

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, May 5, 1992**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 92/05/05

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

head: **Main Estimates 1992-93**

Environment

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair would like to welcome the Minister of the Environment for the consideration of his estimates this evening. The main estimates are to be found on page 137 of the big book, and the elements commence at page 51 of the elements book.

The hon. Minister of the Environment, welcome.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm delighted to have the opportunity again to come before this committee as Minister of the Environment, and I am proud to present to you the 1992-93 fiscal plan for Alberta Environment.

Before I get into the plan itself, I would like to briefly outline to you, Mr. Chairman, some of the initiatives Alberta Environment has taken over the past three years that have contributed greatly to changing the face as to the way we treat the environmental challenges that confront us today.

You know, when I was first asked by the Premier to take over this portfolio, I was quite pleased, although some people said that I must have rocks in my head because, as you know, at that time it was a tremendously volatile portfolio. I often recall going out on the hustings and making speeches, and the first thing I had to say was: "Folks, don't yell at me. Please don't throw anything at me. Don't throw Wapiti River water or dead fish. Don't do any of those things. Let's get this down to a reasonable debate. Let's get this down to an honest discussion."

One of the phenomenal things that has happened, Mr. Chairman, over the past three years is that there has been a breakdown in that polarization. We don't find environmentalists now yelling at industrialists and industrialists yelling at environmentalists and all of them yelling at the minister. What we have found over the past three years is that there is a willingness to work together. One of the most significant initiatives that I think has contributed to a breakdown in this polarization was the creation of the Round Table on Environment and Economy, where indeed we were able to bring 28 Albertans from all walks of life – from the environmental community, the legal community, the agricultural community, the energy community, the health community – together to discuss in reasonable, sane tones what the environmental agenda should be, an agenda that will take us through this decade and into the next century and advise this government as to what the environmental agenda should be and how it should be changed from time to time.

What I'm talking about are a few of the achievements that have been accomplished in the past three years. The other, of course, is the establishment of the environmental caucus committee. There never was an environmental caucus committee. It's under the capable chairmanship, of course, of the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, and it's working very well, Mr. Chairman.

I look at the Environment Council of Alberta and the revamp of that organization to make it a much more efficient and effective organization, whereby the ECA can be called in to assist the

department or to assist any other department of government relative to environmental issues, to have a proper adjudication of those issues, and to get public input into the various problems facing us.

I look also at the establishment of the Natural Resources Conservation Board, for the first time in the history of this province a board established to look from an unbiased and very objective point of view at the social, the economic, and the environmental impacts of projects that are not related to the energy industry, the energy industry of course being subject to review by the Energy Resources Conservation Board.

I look also, Mr. Chairman, at Bill 53. I understand it's going to be renumbered. It's a piece of legislation that is going to be tabled very soon, which is going to be a complete rewrite of environmental law, a consolidation of environmental law, a piece of legislation that will not only be a set of new laws but an environmental agenda that indeed will help us through this decade and into the next century and will reflect today's environmental realities and expectations. So with those few opening remarks I would like to now get into the highlights of the estimates this evening.

Mr. Chairman, once again I believe this government has demonstrated clearly its continued commitment to protect the environment. My priorities for the upcoming fiscal year are as follows: first of all, legislation – that is, tabling of the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act – and at the same time developing associated regulations for the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and continuing to carry out public consultation on proposed water management policies with the objective being a complete rewrite of the Water Resources Act and eventually, hopefully certainly by the next sitting of this Legislature, tabling legislation relative to a rewrite of the Water Resources Act.

Relative to this whole legislative process, I think, it's important to point out that never in the history of this province has there been a process that has involved the public as much as the public has been involved in drafting the new Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. It has been a tremendous public consultation, again facilitated by the capable chairmanship of a review committee of the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, and the regulations, Mr. Chairman, are the subject of the same kind of review. As I understand, there was a workshop yesterday right here in Edmonton – about 250 people attended – relative to the regulations, the operative part of the legislation. Indeed, the Water Resources Act will be subjected to the same kind of public consultation. So legislation certainly is the first priority of the department, to get that legislation cleared up, the new Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and, of course, the Water Resources Act.

8:10

Our second priority, Mr. Chairman, is public service delivery whereby we propose to provide a one-window concept to approvals and licences, where we propose the implementation of inquiry lines for the Action on Waste program, where we propose to strengthen the Calgary office to provide better service in southern Alberta, and where we propose to institute a pilot customer service program.

The third priority, Mr. Chairman, is partnerships, where we propose to continue interjurisdictional co-operation on environmental matters with the federal and other provincial governments and territorial governments, where we propose to implement partnerships with municipalities and other provincial departments and volunteer organizations, many of those volunteer organiza-

tions, of course, being environmental organizations, as represented by the Environmental Resource Centre and the Environmental Network.

The fourth priority is to take advantage of the resources that are available to us, and this brings me to the meat of the estimates this evening. These resources, of course, relate ostensibly to money. The estimates for Alberta Environment are increasing by 4.7 percent, to \$143 million. The department is restructuring and streamlining to meet the challenges of the new Act and to be more effective and efficient in delivery of our services to the public. An additional \$4.3 million has been made available in order to meet Alberta's third-year commitment to the \$23.2 million cost-sharing agreement with the federal government to clean up contaminated orphan sites throughout the province.

One million dollars has been set aside to provide funds to municipalities in the Capital Region Waste Management Commission, and this is that huge problem that involves not only the city of Edmonton but the county of Strathcona, Fort Saskatchewan, the city of St. Albert, and a number of other municipal districts, counties, towns, and cities around the city of Edmonton. This money is being set aside to undertake extensive hydrogeological studies in regard to a regional waste management system. There will be a continued commitment by both Economic Development and Trade and Environment to the Action on Waste program. Alberta Environment has budgeted \$4 million and Economic Development and Trade \$2 million in 1992-93.

Also included in the 1992-93 budget is an increased provision of \$2.7 million for water management projects.

Mr. Chairman, very briefly those are the highlights of the budget. I think a 4.7 percent increase in this time of environmental concern, environmental awareness, and the demand by the people for action by governments, by industry, by individuals to do more to protect our environment is little enough to pay in terms of meeting our commitment to protect and use wisely our environment now and into the future.

With those few opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, I would be very pleased indeed to hear comments from my colleagues in the House.

Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Chairman, there are perhaps a few comments that could be made. I want to start out by agreeing with the minister on one point: I'm sure that he is delighted to be here again for the third year to present his estimates. It's been three interesting years, I must say, for environmental policy around the world and in the province of Alberta. It's certainly been a time during which the minister has launched review initiatives on a number of scores, and I would like to kind of keep score on where we're at with some of these things.

I think the first and perhaps the single most important area when the minister took over his portfolio was the problem of environmental impact assessment in the province of Alberta. We'd been operating for a very long time under the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act. It seems to me that it ought to be a very simple matter in principle to structure the kind of review that we need to do on environmental projects and licensing before decisions are made so that all of the people who are affected by a project have the information they need to assess it, so that they have a forum in which to have their questions answered, in which scientific review is done of studies that are tendered and decisions are made in an unbiased fashion.

These lessons have been demonstrated over and over and over again. I think the Oldman River dam case, which certainly predates the minister's tenure, illustrates those points as well as

it possibly can, by court decision, the things that need to be in there. Still, it seems to me that after three years the lessons are not taken to heart. What we have today is still ministerial discretion in terms of when an environmental assessment is done, notwithstanding the fact that we had a task force – two from industry, two from government, two from the private environmental organizations – who came up with a model more than two years ago now. I cite the example of the Sunpine project at Rocky Mountain House, where still no environmental impact assessment has been ordered, even though at one point at least the proponents had proposed a major wood preservative plant within one kilometre of private residences, no commitment through the NRCB to any public review of FMA decisions, especially the allocation decisions.

Now, we do have the NRCB in place, and that's, I think, to the credit of the government that there's been a move in that direction. The NRCB of course is in its first year of operation. They structured one set of hearings on the Swan Hills expansion project. I felt that they made generous decisions on the question of who would qualify for status in intervenor funding in that case. Several environmental organizations and the Indian Association of Alberta were recognized for funding, but then we go on down the list from there. The Canmore resort project, CADCO, was excluded from any type of review process by the minister's decision. I'm not certain how the exemptions were made on the Three Sisters project. There are two that I'm aware of, one in what's called the Canmore 75 lands and the other in respect of one of the golf courses. I'm informed today that the Three Sisters project has proceeded with diverting water from the Stewart Creek to create a reservoir. Whether they have permits for that, I don't know, but all of this is done in advance of an NRCB hearing.

At the NRCB all of a sudden the criteria started to shift. All of a sudden people who live in Calgary, where they get their water downstream from the Bow River, where there's some likelihood of sewage from this resort time-share operation going into the Bow River, where there's almost certainly runoff from the water on the golf courses which would include fertilizers and possibly herbicides and other types of chemical contaminants – all of a sudden all of the downstream users are not part of the process at all. Then we get to the Kan-Alta project, which has been moved up in time, ahead of the Three Sisters project, in hearings to try and get it through in a hurry. Well, when the request was denied to delay those hearings, some of the environmental groups smelled a rat and walked away. Others stayed and fought for their right to be heard as intervenors.

As of Monday this week the NRCB has ruled them all out of order. They've said that none of them qualify, so there will be no other side to the story. Although they did take an unusual step, which I never ever contemplated under the Act, of saying that the board would provide its own funds to some of these groups to try to get some semblance of a hearing going. Well, the board doesn't have any funds of its own in the first place. If it has any funds, they're taxpayer funds, and it was never presented to this House that the taxpayers were going to pay the cost of this hearing process. In fact it was presented the other way around. So there are problems yet in our environmental impact assessment process. It hasn't evolved the way that we thought it would, especially with the task force report in place.

I've raised the issue of the Pine Lake landfill and the god-awful mess that we have in terms of how we license and scrutinize the operation of landfills in our province. The fact that the Development Appeal Board found the data supplied by Alberta Environment to be erroneous, their term – and there's still an ambiguity. I sent the minister a note earlier today asking whether the

government was going to continue to back the Pine Lake project, even after the hearing process said that it's not a suitable site without the sort of cadillac engineering, which is unproven and very costly at the outset. So, you know, environmental impact assessment is a key.

8:20

Another problem we have with environmental assessment is that the minister has tremendous influence over what questions are answered in the EIA process. Going back to Swan Hills, again the question was cooked in such a way that the NRCB could not consider the question of imports of hazardous waste material into the province because the government prefers politically to deal with that question at another time, hopefully, I suppose from their point of view, after that expansion has been approved.

Now, moving on to the many reviews that the minister mentioned. There's a question of the Clean Air Strategy for Alberta, a report published in November last year and the government's position announced March 18, which I guess was the day before we went into session. My understanding of that process is that the participants worked very hard to come to a consensus so that they would have a ready-made agenda for the government to implement. They included only those things on which there was agreement. They excluded, for example, the idea of setting some kind of realistic targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Alberta because they couldn't agree on that, but they could agree on quite a number of other things.

I was struck today just reviewing these reports by at least six of their key recommendations, which the government has not endorsed even for future action, let alone the present; for example, the recommendation to

identify, evaluate and implement cost-effective energy developments that contribute to clean air.

Not addressed at this point. The change in

management approach for all point-source emissions . . . to avoid adverse effects on human health and the environment."

Not addressed.

Develop and implement a zone approach to managing air quality within specific airsheds:

Not addressed.

Develop innovative and targeted solutions to better manage cumulative emissions in and around urban areas.

Not addressed.

Improve the gathering, sharing, integration and application of scientific and technical knowledge and research regarding atmospheric processes and effects on health and ecosystems.

Not addressed; and also the whole area of public education and information.

You know, if that's an indication of how far the government is prepared to go in addressing the clean air consultative strategy, we'll perhaps be waiting a very long time in order to see very much action out of that particular area. Again that was an issue that was pushed off to review, where it stood for some period of time, and then it came back to the government, and half of the recommendations they didn't even address, and I think that's a problem.

The minister mentioned the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. Believe me, we're waiting for some action on that front. The minister says that what is now the third draft will be tabled in the Legislature within a week or two. I would like the minister to commit that the environmental protection and enhancement legislation will be proclaimed before the next provincial election. I've never heard anyone from the government say that, but there's been a lot that's happened. In fact, the last statement I saw, the government had forgotten how long they'd

been working on it. They said two years when in fact it's been three.

I would also like the minister to indicate to the committee tonight, if he would, whether he's prepared at this stage to consider amendments, because we don't know what process took place since the Member for Banff-Cochrane undertook his hearings, except that we know that somebody got to somebody in government and the Bill was killed last year. It may have been changed, but through whatever process it was, it certainly wasn't an open process or a public process. [interjection] The Bill died on the Order Paper, Mr. Government House Leader, and maybe it's your fault. Maybe I'm talking to the wrong guy. It did die on the Order Paper despite the minister's commitment that it would be passed last year. It wasn't passed last year, so I'm asking for a commitment that the government will see it through this year and not walk away from it and that they will consider amendments on the floor of the House.

Moving on with the minister's reviews, because we certainly have our share of reviews, there's the Water Resources Act review, which he mentioned. Now, that's certainly overdue, but I have some questions. Why are so many water resource decisions being made while the Act is being reviewed? Why, for example, by order in council were new instream flow limits set on the St. Mary, Belly, and Waterton rivers since September last year? Why is the government promoting interbasin transfer from the Highwood to the Little Bow River as a development project during the period of the review of the Act? Why proceed so aggressively with the Oldman River dam and in particular with filling the reservoir to complete capacity while the Water Resources Act review is under way and while the federal EIA is on? Why spend virtually all of the increase in the budget on the Buffalo Lake project? You know, you look at the element detail on page 53: Construction of Surface Water Development and Operations goes from \$5.5 million to \$8.2 million. Buffalo Lake: why spend general revenue funds on that project while the Water Resources Act is ostensibly under review?

There was yet another review published not long ago on contaminated sites. The minister mentioned that there's money in the budget for contaminated sites, but there are very serious and very substantial recommendations from that task force report. Again, Mr. Chairman, when are those reports, when are those recommendations going to be acted upon? A lot of people would like to know. Will they be addressed as part of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, which is, according to the minister, going to be tabled next week? It may be very difficult, since it was only a week ago that that report was made public, to have it included and those brought forward into the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, but a question of when there'll be action on some of those legislative changes is certainly raised.

Now, having raised my questions about the reviews that the minister has undertaken, I'd like to request a review of my own, which is the way the department views chlorine bleaching in the pulp industry. I asked the minister some questions not long ago about why it is that the government spends so much time worrying about how pulp mills are put together and advising pulp mill operators on which piece of equipment they should install, this digester or that bleacher, even going right down to the manufacturers.

Now, I see Jim Dau, who's an Alberta Environment spokesperson, in the *Edmonton Journal*, March 18, criticizing Procter & Gamble because they didn't take Alberta Environment's recommendations on which equipment they should use. It said that they should "use oxygen to separate wood fibre from unusable material." He says that Procter & Gamble "made a business

decision not to follow that policy." Now, policy, schmolicy. What it is is advice from Alberta Environment that they should buy a piece of equipment. Now, what business is it of yours what equipment they buy to make a pulp mill? They're making pulp; the minister's not making pulp. What he should be making is regulations which are clear about what comes out of the pipe in the river, what goes into the atmosphere, but not telling them how they should put their machine together because that puts the government in the position of making business decisions for the company. I'm a socialist, but I understand there's a difference between what government does and what private industry does.

I clearly see the role of the Environment minister to be to spell out the rules, not like what they did with Daishowa corporation. Halfway through the construction of the mill along comes Alberta Environment and says: "Whoa; this pulp mill's all wrong. You're not doing this right. Let's get it on the drawing board here." Then they erase this, and they say, "Well, you put this piece of equipment here, and that's how you make pulp." That's what happened, Mr. Minister of the Environment, and you're responsible for it.

What the minister should do, clearly, is what the minister of the environment in British Columbia has done and said that there will be a time when there will be no chlorine in pulp in Alberta.

MR. KLEIN: Well, get the dirty, rotten, stinking, belching mills cleaned up right now.

MR. McINNIS: I've heard that speech before, and I'm not going to listen to it again, because every time he makes it, he makes the same stupid mistake. He talks about Alberta standards being the highest in the world and what B.C. is going to meet down the road, Alberta meets today. He doesn't even know that the permits that he's issued to Procter & Gamble say that they only meet 2.5 kilograms per air dried tonne. He thinks in his mind that it's 1.5 when it's 2.5.

That's not the issue. The issue is: how do we get to zero? That's the issue. What they've said in British Columbia is: "Here is a date on the calendar. You get to zero by this date. We're not going to tell you how you do it. We're not going to stand over your shoulder and show you how to make pulp in that process. What we're going to do is tell a date on which you have to get down to zero." You know, they're working on it, Mr. Chairman. They've got a pulp mill at Howe Sound Pulp & Paper, which has what they call a brown pulp line, which is producing bleached kraft pulp, ladies and gentlemen, with no chlorine whatsoever. They're doing it. None. You know what comes out of the pipe? Zero point one kilograms AOX per air-dried tonne, and I suspect a lot of that is left over from the other process. So they're working today on producing pulp in a bleached kraft mill with no chlorine, no chlorine dioxide. Now, we don't have that. If the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche were fighting for his constituents, he'd be trying to get a pulp mill with no chlorine in his riding. That's how he'd be securing the economic future of his constituents, because there is no future for chlorine in the pulp industry, and the sooner we recognize it the better.

8:30

Also in British Columbia Louisiana-Pacific is producing pulp in Chetwynd using a process that puts no effluent of any description whatsoever into any river, lake, or stream. Can we say that in Alberta? Of course not, because we don't have that kind of policy direction. We have a minister who doesn't understand what his department is doing. They're standing over the shoulders of pulp mill operators and trying to tell them that they know better how

to build a pulp mill when, in fact, they've got him so confused about the policy that he misspeaks himself every time he speaks on the subject. He doesn't know what he's doing. He doesn't know that they've got a permit there that allows them to the end of this year to go 2.5 kilograms per air-dried tonne, because they're so busy arguing in the news media, for God's sake, about whether or not Procter & Gamble should buy the piece of equipment that they told them to buy. Procter & Gamble said no because it didn't suit their purposes. So what do they do? They run to the *Edmonton Journal*, and they say, "The pulp mill wouldn't buy the piece of equipment." Well, that's nonsense. That ain't the way you run a government.

If you're the Minister of the Environment, you create rules and standards. What they're saying in British Columbia, what they said in Sweden to their industry is: "Here's a date on the calendar. You get to zero, and you figure out how you do it. We're not going to tell you how to do it because we're not pulp makers. We're government." The sooner the minister gets that point the better, and when he does, I suggest that he will also follow British Columbia's lead and say: "There will be a date on the calendar when we're not going to use chlorine, we're not going to have AOX, we're not going to have dioxins, and we're not going to have furans. We're not going to have any of those things. And it's right here."

In Saskatchewan they're producing pulp with zero liquid effluent, and the minister is saying: "Oh, they're not doing that. They can't do that. They've got a sick mill. They've got a virus in their mill. They can't do what they're doing." Well, they don't listen to the minister. Thank God. They are doing it. They're making pulp. Millar Western said,

We studied our options, and came to the conclusion that, if we were willing to make the investment, we could scrap the biological treatment system
all the things that the minister likes to talk about
and go to a closed loop, zero-effluent system. It was the right decision - we've never looked back.

They're proud of what they did, and I don't blame them.

Absolutely every bit of effluent coming out of this mill block goes back into the water recovery plant.

That's the kind of thing that we could do in Alberta if we had a minister who had the political will and the desire to actually do something, as opposed to covering his position politically.

I would also like to ask the minister why he continues to sit on the fence on the question of oil sands pollution. For years there's been the problem of a buildup of toxic materials suspended in water with sand and bitumen, and it's sitting at the bottom of a tailings pond under a bit of clear water, and the companies are saying: "Well, we're just going to leave it there under water for all time. That's how we're going to solve the problem." The Minister of the Environment refuses to say whether that's an acceptable reclamation plan or not. Meanwhile, it continues to build by the billions and billions of gallons. Now, I suggest that if he's going to be the Minister of the Environment in the future, he's going to have to get off the fence and let the people in Alberta know whether he's going to accept that reclamation plan or not. I don't think he can continue to hide behind his officials and say, "Well, somebody has to advise me."

I'd also like him to address the question of coal bed methane, because the oil and gas industry is interested in tapping methane that's trapped in coal beds in various places in the province. The difficulty, as I understand it, is that they have to drill a heck of a lot more wells than they have in the past, and we're looking at potentially an amount of surface disturbance which is as much as 10 times greater than the existing oil and gas industry has had. Now, the Energy Resources Conservation Board set up a task

force which the environmental groups have walked away from because they smell an in-house, industry-run rat at this point. We'd like to know where Alberta Environment is on the environmental aspects of this. All of the surplus water that's generated in coal bed methane projects, some of which is salt water brackish, where is that water going to be disposed? What kind of guidelines will we have in terms of surplus disruption on coal bed methane?

I would like to deal at some point with endangered species, but I think we'll have to save that for another date because we're running short of time.

I would like to get on to the question of the Action on Waste program which the minister mentioned in his opening remarks, the \$4 million in the Environment estimates and the additional \$2 million in the economic development ministry estimates. Now, I assume that those are the funds from which the NIMBY game is constructed, a card game which teaches Albertans that everybody suffers from the NIMBY syndrome. Now, where I come from, when you say a person is NIMBY, what you're saying is that they're not prepared to consider the public interest, that their only interest is their own private interest, that my back yard takes precedence over everybody else's problem.

I don't believe everybody is like that. Maybe the Minister of the Environment does, but you know sometimes there are waste management projects that make sense. Sometimes there are waste management projects which are stupid. I think it's time that the minister recognized that there are projects in those two categories. He was the one who came along after the previous mayor of Edmonton had wasted, I guess, about \$11 million of our money on the Aurum site and issued a two-line press release and said this site is unacceptable from an environmental point of view. Bang. End of story. End of project. Money gone down the tubes, wasted. Well, I presume that's a judgment he made based on the best environmental advice he could get. He made a value judgment that that was not an environmentally acceptable project. He wasn't practising NIMBY; he was making a decision. When people have their input as to whether a project is good or bad from an environmental point of view, I don't think it serves anybody any good to say that they're practising NIMBY. I think we should listen to what they're saying. If what they're saying is NIMBY, that's fine. We put it under NIMBY. But if what they're saying is that it doesn't make sense from an environmental point of view, then we should listen. But, you know, if you're going to listen, you have to at least provide people good information about what's going on.

In the case of Pine Lake there are four other hydrology consultants that say Alberta Environment's data is erroneous. In fact, Golder Associates were actually very perplexed. I mean, the things that were said in testimony were very mild in comparison to what was said by the development appeal board. I think people are entitled to have the information and to express the view over whether a waste management project is suitable or not without being referred to as NIMBY.

I'm thinking also about the prospects of incineration. Under this Action on Waste program we don't have a clear policy direction. I thought we did when I read the papers, but then along comes a provincially led task force that says that we should have an incineration plant in the city of Edmonton, capital regional district, as a waste management option, potentially including one in the district of Edmonton-Jasper Place where Inland Cement is actively discussing such a project with two private sector investors.

I can't determine whether that's okay under provincial policy or not. The policy documents say no, but the task force says yes. I think that question needs to be clarified. The \$6 million that's available may be a good amount of money or it may not, but I can

tell you it's not sufficient to provide for a provincewide collection system for recyclables, and we're not going to have very much of an industry processing those recyclables until we have a reliable source of supply. It ain't gonna happen. We're not going to have a recycled paper mill until we have a source of supply. We'll be able to sell scraps to British Columbia, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, but we're not going to have it here in Alberta. There's plenty of money for TV ads. I know every night I turn on CFRN and there's the *Green File*, sponsored by Action on Waste. There's plenty of money for NIMBY games and other kinds of PR fluff and rhetoric and gags and so forth but not any money for a blue box recycling program. I think that's a real problem.

8:40

Now, Mr. Chairman, I think there's also a problem in that this government doesn't have its priorities straight. You know, the only money that's available, aside from minor amounts here and there, in this budget, the biggest increase I can see is in support of that Buffalo Lake project in the vicinity of the Premier's residence. But there's a tremendous drain on this budget of money that's spent on processing permits to pollute under the Clean Water Act, even though a lot of them are approved with no scrutiny because there isn't enough staff. You know, Esso, Shell, Syncrude, Amoco, Chem-Security, Chevron, and Suncor all got permits in 1989, for example, with no review because there wasn't enough staff. Clean water licences: Amoco, Chevron, Sherritt, Stelco, Celanese. They don't have enough staff to review all of the permits. They never release a noncompliance list, and the minister says that's for political reasons. I used to believe him. I think it's because they don't know who is complying and isn't complying, because in Environmental Assessment and Standards and Approvals they're insufficiently funded.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion in committee.

User Fee System

Moved by Mr. McInnis:

Be it resolved that the following Environmental Protection, Enhancement and Research, budgeted items

- (1) under the Environmental Assessment element section, 2.2.3, Environmental Impact Assessment Review, \$741,594, and
- (2) under Standards and Approvals, 2.3.1, Air Quality, \$2,194,835; 2.3.2, Water Quality, \$964,292; and 2.3.3, Municipal, \$1,586,995,

totaling \$5,487,716, be deleted from the government estimates and Capital Fund estimates and that the Assembly urge the government to adopt a user fee system that will transfer the financial responsibility for administration of pollution permits to the polluters themselves.

MR. McINNIS: The reason I do that is that I'm fed up with so much of the Environment department's budget being drained to provide free permits to people and companies and municipalities who pollute our environment. I think that when we charge people fifty bucks for a driver's licence, a hundred bucks for this, \$40 to get married, we can consider asking the companies and other people who pollute our environment to pay at least for the cost of administering those permits. I think it's time we took action on that, and I commend that to the committee this evening.

Chairman's Ruling Admissibility of Motion

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. There's a question about the orderliness of the motion. Hon. member, the last portion of the

motion does not appear to be in order, and these are the words that don't appear to be in order: "and that the Assembly urge the government to adopt a user fee system . . ." The Chair would suggest that at the top part of his motion the mover say that he proposes the following motion to the Committee of Supply rather than the Assembly and that the words after Capital Fund estimates be deleted.

MR. McINNIS: May I speak to that, Mr. Chairman? There was some discussion back and forth with Parliamentary Counsel about the correct way to word this. The way I understand it, that's in there because the motion would have to be reported out of the committee to the Assembly before it would have any force and effect. It is in the vein of urging the government to do certain things, and therefore its passage would commit the government to nothing whatsoever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee can't do that. The committee can't urge the government to do anything. The Committee can only urge the Assembly to urge the government. The Chair does believe that the sense of the motion is there with those words missing because they're certainly getting the message that you want these sums deleted from the government estimates and the Capital Fund estimates.

Is the mover prepared for these editorial changes?

MR. McINNIS: I'm in your hands, Mr. Chairman. I'll certainly accept your advice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair cannot accept it as given, but the Chair will accept it with those changes.

MR. McINNIS: Well, the difficulty here is that if we move the motion without that other portion, then it just disappears, right? I mean it just disappears off the face of the earth, and hence . . . Believe me, there was considerable discussion with Parliamentary Counsel about how to word this in a way that wouldn't offend parliamentary procedure and precedent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, for the purposes of our work here in the committee, whether it's been discussion or not, this should result in something that Parliamentary Counsel puts his initials to. Then we would have these things resolved without talking about them and taking up the time of the committee here.

Is the committee ready for the question? [interjection] Order.

Does the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark have a question?

MR. MITCHELL: Can you tell me what the question is? Is it to change this motion, or is it to vote on the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There'll be no speaking to the motion until the hon. proposer will agree to the suggestion of the Chair. If he will not agree to the suggestion of the Chair, the Chair is going to rule the motion out of order, and you will not be speaking to it.

MR. McINNIS: I'll agree to the suggestion of the Chair.

Deletion of Subvotes

Moved by Mr. McInnis:

Be it resolved that the following Environmental Protection, Enhancement and Research, budgeted items

(1) under the Environmental Assessment element section, 2.2.3, Environmental Impact Assessment Review, \$741,594, and

(2) under Standards and Approvals, 2.3.1, Air Quality, \$2,194,835; 2.3.2, Water Quality, \$964,292; and 2.3.3, Municipal, \$1,586,995, totaling \$5,487,716, be deleted from the government estimates and Capital Fund estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to support this motion. I believe the sentiment contained in this motion is correct and that we should not . . .

MR. KLEIN: I'll come back when you're ready to vote.

MR. MITCHELL: It doesn't matter, Ralph. I'm sure your vote doesn't count in cabinet, so why would it count here?

AN HON. MEMBER: How would you know?

MR. MITCHELL: Well, we just see the Premier turning over his decisions so frequently.

The fact is that it is difficult to justify the number of fees that are charged private Albertans, individual Albertans on the one hand for services such as drivers licence fees, which have been increased, and not charge businesses for services which are critical to their permission, their ability to continue in business. So this is a very important initiative in that respect.

I would like to emphasize that when you pare away this expenditure, which should be covered by the private sector, and Water Resources Management, vote 3, from the total budget of the Department of Environment, you're approaching 45 percent of the department's total expenditures which either go to things which are not directly environmentally related - i.e., water resource management - or go to items such as this which should be covered elsewhere. It raises, therefore, serious questions about this budget, and it offers a legitimate solution for some of the revenue problems encountered and embraced almost by this government in this budget and its previous six deficit budgets. So, Mr. Chairman, I would urge members of the Legislature to support this.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, I speak in favour of the motion by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. Long enough, I believe, the taxpayers have been paying for those who are polluting our air, our water, and our streams and wrecking our hillsides without proper permits paid for by those companies. The member has allowed \$5,487,716 to go to some of the crucial expenditures that we need in this province. The government is saying that they're down some \$2 billion in revenue this year, and \$5 million is a major chunk of money that could be easily moved into some of these departments like Education, social services, Health, and those departments that have been shaved because of the financial predicament this government has put us in.

8:50

Mr. Chairman, the real problem is the fact that the people who are polluting the water are getting away scot free and the taxpayers are paying the costs for the very things that they're allowed to do by this government. The same goes to the air quality. Some 65 percent of the municipalities in this province put their raw sewage directly in the rivers. Are the taxpayers supposed to pick up the cost of cleaning this mess up? I think it's only fair that from now on those who pollute have to pay the price for permits, the price for their cleanups, and the taxpayers, I think, have shelled out

enough. The people of Alberta cannot afford any more taxes, and this is a good cut to \$5,487,716.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to support this amendment. If this amendment were in place, we'd have more money. If polluters had to pay for the problems that were created, that would lead to having better staff, and many significant environmental mistakes that have been made in the past would no longer be made.

I'd just to draw to the attention of the Chair and the members one particular mistake that could have been avoided had this motion been in place, and it involves a plant that's located on the edge of my constituency of Calgary-Forest Lawn called Hub Oil. Now, the members have heard me speak about this plant on at least a dozen different occasions. I've raised it during question period. I've raised it during environmental estimates debates. Whenever I get a chance, I want to talk to the members about Hub Oil, because this problem creates an awful lot of concern, not just for residents in my constituency but for residents in this whole part of the city. The plant is old. It's an eyesore. It generates all kinds of caustic fumes. When the wind's blowing in a certain direction, the fumes cause residents of my constituency to have watery eyes, headaches, to become nauseous, and even the Calgary board of health has drawn attention to concerns that have been associated with the operation of this plant. Now, those are the problems, Mr. Chairman.

I think if we had more money coming into the Department of the Environment from polluters, we'd then have funding to help this plant upgrade what it is that the plant in effect does. The plant actually provides an extremely critical environmental service. It takes 10 percent of the waste oil that's produced by automobiles and trucks in the province. It recycles that and makes it available. I think that what this plant does could be enhanced if we had a government that could truly get behind environmental protection. There's no reason why 60 or 70 percent of the waste oil that's produced in this province couldn't be recycled, and if we supported this motion, I think it would lead to this kind of recovery.

I think really what's required here, Mr. Chairman, is a government that would provide some leadership. I think in order to have this plant relocated, as I am suggesting, and to get some new modern equipment in place that doesn't constantly break down, we have to have a consortium that would involve not only the city of Calgary. The Minister of the Environment was formerly the mayor of the city of Calgary. He knows how serious this problem is from a Calgary perspective. But if we could get some co-ordination between the province and the city, the plant owners certainly would have to be involved, and even the federal government through the western diversification plan should be prepared to put money in this. It would create a whole new industry, create jobs, solve an environmental problem.

I guess I can't draw attention, Mr. Chairman, to the fact that the minister is now in a position to listen to me, but I'm making once again a plea to the minister. We've exchanged a lot of correspondence on the issue of Hub Oil. I just think it's time that some action be done, that this plant get relocated, and that my constituents no longer have to suffer all of the physical ills that I've just described.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Banff-Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Clearly one of the principles in the Department of the Environment is that the polluter pays. That is something that I've heard the hon. minister

speak to on a number of occasions in this House and elsewhere in the province of Alberta. What the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is considering is lumping two portions of the budget estimates here, the Environmental Assessment and Standards and Approvals, and taking the position that all of those resources are used for no other reason than to compensate for findings of environmental degradation. I don't think that that's consistent with logic.

Although I recognize that the department looks at this on a continuing basis to ensure the most productive use of the budget that's allocated to the department, I really question where the member is coming from when he makes such a bald-faced statement that 5 and a half million dollars is going to compensate polluters. I don't think that's the case, and unless the member is able to provide me and other members in committee with specific examples and some detail upon which we can make an informed choice, then I would suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, and to other members of this committee that this motion should be defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I take a look at the budget documents that are presented before this Legislative Assembly, and I see on page 38 of the Budget Address a list of selected fees and charges. Now, isn't it amazing that throughout this wonderful province of ours, it doesn't matter what you do, you seem to get charged? You get married, marriage licence. There's a charge. If you have to supply liquor at a fund-raising event or a wedding, you go to the Solicitor General's department, you get a liquor licence. That's a charge. But why is it that if you go out and pollute, you dump garbage, all that stinking, smelling, belching - what's the other stuff that the minister - spewing, polluting, garbage, you do it for free.

Chairman's Ruling Relevance

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair regrets to interrupt the hon. member, but he appears to be speaking to that part of the motion that was excised.

Debate Continued

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I guess, then, if I'm speaking to the point that I must, the second portion of the amendment calls for the deletion of funds from the Department of the Environment. Now, what I'm trying to do, quite frankly, is show that if I agree with the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, as I do, I'm just trying to be consistent with government policy. In every other department except this one there are fees attached for the services that are rendered.

I don't see any reason why we shouldn't be charging those individuals that pollute. Whether it's an inspection service or whether it's a cleanup apparatus that comes along after the fact, why is it that the Alberta taxpayer gets stuck with it? Why is it that it's included in this department? It's not included in the estimates of the Department of Health when we have concerns about vital statistics. It's not included in the Department of the Solicitor General when we have concerns about licensing applications. Those fees are applied to the user, and here is one where people are allowed to just go out and dump whatever they want free of charge. What generosity. Well, that has to end, and it ought to end tonight. The government members who are calling for this clean environment strategy should be more than prepared to support the amendment put forward by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. How do we go about finding dollars after

we adopt this amendment becomes rather obvious. You do what you do to every other Albertan. What you do is you charge them.

9:00

MR. CARDINAL: I have a couple of problems with the motion, Mr. Chairman. When you're talking about financial responsibility for the administration of pollution permits that are polluters themselves, I'm concerned. I'd like some clarification from Edmonton-Jasper Place, who made the motion. I just wonder: does this apply to all industries in Alberta, the pulp mills and other industries? Does this also apply to urban centres like Edmonton? If I remember right, last summer when Edmonton dumped 1.6 million litres of raw sewage into the river, neither the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place nor the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, both environmental ministers – they think they're ministers but they're critics. They were sitting here in the House, and they never stood up once to criticize environmental damage. I never saw any of the press in Edmonton or the radio or TV stations putting it on, and they still don't. Now, are they for real, or are they just playing political games against forestry development and industrial development?

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I would like to respond to the request for information in this debate. First, Banff-Cochrane wanted to know what was included and what was not included and how I knew what should be and shouldn't be. If he would pull out the estimates book, the Element Details, page 52, he'd be able to see fairly quickly which sums are included in the motion.

Under Environmental Assessment, I take his point that there are a number of things here that are not strictly related to the issuance of permits and licences. That's why they're not included in my motion and would therefore remain within the spending estimates of the department. For example, Environmental Standards Research and Development would remain the responsibility of the taxpayers, a research and development function. I think Environmental Quality Monitoring also serves the public generally and should remain as a taxpayer supported function; Land Use and Community Affairs as well.

All that's been taken from that section is Environmental Impact Assessment Review. That's where a project proponent brings forth an environmental statement and the department reviews it, sends a deficiency statement and reviews that, sends a deficiency memo, and so on and so forth, which is clearly related to the processing of an application by somebody to achieve something. What we're saying is that that sum should be covered by application fees.

Then we go down to 2.3, Standards and Approvals, and all that section, Air Quality and Water Quality. Mr. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, the Municipal section is included as well. The member is absolutely right. Municipalities can pollute as much as private companies can, and there's no reason to think they should be exempt from environmental regulations, exempt from standards, exempt from application fees for their permits and licences.

MR. CARDINAL: Edmonton too?

MR. McINNIS: Yes, Mr. Member, Edmonton too.

[Motion lost]

Environment (continued)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I have a series of questions about departmental expenditures that I would like to list

for the minister and urge him to answer as soon as possible. I will clarify these questions as much as I feel is necessary.

With respect to vote 1, could the minister justify a 4 percent increase in his estimated expenditure of \$295,000 this year over last year? Could he also give us some assurance that he will actually stay within his budget? His track record in previous years hasn't been good in that respect. He was 43 percent over his budget in his ministerial office in '88-89. He was 30 percent over budget in '89-90, and he was 31 percent over budget in '90-91. With his expectation, I'm sure, that Mr. Love is leaving his office, perhaps we could reduce expenditures somewhat this year. Although he'll be back; don't worry about that. He won't win whenever they call that by-election. It is worthy of note by comparison that the deputy minister's office doesn't plan an increase in expenditure, and in fact the deputy minister has been considerably more accurate in his expenditure estimates and/or more disciplined in his ability to remain within his budgeted guidelines, having exceeded them by only 5 percent in '88-89, by actually coming under the budget guidelines in '89-90, and exceeding his guidelines in 1990-91 by about 7 percent – not good enough, but of course far better than his boss.

With respect to vote 2, it is interesting to note and probably worth while that the minister has increased the expenditure in Wastes and Chemicals by \$6 million, or 24 percent, to \$24 million. I wonder whether the minister could give us the details of how the budget in this area is going to be allocated; that is to say, to which sites for cleanup it will be allocated. I wonder whether he could indicate to us when he will have cleaned up the Canada Creosoting site in Calgary, for which cleanup estimates range from \$33 million to \$54 million, as I understand it. We have received \$23 million from the federal government over several years, I understand, to support provincial initiatives in this area. How is the minister intending to raise more money to address this issue? How much more? How quickly? What is the schedule of cleanup for all the sites identified under the HELP program, and does he or does he not expect to receive more federal funding? Could he comment on the scheme of the Dutch government, which has imposed a 3-cent-a-litre levy on gasoline to provide a fund for environmental cleanup and, of course, at the same time to discourage the use of – how would we put it? – belching, filthy cars?

It is essential, of course, to carry out the work the minister is contemplating under this area of Wastes and Chemicals. I would like to see a greater emphasis placed on the polluter paying for cleanup after the fact, of course. But to ensure they're in a position to do that, it is essential that companies be required to place bonds on their sites that would not be released until proper decommissioning of sites even decades into the future is accomplished. We all look forward to the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act that should, we're told, require industry to provide security for possible contamination in this way. Although it doesn't apply directly to this particular vote, as an aside I would like to know when the minister plans to table his Bill, the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, and whether he would give his commitment this evening that that Bill will be passed before this Legislature rises. It's getting to be a long time; we're already into May and we haven't seen the Bill. Who knows whether there will be yet a third delay in our opportunity to actually deal with that Bill and hopefully pass it in one form or another?

I would like to emphasize that the government does provide support for municipalities in the consideration and review and analysis of landfill sites, and I would like to ask the minister whether he would be prepared to charge the municipalities for

doing that. In effect, de facto, he is subsidizing landfill sites, and that kind of subsidy has to stop. Landfill sites should be discouraged to the extent that there should be some recognition of their true economic cost. That would put the emphasis elsewhere, on waste reduction and recycling, and that of course could assist the government in reaching its goal of a reduction of 50 percent in solid waste by the year 2000.

9:10

With respect to Action on Waste, could the minister please indicate to us what is the actual budget for this program for this year? Could he please inform the Premier that his Action on Waste program calls for people using both sides of the paper and inform him that of course even this government's Throne speech was not printed on both sides of the paper: maybe a small point, but somewhat glaring given that the Action on Waste program is emphasized as a profound environmental initiative. Could the minister please give us some sense of why this Action on Waste program does not involve an overall, comprehensive policy for recycling and for waste reduction? Why is it, for example, that the government apparently has yet to aggressively attack the issue of buying recycled products? I'll discuss that somewhat later in my presentation. Could the minister please give us a clear indication of what the achievements of the Action on Waste program have been during its first year of operation? Could the minister please indicate how far we have moved toward the year 2000 goal of a 50 percent reduction in solid waste? That is to say, what has been the reduction to this point since he implemented this objective?

With respect to Water Resources Management, I have serious difficulty with this particular element of the budget being included in the Department of the Environment. It seems that this should fall within the public works department and that the minister is in a conflict of interest situation, on the one hand building water management projects and, on the other hand, having to monitor them for their environmental sensitivity. It is tantamount to having forestry development projects administered by the Department of the Environment. Clearly, even this government would argue that that would be a conflict of interest, and one can only question why it is that they haven't applied that precedent in this case.

We're very interested in knowing what progress the government is making toward creating a comprehensive inventory of groundwater and aquifer water resources in this province and what progress the minister is making toward establishing strict guidelines for the use of groundwater and aquifer water in the province. I would be very interested in knowing what portion of the minister's time is spent on water resources management, remembering that fully \$49 million of his \$143 million budget falls under the Water Resources Management vote, and remembering that in addition tens of million of dollars in that area fall under his responsibilities within the Heritage Savings Trust Fund water management programs. One could see that this minister spends a great deal of his time with things that are not directly related to environmental protection or to the manner in which this department should in fact be operating. These things should be taken out and put somewhere else. In fact, it is very interesting to note that while the government or this department wants to argue that they spend \$143 million a year on the environment, 34 percent of the expenditure of this department falls under water resource management, which at best, the way it's been construed and administered in the past, relates, or at least a good deal of it relates, to irrigation projects and that kind of thing, which are not properly the mandate of an environment department.

Could the minister please specify how much of his budget has been allocated to the stabilization of Buffalo Lake? Could he also please specify or indicate a document on how that Buffalo Lake stabilization project is cost beneficial? Could he indicate how it is that prior to the Premier becoming the MLA for Stettler, at least two Environment department studies indicated it was not environmentally acceptable to stabilize Buffalo Lake and then that attitude or that conclusion seemed to change magically with the election of the Premier in Stettler?

With respect to the special waste management vote, could the minister please indicate why it is that he neglected to invoke the review of the joint venture agreement that was to be carried out in 1989 and was required by the agreement. I know the minister will say he has invoked the five-year study. I want to know why he didn't implement the study that was required by the agreement in 1989. I'd also like to know why the government did not request an independent, third-party review of the agreed rate of return given to Bovar Inc., again provided for in 1989 under the terms of the agreement. I want to note that the five-year review the minister has said he is undertaking is an internal review between the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation and Bovar, but the 1989 review was to be a much more open, independent review. Is it a coincidence that he would call for the five-year one and not for the one that was specified in 1989?

It's also true that the government has the option, I understand, of buying Bovar out after five years. What is the government's feeling about buying Bovar out? Can the minister continue to justify a cost-plus, guaranteed-profit agreement in the way this one is structured? Why does he continue to neglect opportunities to change that arrangement, opportunities which are called for under the terms of the agreement?

We're still awaiting the decision of the NRCB review of the Swan Hills expansion. It will be interesting, of course, for us to see exactly what they conclude. Many questions may be answered at that time. Could the minister give us some indication whether he has considered the impact of the responsible care program on the demands that will be placed or will not be placed on the Swan Hills plant in the future? Can the minister please clarify this evening that there is sufficient demand for that plant's expansion without importing wastes from outside the province?

Could the minister please comment on the importing of pesticide containers from Manitoba? We understand these are empty containers. They are required to be rinsed before transporting within Alberta. Is the minister requiring that the ones coming from Manitoba are rinsed before they are imported to Alberta to be dealt with by an Alberta entrepreneur?

Would the minister please comment on the fact that a good deal of money has been spent in promoting the Special Waste Management Corporation and what it does through publications and that some of these seem to be less than cost efficient? Could the minister please comment on the fact that 1 million copies of the newsletter *In Our Backyard* were produced and cost \$235,000?

Could the minister please confirm and comment on the fact that \$33,000 was spent on the annual report for the corporation in 1991? This produced 1,200 copies, and if you divide one into the other, you find that that was \$27 per copy. Some suggestion was made that somehow these were used to promote the use of the facility. Surely the minister could find a more efficient, cost-effective way to do that. Twelve hundred copies at \$27 each won't even go to each of the businesses in this province which produce toxic and other hazardous wastes.

Could the minister please indicate how much actual revenue the special waste management facility has raised from the private sector for the use of its services? What we see in the report, of

course, is the amount of revenue that goes to the joint venture from the Special Waste Management Corporation. That is to say, we see the amount – and it's a huge amount – of government subsidy, but could the minister please give us an indication over the years this facility has been functioning of how much the facility has actually collected from clients using its services? By way of doing that, could he therefore indicate whether that has actually increased, decreased, stayed the same, and whether it's significant at all or in fact insignificant?

9:20

The minister has cut the Environment Council of Alberta by about 2.5 percent. Does all the funding for the ECA's responsibility to provide secretariat services to the Round Table on Environment and Economy come from the ECA? Or is there additional funding? Does the private sector assist in that funding? We're all very interested in the progress of the round table. Perhaps the minister could indicate to us what will be the next stage of the round table's work and when the round table is planning to report again, this time hopefully in more detail with more specific recommendations. Under the water resources revolving fund there is a deficit of \$120,000, or about 5 percent of the fund's value. It seems that a revolving fund should balance. Could the minister please indicate what accounts for the \$120,000 shortfall?

There was a \$1.2 million special warrant in 1991-92, probably worthwhile to the extent that it dealt with the cleanup and disposal of hazardous waste resulting from Al-Tech, S.C.A. Waste Systems, and Continental Waste. Could the minister please indicate whether there are some other expenditures we might anticipate but which have not been properly budgeted for? For example, has consultation on the Water Resources Act in particular been included in these budget estimates somewhere?

With respect to the Natural Resources Conservation Board, my information is that the budget for that has been reduced by 9.3 percent. Could the minister please explain how that can possibly be the case? Could he also please reaffirm his commitment that that Natural Resources Conservation Board will be housed in Edmonton? The ERCB is in Calgary; it would be appropriate to have the NRCB in Edmonton.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Why?

MR. MITCHELL: Well, I guess because we'd hate to see it go to Calgary simply because the minister's constituency is there. Certainly the business community in Edmonton is very concerned about that because they have been asking for a commitment. They get commitments somehow, but they never see actual action. So we'd like to see the minister stand up in the Legislature and say before the people of Alberta, "That office is going to be in Edmonton; you have my word." That's what we'd like to see him say.

Revenue sources: handled nicely by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. I'd like to reiterate, of course, that that is a major concern for a government that should be seeking revenue sources aggressively, given its deficit circumstances. Could the minister please explain how he can possibly avoid charging companies for these particular services?

I asked before when the Environmental Protection Enhancement Act is going to be introduced. I'd appreciate a specific date. Even a range of a week or two would be acceptable.

Under air quality, global warming, climate change, that kind of thing, there is grave concern of course about the effect of CFCs. Could the minister please indicate when he is going to require a system for the collection and recycling of CFCs from refrigeration

and air conditioners? It is becoming apparent that air pollution is not something that is alien or unfounded in Edmonton and Calgary any longer. Could the minister please give us his reaction to the fact that air quality indicators, for example, over the Christmas period in Edmonton were extremely high? The indicator having a scale on which 55 is okay, during Christmas there were at least two or three days in Edmonton when the scale was 105. It raises questions about emission control, about energy conservation, and about the fact that air pollution issues that we felt resided in large American cities, large international cities are becoming a way of life and a fact in our lives here. Is the minister addressing that issue? I believe he isn't.

I would like to know by way of leadership whether the minister has considered the average fuel efficiency of the government's fleet. Could he please indicate, in addition, what the average fuel efficiency of the ministerial auto fleet is and whether that has improved since he has become the Minister of the Environment or whether it has stayed the same or is getting better? Will the minister be insisting that government cars provided for ministers pursue and achieve the highest levels or much higher levels of fuel efficiency than some of the huge gas-guzzling cars he and, in fact, his ministerial colleagues drive? Has the minister given any consideration to an environmental levy on large cars, fuel inefficient cars, such as has been implemented on new cars in Ontario? If not, why not? And if he's considering that, when will we see it?

I should note that the Member for Edmonton-Belmont was correct in pointing out that polluters should pay, and clearly we pay very, very little, if anything, for – I hate to use the word "privilege"; it certainly isn't a right – the privilege of pumping carbon dioxide into the air from many sources, but certainly by driving cars which in many respects, given their size, are a luxury we simply cannot properly afford.

The minister did mention in the Throne speech that we are going to see an energy conservation program. Could he please detail for us what some of the elements of that energy conservation program will be this year, and could he please discuss in particular what pressure he is putting on the Minister of Energy to have him allow the Public Utilities Board allow electricity generating companies to work the expense of conservation initiatives into their rate base?

As for the minister's comment now that energy efficiency is really the responsibility of the Minister of Energy, could the minister please comment on the fact that that seems to be a conflict of interest? Why would the Minister of the Environment not have the energy efficiency branch under his mandate, and has he addressed that in caucus and cabinet? Has he pressured or pushed the Minister of Energy and the Premier to transfer the energy efficiency branch to his department?

Nuclear energy: I know the minister is saying that he's not contemplating that and, in any event, there would a full environmental impact assessment. Could he please tell us once again that he's not contemplating that and in fact environmental impact assessments wouldn't even be a question because we would never get to that point?

I'm very concerned about the government's support for recycling products. It is my strong belief that the government can provide leadership, can actually provide markets by buying recycled products. I know the minister tells us that the minister of public works has outlined this elaborate policy. Well, could the Minister of the Environment tell us: is he monitoring the implementation of that policy? Has he got figures indicating that more recycled products are being used this year than last year? Could he indicate to us what percentage of recycled oil is being used in

his government's fleet? Could he indicate to us what percentage of the paper being bought is recycled paper? Could he indicate to us what products the department of transportation is now buying, for example, from Superwood, which is a wood made from recycled plastic? Are they buying the kinds of products that could replace products that are not made from recycled products now?

Could the minister please give us a firm date as to when he is going to recommend designation of what rivers under the Heritage Rivers System program in Canada?

9:30

Could the minister please indicate whether or not there is going to be an outside review by more experts of the tire recycling project decision? What were the inadequacies in the minister's review of that project that would prompt the Premier to suggest that he would second-guess that decision? Could he please indicate where he and the Premier differ in the conclusions they have drawn about that particular project? Could the minister please tell us whether he is going to be able to adhere to his July 1 deadline, now his second deadline, for having tire retailers collect the tire levy?

Water quality. We are very concerned that the Alberta standards for dissolved oxygen are too low, that at five milligrams per litre they compare unfavourably with the Canadian water quality guideline. The minister has been vague about whether he is going to meet that guideline, and clearly he has a problem because right now there are times in the year when the Athabasca River doesn't in fact meet that guideline, his own guideline. I would like to know when the minister is going to have this province conform to the Canadian water quality guidelines for dissolved oxygen.

With respect to the Highwood River, could the minister please indicate why it is that he was unable to meet the terms of his agreement with Trout Unlimited to guarantee and establish minimum flow in the Highwood River of 150 cfs and how this new diversion was going to relate to the flow in that river? I mean, it is a concern, and I'd like to know what the cost/benefit analysis of that diversion project is and what alternatives the minister has considered for providing water to the towns and the farms of that area.

With respect to Cold Lake, could the minister please comment on Esso's use of groundwater and now their need to use aquifer water? And could he please indicate why it is that he simply doesn't specify that companies such as Esso, in circumstances such as that, use nonpotable water? In that particular case we are aware that there is such water available at depth, and why does he simply not require Esso to use that water?

I'd like to have an update on the Sunpine project and whether we're going to see a proper environmental impact assessment. I'd like to know what the minister's decision has been for public intervenor funding for the review of the Three Sisters project and why it is that public intervenors haven't been given a great deal of lead time in that respect.

Thanks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's very exciting to be involved in environmental issues in Alberta today, far more exciting, I think, than it was three years ago when both the hon. minister and I were elected. He has spent a little bit of time tonight explaining why it is so much more exciting today. Back three years ago there was incredible animosity and severe polarization. I want to compliment the minister, and I want to go on record as complimenting the minister, for the effort that he put

into bringing together the various factions involving the environmental movement and those who are involved in our economy in this province so that we could have something that was a positive direction, because I think that's where we are today.

It's not just the minister, of course; it's his department as well. I have become very, very impressed over the last three years with the dedication and the effort of the fine people in the Department of the Environment. I see a number of them in the members' gallery tonight, and I want to express my personal thanks to them, and on behalf of our Environment caucus committee as well, for the effort they put into ensuring that Alberta has the best environment in Canada and North America, and that means, Mr. Chairman, the best environment on this globe.

I think one of the most exciting advances that has been made in the past three years has resulted from the Round Table on Environment and Economy. This is an opportunity, Mr. Chairman, for people from divergent backgrounds to get together and communicate. As the minister has said on a number of occasions, we can't deal with the problems of the environment unless we communicate. I've had the pleasure to speak with and to hear a number of people who are members of the Round Table on Environment and Economy over the past couple of years. The thing that amazes me the most is that now those who were appointed to that round table representing the environmental movement usually begin their debates by speaking about the importance of the economy, how important the economy is to sustaining our environment and to ensuring that we have the resources available to make sure we protect our environment and keep it as pure as it can be. On the other hand, those who are representative of various industries and the economy of the province of Alberta are now speaking about how important it is that we ensure that new industry and industry in existence today in the province of Alberta is conscious about the environmental impact they have, and ensure that the qualities which make living in Alberta the beneficial experience for all of us that it is today are at the very top of the list when it comes to decisions that are made on what's good for our economy.

So again I want to compliment the minister for the work he and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade have been doing to bring that round table together. I certainly cannot pass over a discussion of the round table without complimenting, as well, the secretariat, the Environment Council of Alberta, and Dr. Natalia Krawetz, the chief executive officer of the council, for the tremendous work the council does to ensure that the background information is available to the representatives on the round table and to ensure that they are moving in a positive and forward direction.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

I would like to just very briefly comment on some of the initiatives that are ongoing in the province of Alberta, because I truly believe that Alberta is a leader in the environmental movement and that this government is to be complimented for the advances that have been made over the past decade. Really, let's go back, Mr. Chairman, 21 years ago, when Alberta created the first freestanding Department of the Environment in Canada. That took incredible vision, and that vision has continued to today.

We have things such as the Swan Hills special waste treatment plant, and I see Mr. Ken Simpson, the CEO of Swan Hills, in the members' gallery tonight. This facility took vision by both the government of the province of Alberta and the people in the Swan Hills area, located right in the centre of the province of Alberta, to agree that toxins that could have a very negative influence on

our land base, our water, and our soil were taken to a central site in the province and disposed of. It took vision to dedicate money to that kind of operation, and the Swan Hills operation continues to be something that is looked upon with envy by all other jurisdictions in Canada and certainly in North America.

9:40

If we look at the Alberta Environmental Centre in Vegreville, we see a scientific facility that is second to none in Canada and North America, funded through our government to ensure that we are able to adapt to and deal with the new issues of the day in the environment and the economy. In essence, our approach is an in-house approach. We don't have to go far afield to ensure that we have the most pertinent, the most current expertise. We have that available to us through the Alberta Environmental Centre.

I've really had quite a privilege in working with the minister on the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. Again, I'm convinced that that Act will certainly be leading-edge legislation that will ensure that Alberta responds to the needs of the people of this province by having a one-window approach, by consolidation of environmental legislation that currently in the province can be found in a number of statutes, by ensuring that the public has access to and input into the decision-making process from the very earliest time, and as well, Mr. Chairman, by ensuring that the environmental impact assessment process is a legislated process so there is certainty in that process. I think these are all very important considerations, and I'm extremely pleased that the minister has advised that he will be introducing this legislation in this session.

I must respond to a couple of statements that were made by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. The first is with respect to the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. The hon. member has suggested that the Bill was killed last year, and he's indicated that this was somehow a scheme by the government of the province of Alberta to delay and perhaps stop this legislation from being passed. I think, Mr. Chairman, that nothing could be further from the truth. The point of the matter is that when the draft legislation was given to the people of Alberta to review in 1990, the minister made a commitment that Albertans would have an opportunity to input into that process. That opportunity came from a number of directions, one of which I had the privilege to be involved in, and that was the Environmental Legislation Review Panel. That opportunity took a lot of time and effort on the part of Albertans and on behalf of the panel. I want to congratulate all the members of that panel, who worked so hard with me to ensure that we made a significant contribution by digesting the information that was in the draft Bill and making some suggestions to the minister. Those suggestions in fact came in the form of a report that was over a hundred pages in length.

The minister and the department took that report in January, February of 1991 and came out with a new draft piece of legislation in last year's legislative sitting. We heard when that Bill was introduced that there were some issues that were left to be decided. There was some debate as to directions, and I think the minister quite properly chose to hold the legislation over to give Albertans the opportunity to communicate, to discuss what was in that legislation. It's extremely important that that legislation be approved of and be acceptable to as many Albertans as possible, because unless we bring the people of Alberta together to have a personal commitment with respect to their environment, that legislation will not be effective. It requires the commitment of Albertans. I think that commitment is closer and closer today thanks to the efforts of the department, to the efforts of the minister. I'm convinced that when the legislative package is

introduced shortly into this Legislature, we will have constructive debate but we will soon be in a position to pass that legislation and again prove that Alberta has the most responsive environmental legislation there is.

There's another comment I want to make about three projects that are ongoing in the constituency I represent, Banff-Cochrane. For example, the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has suggested that the Canmore Alpine Development project was excluded from any review. With respect to the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to make a couple of comments and inform the hon. member, because I'm sure that rather than trying to bring forward erroneous information, he's just not up to date on what has happened.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, you'll recognize that there was little if any debate, little if any commentary by the media when the approval process was ongoing for the Canmore Alpine Development. I'll suggest to you that there's one reason for that. That reason is because the Canmore Alpine Development consortium, and Hal Walker in particular, made sure that he and his group met with all the environmental groups, both local environmental groups in the region and also provincewide, to deal with the important issues that were part of that approval process: wildlife migration routes, clean air, clean water, issues that dealt with the social impacts of that development. Those are the reasons that that project did not come under the kind of negative press that it might have, and that it is today. The reason we are hearing negative reports about the Canmore Alpine Development project today is because the federal government, the Canadian Parks Service, has expressed a concern, as well they should, about wildlife migration that moves from Banff national park, which is clearly in their jurisdiction, through the Canmore corridor. They have alerted the people of Alberta to a concern. With all due respect, I believe that concern has been adequately addressed. It was reviewed both by the Department of the Environment and by the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, and that will prove to be the case as this project continues.

With respect to the Three Sisters project, there is development on part of the Three Sisters project, but that is on site C. That's a golf course, and there will be some housing in that area as well. That site was approved prior to the proclamation in force of the NRCB legislation and, quite appropriately, was given approval because the project was reviewed and was ready for approval prior to the proclamation of that legislation.

There had been some statements made, again by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, about concerns about clean water. I would suggest to him that if he takes a look at a map of both the Three Sisters project and the Canmore Alpine Development project, he'll note that a very small area of either of those projects touches upon the Bow River, which, as he has pointed out, is the source of water for the city of Calgary. In fact, the Canmore Alpine Development project is far removed from the Bow River. There's only a small portion of the Three Sisters project which touches on the Bow River; that's the portion in the far west of the project. If he had reviewed carefully the environmental impact assessment that was prepared by the Three Sisters project, he would recognize that all the streams that come from Stewart Creek and Three Sisters Creek actually die before they reach the Bow River because the flow is not extreme. There is absolutely no indication that there would be any impact on the watercourse serving the city of Calgary from either of those projects.

MR. McINNIS: Says who?

MR. EVANS: Says me and also says the environment impact assessment, hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, and I'm confident that the NRCB, when it reviews that information, will come to the same conclusion.

9:50

I would like to make one other comment, about the Kan-Alta project, again in the Banff-Cochrane constituency. I think the member may have left the impression that this has been a rapid-fire process to get the Kan-Alta project on stream. He's even gone so far as to say that it was put on stream prior to the NRCB process for the Three Sisters project.

The Three Sisters project had a number of intervenors who requested a considerable period of time because of the amount of information that was to be digested from the environmental impact assessment. The board decided that that was appropriate and literally gave a three-month period of time for a review. That same kind of information, the volume of information, is not that large an issue with respect to the proposed Kan-Alta 18-hole golf course. In fact, there were public meetings on the Kan-Alta golf course more than a year ago both in Banff-Cochrane constituency and also in the city of Calgary. So to suggest that that process has been speeded up for expediency purposes is, I think, quite inaccurate.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to deal with a couple of specific questions on the minister's estimates this evening. Firstly, I'd like to comment on the Action on Waste program. I'm very well aware that one of the major targets for the Action on Waste program is a 50 percent reduction in municipal solid waste by the year 2000. I know that there are a number of other initiatives as well, specifically the Peace region integrated waste management planning study, the tire project, the 1-800 information line, and a number of other initiatives. I would appreciate it if the minister would provide the committee with an update on all the aspects of this Action on Waste program.

Secondly, given the fact that working with municipalities is such an integral part of the Action on Waste initiative and again is consistent with what I believe is essential to ensure that we have the most adaptable, if you will, but certainly the most pure environment we can possibly have, could the minister provide the committee with some more details with respect to the municipal involvement in this program? As well, could the minister provide the committee with some information on Action on Waste initiatives both in the industrial and the educational areas?

Moving along, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation's budget, there has been a reduction in that budget over the past two years. I would appreciate hearing from the minister as to how that decrease is affecting the services that the corporation provides in managing hazardous waste in Alberta. With respect to the farming community and the average citizens in our cities and other smaller centres, how are they benefiting from the activities of the corporation?

A concern was expressed to me today when I participated in a panel with the Forum for Young Albertans with respect to the transportation of hazardous goods throughout the province, and that is a concern to all those Albertans who have hazardous goods pass their way. Now, I made a suggestion to that individual that it's important to have the most efficient and certainly the most careful process known to man to move these very toxic substances to Swan Hills. I believe we are doing that now. I presume we will continue to use the most advanced technology to ensure the safety of Albertans with respect to the movement of these toxins, and I would appreciate your comments on that, Mr. Minister.

With respect to the Environment Council of Alberta, I had the privilege to sponsor amendments to the Act last year in this Legislature and to work again with Dr. Natalia Krawetz. The budget is \$1.7 million, and my question to the minister is: is this funding adequate to allow the council to successfully pursue its expanded mandate as was evident when we debated the amendments to the Act last year? I know that the change in mandate and in fact a revitalization of the Environment Council of Alberta has resulted in a number of new initiatives taking place. I would question the minister as to what has happened to that mandate that was changed by the legislation last year and how he sees the council responding to that change of mandate. Finally, Mr. Chairman, could the minister advise the committee as to some specific issues the council will be looking at in the future?

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to give other members an opportunity to participate in this debate and just close by saying again how privileged I feel to have been able to be involved with such an important initiative which has so many positive benefits to the people of this province. I'm convinced whenever I travel outside our province that we do have the cleanest province and the most conscientious population anywhere when it comes to environmental matters. I don't think we can be smug about that. We have to continue to communicate to Albertans the importance of our clean environment. I believe the department is doing that, and I want to recommend to the minister that he continue the course he has been working on for the past three years, because it is certainly improving the environment of the province of Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The clock is getting late, according to the minister, so I'll do my best to be as brief as possible, get right to the point, and get the biggest clap of the night.

Mr. Chairman, I listened carefully to everybody thus far. I appreciate the comments from the Member for Banff-Cochrane, who certainly has traveled the province and listened to Albertans in regards to the needs of cleaning up our environment and finding new ways of addressing the situations that have happened in the past due to the fault of this government not having proper environmental legislation.

The one issue – I was reviewing this particular document of the Contaminated Sites Liability Issues Task Force, the report to the Minister of the Environment. It addresses very often within this document the fact of who should pay, who should be the ones that pay if there is a contaminated site. The document doesn't address exactly who is going to pay, and I hope the minister would clarify how he's going to determine who should pay for the cost of cleanup of contaminated sites.

Indeed, if you were to take a look, Mr. Chairman, at the state of the Athabasca River over the years, and now with another pulp mill coming on, I myself, as an avid fisherman, would not eat the fish out of the Athabasca River. You can catch fish at the Berland, some 150 kilometres upriver from the mill at Hinton, and those fish when you put them in the frying pan smell the same as the mill does, the odour that comes from the stacks of the Hinton mill. So something has to be done to bring in legislation to stop these mills from polluting our rivers. The Athabasca River in fact was declared a heritage river some two years ago in Jasper. Not going too far out the Jasper gates, you have effluent going in it that is not healthy to the people of Alberta or not healthy to anybody who might be visiting and fishing or hunting or perhaps

using that water, if they're camped in sites along the Athabasca, for cooking.

10:00

Mr. Chairman, the minister stood in this Legislature more than once and said to close the mill. I as the Member for West Yellowhead would never agree that the mill should be closed, but I do agree that legislation must be brought in to make sure that these mills clean up. This document here, the Contaminated Sites Liability Issues Task Force, perhaps would address who should clean up the rivers in this province after they've caused damage to them. I would not say that it should exactly be the mills who have been allowed to pollute because of poor legislation in this province, but in some way something has to be done to clean these waters up. Unfortunately, this past week I visited three friends in the hospital, all with cancer. One, who was my executive assistant in Hinton, 26 years old, was notified that he has six weeks to six months to live, dying because of something that has caused him to have cancer. I think we have to take every step possible to clean up the environment and make sure that it's not some environmental hazard that's allowing people to get these dreaded diseases.

Bill 53: we've been waiting for some time to get that before the Legislature. It's been going on for some three years, I believe the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place said earlier. There are some important issues in there, of course, that have to be addressed. There are many that should be amended, and we'll be waiting for this Bill to come forward regardless of whether it's Bill 53 or another number.

Also on this particular contaminated sites document that was put out just recently, the minister surely recalls the contaminated fuel issue in Hinton that happened in June 1990, when somebody from someplace held some contaminated fuel and put it in the Hinton Husky service station. That fuel was pumped, Mr. Chairman, and many people were contaminated by that fuel. There were no permits for anybody to take that fuel to the Hinton Husky service station, and in fact nobody knew that the contaminant was in there for some three to four weeks, when Mr. Johnstone and others became deathly ill. Many of those people's health has not recovered to this date, and they have received no compensation.

The dreaded fact is, Mr. Chairman, that Environment went out there to see the site, had the tanks removed, and lo and behold, without any permits they allowed those tanks to be hauled to a site in the Leduc area, where by some other coincidence those tanks went mysteriously missing. To my knowledge those tanks have not been recovered to this date. That contaminant could very possibly still be pumped someplace, or if somebody were to slice them in half and feed cattle out of them or bury them in the ground for their own personal fuel, or if there's any possible use, if those tanks are still in service someplace, surely we're going to have further problems. I would sure not like to see harm come to anyone like it did to more than 100 people in the Hinton area when Environment did nothing about protecting and securing that site.

In fact, I have never known whether Environment actually tested the grounds around that service station where many gallons of this fuel were pumped and some was thrown out. Kids get out of the motor homes and campers and walk around there while parents are fueling up, and I don't believe that site has ever been checked by Environment. Perhaps the minister could advise me if it has or will be, because we have to take every step possible to make sure that no one else is poisoned by this dangerous contaminant.

Buffalo Lake, of course, Mr. Chairman, is more of a political issue. It's something that is not needed in these hard economic times. Some members will disagree, I'm sure, because it's been

their pet project, especially the Premier. It's strange how the rules can change when somebody with a little more power gets elected to a certain riding and then builds a house near Buffalo Lake.

The landfill sites, Mr. Chairman: I want to congratulate the minister on the many good landfill sites he established in the riding of West Yellowhead. In fact, we were out at the opening of one, and they are very environmentally friendly. They're clean all the time. There are places there to store materials that cannot be put into these tanks. It has worked very well in my riding of West Yellowhead, and I'm sure it will work in any other communities where they are established.

The Member for Banff-Cochrane raised the very important issue of municipalities in regard to sewage. I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that I would like to see Environment take a stronger stand on how we are going to solve the problem of municipalities using the waters of Alberta to dump their sewage in. There are some municipalities that can hold it for a long time: they overbuilt their facilities, and they don't have to dump their water as often as other municipalities. There are some municipalities that aerate their water by a bubbling system or by a sprinkler system, and still they will run the overflow into the rivers in the high water.

This is not good. I fish quite often in the McLeod River, but I have to be very careful as to where the sewage goes in. Some people tell me they find these beautiful pickerel right where this big pipe comes out, but I happen to know what comes out of that pipe, so I make sure I'm several miles back the other way. The pickerel might not be quite as fat, but they are much tastier. I would encourage anybody not to fish downstream from some of these sewage lagoons, which are belching this stinking sewage into the very virgin rivers like the McLeod River especially.

Another thing in my riding, Mr. Chairman, is that the Jasper environmental groups have worked hand in hand with Alberta Power to do an energy audit within the town. Alberta Power was to build a transmission line through the parks, which would have ruined the aerial environment with power lines higher than the trees. Anyone who lives in Jasper or travels there certainly enjoys the beauty and the wild nature of Jasper national park. In Jasper they took an energy audit on the homes: who was heating with electricity and what they were using, mainly in electricity. They've cut their consumption of electricity by somewhere around 30 percent and do not now have to build a transmission line from Edson and Hinton and on to Jasper up through the park. They have a gas-fired plant and one waterfall in Jasper that supplies their electricity, and by continuing to conserving energy there alone, they feel they have another 10 to 15 years of life before they'll need any further extensions of transmission lines.

Also, there's been a problem in Jasper for some years with the tramway that has been dumping their sewage down the side of a mountain. Last year they were supposed to have cleaned it up; it hasn't happened yet. They have ideas of hauling the sewage down on the tramway now, but I'm not too sure if the Minister of the Environment is involved with the environment in Jasper park. Perhaps it has to come under the mandate of the federal government.

The heritage rivers program, Mr. Chairman, is a program that many people believe in, especially the people of West Yellowhead. They love their fresh waters. Most of the clean waters begin in the riding of West Yellowhead and off the slopes of the Rockies, and we would like to see the rest of the province be just as clean as the fresh waters off the mountains.

The minister mentioned the studies on different types of things that are harming the environment, but I heard nothing about the electromagnetic field that many people are very concerned about,

with transmission lines running through major cities and microwave towers. The electromagnetic field does concern many people who think very seriously about the environment. I, of course, as a journeyman lineman worked around electricity and live lines, on transmission lines up to 500,000 volts. I'm not too sure that it's such a serious thing. I understand that more people die from suicide within the power companies than actually die from any causes of the electromagnetic field.

10:10

Mr. Chairman, in speaking to the environment, we have to also talk about how we can protect the environment of our wildlife. In Jasper national park many of these animals like to roam a little bit outside. As you travel Highway 40 towards Grande Cache, the highway gets very close to Jasper national park. The forestry companies have forest management agreements or some rights to cut the timber up there. It seems in recent years they've gone in as close as they possibly could to Jasper park and cut out the forest, and now the woodland caribou are predominantly on the roadways. They're looking for protection, and they've wandered out of the park and just haven't gone back in. We also need to protect the mountain sheep, the deer, and the elk in those areas along the park. I would like to see the Minister of the Environment work with whatever department he can through his one window to make sure that we put a peripheral rim around Jasper national park and Willmore wilderness park to make sure that these animals are protected just a little ways farther and that the environment is not ruined by cutting the forest within at least a 10-mile range of Jasper national park.

I do agree with the Member for Banff-Cochrane and, I'm sure, with the Minister of the Environment that the environment and the economy can work hand in hand. We in the Official Opposition know that it can work hand in hand, but we must have good legislation in place where companies coming in know what they have to do to have the right projects in place without wasting a lot of time and a lot of money when legislation continually changes or they're trying to second-guess what the next piece of legislation might be.

One thing I forgot to mention, Mr. Chairman, was an older debate some years ago on PCBs. I was employed by the power company at that time and had the opportunity to check several transformers to locate the PCBs. Something that's taken place in the power companies over the last 10 years that a lot of people probably didn't notice or didn't know is that the power poles were identified as having as much PCB in the wood treatment as some of the transformers had. Indeed, those same power poles were treated at the same places as playground equipment was treated and with the same type of stuff. However, I'm sure some of the playground equipment that's in a lot of the playgrounds and parks in Alberta have not been checked for PCBs, and I would hope that the minister would take a serious look at that.

I would hope that the minister is a little more conscientious in his spending, Mr. Chairman, and I would certainly emphasize that he work hand in hand with the municipalities to find some way of stopping the municipalities across this province from using the rivers of Alberta to get rid of their sewage.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank God there is a *Hansard*, because there have been many questions asked this evening. They were for the most part very good questions, and

we will do all in our power to get the appropriate answers if I'm not able to get to them this evening.

I do appreciate the remarks of the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, particularly as they affect my staff. I've been very, very fortunate to have a very competent staff and a very committed staff, a staff that definitely is committed to the principal of wise use of our environment now and into the future. I'm so very, very pleased that they're here with me tonight, and I would like to acknowledge their presence in the gallery.

Speaking of staff, Mr. Chairman, there is something that is very bothersome to me, and again I come back to the remarks of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, particularly with respect to the proposed Pine Lake regional landfill site. I'm going to be tabling a report tomorrow that will clearly indicate that in fact members of Alberta Environment who conducted the hydrogeology tests on that site were not erroneous. It is a matter of opinion, and we stand behind our work with respect to that landfill site. The whole issue of landfill is a very, very complex one, and I would like to address this issue specifically.

Many years ago we had dumps, really infested, dirty dumps. As a matter of fact – and this is something the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place consistently fails to mention – right on that site today exists a dump, a dirty, fly-infested dump. He doesn't say anything about that. What is proposed for that particular site is a regional waste management system. The hon. Member for West Yellowhead alluded to a proper waste management system with transfer stations, with storage facilities to accommodate recyclable materials, to dispose of waste that normally goes into a landfill in a responsible manner. That's what we're talking about. Alberta Environment's role is simply to do the hydrogeology to determine at the outset if a site is suitable. On the basis of the tests that we undertook, we determined that that site was indeed suitable. We presented our evidence first to the local board of health. Then there was an appeal from the local board of health to the Public Health Advisory and Appeal Board, PHAAB; we presented our evidence to that board. Then it went on to the Development Appeal Board, and that evidence then was taken into account.

There was a difference of opinion as to the accuracy of our reports. I'll be filing a report tomorrow, and at that time I hope the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place will stand up and apologize to the officials in my department whose credibility he tried to question. [interjection] Hon. member, they were not erroneous in their assessment.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to environmental impact assessments – and this was a point that was brought up by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place – particularly as they relate to tourism projects, there is something the hon. member must understand. Maybe he does, or maybe he is just being consistent in his ignorance. With respect to tourism related projects, those projects are subjected to a Natural Resources Conservation Board hearing only if an environmental impact assessment is ordered. That makes them quite different from any other project. They are not on a mandatory list.

MR. McINNIS: You decide.

MR. KLEIN: That is right, and that is in the NRCB regulations. That's what makes a tourism project quite unique. It does not say that every single tourism project must go through an NRCB hearing.

Once an EIA is ordered and the NRCB decides whether a hearing is to be held, it is up to that board, without political

interference whatsoever, to determine the extent of intervenor funding and, indeed, if intervenor funding is going to be allowed at all. With respect to the Kan-Alta development, what I suspect has happened is that Brian Hrysy,* the hon. member's friend over here from Springbank, is a little upset that he's not going to get some money. You know, the NRCB is not a cash cow. The Kan-Alta project, by the way, has been zoned for many, many years to accommodate precisely that kind of development, but aside from that, there will be a hearing before the Natural Resources Conservation Board. Mr. Hrysy* on television alluded to it being some kind of a secret that just occurred in the last month or so. This project has been on the books for years.

10:20

With respect to the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, Mr. Chairman, it will be tabled before this House in the fullness of time, but very soon, I might add. As to whether I can commit to that Bill being proclaimed or being given third reading, that is entirely up to the opposition. This is a Bill that has gone through probably the most extensive public consultation process of any piece of legislation in the history of this province. It is going to depend on how many silly amendments we get from the NDs and the Liberals. That is the only thing that's going to hold this Bill up. I will give a commitment that we will give third reading to this Bill if we can get rid of the silly amendments that I think are going to come from the opposition parties. It has nothing to do with me. It'll have everything to do with the hon. members for Edmonton-Jasper Place and Edmonton-Meadowlark and their cohorts.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark posed about half an hour's worth of questions, which would take me about two and a half hours to answer. There are answers to

all those questions. As I indicated at the outset, those questions will be recorded in *Hansard*. We will do our very, very best to get the answers to those questions and pass them on to the hon. member.

Aside from that, Mr. Chairman, I'm delighted to have had the opportunity to introduce my estimates this evening. I'm pleased that the opposition members have asked some intelligent questions, and you can rest assured we will do our best to provide some intelligent answers.

Thank you.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee now rise, report progress, and request leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of the Environment, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report by the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The Assembly adjourned at 10:24 p.m.]

*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.