

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, March 15, 1994**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 94/03/15

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the committee to order. Order in the committee. At the risk of interrupting those people who are still engaged in lively conversations, we'll begin.

head: **Main Estimates 1994-95**

Public Works, Supply and Services

MR. CHAIRMAN: This evening committee is reminded that we're looking at the estimates of Public Works, Supply and Services for the second evening. We would ask the minister to begin, because if memory serves me right, and it doesn't very often, it seems to me that you were cut off prior to being able to answer the questions. So we would invite the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services to begin this evening.

MR. THURBER: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad to see that your peripheral vision has improved tonight, because the last time I was here, it seemed that you couldn't see me at the last part of the estimates.

Mr. Chairman, the last time I appeared with my estimates, I took a lot of questions from the opposition. They were very good questions, and I didn't get the opportunity to respond to any of them. So I thought I would take a few minutes in my opening remarks here and respond to some of them. Then we can carry on into the evening if that's agreeable to everybody.

I would deal first of all with the Member for Edmonton-Mayfield, who had asked numerous questions, and I'll deal with some of them but not necessarily all of them. I want to remind the members that as we go through this process, even after the vote is taken at some point in time on my estimates, I will provide answers to all the questions that were asked in the House. You will be getting those. I will file them with the House at a point of time in the future.

Now, the MLA for Edmonton-Mayfield talked about a net surplus of \$5.9 million, and I have to reply to him that the discrepancies he mentions were in fact related to different items and different fiscal years. That went on in two or three of his first questions. So I would just ask him to look very carefully at the estimates so that he gets those in line, because they do relate to the past year and this year's estimates.

The other question the hon. member asked about was the Christmas tree lights and the decorations on the Legislature Grounds here. I do know that he has written me several memos on this, wanting to know what it cost to put these lights up and to install the lighting and the decorations. I'd just like to inform the Assembly that we changed a few things this last year in order to provide some enjoyment for some young children and to provide us with some savings. We allowed school groups to come in and decorate some of the trees in the pedway, which I'm sure you all saw, and I was very proud of those children who came in and did that. They used home-made decorations, and it was also a savings to the government of \$6,000 or \$7,000, in that area. So I was very proud of that.

I guess I have a problem with somebody questioning the cost of the lighting and the decorations on the grounds here when it provides such an enjoyment for children and senior citizens and

the populace in general, by the thousands in fact, because I've been here when we've turned them on and the yards are full. You come here in the evenings and you see people driving around to see the lights of the Legislature. While we did cut it back considerably this year because of restraint, the costs of that were approximately \$30,000. I will never be the grinch that stole Christmas from these Legislature Grounds. We tried to put some common sense into it and some reason into it, and I think it worked out really well, but as I mentioned, it was around \$30,000.

Just for the information of the Assembly as well, this amounted to about a sixth of the cost of renovations to make the Liberals' short stay in the Legislature more comfortable in the annex. I just thought I'd throw that in.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's not fair, Tom. Just for that I'm getting on my feet. You're going to hear from me right away.

AN HON. MEMBER: A sixth, Tom?

MR. THURBER: A sixth. About a sixth of it.

The '92-93 revenue total includes a number of one-time extraordinary items such as proceeds from regional land trades and the disposition of properties at other than market value and the finalization of certain tenant allowances.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member asked a number of questions, as I mentioned before. I won't deal with all of them but certainly with some that I think are important to the Legislature.

The change in revenue in the business plan. He mentioned that that may be automobiles that we're sending off. In fact that's not true. The change in revenue is not the result of a transfer of the government automobiles out of the PWSS revolving fund. The business plan revenue proposals and associated changes listed on page 4 relate to the operation of the general revenue fund only. The increase in revenue from the '93-94 estimates of \$21 million to the '93-94 forecast of \$28.2 million is \$6.5 million. This is a result of recoveries of grant moneys advanced to health care facilities and completion of land sale transactions. PWSS generates revenues from civil service parking, surplus sales, sale of surplus lands, and rental of property. Over the next three years PWSS will move from charging nominal or subsidized rates for civil service parking to charging market rates. That may have an effect on everybody in this Legislature.

Again, there were some questions brought forward by that member, good questions on the whole. They talked about the life cycle of buildings and structures that we're involved in. The business plan is not intended to reflect the detailed daily processes of the department. We conduct regular facility evaluations and value analysis on our capital assets to assist our life cycle planning. The hon. member will be very much aware of that, being in the business himself. Replacement of major components in a building is evaluated in terms of the age of the facility, the cost of the components, and many other factors. Life cycle planning is a fundamental premise followed in our project planning.

Again, there was a question about money spent in the Legislature Annex to do with the life cycle of that building. Life cycle analysis is being done using detailed evaluation reports. In the case of the annex, back in 1988 the decision was made to extend the life of the building beyond the year 2000 as opposed to tearing it down and restructuring. The total cost was estimated at just under a million dollars - I believe \$960,000 - and is being phased over three years. We anticipate the work to be complete in this fiscal year, 1994-95. This is over and above the value of the renovations the Liberals had to make their accommodations much

more comfortable than what they were when the NDP and the Conservatives were in there. We continue to monitor its condition and will assess its needs on an ongoing basis. In the current economic climate we feel that trying to maintain and rebuild this and extend the life of it is a very viable option. The life cycle process is an ongoing planning thing that as the needs of government change, the impact on facilities also changes. These impacts are assessed within the short- and long-term requirements of the program being delivered within the facility.

Mention was also made by the member about priority setting and management of resources in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner. I can assure the hon. members that this is done very sensibly through my department. Resources allocated through the budgetary process are limited, and department requests for goods and services are prioritized and accommodated within the limits of our budget. PWSS recently published a set of environmental principles, which guide the way the department does business. We will continue to provide the best cost solution to department needs while recognizing these environmental impacts and needs.

Another question was brought forward on the involvement of customer stakeholders and staff in design solutions. Certainly PWSS has always done this. We co-ordinate and we manage tenement improvement and capital construction projects on behalf of various government departments and agencies. These departments identify their needs and set their priorities, and we assist in identifying alternatives and determining the scope, the cost, and the timing for each project. All requests which involve us are evaluated in terms of the most cost-effective solution to these needs including the life cycle analysis.

8:10

Again, we talked briefly about the business plans, and you asked about the initiatives that involved other levels of government. This department has a history of making surplus space available to other levels of government. We also looked at sharing facilities. For example, maintenance facilities could be shared with the federal government or local municipalities, and we're involved in that in many areas. This approach results in better utilization of space and lower cost to the taxpayer. I can see this approach being expanded upon as we go through the process in the next few years of all governments trying to downsize and get their acts together. It also provides better service to local residents by having government services consolidated in a single facility, and that just makes common sense. This department will continue to take advantage of these opportunities as they arise. We don't go out looking for them, but if they're there and we can make the suggestion or make the overture to the other department or the other government, then we deal with it.

The \$561.1 million in expenditures listed on page 9 of the PWSS business plan relate to the '93-94 fiscal year, and the \$571.8 million listed on page 249 is the net amount to be voted for the 1994-95 fiscal year.

I was asked about the sale of surplus properties and how we handle that. The revenue derived from the sale of surplus properties is deposited in the general revenue fund, not the revolving fund. Revenue from the sale of surplus land is estimated to be around \$12.5 million in this fiscal year '94-95. As a result of the downsizing initiatives being undertaken by this government, a number of properties and parcels of land will be surplus to government needs. We are now assessing exactly what properties will be surplus, and of course they will be affected by decisions of every department as they reassess their own program operations. Like any other property owner we sell our properties

for market value, which is sometimes higher and sometimes lower than the purchase price.

Most of the surplus land is in the periphery of Edmonton and Calgary – and a couple of other members asked about this – and was acquired under the restricted development area program. The corridor was initially one-half mile wide, and the boundaries of the corridor were later redefined to a smaller area which now permits the excess lands to be sold. Other properties throughout the province have become surplus mostly because of changes in the way government delivers programs over the years.

The same principle is applied to the sale of land, as we stated on October 14 with regard to purchasing land. It's always a judgment call as to whether you wait a while to try and get a better price for taxpayers or in this case whether you sell at the current market rate today. That will always be a problem and to try . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: That's what you do. You sell it now at the current market rate. You've got no business to be holding land.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Chairman, this will always be a problem, and it will always be a matter of opinion as to whether it's the right time or not.

Again, there was a question about recognizing employee contribution through advancement and remuneration and rewards. This department follows closely the rewards and recognition plan outlined for the Alberta government. The plan when completed will outline desired performance both for the organization and individual employees. The department performance indicators will be further redefined within each division and again with each employee in public works.

The MLA for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan asked about the Alberta Hospital Edmonton greenhouse operations. There was a consultant study done on this greenhouse operation, and while the program requirements for a greenhouse are significantly different at the Alberta Hospital Edmonton, we will consider the information in our review of the whole operation of that greenhouse.

Again, she talked a little bit about the restricted development area, and I've outlined that as it's come to pass over the years. Most of the land we picked up in that area as the land became available for sale. In some cases we had to purchase larger parcels of land in order to acquire the land that was actually in the corridor. We're in the process of selling some of that land off now as the market indicates. Restricted development areas for the transportation and utility corridors were established under regulations of the department of the environment in the mid-70s.

I was asked what process we used to determine the fair market value when we're selling this land. As I've mentioned in the House before, most of the land that we sell we do it through the Real Estate Association of Alberta, through their MLS, multiple listing service, to try and achieve the best market value that we can at the time. Nevertheless, it is a market value, and it can change from year to year. As I mentioned before, in some cases we will get more for the land than we paid before, and in some cases we get less. There's no doubt about that.

One of the objectives of public works' three-year business plan – and this was questioned the other night – is to conduct a review as to where the long-term administration of these restricted development area lands should be. Public works became involved with the RDA in 1983 to deal with the land acquisition concerns. The land acquisition activity is now well advanced, with some 80 to 90 percent of the land purchased. Much of the emphasis in the future will be in the planning issues associated with this, with

locating the roads, pipelines, power lines, utility lines, et cetera, and this was the original reason that the land was purchased. These issues involve several provincial departments and municipal authorities as well as the potential users. As a result, it is timely to conduct a review. The issue of costs to operate such an authority would obviously have to be addressed as part of that review.

Again, there were some maintenance programs on the buildings questioned. I won't go into all of the questions, but I'll give you a brief answer on it. We have a facility evaluation program which assesses the condition of buildings and identifies items requiring repair or replacement. Based on building use, condition, and life expectancy, recommendations are provided for planned maintenance work to address short- and long-term requirements.

The next question that was asked was: how do we determine what new construction should take place? This government recognizes that building a new building is the last option to be considered in light of our present fiscal policy. This being the case, we are doing our best to maintain our inventory of buildings in as good a shape as possible. Our business plan shows an increase in spending on maintenance from \$8 million in 1994-95 to \$10 million in '95-96 and again in '96-97. It is our intent to continue to maintain our buildings at an appropriate standard to ensure that they provide cost-effective service to Albertans.

For the information of the hon. member who asked the question - I'll put it that way - we are not in charge of the construction of schools.

With regard to the health care facilities, though, hospitals submit requests for replacing or renovating hospitals to Alberta Health. Alberta Health requests the advice of public works to aid in the decision-making process based on the following parameters: the age and the condition of the facility; the capability of that facility to accommodate the functional needs and clinical requirements that are necessary in that particular health care field; the costs of operating the facility, including utilities, energy consumption, janitorial, and preventative maintenance. We go through a very lengthy process to determine whether in fact the building is worth saving and worth rebuilding, or whether in fact it has to be rebuilt in total. So it is a very long and lengthy process, how we determine whether it needs to be a new construction or not.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I'll sit down and let some of the hon. members ask some questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

8:20

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to join the debate on the estimates for the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services. I have just one comment before I begin with the more substantive issues. I appreciate the minister's comment that any questions he's not able to respond to immediately, he will get back at some time. He didn't say it, but I took the "in due course" being the thrust of his comment.

I've seen that in different departments different ministers have perhaps a variety of ways they respond to requests for information, but is it unreasonable and unduly logical that we should ask for the responses before we vote on the estimates? You know, I'm conscious that every time we go through one of these things, for the most part ministers bring senior people from their department to sit and dutifully listen and presumably send messages down to the minister. It would be foolish for me to expect I'm going to get a response the moment or the same

evening I ask the question, but surely it's not unrealistic to expect that before the minister expects members to vote on his estimates, we've had a response to our queries. If we don't have a response because the query is going to take too much investigation or it's too complicated, then that's fine. I mean, the minister can come back and tell us: we can't give you this response before the vote is put, for reasons (a), (b), (c). It seems to me fair, Mr. Chairman. I know I can't compel and you can't compel, but I simply want to ask the minister to consider whether Albertans would not be better served if he and the people in his department strived mightily to be able to provide responses to questions, as quickly as possible, of course, but most importantly before he comes back to this Chamber and asks for a vote. That's a proposition I want to put to the minister, and I hope he'd consider responding to it.

I have some concerns, Mr. Minister, through the Chair, on freedom of information. I don't want to be seen as a one-issue member of the Assembly, but this is just such a compelling subject, and there's so much to talk about, I wanted to focus on that. Three specific issues I wanted to raise relative to freedom of information. The first one is: I sit on the Legislative Offices Committee, and we were told just a scant couple of weeks ago that we had to find \$200,000 from the chief electoral office. The reason was that we needed \$200,000 to start our information and privacy commissioner office. I asked for a budget, and I was told that well, there is no budget. I said: where did the \$200,000 come from? I think the chairman or a representative of the government said: well, we're not really sure. So although our committee wasn't aware of a budget for freedom of information start-up, I'm hoping that surely, sir, you and your department have some kind of a budget and that the \$200,000 wasn't a number sort of plucked from the sky but in some fashion reflected what people in your department expected the first few months of start-up costs were going to be. So I'd like an indication from you in terms of what kind of budget you have in mind, and I guess I'm looking for the run-up to implementation and then some information from that point. I think we're now to a point, Mr. Minister - I am not a member of your caucus, but I'm hopeful that your caucus has finally addressed the question of what the final text will look like. I understand the Premier is telling at least some Albertans that we're going to see a new Bill within a few weeks, so I assume the Bill is there. You know what it looks like. Ms Kessler and the other people with expertise in this area in your department know what it looks like. So I want to know what we're looking at in terms of a budget.

The second thing, Mr. Minister, is that it's come to my attention that you are looking actively at soliciting bids for at least some of the FOI implementation work to be contracted out of your department. That I think begs the question: why is it being done outside your department? Do we not have the expertise in your department? I had a chance to attend a conference in Calgary in probably November of 1993 where freedom of information commissioners from Ontario and B.C. came to Calgary and made presentations. I congratulate you for ensuring that a number of people from your department were present and able to share in the experience and the ideas that came from other freedom of information commissioners. I'm delighted that you had people from your department there, but it's clear to me that you've had people who have been working hard on freedom of information for a period of time, so I was surprised when I heard that there's some contracting out of some part of freedom of information implementation. If you could clarify for me: what work has to be contracted out and can't be undertaken within the four corners of your department budget? I'm interested in that.

The other thing, Mr. Minister, if you look at the freedom of information all-party panel report at page 17, I want to make sure that communication from me to the hon. Minister of Justice has been relayed to you and the people in your department working with freedom of information. Subsequent to the publication of our report in December of 1993, I think, members of the committee noted that at page 17 – the reference there to archival, historical, and genealogical research. There was a part that required some clarification. I just want to flag that for you, sir. If you look at page 17, the second bullet, there is a difficulty there where it says

- No record should be taken into the custody of designated Archives until it is in the public domain and open and available to researchers.

In fact, I think the all-party panel confirmed after the fact that that is not the message we were trying to convey to you, sir, and your colleague the Minister of Justice. The concern was that the documents would – it wouldn't be a question of waiting until they were in the public domain, that documents could be taken to the designated archives at an earlier point. Bullet 2 actually should come out altogether on page 17.

With respect to the third bullet, that was intended to refer specifically to personal information, not general corporate or government information but personal information.

So I was just anxious, Mr. Minister, that I tell you in a public way about those concerns. I encourage you to speak with the Member for Rocky Mountain House, the chair of that panel, or the Member for Calgary-Shaw, who I see is as usual working diligently in the House this evening while we speak. I encourage you to do the follow-up and just confirm what I've told you.

I guess the other specific thing I'd ask you about freedom of information. You'll recall, Mr. Minister, when you read the report from December of 1993 – I'm confident you read it several times over, because there were some good ideas in there. One of the things that we were anxious as a panel to convey to you, sir, was our concern that pending implementation of a freedom of information regime the destruction of government documents be done in a scrupulous and fair fashion and that every precaution be taken to ensure that under the new Bill – you know what's in it; I don't – documents that will be public or accessible under the new Bill will basically be maintained in a fashion consistent with the thrust of the new Bill. Whether in fact it has legal effect or not, there's certainly, I think, a strong moral imperative, sir, that suggests that we attempt to follow the principle set out in our all-party submission.

8:30

Those are the comments I wanted to make, Mr. Minister. Thank you very much.

Chairman's Ruling Relevance

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, in trying to follow the thread of your questions, we're having some anxiety about how far we can truly stray from the budget estimates. I know you were trying to tie it in. Some parts of it, though, are a bit tenuous from the strict adherence, although heaven knows we haven't strictly adhered to everything that's been within the budget, allowing people to move into the three-year plan and even into some things that are more properly in the Public Accounts Committee. I just wanted to register that we were having some sort of concern about it, and it's not directed just at you, hon. member, but at any of the hon. members. Although we are supposed to be on the budget, we have allowed rather broad paths to roam.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the reminder. If it wasn't clear, I had made the assumption – and I hope the minister will disabuse me if I'm incorrect – that the implementation of freedom of information is going to be a huge responsibility of this department, with enormous budgetary implications both immediate – and I tried to reference that in terms of the funding from the Legislative Offices Committee. I assume also that there's going to be a large expenditure in terms of his department. I didn't see that broken out separately in the estimates, but I was intending very much to target specifically the three-year plan and the current budget year.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
Mr. Minister.

Debate Continued

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a brief comment. The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo spoke about having all of the responses back before voting. Well, I guess somewhere along the line you've got to achieve a balance. The other night when I was here, I was courteous enough to allow the opposition to ask all the questions that they wanted to and was not given the opportunity to answer them that night. I note that some 75 questions came forward at that time. Now, if you wish responses as we go along, certainly I can do that, but you will probably only get 15 questions instead of 75. So I guess that's your choice. As I did previously when I've had my estimates before the House, I did provide the answers in an expeditious manner, as soon as I had them gathered together, and I filed them in the House here for everybody's information.

Just a comment while I'm on my feet, Mr. Chairman, on freedom of information. The hon. member is quite right. This department will be very much involved in the implementation of the freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation. To that end we have \$750,000 in this year's budget to help start the implementation process. It's very complicated. The protection of privacy and the access to information, for the documentation and the processes of retrieval: we don't do a lot of in-house work on this other than to guide the consultants and hire consultants out there, because there is a lot of expertise in the private sector, and we believe that that's where the expertise should come from. That's just a point that I make, that we are very much involved in it, but as you're probably aware, having sat on that committee, there's a great deal of work to be done in not only cataloguing but figuring out a way to retrieve this. Some of the other provinces have been at it for two and three years, and they still haven't got the process down straight. They're still having problems with it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Buffalo is rising again.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Chairman, if I could just follow up. I very much appreciate the fact that the minister responded so quickly. I wonder if the minister could give some direction in terms of how the line is being drawn between those funds being set aside by the Legislative Offices Committee and the funds in the budget for his department. Can he assist members by simply indicating where the threshold is so that we have some appreciation for what questions should more properly be directed to the Legislative Offices Committee and which questions to this minister?

MR. THURBER: Certainly, Mr. Chairman. I'll just touch on it briefly here and try and make it a little bit clearer for the hon.

member. The major focus for the implementation of this program is on the improvement of records and the management practices and the retrieval and the whole process in actually accessing the physical end of it. We're in that end of it. We're not in the legislative end of it and the other budget that you speak of. That's more for the legislation, I would assume, or for some other part of it, for designing, helping the committee in their process. Certainly my end of it is just in the physical end of retrieval, storing. How do you get to the stuff, how do you store it, how long do you store it, what's accessible, and what isn't?

Chairman's Ruling Clarification

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield, before I recognize you, I'd like to clarify a point that has been directly referred to and alluded to. If I could have the attention of the House leaders, maybe that might make the point clearer.

Hon. members of the committee, the point has been made several times, referring to the occasion when the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services was last before us in committee, that he was unable to give his answers to the many questions that came up that evening. There is some sort of inference that somehow this was that the Chair did not recognize the minister. In fact, if all members recall the evening and recall the procedure, any hon. member may stand in his or her place and move that the committee do now rise and report. Since the committee is in charge of itself, not the Chair, if the committee agrees to rise and report, we then can't reverse. That is precisely what happened. Those committee members supported the proposition put by one of the opposition members that the committee do at that point rise and report. At that point the deputy House leader indicated that it would be nice if the minister could. Certainly it would have been nice if the minister could, but the committee was no longer in existence because they'd just voted themselves to go back into Assembly.

I want to just make sure that we all understand that, should that occasion arise this evening. I'm sure it won't, but now that we understand that when an hon. member makes the point of rising and reporting and makes that motion, it's a nondebatable motion, and it's voted upon. That vote will determine our course of action, whether to go back into Assembly or to continue in committee.

Having said all of that, we have held off Edmonton-Mayfield for a period of time, and we thank him for his patience.

MR. WHITE: Sir, I'd like to thank you for yours, too. We try to do the best we can to maintain decorum, particularly when dealing with Public Works, Supply and Services. To that end, tonight we have made our arrangements, and the minister has agreed to adjourn debate at the appropriate time. We've preset that, so the House shall not be disrupted in that manner.

Debate Continued

MR. WHITE: Speaking to the estimates, I'm glad to see that the minister is still the minister; the *Calgary Herald* last week had him somewhere else and the former member, Mr. Kowalski, taking the position. It's good to see that that hasn't changed. That minister has enough to deal with without dealing with the problems you're dealing with.

It's interesting to note – and I'd like to revisit it again – that the business plans refer time and time and time again under a number of different words to the reduction of simple waste. Now, you, sir, in your answers to questions earlier with regard to the lights and the grounds here, asked: who would object? Well, I tell

you, sir, that was then, and this is now. Then we didn't have the cuts that the seniors have. I represent a great deal of seniors, and invariably it's those seniors that are in that threshold that are calling me time and time and time again to find out what 17-something thousand dollars does for them and what it doesn't. Well, I say through you to those people that \$30,000 is a great deal of money, a great deal of money. It makes the difference in their sense of at least two years of living, and when you have people worried to that extent, that they are not going to be able to get to the end of their years in the style that they wish to be comfortable in, then it does make a big difference.

8:40

I, sir, live in this city and spend a great deal of time in and around the city centre. I live seven minutes from here. I, in fact, was here for three of the last four years of turning on the lights at this Legislature. It happens to be one of the things that my family does and we enjoy at that time of year regardless of the weather at the time. But I can say to you that when I ask my 11-year-old if the money should go into the lights or go to helping Mrs. McClarty down the road, who doesn't have a great deal of money to pay the boys to cut the lawn, whether we should do that, I can tell you the answer. The answer is clear and precise every single time. It's supposedly those people.

So, please, when you do address these things – and it was good of you to answer in that three letters and four times I've asked you about what it cost. Tonight was the first time you'd mentioned that number. I don't know what that includes. Judging from the amount of equipment around that I saw through three months here and having formerly been in that business, some parts of it may in fact have been left out in the estimate of that. However, please, in future, those kinds of expenditures: it would be nice to have them timed and returned. Perhaps I would not be seen as being the grinch that stole Christmas, even though I've been described as worse from that side of the House.

There's another question that was brought up earlier by Calgary-Buffalo, the implementation of the freedom of information. Now freedom of information is your department's big concern. It's one of your big tasks in the coming years, I suspect, because it is a very difficult area to deal with. There are volumes and volumes of documents presently stored in this building, some in the annex, and I think some out in Lampton Park. They're stored in a number of places. I would ask you this, and personally I would appreciate it and I'm sure a lot of other members would too: is it possible for you to say to this House that the information that is currently stored either in ministerial offices or in your possession – I don't suppose you can answer for ministerial offices, though I think everything that comes out of the offices is actually a responsibility. Could you assure that those documents are not destroyed in the transition? They can always be categorized later, and the most recent documents are the ones that are of most interest to most of those that will be applying under the Act for that kind of information. I should hope that the spirit of the proposal, the original proposal in the last session, being Bill 1, being that most important for the Premier, would carry forward into this session and in fact carry forward to your department to the extent that you would ensure that the documentation was maintained, period, and maintained in an order which can be accessed.

I was going to speak somewhat about the Legislature Annex, but my colleague wishes to rise to the occasion to speak to that directly, sir, so I'll leave that to him. However, I do have to comment on it. When you talk about a short stay in that particular building, it may in fact be so, sir. There are offices that may in fact be vacant here in such a time.

[Mr. Sohal in the Chair]

There are some questions about the federal building, very near and dear to a lot of Edmontonians' hearts. That building has been sitting – I think it was June of '93 that some work was to be commenced there in order to convert it to some luxury condominiums or some such thing. I'm not quite sure how the contract reads in that one, but it is plain and obvious to all that drive by it on a regular basis that there is no work being done there. We also see in your budget that there was some \$35,000 last year in the maintenance of that structure. You were speaking earlier this evening about life cycles, and you know as well as I that the longer you go on, the higher the cost for maintaining that structure.

Now, I know that the minister has relied on private enterprise to come through in this case, and oftentimes private enterprise has second thoughts with market changes. I was wondering if the minister could answer the fundamental question about when is the right time to pull the rug out and say: "Lookit, guys; you're not doing the job. We, being the owners of the property, have to make some kind of alternate arrangement." Whatever remedy is available to you, then you must take it, whether it's to rebuild the structure into one for the department's occupancy or some other agencies of the government or whether in fact it is to find another developer. Something sooner or later has to be done, and we'd ask that you address yourself to that, sir.

The two other items I wished to speak to you about perhaps we can get to later. They're not of major consequence. At 9:30 we're trying to wrap this up, so I'll leave it to other members here.

MR. THURBER: Do you wish me to answer or leave it to my wrap-up? Whichever you would prefer.

MR. WHITE: We believe we have to 9:30 for whatever time you take to do your wrap-up. If you can put it all together, we'll try and get in as much as we can, if you wouldn't mind.

MR. THURBER: Okay. One thing I might ask your indulgence in, Mr. Chairman, while I'm here. We go back and forth about the cost of the Christmas tree lights. Of course, you can put any figure in a bad light with a negative trend to it. In fact, I might say to some senior citizens, "Wouldn't it be better if you had all of the hon. member's salary, because he probably doesn't need it and it would do you a lot more good." They would agree, yes. The \$30,000 did include the tree, and that was delivered by Environment.

The other thing that you should know, while I'm on my feet here, has to do with the freedom of information. We have in storage right now enough records to cover a football field some five to six feet deep. There is a committee that determines how long certain records should be kept. That committee's been in place for a long time. Some records are designed to be kept for 100 years or 70 years or 30 years or whatever the case may be. With those time lines on these records, there are still approximately 1,200 tonnes of paper that fall off the other end and go into recycling every year. I just thought I'd bring that to your attention while I'm up here.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper.

MR. CHADI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to be able to rise tonight to speak to the estimates of public works. I listened long and hard to the minister responsible

for this department, and I heard him speak about where we expended certain funds. Perhaps we expended them in a not so fruitful manner. Nonetheless, I'm going to get into that a little bit later.

Right now I want to comment on some of the comments that he made in his opening remarks. One of them was the real estate that will be sold and will be sold at market rates. Now, I look at the business plan of public works, Mr. Chairman. I look specifically to page 8, and I look at the results and performance measures with respect to this department. Then you look and see the performance indicators, and it clearly says in there under property holdings that there's a "reduction in property holdings through the sale of surplus properties at market rates." Wow. What a performance indicator. I bet you that maybe we could sell some of this technology to some of these big companies around the world. This is a performance indicator: "reduction in property holdings through the sale of surplus properties at market rates." Absolutely ludicrous.

You know, Mr. Chairman, I would like very much to suggest to the hon. minister that sales of property are made at market rates only if somebody's willing to pay. That is what establishes a market rate. If you put something up for sale and you sit on it and you continue to sit on it, you will not sell it until somebody comes along and says, "I want to buy that," and what they're willing to pay for it is what the market rate is. You can pick all the numbers you want. You can have 10 appraisals. You can call for all sorts of fancy appraisers to come from all over the place to appraise this property, and you'll get 10 different numbers. You'll never get anybody to agree on how much a piece of real estate is worth, an exact number from different people. You're going to get a wide range of figures. So what somebody's willing to pay for the property at that time is what it's worth.

8:50

I'd say to the hon. minister that that's the attitude we take when we go and sell this stuff and dispose of it, because we're not in the real estate business here. We're not in the business of amassing properties. We just happen to hold some properties. We've got them now; we're in this dilemma. It's a dilemma that cost us about \$30 billion in total. Here's where we sit, with a debt that is just astronomical for 2 and a half million people, and that's what we have to do. We have to consider selling some of that stuff. A comment that I'd like to make to the hon. minister – and I hope he keeps this and takes it to heart – is that whenever we do sell some of that property, the excess property, the surplus properties, and we actually take and get the sale proceeds of that, are we using those funds to pay down our debt? Because we've amassed this debt to purchase this property, et cetera, et cetera, why aren't we using those funds to just slap it against the debt instead of going to the general revenue fund or wherever else it goes? That's where I'd like to see that go, and I think Albertans want to see it go in that fashion, Mr. Chairman.

You know, the minister made a comment about holding property for the right price. I'm going to tell you a little experience, Mr. Chairman, about what happened to me a few years back. A fellow came up to me and wanted to sell me a piece of property because he wanted to run in a provincial election. I said, "Okay; I'll go and have a look at this property," and I did. He and I went and looked at this thing, and I said to him, "How much do you want for this property?" And he says: "Well, you know, we paid \$40,000 for it. I know I won't get \$40,000, but what do you think?" I sort of hemmed and hawed, and I says, "No, you've got to give me that figure." Finally he did; he gave me the figure of \$25,000. I looked at him and I said, "Well, you know, I've really got to think this over, but if you'd take \$22,000

now, I might consider it." And he says: "Oh, no, no, no. The wife and I have got to do this thing, and I really need this much money because I'm running in this provincial election." I said to him, "Well, you let me know." Lo and behold, a couple of weeks later the guy comes to me and he says: "Okay. I really need the money, and the election is going to be called soon. I'll take the \$22,000." I said: "You know something? I've thought it over now, and I really don't think it's worth \$22,000. I may give you \$20,000."

You know something, Mr. Chairman? The guy stormed out of my office, and about half an hour later he comes back and says, "Well, I discussed it with my wife, and we'll take the \$20,000." I looked at him, because I didn't really want this piece of property, and I said to him: "Well, that was then. You should have taken it." I said, "If you really want to sell me that piece of property and if you really need the money, I might come up with \$15,000 for you." He was really steamed, but within about a half hour more I ended up buying that piece of property for \$17,000. Now, here's a guy who got \$17,000 for this piece of property . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame, shame.

MR. CHADI: Shame? The real shame is that he got elected. That's the real shame. He was running the affairs of this province because he got elected. That's the real tragedy, and that same mentality, Mr. Chairman, has all of a sudden surfaced here tonight, because the minister says we'll hold out for our price. Well, this guy sure as heck held out for his price, and see what he got? He got \$8,000 less for holding out.

I tell you something, Mr. Chairman: the minister ought to remember what I've just said. Take that to heart, Mr. Minister. When you get an offer, you consider it seriously or you blow it. Take some of those funds and put them against the debt.

I would very much like the opportunity to negotiate someday with the member from Medicine Hat. I understand that he's got some lease space there that I might consider looking at some day.

We have apparently expended certain funds, and reference was made to the annex. I'm not sure, but I'm told we expended in the range of \$180,000. Now, some of those funds, maybe all of those funds, were expended to revamp and renovate the offices so that it could accommodate the Liberal caucus. Let there be no mistake about it, Mr. Chairman. We were offered and we were entitled to have offices in this Legislature Building, but we chose that it would be a lot fairer if we could give this up and we could renovate to suit us over there, because those offices dearly needed renovation, those offices couldn't accommodate 32 MLAs. We did it the cheapest we possibly could; we did it for \$180,000 or thereabouts. That's a far cry – and I want everyone to hear this – the \$180,000 is a far cry from the \$300 million that was used to renovate the entire Legislature property. Three hundred million dollars when the parkade was done and the bridge over here and the water fountain and all the other offices that were renovated; \$300 million were expended to suit the government of the day, not \$180,000. That's a far, far cry from it. As a matter of fact, I think we've done a marvelous job with \$180,000. We ought to be commended, and the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services ought to send a letter congratulating the Liberal caucus for doing such a marvelous job for the least amount of money.

Mr. Chairman, I have a concern as well with I believe reference 3.3.4, and it's with respect to Public Works, Supply and Services. It says Operating Expenditure when you look at the estimates. It goes into land assembly, and we're expending \$3 million on land assembly. Now, in the area where it explains the land assembly, it says:

To purchase land interests for all government departments, except Alberta Transportation and Utilities' highway and airport construction requirements . . .

It goes on further to say:

and to dispose of land surplus to the government's requirements.

So here on the one hand we've got land assembly, and we've also got surplus land that we're disposing of within land assembly.

Now, my question is: when we look at \$3 million of gross expenditures in 1994-95, where are those funds going to be expended? I'm hoping that the minister would give me a response to that. I also want to know, within that same category, why do we have the disposal of land in the land assembly category? Since we do have that disposal "of land surplus to government's requirements" within that category, can the minister advise us or give us a listing of those properties that we have in terms of surplus? Explain that for us by showing us a list of properties that are to be disposed of. If we are to dispose of certain properties, is it the expectation of the minister to only expend \$3 million because we're going to utilize cash from the disposal of certain land surplus and that would be the net effect? If that's indeed the case, then I'd like an explanation.

Another question I've got, Mr. Chairman, is in 3.3.5, and I think the minister touched on it in his opening remarks. It's with respect to the RDAs, or the restricted development areas. Now, in those restricted development areas we are slated to expend another \$13,900,000, almost \$14 million, this year. So in this fiscal year we're talking expending another \$14 million almost.

9:00

Now, here we are sitting here tonight listening to the minister talking about selling off some of that RDA property, yet in another breath we're going out and we're spending \$14 million more buying more RDA property. Firstly, the properties within the RDA that we hope to liquidate, I'm wondering if we can get a listing of those properties as to which properties we are going to liquidate within the RDA. Secondly, I'd like to know the breakdown of costs of those properties that we are liquidating. For this expenditure that we are spending this \$13,900,000, I'd kind of like to have any documentation identifying this expenditure. Do you purchase property based on real estate appraisals? Do you go out there? Do you do your own appraising? How does it work? Could you explain that? Because it seems like an awful lot of money here to be expended for the purchase of more RDA, when on the one hand we're trying to get out of the business of being in the land business, and the other side of the coin, here we are going out and spending \$14 million more. It just don't make sense at all, Mr. Chairman.

Another question is with respect to excess properties. I've asked this question time and time again to no avail, Mr. Chairman. It wouldn't surprise me at all if we were to come up with an inventory of properties from within all the different departments that we've got and pooled them all together and gave them to Public Works, Supply and Services and said to public works: "You're the steward. You're in charge of the disposal, the liquidation of these properties." I happen to think that we're sitting on a tremendous amount of money that we could use to pay down the debt. We're paying \$1.5 billion to service a debt. I think we could liquidate a lot of our assets right away and pay down some of that debt so that we don't have to pay that kind of money.

Now, why isn't there a mechanism in place so that all departments – and I'm talking about agriculture, I'm talking about Environmental Protection, I'm talking about Municipal Affairs, I'm talking about transportation, every department. There's got

to be surplus properties there if only we took the time to pull them all together and said: "Here's what we've got. Valuate those, and let's get on with the job of selling this stuff off so that we can liquidate some of our debt." That would be the best thing we could possibly do.

In the business plans, on page 9, of Public Works, Supply and Services we look at property holdings. Under expected results, property holdings – in the first bullet there it says surplus properties in the millions of dollars, and we've got \$47,900,000, it appears, in surplus properties. Now, I'm wondering if the minister could advise us whether or not this is properties that have been accumulated or amassed by all departments and it's come to public works at this point in time, or is that just sitting in public works right now and it's surplus property that is out there for sale. Then the expectation in the 1995-96 fiscal year, Mr. Chairman – it appears as though what we're trying to do is liquidate somewhere in the range of \$10 million worth of property. My question is: how do you base that target? Like, how did you come up with that figure? How did you go from \$47.9 million to \$38.1 million? Did you just say one day, "Well, I think we ought to sell \$10 million worth"? It just doesn't make sense. If it were me and if it were my company and I'd got \$47.9 million worth of real estate to dispose of, I wouldn't say: well, I think I'll sell \$10 million this year simply because of what. My goal would be to sell all of it this year. That should be your target. It ought not to be your target to spread it over two or three years and say to yourself: well, I've only sold \$10 million this year. Why? Why, Mr. Minister?

If we go on to the property holdings and we say to ourselves that within the property holdings we've got \$47.9 million of surplus, then why on earth under program reference 3.3, land assembly, go and expend a further \$3 million? Isn't there something in there that we could utilize, certain properties, so we don't have to expend any more funds? Is it really necessary to go on to spend more money when you're sitting on almost \$50 million worth of property? That's just in Public Works, Supply and Services. What about all the rest of the departments? The Lord knows, we've got 17 of those guys sitting on the front bench, men and women. If only supply and services has \$47.9 million, and it would be reasonable to assume that each one of those might have \$40 or \$50 million worth of property – goodness gracious. I mean, we're talking in billions of dollars, Mr. Chairman. That'll go a long ways towards paying off the debt and reducing our service costs.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the time tonight, and I look forward to the minister's responses. If I don't get my answers this time around, I can guarantee you one thing: I'm coming back again, and I'm going to go after the minister, because I want to hear some answers. Thank you very much.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to follow up on the Member for Edmonton-Roper's story about his land dealing, which demonstrates that over here we have a free enterpriser. What I was struck by was the reaction from some of these free enterprisers, they like to call themselves, across the way here. You know, they were lamenting the fact that a businessman would be able to evaluate the market and pay \$17,000 for a piece of property that somebody was trying to say was worth \$40,000. I looked at the response from the minister of public works, and I got really frightened. You know what struck me? It struck me that he actually would have paid \$40,000, and

he would have been supported by all of those people there, particularly the minister of agriculture, who was saying: what a ridiculous thing to pay \$17,000. But then I got really worried when I saw the reaction of the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, and knowing what he did today for Chembiomed, I thought he'd have given them \$40,000 and let them keep the land. But he'd have got a royalty on whatever they developed on that land, and it might have been worth a thousand bucks or something like that. So what we had was a very instructive lesson in private enterprise, in free markets, and I only wish that these people across here could have seen themselves and seen their reaction and understood how ridiculous it was that they would be fighting the free market and this entrepreneurial initiative.

I am profoundly concerned when I look at this, and it's entitled element details. When I look at this book called element details, well, detail – health facilities projects, various, on page 66, and of course it's elaborated, because there's an asterisk here and it says:

Funding will be allocated in-year to projects based on recommendations arising from an independent review . . .

But there's \$47 million allocated. Well, how could we possibly be asked to vote on a \$47 million capital expenditure allocation for projects which are described no more precisely and no more definitively than by the word "various"? The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that given that the minister is in the process of putting in a regional structure that will make some decisions about this – I mean, surely the regional structures will make decisions about this and not only the independent review conducted through the health planning process. Surely the minister understands that she could actually be authorizing the construction of hospitals which will weeks, months later be closed by an independent regional board which decides that that wasn't the appropriate thing to do.

9:10

I cannot comprehend that the minister would actually have the gall to present here \$47 million in various health care facilities projects and not be able to give us any indication of what they might be, not be able to tell us what role the regional boards will play in them. I look at the member from Medicine Hat and the member from Calgary-whatever, and they are actually supporting this document. Well, a blank cheque to the Minister of Health, \$47 million to build more hospitals: imagine that. On the one hand, they're closing hospitals. They're requiring that there be fewer hospital facilities, and on the other hand, they've got \$47 million in here for various.

Now, we had some insights into what one of those various hospitals might be, because the Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne announced to his constituency scant weeks ago that they would be building a hospital in Whitecourt. Now, he stands up – it's not his turn to speak, Mr. Chairman.

Point of Order Accusing a Member of Lying

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A point of order. The Minister of Transportation and Utilities.

MR. TRYNCHY: The member speaking has just told a falsehood. I never told anybody we were building a hospital, so retract that and quit lying.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm just doing what the Premier seems to do day after day, which is stand in the Legislature and refer to a newspaper article, which seems to be good enough for him. The fact of the matter is that the Whitecourt news reports – is he

calling his own newspaper a liar? The Whitecourt newspaper reported that in fact he's building a hospital. Well, I think we should get back to the newspaper – we'll send them *Hansard* – because they reported that you're going to build a Whitecourt hospital. Now, it's very convenient because the Premier and whomever can stand up and say, "No, we're not building that hospital," and nobody can question them because the element details – and I use that word lightly – say: \$47 million, various. I wonder if the minister could tell us which of the various hospitals will be built and added up – oh, I see. I see. This is the Premier's true leadership. Everybody's doing it now. [interjections] Somebody else's responsibility.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Through the Chair, please.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Thank you. I think I was.

This is the Premier's true leadership. This is his imprint on leadership. Everybody's passing the buck. I would hope that the Minister of Health would be able to answer what hospitals are going to be built, whether they're built by the minister of public works or the minister of agriculture. I don't care, but surely the Minister of Health would have some idea which ones they'd be. Unbelievable. It's unbelievable.

Debate Continued

MR. MITCHELL: In any event, Mr. Chairman, why can't, at the very least, the minister for public works therefore identify – and I'd like to see a detailed listing of the \$47 million, where it's going to go, which hospitals are going to be built. I'd like to see whether it's going to be in Whitecourt or not. I think that's an important question that should be answered.

I'd like to know what role the regional boards are going to play in determining which various hospitals are going to be built, these same boards that aren't even yet structured. I'd like to know whether they're going to have any role or whether the minister, whichever, is going to be able to build some hospitals and have the regional boards decide that they want to close them. I'd like to know, Mr. Chairman, whether the Westlock hospital was lumped into something called various health care facilities projects last year and then had that perpetrated upon the people of Alberta this year without any prior warning.

Now, I'd also like to know, Mr. Chairman, under 4.9.94, page 66, if the Westlock hospital is costing us \$10 million, as was touted by the various – well, the member from that area. Or is it costing us \$8,260,000 this year on top of \$5,650,000 last year, which would actually bring it to almost \$14 million? That is an important revelation, and I'd like to have that clarified by the minister.

Mr. Chairman, I will leave my comments at that point. I'd like to see a little bit of detail so that we can make some judgments and aren't asked to vote on some blanket capital hospital, capital construction budget which may or may not bear any relationship to reality, which may or may not bear any relationship to a decision-making process which the Minister of Health seems to have severed herself from.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again we get some very interesting comments from across the way here trying to justify a lot of things that they've been involved in. I find it

interesting that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield talked about \$30,000 and compared that to what it would do for seniors and asked his child if he would rather see the money spent on the Christmas tree lights or spent on the seniors. I might say that the same thing would apply to the \$180,000 that was spent on the annex for your comfort. There were people living in it. The NDP were in it. Government members were in it before that. You say that it wasn't fit for you to live in, so you had to have that extra money spent on it. I'm sure there are seniors that would love to have that spent on them as well. [interjections]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Centre, order. [interjections] Order please.

MR. THURBER: We have a recommendation from a self-professed real estate professional across the way from Edmonton-Roper who says that we have to sell all the land in one year. I hope you recognize where the majority of the property that this government holds is at. It's in this city of Edmonton or in the near vicinity. [interjections]

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

Chairman's Ruling Decorum

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, if you wish to discuss some matter with other hon. members, we have no objection to you doing so outside. The Chamber is properly the area for one speaker at a time. I know occasionally that isn't quite . . .

MR. HENRY: You guys listen to that over there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We don't need finger pointing. I'm casting my comments to all sides.

Hon. minister.

Debate Continued

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to bring to your attention that the majority of surplus property we had would naturally be in Edmonton or the Edmonton area. The Member for Edmonton-Roper of course says he would put it all on the market and sell it today. Does he have any idea what that would do to real estate values or the city of Edmonton? We have a little bit of compassion on this side of the House. We try and do things in an orderly manner and in the best manner and in the most humane manner for not only this government and the taxpayer but the citizens of this province and this city. I found that very amusing. There's a lot of land that belongs to universities, hospitals, this government. I would be very interested in seeing what that would do to the real estate.

MRS. HEWES: When I came first came here, they didn't know how much they had. They never knew what it was that they owned. Honestly. Up until a year and a half ago there wasn't any inventory.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll put your name down now, Edmonton-Gold Bar, and you can continue to . . .

MRS. HEWES: I can't restrain myself, Mr. Chairman, when I hear those kinds of things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do.

MR. THURBER: The question was asked about the listing of property in the RDA. We don't sell property that's within the RDA. The RDA is what we're trying to establish. We sell property outside of the RDA that becomes surplus because we have to pick up a larger package to obtain ownership of a piece that's in the RDA.

I understand, Mr. Chairman, that there's another member who'd like to speak, so I'll wait till he's done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Gold Bar, were you on the list?

MRS. HEWES: No, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.
Edmonton-Mayfield.

MR. WHITE: She has the capacity to think very loud, I understand, and it was carried right through.

Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister. The minister may use the figure \$180,000 to do some renovations; he may use a lot of numbers. But I'm saying to you: look, do you know how small that particular number is relative to the \$30 billion? If you say it fast, it doesn't make very much difference, but then you say \$180,000. We know that it's only \$104,000, the actual work, unless you can pull out some better numbers than adding telephones and everything else. Now, one of those floors happened to be taken over with very minimal changes to it, almost minuscule changes. That happened to be a floor of former Tory backbenchers. That's taken over by our leader. [interjection]

9:20

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, you have a point of order. Do you have a citation? [interjection]

MR. WHITE: When you're speaking of those numbers, you should be cognizant of the fact that you cannot blame this side of the House for the things that weren't done in the past. That building was not up to standards. You're spending admittedly a million dollars on it, and I can tell you it is not on the Liberals that you're spending that million dollars. You know that, and I know that. You know that building should have been done many, many years ago, at the same time that all the tunnel work was done. There's more work horizontally in that \$100,000-a-foot pedway across there and all the parking structure than in that building. You walk out the front of the building and see a wonderful pool. You look off to the right, and one of the uglier buildings around; you and I both admit that. Even the old highways building had a little more character than the thumb in the sky. I mean, we know that. So let us not forget that it's a long succession of ministers, 22 years, in fact, that have not done what they should have done at the time in dealing with the grounds here. A hundred and eighty thousand dollars to renovate space that was woefully inadequate even at the time, and they said so at the outset, when you're doing an equal amount in this building for this term for many less members – let us not forget that money has to be expended on some items. We did a minimal job there. There are no extras anywhere. You and I both know that.

As a matter of fact, one of the things that we wanted to do with some of that money was to dress up the exterior of that building so that it looked presentable. Remember one of your members, I think, put forward a plan to save some money. I think he had a payback of somewhere of three to five years on a \$40,000 purchase that would put reflective material inside the glass on that

building, make that building look so, so much better. You'd be able to clean the windows. You'd be able to clean the entire exterior and make it look like it's not the ugliest box that the pool arrived in. Now, I've given the minister sufficient food for thought on that matter, and I don't want to belabour it.

If you wish to sum up, we have only one member that would like to say anything more, and he doesn't seem to be present, so we'll allow you, sir, the time to sum up.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, hon. members. I appreciate the opportunity to sum up. It seems to me that the member doth protest overly much about the renovations to the annex building. I spent four years in the annex. I was very comfortable there. I'd been on one of the floors that they've been living on and that they found weren't satisfactory for their use. Be that as it may, the question originally arose over \$30,000 of Christmas lights for the kids and the people that come to see the Legislature at Christmastime, and I wanted to make sure that if that \$30,000 would be better used on the seniors – there is a lot of other money that could be better used on the seniors for that matter.

I don't know how we got onto the seniors or some of the other items that we've been discussing here, but when you talk about the seniors, I just would like you to know that in recent days I've had seniors phone me and were quite happy with the proposals. They were on the low end of the income, and they found that they're going to be getting better. I've also had seniors in my own constituency told by people in Edmonton that they'd better list their house because they were going to be cut off on their benefits. Once we explained it properly and truthfully to them, they were very happy. That's my only comment on seniors.

As I mentioned before, Mr. Chairman, it will take me a little while to go through some of the . . .

Point of Order Imputing Motives

MRS. HEWES: Point of order, 23(i).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Which is?

MRS. HEWES: Motives.

Mr. Chairman, I'm just a little concerned at the minister's last statement that seniors were getting information from – and did I understand the inference was from members in Edmonton, Mr. Minister? If so, I do take exception. Or was it your intention – I hope – that it was from people in the minister's department or someone perhaps who was giving them misinformation? It certainly wasn't coming from MLA constituency offices; I can assure you of that. I'd like an answer from the minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has risen on a point of order and has asked clarification of what the minister in fact said.

MR. THURBER: People from Edmonton. I'm quoting a person on the phone today. I didn't bring up the subject of seniors, hon. members. It was brought up by people on your side, saying that there would be \$30,000 better spent on seniors than on lighting up the Christmas trees for the children.

MRS. HEWES: But we're not saying that MLA offices in Edmonton . . . [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute, hon. members. This is truly a debate, not a chitchat. If the members who would like to ask

the questions will rise in their places and be recognized, then the minister will be given the opportunity to reply to those questions.

MRS. HEWES: There was a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The point of order asked for clarification. The minister I believe has clarified that he was referring to people in Edmonton and not members in Edmonton. Is that satisfactory to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar?

MRS. HEWES: Is that the answer, sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the answer he offered. The question is: does that satisfy the point of order?

MRS. HEWES: Yes, thank you.

Debate Continued

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services in conclusion.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Chairman, it would take me a little while here to sort through the questions. There are very few that I haven't answered or that the answers haven't been prepared for tabling, and I will do that as expeditiously as I have always done. So I would ask that we call for the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be very brief with my comments. We won't belabour the evening here, but there were some questions that were unanswered, and I wonder if in fact clarification could be brought to it.

I was looking at an item here in the public works expenditure associated with the Royal Alexandra hospital. It's \$14.5 million. I'd like to ask for some clarification there. My information is that part of it is to a diagnostic treatment centre, which includes labs, operating rooms, and the likes of that, which was scheduled to open in May of '95, I believe. That particular project has been accelerated, and people are expected to start moving into that in the next two months. I would ask the minister, in fact, if the construction has been accelerated to such a point, where those dollars would come from, and what the idea or strategy behind that would be.

The other question I would ask simply in regards to those two facilities, the Alex and the Camsell. The hon. member would know that in fact the psychiatric patients were moved from the Alexandra over to the Charles Camsell. There were considerable dollars expended there to renovate to accommodate those particular patients. I wonder if the minister could isolate those dollars spent for that renovation. Of course, if we were to deal with urban innuendo here, those patients ultimately will end up elsewhere very shortly with a move perhaps to the Grey Nuns or perhaps to the Alberta hospital, whatever the decision might be in that situation.

With that, as I indicated, I'll be brief, and I would leave the minister those questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Royal Alex. Certainly there are some funds in the budget for that, and this includes the diagnostic and treatment centre, intensive and coronary care units, and it's designated to be completed in January 1995. There's construction on there now. It commenced in September of 1991, and it's ongoing. It should be completed by January of 1995.

9:30

MR. KIRKLAND: Moving in before May of this year?

MR. THURBER: That part I can't answer.

MR. KIRKLAND: Anyway, that's the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hon. members . . .

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you.
Sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Leduc, you're perfectly welcome to ask further questions once the minister has completed his responses.

MR. THURBER: Just a comment on the Charles Camsell hospital. As you're well aware, they've joined together with the Royal Alex. What exactly they're doing with that or what the future is will be up to whatever regional authority ends up in Edmonton.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The committee is reminded that we are looking at the estimates of Public Works, Supply and Services.

Agreed to:	
Program 1 – Departmental Support Services	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$9,368,000
Total Capital Investment	\$151,000
Program 2 – Information Technology and Supply	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$53,207,000
Total Capital Investment	\$1,613,000
Program 3 – Management of Properties	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$213,754,000
Total Capital Investment	\$5,881,000
Program 4 – Planning and Implementation of Construction Projects	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$92,070,000
Total Capital Investment	\$195,750,000
Summary	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$368,399,000
Total Capital Investment	\$203,395,000
Department Total	\$571,794,000

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I now move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

Resolved that a sum not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995, for the departments and purposes indicated.

For the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services: \$368,399,000 for operating expenditures, \$203,395,000 for capital investment, for a total of \$571,794,000.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur on the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **Government Bills and Orders**

head: **Second Reading**

Bill 8

Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1994

[Adjourned debate March 15: Mrs. Black]

MR. SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

DR. PERCY: Yes. They were calling the question, Mr. Speaker, so somebody had to stand.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question? [interjections] The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has already participated in debate on this stage and is therefore ineligible to speak again.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I did want to rise on the interim appropriations. Some points have already been raised by my colleagues, specifically with regard to the fact that there's a lack of detail with regard to how it is the money will be spent. We're being asked to approve about 28 percent in expenditures for the various departments.

I go to the Department of Education and find out that we are being asked for exactly 28 percent support. I haven't seen a breakdown from the Department of Education yet because we haven't been able to review the supplementary estimates, so I'd be interested in knowing some of the details about what it is that we are going to be seeing in terms of detail. Are we in fact going to see a breakdown with regard to the student finance that is being appropriated to each board? Are we in fact going to see a board-

by-board breakdown? Is that only provided to some members, or is it provided to all Members of the Legislative Assembly?

I also want to put on record that I've been approached by a number of boards who are terribly concerned because they had some preliminary indication of what their financing will be for the per student grant in the upcoming year, but they have no idea how it's going to shake down with regard to the residential and nonresidential property tax base and how that's going to be appropriated around the province.

Last night I was in the wonderful, beautiful constituency of Leduc. There were three board chairpersons there whom I discussed the budget with, and they had some concerns that they raised. One of the problems that we're having out in the community, that we're now being asked to appropriate money for expenditure, is that many boards don't know what's going to be happening down the road, don't know in fact how much of this money they're going to get.

We had an official from the Department of Education actually telling the audience at a forum that all three boards in Leduc – the Catholic board, the city public board, and the county public board – are going to receive more money, yet the three chairpersons didn't know that. They said: "Well, we understand we're going to be receiving less money. Our indication from the department is that we're receiving less." The department official suggested that perhaps Leduc is going to end up with more money because the mill rate is going to go down. There was quite a long conversation that extended past the forum that included one of the chairpersons and the department official, and it wasn't clear as to who was going to receive more money. Was it going to be the Department of Education receiving more money, was it going to be the school boards receiving more money, or was it going to be the ratepayers receiving more money? There is a lot of, I believe, unclear information out there.

I know that the members across and the Premier have been fond of inferring that members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition have been out fear mongering.

9:40

AN HON. MEMBER: That's right.

MR. HENRY: I hear people saying "That's right" on the other side of the House. Mr. Speaker, if we were able to get facts from the department, if the department had the facts, if they had worked the facts out, we'd be glad to participate in disseminating that information. But the problem you get is that you end up with duly elected board chairpersons having different information than what the department officials have. Nobody is clear as to whether we're going to see just a reduction in the mill rate in Leduc and therefore the taxpayers individually may have more money in Leduc and Leduc county or whether we're going to have the boards have more money to work with in providing the education. Because the boards won't be setting the mill rate any more, because we're going to have a uniform mill rate around the province, nobody seems quite sure exactly what's going to happen with regard to the breakdown on a board-by-board basis.

The other issues that I want to raise have to do with the Department of Education. We're being asked to approve \$619,288,000 for the Department of Education for the first quarter of this year. Mr. Speaker, the problem I have in supporting that kind of expenditure is that that kind of expenditure is based on some discussions in, I assume, the government caucus and had very little to do with any of the consultation that I participated in. I attended the two roundtables sponsored by the ministry as well as several of the roundtables sponsored by other

groups. In addition to that, I've received literally tens of thousands of letters now from individuals around this province who have said that they've sent either the original or copies of the letter to the minister or the Premier.

In the budget estimates that we've received, where I assume this figure comes from, we see that we're going to see more money for achievement testing. Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the broad consensus out in the real world, if I can point it out to members who spend too much time under the dome, is the fact that there was some consensus for achievement testing at the higher levels but there was absolutely minimal support, if any, for continuation of achievement testing at grade 3. It simply was not reliable. It simply did not produce valid results. We need to find new tools. What's the response in the budget? We're going to quadruple the amount of testing we're going to do, and the budget reflects that. It simply doesn't match what I certainly heard. I attended the plenary sessions from the roundtables, and I'm being asked to vote for this 619-odd million dollars, which flies in the face of the consultation and makes a mockery of the consultation process.

The other issue is that in the budget figures that we've yet had an opportunity to debate, we're seeing substantial dollars being spent on curriculum development. The one consistent over and over and over again message that came from the roundtables is to stop reinventing the wheel. Constantly we have a department in a department that is full of MEds and PhDs in education that have nothing better to do, I believe, than have make-work projects, reinventing and reinventing and reinventing. Well, perhaps there is a role for government in having make-work projects from time to time. We supported the infrastructure program.

Mr. Speaker, the downloading onto the school boards the responsibility of purchasing new resource materials, of piloting programs and purchasing new textbooks every three years was very, very clear at the roundtables, but the school boards said, "Stop."

Point of Order Relevance

MR. HERARD: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont is rising on a point of order.

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Beauchesne* 459. I think we have stopped looking at estimates. We're now dealing with Bill 8, and I wish that the hon. member would stick to that topic.

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will stick to that topic, and the topic, for the hon. member, is: enlightenment.

Debate Continued

MR. HENRY: On page 2 of the Bill is education – it starts with an E – an operating expenditure of \$619,288,000, and capital investment, \$621,000. We're being asked to expend money based on some breakdown that we have not been provided with but I have to assume has some sort of relevance to the document that was tabled in the so-called business plan on budget night. We're being asked to support this. The document which should have been based on the consultation that took an awful lot of money and an awful lot of people's time simply does not relate. So the relevance, if you'll allow me, Mr. Speaker, is that this figure has absolutely nothing to do with any of the consultations. If the

minister would stand in his place and tell me exactly the breakdown of the \$619 million, I would be absolutely thrilled. I would be excited if the minister would provide us with a board-by-board breakdown of how the funds will be distributed. If the minister would also outline how the property tax dollars are to be distributed, Mr. Speaker, I guarantee you that I would hop into my little car, and I would drive to 83 constituencies, and I would give that information to the 142 boards that are begging for it.

Unfortunately, we're back to debating a flimsy piece of information, and we're being asked to vote on a substantial amount of money. Mr. Speaker, I can blame some of this and some of my frustration, frankly, which I am trying to express tonight, on the process that we're involved in. We all know that we've made some changes with regard to the parliamentary process. I think we all know that we need to make a lot more changes, but I have to lay some of the responsibility at the feet of the Treasurer and the Minister of Education specifically for not providing the kinds of details that we should be entitled to receive, for providing a book called business plans that in any other world that I am aware of would essentially be called policy statements and not business plans. We simply don't have the information that we need to be able to vote. I certainly don't have the information I need to be able to vote.

I would like to address one other issue, Mr. Speaker, which is support to the Legislative Assembly, being \$10,347,000. It would be useful and interesting for me with regard to a vote, given that I'm a member of the Members' Services Committee and we did review the budget, to actually have a breakdown of how this money is going to be spent. Are we intending to spend one-quarter of all of our line items in our budget in the Legislative Assembly, or are we spending 30 percent in some line items and 20 percent in others? If we don't have this breakdown, I think it's a travesty that the hon. Treasurer in his seat would ask us to support this flimsy piece of information.

Thank you.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I cannot support this interim supply Bill, and I'll tell you why. What this Bill does: in a time when the world is just recovering from Thatcherism and from Reaganomics, we now have creeping Kleinism. We have a Treasurer who tells us that he's part of a government that's committed to being open and accountable, but he wants to have almost a third of the budget passed in an interim supply motion. They tell us that they want to be transparent, but what's transparent is the lack of detail that we get when the Treasurer has the gall to bring to this Assembly, while we are in the middle of estimates debates, a request to pass 28 percent of the budget in an interim supply Bill. I can't support this, and I don't think any responsible member of this Legislature can support this.

The government keeps on telling Albertans that they have a plan to control expenditures. Well, members on this side of the House voted reluctantly for the Deficit Elimination Act, but now we see that we've been duped. We've been duped, because this interim supply request suggests that there are going to be some kind of midterm corrections that this Treasurer's already, we know, on record as being so fond of. He makes them on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker. Now we don't even know which ones are going to occur before the end of this fiscal year. Maybe the Treasurer can explain why he needs \$3.5 billion in interim supply when a total of only slightly more than a billion would get him through to the end of the month of April.

9:50

Mr. Speaker, when full supply will be granted at the end of these estimates debates, why is he being so greedy now to grab this money in a way that no Albertan can be certain how it'll be spent? Just what corrections does the Treasurer plan to make in the next 45 days which would warrant this \$2 billion cushion? Where are the expenditure overruns? What's he trying to hide? More evaluation adjustments? More losses on the sales of assets? Higher debt servicing costs? The failure of his trip to New York? I think that we deserve to have answers to these questions before we can vote responsibly on this Bill.

Now, in light of the need for the Treasurer to give himself \$2 billion in pin money or petty cash, can the Treasurer comment on what financial mechanisms he's developed to maximize the efficiency of government and the development of financial planning mechanisms that support the medium- and long-term decisions and promote accountability? They certainly weren't in the business plans, Mr. Speaker. So what's the Treasurer been doing while he's been flying around? Has he come to terms with actually making this government accountable for how it spends tax dollars? Now, his long-term planning, on the other hand, is now just defined by a matter of months or weeks or even days. In light of this \$2 billion cushion, just what systems has the Treasurer put into place to hold individual departments and agencies accountable and responsible for their administrations, particularly at this time when we know that all departments are scrambling already at year-end?

Mr. Speaker, what about performance measures in the business plans? I use both terms, "performance measures" and "business plans," loosely. What about the performance measures which we were supposed to see which are supposed to support fiscal accountability? They're certainly not in this document. Is the Treasurer getting ready to send out a survey to Albertans to gauge satisfaction with the government's reporting systems? Has there been a show of hands around the cabinet table, perhaps, to gauge the quality of the Treasurer's analysis? Have they bothered to ask anybody? Certainly we know that people aren't happy with this kind of fiscal shenanigans, and we know that people elected all members of this Assembly to be accountable, to be responsible. What we have instead is the height of arrogance, the height of irresponsibility, and a total lack of accountability.

I can't vote for this, and I don't think anybody in good conscience can.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer, to close debate on Bill 8.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, having been counseled by my colleague to simply try to provide some basic answers to some of the basic questions, I won't go in at length. Clearly, it is the custom of this House to grant Her Majesty supply to provide for the government's costs, make payroll, pay schools and school boards and hospitals, consistent with the government estimates document that was filed in the Assembly on February 24, and we've done that for the first three months of the fiscal year. If, as my learned colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud said this afternoon, we were to magically get approval to the appropriation Act for the entire fiscal year, say, by May 1, then naturally the supply that we are seeking approval for tonight would be subsumed within that 12-month appropriation Bill, beginning April 1, 1994.

I understand the hon. member's caution or concern that we may not need all the interim supply that's being asked for here, but in

the event that the hon. members across the way or this Assembly perhaps decided to adjourn the Assembly for three weeks or two weeks or four weeks so as to go out and seek further the advice of Albertans on any number of issues, then we would lack sufficient supply authority to pay those bills, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the needs of their constituents in Edmonton and our constituents across the rest of this province are met. So while I appreciate the hon. member's caution that this supply is large, it is backed up by a good amount of Committee of Supply debate that's already occurred, the designated subcommittee of supply debate on at least one department and possibly some others, plus the information that is here.

Mr. Speaker, that is perhaps my best basic off-the-cuff explanation for what interim supply is really for and what the purpose is so that the hon. members across the way would be enlightened now for the second time in dealing with the matter of interim supply.

With those general remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would simply move second reading of Bill 8 and look forward to the more lengthy, more exhaustive, more detailed debate when we move to Committee of the Whole on the Bill.

[Motion carried; Bill 8 read a second time]

Bill 9
Appropriation (Alberta Heritage Savings
Trust Fund, Capital Projects Division)
Interim Supply Act, 1994

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 9 to provide appropriation for various capital projects under the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, the interim supply for those projects for the first three months of the fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, as members will look at the Bill and look at the estimates book associated with the Bill, it spells out the supply sought to support our Agriculture, Food and Rural Development programs, including Farming for the Future, irrigation rehabilitation and expansion, the grazing reserves; urban park development in the Department of Community Development; water management systems improvement in the Department of Environmental Protection – and I learned a great deal about irrigation as we were going through the budgetary matters this year, as my colleagues on Treasury Board did – as well as \$700,000 in applied cancer research; and of course, a good investment in the occupational health and safety research and education programs.

I would ask hon. members to support this Bill for second reading, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, as we look at the schedule here that sets out the expenditure of \$30 million, it's pretty skimpy. The Provincial Treasurer has summarized it very briefly and succinctly. You look at the numbers and there's really nothing there but the numbers. You don't know whether this is pro rata over three months, four months. You know that some of these involve significant capital expenditures. You would think that perhaps you'd have more of this money spent early in the spring, so you'd expect to see it not pro rata but perhaps half the sums expended in the first three months. You look here and you have no idea of how they're going to do it and why the numbers were chosen. It's thin.

We look at this and then we ask: how are we to judge this? Are these funds to be expended? What happens if, for example, this Bill fails to meet the test of legislative approval and the government falls on this? It could happen, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there are certain things here that you would expect from free marketeers, as there are allegedly on that side of the House. You would wonder . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Did you say musketeers or marketeers?

DR. PERCY: Musketeers. Pardon me, Mr. Speaker.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this interim appropriation Bill, again you can characterize it much as you could Bill 8. There's an absence of factual information to back it up as to how the numbers were chosen, where the money is going to be spent, whether it's pro rata, the actual reasoning underlying the sums that are here, particularly the three-month period.

On that point I will conclude, Mr. Speaker, by just saying that it would not, in fact, cause great problems to the Provincial Treasurer to bring forward more information just saying how these numbers are arrived at. Is it simply a straight line with a ruler, or is it some other mechanism that's used to divine these numbers? Or is it just sort of throwing darts at the dart board?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer, to conclude debate.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will simply say that I'd encourage all members to move to vote in support of Bill 9.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a second time]

10:00

**Bill 10
Appropriation (Lottery Fund)
Interim Supply Act, 1994**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 10, the Appropriation (Lottery Fund) Interim Supply Act, 1994.

Members have received the lottery fund estimates document that was filed with the Assembly on February 24. I would advise members that an estimated 35 percent of the required cost of the various projects itemized on page 7 of those estimates is requested in this interim supply Bill so as to grant Her Majesty authority to spend those funds for the first three months of the fiscal year.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, if one were to categorize Bills 8, 9, and 10, it would be as skimpy, skimpier, and skimpiest. We have one number, \$45 million, and it's just a single number. How is it going to be spent? Where? What are the projects? It's just the number.

Before I conclude my comments on the interim appropriation Bill – because I know there's one more of our colleagues who wishes to speak on this – I just want to take the hon. members down memory lane one more time, because we've heard the hon. Provincial Treasurer talk about the Legislature Annex and the overexpenditure this afternoon. This will be very brief, Mr. Speaker, but it's a nostalgia evening. I had pointed out that when the hon. Provincial Treasurer was under one dome, prior to his arrival at Dome they were making big money. His arrival there: they started going down the tubes. Suddenly he left, and the problems started here under this dome, with the large deficits. I would just draw the hon. members' attention to, again, the financial statements of the late, great Dome Petroleum. In fact, when the hon. Provincial Treasurer left and we look at the

statements for '84-85, their fiscal position in a sense turned around. It was only a brief recovery before the onset of a terminal disease, but in fact in '83, his last year there, they lost a billion dollars. In '84 it was then only \$197 million; that was one year after their loss of the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Then in '85 there was just a loss of \$15 million. So as we go down memory lane on occasion with the Provincial Treasurer, I'm sure that we can match him fact for fact, statement for statement.

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

MR. WHITE: Thank you, sir. I rise, and I may not be as brief as some other members would like.

This is a single number. Take this skimpy document to any constituent you wish. Take that. Find out what they say about what the Legislature and what you were elected to do. It certainly was not to take one skimpy, skimpy – skimpiest I think it was called earlier – number to this Legislature and say that that's what we're going to do. It certainly isn't the way anyone runs a business, and if this government wishes to conduct themselves in a businesslike manner, I suggest that they outline a little further as to what expenditures must be made in each and every month. It can be done regularly, particularly in this budget. I know it rather well.

The other thing that can be said for this. There's a certain portion of that \$45 million that not one member who's currently sitting in this House, who's here this evening, will have anything to say about. There's one member opposite that controls that fund totally and completely. [interjections] Now, it may come as a surprise. It's odd that the members opposite take so much joy in the fact that they are treated exactly the same as the members on this side of the House, with the same amount of disdain when it comes to dealing with a certain appropriation of certain funds, that one must go on bended knee to ask one minister in order to deliver some goods to their particular constituency. I think that is absolutely appalling. [interjections] There are some members that say that we don't have to go on bended knee. That's different. Gee. It's really strange. I was wondering if one could explain that to a grade 6 class, how democracy actually works. [interjection] Not at all. I mean, this is absolutely appalling to anyone, anyone that has a modicum of decency in dealing with a democracy. This is not the way to pass any kind of a business. This is absolutely abhorrent, fundamentally wrong. I don't have difficulty with the other appropriations, because we know approximately where they go, but this one – no accountability in the expenditure of funds. Absolutely none.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Provincial Treasurer, to conclude debate.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand and conclude debate on Bill 10 on behalf of my colleagues in the government caucus. But let me just do a short little trip down memory lane, because this evening – this afternoon I was unable to enjoy the entire debate from our colleagues across the way – this evening they have voted two for two in opposition to the supply Bills that are before the Assembly tonight. They voted in opposition.

Let's be clear about what the members across the way have voted in opposition of, Mr. Speaker. They have voted in opposition to providing some two-thirds of \$762 million in grants to operate our schools to give our kids an education. They voted in opposition to that. I'm appalled. They've also voted in opposition to granting some nearly \$20 million in supply to run

the Alberta Aids to Daily Living benefits program for our senior citizens, for young Albertans and older Albertans alike, so that those people can lead independent and healthy lives. They voted in opposition to that, and I think it's appalling that they'd do so.

10:10

Mr. Speaker, finally what they did was vote in opposition this afternoon and this evening to granting supply to complete the renovations of the Cross Cancer Institute. That's what they have voted here in Edmonton. They have voted in opposition to the basic needs of their own constituents here in the city of Edmonton. It is on the record. They voted in opposition to it, and I think it's only fair that it be brought to the attention of the Assembly here tonight.

Point of Order

Relevance

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield is rising on a point of order.

MR. WHITE: I'm sorry, sir. I'll write you a note next time.

I cite 23(b), sir: relevance. I mean, we're talking about lotteries here, \$45 million. Memory lane has gone back only 20 minutes or so, but memory lane does respect the rules of order.

Thank you, sir.

Debate Continued

MR. DINNING: Just a briefer version of memory lane: these same Liberal members, almost all of them from Edmonton, here today have voted in opposition to granting some \$2.8 million for applied cancer research under the heritage savings trust fund.

Mr. Speaker, on the lottery Bill . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. On the lottery?

MR. DINNING: On the lottery Bill. Knowing how anxious you were, Mr. Speaker, to hear further debate on Bill 10, the lottery Bill, there is in this Bill today a request for some \$45 million in funding to provide for the projects as spelled out in the lottery fund estimates filed in the Assembly on February 24. The details are there. I would turn their attention to nearly \$7.3 million in advanced medical equipment purchases. I would call their attention to providing supply for the likes of the Science Alberta Foundation and for Edmonton Northlands. Here are a number of Edmonton MLAs who are voting in opposition. They have voted in opposition to the basic needs of the citizens in the city of Edmonton. It's on the record.

All I could think of this afternoon – and I wasn't allowed to ask the question of my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud, but watching his performance this afternoon, my question was a simple one: has the hon. member considered decaf?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would move second reading of Bill 10.

[Motion carried; Bill 10 read a second time]

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've had a very interesting evening, but given the hour and knowing that a number of hon. members would like to adjourn to have some decaffeinated coffee, I now move that we adjourn.

[At 10:14 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]