of NDP governments, Mr. Speaker. What have they done in Ontario, which has decreased its spending in education? They came in and promised 60 percent. They started off at 40 percent provincial funding in Ontario; it's now spiraling downwards. What happened in the Saskatchewan New Democratic government the day before yesterday? They dropped their spending this year by 2 percent and committed to do the same thing next year by another 2 percent. So we know what NDP governments do in this country. While our spending goes up this year by about 6 percent, the NDP governments across this country are going to drop theirs by 2 percent.

### High-speed Police Chases

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the matter of high-speed pursuits is a serious matter of law enforcement which impacts on the lives

of all Albertans. The previous Solicitor General was so concerned about the incidence of such pursuits that he set up a task force to develop minimum guidelines to regulate these pursuits. To the Solicitor General: given that the voluntary guidelines have been in effect since October 1990, when will this minister see fit to release the first six-month assessment of those guidelines, which was prepared by his law enforcement division one year ago?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, we brought out the guidelines. There are some 25 recommendations in the guidelines. Those were then sent out to the police forces, the municipalities, and the commissions throughout the province, and their responses to them are coming in as I stand here. I've had several of them respond in the last two weeks. The majority are agreeing with the recommendations, and many have implemented to the best of their ability the majority of the recommendations.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the report prepared by his enforcement division nearly one year ago.

Let's go on. The recent RCMP report shows that hazardous pursuits in this province as amongst the rest of Canada have increased by 10 percent over the last year, which is 25 percent of the national total. When will the minister strengthen the existing guidelines, possibly by putting them into legislation, because they're not working?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, high-speed pursuits are a real concern to society. There are many other contributing factors to the level of them, and that is, the attitude of the citizenry to our police forces in this area. We have seen a tremendous increase in the amount of stolen vehicles, and we have also seen an increase in the attitudes of our young people as well as some adults of taunting police. We are going to address this as we continue with the recommendations that have been brought forth, but we're going to continue this not only with the Attorney General's department but with our police forces to see if we can't get a change in attitude by the public as we address this very serious and grave area in our society.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Glenmore, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

### Advanced Education Programs

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's been a growing concern amongst parents and students regarding access to the universities in Alberta. It's come to my attention once again from the students, particularly with regards to access as well as the curriculum presented by the university. It appears that a number of the students are feeling that when they finish, they're not in the global competitive market. Would the Minister of Advanced Education please give this Assembly some indication as to whether or not his department is examining, first of all, the access and then the curriculum?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, without question, the area of accessibility to our 27 institutions is a very major concern. The fact that Alberta has the highest participation rate in the country in terms of postsecondary education I think speaks for itself. A recent study carried out by the University of Lethbridge, the University of Calgary, and I believe Mount Royal has indicated that of all

those seeking university program entry, 98 percent were successful.

On the question of curriculum, that's a more difficult subject, Mr. Speaker. As members may be aware, we have in Alberta 16 centres of excellence in our universities, and the research funds attracted by our professoriat obviously is pretty good. It's over \$120 million. I can't comment on the curriculum within the institution in that they're board governed, and of course the institutions set their own curriculum and entry requirements.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government spends 80 to 85 percent funding these programs, and these students are expressing concern about the number of instructional hours they do receive from their professors. They also have expressed a concern that if there were more instructional hours by the professors, perhaps it would help them in their studies. Could the minister please examine whether or not his department can do something about increasing these instructional hours by these professors?

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to universities, it's often been said that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. For those who have read Dr. Stuart Smith's evaluation of the university system, he quite clearly points out that there must be more emphasis on teaching, less emphasis on research.

However, Mr. Speaker, my department, as the instrument that does the funding, although it has a very great interest in the output – and we all hope that *Toward 2000 Together* and the human resources study will focus attention on the requirements and the direction institutions should be taking – this minister is very hesitant to ever become involved between the boards of governors, which legitimately run the business of the institutions, and whatever the collective agreements may have with regard to hours of work and so on. A colleague of mine in the House may have some comment to make with regard to working hours of those people.

#### **Family and Community Support Services**

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, local family and community support service organizations and municipalities have been waiting for this government to announce what it will do about the recommendations of the FCSS Ministerial Review Panel released in November. So far there's been no action on the part of this government to the recommendations. To the Minister of Family and Social Services: will the minister give this Assembly today a specific time line as to which recommendations will be implemented and adopted and when?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, as so often is the case with this government, we have gone through again an exhaustive consultative process with Albertans. It was a process that was chaired by the Member for Highwood, and I would want to say at the beginning that I think they did an exceptional job. They've brought back some very thoughtful recommendations, some very substantive recommendations, and I believe that because of the work and effort that went into that, they deserve the kind of care and attention this government is currently giving it. We're going through them in detail. We are evaluating the ramifications; we are evaluating the cost. I'm looking forward to being able to respond, hopefully later in this session.

MS MJOLSNESS: Well, I would agree that the process was good, Mr. Speaker, but now the report is basically sitting.

Given that municipalities have to plan their budgets and these vital programs are currently in a state of uncertainty due to this government's stalling, will the minister commit to announcing a three-year funding commitment to FCSS in the upcoming budget and in the future announcing the FCSS funds in January, along with the other local authorities grants?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's anxiousness to see the response to the report that was brought forward, but as I said earlier, I think it's appropriate that we spend the necessary time as well to review those recommendations in a thoughtful and considerate way. I would consider it an insult to that committee to do it in any other fashion. I think it's important that my colleagues take the necessary time, as they are, to go through those recommendations and details. We don't like to just have the knee-jerk response that they bring forward across the way, where they quickly jump in one direction, then they get a little more information and they jump in another direction, then they get a little more information and they change their minds again. We're doing it in a thoughtful, considerate process, and that's the way this government functions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, and now I jump.  
Edmonton-Jasper Place.

#### **10:40 Special Waste Management Corporation**

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In his testimony yesterday at the NRCB, Mr. Al Wakelin, who's the project manager at Swan Hills, stated that that money-burning facility could break even with the expansion proposal. Now, the government has failed so far to make public the financial statements of the joint venture or the financial projections on which such a claim might be based, but virtually all of the intervenors have said that that's not possible without hazardous waste imports. Unfortunately, they're not allowed to talk about it because of the way the government cooked the terms of reference. So I'd simply like to ask the Minister of the Environment if he will end the frustration at the hearings and amend the terms of reference to allow the participants to discuss the important matter of importation of hazardous waste to the province of Alberta.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the tone and the nature of the meetings and the way the NRCB hearings are structured are quite simply under the direction and guidance of the board. The department in no way, shape, or form dictates to the board how those meetings are to be run and what issues are to be addressed.

MR. McINNIS: No, sir. The cabinet wrote the terms of reference for that hearing and nobody else.

The NRCB has previously ordered Chem-Security to table the financial information, their financial statements at the hearings. Their answer is in the evidence, and I quote, "This information is considered to be proprietary." Now, I think that may be a violation of the Act, but I would like the minister to explain to this House why he allows Chem-Security to withhold the important financial statements of that operation from this Assembly and the people of Alberta.

MR. KLEIN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, it is indeed proprietary because it involves a particular kind of technology that has been developed by this particular firm, and I think that the hon. member understands that. I guess if I can pose a question, maybe not to the hon. member: when was he last in our cabinet?

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

### English as a Second Language

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Career Development and Employment, and they are in regard to adult ESL. In light of the throne speech and in light of the province's own interdepartmental working committee, it is estimated that an additional 1,300 immigrants require full-time ESL, 1,200 immigrants require settlement language programs, 1,700 immigrants require part-time ESL, and 2,400 individuals require English in the workplace. Can the minister provide some details as to what new initiatives mentioned in the throne speech he is planning within this field?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I first of all accept the representation made by the hon. member and agree that there is a need for extended services and assistance with regards to the programs, particularly as they relate to adult assistance. As far as the actual numbers outlined by the hon. member, I would question some of the numbers stated but would ask her indulgence in waiting. As we've indicated, there will be further announcements that will be unveiled further in regards to the budget speech.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I don't think that people involved will find that answer is sufficient, and I would like the minister to outline these initiatives and give us a time line. Will they fully meet the demand?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I've said that she'll have to wait until such time as that information is revealed in the House in various stages of this sitting and would ask her patience in waiting for that. As far as responding to her actual concerns, I'm not able to give that commitment at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

### Disabled Children's Support

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Family and Social Services have been justifying the review of handicapped children's services by stating that they want to ensure that children receive the same benefits wherever they live in this province. My questions are to the minister. Will the minister now admit that the real objective of this review is to cut services and pressure parents to take on more?

MR. OLDRING: No, Mr. Speaker. As usual, the member is wrong. I think again that all you have to do is look at our budgetary process. Last year we increased our budget to the handicapped children services program by 19.7 percent. I think that speaks of our commitment.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, this system is moving towards being system centred, not child centred.

Mr. Speaker, my second question to the minister is: in this so-called atmosphere of openness, why are the meetings, then, being

held by invitation only, denying some parents and organizations from participating?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, there has been an exhaustive list of people invited to participate in this process. We've made it very clear that if there's anyone that hasn't been invited that would be interested in participating, we're making those opportunities available as well. In fact, as I mentioned earlier, we've made opportunities available to members of the opposition. We welcome the input of Albertans. This is again an exhaustive process that we're going through. We're meeting with FCSS boards, health units, police, Indian bands, Metis associations, service agencies, community agencies, advocacy groups, parents. We're committed to taking a good program, a program that I receive a tremendous amount of positive response on, and making it even better.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North, followed by Edmonton-Highlands.

### Young Offenders Programs

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Solicitor General. The problems and challenges that are involved in both the protection and unfortunately sometimes the prosecution of youth crimes is very distressing to all of us. One of a number of remedial approaches, not the only one, that has significant public and professional support is the concept of taking the serious repeat offenders, immersing them in a closed-custody program in a nonurban setting which would combine educational upgrading and a work-oriented skills development program which would build self-esteem and acquaint the young offenders with positive values. My question to the Solicitor General: is he willing to have officials in his department explore the possibilities of such a program becoming a reality here in Alberta?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Red Deer-North brings up a very serious concern in our society. I've recently been going over the Young Offenders Act and as well looking at the stats as they involve our young offenders from 12 to 18. Certainly there's a concern by the citizens with the Young Offenders Act, and the stats are alarming. We are going to look at many areas, and I can assure the member that the department will look at the wilderness camp and work camp experiences. We are going to review the results in these areas in other jurisdictions as well as the results that we've had in the adult offenders area, where we do have camps in the province today.

I must just say shortly that with the changing family structure and the social fabric of our society, it's going to take a lot of input, not only from the criminal justice system but from our communities, our parents, and the rest of society today.

MR. DAY: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. One of the principles of the Family Policy Grid, which has been endorsed by this government, is that our programs recognize the persistence of family ties. My question is this: when young offenders are unfortunately caught in the snare of criminal activity, are efforts made to require that parents are also involved in the restitution and rehabilitation process?

DR. WEST: At the present time we are working hard through our courts, our police forces, and our communities to make sure

that there are alternative measures in lighter custodial situations where the individual has an opportunity to make restitution to society with the help of their parents and their family, along with the person that is a victim of their crimes. There's a lot of work to be done in this area, and we are going to continue to look at alternative measures involving the family members.

### Low-income Housing

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, last month's federal budget showed a complete elimination of the federal co-op housing program. That program cost \$6 million a year and, by the government's own studies, saved Canadians about \$40 million a year because they didn't have to use that money in social housing programs. My question is to the Municipal Affairs minister, and it is this: will the minister undertake to write on behalf of his government to his federal counterpart and ask that they abandon this shortsighted dropping of this useful program?

10:50

MR. FOWLER: Thank you for the question. We have already done so in this regard, Mr. Speaker, and we are further in contact with other provincial ministers of housing to call a special emergent meeting of the ministers to address this matter.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear the response.

I have an additional question, then, to the minister, who seems to be open to good ideas from this caucus these days, and that is: will he now help address the crisis of low-income housing right here in Edmonton by offering through his department to acquire, whether by purchase or lease, some apartment buildings, to make them available, such as Thorncliff Place, which is available in west Edmonton? It's for sale. Will he undertake to make that commitment to low-income families?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, had I waited for the idea to write the minister, the letter would have been going out sometime this week or next week rather than two weeks ago.

Nonetheless, we are looking into the situation in the city of Edmonton in respect to low-cost housing and low rental housing, particularly in the inner-city area but also for the whole of the city.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

### Municipal Assessments

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your indulgence I'd like to take a few moments to congratulate the Minister of Municipal Affairs on his appointment. I think his background in the field will make him an excellent minister.

Now, my questions are to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. For a number of years now the Department of Municipal Affairs has been reviewing its statutes, a process which for the most part has been supported by local authorities. Now, Mr. Speaker, the smaller municipalities around the province are coming out against this government proposal for centralized assessment authority on the basis that it's going to increase layers of bureaucracy, which will end up costing smaller municipalities more money than the current system. My question to the minister is this: given the overwhelming opposition to this scheme, why has the minister not responded to the concerns of the smaller municipalities?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the Municipal Statutes Review Committee has been in operation for approximately five years, and while a new Municipal Government Act, as indicated in the throne speech, will be introduced this year, there is also an important piece of the study in respect to the assessment body that is being proposed by that same committee. However, that proposal is not by government people but by a review committee and is a recommendation to this government. I am aware of a great number of objections to the proposed assessment corporation, and it is not my intention to move on this in this House until I have had an opportunity to discuss it in considerable detail with those objectors as well as the proposers.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties is overwhelmingly opposed to this particular proposal, and even the AUMA can't agree on whether it's a good idea or not. In fact, the minister's own council in St. Albert did submit a resolution to the AUMA opposing this particular proposal. Will the minister now prove that he is listening to local councils and redraw this proposal and send the whole issue of assessment back to the drawing board?

MR. FOWLER: That may in fact be the final result, Mr. Speaker, but I'm not in a position to undertake that today. I think I have an obligation to this House and to this government and the people of Alberta to study the proposal which has been made. There's a great deal of work that's gone into it, and I don't think it would be appropriate at all to make a decision at this time or that type of commitment.

### Recycled Materials Usage

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, despite the leadership which municipalities have shown in recycling initiatives, there is no comprehensive recycling policy at the provincial level to supplement these efforts. One area in which the province could in fact play an effective role is in the creation of markets for recycled products. To the Minister of the Environment: when will the minister have a timetable for phasing in the use of recycled paper in newspapers sold in this province? The government might just as well get its bad press on good paper.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as usual the hon. member hasn't been paying attention. He refused to read his own press clipping from last January 17. If he would go back, he would soon learn that the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services announced some months ago that the government of Alberta would purchase recycled materials on a priority basis as part of an initiative that fits in with our Action on Waste program.

MR. MITCHELL: What's that got to do with newspapers, Mr. Speaker? What has this minister done to encourage his colleagues in the departments such as public works, transportation, recreation and parks to buy significant amounts of products such as fence posts, parking curbs, picnic tables, dimensional boards made from recycled plastics by Alberta-based companies such as Superwood Western Ltd.?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I thought I gave the hon. member his answer. The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services



announced some time ago that we as a government would buy back on a priority basis recycled materials as part of the Action on Waste program.

Insofar as newspapers are concerned, the newspaper recycling association involving Southam corporation, the Sun Publishing Corporation, Bowes, and a couple of the other independents have agreed to voluntarily include 20 percent recycled pulp in their operations. If that can be done, then there's no need to legislate that kind of thing.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The time for question period has officially expired. However, the Minister of Family and Social Services wishes to supplement information given in an earlier question. The question was raised by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

Minister.

### SAIT Advertisement

*(continued)*

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the leader of the Liberal Party. I appreciate that he has provided me with a copy of the actual ad. Earlier the leader had suggested that I should have been aware of it and that it was my program. I want to make it very clear that, no, it is not my program. The ad itself makes it very clear. It says, "This program is paid for by the Canadian Jobs Strategy." That's a federal program, absolutely no consultation with me, and that was in the ad. Further, the same ad says, "For more information call SAIT at 284-8446." SAIT is responsible, not me. He has the telephone number, and I would suggest that he phone it.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, if the minister does his homework, he'll find out that this is a joint program with his department and the federal department.

My further question. The minister has a vested interest in this matter. Will he stop this action of insisting that men only be given opportunity here?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to take the initiative of calling that particular number and speaking to the folks at SAIT and suggesting that they consider including females in that particular program as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Before we deal with Standing Order 40, I recognize, first, the Minister of Education to introduce special guests and then the Member for Vegreville.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

*(reversion)*

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce a number of visitors here from Elofson Academy in Calgary. They are led by Mrs. Jackie Ottmann and volunteer, Mrs. Marlene Owl-Simon. I'm going to meet with them in a few minutes. I'm anxious to hear their assessment of how overwhelmed they have been with our theatre of democracy. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm and cordial welcome of this Assembly.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 59 visitors from the Tofield school in the Vegreville constituency. They're studying government and

here as part of that study, accompanied by their teachers Mrs. MacKay and Mrs. Kope, several interested parents and helpers, and a couple of dedicated bus drivers. I'd like them to rise in the public gallery and receive the warm welcome of members of the Assembly.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**  
**11:00**

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar requests Standing Order 40, but speaking, as Standing Order 40 states, to the matter of urgency, not to the issue, please.

### Brain Cell Research

Mrs. Hewes:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly congratulate Dr. Samuel Weiss and doctoral student Brent Reynolds, both of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Medicine, for their breakthrough in brain cell research.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will request under Standing Order 40 unanimous consent to consider the motion, which has been circulated. I think we were all excited by yesterday's news that there has been a remarkable discovery in the University of Calgary regarding the regeneration of brain cells. I think it's incumbent on this House to congratulate and offer our gratitude to those scientists who have worked diligently and whose work will now persist, as we understand, hoping that it will lead to treatments for crippling brain disorders: Parkinson's, Alzheimer's.

MR. SPEAKER: A request under Standing Order 40. Those willing to allow the matter to proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails. Thank you.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
head: **Second Reading**

### Bill 6 Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1992

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to move second reading of Bill 6, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1992. We've had a long and thorough and detailed discussion through the interim supply side already, and I've been able to present I think very compelling arguments to the Legislative Assembly, certainly to Albertans, as to the need for this Bill to proceed on second reading so that by the end of the day, which is before the end of March 31, '92, we can have in place interim supply to pay those bills which flow as a matter of natural course in the new fiscal year starting April 1, 1992. Accordingly, and without providing much more elaboration on the reason for this Bill because we've had a full and ample opportunity to discuss, I move second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I was intrigued by the remarks that the Provincial Treasurer made in question period earlier this morning. In answer to the questions from the Leader of the Opposition about last year's budget he crowed a great deal about how the year just ended was the end of their fiscal plan. I thought that was perhaps a Freudian slip and he didn't in fact mean it to be that, but I guess out of his own mouth came the truth: whatever plan they might have had clearly and totally reached the end of the line in the current year. I would think the least we could have expected from the Provincial Treasurer before he tabled the interim supply Bills and the estimates in front of this Assembly would be something from him about the current year's budget. We've had no financial update. We don't even have the public accounts from the fiscal year ended a year ago. So I guess we have to take his word for it that it is the end of the plan. Obviously, we knew that he didn't have much of a plan, but I guess we have to expect that whatever it was disappeared a long time ago.

He also referred to how they had stimulated the economy with this so-called balanced budget a year ago and talked about great successes. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we have the highest rates of unemployment we've seen in this province for a number of years. I don't know what he's talking about when he talks about stimulating the economy. Certainly when it comes to these interim estimates, we have no idea whether they're part of a stimulative economy or part of the same discredited fiscal plan that we assume he's been trying to follow for the last couple of years.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

He's made reference to great successes in the last year. All that we've seen are failed business ventures, growing unemployment. It seems that every business that goes out of business in this province had some sort of government involvement, so as the rates of businesses fail, the rates of government losses increase. We're being hit a double whammy: high unemployment, reduced corporate tax. Then as these loan guarantees get called, the taxpayers are asked to pay a second or a third time in the form of bailing them out and paying for these government decisions. There may be the end of a plan, Mr. Speaker; that's true. The plan is in total shambles.

So when we come to these requests for spending estimates, interim supply Bills, we have to ask ourselves: in what context are they provided to us? There's no context whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. Here's where this government is going to pay the price for the kinds of approaches it's taken in the past. We don't have the public accounts for the fiscal year ended a year ago. These estimates are presented to us without any context of that whatsoever. We've had no estimates or reviews given to us or the province since the budget a year ago. We know that it's in a shambles, but the Provincial Treasurer refuses to own up to them, refuses to give any kind of estimate to the people of Alberta of what has happened with his overly optimistic revenue forecast for the past year.

We know for sure, for example, that as we've tracked the biweekly sale of oil and natural gas leases and licences for the current fiscal year, they're in the order of \$300 million less than what the Provincial Treasurer budgeted for. Crude oil royalties are probably in the order of a quarter of a billion dollars less than he budgeted for last year, and of course the problem with natural gas

royalties is well known to the Provincial Treasurer. He's never made any of this available to the taxpayers of Alberta, so when he introduces interim supply Bills, it's done within a context of secrecy, it's done within a context of clinging to outdated and discredited budget estimates, it's done in the context of failing to report to the taxpayers of this province about how their money was spent even a year ago. It's done totally in the dark, totally in secrecy, totally without any supporting evidence of a fiscal plan or responsible fiscal management for the province as a whole. That, Mr. Speaker, should be the context in which these estimates or requests are in fact presented.

The Provincial Treasurer has had nine and a half, 10 months since we last sat here at the end of June of 1991. He certainly must know himself what the fiscal estimates are, what the forecasts are on a daily, weekly basis as they're brought to him by his department, but he's failed to share any of that with the taxpayers or with the people of Alberta. Now he wants us to approve virtually anywhere from between 25 to 40 percent of next year's budget without giving us so much as a minimum of information about his performance in the past. I think that sort of approach, Mr. Speaker, is totally out of line with what other jurisdictions do and is totally unacceptable to any kind of responsible approach to the budget. Of course, we haven't seen a responsible approach to the budget for some time. I guess it's just highlighted here by a track record where budget estimates are given in an address on any given night, any given year, and when we finally get the public accounts two years later, we find that the Provincial Treasurer was out by a significant amount of money.

*11:10*

For example, Mr. Speaker, if we were to look over the past estimates that have been presented to us as a Legislature since the fiscal year 1986-87, this Provincial Treasurer actually budgeted for deficits totaling \$6.8 billion. So if we went back over time and looked at the estimates that were presented to the Assembly over those years, he projected, cumulatively, a deficit of \$6.8 billion. If we look to the actual accumulated deficits that occurred over that period of time, they were in the order of \$11 billion to the end of last year's fiscal year, and if we take what's expected to be a \$2 billion deficit in the current fiscal year, we find that that figure is closer to \$13 billion when, in fact, the Provincial Treasurer budgeted for something in the order of \$7 billion in that period of time. What it says to me is that his ability to actually be on budget is highly questionable. In fact, the track record is that his ability to be on budget is laughable. If one were to measure performance here, we'd find that performance is lacking.

What we find, in fact, is that in each of the four years from the 1986-87 fiscal year to the 1990-91 fiscal year expenditures were over budget by \$1.5 billion, which increased the accumulated deficits beyond the levels budgeted in that period by the equivalent amount. It would not be a performance that would be tolerated in a business organization. So when we look at the context in which these estimates are provided, they're simply a shot in the dark; they're simply carrying on what was done last year. It's certainly not in keeping with any overall performance, certainly not in keeping with any overall fiscal plan. It's certainly not part of any stimulative budget. It's certainly not part of any budget that's intended to reduce unemployment in the province. It's simply carrying on in the same old, tired way, unable to get a grasp on what's happening with either the revenues or the expenditures of the province. It's not part of any realistic plan, and therefore, Mr.

Speaker, they bear no relationship to the reality that eventually unfolds.

All the Provincial Treasurer has attempted to do in his years as the incumbent in that position is each and every budget night tried to bring in a political budget that he thinks will sell to the people of Alberta on that given night. What happens then is that his projections are totally out of whack because they're based on a political objective, not on a fiscal objective. We find that the end result is one that's highly undesirable: we end up being unable to achieve any realistic objective either to control expenditures or to properly estimate revenues. We find ourselves in the situation that was presumably never intended, that we presumably never wanted to find ourselves in: a situation where there's a high and growing debt in the province, high and growing levels of unemployment, high and growing levels of job losses, high and growing numbers of business bankruptcies, high and growing numbers of difficulties for our people. Because of this government's approach in the past of accumulating high deficits at a time when the province was in a stronger economic position, now that we're in this position, we find ourselves hampered by the fiscal circumstances created by this Treasurer, and it hampers the ability of the government to respond to the real needs that are out there in the province.

So we get these interim supply Bills brought before us, Mr. Speaker, without a plan, in the context of a difficult financial situation for the province, in the context of a difficult economic situation for the province, and we're just asked to rubber-stamp them and on we go. You know, it's very difficult for anyone to say no to interim supply. We recognize there is a need for government to carry on with the important jobs that the government is required to perform. But there is no accountability. That's where I want to leave the theme of my remarks, and it's simply this: there is no accountability.

Starting today, this government has asked for a request. It's in the context of not willing to be accountable for past spending. They're coming to us without a plan. They don't want to be accountable for any plan they pretended to have in the past. They're brought to us without any context. They don't want to be accountable for the context they've created, so they want us to approve these in the context of secrecy and in the context of fiscal lack of performance and an inability to grasp the fiscal responsibilities and the fiscal realities facing the province. They don't want to be accountable. That is fundamentally what's wrong with simply putting estimates and supply Bills on the table and saying, "Vote". They don't want to be accountable for this spending either, Mr. Speaker.

I predict that this Treasurer would like nothing better than to hide any accountability for this request today from the people of Alberta for another two years. The public accounts, if he had his way, would not be tabled in this Legislature for another two years, the requests that we're giving him today. That's just in the context of a growing unwillingness of this Treasurer to be accountable for his decisions. He knows that the decisions he's taken in the past are not defensible, so the more he can keep the public from knowing what's really happening with the fiscal management of the province, the better off he is. The more secrecy he can maintain, the less likelihood people will know or care what's going on.

This is my main concern, Mr. Speaker: the growing lack of accountability by this government to account for its decisions, for its willingness to be accountable, for its willingness to put the information on the table for all people to see. The fact that this money being requested of us today won't be accounted for

publicly for another two years causes me a great deal of concern. On the other hand, two years from now their mandate will be over, and there'll be a new group in there, a new party governing the affairs of this province, a party committed to accountability and to making this information available to all Albertans. I know that ultimately we all live with hope. Given the performance and the track record of this Provincial Treasurer, the interim supply Bill being requested from us today will be accounted for much more openly than it has been in the past. That's one thing I'm not only hopeful for but certain about.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

11:20

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to touch on a few of the items that pertain directly and indirectly to the Bill that we're dealing with. I mentioned last night and I again want to address the question of the process that is now in front of us as we deal with this particular Bill and with the question of advancing it to complete it in sufficient time to allow government to function from a financial point of view.

Yes, obviously that has to be done, but it has to be done because the process is out of whack. The process is out of whack in that we have a system that forces us to do what are not, I don't believe, proper management techniques, proper financial techniques that would normally be used by other levels of government or by corporations. In other words, you plan accordingly so that you're not left in these situations where you have all these spending warrants, have deficits that are probably a billion dollars out of whack in terms of the original budget. A private company, if they did that type of thing, would be gone; they would be history. The president, the CEO of that company would be gone. They would simply not be tolerated.

It appears that the news will come eventually when the public accounts are brought down that in fact the worst fears of the Liberal caucus going back a year ago will bear to be true and that that big surplus of \$37 million that was talked about will translate into a deficit that will in fact be hundreds of millions of dollars if not approaching a billion dollars. Again, this year what's to be anticipated? I think the message is quite clear even though there was some confusion yesterday on that side of the floor. Reading again the quotes from the Premier of this province: the budget for '92-93 has been delayed. Like our leader says, possibly because they can't find enough red ink to cover it. It has been delayed because there is a struggle there, or there is an intentional delay because of the coming convention this weekend. For whatever reason the budget is being introduced after the fiscal period begins, which is really, really, I believe, unnecessary and shouldn't be done if there was a streamlining, a rationalization of the process.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer is nicknamed Deficit Dick for a reason, and it's not a complimentary title. In fact, the last time I was down in the city of Lethbridge, I saw somebody wearing a button that read: I once saw Deficit Dick in Lethbridge.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk in terms of the budget that is forthcoming, that will now apparently be introduced on April 9 unless there are some last-minute entanglements that the Provincial Treasurer has to deal with, I certainly hope that there is an emphasis to shifting dollars from the fat, from the unnecessary, from the nonessentials to those programs that people are calling for, that they're crying for: quality services, health care, social

services, education. Right now the thing that means the most to Albertans out there is the economy, the growing unemployment rate. Despite what may be said about the rosy times in Alberta and how we're booming in comparison with Ontario – I think that's a bad example to use, but that's the example that is being used – if you're the worst of all evils, I don't think that is something to hold up there and be proud of.

There is a problem here in Alberta in terms of the economy, in terms of the unemployment. When we talk in terms of the high unemployment, a number of factors spin off from that. One is people lose their dignity because they don't have jobs. It's that impact, that monetary impact on other programs like social services, unemployment insurance, and so on and so forth. In other words, the government has to spend more in other areas providing resources because the government has not been able to bring down that unemployment rate. Secondly, it's the loss of revenue. A person out there gainfully employed is not only not drawing from the system but is putting money back into the system paying federal and provincial income tax, spending, creating a spin-off effect in the economy. The impact on businesses, Mr. Speaker, speaks for itself. The less spending power out there, the more businesses that are going to go under and the less revenue that is going to be received. So it's a compounding effect.

If there's any one message that I would have to give to the Provincial Treasurer for these last 10 days he has in preparing that budget, it's hold job creation as his number one priority but in line with fiscal responsibility. Don't just simply go out there like the Premier is right now saying: Well, we're going to have a big deficit; it's apparent we have to have a deficit because job creation is that important. Yes, job creation is that important, but cut from some of the other areas. Take a look at the cabinet there and see how much can be saved by reducing that. Take from here, take from there, take from the nonessential items that can carry on and Albertans don't notice that they're missing.

If the Treasurer is able to bring forward a truly sensible, sound budget that is built on a foundation that can demonstrate that the deficit is being tackled, that has job creation, that cuts out a lot of that fat, sets up a system that starts to reduce bureaucracy in such a way that it doesn't mean layoffs or impact on people, then I think the Treasurer is doing a reasonable job. Until I see a budget, until I see the proof in the pudding, I'm not going to buy that we're going to see that type of budget. If we do, my fear would be then that it's a budget built on band-aids, and it doesn't have that solid financial foundation that the leader of the Liberal caucus was always able to do as mayor of the city of Edmonton.

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

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just would like to get a few remarks on the record today in regards to the Bill that's before us.

First, in terms of appropriation I want to mention the concerns that many of my constituents in Edmonton-Mill Woods have about the funding support for our community hospital, the Grey Nuns hospital. The people in my district – it's a suburban community; we have a high population of young people, very young demographics, a lot of young children – have come to depend on the Grey Nuns hospital for medical care and, generally speaking, are quite satisfied with it. I want to let the government know that they are very concerned as well when they read about reductions

in the funding formula to the Grey Nuns hospital and how the hospital is going to be able to provide ongoing quality care in a context when funding is being eroded and at the same time in my district all kinds of new development is continuing to go on. New houses are being built every single day, so there are additional population pressures that are going to be requiring medical care. There is a lot of concern in the constituency about the government's commitment to quality care. Many people in Edmonton-Mill Woods will be looking carefully at the budget when it comes down on the 9th, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the proposed allocations for the 1992-93 year. Of course, Bill 6 is speaking to that on an interim basis. My concern is that we make sure that these health care facilities that are community based and that are so well regarded and so critical to maintaining the health of people in our various constituencies, and in my case in Edmonton-Mill Woods in particular, southeast Edmonton, have the funding they need to do the job.

Secondly, in terms of schools, Mr. Speaker, I must bring to the attention of the government, the Treasurer, and the Minister of Education the pressing need for support for new schools in new districts like mine. There are no less than at least five neighbourhoods in my district – Fountain Lake, Jackson Heights, Jackson Heights north, Creek's Crossing, and Meadowbrook – that don't even have an elementary school for the young children yet. They've got to take buses somewhere else because there are no schools there. There's no high school east of 66th Street: that entire population east of 66th Street to 34th Street and not a single high school. Most of those students either go to Percy Page or Holy Trinity high schools west of 66th Street in Edmonton-Mill Woods or to other high schools in the south Edmonton area, generally speaking. That is becoming increasingly unsatisfactory. I'm just indicating to the Treasurer and to the Minister of Education that people in my constituency very much value the good-quality education that they receive from the schools, but they would like to look at ensuring that there is some government commitment to make sure that especially in the case of our younger elementary school students they have access to a school within their neighbourhood. I think that's only fair and reasonable, especially, of course, when you consider how difficult it is in the wintertime for those younger students to take the bus or to have to travel significant distances back and forth to school.

### 11:30

The third and last item I just want to mention here, Mr. Speaker, is in regard to programs that involve partnerships between the government and community organizations. Now, in Edmonton-Mill Woods we have been fortunate to get various grants under the community facilities enhancement program and others, and we want to thank the government for making those available, even though they're not accounted for properly, in my view, under the General Revenue Fund, and from lottery funds independently. But aside from that, the grants have been put to very good use, and the citizens of Edmonton-Mill Woods appreciate the support that we received.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, you know that the community facility enhancement program has been canceled. So where does that leave our community leagues and other voluntary organizations who had been working in these partnerships with the government? I'm hoping that the Treasurer will have some news for us about that on April 9, perhaps some new program to replace the community facility enhancement program, because these partnerships are important. The volunteers give up a lot of their free time

on behalf of our communities, time that's taken away from their families, from their businesses, from leisure activities, other things that they could be doing after they put in a full day of work at their jobs. So I want to speak strongly in support of these partnership programs between the government and the community and would certainly like to see some kind of son of the community facility enhancement program – or daughter of the community facility enhancement program, as you wish – some follow-up to replace that because many communities depended on that support. I believe I have support for that on the government side too.

I particularly would like to just point out that in my particular neighbourhood, in the Woodvale Community League in Mill Woods, they are involved in working on a Mill Woods district park to be called Jackie Parker park. Of course, you all know the well-known football history here in the province. Jackie Parker: we're proud to have the park named after him.

Mr. Speaker, it takes money to develop a facility like that. We know that the city, of course, are restricted in their funds and everybody else is, but I think if we looked at some kind of a partnership between the community leagues and groups like the Mill Woods Cultural and Recreational Facility Association, the city parks and recreation, and some support from the province in terms of a partnership program, then we could really activate and motivate the involvement of the voluntary organizations to work in co-operation with the different levels of government to make sure that the community members have access to the kinds of facilities that you come to expect in an urban area.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

I would just say, Mr. Speaker, that although we have in Edmonton, the capital city here, some very fine parks in the river valley, in southeast Edmonton we really don't have any district parks of any significance. We have small playgrounds at the various schools in Mill Woods, and those are nice enough, but we don't have anything of any significant size that would be appropriate in amenity for the size of the community that Mill Woods now is, which is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 70,000 persons. I know in terms of the Jackie Parker park there are plans to develop it on a very sound environmental theme, and it's very, very exciting. It'll be adjacent to the Woodvale golf course, which, as you may recall, is a reclaimed landfill site. So this would be a very tremendous enhancement to the facilities that are available to the constituents of Edmonton-Mill Woods and to the whole area of southeast Edmonton in general. So I commend that project to the government.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make some comments on second reading of Bill 6, and just for the information of our guests so they know what's happening here in this debate, Bill 6 is called the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1992. It reflects the fact that governments run on a fiscal year which goes from April 1 till the end of March the following year, so in a few short days from now, at the end of March, the government runs out of money, and they need to come to this place, to the Legislative Assembly, to ask us if we will grant some more supply. The amount of supply that's being asked for in Bill 6 is \$4,420,000,000, which is a fair amount of money, so this is a very important debate that we're having today.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Normally this debate over supply budget takes place in the context of a provincial budget, but of course at this point we don't have a provincial budget. In fact, I believe it was announced yesterday that the provincial budget will not come down until April 9 this year, which is after the end of the fiscal year and leaves the government in the situation where it can't spend your money. Now, some people have said, perhaps unfairly, that the budget is being delayed so that the government can have its party convention this weekend and won't have to answer questions about why the budget didn't quite balance the way it was presented to the Assembly a year ago. There are others who feel that perhaps the government is thinking that they might want to use the budget as a springboard for a provincial general election this spring. I don't know what the proposition is, but I do know that the government is in a difficult position as of the end of March. It has no money to pay for the bills that it's incurred on behalf of the taxpayers and has come looking for supply.

Now, the frustration from an opposition point of view is, firstly, that there is no financial plan, as has been mentioned. We really have no idea what period of time this \$4.4 billion is to cover, what priorities the government has for this period of time: no financial plan, no economic plan, I daresay no leadership in terms of the province's finances. So we have this \$4.4 billion tab. The other frustration stems from the fact that this Bill will have to pass second reading today under the rules in this Assembly. Regardless of whether more members want more debate, this Bill must go to a vote. Under the rules which are written by the majority, which is the government, we have to vote on this Bill today.

We also have to vote today on Bill 7, which is called the Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund) Interim Supply Act, 1992, which is another Bill for, in this case, \$121,474,000 for capital funds. We also have to vote on second reading of a third Bill, Bill 8, which is called the Appropriation (Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Capital Projects Division) Interim Supply Act, 1992, which is a Bill for \$55,876,000. It leaves members opposite in the position of having to try to cram all of the concern and debate that we have about all questions related to budget, supply, and finances in this very short debate this morning.

I would like, first of all, to say that I think that what the government ought to be doing in this debate and in defence of this funding – any funding proposition but particularly one which is in the range of \$4 billion to \$5 billion – is to tell the Assembly in considerable detail what it plans to do to help bring Alberta out of the recession that we are presently in. We know it took the government a very long time to come, at least publicly, to the realization that there are tough economic times in the province of Alberta.

We continue to hear the same broken record over and over again about how Albertans are so uniquely blessed in terms of our natural and financial wealth, that we are undertaxed when compared to other provinces, and all of these sort of glowing, self-promotional speeches and diatribes, as if the government put the resources in the ground, as if they ran the economy, which they don't. Clearly, it's the men and the women who do the work and the investment and make the decisions in our economy who make it run. In fact, I think it took a normally nonpolitical agency such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants to point out how badly our province has been hurt over the years by that kind of rhetoric because it has caused some Albertans to believe that we are God's chosen people, that somehow governments can spend money

without raising taxes to pay for it, that somehow we can have this kind of expenditure, billions of dollars spent without accountability, because we're so well off in the province of Alberta that we don't have to worry in the same way that other people, other provinces, other countries do. It took the chartered accountants to point out that we're not uniquely blessed and Albertans are not in a fundamentally different category than the rest of the world. We have to work for a living too, just like everybody else. We have to get up in the morning; we have to get dressed, and we have to go off and make the bacon. We've had rhetoric from this Treasurer and from this Premier and the previous Premier, the hon. Mr. Lougheed, year after year after year – look at us; the best economy in the universe, the best in the country, the best in the galaxy – on and on like this. It's really caused a problem, and the problem I think is here today.

#### 11:40

Now, perhaps there is some truth in the notion that the government doesn't want to reveal the extent of its deficit for the past year before the provincial PC convention. Perhaps there is some truth in the accusation that they wish to hold that information in hand in the desk drawer until after the delegates are gone home so that it is possible for them to fudge that point or not fudge that point, but in reality, as my colleagues have pointed out in previous debates, we've gone over the course of the past six years from virtually no operating deficit to one that's in the neighbourhood of \$13 billion, I believe at the moment on the operating side, plus whatever was racked up in the last year. So I think that the message is coming home to Albertans, perhaps not to the back bench in the government, that we have some difficult financial decisions to make too, and perhaps it's time we started to face up to them. You don't face up to them by dropping a \$4.4 billion interim supply Bill on the table without saying where the revenue's coming from, without saying what the spending priorities are, and especially without saying what the plan is to move the province out of the recession.

We on this side have done our part, I would submit, prior to this Legislative session. We made a number of proposals to the government and the people of Alberta. One in particular, which seems to be gaining strength looking at the first ministers' meeting earlier this week, was for an Alberta works program which would concentrate on developing our transportation, communications, and municipal infrastructures towards economic development in the future.

I think about the small area of the province that I represent in Edmonton-Jasper Place. The community – and I think the community deserves the credit – worked very hard to convince the city that they should invest funds under the AMPLE program in rebuilding some of our mature neighbourhoods: Britannia, Youngstown, McQueen, High Park, and Mayfield in particular. Then the provincial government came along and said, “Well, we're going to cut your transportation grants in the city of Edmonton because . . .” Well, I'm not sure they actually gave a reason other to say, “Bad luck, Edmonton, you're losing your transportation funds.” They said the same to Calgary and others as well, which left a slight problem. The Whitemud interchange, as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud knows well, is just a real headache for people traveling through there, particularly in the morning's rush hour. All of the good people in Leduc and other places like that who come to work in the city of Edmonton have trouble getting through there in the day, so there was an urgent need to find money to complete that Whitemud interchange.

There's also the very important matter of the Capilano Drive extension, which the members from Edmonton-Highlands and Edmonton-Belmont have long talked about and long pushed for, an important project. There's getting the LRT to the university, the 114th Street project. All of these things when they added it up, the money that was available for transportation would be entirely eaten up and then some by these four pressing road projects.

What did they do? Well, they had to look somewhere for money, and the only place they could find it was in the AMPLE program. Unfortunately, it's meant that not just the four neighbourhoods I mentioned in my district but the Boyle, McCauley districts and others have to wait. I hope “wait” is the correct term. I hope we're not saying that these things aren't going to happen. I think sooner or later if this government doesn't change its ways, then as my colleague for Calgary-Mountain View said, Albertans will change the government. You can be sure of that. They have to wait on account of financial decisions made in the cabinet offices here, and I think it's not a really good thing in an economic recession to cancel those vitally needed construction projects in the communities when in fact those things can provide jobs and employment when they're needed right now.

I'm not talking in this case about new spending in large amounts; what I'm talking about is just continuing with the plans and the programs that were in place. The funding was in place, all of it, until along came the minister of transportation and pulled the rug out from under as far as transportation funding is concerned. Now, I've spoken with the people in my communities. They are prepared to accept the decision that was made by Edmonton city council and the mayor because they recognize that these major transportation projects need to be completed. So they are prepared to put up with delay, but they would like to have a sense that the importance of rebuilding these communities is recognized by the government and that the importance of jobs during the recession is recognized by the government.

There are some very specific examples. We had tabled prior to the legislative session a green job strategy. It was not done for Saint Patrick's Day, it was done for the very important purpose of moving toward sustainable development: a sustainable economy, a sustainable environment in the future. That's the kind of plan that we need to work our way through the recession by creating jobs in industries which work in harmony with our natural systems.

I recall the report of the Round Table on Environment and Economy which was made public last October, an initiative that I congratulated the Minister of the Environment for in getting that agency going. Well, here you had representatives of large industry, small business, labour, people who are known as environmentalists, farmers, aboriginal people, who got together over a period of time, and they produced a vision for our province's future which really looks at ways to make our economy sustainable, to make jobs sustainable at the same time. I think the concepts in that report could be implemented in an economic development strategy which we've called a green job strategy, looking at recycling industries, looking at things that can be done towards energy efficiency technology, towards alternative forms of energy, not the nuclear industry that the Minister of Energy is investing money in despite what he refers to as a passing interest. You know, the Minister of Energy throws 15 million bucks at the nuclear industry and tries to pretend that he only has a passing interest in the matter. Well, God forbid if he actually wanted to do something about it. What would he do then? A \$15 million

investment in the nuclear industry is not what I would refer to as a green job strategy, but presumably it's buried somewhere here within the \$4.4 billion tab which the Treasurer has laid on the table today. We don't have any information about how far the government wants to take it. In fact, the information came via the back door, as usual, rather than from the government.

We've also referred to the need for reform of the taxation system, in particular the need to recognize the very heavy impact that provincial taxation policies have had on working families over the last five or six years; to recognize what's happening, thanks to the Minister of Family and Social Services, in the child care field, where fees are going up dramatically because of an ill-considered change in the way the funding program for day care works. Child care is a critically important expenditure for most families, and I'm increasingly finding women who say to me, "It is not worth my while financially to go to work anymore because when you add the cost of child care, of the tax system, the tax burden, the costs of commuting to work because of the transit policies of this government – you add up all of those things and the cost of child care, and you're financially better off to stay at home." Well, you know, I'm not certain that that's such a sound policy, so we've talked in our party and our caucus publicly about the need for a type of a child tax credit provincially which recognizes the need for working families to have some tax relief at the present time in the economic recession.

We've certainly talked about the need to pursue some value-added policies in our basic resource industries, particularly forestry, where we're exporting our trees, cooked, bleached, and cubed in boxcars – in pulp rather than making finished products, manufactured products, end-user products – but also the whole range of wood products where I suggest we're in relative infancy. I think we may have backed the wrong horse when it comes to the chlorine bleached kraft end of things. Also the question of value-added in energy – and again I repeat that's a much better way for us to go than investing in the nuclear industry – so that we can create more oil to put down the pipe for the benefit of industry and jobs in other regions and other parts of the country.

## 11:50

We've talked, and I think this is a very important point, about streamlining the delivery of our social and human services in the province of Alberta. It has often been pointed out, I would say in a bragging way, by the government that there's a large expenditure per capita out of our provincial budget, whereas in fact a lot of that is related to waste and inefficiency in the system. We're spending more money to get the result than I think we need to. A lot of work has been done not on the issue of more spending, as the Treasurer would have it, but on smarter spending, on making sure that we get a better bang for our buck, particularly when we deal with the still unresolved problems of child poverty. I see that all three political parties are involved in a conference which the Alberta Teachers' Association is sponsoring on the weekend of April 10 and 11, I believe it is, the Friday and Saturday. There are going to be representatives from all three political parties addressing this question. I think we all recognize deep down that we're fumbling the ball when it comes to dealing with problems of children in poverty, that there is a terrific amount of money that's spent in the system but somehow it's not getting to where the problem is. It's not getting to kids who are hungry; it just doesn't seem to be doing the job.

The question of training, retraining. We certainly hoped that there would be initiatives in that area to recognize the changing

nature of our economy and the fact that some people even in Alberta who have lost their jobs due to the recession may not find exactly the same job again and will need to look at finding some other way to make a living. I think our system of career development and employment and advanced education needs to be geared towards dealing with those particular problems.

The problems of delivery of health care, ours being perhaps, as the Minister of Health often says, not a sustainable system the way it's presently structured – I'm not certain that the arbitrary approaches that have been taken are the right ones, but we've talked about moving towards a more community-based model, to clinics, and to outreach type of health programs; to preventative programs which deal with healthy life-style and fitness as opposed to merely putting band-aids on cuts and trying to treat the symptoms of disease. These are the kinds of directions that need to be pursued, but in Bill 6 all we get is a \$4.4 billion tab itemized by department.

I'm just thinking about some of the specific issues that have been talked about in question period. I note that Bill 6 has a provision for 8 and a half million dollars to the Special Waste Management Corporation, which presumably reflects the ongoing incineration of taxpayers' funds at that operation, but it probably also reflects the major expansion, the quadrupling of capacity which the hon. Minister of the Environment is attempting to stickhandle through the process right now. In this case the government is both the regulatory agency and the equity partner, so the government wears two hats. But the explanation for the expenditure plan on special waste management is sorely lacking with this budget Bill, as it is with many other items, and in particular the very important issue of the importation of hazardous wastes in the province of Alberta.

The Minister of the Environment quoted from a summary of a public meeting held in Medicine Hat on January 31 this year in the Toward 2000 Together process, which I see that he finally got around to tabling today. He quoted, I thought with favour, the submission of the industry, the environmental services association of Alberta, 150 member companies who deal in the general field of waste management, saying that

the proposed ban . . .

Well, I think what they meant is the existing ban; there is at present a ban.

. . . on the importation of hazardous and recyclable waste is a restraint of trade that will isolate Alberta from international and interprovincial markets.

I believe the Minister of the Environment spoke kindly of that, and he has said on several occasions that he personally supports the import of toxic and hazardous wastes to the province of Alberta. What he hasn't said is whether that's going to be government policy, and the reason he hasn't said it is because he wants to get this project through the process before he addresses the issue. It might be a neat trick, handled perhaps in a more skillful fashion, to sort of shuffle the agenda that way and say, "Well, we'll just talk about whether we need a plant that's four times the size it is today first, and then we'll get around to talking about whether we need to import hazardous waste to fill it."

These are the facts, Mr. Speaker. Across the border in the province of British Columbia on the shores of the Williston Lake reservoir, which is caused by the W.A.C. Bennett dam, there is, in storage with B.C. Hydro, an absolutely huge quantity of PCB-filled incinerators. Most Albertans by now are aware that the only thing that that lemon plant up there has been able to do is to incinerate liquid PCBs because it's easy. You just have to inject it into the

flame, and it burns. What it hasn't been able to do is incinerate solid waste because you have to agitate it and expose every surface to the flame. At Hudson Hope there's another cache. Well, of course the province of British Columbia has a problem. They would love for Alberta to solve it for them, but I've got a problem with that. I've met with the Hon. John Cashore and I've told him what my problem is. My problem is that that material will have to move by highway from where it is to that Swan Hills plant, because the government, as much as it likes to pat itself on the back about Swan Hills, does not often mention that there isn't a railway spur into there. Everything has to go by truck. Truck traffic is considerably less safe than rail traffic from a statistical point of view and less energy efficient as well, and I'm not certain that Mr. and Mrs. Albertan who are out on the public highways really like the idea of having to dodge around convoys of trucks carrying hazardous wastes. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. McINNIS: The Member for Smoky River doesn't believe that truck traffic is more hazardous than rail traffic?

**Speaker's Ruling  
Interrupting a Member**

MR. SPEAKER: I know, hon. members, that we are dealing with appropriation Bill 6. The Chair is also willing to recognize the Minister of the Environment after the speaker, if needs be, but let's come back to the issue and let's go through the Chair, please.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I'm being sidetracked because I have to educate these Tory backbenchers on things that they should have known about a long time ago.

**Debate Continued**

MR. McINNIS: The reality is, Mr. Member for Smoky River, that truck traffic is statistically a heck of a lot more unsafe than rail, and I can give you a half dozen studies to show that. It's common sense. [interjections]

**Speaker's Ruling  
Interrupting a Member**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We have a Standing Order 13. I'm sure all members are aware of it. Thank you.  
Edmonton-Jasper Place.

**Debate Continued**

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I was merely making the point that this is one of so many questions that are unanswered because of the lack of a financial and economic plan for the province of Alberta. That's what we're trying to get to. Normally we look to the provincial budget as being a critical element in explaining where the government is at, where it's going and where it sees the province of Alberta going, but there is no budget. All there is is this \$4.4 billion tab which has been dropped on the table, including 8 and a half million dollars for the Special Waste Management Corporation. I might also reference \$700,000 approximately which is there for the Natural Resources Conservation Board.

Further, I would like to speak just briefly to the \$50 million item in here for Forest Resources Management. You know, the province of Alberta has been waiting at least since the late 1970s for the province to come up with a forestry package which will provide for the management of this resource in a sustainable

fashion into the future. We've since that time had the Dancik report which has come out and made numerous suggestions on how that should be done. At the present time the only thing that I can see that's happening in terms of developing a new forest policy – a new forest relationship, I guess would be the better way to put it – is that Alberta-Pacific has a consultant who is out talking to people in the northeastern part of the province about what they would like to see in a forest management system. I think that's an area of involvement that cries out for some discussion, and we hope to see those things in the budget as well.

**12:00**

I would like to indicate that I'm far from satisfied with this process by which we deal with this \$4.4 billion expenditure Bill presented by the Provincial Treasurer. We don't really know what it's for, how long it's going to last, and who's going to pay for it other than, in a general sense, with the status quo taxation. We don't know what the government's economic game plan is in terms of dealing with this recession and getting us to the next economy, which we hope will be one that's truly sustainable in the long term.

Thank you.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start by carrying on with the theme the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place and the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn established, and that is the difficulty we face in not having details about the proposals for the money that's going to be expended. In theory, once these Bills are passed – and I believe they will be on Monday – if the Government House Leader moved that we adjourn the sitting, they could do that and we would never know for four months or more how this money was being spent. That's not a very fair system, quite frankly. The government could basically get these Bills in place, get their \$4 billion, and not give us a budget until the autumn. That is a total disgrace. That's the problem here. Usually this interim supply is presented along with the budget so that we know the general directions. I mean, I have no idea.

Today in question period I asked the Municipal Affairs minister questions about housing programs and he said, "We're looking." Well, looking is not good enough. Right now we have a serious crisis in Edmonton. There are thousands of people who have no access to affordable housing. I should say that this is not just an inner-city issue, although it expresses itself most visibly in the inner city because the tenements, those god-awful rooming houses that offer you a room eight by 10 feet or maybe 10 by 15 feet for the maximum the social allowance can pay, \$290 a month, are flourishing in the inner city. The slumlords make a lot of money off it, so it's very visible. The other thing that distinguishes the inner city, of course, is that when people don't even have that kind of money, they sleep in the streets, and they only do that in the inner city. But I should tell you that I don't believe I have a colleague in my caucus from the city of Edmonton who doesn't have constituents who have problems accessing affordable housing. Their incomes haven't been increasing over the last few years. A lot of them have lost their jobs. They can't afford to pay escalating rents. Now, this RRSP nonsense that the federal government brought in is fine for those who have the RRSPs, but that does not speak to the people who are living on low incomes. They don't have money to put toward a down payment on a house. So we're not talking even mortgages with this group of people, and believe me, it's a big group of people.



The minister today, instead of saying yes, he's very certainly going to do something, in response to my questions said: yeah, you're right; there's a problem and we're looking at it. Well, I can tell you that right now there are a lot of apartment buildings for sale. Developers are realizing that now's a good time to get out of the market. They're playing their land-flip games. Well, let's put an end to land-flip games and encourage the government to acquire some of these properties and convert them to subsidized housing or low-income housing and make sure the spaces, the units within them, are available only to people who need financial assistance. This would go a long way in helping the problem.

The Treasurer hasn't talked to us about housing; he hasn't said what the plans are. Yet aside from unemployment, I would suggest it's probably one of the most serious problems people in Edmonton are facing right now.

The other thing we don't have in this request for \$4 billion is any sense of what the Health minister plans to do with the money allocated to her department. Of course, a lot of it will be for taking care of ongoing business, and that's fine. On the other hand, there are other projects the government should be contemplating, those which have been sponsored time and again by the New Democrat caucus for ways to save money in the health care system while expanding services, meeting the needs of Albertans, and working towards prevention.

For example, out of the money estimated here, is any percentage of the \$818 million for financial assistance for acute care going to be set aside for prevention? The Hyndman commission – which, by the way, took two years and chewed up a lot of money in that time – finally recommended that a fixed percentage, 1 percent, of the health care budget be set aside for strictly preventive health care programs. It took the government, again chewing up a lot of money, another two years to respond to that. Then they said, "Fine, we like certain things like the innovation health fund," and now they've frozen it. Well, I want some details about where the government plans to go in health care. They are not here. There's no information here except for the bottom line, \$4 billion, which the government can spend without any sense of accountability to the public; in other words, the people paying the bill.

There's another little fact here that has been overlooked, and that is the issue of special warrants. Where did the money come from? Is it locked up in here as well? Is a percentage of all these budgets in fact covering what these guys spent from behind closed doors during the nine months the House didn't sit? Methinks it must be. If that's the case, I would suggest to you that very soon the accumulated debt will get close to pushing that \$13.5 billion ceiling that was established last year under another Act presented by the Provincial Treasurer. I remind you, Mr. Speaker, what he said at that time in sponsoring that Bill. He said at every stage: don't worry, folks; this is just an interim measure. We've just got a small cash flow problem. We don't really need that \$2 billion in deficit spending. It's just temporary, and it will all be back there by the time you get next year's budget. What nonsense. They're probably pushing that ceiling right now, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if one of the 50 or 60 Bills the government has promised us is going to be – guess what? – yet another Bill to allow the accumulated debt to increase. So much for a balanced budget, and so much for needing only a bit of money to help him sort out his cash flow problem.

In my opinion, the Provincial Treasurer insults every Albertan, and so does the Premier; he shouldn't be off the hook on this. They insult every Albertan, quite frankly, by coming forward and asking for interim supply approval, which will be given. I don't

know about the Member for Calgary-North West; earlier this week he suggested that he would not give approval. I don't know about the Liberal caucus. Maybe they want every school and hospital to shut down on April 1. I don't think that's a good April Fools' joke, quite frankly, but he's on record saying he's not going to go along with this. Nonetheless, I for one am going to go along with this because it has to be done. But I think it's reckless and irresponsible of the government to proceed with these Bills and not give us any indication of priorities for spending within each of the departments. It's an insult to every Albertan who is paying the bill. They're either paying the bill right now through taxation or they're going to be paying the bill through long-term deficit reduction plans. What an outrage. I think the government should get off its duff and get a budget in to us. In every other year they've provided us with a budget within usually the first week but at least within the first two weeks of the House recommencing.

This year it appears all they're willing to do is get through their convention, where I understand they're being barraged by a bunch of really right-wing, Reform-style resolutions, which is going to put the Treasurer in a very awkward situation after the fact. He's going to have to be a typical Liberal, as far as I can see. He'll go to the convention, say "Yes, yes, yes, I like what you're saying" to all these right-wing resolutions, and then come back here and change his tune. Well, that's his problem, and I know that the constituents of Lethbridge-East are going to know what to do with him after the next election. They're going to do with him what they're going to do with a whole bunch of Conservatives with their six-year history of bringing the Alberta financial picture from one of balance and strength to one of a total mess and deficit and accumulated debt. The people of Alberta are going to do the right thing and throw those rascals out, Mr. Speaker. I, for one, would be pleased to go to the Treasurer's riding and knock on doors and show them how these people, the Premier and the Treasurer, had the nerve . . .

#### 12:10

MR. JOHNSTON: You'd better stay at home, my friend. You'd better stay close to home.

MS BARRETT: . . . the unmitigated gall to come into this Assembly asking for \$4.1 billion in spending and not even have the common decency to tell the people of Alberta how they plan to spend that money. My vote is a yes for this Bill, but in closing I say shame on you, shame on you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

Provincial Treasurer, summation.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear such rhetoric on such a simple parliamentary practice. The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place tries to explain to presumably his mother, who is in the stands, or somebody else what's going on, because outside his own family, I doubt if he has very much support in Edmonton-Jasper Place. Nonetheless, let me make it clear what in fact is happening here, because I think it would be informative for three out of four on the front bench who have expressed a view, ridiculous as it might be.

Let me remind members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that interim supply dates back well into the 1600s from the Mother of Parliaments. We simply are asking the Legislative Assembly to

provide the short-term amount of money required for spending over the course of the next four months. That requirement allows us to bring in a budget, and the budget eventually envelopes the entire interim supply amount. It's not a budget, and that's the first point of misrepresentation that we see here. These are simple estimates based on last year's budget estimates. There's no great magic to it. It's a rough and crude estimate as to how much money will be required between April 1, 1992, and the summer of '92 when in fact the Legislative Assembly, in its time allocation process, allows the government to move its ways and means motions forward. That's simply all we're doing here. So you hear these wild, irregular, illogical, and out-of-context notes from the opposition parties, in particular the NDP Party, sic, who continue to say that this is a budget. This is not a budget at all.

Secondly, this is not about the whole question of time allocation. Time allocation is established elsewhere. It's established on a long historical point of view, which I guess goes back to 1971. In the case of this government, we have established in consultation with the opposition parties how we will proceed on the budget. That's been clearly established by this Legislative Assembly. To say that it's not appropriate or it needs to be changed may be one thing, but to say it's wrong is in part holding the rest of the members of this Assembly in contempt, because it's a shared responsibility, a shared position we've adopted, and it is in fact the rules of conduct under which we operate. So this is not about time allocation. Time allocation in the budget is clearly established by the Standing Orders of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, let me also note that because several members have talked about the relative position of the province of Alberta – and I'm somewhat alarmed to hear them cast such a dismal view on what's happening in Alberta – we should have a moment to at least set the record straight about real strengths that do exist in this province and the way in which we have rebounded under the sound co-operation of the private sector and the government since 1986-87.

In doing so, I must start by saying that I have some sympathy for the NDP governments across Canada who are now facing the realities of governing. It's a big shock for those people who have been in the opposition traditionally and now must make some decisions which reflect positions of the electorate and reflect the reality of life. They no longer can be on both sides of the issue, no longer can suggest simple off-the-cuff solutions, because they have to deal in the real world, and that's what's happening now. As I say, I do have some sympathy for the Premier of Ontario, for example, who found himself in a bit of a pushing match with the Prime Minister this past week over the off-loading costs. Clearly there are some points there that the province of Alberta shares, that certainly there have been costs loaded on the provinces as a result of federal government measures which have, for example, in the case of Alberta, put a cap on our Canada assistance plan participation. For the have provinces those are quite serious concerns because it limits our flexibility as well, but in the case of Ontario, you have a deficit which, by some measures, is being forecast as over \$15 billion next year. What can they do? Well, the only thing they could do in Ontario, if I were to forecast their position, would be to continue to run a deficit close to \$15 billion, the financing of which is causing all of Canada concern, and increase taxes. That's the classic approach across the way, to continue to spend on one hand and tax on the other. Now, if you talk about lack of a structured plan, that reflects it.

In fact, just yesterday in B.C. we saw exactly the same print put in place by the B.C. NDP; that is to say, a deficit of \$2 billion in

the case of B.C., characterized by substantial income tax increases across the personal sector and the corporate sector. No wonder there are going to be difficulties in Ontario and in B.C. in terms of its competitive position. These are not the kinds of processes which the province of Alberta adopts. Since December 19 . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. You've asked the question more than once. That's enough.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as a result, I must say it is a difficult position. I know my good friend the Premier of Saskatchewan is facing the same kinds of problems. For whatever reason, he's going to blame the former government, but I know he's got a very difficult position. The point is that all provinces have this difficult position, and I think all provinces have to find some way of dealing with it short of increasing taxes certainly and simply taking the casual who-cares approach to spending that we've seen in the case of Ontario and B.C. recently.

So to say Alberta is alone in this problem – and our problems, as I said in question period, are driven primarily by the change in the natural resource rates we receive in this province. In fact, I think we have to find some way to deal more objectively with the way in which division of powers takes place, for example, or the way in which certain services are provided and paid for by the various governments. That's why Alberta at the western Premiers' conferences over the past two years has called for a disentanglement of the expenditure responsibility, coupled with a transfer of tax points back to the government. So you do not have this mismatch of taxation policy and spending, it has to be sorted out. Really, that's why I said to Floyd Laughren and others that I agree with the position taken by the Ontario government that this is at the heart of the way in which we are going to sort out the problems in Canada. Not just the problems in Ontario or B.C. or Alberta but these kinds of problems have to be sorted out in this fashion. I hope over the course of the next little while, as the reality of deficits in those provinces starts to hit home, you will see more pressure for this kind of debate.

Now, the question of debt, Mr. Speaker, is not one any Treasurer wants to have in front of him, but if you look at the relationships, for example, based on interprovincial debt comparisons in 1991, you'll find that in the case of Saskatchewan its direct debt is 58.7 percent of its gross domestic product, about 60 percent of its gross domestic product. In the case of Manitoba, 38.5 percent of its debt ratio to GDP. And it goes on. In Newfoundland it's about 40 percent. Here in Alberta it runs around 15. Alberta and B.C. are running about 15 percent. That's gross debt in relation to GDP. So you can see there's a fairly significant divergence between provinces, but there's also a continuing trend toward higher debt to GDP. I'm saying here, and trying to be apolitical at this point, that I doubt very much that any province over the period ahead will be able to carry this kind of commitment and be able to fund it and be able to ensure we have an opportunity to be competitive, because all of us eventually are going to be forced to one alternative. Either you continue to run the deficit and forget about it or you're going to have to increase taxes, and under both those variables, of course, we become less competitive every day.

12:20

The real measurement of that, of course, is the cross-border shopping. Why do you think people are cross-border shopping? Because the tax is too high, isn't it? The taxes are too high.

Every time you run a deficit, whether it's the deficits in Ontario or B.C. or perhaps even in Alberta, all you're doing is taxing the future generations because deficits are deferred taxes no matter how you cut it. That's the problem we're all facing. So we should be a little less political in this discussion today, Mr. Speaker, and try to focus more specifically over the course of legislative time ahead, between now and June, to try and find some more reasonable way to draw it together. That's what Albertans expect of us; that's what the Alberta government will deliver, certainly, in view of the problem. Nonetheless, we will get on over the course of the next few weeks with presenting a budget.

Therefore, I come back to what we're about now. What we're about now, Mr. Speaker, is simply interim supply, allowing us to pay the bills on April 1, get the cheques in the hands of the employers, pay the universities and colleges, put the money into urban parks, into hospitals, put the money into research facilities early on in the fiscal year so these programs can have sustaining benefit over the course of the 12-month fiscal period and not be limited at all by the flexibility some of these decision-makers require to allocate resources to their own priorities. That's what it's about. It's not a budget speech. It's not a time allocation question. It's not a time to examine the policies of government. It's a very simple process.

I had to make that speech because I know the members of the opposition now understand what we're doing. They won't put the same sort of camouflage on this issue as they have historically. It's not about special warrants, as I said before. Mr. Speaker, now I think I have set the record straight. As the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has noted, he now has the opportunity of having it explained to him. He was explaining some very interesting issues to my colleague the Minister of the Environment, who knows full well about environmental questions. Let me say that he now understands what this process is about, a bit of a glimpse of the history of interim supply, and I hope that in the future he'll conduct himself accordingly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 6 read a second time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, by way of notice, the intent of the government is to call on Monday the Committee of the Whole on Bill 7, appropriation Bill, now that all appropriation Bills have been read a second time, and to deal with third reading of Bill 8.

I move we now call it 1 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair is unable to put that motion, the reason being that with respect to the other two items that are on the Order paper, those should be called and debate should be allowed if indeed debate is to transpire. If debate continues till quarter to 1, then the operative standing order would take place.

First, I must, of course, ask the Government House Leader if he's prepared to withdraw the motion.

MR. GOGO: I would so do, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Consent of the House?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Thank you.

**Bill 7**  
**Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund)**  
**Interim Supply Act, 1992**

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 7, Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund) Interim Supply Act, 1992.

Let me say that the Alberta Capital Fund construction has had again a very wide and full discussion over the interim supply period, which ended last night sometime towards 10:15. This budget, a total of \$121,474,000, simply allows five departments to continue the capital expenditures based on some rough estimate of the costs of last year's capital commitments. Mostly the construction, Mr. Speaker, is based on those estimates of the capital projects which are now under way, which were commenced in the past year-end and, because of the size and duration of them, require funding throughout the first few months of the '92-93 fiscal year. These dollars essentially do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 7.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to make a few brief comments. I've said before that I'm concerned that as we spend money on worthwhile projects out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, it reduces the financial assets available in the fund over time to be able to do the other things we want the Heritage Savings Trust Fund to do. That is, the more money that's invested out of the financial assets into the capital projects division - I'm sorry; what I wanted to highlight this afternoon were my comments on the capital projects division of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and that's Bill 8.

What I'd like to do in terms of the Capital Fund itself is simply to highlight that as this government spends money, it's shifted its capital expenditures since 1987 into the Capital Fund which previously it spent out of the General Revenue Fund of the province. As we've seen over time, the money that used to be spent in the General Revenue Fund decreased, the capital expenditures decreased, as money out of the Capital Fund increased. Unfortunately, what has happened as a result of this different form of accounting is that the overall debt of the province then tends to be misrepresented because all that is referred to in the provincial government's annual report to taxpayers is the deficit in the General Revenue Fund, and it doesn't take into account the debt that has accumulated through the Alberta Capital Fund. So I'd just like to make the note this afternoon that the total outstanding debt, that is \$1.3 billion to the end of fiscal year 1991, and the debt servicing costs, although picked up by the General Revenue Fund, are not included in the announced budget deficit projections.

I just want to make the note, use this opportunity to highlight in terms of the overall fiscal reporting and accountability of the province that funding under the Alberta Capital Fund is not reported as part of the General Revenue Fund deficit and tends to understate the deficit position of the province. It's a situation that I think tends to mislead people in terms of the overall fiscal position of the government.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, just very, very briefly. In view of the time and the process we want to complete this morning, I just want to point out that in front of us is a piece of paper. I

guess it would be eight and a half by 11 if you measured it, and a little bit of coffee on it, but it represents \$121 million in interim spending. It talks in terms of \$49 million for health care facilities, \$33 million for postsecondary educational institutions. Again, it just illustrates the flaw in the system. At the very, very least, Provincial Treasurer, before you shake your head no, have a document spelling out to us how many of these dollars are here. Maybe all of them have to be advanced to postsecondary facilities, to health care facilities, and so on and so forth, but is that the case? If so, let us know.

**12:30**

When we look at Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure, the \$19 million, some of that obviously is going to go to the city of Edmonton. Is that some of the dollars that have been bargained for to complete the Whitemud and the Capilano and so on? We'd like some type of rationale as to how these dollars are being spent. It would be nice to know what type of social housing is being built, where it's going to be built. Just a little more detail certainly wouldn't hurt, because we're not talking nickels and dimes here, Mr. Speaker. We're talking 121 million smackers.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, a brief remark on second reading of Bill 7. As usual, the Provincial Treasurer is only half right in his explanations. It is true that there is a parliamentary tradition of interim supply, and it's true that that's enveloped within the budget. But in this case the envelope has a big hole on one side of it, and that's the absence of a budget. Normally, interim supply comes while the budget estimates are being deliberated so that there are funds to spend. So some of the questions that have been raised about the spending, which is authorized should Bill 7 pass into law, are relevant questions to ask at this stage of the game and not at some other stage. For example, Bill 7 contains an expenditure for construction of special waste facilities in the amount of \$3.4 million, which I submit is very relevant to the discussion that's being held about the future of that industry.

I believe that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud asked questions about the construction of social housing, which is also provided for under this Bill. Now, we know in this Assembly on this side of the House that there is a crisis in affordable family housing on the low-income side of the scale, particularly in the major urban centres. We do seem to have some vacancy in some of the smaller centres on the social housing side as a result of some of the developments that took place where there aren't any residents to fill them. My colleague the Member for Edmonton-Highlands asked questions today of the Minister of Municipal Affairs in that regard and asked specifically whether the minister would address the crisis situation through purchase or lease of existing housing stock, a much quicker way to deal with the problem than development and construction, especially where land isn't necessarily available. In the city of Edmonton, just for an example, the policy of dedicating portions of new subdivisions for public or social housing was terminated by, I believe it was, the former mayor of Edmonton when he was in that capacity, now the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. No longer does the city provide land for social or public housing, so where do we get the land to build this housing? I think my colleague's suggestion is a particularly good one, coming today in light of the \$5,745,000 allocated in this Bill for that purpose.

My colleague mentioned Thorncliff Place and Springfield Place, a development in my district which was built with public funds

under the federal Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation program in the early 1970s. Unfortunately, that program – again, developed by a Liberal government – was so ill conceived that it expired at the end of a 15-year period. A project built by the taxpayers reverted to private ownership. Since then it's been flipped three times or twice, on the market again every time the new owners kick the rents a hundred dollars a month and put the boots to the low-income families, many of which are on social assistance, who were attracted to that place because of social housing in the first place. There's a prime example of a property that might be acquired and provide 255 units of badly needed social housing in the city of Edmonton right now, no delay about it, a thought and perhaps one that could be investigated had we a plan and framework for development.

Thirdly, I'd like to mention that I believe the item entitled Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure, \$19,347,000, is probably even more subsidies for the chlorine bleached kraft pulp industry, and we need an explanation of that.

Again, we're dealing with an envelope that has a hole in it, and the hole is the lack of fiscal plan and presentation in this Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question.

Provincial Treasurer, summation?

[Motion carried; Bill 7 read a second time]

### Bill 8

#### Appropriation (Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Capital Projects Division) Interim Supply Act, 1992

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 8, Appropriation (Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Capital Projects Division) Interim Supply Act, 1992.

Mr. Speaker, in consideration of the second reading of this Bill, which provides for spending through the capital projects division of the heritage fund, dollars are used for those very important special projects which identify Alberta as unique among other provinces, which afford to Albertans an opportunity to ensure continued diversification of the economy while particularly establishing a much better quality of life for all Albertans. To this end, as I said in interim supply which we have considered here over the past few days, in the case of agriculture we are very pleased with our commitment to irrigation and to the research in other areas, which I've identified in the case of agriculture diversification, an opportunity for the southern part of the province in particular to become part of the competitive world market in terms of changing agricultural production and value-added.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, there is a wide menu of spending in the capital projects division. Each has its own unique and distinct history. Each in the view of the government expresses our vision about what the future should be for Albertans. In many ways such things as research into cancer, for example, will allow us at some point to unlock the very difficult killer of many Canadians and certainly Albertans.

In a variety of these areas, Mr. Speaker, it is because of the capital projects division of the heritage fund that we are able to move this form of diversification, to provide this kind of dollars to continue important research commitments and to provide an

important opportunity for these unique, special capital projects to be continued within the province.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to move second reading of Bill 8 to allow needed money to flow to these important ventures and to continue to develop and secure the future of this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to comment or ask a question or two about item 2 under Executive Council in this Bill. This is the \$1,800,000 allocated under the Alberta Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation. There's never been any question in my mind about the Premier's sincerity in wanting to do something about the substance abuse circumstances that appear to be proliferating throughout our province, but I can't recall anything that has brought more negative response than the creation of this foundation, because while people are desperate to see something happen, they also recognize that we have at our hands two or more agencies that are more than competent and capable of dealing with these kinds of circumstances but have been held back because of the absence of resources and that we now appear to be creating a foundation that will go into competition with them and whose terms of reference and mandate are still somewhat vague, undefined, and will cause competition for access to funds among many organizations in our communities. I speak, of course, about the very responsible work that's being done by AADAC and also by family and community support services in our municipalities, in addition to the many institutions. We are all concerned about the numbers of young people in particular that are now going at immense cost to the United States for treatment in substance abuse, yet it appears that this foundation is not going to be in the business of providing treatment and relieving that situation.

Mr. Speaker, just finally, I do question this amount being needed. My understanding is the chairman has just recently been appointed to this foundation. As yet they are not functioning, and I question and see no particular reason or rationale why this needs to be in the interim supply schedule at this point in time. We have not heard in this House what the plans for this foundation are.

12:40

MR. SPEAKER: Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to add a few comments under Agriculture vote 1, Farming for the Future, under the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital projects division. As members of the Assembly are aware, over the past year there's been a merger of the Farming for the Future activities with the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. One of the points that was stressed to the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute board by our minister, the Associate Minister of Agriculture, and certainly supported fully by members of the board, was

that the unique aspects of Farming for the Future, which have been developed over the years, be retained fully. The board worked very hard to incorporate the six regional review committees into the structure of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. They've not only been retained, but there have been times when the committees have come together with the board. There's been good interaction between the two bodies.

As the rural members of the Assembly in particular will know, the on-farm demonstration projects under Farming for the Future have been particularly beneficial. Through this vehicle we have given the opportunity to farmers, directly to farmers and people in the agrifood business, to demonstrate, to experiment, to find ways to address problems, whether it's with soil degradation or other matters, ways to improve and enhance productivity, the use of our land. I'm very pleased to stand in my place today and support fully and urge all members of the Assembly to support Bill 8, and in particular the aspect relating to Farming for the Future.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you. I would also like to raise concerns in regard to the Alberta Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation similar to those raised by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen no demonstrated need for a separate body to administer a program to deal with alcohol and substance abuse, and in fact the body that established, that wrote the guidelines for this particular foundation had to be educated by the people from AADAC. This body also may have funding power over AADAC where the chairperson of the board, recently appointed, has no demonstrated experience in the area of addictions or substance abuse. It would seem to me that we must vigorously oppose this particular expenditure through this foundation. Let's get this money directly into service and not into funding a needless board that will then have a power over an agency that has the expertise and knowledge to deliver the service in the best ways possible.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There's a call for the question.  
Provincial Treasurer, any words of summation?

MR. JOHNSTON: No, sir.

[Motion carried; Bill 8 read a second time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, the business for Monday would be Committee of the Whole and third reading of the interim supply Bills.

[At 12:45 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

