

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, April 20, 1994**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 94/04/20

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please be seated.

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

head:

Private Bills

head:

Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. The committee is reminded that we're in Committee of the Whole. We're going to have under consideration a number of private members' Bills. Just a reminder to the committee that we will continue to observe the custom of only one member standing and talking at a time. Anyone else is on their way out or on their way to another seat.

Bill Pr. 2

Lethbridge Foundation Amendment Act, 1994

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll begin the evening by calling on anyone who wishes to make comment on Bill Pr. 2, Lethbridge Foundation Amendment Act, 1994. The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move the question be put.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments or questions?
Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill Pr. 2 agreed to]

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill Pr. 2 be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill Pr. 3

Companions of Angela and Francis (Koinonia Association) Act

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a lovely name. On behalf of the Member for St. Albert I'd like to move that the question be put on the Companions of Angela and Francis (Koinonia Association) Act.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill Pr. 3 agreed to]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: I've got to send him a pin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill Pr. 3 be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill Pr. 8

Shaw Communications Inc. Act

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the question be put.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West has moved that the question be now put. Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill Pr. 8 agreed to]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill Pr. 8 be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill Pr. 9

Tammy Lee Barnes Adoption Act

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Settler.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the question be put.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill Pr. 9 agreed to]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Settler.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill Pr. 9 be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill Pr. 10

Janna Adella Marie Kinnee Adoption Act

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the question be put.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill Pr. 10 agreed to]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill Pr. 10 be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill Pr. 15
Silvia Kathleen Miles Adoption Act

MR. ZARIWNY: I move that the question be put, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill Pr. 15 agreed to]

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill Pr. 15 be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Hon. members, I don't make the rules.

The hon. Member for Highwood.

8:10

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports the following Bills: Pr. 2, Pr. 3, Pr. 8, Pr. 9, Pr. 10, and Pr. 15.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. Are all agreed with the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll call the committee to order. Order. Again members are reminded of the two standing speaking rule: it would be two too many.

head: **Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund**
head: **Estimates 1994-95**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tonight the Committee of Supply has under consideration the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital projects division. Members wishing to make additional comments, questions, et cetera are invited.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Chairman, it gives me tremendous pleasure this evening to come back and address the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat is standing, so I can presume that you have a point of order.

DR. L. TAYLOR: No, I was just sitting, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we have a rule that two people may stand but two people may not speak at the same time, and the Chair has recognized the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying, it gives me tremendous pleasure to be here yet again to speak to the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital projects division.

In my previous comments I had discussed some of the general issues, and I'll just very briefly recapitulate them. The first point I wanted to make, Mr. Chairman . . . [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. If the hon. member wishes to carry on a debate, he is invited with the Whip's consent to go and view the hockey game.

Edmonton-Whitemud is invited to continue on uninterrupted.

DR. PERCY: The first point, Mr. Chairman, was that in fact it is really a misnomer to call this the capital projects division. This was a question I put to the hon. Provincial Treasurer, who I know is reading *Hansard*. The point was really that these in fact are disproportionately operating expenditures. I feel that if we're going to label a particular set of estimates as capital, they indeed ought to be capital. Thirty-five million dollars of these are in fact operating expenditures, and approximately \$15 million are capital investments. When it does come time to reallocate some of the capital that has been funded from here onto the accounts of various departments when the recommendations of the Auditor General are fully adopted with regards to assets owned by the provincial government, that will cause some problem in terms of getting the reconciliation.

The second point I made was the whole issue of prioritization with regards to these. Many of these indeed are operating expenditures and, as I strongly emphasized, are in fact very worthy and stand on their own, yet they stand on their own in isolation from the expenditures of various departments. It's very clear, for example, when you look at Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, that many of these projects do belong within the department. If, as a consequence of the long forthcoming review of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, there is a move then to wind down the heritage savings trust fund in an orderly manner, the funding base for many of these very worthwhile programs will disappear. Indeed, many of these programs may be far more worthy than programs that are currently funded, and by isolating these programs here, out of context from the expenditures of departments to which they belong, we do not have a very clear idea of whether or not they're high priority or low priority and whether or not they will be discontinued should there be an orderly wind down of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund

capital projects division. I had then asked a number of specific questions to ministers and had received some very specific replies in some instances.

The issue that I want to talk about now, Mr. Chairman, is a broader issue, and again it's directed to the hon. Provincial Treasurer, who I know will review this. The first point is that the heritage savings trust fund and the various divisions therein were set up to provide a buffer for the Alberta economy because of its dependence on nonrenewable resources. It was also set up – and it was farsighted to do so at the time – as a vehicle for savings. It's very clear that had the government of the time, as it's referred to by the current government but it's one and the same, in fact allowed all of the revenues to go into the operating expenditures, we'd have a far worse structural deficit than we have now. What would have happened is there would have been this ratchet and the level of expenditures would have been significantly higher because they worked on a use it or lose it type of mentality. So in one sense, the setting-up of the heritage savings trust fund was a very, very worthwhile endeavour, because it has reduced to an extent the current level of problems that we face, and it does provide a significant inflow of capital to finance current government expenditures without having to resort to higher taxes. Nobody can argue against that, and I would be the last person to do so. However, there are one or two issues that ought to be addressed in general terms, and I would like the Provincial Treasurer to consider this.

One of the problems that we have run into in the province and certainly in our fiscal position – and this has been hinted at, Mr. Chairman, in the recommendations of the Alberta Financial Review Commission, but I think many members on both sides of the House know this is the case. The problem has been that we have treated the revenues that we have collected from nonrenewable resource revenues as in fact a flow of income, that today, tomorrow, the year after we would continue to be able to pump oil and would be able to continue to spend at this same rate. Well, we know that is misleading because it's a nonrenewable resource, but our fundamental problem was that we treated it as a sustainable flow of income.

In part, then, the Alberta heritage savings trust fund was a vehicle for allowing us to shift from treating it as a nonrenewable resource to providing a sustainable revenue base and at the same time buffering us from spending too much money too quickly in an already overheated economy in the 1970s. The problem, as has been pointed out by a variety of economists including those of the Fraser Institute, is that if you want a sustainable flow of revenue from our nonrenewable resource base, what one has to do is in fact spend only the interest income from the oil revenues because that indeed is sustainable. The problem that we entered, all of us collectively as taxpayers and as voters, is that we went beyond the mark. Not only did we spend the potential interest income, Mr. Chairman, but we chose to treat it as a stock that was sustainable in and of itself.

8:20

My question, then, is to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. As the review of the heritage savings trust fund is undertaken and as we consider then the elements of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital projects division, we're going to run into this problem head-on, Mr. Chairman, in that we should be spending only the interest income, but what we are spending is the entire flow of revenues that we get from our nonrenewable resource base. If the issue that's going to be addressed – and it will be addressed in this review panel, and that is intimately related to these estimates because we're dealing here with \$50,612,000 of expenditures from the heritage savings trust fund – is how, then, would we

finance these types of projects, because it's clear that if we were to move to that type of rule of only spending the interest income on the flow of revenues to the provincial government, there would be a further significant downsizing of expenditures.

Point of Order

Questioning a Member

MR. HLADY: A point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View is rising on a point of order.

MR. HLADY: Yes. *Beauchesne* 482. A question. I was wondering if the member would be able to clarify something that he had mentioned: interest income.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Hon. member?

DR. PERCY: Of course.

MR. HLADY: I was just wondering if he would answer that. If he could explain.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Mountain View, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has agreed.

DR. PERCY: Oh, absolutely. [interjections] He's my straight man.

Debate Continued

DR. PERCY: The hon. member asked a question as to what I meant when I referred to interest income. What I was referring to is that if you take the energy revenues and if you had invested them at a commercial rate of return, that would generate some flow of income. Had we, in fact, treated the oil that we pumped out of the ground as generating in a sense an annuity and lived off that income, if we had treated it as a sustainable flow of income – the only way we could have done that, Mr. Chairman, is had we in the early '70s invested it, continued to invest it, and then lived off the interest income. Because it is a nonrenewable resource. If you want a sustainable source of income to finance government expenditures, you can only live off the interest income because then you start depleting your revenue, the stock of wealth.

So it's really a question of stocks and flows, for the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, in the sense that when we talk about wealth, we talk about the total stock of assets that we have that generate income. Part of the real resource income base that we have in this province is our natural resource wealth. Had we had the foresight in the '70s to totally save that interest income and only live off interest income, it would be a far better place today because we would have this huge stock of wealth and a very large flow of interest income. We did not do that, and that's spilled milk. I'm not going to point any fingers. [interjections] That's spilled milk, Mr. Chairman, on both sides, both overexpenditures and totally inappropriate macroeconomic policies on the part of the government of the time at the federal level.

So we're not at that stage, but when it comes, then, to the review panel that's going to assess the heritage savings trust fund, they're going to have to run head-on into these types of problems: what do we do with the nonrenewable resource revenues, and how do we continue to finance such worthy projects as appear here in the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital projects division?

That was a series of questions, then, for the Provincial Treasurer. In terms of specific questions, Mr. Chairman, I would like

to turn again to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. I had asked a question about the pricing formula for private irrigation development assistance and irrigation rehabilitation and expansion, and I had asked the question: exactly how is the formula set out? The minister said: well, there's the division between the provincial expenditure and the expenditure by the farmers. I'm just speaking from memory, Mr. Chairman. I believe it was 14 percent-86 percent. So my question is, first of all, how is the 14 percent derived? Is it drawn out of a hat? How is it derived? Does it vary in a sense with the cost, then, of the particular project, or is it just basically that share? Does that share change through time as investments or rehabilitation of the particular irrigation project is undertaken?

Also, to the extent that water has value when it's used in irrigation, it has value, Mr. Chairman, because it helps lead to crop growth, it helps to make the land more productive. In that sense, the real value of that water depends on the value of the crops that it helps nurture and provide for market to an extent that if one wanted a pricing mechanism that in a sense ensured that water was allocated to the highest value use, you might want to make the mechanism a little more market responsive so that it would be allocated among competing uses in terms of highest value crop use and that the price would tend to vary through time as crop prices would rise. So my question really is: what is the market sensitivity of this formula, and how does it ensure that a scarce resource which is extraordinarily important to southern Alberta is allocated among best competing uses? That is tied specifically, then, to the private irrigation development assistance and the irrigation rehabilitation and expansion.

I'm now, Mr. Chairman, admitting my ignorance in certain things. Certainly there are an extraordinarily large number of things that I am not up to date on, and one thing is the grazing reserves enhancement. In response to questions from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper, the minister had said that this is a mechanism for ensuring entry by younger farmers who don't have the financial wherewithal, one mechanism for them to enter farming. I would very much appreciate, then, if the hon. minister could provide the array of statistics, just that it is in a sense a targeted program that does overcome a significant barrier to entry. If you look at the age distribution of farming – one of the things I found really alarming when I looked at this is how rapidly the median age of farmers is growing. So to the extent that you do want to ensure a continuity and you do want an even age profile, I'm sympathetic to programs that allow entry by younger farmers, but I'm sympathetic to the extent, then, that it's a targeted program and that it's not generally available to those who might actually have the financial wherewithal to remain in farming. So really my question to the hon. minister is: while I'm sympathetic to his answer, how can he assure me that it in fact is a targeted program, the exact mechanics of it? I would appreciate, then, a description and a discussion of that.

A question for the hon. Minister of Health. I recall, just parenthetically, occasionally when talking to you on these accounts a sense of *déjà vu*, and it's because of course you run into them in Public Accounts and you run into them in a variety of areas. I do recall that in Public Accounts an hon. member was going to propose an amendment that would have seen the applied cancer research voted into I think it was the medical research foundation or just melded into another set of programs that are in place. Should, in fact, the panel that will assess the heritage savings trust fund suggest an orderly disposition of the funds, and should that occur, then that would mean such programs as this would have to be shifted to some other niche. My question, then, to the hon. minister is: where under those circumstances would

a program such as applied cancer research go, which I think all members would view as being a program that deserves to be financed?

A second question along those lines would be: given that it is currently financed out of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital projects division, why does it continue to be financed here since it does appear to be able to fit in a variety of other program areas that are administered by the minister or that the hon. minister has access to? Is it just inertia? I think that within the next two to three years, the heritage savings trust fund is going to come under increasing scrutiny. So that was my question to the hon. minister.

I would ask the hon. Minister of Labour about the occupational health and safety research and education. This is again a question I'd asked – and I'm sure that upon review of *Hansard* he will provide me with an answer – concerning in fact the nature of financing of research in this area. Whereas I know that in agriculture the research projects that are undertaken are broad based subject to significant peer review and allow, then, research that is not just targeted at a particular area in an effort to solely pick winners in the research area, it's not clear that that is also the case in occupational health and safety research and education.

Also in this area, to the extent that some of these types of investments in the research yield outcomes that are commercially viable, I would be very curious as to how in fact the property rights – because to the extent that the provincial government funds certain types of research that have a significant commercial application, the minister of agriculture has explained how in fact those benefits are captured, but it's not clear to what extent, then, the benefits that might emerge from this type of research are captured. So I would like to know the rules that exist, then, within the Department of Labour for this particular program that look at cost recovery should the research yield commercially viable types of investments.

8:30

[Mr. Herard in the Chair]

To the hon. Minister of Environmental Protection. The water management systems improvement. Here again there would be very few members on either side of this House who would question the merits of such investments, although one might ask about, you know, the mechanisms by which priorities are set and how the funds are allocated on the basis of those priorities. Is there a schedule put in place?

The question, though, again is that the water management systems improvement falls under Environmental Protection, but one can equally see that this would also be germane to many of the activities undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. I recall from last night that the minister said there was co-operation between the ministers in certain areas. Again I wonder why in fact this has been allocated to the Minister of Environmental Protection rather than in a sense consolidated under the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, because it appears to be germane to many of the areas and pursuits that would be important to agriculture across the province.

My final question is to the Minister of Energy. Again I note that the budget line for that minister has disappeared, and that was for the renewable energy research.

AN HON. MEMBER: They eliminated the program.

DR. PERCY: I'm aware that the program was eliminated, but again in the context of eliminating SWAREI, I would be very curious. When you eliminate programs, you do so on the basis

that this is low priority compared to other programs that are financed by the particular department. What in fact were the criteria used to eliminate the program? Because I think there might well have been other programs that could have been eliminated.

MRS. BLACK: Well, what about an expiry date?

DR. PERCY: No, I believe, Mr. Chairman, in sunset clauses. We argued very vigorously during the election campaign that there ought to be sunset clauses, and as is their habit, they occasionally do take good ideas and apply them. They have in certain areas. Here is a case where, as the minister says, there was a sunset clause and the program had expired. It's not necessarily automatic. One does a cost/benefit analysis to say, "Was this a good allocation of money?" So my question to the hon. minister is: on what grounds, other than the fact that it was easy, that the program was expiring, were those funds eliminated?

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I will conclude.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister of agriculture.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Very briefly to answer some of the questions that were raised. Why are we involved with some of the programs that we're involved in and funding through the heritage trust fund? Indeed, that's exactly the process that we're going through now in that we're moving out of the heritage trust fund. We're moving out with irrigation. We've indicated that our program is already in place. We're moving out with grazing leases in that they're becoming self-sufficient. There will be no further funding. Farming for the Future we're moving into partnerships with other groups. So indeed your point is well taken, but that's already happening, and it's shown in our three-year plan.

As far as the 86-14, how did this come about? It was through a series of studies that were done by the Irrigation Council. The general indication was that the agricultural community uses about 14 percent of the water, and the rest of society uses about 86 percent. That was how that formula came about.

As far as economic return is concerned, the key is basically that the producer is going to determine what is the best economic return. Government's not going to dictate what crops have to be grown and who should be growing what. That's not the role of government, at least not the role of this government. It's not our intention to dictate to the agricultural community the exact products that they're going to have to grow. Let the private enterprise people determine that.

As far as grazing leases are concerned, the process is basically determined by local committees that make allocations for animals within the grazing reserves, and that's the process that is used. We've had some problems of late simply because of the number of animals that are being produced. What we've run into is that we've had to cap some of the customers because of the volumes that were overloading the grazing reserves. In order to allow entry of new usage of the grazing reserves, there have been caps placed, and consequently we allow for the inclusion of new members.

I agree that there is a partnership and we work together, but the reason the headworks are funded under environment goes back to the statistics that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud had requested earlier, and that is the breakdown. What is the percentage breakdown? That was determined at 86-14. Why should agriculture be building the headworks when they really are only achieving 14 percent of the benefit? That's why environment, the general community, through the use of the water gets

a far greater usage, and therefore the general community, which is environment, should indeed be the major contributor.

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

MR. CHADI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You know, debate is just a wonderful phenomenon, especially in Committee of Supply because one can speak and ask questions, and you get some responses. Sometimes the responses may not be directly related to the questions that you asked, so in Committee of Supply one can get up once again and ask those same questions if they haven't been answered at all.

In this case, Mr. Chairman, I am of course pleased to be able to rise again today. I know yesterday I rose and spoke and asked questions with respect to the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital division, and the questions that I posed were to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Some of the comments that I made sparked a reaction from the minister rather quickly and harshly, and he came out swinging. I want to quote today from *Hansard* some of the comments that the minister made. He took them and did not respond to exactly what I was saying. If you'll bear with me, I'd like very much to be able to set the record straight here this evening.

In my comments – and it's in *Hansard*, page 1299 – I was referring to a quarter section of land nowadays, that one could perhaps pick up a quarter section of land, particularly a bush quarter. I said, "I can tell you that if it had spruce, it would be a premium, but today, with the poplar, one could sell a quarter section of land for the wood itself." Why nobody would be "interested in the farming anymore; they're interested in the trees on the quarter." Not in farming it as much as they are interested in the trees on the quarter. Well, the minister got up huffing and puffing, and he says:

How in heaven's name . . . This hon. gentleman has told us here tonight that nobody's interested in farming anymore. I quote: "Nobody's interested in the farming anymore."

Well, Lord, Mr. Chairman, I didn't say that at all. I said that in the context that nobody was interested in farming a bush quarter. I mean, all they are interested in are the trees on that quarter. I know full well that the minister knows what I'm talking about. The last thing in the world I would like him to say is that I would have said in this House that nobody in this province or nobody at all is interested in farming, because that's not the case whatsoever.

8:40

The minister takes it upon himself, Mr. Chairman, from time to time to say that only he knows about farming in the province. I mean, he's the one that is in charge of agriculture, and he's the one that knows all about it, and he's the one. I question very much that he is the only one. I mean, I tell you that I've worked so hard on a farm before that Lord knows I'm grateful for the fact that I don't have to be back on a farm, only because of the hard work that goes into farming. I know all about it, and I know that the minister should know all about it. I'm told that he's a farmer himself sometimes. But to stand up in this House and say that I'm against farming or that anyone on this side of the House is against farming is not correct at all.

From time to time I've heard the minister say those comments. It hasn't happened only once or twice; it's happened often. I would hope that the minister would change his script. Somehow, somewhere I think that somebody is feeding him this script. Perhaps maybe get yourself a new script. Mr. Chairman, it would be wise on the minister's part to ask his researchers. I

know that there's got to be a real big research budget within the ranks of the agricultural department to come up with a new script.

He goes on to say:

Mr. Chairman, there are a 104 people directly involved in farming in Alberta. No other industry in Alberta has that many people involved in one industry.

Well, I can tell you that I know that the hon. minister erred there. I know that he meant . . .

Chairman's Ruling Relevance

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, you've taken almost five minutes of your time trying to correct the record. I think everyone's aware. I think everyone is aware that the hon. member corrected that statement and said 104,000, and I wish you'd get on to the estimates.

Thank you.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: It wasn't right. Let's not be selective.

Debate Continued

MR. CHADI: Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, but the hon. minister continues to harp away over there and chirp and chatter. He asked me through the Chair. He was saying: well, what's the next line? Well, allow me to give you the next line, "An Hon. Member: A hundred and four?" Not a 104,000 that you say, but 104. I know that it isn't 104, and I know that the hon. minister knows it's not 104, but for the record I corrected you, hon. minister. A hundred and four thousand is what you meant to say.

DR. L. TAYLOR: That's a big important deal, Sine.

MR. CHADI: I'm sure it is a very important deal. There's no question about it. It isn't the minister himself that created this agricultural department. This was here far before he came around, and it'll be here far after he leaves and far after you leave as well and far after I leave. Agriculture has been in this province and built this province and will continue to maintain this province.

DR. L. TAYLOR: It's the future, not the past.

MR. CHADI: I said it'll be here far after you're gone and I'm gone.

Mr. Chairman, I made some comments yesterday and asked some questions with respect to why not privatize the grazing reserves. Why not go out and consider privatizing them? When the minister responded, he found it very, very convenient to respond in his usual fashion and try to suggest that I know nothing about farming. He said absolutely nothing about why not privatize these grazing reserves, so I would hope in his response this evening that somewhere, somehow he could perhaps consider a response to that, because we have spent already within this program from the heritage savings trust fund \$47 million. Forty-seven million dollars is not something to sneeze at. I think it's well worthy of debate whether I spend five minutes or I spend five hours. It's \$47 million of not your money and my money only and everybody else's money, but every single taxpayer in this province of Alberta. That's whose money it is. It's hard-earned money. I know when I go to pay my taxes. I don't know about the rest of you, but let me tell you something: when I see my money being expended the way it's being expended here, it makes me sick sometimes, and it ought to make everybody sick. Nobody cares anymore in this House about a million dollars or \$2 million. It just goes without any thought whatsoever; it's no big deal.

Now, here's \$47 million right here in this vote. You know, \$3.7 million is about to be expended again. I asked the minister yesterday and I'll ask again today: why are we continuously spending money in this program when I know that there are private entrepreneurs out there who may be interested in pursuing something in terms of privatization? I would suspect he ought to consider calling the Minister of Municipal Affairs and working out some kind of a formula to privatize these grazing reserves. You see, it's not fair. It's not fair to the farmers that are bordering these grazing reserves. It's not fair to the people that are out there investing in real estate, investing in pastures, investing in farms.

The minister says to me yesterday: well, this is for beginning farmers. What is a beginning farmer, Mr. Minister? In your description is it a brand-new farmer who just starts today? Or is it somebody who has been in the business of farming for one year, two years, three years, four years, five years? What is it? When do you stop being a beginning farmer? I question how many beginning farmers are putting cattle on these grazing reserves. Give me a percentage, if you possibly can, of users of the grazing reserves today that are beginning farmers. I want to know.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it's quite clear that in the grazing reserves – they say that we will provide grazing for approximately 20,000 head of livestock. Well, 20,000 head of livestock in the province of Alberta is spit in the bucket compared to what is produced in this province today. Don't give me the song and dance, Mr. Minister; just give me straight answers here. I want to know the percentage of beginning farmers that are utilizing these grazing reserves that we're expending \$3.7 million on this year. It brings the total up to almost \$50 million, because the total amount expended to March 31, 1993, was \$47 million. Add \$3.7 million. That's my understanding; correct me if I'm wrong. It would take it over and above \$50 million. Now, you tell me what the value of these properties really is. I mean, are they really worth the \$50 million that we expended in there? Lord knows; I can't imagine – 136,000 acres of low-lying tame pastures which would revert to brush at a rapid rate on these. So 136,000 acres. Divide that by the \$50 million. I suspect we'll never see our money again. Never.

I understand that we're about to and we've received some revenues off of these grazing reserves, but sooner or later, Mr. Chairman, we've got to come to realize that there is a market here. There's a free-enterprising people in the province of Alberta, and no longer can we afford to just sit back and throw out the properties that we've got and continuously rent them out. Lord knows, even social housing is on the block today; we can't afford to put people up in houses owned by the government. We're selling them off. But the minister doesn't have a problem at all putting up cows. Not a problem. Big, big difference here: putting up cows or putting up people. I think we ought to consider privatizing this before we consider privatizing our social housing in this province. [some applause] Thank you very much.

I want to talk a little about the public review of the heritage savings trust fund. The Premier on a number of occasions alluded to the fact that we are going to put together a committee, that we would have a committee put together sometime this year. The Treasurer alluded to it, and members opposite have alluded to it from time to time. I know that in Public Accounts, in Executive Council, when the Premier appeared before Public Accounts, he made it clear that this was going to happen this year. He went on to say that he would also consider having members of both sides of the House involved, and I do know from listening to the Provincial Treasurer from time to time that funds have been set aside now for this committee and its research in the heritage savings trust fund. I'm wondering if the Provincial Treasurer

wouldn't comment on that, as to exactly when we can expect to see a committee put together and get on with the job of the public review of the heritage savings trust fund.

8:50

Mr. Chairman, this is of vital importance to Albertans. It's of vital importance to all of us in this House, so much so that the Financial Review Commission sometime ago said, and I quote, that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund gives Albertans "a false sense of security." It's a false sense of security that we've got \$12 billion, supposedly, set aside; that \$12 billion is our bank account that offsets the debt that we have, which is a growing debt, growing this year alone by somewhere in the range of 2 and a half billion dollars, this fiscal year by \$1.5 billion. That's just our projected growth in the debt. It could be an awful lot higher than that, and I would suspect that it is going to be higher than that, because there is a tremendous amount of overestimation on the revenue side. I think you've got overspeculation and optimism on the personal income tax side and, I do think, when you talk about the revenues on the energy side as well. So I think you're going to see the debt rising even a lot quicker and a lot greater than is projected. That false sense of security is there in that respect, and I think this is what the Financial Review Commission meant when they mentioned that it leaves Albertans with "a false sense of security."

The Provincial Treasurer has from time to time said that we get \$750 million out of the heritage savings trust fund. That \$750 million comes around, and it's paid back to the GRF, the general revenue fund. Mr. Chairman, on the face of it, it doesn't sound like a bad deal at all. I mean, who would complain about getting somewhere in the range of - I understand it's somewhere around \$7 billion of liquid and marketable securities. Based on that, we're talking somewhere in the range of a 10 percent return. That's a tremendous return on investment. I would be one of the people that would advocate retention of the fund if that were the case, if it were the true case, but it really isn't the case.

Let me explain. In a letter by the Provincial Treasurer - the letter was dated March 30, 1994, so it's very recent, Mr. Chairman. It outlines some of the cash and marketable securities that are held by the fund itself. Now, I don't know if many of our colleagues in this House know, but I want you to know this. Some of these loans, the cash and marketable securities, are payable to the GRF. So let me tell you that not only does the Alberta heritage savings trust fund fund the AOC and AMHC and AADC, the Alberta agriculture financial corporation, but it also funds the GRF by way of advancing loans to it, you see.

Now, let me tell you that the maturity date on - I suspect it's probably close to about 40 different loans here, 40 different book entries, with maturity dates dating back to April 1, 1993. Now, I would imagine these have been updated, because I can't believe they were actually paid back to the heritage savings trust fund. There has been no indication that it has been. We're talking 40 or so different entries, but believe it or not, we're talking \$2 billion - \$2 billion from the GRF. Each and every year we pay an annual rate, and I haven't calculated this, because it doesn't give you an average rate of return on that \$2 billion, but I suspect it's somewhere in the range of about 6 percent. So the GRF may be closer to 6 and a half percent. Here's a 64 and a half million dollar Alberta GRF with an August 8, 1994, maturity. It says the yield issue is 9.295 percent. That's one of the higher ones that we've got that hasn't matured yet. It says that the book value on this - which leads me to believe that we ain't paying the interest on this, by the way, yet - \$66,310,000 on a \$64,500,000.

What I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, is that we've got a situation where we've got \$2 billion coming in. This is this document

alone. I don't know about the rest of this stuff that is from the heritage savings trust fund that comes to the GRF. The GRF pays money, the interest, over to the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, which in turn pays back the GRF, which comes in by way of \$750 million. So when they say \$750 million, heck, it's the GRF feeding it. It brings it back over here. That's the circular accounting, you see. There's no end to it; it just continues to rotate. That's only from the GRF. So when the Alberta Financial Review Commission comes out with the comments that it did, I'm not surprised and Albertans aren't surprised. I can tell you one thing: the Provincial Treasurer I think has to explain whether or not there is actually more than the \$2 billion that is in this document here, or is this it? I mean, is that all there is to it, or is there more? I think Albertans have to know what it is that we're faced with.

The AADC, formerly called the ADC, and the AOC and the AMHC were no different, Mr. Chairman. Each year we fund from the heritage savings trust fund the AOC, and because it borrows money from the heritage trust fund, it takes that money and it pays interest back to the heritage savings trust fund. But that money comes by way of a grant from the GRF. So the general revenue fund grants, they grab the interest, pay back the heritage savings trust fund: circular accounting. I know there are members on that side of the House that are already dizzy from the circular accounting, and we keep talking about it. Maybe that ought to be a strategy on my part, to keep talking about this, because maybe we could end this rather quickly by having members continuously in a circle.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to community development . . . My time is up?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, before going on, for the benefit of the people in the galleries I would like to explain that you are here witnessing the Committee of Supply, which is considering the estimates of the heritage savings trust fund. This session is an informal session where members can be without their jackets and can have coffee at their desks and can carry on very quiet conversations, we hope.

With that, the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was interesting to listen to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper, because with representatives like the hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper, agriculture will be Alberta's future and the Liberals will be Alberta's past. I think that's a very, very fair statement.

To start with, unfortunately the hon. member hasn't taken the time to utilize the \$2 million that is paid to his caucus's research department and use that money to advantage. It must be embarrassing. It frankly must be embarrassing to make a statement that a beginning farmer can go out and buy the land that's got trees on it. With the process that's there today, those trees are assessed. The beginning farmer has to pay for the value of those trees up front and then the land value as well. Unfortunately, perhaps there should be some time spent developing some research in this whole process. Indeed, if that had been done, he would have known that he has to pay for those trees that are on that property as well as the land. You don't get land without paying for the trees that are on it now.

Grazing reserves pay taxes. The tax is actually interpreted into the costing. The budget actually for this year was \$3,712,000, and that's this year's budget. I think this is what we're debating, and this is what we're talking about: \$3,712,000 for the grazing reserves budget this year.

9:00

I think it's very unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, to quote a statement from *Hansard*, taking it out of context, and then when it was corrected, totally ignoring it. Indicating that indeed there was not a correction I think determines some of the credibility of the hon. member because selective choice is hardly what should be done.

Grazing reserves I think are very important, because the cattleman uses the grazing reserve for five months of the year, yet the rest of society uses the grazing reserve for four-wheel driving or for whatever they may wish to use it for. They use it for the rest of the year, yet they don't contribute to the taxes. The cattleman is the one that pays those taxes. They don't contribute to the upkeep; they don't contribute at all. We have developed a strategy and a process where in three years' time those grazing reserves are going to be self-sufficient, and the cattlemen are going to pay the whole cost of that.

At this stage I just want to make sure that the correction is made that indeed *Hansard* as of last night indicated 104,000 people, and I hope that that is understood.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got some questions that I'd like to direct to the Minister of Health. The applied cancer research amount that's been allocated under this program, \$2.8 million: as I understand, the objective is to provide for applied cancer research. Now, this research entails the establishment and expansion of treatment programs. I have a very major question just about the phraseology "applied cancer research." I support very much the injection of moneys into cancer research. This disease has taken the lives of many people that I know that are dear to both sides of this House.

New cancer cases are diagnosed at a increasingly alarming rate, yet we are short on radiation therapists, radiation oncologists, and medical therapists. There does not seem to be enough money for hiring therapists, nurses, and social workers. There's not enough money for needed equipment. There are not enough oncologists to meet the need for care. Now, whether we're doctors, nurses, lawyers, families, patients, or politicians, we're all worried about the state of cancer care in Alberta. For all of these reasons, I support the injection of moneys into applied research, but I'd ask the minister responsible for this particular area: why would this amount be devoted only to applied research and not some of it to basic research, which I believe would help with a cure instead of just treating cancer?

The Alberta Cancer Board reviews research proposals and then recommends projects to the Department of Health for funding. I was wondering if there was any thought given to establishing a provincial cancer control agency with the belief that such an agency would be responsible for planning and managing cancer control in Alberta. Now, I realize that the research fund is the driving force behind the Alberta Cancer Board's research program, but a provincial control agency would have a number of roles. One of them would be maintaining a registry, for example. Another would be co-ordinating research among competing agencies.

My question here is: is there co-ordination between the research agency, the Alberta Cancer Board, and similar federal agencies? Can the Minister of Health give us some detailed information about the specific research projects which have been funded by the \$2.8 million? For example, have any funds been set aside for developing an inventory of support and other services

for cancer patients, identifying gaps in services and attempting to discover the means of filling them, analyzing cancer prevention and health promotion programs?

It would appear that medical research for cancer is separated from all other medical research for a reason. I believe that this might be because it's an area that needs special designation and investigation, but at the same time I think that the Minister of Health would want to concentrate on some sort of co-ordination to avoid the plethora of duplication and overlap. For example, should there not be a review of the government's mammography screening program conducted in conjunction with other agencies and other programs?

Are these research programs – for example, chelation therapy, the effects of air pollution, and the effects of landfill sites – being funded? Does this research include the use of magnetic resonance imaging capacity for the province and the specification of standards and use on a multiyear basis? Again it would seem to me that a provincial control agency accountable to the Minister of Health would, I believe, bring research moneys spent by this government under one umbrella given particularly that the cancer care system in Alberta is very strained.

Finally, it seems to me that research on breast cancer continues to be in question, and I would ask whether or not any of the research moneys have been devoted to setting up mammography screening mobile units and ensuring that this kind of screening is extended to at-risk women younger than 50.

I'd very much like to hear from the Minister of Health on those questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's indeed a pleasure to rise this evening to speak in the debate on the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division, just perhaps to make some general comments. I recall that when debate was opened by the Provincial Treasurer, he made the comment . . .

MR. DINNING: Imagine Alberta.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Imagine Alberta. That's exactly right. Imagine Alberta without the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I can. Indeed I can imagine that, because we have had a significant amount of debate. We've had a lot of debate already about where we are going as a province and as a government in terms of the heritage savings trust fund.

These debates are nothing new. They've been going on for years. We've recognized that it's time that we stand back and do a complete and full review of the heritage savings trust fund. The hon. Provincial Treasurer is on record as talking about the need for a complete public review of the fund. The Premier is on record as saying that the government has committed to launching a review of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund. Yet we again come into debate and we look at it and we debate piecemeal changes and piecemeal programs involved in the heritage savings trust fund. We haven't yet moved to a point where there seems to be action against the statements made by the government that it's time for the review.

We have heard in these debates, Mr. Chairman, some discussion about the fact that various programs are indeed winding down. Programs are and should be moving from the heritage savings trust fund to general revenue. Some of the programs are

moving faster than others to come into general revenue. I think it can be stated that in fact we should be moving faster.

There's again a recognition by all members of the Assembly that we want to move away from the kind of accounting that's been done. The Financial Review Commission has been critical of the way accounting procedures have been undertaken. They have recommended a consolidated approach to the financial records of government. In fact, the Financial Review Commission and certainly the Institute of Chartered Accountants have even been on record as saying that perhaps it's time to look at the liquidation of the heritage savings trust fund. Well, let's have those debates then.

I think it's time that we move forward here and that we get on with those debates, move away from just dealing with these individual projects and have a full debate on the future of the heritage savings trust fund in this province. As I say, we're just doing this in a bit of a piecemeal fashion at this point in time.

9:10

To pick up on the comments of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, we have often said – and now I do want to refer specifically to the votes we're talking about tonight in the capital projects division and specifically in the Department of Health, applied cancer research. There has been lots of discussion, lots of debate about an approach to health that's an environmental health approach. We have to again change the paradigm in the way we look at health issues, the way we look at wellness issues, the way we look at what in our environment, what in our society are contributing factors to serious killers like cancer. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona asked some specific questions about detail in terms of the applied cancer research budget, what specifically the expenditures are being used for in those research projects, and I think it's important to ask whether we are indeed in that context looking at research for epidemiology and etiology related to the causes of cancer as opposed to just the treatment of cancer.

We have had, and members will recall, debate about the incidence of asthma in the province of Alberta. What's causing the high incidence of asthma in this province? There are many theories, but obviously we need to continue to work diligently to find out what exactly those causes are, because they affect men, they affect women, they affect children, they affect productivity, and they affect health. They affect the way we operate as a society and as a community. So I think it's important that we take an environmental health approach. This is one small aspect of that, of course, but we need to take an environmental approach to health and to the way we look at how we interact with our environment. So I'll leave my comments on the health aspect of the capital projects division at that, Mr. Chairman.

I want to comment that as we go through the heritage savings trust fund debate in the time allotted to us, we again see – and it really is quite amazing and I'm sure that our constituents are quite amazed that to debate the expenditure of \$50,612,000, we have 19 pages in which to do that. There is no detail that's been provided to us. I guess, Mr. Chairman, I can only go from my own experiences in the business world. Corporations that want to access capital markets, that look for infusion of capital through the public markets, through filings of prospectuses or private placement offering memorandums, have tremendous disclosure requirements placed upon them so that potential investors have what is known in the industry as full, true, and plain disclosure of all material facts relating to those expenditures. Well, I don't quite see how an investor is all that different from a taxpayer in that it is money coming out of their pocket for various projects,

for various business ventures that the government is undertaking, and they should be entitled to the same level of disclosure on how the money is being expended and what specifically the money is being expended on.

As we go through the votes, they are very superficial and in no way provide the kind of detail that would be important not only for us but for our constituents to understand, as I say, how the money is being spent and why the money is being spent. This has to, in my view, be part of a commitment of government. In its commitment to be more open and more accountable, government has to come forward and offer a significant amount of more information on what these programs entail, what the benefit of the program is going to be, how the program is going to be implemented, whether there are sunset clauses, and how we determine whether there is going to be value for that. I say that, Mr. Chairman, because our constituents are entitled to that information.

I note on the summary of the amounts to be voted on in the capital projects division that well over 70 percent of the capital projects division for the 1994-95 year are in Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Environmental Protection. In that regard, the significant amount, virtually 68 percent of the expenditures that we are to approve this year, is in terms of irrigation rehabilitation and water management systems improvement for irrigation.

One of the criticisms that I have of the government, Mr. Chairman, is that we seem to be spreading out and find no coherence in the projects that are involved in water management, water management developed projects, the irrigation projects, as to where in fact they ultimately fit in terms of the expenditures of funds. Just as an example, we've already had discussion and debate today and yesterday about the fact that Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is responsible for and will in fact expend \$18 million this year on irrigation. In fact, for the information that we indeed do have, the objective of that particular program is "to assist irrigation districts in rehabilitating irrigation systems." Part of that is the rehabilitation of irrigation canals.

Of course, in the Environmental Protection vote in project 1, the objective of that program, which used to be the irrigation headworks and main canal rehabilitation program, as I recall – we now call it the water management systems improvement program. Again, that is for the rehabilitation or upgrade of water management works to "assure a water supply for irrigation and other multipurpose uses in Southern Alberta." So between project 1 in Environmental Protection and project 2 in Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, we're spending \$68 million on irrigation projects.

In addition to those expenditures, we also find in the estimates this year that there are a number of other water management programs that are also occurring. For example, the Little Bow project, which is currently under environmental impact assessment review, has a budget this year of \$9.4 million, and that comes out of general revenue in the area of public works. Another project is the Pine Coulee project, which is presently organizing terms of reference for the environmental impact assessment. Its budget is \$13 million, and that's under the public works capital projects division for 1994-95. We also have the Milk River project, with a budget of \$100,000, again under the public works capital projects for 1994-95.

So we have a number of projects that are spread out across the estimates that are essentially dealing with the same kind of work, the same kind of project. I think, Mr. Chairman, we've come to a point in recognizing some of the inefficiencies in an accounting system of government. We have to find a way to put those projects together to create greater efficiencies, to find ways to streamline the process simply from the accounting perspective so

that those projects are identifiable and available and will work in one specific area, so that they're not spread out all over the place.

I know, Mr. Chairman, that there was a comment made this evening by the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development as to the rationale or the justification as to why the water management headworks and main canal rehabilitation project is in Environmental Protection. I think his statement was that agriculture benefits less from that project, so it probably fits better into Environmental Protection than it does in agriculture because of those reasons. Well, I beg to differ with that, because the portfolio now is Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. In fact, there was a statement made by the hon. Premier in the 1992-93 heritage savings trust fund estimates, where he points out the benefits of irrigation involving 4 percent of land irrigated producing 20 percent of the province's gross agricultural revenue. Now having said that, that's hardly the subject for Environmental Protection. It's clearly within the mandate, it's clearly within the scope, it clearly falls within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Or in fact it could even be in the ministry of economic development.

Again, the spreading out of those two projects and dividing them between Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Environmental Protection simply makes no sense in today's day and age. It would be appropriate and it would be prudent to consolidate both of those into Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and move those projects out of Environmental Protection, because they simply don't belong.

9:20

Some other comments to make specifically, Mr. Chairman. Again, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development did talk about the winding down of some projects, and I believe that the hon. Minister of Environmental Protection did make the same comments, particularly with respect to project 1 under the water management systems improvement. We do of course see a significant reduction in vote 1.2 under water management headworks and main canal rehabilitation, where there's been a significant decline. It would appear that that means this program is indeed winding down. The Minister of Environmental Protection did make reference to the fact that we are now in the 14th year of a 15-year project for that canal and headworks rehabilitation program, starting in 1980 and being completed in 1995.

It would appear that this is in fact a move towards winding down the program. I leave to the Minister of Environmental Protection to provide some detailed information as to what the balance of those dollars are being used for and how the government has in fact been able to incorporate a reduction of \$5 million in one year in the budget from last year to this year in winding down the water management headworks and main canal rehabilitation vote. That figure is approximately \$5 million, so we need to know how in fact that is being accomplished, where those savings are coming from. Certainly I'm not necessarily being critical of the minister; I perhaps might even be applauding the minister. We need to know just exactly how the government has dealt with the phasing out or the winding down of that particular project, if in fact that's what is happening at this point in time.

We also have special areas water supply projects. These are not specifically referred to in the heritage savings trust fund estimates under the capital projects division. The question, Mr. Chairman, for the Minister of Environmental Protection, then, is whether or not the special areas water supply project is still being considered. If in fact it is, what would the cost be? If the funds are not then allocated from the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, where is the money coming from? Now, again I know that it is

not specifically dealt with here, but I'll leave those questions to the minister, and I'll look forward to his response on those.

I just want to make some comments, Mr. Chairman, on some of the other votes as well. I'll just quickly go to project 3 under Environmental Protection, which is the Pine Ridge reforestation nursery enhancement. On this particular vote we are not in fact debating further estimates to that project in this year, but we have had comments from the Minister of Environmental Protection that in fact "Pine Ridge is being operated [now] as a public facility, and it [should] be operating on a full-cost recovery basis by '96-97." I believe those comments were made by the Minister of Environmental Protection in response to a question in question period, and I believe the date was April 14. The question, then, to put to the minister is whether or not the full cost recovery means that the government will be able to earn enough revenue from this facility so that it can repay not only the operating costs but will also in fact be able to recover the money that it has invested in this particular area.

We have had some comment, and certainly the minister will have heard comment, that the product at Pine Ridge nursery at times has been inferior to the product from other nurseries. We need to, I think, hear from the minister as to whether or not those problems have been resolved so that we know that there will be a continuous supply of trees going to the industry that in fact meet the industry's needs and the industry's standards. So I want to ask the minister about that. I hope he will in fact be able to assure me, assure members of the Assembly, and assure all Albertans that this particular facility, now that it is moving to a full cost-recovery basis, will in fact recover not only the operating costs but also the investment.

Mr. Chairman, there are times I wish we could have that discussion and that debate about the Swan Hills waste treatment facility as well, but I daresay it will be many, many, many years before we're going to be able to have that debate about whether we're going to recover our cost on the Swan Hills waste treatment facility.

Mr. Chairman, I think those are all my comments at this point in time, and I'll take my chair and allow other members to speak.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to make a few comments about the heritage savings trust fund capital fund estimates we have before us today. It wasn't long ago, it seems like, when we were debating this in the fall and discussing virtually the same kinds of expenditures that we have before us today. I want to kind of pick up where I left off those scant few months ago with respect to the issue of irrigation rehabilitation and expansion.

At that time I put some questions to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development expressing some concerns about the money expended so far. On page 8 of the estimates it says that the total amount expended to March 31, 1993, is \$361 million. When I look at that figure, Mr. Chairman, I have to wonder. The minister did respond to my question at that time with assurances that he felt quite comfortable in that expenditure that had been incurred to date. I guess what I would like to see is something a little more objective and a little less subjective. When I consider, as I said on that particular page, 360-plus million dollars spent on irrigation rehabilitation and expansion, I have to wonder how accurately or how thoroughly the measuring is taking place with respect to that expenditure. In other words, are we getting our money's worth? Three hundred

and sixty-one million dollars expended to date. This budget proposes an additional \$18 million. The minister has said that there's no doubt that we get increased production and we get increased value from our agricultural sector from these projects, from these investments. No argument. I'm sure we get increased production. I'm sure we get increased value. The question that I'm asking is: how much increased production and how much increased value?

I guess my concern with that is that it's not just in that particular area, because when we go a little further down in the estimates and we turn to page 13, project 1, water management systems improvement, which the hon. Member for Sherwood Park made reference to in his comments – \$525 million spent there – it says also in part "to help assure a water supply for irrigation and other multipurpose uses in Southern Alberta." Now, southern Alberta of course has a shortage of water supply, and there's no doubt that it is important for both the economic development, the agricultural development, and I suppose to an extent even the urban development. [interjection]

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

Calgary-North West.

9:30

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said, there's no doubt that an assured water supply is important for southern Alberta, but, again, when we sum these two figures together in particular, and we come up with a figure that is rapidly approaching the \$900 million mark, I think it's incumbent upon the government to do something that we on this side of the House have been asking for for quite some time, and that is value-for-money evaluation of what has been spent. Nine hundred million dollars, in round figures, spent on irrigation rehabilitation and the provision of waterworks is a substantial amount of money. We see requests here under project 2, page 8, for another \$18 million; under project 1, water management systems improvement, under Environmental Protection a request for another \$16.3 million. That figure is climbing inexorably upwards.

Mr. Chairman, the concern I have there is with that figure increasing and really, as far as these particular documents are concerned, no real evaluation of what it is we're getting for that money or even in fact if ever we will see a point in time when those expenditures are no longer required. We look at the comparable estimates from previous years. Admittedly, in both cases the figures are down, but I would like some kind of an indication from someone on the government side, whether it's the minister of agriculture or the Minister of Environmental Protection, of whether or not that type of expenditure, again this year an additional \$34 million being requested, is going to at some point in the future cease. Are we going to see an increase levied on those that are benefiting from that? I mean, how does that really work? So a bit of a concern, I guess, over the long-term impact. When we look at last year's estimates of \$50 million, it is a notable reduction in the estimates from previous years but quite a considerable expenditure continuing.

In one particular area on page 8 it says, "Contributions by the districts will increase to 20% of funding in 1994-95." I'd like to get a bit better idea of what that figure really refers to. So I'd like, if I could – to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development – what kind of dollar figure that really is going to impact upon.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of spending \$361 million so far, \$362 million rounding it off, on irrigation – this is to March 31, 1993 – to me seems to be quite a substantial amount of money, and I'm

really wondering: over the long term will we see a return on our investment? The reason I raise that point – I know that right at the beginning, the preface, page 1 in fact, talks about definitions, I guess, and we have a definition of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act. I'm reading from page 1, which says that the Act

permits expenditure on projects which provide long-term economic or social benefits to the people of Alberta. Such expenditure need not yield a return to the Fund.

Well, I can appreciate that it need not yield a return to the fund, but I think it certainly should be important that it yield a return to the people of Alberta. The moneys that have been expended are moneys that by and large have been accumulated through royalty revenues that have accrued to the province over the years past. We now see the Alberta heritage savings trust fund total amount declining.

I think it's incumbent upon the government to tell us that it's declining for a good reason. The documents that we have before us don't assure me of that or don't provide me any documentation or don't provide me any detail that that in fact is the case. So that is an issue that I'd raise with respect to those two particular points, because most of them deal with provision of water for multipurpose use and for irrigation rehabilitation and expansion. Mr. Chairman, I guess the question is: having expended \$362 million, might we not have been just as far ahead to give the farmers the cash and keep the money on the interest and maybe not bother developing this in the first place? Now, if the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development can convince me otherwise, then I would be most pleased to hear that information, but so far I haven't heard it forthcoming. So I'd like some objective figures from the minister on that particular issue.

Now, talking about irrigation development, I have to wonder, Mr. Chairman, about page 9, project 3, private irrigation development assistance. I must confess that although the amount is relatively small, \$1.2 million total expenditure to date and this year a proposed expenditure of only a quarter of a million dollars – it's perhaps not a large amount of money, but I have to question the principle of providing private irrigation development assistance. Why is it that the government of Alberta is getting into this at all if it is to help an even fewer numbers of individuals than what is being helped under project 2? I guess the difference I see between project 2 and project 3 is that project 3 is assisting a very small number of individuals, project 2 perhaps a broader number of individuals but still, as a total percentage of the total population of the province of Alberta, a fair chunk of money. I have some concerns about an expenditure of \$250,000, and I'm wondering why it is we are developing, as I read it, someone's farm property, in particular, with \$250,000 worth of expenditures.

So that certainly is an issue that I would like to have addressed by the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development because it seems to me to be an inappropriate expenditure. One of the roles of government would be to help as many Albertans as possible. As I mentioned before, although it's not necessary that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, as it's pointed out in the definition, "need not yield a return to the Fund," I think it is incumbent upon the government, since the revenues are really revenues from royalties that are paid in a sense from all Albertans on behalf of all Albertans – to then take some of that money, which should be for the general good and for the good of as large a number of people as possible, to then turn around and funnel it and channel it, "channel" perhaps the more appropriate term, into private irrigation development seems to be entirely inappropriate. I'm wondering why that is in fact the case.

Mr. Chairman, when I turn back to the beginning, and I look at page 5 of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital projects

division, and I look at the summary by type of expenditure, we see a total expenditure of \$50.6 million. That's certainly a fairly substantial amount of money. My concern, I guess, when I look at this is that operating expenditure is nearly \$36 million out of the \$50 million.

So when I look at that \$36 million being operating expenditure, I have to question why the government would be taking money that has been collected from royalty revenues of our nonrenewable resource and expending it on operating expenditure. Certainly I can have greater sympathy with the concept of putting money into the capital projects division, where we are building something. Whether you agree with the building of that thing or not is another point, but when you are actually building something, you can point to it and say that we built a canal or we built a dam or we built something, a highway or an airport or whatever. You can say: "There is a physical thing that benefits all Albertans who choose to travel in that part of the province of Alberta. There is a capital investment that all Albertans can benefit from." In fact, when moneys go into operating expenditure, it seems to me that that would be an inappropriate expenditure of the heritage savings trust fund, and I guess I have some difficulty with that philosophy, that we would put money into operating expenditures.

Now, again I turn back to the definitions, because sometimes the definitions in themselves are interesting. It says:

Operating expenditure includes administration and program expenses (such as salaries and operating grants for research), as well as grants for infrastructure to entities external to the Alberta Government.

Again I have to wonder about things being external to the Alberta government because it implies, therefore, that these moneys are going to, again, private enterprises. Now, Mr. Chairman, I have concerns about that. If we are giving money, heritage savings trust fund money, money that accrues or should accrue to the benefit of all Albertans whether there's a capital or a net realizable return – whether we can see a real economic benefit or not is another issue. But when we put the money into private enterprises, as this seems to imply, then I have to wonder why it is we're spending that money in that fashion.

Further on in that definition it says:

Grants for infrastructure are classed as operating expenditures because they do not increase the province's owned assets.

If the province doesn't own the assets and the money is given from the province, from the people of the province of Alberta, the question is: who does own it? If it's not the people of Alberta through the government, then I have to question those investments that are being made. I would hope that the government would indeed give some consideration to defining a little more carefully, I suppose, or a little more closely where those dollars are going.

9:40

The definition of capital investment: certainly I have no difficulty with that particular definition further on. Here's where it really puts into perspective operating expenditures of \$36 million out of the \$50 million that have been proposed to be expended under this particular page, better than 70 percent of the expenditures. So a concern there, Mr. Chairman, and I hope either the Treasurer or someone over there who is hanging on my every word can explain it to me, because I have some concerns about what is being proposed. [interjection] I appreciate that. Thank you, hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

The section on applied research. I'm looking at page 16, Health section, project 1, applied cancer research. Certainly I think the expenditure of money on applied cancer research is a good expenditure, and I say that because I suspect that every single Member of this Legislative Assembly has somehow, either

in their families or themselves, been touched by cancer, which is certainly an insidious disease. I'm pleased to see that expenditure because I do believe that this is an expenditure that has – the definition is "long-term . . . social benefits to the people of Alberta." So I'm certainly not critical of the Minister of Health for proposing this.

The question that I would put to the minister, however, deals with the issue of co-ordination, co-ordination of expenditure of taxpayer dollars on this particular and very serious issue. Now, in Edmonton, of course, Mr. Chairman, we have the Cross Cancer Institute. In Calgary we've got the Tom Baker cancer institute. At the Alberta Children's hospital in Calgary, where you've got a very good oncology unit that serves the needs of our young children, certainly there's a lot of research going on in a variety of different areas. The question that I must pose to the hon. minister, however – \$2.8 million expended this year; \$49 million expended so far. Again this is taken from page 16 of the estimates. My concern is not with the dollar figure here, because if we finally – and I hope we really do – get that breakthrough that so many people would like to see . . .

Point of Order Decorum

DR. WEST: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs is rising on a point of order.

DR. WEST: I'm having difficulty hearing the speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Thank you, hon. minister. The hon. minister has indicated that we're having difficulty hearing the speaker. We're not having difficulty hearing a number of lively conversations. So that the minister and the Chair can hear the hon. Member for Calgary-North West, we would hope that (a) the noise would turn down and (b) the volume would turn up.

Hon. Member for Calgary-North West, I know that you're not shy. We would like you to speak loudly for us.

MR. BRUSEKER: Gee, this is really a turn of events for me. Last week people were saying I was speaking up too much. Now it's speak up some more. Maybe I should start at the beginning again. No? I'll just continue on.

Debate Continued

MR. BRUSEKER: With respect to the applied cancer research – I was virtually concluding on this particular topic, Mr. Chairman – my concern is duplication and overlap. I know that this is an issue that is near and dear, and I want to thank particularly the Minister of Municipal Affairs for interceding on my behalf because I certainly do appreciate it. We want to see that breakthrough. We want to see that eventually cancer is beaten. Certainly, as I said, it is something that has impacted on many individuals' lives. I would like the Minister of Health to perhaps at some point address the issue about streamlining, prevention of duplication and overlap. In the long term this certainly could be a more than worthwhile expenditure of funds from the heritage savings trust fund, but I would just like the Minister of Health to address that particular issue, if she might.

Mr. Chairman, just one other issue that I wanted to refer to, if I can just find the proper page here. Project 1, urban park development. You know, a \$4 million expenditure of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund is perhaps not a large expenditure given the size of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, but certainly all of the members in this Assembly tonight campaigned

on the issue of reduction of the debt, reduction of the deficit. I know that the government and certainly the Treasurer talk about the heritage savings trust fund as being separate dollars over here and the general revenue fund over here as being two different areas and they don't really overlap. Of course, then we've got a third pot off somewhere else called the lottery fund pot, which of course is something we'll get to elsewhere.

I guess the issue that I want to raise here is that at a time when we are facing, you know, a huge deficit, increasing debt – I know we're whittling it down, we're decreasing it – I'm wondering why it is we're spending \$4 million on urban park development. We've already spent \$113,581,000 to March 31, 1993. I think we could probably eliminate that \$4 million expenditure. I don't think we need to expend this on our parks right now. I would sooner see that money either going to buying down the debt or used to eliminate some of our interest payments that we're making. It doesn't seem to me to be a really high priority at this time. I guess in times when you've got to make those tough choices and you've got to decide where you're going to put the money, \$4 million here and \$4 million there and pretty soon you're talking a billion, and you've got a significant dent in our expenditures. I would suggest that would be an area where we could make some additional savings.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to take a few minutes to discuss some of the estimates related to the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital projects division and, specifically, under agriculture, project 4, grazing reserves enhancement. The minister may or may not have time tonight to address this, but just to go on record, I'm looking at funding being provided for the

redevelopment of 21 Provincial Grazing Reserves in central and northern Alberta to maintain and/or increase the grazing capacity on these reserves.

There's a wide range of items that's covered obviously under the agriculture vote. This one, I must confess, I need some more information on, and if the minister can get it in writing, whatever it may be. There are so many things that this minister is handling so typically capably that I know that it won't be a problem to get the information, but I do get questions from those in my constituency. Red Deer-North actually does have farms in it. Unlike some of the urban farmers across the way, Red Deer-North takes in a lot of rural area: north to the Blindman River, east almost to the Joffre bridge, and west of Highway 2. We have feedlots; we have significant farming operations.

MR. CHADI: Do you have grazing reserves?

MR. DAY: In answer to the question just posed by the member across, no, I'm not aware that we have grazing reserves in the constituency of Red Deer-North, but I do get questions from Red Deer-North in terms of, whether this particular vote actually applies or not, just the whole aspect of the grazing reserves as related to situations where a person apparently can also have the mineral rights on the particular land. This is the question I get that I must confess, with all the other things I have to pursue, is one of the things I need some clarification on. I realize that there have been a lot of questions asked to the minister already and that we may be running out of time.

I see the minister is struggling to rise, and yes, I would be pleased to defer and hear some comments on that particular item.

9:50

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Certainly, Mr. Chairman, I have a great deal of respect for the hon. member, who represents a very active agricultural community in Red Deer-North and represents the agricultural community very well in that he's constantly bombarding the department and our office with ongoing questions and concerns about the agricultural community. I commend the hon. Member for Red Deer-North for representing agriculture so well.

The question about how the money is spent on grazing reserves as far as Alberta heritage trust fund is concerned: the money is basically spent on maintenance, the process of grazing reserves. Grass has to be reconstituted. It has to be reseeded; it has to be redeveloped just as any other crops. So periodically, approximately every sixth year the land is worked. It's leveled, and it's reseeded to grass. The grass is allowed to regenerate for a year, and then of course the growth is more vibrant and healthier and provides for better feed.

The second question about oil wells on property, basically the reference is to grazing leases. Grazing leases of course are quite different from grazing reserves. Grazing leases are not under the heritage trust fund.

Having answered those questions, Mr. Chairman, I would now move that we rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Order.

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund capital projects division for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995, reports progress thereon, and begs leave to sit again.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.
All in favour of that report, say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

head: **Government Bills and Orders**
head: **Committee of the Whole**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Call the committee to order.

Bill 16 **Government Land Purchases Act Repeal Act**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Last day we ended with the hon. Member for Redwater ending debate. Any further comments?

We do have the hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to further debate Bill 16, the Government Land Purchases Act Repeal Act. Just before I begin, I understand

congratulations are in order for the Member for Calgary-Shaw, who apparently has made the front cover of *Time* magazine.

The repeal of the Government Land Purchases Act deals primarily with recognition of where the assets of the land purchase fund will go and where the liabilities of the land purchase fund will go. It seems, Mr. Chairman, that what's missing in the Act is the issue of the land purchase authority that presently exists in the Government Land Purchases Act. When we repeal this Act, we will also repeal the authority that has been given to the Provincial Treasurer in section 2 of that Act. Section 2 of the Government Land Purchases Act allows:

On the request of a Minister of the Crown, the Provincial Treasurer, or an agent authorized by him, may, on behalf of the Crown, acquire land in Alberta.

Now, that legislative authority sets out at least some guidelines and some parameters under which the Provincial Treasurer is bound in terms of when the Provincial Treasurer can and when the Provincial Treasurer cannot purchase land on behalf of the government. Now, granted, Mr. Chairman, those parameters are fairly broad. The legislative authority granted to the Provincial Treasurer is that he may

acquire land . . . that it is expedient or advantageous to acquire
(a) to meet future requirements of a department or other division of the public service of Alberta.

The specific provision goes on in subsection (b) to also talk about purchase of land or acquisition of land in a restricted development area under the Department of the Environment Act.

10:00

The difficulty I have, Mr. Chairman, with the way the Act is worded, by simply repealing the Act and making as consequential a transfer of the assets and the liabilities to the general revenue fund, is that we have left a vacuum in terms of the legislative authority for the subsequent purchases of land that will occur in the future. Now, my understanding is that the idea behind the Bill in terms of its repeal is to allow the minister of public works then to essentially carry on the role that was being carried on by the Provincial Treasurer in the acquisition of land for various departments. I have no difficulty with that, but again as I say, we did not deal in Bill 16 with how that legislative authority would then be passed on to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services in the same form that it is in the existing Government Land Purchases Act. So we do not see in the Bill a consequential amendment where in fact the legislative authority as it stands in the Government Land Purchases Act is transferred to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

Now, in looking at the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services Act as it presently stands, Mr. Chairman, I will stand corrected, but it appears that the legislative authority granted to that particular minister comes under section 14 of that Act. What that Act allows is that unless otherwise provided by law or an order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the minister is responsible for the acquisition of all land for public works of the government. It strikes me that that is not sufficient legislative authority granted to the minister of public works for the purchase or acquisition of land for other departments.

Again, as I say, my understanding of the purpose and the consequence of the Government Land Purchases Act Repeal Act, Bill 16, is that the legislative authority to acquire land will move to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. Well, at present he doesn't have the legislative authority to acquire land on behalf of other departments. If we had in fact taken those authoritative sections from that Act and moved them over to the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services legislation, then the legislative authority would in fact exist.

My concern, Mr. Chairman, is that by not doing that and by not essentially closing that hole and by allowing that to fall through the cracks, we may have created a situation that is still open to interpretation as to whether or not the authority does exist or the authority does not exist, because we haven't laid that out. We haven't laid out the groundwork clearly enough to demonstrate that in fact the legislative authority has been given to that minister to do the same thing.

Now, as I say, under the Government Land Purchases Act there were loose parameters, loose guidelines under which the Provincial Treasurer could act, but those same parameters, those same guidelines, those same provisions are not binding the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services in his determination as to when it is appropriate and when it is not appropriate to acquire land either for his department or for another department.

So essentially there are two issues. Number one, does the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services as a result of the repeal of the Government Land Purchases Act acquire by virtue of the repeal the legislative authority to do the same thing the Provincial Treasurer was doing? Secondly, if he does, is that minister bound by the same legislative guidelines that the Provincial Treasurer is bound by in the enabling section in that Bill under section 2? Neither of those appear to have been dealt with, and I'll look forward to the comments by the hon. Provincial Treasurer about that issue.

The second thing we talked about in terms of debate last day was where we deal with the contingent liability situation here. My recollection is that the Provincial Treasurer made reference to the fact that there's about \$58 million in contingent liabilities that presently exist within the fund. Now, Mr. Chairman, we're not clear here. When the assets and the land go to the general revenue fund, we're not clear where the land will go specifically, what will go into what departments, and will the liabilities necessarily follow. Simply put: will we end up in a situation where a particular department of government will find itself assuming the liability that is presently a contingent liability while in fact it may not acquire that asset ultimately in the end? One would assume it will, but there's no indication as to how this is all going to come out in the long run as to where the assets of the fund are going to be disbursed, how the liabilities of the fund are going to be disbursed, and in fact how the government is going to deal with the contingent liabilities.

Arising from that, the question also arises as to whether or not there are sufficient sources existing right now to cover those contingent liabilities or if there are further funds that will be required out of the general revenue fund to cover the contingent liabilities if or when they become due. I'd like to hear from the Provincial Treasurer on that as well. I know we've had some debate on contingent liabilities, but I don't think the issue is yet clear. We need clarification on that specific matter.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the last comment is that section 3 of Bill 16 deems this Act "to have come into force on March 31, 1994." I will again assume that there is an explanation that the Provincial Treasurer will give us as to why we're sort of backdating the legislation again. My recollection is that Bill 16 wasn't even introduced in first reading before March 31, 1994, yet we're going back to the end of the fiscal year '93. The question is simply put: why is it necessary for the government to bring forward legislation to sort of cure things that they want to move back to a point in time? We've seen this. We're continuing to see this. We see this with Bill 1, where the government is now

coming forward with legislation because something has already been done and they're just curing it.

Members will recall debate in the Legislature about the regulation under I think it was Bill 6. The government was now deeming a regulation to have been purified by a section of the legislation. Totally inappropriate; not required. So we're again taking legislation and then backing it up and saying okay; now it's effective as of a date in the past. We are intending by the passage of this Bill, in repealing the Government Land Purchases Act, to make it effective as of the end of the fiscal year '94. A question to the Provincial Treasurer is: why is that necessary? Is it just convenient, or is it in fact necessary? And a full explanation as to why that is.

Now, Mr Chairman, those are my comments. Again my concern primarily is with the legislative authority that will now rest with the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services as to how and when and what guidelines that particular minister has in acquiring land in the future for other departments of government.

With that, I look forward to the reply from the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: That's right, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. My comments will be brief. I was looking forward to rising tonight and speaking in support of Bill 16, because I believe that primarily it addressed our concerns regarding transparency. It allows for the responsible sale of assets in a manner which can be tracked. The government can be accountable, so everybody can see in fact what's transpired. I was glad that the government had come forward with a Bill that I could support that had met the conditions that this caucus would put on such a Bill, but then my colleague from Sherwood Park raises some very, very real concerns in my mind, particularly about the absence of the authority in Bill 16 that we see in section 2 with the Government Land Purchases Act. I'm hoping that the Provincial Treasurer tonight will be able to clear up that concern in his remarks, because I would like to vote for this Bill, but I couldn't do so with that concern left unmet.

I'm aware that at least one other of my colleagues has some comments to make on Bill 16, and then I hope we'll have the time tonight to hear from the Provincial Treasurer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10:10

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 16 as amended agreed to]

MR. DINNING: I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill 1 Labour Boards Amalgamation Act

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. We're on Bill 1, amendment (b).

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. I'd just like to refresh people's memories as to what this particular Act is about and what this particular Act will potentially do in terms of its effects. I would also like to refresh people's memories as to the amendment that we're on and the reason for that amendment.

Just to give a brief overview seeing it's such a long time since we've been there, Bill 1 is the Labour Boards Amalgamation Act. That particular Act amalgamates the Labour Relations Code and the Public Service Employee Relations Act, which are the code and the Act that govern the labour relations within the province. One deals with the sector that is considered the public sector; the other is the nonpublic sector. So the amendments in effect affect both the unionized sectors within this province.

What the essence of the Bill is is to amalgamate, because in fact the boards have been amalgamated as of last year. The reasons for that amalgamation were as a cost saving, number one – not necessarily in order of priority, of course – and number two, in order for efficiency. In and of itself, it is not a bad move. In fact, the feedback that we have received is that the impact of this particular move has been negligible in terms of the labour relations climate within the province of Alberta.

Having said that, however, there are certain concerns with regards to this Act. One is a fundamental concern in that there was very little consultation that occurred between the interested parties in the formulation of this Act. Another concern has to do with the fact that the Act in and of itself is dealing with an amalgamation of two Acts that the department, I am led to understand, has on their shelf right now. There is and has been, at least since the last minister, an Act that could be presented to this Legislative Assembly that would amalgamate both the Labour Relations Code and the Public Service Employee Relations Act. The question that I'd put to the minister is: why would he not have taken this opportunity, given the combination of the administration, to do that with the Act? It would not have required much work on his part in that that work has already been done. It would have just necessitated the presentation of the Act to the Legislative Assembly. We could have then looked at the issues that come out of any amendments to Acts with regards to labour relations in this province as a coherent whole.

Unfortunately, the minister, for reasons unbeknownst to ourselves unless he's willing to share that with ourselves, did not take the opportunity to deal with a number of issues of concern with regards to the Public Service Employee Relations Act and the Labour Relations Code. I can think just off the top of my head of an example of a group that I met with this morning who are the nonacademic staff of the University of Alberta, who in fact are governed by a number of Acts and seem to be precluded, because of the Universities Act, with regards to their rights as an association under the Public Service Employee Relations Act. It's things like that that require a thorough understanding and a thorough investigation with regards to what we're looking at in this particular situation.

Now, with Bill 1, if all that Bill 1 said was that we are amalgamating the two boards, we are substituting a few sections, we're not doing much in terms of powers within the boards, then I would be willing to say okay; let's go ahead with the other business in this Legislative Assembly that requires full debate. However, this is not the only thing that this Bill says. The amendment that we are on deals specifically with the ability of the board to charge fees for services or materials provided by or at the direction of the board in the proceeding before it or in an application under section 18(2).

Now, again this particular section brings up the issue of mediation, the issue of the privatization of mediation services,

which we understand is in the process of occurring within the department. It brings to mind: under exactly what authority would fees be instituted? Because unless the chair of the board was named as the director of mediation services and mediation moved to the board's jurisdiction from that of Alberta Labour, then there's a problem in terms of the instituting of the fee. So, in essence, how is this going to occur? Or is the province just going to wash its hands totally of its role with regards to mediation and say, "This is not an issue that we are interested in; this is not a service that we as a government will continue to provide," and throw it out to the public sector?

In some instances, that's the road that this government should take with regards to privatization. In the issue of mediation, however, we are dealing with not only the province of Alberta but where the province of Alberta sits with regards to the North American free trade agreement. When I look at the document, the North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation, that Canada is a signatory to as well as the province, I have great concerns in terms of the direction that labour relations is moving within this province and the way that will position us with regards to not only the United States but even Mexico.

10:20

When I look at what the preamble is – and this is the final draft of the particular document of September 13, 1993 – it says that the government of Canada, government of the United States, government of Mexico recall their resolve to protect, enhance, and enforce basic workers' rights. This is a function of mediation, in order to protect. If I'm just picking at random, some other statements are: acknowledging that protecting basic workers' rights will encourage firms. This is a province that says that they are encouraging business to adopt high productivity competitive strategies.

We've seen a recent example where mediation worked well. That was with the example of the Engine Rebuilders' strike here in Edmonton, and I give full compliments to mediation services within the government. One of the reasons we came to a speedy conclusion on that particular strike, which was in fact becoming violent, was because of the intervention of mediation services. This is seen as a neutral body that can go from employer to employee during a situation that is and can be inflammatory. Just to give you an example of how mediation works, for those of you who have never been involved in labour relations, what happens is – and we'll dispense with how you get to mediation. But when you're in mediation, what ends up happening is that the two parties to the collective agreement – and generally when the parties are in mediation, they are not necessarily willing to be amenable to the other group. That's why they are there. What ends up happening is that you have the employer in one room and the employee group in another room. The mediator then goes back and forth between these two groups to say, "Is there some common ground?" The mediator tries to bring these groups together around the bargaining table and tries to facilitate so that the anger and the distrust, perhaps, that has occurred in the relationship between the employer and the employee is dissipated so that the mediator is able to provide an avenue whereby an agreement can occur.

I'm not sure if the minister is aware, but in the case of the Engine Rebuilders' strike in actual fact the mediation process did break down, but the mediator did not give up. I'd like to know how many private mediators would continue with the process if they aren't necessarily getting paid. And by whom are they getting paid? Are they getting paid by one group or by the other group? That also means: where is their neutrality? In this

particular situation what happened was that the negotiations did in a sense break down. The mediator did not give up because the mediator felt it was his role to try and bring about an agreement between these two parties, so he used the telephone. He used whatever means he could to get from one party to the other, and the mediator worked day and night. This is not a job that's 9 to 5. Mediation is not a job where you can clock per minute like we see lawyers doing, in all deference to my friends and my colleagues who are lawyers. As in arbitration, this is a process that requires dedication, that requires neutrality, and is in fact a function that government cannot step away from.

We have been trailblazers in a lot of areas, and I cannot say that I have been in agreement with a lot of the areas that we have blazed trail in. But this is one area where I think the repercussions down the road are going to be such that the supposed savings that we will enjoy from not having mediation staff will be more than dispensed. We will not have any savings when you look at lost time in terms of productivity, lost time in terms of workdays not worked because of strikes that are not being settled perhaps as quickly as they can. So I think there's a false economy that we are seeing.

Now, if I can just refer back to this NAFTA labour co-operation agreement. When I look at what the obligations are and the objectives that the parties have agreed to, what we have agreed to is to strengthen labour/management co-operation to promote greater dialogue between worker organizations and employers. We've agreed to encourage consultation and dialogue between labour, business, and government. We've agreed to encourage employers and employees to comply with labour laws. All of these fit within the mandate of what mediation does.

The objective that we look at is to foster transparency in the administration of labour law. Then there's an obligation that this government has agreed to, and the obligation is with regards to government enforcement action. It says that each party shall promote compliance with and effectively enforce its labour laws through appropriate government action by monitoring compliance and appointing and training inspectors. Actually, that gets into another issue of safety that we will talk about, I'm sure, at a later point within this Assembly, and I wish that the minister would carefully pay attention to this because it's in here.

MR. DAY: I am.

MS LEIBOVICI: I know you are.

Providing or encouraging mediation, conciliation, and arbitration services: now, how plain can that be? And here we are walking away from our responsibilities. We will be the only province, the only place in North America that will not have mediators. Not even North America. We're talking about NAFTA. We will even be beneath, if I can put it that way, Mexico with regards to this particular item, and this is an area that we want to trailblaze in?

I have trouble understanding the rationality of a government that says: "Yes, we believe in business. Yes, we believe that we want to foster good employee/employer labour relations." Laugh as you may, the reason that good employee labour relations are important is that's the only way this economy is going to get back on track. Whatever you read, whichever books you read, whether you read *Reinventing Government*, whether you read the other bible that supposedly the government is abiding by, whether you read economists to the left, right, or centre of the spectrum, whatever you look at in terms of how to get the economy moving, it means being able to interact with workers in a productive manner. It's the organization of work that counts, and the only way you organize work properly is if you can foster trust. I'm

not suggesting or saying that the only way to organize work is through unions or associations. What I am suggesting is that there has to be a presence, there has to be a show of support within this province for the right of workers, unionized or nonunionized.

We talked at length about Bill 4, and I've been assured that that was not a Bill that was going to make the rights of workers less than what they are right now. We are now talking about Bill 1, which is the unionized sector. You take away mediation, you take away an avenue that allows workers and employers – and let's not think big, let's not think the huge AUPes and the huge CUPEs, who can maybe well afford to take care of themselves. Why don't we think about the small businesses which in some instances are unionized? They're going to have to pay for mediation because they are going to at some point in time enter into a conflict with employees. That is not any more of a surprise than to say that you in your own relationships with your spouses at some point in time are going to get into an argument. It stands to reason. I see one member saying "never." I'll have to talk to your spouse about that.

I think those are areas that we cannot underplay the importance of. You know, I can just point to this. I guess I could inform the Assembly that on just about every page I've highlighted areas that deal with the notion of employee/employer relationships, that deal with the obligations of this government, that deal with the importance of mediation. It just goes on and on.

10:30

Now, there's another document that I'd like to bring forward. As I said, in terms of the spectrum, whether you look at left, right, centre, or a combination thereof, there are certain things that governments are being asked to do. This is a document called: *The Roles of Governments: Supporting Business-Labour Approaches to Economic Restructuring*. Some of you may be aware of this particular group. It's the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre. This is a group that, if I can just read some of the membership, includes the deputy ministers of every province, has business representatives from Atlas Textiles/Print, Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Kerr Addison Mines Ltd., and has a number of the labour groups in terms of federations of labour. In our particular situation Robin Ford was the deputy minister who sits on this particular committee.

When I look at what this committee says, it basically says that government should be a facilitator, that facilitation means certain things, and that government must be prepared to acknowledge the lead role of business and labour in a number of areas and adopt for itself the role of supporting business and labour. There are a number of ways that government can do that. There are areas in here that talk about government as policymakers and that it's important that government play a critical role in promoting high-value public decisions and policies.

I think that perhaps the department needs to reacquaint itself with some of the items within this document in the development of and perhaps the changing of some of the items within Bill 1 or providing assurances that mediation is not an area that is being looked at and perhaps will be rethought in terms of privatization. This document is also an area that I think the government should look back at when looking at things like work force adjustment, which has to this point failed dismally, and joint business/labour initiatives in this province.

On page 37 of this document it talks about preventive mediation, and we talked a little bit about that on the 14th of April. It says that

governments can play a practical role in promoting more effective business and labour relationships through a number of services aimed

at improving labour relations. Such support is proactive in nature, allowing both parties to come together to attempt to resolve problems before they reach crisis proportion.

This is exactly what we're talking about. [Ms Leibovici's speaking time expired] I will return.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All ready for the question?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MR. BENIUK: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. I rise to speak in favour of the amendment as noted on the form Amendments to Bill 1, Labour Boards Amalgamation Act. The B section amends section 1(5) by deleting section 11(2)(g)(iii), which deals as follows, and I'd like to read it to make sure that all members are aware of it because I don't know if everybody at the present time has a sheet, as this was distributed earlier. It states: the board may for the purposes of this Act make rules

for the charging of fees for services or materials provided by or at the direction of the Board in a proceeding before it or in an application under section 18(2).

Mr. Chairman, when I rose to speak on Bill 4, I was very concerned about a number of issues. This section makes those issues even more noteworthy to be raised. At least in Bill 4 presented by the minister there was a provision that an umpire would step in if there was a dispute on the fees being charged. In the Bill presented before us by the Premier, there is no such provision. Here we are being asked to allow the Premier through the board to put his hands in the pockets of every citizen in this province that comes before the board and to take out whatever money he wants. This is an open, blank cheque.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

MR. DAY: Point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Point of order, hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. DAY: Yes. It's *Beauchesne* 23(i), talking about allegations and motives.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Standing Orders.

MR. DAY: Standing Orders. Thank you. Thank you for that correction. You see how well I receive correction.

Mr. Chairman, it's one thing to disagree with a Bill on its merits as the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark does. I think she's misled, but she sticks to the merits. What we just heard, talking about the chairman or a member of the board picking the pockets of people coming to the board, if that had been said outside this House, we would thankfully be relieved of the presence of the gentleman from Edmonton-Norwood. Those remarks outside this House would be scandalous and libelous, and I would ask that he stick to the merits of the Bill or the demerits and refrain from these hopeless allegations and scandalous allegations.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, I would ask that the Minister of Labour change certain words he alleged I said. If not, I request the Speaker to come in and that the Blues be read. [interjections] I ask that the Speaker be brought forth. I did not say what he said. I ask that the Blues be checked. I did not say "pick the pockets." I said: "put his hands in the pockets."

MR. DAY: Oh, excuse me. Put your hands in your pockets. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. Okay. Thank you. [interjections]

MR. BENIUK: There is a difference. This Act says that the board can charge whatever it wants to anybody that appears before the board. There is no provision for appeal. How do you define that? By not giving the powers to the board to charge whatever they want.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, please sit down. I think you got away from the point of order by the hon. Minister of Labour. Now, we're always lenient in this House, but whether you agree with what he said is immaterial. Whatever you said or he said, please get on with the amendments to Bill 1 and please try not to pick people outside this room, whatever.

Debate Continued

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, this section is more severe than the section that we dealt with in Bill 4. At least in Bill 4 there was the provision of an umpire stepping in and reviewing the fee being charged. Under this section there is no appeal. A bureaucrat, a member of the board can levy any fee he or she wants to, and whoever is appearing before the board has to pay for the service, for the material. I repeat, "reasonable" is not used. It's wide open. This is a very serious situation.

If the minister is going to rise and say that regulations will cover it, we are still awaiting his pledge of regulations being shown on Bill 4. This section has to be deleted because of the massive power it gives to one, two, or how many people are going to be serving on this board. There is not one person, I assume, in this House that would be happy to appear before a panel, a board where the power of that board is such that they can be charged any fee that those people they're appearing before decide to charge and where the members of this House that are appearing before that board have no recourse or appeal. This section is very regressive, it is very punitive, and it should not be passed by this House.

10:40

Mr. Chairman, earlier in the day I was hoping to have an opportunity to mention something on Bill 210, which I will raise now because it does deal with this. If a Bill like Bill 210 were to pass, you would have a massive flood of appeals to government bodies.

Point of Order Relevance

MRS. BLACK: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, hon. Minister of Energy.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, relevancy, *Beauchesne* 459. I would ask that the hon. chairman direct the member to direct his questions to the Bill of the evening, not the one that was to be discussed this afternoon.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. Minister of Energy. I was listening very, very carefully, and I was trying to pick up some relevancy.

MR. BENIUK: There is.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let's get onto it then. Okay; just make reference to it, and let's get back onto the Bill.

MR. BENIUK: Yes, but I have to explain what the significance is. Bill 210 deals with the Workers' Compensation Board; okay? There is for example a clause – and it deals with this – that says that for the first . . .

MRS. BLACK: Point of order, Mr. Chairman, please. We are not dealing with Bill 210 tonight. We are dealing with Bill 1. I would ask that you direct the member to direct his questions and his comments to that Bill, please.

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, if I could.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you talking to the point of order, hon. member?

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, if I could. This section deals with charges that are going to be levied when people appear before a board. I want to give you a concrete example of how a Bill, if it did pass, would affect people coming before this board. It is on point.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay, hon. member. Please continue.

MR. BENIUK: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: But let's not be long in getting back to the Bill. If it's just for an example, let's get on with it. Okay.

MR. BENIUK: There is a section there that says that compensation would not be paid for the first seven days. So then you have the question . . .

MRS. BLACK: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. *Beauchesne* 481(a). I would ask that he refer to the question and discussion of the session that's going on right now.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What's in 481, hon. minister?

MRS. BLACK: *Beauchesne* 481(a).

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Minister of Energy, the same ruling is in effect.

Please, I'll give you a few seconds here to get to the reference.

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, I would have finished already, but I was interrupted by that point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. BENIUK: My comments bringing in a section of Bill 210 would have taken exactly one minute. Instead, it's taken five minutes, and we now take another minute, because I have to explain the significance. It is very much on point.

Debate Continued

MR. BENIUK: In that Bill there is a section that says that employees that are injured will not get any benefits for the first seven days. So what you have there would be conflicts developing between employers and employees, and they will turn to the government, to the various boards to have this resolved. Under

this section people who are injured would have to pay fees that are wide open. There is no guarantee that these fees will be reasonable. This section is regressive for a number of reasons, and that's one of them. There is no limit on what the fees will be. The word "reasonable" is not used, and that's a very important word. Any fee can be charged. It could be a dollar; it could be a thousand dollars. We don't know. It will be done by regulation.

The minister, as I mentioned, promised in Bill 4 that he'll show us the regulations. We haven't seen those regulations yet. Now this will also be dealt with by regulations. We owe it to the people of this province to make sure that when a person appears before a government body, a board, they are not going to be soaked, and this does not give them any assurance. It doesn't give me assurance, and I certainly hope, Mr. Chairman, that it doesn't give you assurance. If you were to appear before a board and be told, "We'll give you a bill when it's all over, and you have to pay it whether you think it's fair or not," – there is no provision for appeal. None. I ask the minister to explain what appeal process he foresees in this. If somebody appearing before this board says, "We are not happy with the bill," do they go to him? Do they go to the MLAs? Do they go to court? What do they do? At least in Bill 4 there was an umpire they could turn to. Here there's no one.

I would have been able to point out the significance of bringing Bill 210 to this a long time ago, and it would have been a much shorter discussion than what has taken place because of the points of order that were continuously raised by the member from Calgary. I'm not too sure from where but some place in Calgary.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

MR. MAGNUS: A point or order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member on a point of order.

MR. MAGNUS: Standing Order 23(i), imputing false motives and all that junk. He's accusing all Calgarians of doing that, and some of us have been sitting very quietly and intently listening to his debate.

MR. BENIUK: I am not accusing. I am pointing out that the section is bad; it is regressive. I am offering the members opposite an opportunity to correct an error by agreeing to have this deleted. Now, if the member has a guilt complex or whatever that he has to rise and say I'm accusing him of something, that's his problem. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, it appears that the chair of the Alberta Research Council and his colleagues across the way are behaving in a most unparliamentary fashion. I can only assume . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. We'll just hold proceedings until we get some order in the House, please, whether we like it or not. We won't ask any member of this House to speak when there's the kind of racket that's going on right now.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood, we can't possibly do business in this House with the noise level that's been up. Hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, if I could just finish my sentence. I was going to say that my colleague from Sherwood Park was right on when he was raising concerns about Alberta Energy Council safety regulations not being adhered to.

Mr. Chairman, I have tried to keep on point with this particular section and no other section, but . . . [interjections]

I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that that should be withdrawn, if not at your instructions, then please ask the Speaker to come. I would ask that that be withdrawn, Mr. Chairman. Standing Order 23(j). [interjections]

10:50

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. Order. [interjections] Order.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood, what was your request?

MR. BENIUK: Standing Order 23(j). I asked that that comment be withdrawn. If you can't convince the hon. member to withdraw it, I ask that the Speaker be brought in.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, obviously I didn't hear any comments. All I've heard the last 10 minutes is a tremendous amount of noise in this House. For me to hear a comment in the House would be absolutely impossible. I never heard any comment, so I don't even know whom to ask. So we've got to have order in the House.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood, do you want to keep up your remarks on the amendment to Bill 1?

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, I wish to go on record in *Hansard* expressing grave disappointment at your ruling.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont. [interjections] Order.

MR. HERARD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood would clarify whether or not he's challenging the Chair.

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, I am not challenging the Chair, but I wish to record in *Hansard* that I am very, very displeased.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

MR. BENIUK: No. Mr. Chairman . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We'll adjourn for three minutes, please, and see if we can then get order in the House.

[The committee adjourned from 10:55 p.m. to 10:58 p.m.]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay; could we come back to order, please? We have now wasted 25 minutes for the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood to speak for 10 minutes, so if we can have order now, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MR. BENIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I gather it'll be another 25 minutes for me to do the balance of my 10 minutes. [interjections] Must be a full moon.

Mr. Chairman, the significance of this section I cannot over-stress. It opens a door to abuse against the very people that are going to turn to the government, to a board for guidance, for help to resolve problems. It is unjust to have those people . . .

Point of Order
Repetition

MRS. BLACK: Standing Order 23(c), repetition. Mr. Chairman, I would ask the member to please get on with it. We've heard about "unjust" and this section 10 times in his deliberations tonight. Could we move on?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister of Energy, I've been here since 1986, and I've seen repetition from every side of this House. I can remember one hon. member spoke the same speech 74 times, so if we have to listen to it twice, we have to do it.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

MR. BENIUK: Mr. Chairman, one of the major reasons I have repeated certain things a couple of times is because, as I have said it, there has been a choir. My comments could not be heard. There were interruptions, so I had to recollect my thoughts and re-express them so everybody understood what I was trying to say. If there had been silence, it would have made it a lot easier and would have made my statement much shorter.

11:00

Debate Continued

MR. BENIUK: There are Bills, Mr. Chairman, that are coming forth that impact on this provision of wide-open fees. I would ask every member in this House on both sides: would they be comfortable appearing before a board the cost of which they do not know until it's all over, and when that bill comes, there is no provision for appeal? It's a very serious situation. I have totally concentrated all my comments on this section, and I would urge every member in this House to vote to delete this provision, or if they have a suggestion of how to make it more reasonable, then fine; come forth with an amendment. The way it is now worded, it is not just to the people that are going to be appearing before a

board. All I'm asking is let's be fair to the people that are going to turn to the government body for assistance to overcome a problem. That's all I'm asking.

I could have said that in three minutes; instead it has taken – what? – half an hour.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, given the hour, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills and reports the following: Bill 16. The committee reports progress on the following: Bill 1. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official record of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

[At 11:04 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]