

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, April 21, 1994**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 94/04/21

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, keep us mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents and our province, and in that work give us strength and wisdom.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature guests in the Speaker's gallery. They're special guests from Marion county in Oregon, which is the twin to Strathcona county. May I present Carol Fischer, the public affairs manager of the county of Marion; Dan Hoynacki, the visitor co-ordinator; county councillor Vern Hartwell, also chairman of economic development for the county of Strathcona; and Jocelyn Tennison, the manager of communications for Strathcona county. Our guests from Marion county are actively involved in the trade fair of Sherwood Park and district. I'd ask that they now rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition with 2,962 signatures. That's almost 3,000 signatures from the . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Not every accountant can figure that out.

MR. DALLA-LONGA: That's for you nonaccountants.

The petition urges the Legislature to not move the location of the Alberta Children's hospital.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition from 160 citizens of Edmonton urging the Government to maintain the Grey Nuns Hospital as a Full-Service, Active Hospital and continue to serve the south-east end of Edmonton and surrounding area.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition with 2,571 names of people in the Lethbridge area. They want this to be an input into the legislative process and the decision-making that's going on concerning the Children's hospital in Calgary.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a petition mostly from northwest Calgary expressing concern and asking the government to reconsider the recommendation in the Hyndman report to relocate the Alberta Children's hospital.

MR. WOLOSHYN: How many names?

MR. BRUSEKER: I'm sorry; 306 names.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to table with the Assembly responses to questions which I did not have the opportunity to respond to during the March 2 and March 15, '94, Committee of Supply reviews of the Public Works, Supply and Services estimates.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table over 1,000 references and 10 sample articles which represent the wide variety of research on kindergarten and ECS.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure also today to table copies of two documents. The first entitled Microcomputers in Alberta Schools, 1993, and the second is entitled Alberta Education, Main Estimates 1993-94, responses to MLA questions.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table four copies of the summary report on the Alberta seniors' benefit consultation with seniors. My hon. colleagues may obtain a copy of this report from my office.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Energy.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to section 27 of the public utilities Act, I wish to file with the Assembly four copies of the annual report of the Public Utilities Board for 1993.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I also wish to file four copies of the annual report of the Energy Resources Conservation Board for 1993.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to file four copies of the urgent resolution passed by the Calgary city council on the 18th of April after the council dealt with and analyzed the Hyndman report. The motion calls for the rejection of that report.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table 500 coupons returned as part of the Alberta Liberal campaign against education cuts. All 500 of the coupons are against the cuts.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Before recognizing hon. members for this segment, the Chair wishes to advise hon. members that since this is Volunteer Week, I would like to introduce to you Cathy Pagliuso and Matina Karvellas. They are seated in the public gallery this afternoon with the F.G. Miller school group. Cathy started with visitor services in June of 1993 and with her busy schedule has donated 64 hours. Matina started last October and is a student at the University of Alberta. She has donated approximately 40 hours to visitor services. Both have assisted in our gift shop in the Interpretive Centre, worked during our special events, helped out in the office, greeted guests, and assisted with many school groups. Cathy will be assisting with the training of new volunteers, and both will be starting their own short grounds tours this spring. A big thank you to them and to all

volunteers with our visitor services. I'd ask all hon. members to express their appreciation for their services to the Legislative Assembly.

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly 48 visitors from the fine community of Elk Point, which is the birthplace of my former colleague from St. Albert. We have 17 members from the grade 9 French immersion class in the members' gallery and 27 members from the grade 9 Alberta local history option class. They attend the F.G. Miller junior and senior high school in Elk Point. Today they're accompanied by three of the teaching staff, Mr. Michael O'Neill, Ms Dalane Huber, and Ms Lily Pentek, also one parent Mrs. Dunlop. I'd like to ask our visitors today to rise and receive a fine welcome from all the members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HLADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you nine visitors from Rundle College, a private school in my riding, Calgary-Mountain View. I would like to ask Mr. Rod Martens, the teacher, and the eight students if they would rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a well-known and respected psychologist who has practised in the city of Edmonton for 20 years: Dr. Barbara Massey. Dr. Massey happens to be the lifelong partner and inspiration of the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. Dr. Massey is sitting in the public gallery. I'd ask her to rise and receive the recognition of the House.

1:40

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour for me to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly Mrs. Val Campbell, who's sitting in the members' gallery. Mrs. Campbell is a nurse at the General hospital, and she's here visiting today to discuss the potential closure of that hospital. I'd ask her to receive the warm welcome of all the members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to be able to introduce to you and to the members of this House two ladies who are representing parents concerned about the future of education. They are Cynthia Joines and Lena McArdle, and I'd like them to stand up in the public gallery and receive the warm welcome of this House.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Joan Worth and Dr. Walter Worth to you and through you to members of the Assembly. Seated in the public gallery these two noted educators are currently adding to the international reputation of the University of Alberta by contribut-

ing to a project training university administrators in China. With your permission, I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly Mr. Bill MacPherson, who resides in my constituency. Mr. MacPherson is very actively involved in the community as a volunteer, specifically in the areas of mental health and working with those in the area of poverty. He is seated in the public gallery, and I would ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head:

### Oral Question Period

#### Hospital Services in Calgary

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, Albertans continue to be angered and frustrated by hospital planning in this province, particularly in Calgary and Edmonton. Doctors say that they're being ignored. Fifteen thousand Edmontonians in the southeast part of Edmonton marched when the threat to their hospital loomed. Community groups say that they're not getting the proper input into the system, and now the Calgary city council in urgent debate has totally rejected the Hyndman report. Mr. Premier, when you asked for public input, how can you now ignore the urgent resolution of the Calgary city council, which says that the Hyndman report should be thrown in the garbage can?

MR. KLEIN: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. leader of the Liberal Party show me precisely, quote verbatim where it says: throw it in the garbage can.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, you know what they mean.

MR. KLEIN: No. Well, he said it, Mr. Speaker. If he can't ask a proper question in a truthful manner, I would suggest he not ask any question at all.

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

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, when the Calgary city council says that they reject - they reject, reject, reject - the Hyndman report, I want to know when the Premier of Alberta . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. Enough of the histrionics, hon. Leader of the Opposition. Ask your question.

MR. DECORE: I want to know what arrangements the Premier has made to visit Calgary city council to talk to them about a report that they now say should be rejected. The Hyndman report should be rejected.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm in constant communication with the Calgary mayor. I had a delightful dinner with him and his wife about a week ago. He said absolutely nothing about the Hyndman report or his concern over the Hyndman report, and I would be more than pleased to discuss with the mayor the Hyndman report.

The mayor has access, by the way, to all the administrators of all the hospitals in Calgary, all the chairmen of the boards. He knows them all. Many of these people who participate on the hospital boards are on other civic committees also. So the mayor

and the council members have ample opportunity to participate with members of the hospital administrations. As a matter of fact, there are a number of members of Calgary city council on the Calgary General hospital board. As a matter of fact, I believe all the appointments are made by city council.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Half and half.

MR. KLEIN: Half and half; I'm sorry. So there's ample opportunity for these people to participate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has messed up the process of planning and dealing with seniors. Will the Premier now agree that his process to deal with hospitals, particularly in Calgary and Edmonton, is so messed up, so convoluted that he needs a new system put in place to set out the mess and straighten it out?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that we're doing a good job in terms of consulting with the people who are responsible for delivering the services. This process, this 18-month process has involved the administrators of the hospitals, has involved the chairmen of the hospitals, has involved the minister when her services have been required, has involved community input. We're undertaking a very important planning process to achieve more efficiencies and to achieve better and new ways of doing things.

In this caucus, Mr. Speaker, there's a slogan, and it says: think differently. Think differently, not the same old dried up ways the Liberals tend to think. I note that the resolution was introduced by that all-time great socialist Alderman Bob Hawkesworth, a former member of this Legislature. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

MR. DECORE: That was almost a unanimous vote of the council, Mr. Premier. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has been recognized to ask the second main question, if he could be heard in this Chamber, hon. members.

### Young Offenders

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday Edmonton's chief of police stated that the best way to handle the young offenders problem is to prevent children from becoming offenders in the first place. The chief says that it's a mistake to cut back provincial funding to early childhood services like kindergarten and Head Start programs, because those programs make children's lives productive and positive. Mr. Premier, how do you respond to the chief's warning that the only prescription for change is to put more money into early childhood education?

MR. KLEIN: The way I respond, Mr. Speaker, is that that's the chief's opinion. I imagine that many people have other opinions, but I would like to . . .

MRS. SOETAERT: They're pretty valid opinions.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert will please be quiet.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, quite simply there are many opinions relative to the Young Offenders Act and what should be done with

respect to that Act. Many of those opinions were expressed here during debate yesterday. What we would like to do is we would like to give this whole matter some very careful thought. I have asked the Justice minister to bring back a report, to prepare the framework for the development of a government policy on the Young Offenders Act, a policy that we can support as the government and really get . . . [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair hates to interrupt the hon. Premier, but now the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark can't seem to obey the rules of the House. Would the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark please be quiet?

MR. KLEIN: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, we consider this a matter of deep and grave concern, and we will be developing in fairly short order a government policy relative to the Young Offenders Act. Hopefully, we can seek and set up a mechanism for public input.

1:50

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the chief, too, has given this matter careful thought.

How can the Premier cut early childhood education programs when there is clear proof that spending moneys on these programs saves money down the line for society and government?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, quite simply we have said that we believe 200 hours of preschool education is enough to prepare a student for entry into grade 1 relative to some of the other components of ECS. We're saying that this is a golden opportunity for the communities to become involved with kindergartens, to create the kind of interaction and social action services that are required relative to ECS. The hon. minister I believe tabled – how many documents relative to ECS?

MR. JONSON: A thousand.

MR. KLEIN: A thousand different items. I would imagine that in those documents there will be a thousand different opinions relative to ECS, and the police chief's opinion – well, I guess if he wants to, he can add those opinions to the mountain of documents that were just filed.

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Premier, how can you ignore the chief of police of the city of Edmonton when he says that prevention, which is a provincial responsibility, has a much greater part in dealing with young offenders than enforcement? How can you ignore that?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, quite simply I'm not ignoring it. That is the chief's opinion. That is the police chief's opinion, and if the police chief wants to offer that opinion to the hon. Minister of Education, I would imagine the minister will include that opinion with the thousands of other opinions he's already received.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education wishes to augment.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I think that I would like to add two points with respect to this particular matter. First of all, the overall effort with respect to dealing with issues related to young offenders is an overall societal problem. There were many fine speeches in this Assembly yesterday afternoon on that particular topic, even a few from across the way. I note that the Member for

Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly participated in the debate and referred to the many sides of this issue, the many efforts and types of responsibility that have to be taken to deal with the problem. The member for . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: We can get all that out of *Hansard*. We don't need him telling us that.

MR. JONSON: I think it is important to remind the members opposite that they did focus on the fact that the media is very important in terms of violence among young people, and we have to address that problem.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to make is that about one year ago we did hold a conference on school violence in this province under the initiative of Alberta Education, and if you look at the recommendations of that report, it deals with a wide variety of facets of this problem that have to be addressed and taken responsibility for by all of society.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

#### Police Services

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we heard government members spend all of their energy blaming Ottawa for public safety concerns, but they are members of the very same government which is cutting police grants to municipalities by 50 percent over the next three years. My question to the hon. Premier: what assurances can the Premier give Albertans that local police forces will not have to fight crime with one hand tied behind their back?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I don't know where this hon. member comes up with the ridiculous assumption that the police will have to fight crime with one arm behind their back. What is he talking about?

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going back to the hon. Premier. When will the Premier stop pointing fingers either at Ottawa or at local municipal councils and accept his proper responsibility for making our communities safer?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. Justice minister, the Attorney General, the solicitor general, is doing an excellent job in fulfilling his duties relative to law enforcement and to the administration of justice.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice wishes to augment.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, on that point I'd just like to perhaps add a couple of perspectives. One is that as much as we have enjoyed and still continue to enjoy giving some provincial funding to municipal police forces, the amount has been cut. We've had dialogue with all the police services, and although they aren't happy about it, they're willing to work with it and try and re-engineer how they deliver their service and still have the utmost concern for public safety. In this particular budget year the maximum amount anybody's police budget is affected by the grants reduction is 1.6 percent. That's not a monumental amount to work around in restructuring.

In regard to the debate yesterday in terms of the allegation of pointing fingers, of course Ottawa came up. I personally gave

quite a bit of commendation to the Hon. Allan Rock, the current minister, because I think he is committed to making some changes to the Young Offenders Act. Who else would you direct it to when that Act is in the sole jurisdiction of the federal government? I mean, it's just preposterous to think otherwise.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then going back to the hon. Premier. Let me be more specific. Given the announcements by the government in terms of wage rollbacks in other parts of the MUSH sector, I want to specifically ask the hon. Premier: is it the intention of his government that local police forces should take a 5 percent wage rollback?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I have urged all segments, all segments of the public service – all segments of the public service – to accept a 5 percent rollback. As you know, the municipal police departments, well, all the police departments and their salaries are administered by local jurisdictions, and that will be a matter of collective bargaining. If the firemen take 5 percent, if the sanitation workers take 5 percent, if all other employees of a local municipality take 5 percent, then why wouldn't the police department take 5 percent?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

#### School Foundation Fund

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The move by the provincial government to full funding for education puts to rest the effects of fiscal inequity on the quality of education in our province. Following a meeting with my constituents' school councils last Tuesday morning, parents asked me to address a question to the Minister of Education. If full funding now provides equitable education opportunities, what will be the effect on the quality of education on those students who will no longer be able to receive equitable dollars because of exercising constitutional rights?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, a school board that chooses to not opt in to the Alberta school foundation fund will then have to look to their local tax base, their local mill rate to ensure that a proper educational system and equitable opportunity is provided for locally.

MRS. BURGNER: Will the minister recognize different accountability standards for those students whose boards, having exercised their constitutional rights, do have consequentially fewer resources?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important here to remind members of the Assembly that we have provided for a very fair and equitable opportunity for all students in this province – all students in this province – be they from a separate school jurisdiction or from a public school jurisdiction. Therefore, the provision is there. The opportunity is there. If a school board chooses to opt out, then we expect that they will be able to provide that base of opportunity on the basis of the financial regime they've opted out under, and that refers to utilizing the local tax base.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister explain to the students in my constituency how, if they were able to access full funding under the original grant announcements, they are no longer eligible for equitable resources because they are Catholic students?

2:00

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it is quite the contrary. Catholic school students, public school students are eligible for the full provincial funding program. It is the choice of a school board should they choose not to opt in to that overall scheme of funding, and therefore we are providing for that equal opportunity for all students in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

### Senior Citizens' Programs

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thousands and thousands of seniors in this province have protested and pleaded with the government. Now the minister announces today, of all things, yet another committee. Another committee. Today's press release reveals that in spite of all we've been told, there's no fundamental change in the minister's plans. He's just tinkering around with a flawed program. Clearly, nobody is fooled here. The decision has already been made. My question is to the minister in charge of seniors. Mr. Minister, would you spare us the agony and suspense and just tell us what it is you really intend to do?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, from the outset of the consultations which took place with seniors, it was made clear that we would not only listen to seniors, but we would also respond to their issues and concerns. Over the last two months we have gone through the process of listening to tens of thousands of seniors. We now know what their concerns are. The Alberta seniors' benefit program is going ahead, but we still have to respond to the concerns that were raised by seniors. Accordingly, as was the plan from the very outset, a review panel made up of a cross section of seniors from throughout the province of Alberta who are knowledgeable on seniors' issues will make recommendations to cabinet with respect to how we should respond to the concerns raised.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, by his own admission the ASB's going ahead.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, this is an indefensible program, an indefensible position. Would you please now take over from this minister, take over what's happening here and end this charade that's causing so much fear in seniors?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I really didn't know that the hon. member was still capable of doing flips, but she's certainly done a good one this time. Day after day after day in this House, day after day in this Legislative Assembly the Liberals get up and pile on the clerks of this Assembly paper and petition after petition after petition that say: don't touch the seniors' programs until after full consultation with the seniors. Full consultation with the seniors. So we go ahead and we fulfill that consultative process, and what do they say now? Stop consulting.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, what the minister is saying is that the consultation was useless; I'm going ahead with the program anyway.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, the seniors have indicated that this is a flawed proposal. One of the flaws is that it's a very truncated program of five, not taking into consideration all of their needs. Will the Premier please pull this one together so that all programs for seniors are treated as a package, not just the ones he's peeled off?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister has done a commendable job, along with the chairman of the Seniors Advisory Council, in conducting a meaningful public consultation program geared to the seniors telling us what is right for them and making darn sure that it is right by submitting it to a further review by the review panel. This is an excellent example of good, meaningful public consultation, and indeed the minister has a critical path. The plan is there. He is right on track, and if the hon. member across the way would just be patient for a little while longer, she will see this wonderful plan unfold.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to add to the Premier's comments, and that's in this regard. The hon. member opposite is heard to say that we should scrap this program. The program contains a number of principles which I presume she would be against, those being the protection of lower income seniors, the amalgamation and streamlining of government, the use of an income test as opposed to means testing. Very clearly, those are principles that remain in this program.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Stettler.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 7 I hosted two workshops in the Lacombe-Stettler constituency to hear from my seniors regarding the Alberta seniors' benefit program. Over 260 questioning seniors attended. Many said to me: thank you for allowing us this . . . [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, quiet please.

MRS. GORDON: Many said to me: "Thank you for allowing us this forum to comment. But how do we know you will listen to what we've said, and more importantly how do we know you will implement the necessary changes?" To the minister responsible for seniors: Mr. Minister, how can I guarantee these constituents that indeed their concerns will be heard and known?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are really two parts to the answer in response to the hon. member. The first part, of course, is the issue of: did we hear? We did hear, and I invite members of this Legislature to read a copy of the summary report, which contains the comments that were made by some 35,000 seniors throughout the province of Alberta in about 140 different meetings, thousands of phone calls, and at many, many meetings which I personally attended.

The second part of the answer, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to: how will we respond? We will put that summary report before a review panel made up of seniors who will make recommendations on how to deal with the concerns that were addressed in the report.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister explain how the review panel will be made up? I'm sure many of my constituents would have been willing to participate.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, the review panel is made up of a cross section of senior Albertans from throughout the province of Alberta. They are all knowledgeable on issues respecting seniors' programs, seniors' issues, and seniors' concerns. It will be made up of four members of the Seniors Advisory Council, three members from the Alberta Interagency Council on Aging, and four seniors who are members of the public, who again are also knowledgeable in areas respecting seniors. With respect to the chairmanship of this panel, it will be made up of Dr. Richard Cherry, who's the vice-chairman of the Seniors Advisory Council, and Betty McCreight, who is the past president of the Kerby Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister advise the Assembly as to when we can expect the report of the Alberta seniors' benefit review panel?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, that report is due on May 2, which is 11 days from this date.

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

#### 4-H Clubs

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 4-H is one of the best youth organizations in rural Alberta if not all of North America. It prides itself on teaching leadership and developing quality citizens. This is a tremendously positive program for our youth. My question is to the minister of agriculture. Why has a user fee been imposed that will more than triple the \$60,000 that you slashed from the 4-H budget?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. [interjections]

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would appreciate the opportunity of answering the question if I may, please.

MR. CHADI: He just needs time to think, Mr. Speaker. That's all.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, hon. members are certainly giving him the opportunity of doing it, if that's the case.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

#### 2:10

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly 4-H, as the hon. member has pointed out, plays a vital role in the development of the youth of this province. The decision to charge \$25 per 4-H member basically as a user fee or whatever you may wish to call it was done in total discussion with the 4-H Council. This was a recommendation that came forward from the 4-H Council as well as from the organizers. The 4-H group felt that indeed they do have a lot of benefits from the programs, and as a result of the benefits that have been determined, it was felt that indeed the 4-H membership itself would be quite pleased to participate to that extent.

MRS. SOETAERT: That decision never came from club level.

Why would you deprive our youth of access to this program instead of trimming top-heavy bureaucracy?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think that we had an opportunity to debate our budget during estimates, and it's unfortunate that the agricultural portfolio was debated and this issue was not raised at that time. However, having said that, I think it's important to note that indeed the 4-H Council did communicate with the various clubs, and this was a decision that came forward from the 4-H Council through communications with the 4-H clubs. Now, if a 4-H club did not participate in the discussions, that was not the general trend, because indeed there was a consultative process. The decision was made in conjunction with the 4-H Council.

MRS. SOETAERT: Not at club level.

My final supplemental: would you consider, for the sake of our youth, cutting, scrapping this destructive user fee?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: If we listen to the Liberals here, we would be commanding from the top down. Mr. Speaker, this was done through a consultative process. We listened to the grass roots in establishing this. I think it's important to note that the process that the department of agriculture has used, contrary to the wishes of the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, who would do it from the top down, we did it . . . [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: It's a joke.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: It's a joke, the hon. member says.

MRS. SOETAERT: It's not a joke.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: 4-H is not a joke, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MRS. SOETAERT: That's right.

#### Speaker's Ruling Interrupting a Member

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, you asked your question. Why won't you give the minister the opportunity of responding in a proper manner? [interjections] Hon. members are going to use up a lot of question period this way. That's their choice, but the Chair is going to give the hon. minister the opportunity to answer this question in the way he is entitled to do so.

The hon. minister of . . . [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: He already did. He's finished.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not up to the hon. members in the Liberal caucus to determine when the minister is finished. [interjection] It is not your decision, hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield. It is the Chair's decision, and the Chair is going to give the hon. minister the opportunity to complete this answer. So whether you like it or not, that's going to happen and the clock is going to keep ticking.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

#### 4-H Clubs

(continued)

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The decision was made through the consultative process as we have made all our decisions as far as the department of agriculture is concerned. We are going through a major restructuring through the department. We have consulted with the people through a series of roundtables. The roundtables started in '92 and were followed up in '93 to see if we were still on track. This decision, as were many others as far as restructuring our whole delivery of service provided by the department of agriculture, was done in consultation with the communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

#### Agricultural Trade

MR. HIERATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of my constituents have expressed concern over statements from U.S. Senator Kent Conrad of North Dakota about redirecting minuetman missiles to Canada to get Canada to stop exporting wheat to the U.S. There are reports that unless an agreement is signed shortly, there is a real danger that the Americans will take trade action against Canada and restrict exports of wheat, barley, and sugar. Can the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development advise as to whether any progress in negotiations has taken place and whether or not trade action is likely?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Originally the GATT deadline was set at December 15 of this past year, '93. The GATT agreement was signed on December 15. However, negotiations were not completed. On Canada's part negotiations were completed with very, very few nations. The date was extended to April 15 for the completion of the signing of bilaterals, which would allow for signing with individual countries. April 15 passed and we still did not have an agreement with the United States, so a self-imposed deadline of April 22 was put in place. Since that time, the Americans have been threatening. It's very unfortunate because you don't negotiate properly when you're being threatened. The whole process, unfortunately, should be one of negotiation rather than of threats. The Americans have threatened us with imposing article 28 as well as section 22, which of course would affect our wheat, our sugar in a very dramatic way as far as production in Alberta is concerned.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. HIERATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister please, for the farmers in this province, explain the position of this government on bilateral demands that are being made by the Americans?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you. That's a very important question to our agricultural community, and I appreciate the hon. Member for Taber-Warner asking that. Our position as an Alberta agriculture position hasn't changed, and that basically is that no deal is better than a bad deal. However, we feel that we have to continue negotiating, and we feel very strongly that a good deal for Alberta agriculture can be achieved.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. HIERATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has this government acted to provide recommendations to the federal government regarding some of our feelings towards this trade dispute?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have. We've made several suggestions as to how to keep the negotiations going, and one of those suggestions deals with the American threat to invoke section 22. That basically is that we should be dealing with the restructuring of the Wheat Board. We should be dealing with paying the Crow benefit to the producer. If indeed we enacted that particular element, we would indeed remove section 22 from the table. It would no longer be necessary to be there to negotiate. We've also made some suggestions as to opportunities that are there to negotiate, and we strongly support the position that the federal government has taken. Again, it's similar to ours in that no deal is better than a bad deal.

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

#### Regional Health Authorities

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are, to say the least, puzzled about how this government is drawing its new regional health boundaries. There are no clear criteria for how the lines are to be determined, and some of the boundaries that have been suggested go beyond the questionable and directly to the politically suspicious. My question is to the Premier. Why have these boundaries been based so heavily upon acute care hospital considerations while public health considerations have been completely ignored?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I reject that assertion. Basically the planning process has been predicated on community-based health, incorporating acute care health units, long-term care, and drawing the boundaries to offer an opportunity for rationalization through reasonable regionalization. This has been a tremendously meaningful process. The hon. Member for Bow Valley has done a commendable job, along with Dr. Norman Wagner, in putting these boundaries together, and I would be delighted to have the hon. member supplement. Oh, I'm sorry. He's not here, so I will have the hon. Minister of Health supplement.

2:20

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Health.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be happy to supplement on behalf of my colleague for Bow Valley, who, as the Premier indicated, has done a tremendous job along with the other members of the steering committee. I might say that the subcommittee was chaired in fact by the chairman of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, so we were fortunate to have that input into the process as well.

Mr. Speaker, there were 10 criteria laid out very clearly. I will not take the time of the House to go over all of them, but certainly the major areas were that they reflect trading patterns and areas of interest, that they offer as wide a range of health services as possible within a region.

Mr. Speaker, the other point I would make is that the boundaries that were released were the exact map that was produced by the steering committee and presented to the minister. That map has been sent out on a wide scale to ensure that all areas have an opportunity to provide comment to the minister. That has

occurred, and we will be announcing the final boundaries – the final boundaries – in the very near future.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Premier: what sense does it make to include Leduc, Fort Saskatchewan, and Stony Plain in the Edmonton health region while St. Albert is included in the Edmonton health region when St. Albert people don't want to be included?

MR. KLEIN: The hon. minister just indicated, Mr. Speaker, that the boundaries will be released in very short order, and I would ask the hon. member to be patient.

MR. MITCHELL: How does the Premier justify splitting Cereal and Oyen with an artificial regional health boundary when they are no less than nine miles apart, they both happen to have hospitals, and co-incidentally they both happen to be in the constituency of the Minister of Health?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to answer that. Again I would reiterate that the boundaries that were proposed came to the minister directly from the steering committee. I can assure the hon. members that I did not see that map or those boundaries in advance of getting it. There are some valid reasons, not just in Cereal and Oyen, as to where lines are drawn, and it is clear that the hon. member does not understand rural communities, rural travel patterns, rural trade patterns any more than he understands urban.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

#### Senior Citizens' Programs

*(continued)*

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituency of Vegreville-Viking has the highest percentage of seniors in the province of Alberta. They support our tough stand on the deficit. Their only concern is that they be treated fairly compared to other sectors participating in our plan of reducing the deficit. To the minister responsible for seniors: will you commit today to listen to their concerns?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, not only have I committed; I've carried out that commitment as well. I've not only been to the riding of the hon. member who asked the question; I've been to many other ridings as well. And I will continue to commit to listening to the concerns of seniors.

With respect to what they've said, Mr. Speaker, they do have concerns. They want to make sure that we've heard what they've said. Those concerns relate to issues respecting thresholds, respecting fees and rates for health care premiums, optical and dental benefits. We will not only hear those concerns; we will respond to them after we have the recommendations of the review panel.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister tell me if this list of issues represents the issues the Alberta seniors' benefit review panel will be looking at?

MR. MAR: The answer to that question is very clearly yes, Mr. Speaker. The review panel is charged with the responsibility of

looking at those issues as well as peripheral issues respecting things like the need for an appeal process, issues respecting singles versus married seniors, issues respecting the definition of income. Of course, we'll continue to address those issues.

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, is the 11-day time frame realistic?

MR. MAR: Categorically, Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. I say this for two reasons. One is that the issues are spelled out very clearly in the document which I tabled earlier today. Secondly, not only are the issues clear; the concerns are clear as to what needs to be addressed. Eleven days is ample time.

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

#### Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. STARS is a nonprofit emergency air rescue service run by volunteers that all Albertans can be proud of. However, recently comments made by the Provincial Treasurer have put this respected charity under a cloud of suspicion. Now, to add to the confusion, the government has recently compiled a report on air ambulance service which questions the cost-effectiveness of STARS. My question to the Provincial Treasurer: will the Treasurer please give us the specifics of what he was talking about when he said that he believes STARS is wasting money?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I said nothing of the sort. The matter was dealt with as an MLA responding to questions of a constituent. Therefore I think it would be appropriate for the Minister of Health to be responding to any of these kinds of questions.

MR. CHADI: He asked you the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. To the member who said that the Treasurer was asked the question, the answer to that is that the Treasurer does not have the legislative competence, as all hon. members know, to deal with this matter of air ambulances.

The hon. Minister of Health.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I have no comment on a third party question.

MR. SAPERS: The Treasurer doesn't even listen to himself when he talks.

To the Minister of Health then: what steps, Mr. Minister, are you taking to protect this respected charity from attacks made by your cabinet colleagues?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any attacks on STARS by my cabinet colleagues. However, there was a report in a paper that was erroneous that suggested that the Minister of Health was investigating STARS. I have cleared that up by writing a letter to the paper, which they very kindly published, where we assure people that we are not investigating STARS, that we value the service that STARS provides for the province of Alberta. We fund STARS for a service on a contract basis, and I am quite satisfied with the work that we receive for those contract dollars, and that is what my concern in this affair should be and is.



MR. KOWALSKI: Tell the truth now, Howard. Tell the truth.

MR. SAPERS: Always do. Always do.

In your deliberations, Madam Minister, about the future funding of STARS . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question. Question.

MR. SAPERS: Be patient.

Have you determined how much is too much to spend to save a life in rural Alberta?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker . . .

### **Speaker's Ruling Improper Questions**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The minister will not answer that question, because it is totally irresponsible to ask.

The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

MR. SAPERS: That's bias. She was going to answer it.

MR. SPEAKER: She may have been going to answer it, but the Chair prevented her from answering it because it was an improper question.

The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

### **Senior Citizens' Programs (continued)**

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Repeatedly in discussions with seniors in my constituency they have been asking how flexible the government is prepared to be with the Alberta seniors' benefit program. The minister was quoted many times as saying that the government would be fair, reasonable, and flexible with this program. To the minister responsible for seniors: do you intend to keep that promise?

2:30

MR. MAR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As I have stated from the outset, I would not have gone through a very lengthy consultation process if I was not prepared to be flexible. The changes that we make to the Alberta seniors benefit program, whether financial or otherwise, will depend upon the recommendation of the review panel. I can say in this House that the Premier and the Provincial Treasurer and this government are committed to staying on track within our budget targets.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would seem to me that the minister is saying that he will only remain flexible to a point. What if the review panel is insistent and recommends that more money be spent on this program?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for seniors and all ministers with seniors' programs in this province, we are prepared to go back and review every program, if necessary. We intend to have a program that works, that protects low-income seniors, that also addresses the concerns of seniors made during the consultation process.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it sounds as if the minister already knows what he is going to do. I would like to ask the minister: what is the point of having a review panel if you don't listen to them?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, the point of having the review panel is, I've said from the very outset, that we would involve seniors in every step along the consultation process. This is one of the steps that we are taking. Not only have we listened to seniors, we've heard their concerns about threshold levels. We've heard their concerns about married versus single seniors. We've heard their concerns about optical and dental benefits. We are now prepared to respond to those concerns. We've heard those concerns, and now we have selected a cross-representation of seniors throughout the province of Alberta. They've come from places in northern Alberta, southern Alberta, and central Alberta, and these people are all knowledgeable. Very clearly seniors would have something very important to say about how this seniors' program works.

Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. That's long enough.

The hon. Member for Redwater.

### **Heavy Oil Upgrader**

MR. N. TAYLOR: Just in the nick of time.

Another ticking time bomb for taxpayers are the loans provided the Lloydminster upgrader. This is to the Minister of Energy. In a letter to the Liberal caucus dated April 12, which I'm now tabling, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy refused to release the agreements dealing with the funding on operating shortfalls. However, there was light. I have copies of the agreement, which I've obtained through the federal freedom of information Act. Thank God for Ottawa, eh? In light of the latest \$24 million requirement to cover operating shortfalls – a bagatelle, \$24 million – is the minister still sticking to her statement that the upgrader will turn a profit by June of 1995?

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I would have to see where I made the statement that the upgrader would turn a profit by 1995. However, I am always optimistic that as prices firm up, we will in fact see profit by the end of this year or next year or very soon. That would be very beneficial for everyone, particularly all of the partners within the upgrader.

I might remind the hon. member that Alberta has 24.17 percent interest in the upgrader along with partners from the province of Saskatchewan and the federal government and of course Husky Oil. I would hope to see a profit come very shortly from the upgrader.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Hope springs eternal. The statement was January 25, 1994, by the way, if you want to look it up.

Why would the minister in requests in the letter hide the management fees paid to Husky? Why does she want to hide those management fees?

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I've said on numerous occasions that I was not prepared to file in this Legislature the agreements between the partners without first having the consent from those partners because this is in fact a commercial arrangement. There's also a private-sector firm involved in this. As such, I would not file that information unless they were in agreement, and to date they have not been in agreement to do that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this is to the Deputy Premier. In view of the fact that the freedom of information Act is well under way now and it was put forward by the government, would the Deputy Premier promise the House that there'll be no more secret deals on the upgrader in the future?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, there never has been a secret deal. In typical fashion by the hon. member displayed so many times both in and outside of this House, he leads with mischievous questions and innuendo that simply aren't true. This government is an open government.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I must take exception to the hon. Member for Redwater's comments. If he would read the public accounts and the Auditor General's report, clearly there's a reporting on Alberta's position within the upgrader that comes out every year, in fact, not only for the capital investment but for the ongoing operations. So I'd suggest that he read those reports.

head: **Members' Statements**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

#### **Excellence in Teaching**

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Halvar Jonson, Minister of Education, recently announced the 20 winners for the 1994 provincial excellence in teaching awards. This year's winners were selected from 420 teachers who were nominated by students, parents, teaching colleagues, principals, and superintendents. Calgary-Bow was very proud to have three of these special teachers: James Byrne, Queen Elizabeth high school; Ellen Guderyan, Our Lady of Assumption school; and Richard Pentelbury, Bowness high. The excellence in teaching awards is a timely reminder of the debt society owes to its teachers. It reminds us of the teachers' dedication and concern for their students.

With the many demands of today placed on the shoulders of teachers, it's time to evaluate what their roles should be and what expectations should be placed on teachers. Should they be expected to be social workers, nurses, entertainers, money collectors, nutritionists, family counselors, to name just a few of the tasks that we have laid on their shoulders? The teachers I have known in my 26 years in the education field were for the most part hardworking professionals. They participated in professional development in many areas to improve their schools, and they did attend the annual conventions to search for new methods and new ideas. They attended meetings. They coached many sports and activities, often on their own time. They marked papers most evenings and a lot of weekends. They organized lunches, breakfasts, and provided clothing for the needy children in their care.

The excellence in teaching awards is a time to pay tribute to the teacher. Teaching is a noble profession with a long and rich history; indeed, I've often heard it referred to as the second oldest profession. In closing, I would like to congratulate all the winners of the excellence awards for 1994 and their many colleagues in the classrooms of Alberta.

Thank you.

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

#### **University Autonomy**

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Universities in our province are swept up in a frenzy of budget cutting that threatens

their already fragile autonomy. There is a concentrated move to make career education the paramount task of these unique, democratic institutions. Such a move is wrong. Universities are different from other advanced education institutions. With origins in ancient Greece and Rome they did not flourish until the Middle Ages.

Starting in those early times there has been a group of values associated with these schools that continue to have international support. Foremost among those values is autonomy: freedom for students to search for truth and knowledge wherever that may lead, freedom for scholars unfettered to pursue the world of ideas, and freedom for researchers to pursue projects unrestrained by utilitarian motives. The academic community must have freedom to serve as unmolested critics within our society, freedom to preserve our intellectual culture and freedom to take part in open debate.

In the current government's induced financial crisis we hear mumblings over spending on the ivory tower. Universities never have been and never can be ivory towers. Since those medieval times they have supplied our professionals, beginning with clergy, law, and medicine. Today that has been extended to a wide range of professions. Thousands of graduates use the liberal education they have pursued to enter general occupations in industry and commerce. That being the case, we must resist pressures like those embodied in the access fund that would require students to undergo programs of study that are narrowly defined and linked to the government's momentary economic goals. Such moves violate the whole notion of a university. Such moves violate freedom, and such moves violate our democracy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **2:40 Syncrude Canada Ltd.**

MR. HLADY: Mr. Speaker, I stand today as a proud Albertan, proud of the achievements that have been made by a pioneer in the energy field, an Alberta company that has become a world leader over the past 30 years. As a member of the board of Syncrude Canada I would like to take some time to tell Members of the Legislative Assembly of the accomplishments of this determined company.

When I say determined, I really mean it. The project to harvest the oil sands of Alberta began over three decades ago. After numerous setbacks from several governments over nearly 10 years, Premier Peter Lougheed finally announced the go-ahead for a synthetic crude oil project. The dream finally became a reality in September of 1978 when Syncrude Canada officially opened its \$2.3 billion project designed to produce 109,000 barrels per day. Now it produces approximately 200,000 barrels per day.

Now, thirty years later, Syncrude is an established expert in the field. In March of this year Syncrude shipped its 700-millionth barrel of oil, more than the total reserves expected from the Hibernia project. Even when Hibernia is depleted, the Athabasca oil sands will still be going strong. In fact, the Athabasca oil sand deposit will become the country's number one field in three years. That is no small accomplishment for a company that took 10 years of dogged determination to get their project off the ground.

Syncrude should also be commended for their commitment to environmental issues. As one of Canada's largest and most ambitious energy ventures Syncrude will continue to quietly work to prove that industry and environment can coexist without adverse long-term effects. Careful management and creative programs are demonstrating that economic development does not always permanently scar the land, cloud the water, and pollute the air. Syncrude was committed to minimizing the project's environ-

mental effects long before going green became trendy. During the planning stages in the 1960s Syncrude used environmental professionals well in advance of the first shovel of earth being turned.

The future provides exciting development in many different areas of the mining industry, as the ability to extract other minerals and metals from the sands has now become profitable.

Thank you very much.

head: **Projected Government Business**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with our efforts to do whatever it takes to try and find out what this government is up to, I'm rising under Standing Order 7(5) to ask the hon. House leader what he's got in mind for next week.

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, in keeping with our ongoing spirit of openness and good government and somewhat in anticipation of what may be happening today in the afternoon, on Monday, April 25, in the afternoon under Government Bills and Orders we will look at second readings of Bills 19, 20, 15, 21, 22, and 27, not necessarily in that order, but that's the projected order. As Standing Orders are very clear that a sequence does not have to indeed be pointed out – yet we're going the extra mile to try and do that – it's too bad that that's greeted with derision from across the way. In the evening we will be considering in Committee of Supply the estimates . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We want Ken. We want Ken.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, being part of a listening government and hearing the cry for Ken, indeed then we will have the consideration in Committee of Supply of the lotteries estimates on Monday evening. Tuesday afternoon we will be in second readings as per the Order Paper; in the evening Government Bills and Orders, second reading of Bill 24; Committee of the Whole, if there's time, Bills 18 and 1 and others as may be on the Order Paper; third readings as per the Order Paper. On Wednesday in the evening under Government Bills and Orders in Committee of the Whole we will be looking at Bill 25, and then again if there's time, Committee of the Whole as per the Order Paper. I'd suggested also on March 31 – and it's recorded, I remind members opposite – that when we have opportunity following supply considerations in the evenings, we then do move to Committee of the Whole and second readings or third readings. My ongoing commitment to communicate that order, at least as closely as we can, to the members opposite will be continued. On Thursday, then, third readings in the afternoon under Government Bills and Orders; also, Bill 26 and then Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader on a point of order.

**Point of Order  
Decorum**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, sometimes as parents, when our children have tantrums, it's best to just . . .

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Citation, citation.

MR. DAY: The citation's coming. Just hang on there, Danny boy.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, as parents it's best just to ignore children when they have tantrums. But in the case of adult members in this Assembly, especially in reference to the Leader of the Opposition – and I know he's under considerable distraction from the time it takes to pull knives out of his back, but it doesn't really excuse the demonstration that we saw today. We have become used to the desk pounding. We have become used to the parade of costume jewelry and rags wrapped around their shirts and the wearing of bathroom accessories. We're accustomed to that.

But today in the Assembly the Leader of the Opposition in a moment of petulance and foot stomping threw some articles to the floor of the Chamber. The difficulty with that, Mr. Speaker, is that when people watch that – it's not just members here that have to put up with it, but in fact the televisions are on. There are students in the galleries. It reflects poorly on all of us. Even the media have continually reported that most of the disruption is coming from the Liberal caucus, yet it reflects on all of us.

I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition would at least do the honourable thing today and apologize for the fit of petulance, and maybe that would just raise the overall manner in which we conduct ourselves here in the Assembly.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, if I could just remind the Assembly on the issue that was being pursued, it is our responsibility to come to this Assembly to get the government to account for certain actions. The government has been, I think, lax and negligent in providing the kind of leadership that's needed to deal with the hospitals issue in Alberta, particularly in Calgary and Edmonton. People are getting frustrated. People are getting angry. People don't know where to turn. Community groups are coming to the Premier and to the government saying: "How do I get input? I can't seem to get heard." Fifteen thousand people marched. Doctors told me on Monday in Calgary that they're being ignored and not getting their input into how this restructuring should take place.

Today I stood in the Assembly and noted for the attention of the Premier and the government the fact that the city of Calgary has rejected – and the word that they used was "reject" – the Hyndman report. They had a thorough debate on that. They said very succinctly that they rejected it. The issue that I rose and talked about was that the Calgary city council in effect had thrown the suggestions of Hyndman into the garbage can, wanted them thrown into the garbage can. The Premier made light of that. That adds to the frustration and the anger for those doctors and nurses and community groups, and it frustrates us in not being able to get the kind of attention to this issue that we want.

When I rose and I talked about throwing something in the garbage and related it and linked it to the word "rejected," the Premier didn't seem to twig to that. I looked for a dictionary on my left; I couldn't find the *Oxford*. I looked to the right; I couldn't find *Funk & Wagnall's*. I even looked everywhere for a *Webster's* dictionary; it wasn't there. I thought the best thing was to give him the motion right out of the city council, because there is no other way for the Premier and the government to get the message. Now, I regret, Mr. Speaker, that I couldn't give it to him through a dictionary, and I apologize for that.

2:50

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair has heard the apology of the hon. Leader of the Opposition and certainly accepts it but would indicate that if such an incident happens again, it will be treated

as a gross indignity to the Chamber, and the Chair will have a plan to deal with it. In this connection, to the general tone, it's just not good enough for hon. members to use their frustrations as an excuse for doing this. This is supposed to be a special place in Alberta. The Chair admonishes members on both sides of the Assembly to bear some responsibility and consider their responsibility and use proper language and not use language that is intentionally designed to raise the temperature in this Chamber. The government is almost as responsible for this as the Opposition – almost – and the Chair will say that . . .

MR. DALLA-LONGA: What about those comments?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-West knows that he is not to argue with the Chair when the Chair is speaking. Does the hon. Member for Calgary-West not know that? Well, you know now, so govern yourself accordingly.

All hon. members should consider how they appear. The Chair is going to be intervening during question period to remind hon. members that there are schoolchildren. Is that the impression they want to leave with the schoolchildren who are visiting this Assembly? It seems like a lot of hon. members in this Assembly have the attention span of a hummingbird. It doesn't do them any good to say: "Well, we're frustrated. How are we going to express our frustrations?"

Hon. members, you were elected by the people in your constituencies to be better than that. So try to remember it. You have the opportunity this weekend to remember this and put it into your brains, the gray cells within your skull. Please do it, because you're not doing the public administration of this province's affairs any good the way you're behaving on both sides of the Assembly.

That's that point of order. Another point of order?

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I must request to raise a point of order as a result of question period. The last question that was raised in the House today . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Well, then, we'll take these in order. We have notices of other points of order. The point of order number 2 that the Chair has received notice of is from the Opposition House Leader, if he wishes to . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: He just left.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, sorry. I'm sorry. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

#### **Point of Order Imputing Motives**

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on 23(i). The hon. minister responsible for Community Development and seniors rose this afternoon to give a supplementary statement to an answer that the Premier had given to a question of mine, and in doing so the minister said that he presumed from my statements that I did not support assistance to low-income seniors. I submit that the hon. minister has therefore imputed motives to me in regard to that that cannot be substantiated.

I am on record in this House and in public on many occasions as being in support of seniors and the continuation of programs to support seniors. Mr. Speaker, I have stated publicly and in this House that I do not believe that the minister, in promoting the program that he has, understands the full consequences or the problems that will be encountered, that he has no depth of understanding. The minister protests that he has done a consulta-

tion and that he is responding, but it's clear from the information that has been given to him and to all of us that the consultation asks for something quite different than what he is prepared to do. I suggest that the minister has not responded to the concerns that have been expressed to him. He has not taken into consideration all programs that affect seniors, only a part of them, and is determined to press ahead. Now, if I can get to it, I believe the minister has now found himself cornered. He has acknowledged that his information to seniors was incorrect. He's raised expectations of seniors in our communities.

Now he is suggesting in the House that I am not in favour of helping low-income seniors. Clearly, this is a distortion of what I have said here and outside of this House. It imputes motives to me that are unacceptable and incorrect. I hope that the minister will do the honourable thing and withdraw his remark, which I submit to you, sir, he knows is incorrect and improper.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair has heard the complaint of the hon. member, but the Chair does not accept the fact – this is a case of a disagreement between hon. members. When we use the term "imputing false motives," usually that refers to something deceitful or duplicitous. The hon. member has had, because this is an opportunity for venting complaints, the opportunity to complain about the minister misunderstanding what she agrees with and what . . .

MRS. HEWES: He presumed.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the Chair still does not agree that there was an implication of false motives as defined parliamentarily. The hon. member has had the opportunity of setting the record straight, and the Chair believes that should close this matter.

The third one is by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

#### **Point of Order Explanation of Speaker's Ruling**

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in question period you ruled against, or disallowed, a second supplemental question when I was questioning the Minister of Health about a very important matter. I was questioning the Minister of Health regarding STARS, which operates rotary aircraft which can land where no fixed-wing aircraft can land. This ability is of particular importance to rural Alberta.

Secondly, my question was based on a report that was requested by the Minister of Health, authored by the Member for Peace River, and recently delivered to the minister. That report was on the subject of air ambulance service and costs, and it specifically recommended that STARS be reviewed because, in the words of the report, helicopter costs are six times higher than the cost of operating a fixed-wing aircraft. Now, my question sought relevant information supposedly within the Minister of Health's area of legislative competence regarding the cost/benefit analysis being done on air ambulance services.

Now, I respectfully request under Standing Order 13(2) that you explain to me and members of the Assembly: on what basis was that question considered irrelevant? I believe you used some other adjectives that I personally don't agree with. I think it was a fairly put question in the style accustomed to this House and a question within the minister's area of competence, and I request reasons for your ruling, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The question that the Chair heard was: how many dollars is it worth to save a life in rural Alberta? That doesn't accord at all with what the hon. member now says he

said. That question is clearly argumentative and designed to create disorder and will not be allowed. The hon. member will sit down. That matter is closed.

3:00

Hon. Minister of Energy, if your point of order arose after question period, we'll deal with it. If it arose out of question period and you did not raise it, then you're going to be fore-closed.

**Point of Order  
Factual Accuracy**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I just received the information from Parliamentary Counsel as to information that was filed during the question by the Member for Redwater during question period today, and I asked to see the information.

Mr. Speaker, my question pertains to the question that was asked by Redwater to myself with regard to the arrangements on the upgrader today. He indicated that he had received documents from the federal government that were not privy to him in this House. It was as a result of the freedom of information Act that they have in Ottawa, that we do not in fact have here. I asked Parliamentary Counsel to send over that document to me, and when I received it, I was absolutely shocked by the number of pages that are in fact whited out of this document with the pertinent information to the agreement.

I think it is inappropriate for the hon. Member for Redwater to stand up in this House and say that he received information from another government that he has received time and time again in this House, file a document with pages whited out, Mr. Speaker, and mislead, I believe, this House and the people of Alberta. I think he should retract those statements, and he should retract them immediately.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, as usual she builds on a half-truth. The point is that there are, as in any freedom of information Act released, things that are whited out. It's very rarely that there aren't any. I think that goes with the territory.

But the point is that we don't even have the blacked portions. This minister has refused to give us anything. What we got from Ottawa is on the freedom of information Act. It's an Act that, admittedly, maybe 3 percent or maybe 1 percent has been whited out, but the rest hasn't. That's why I filed it, Mr. Speaker. If I had intimated that I had the whole thing, I'd force her to look at it. I'm glad that she was able to look through it and see that. Now, if she will tell me why she didn't give the information that's blacked, that's all I'm asking for. Why did you not give that? The fact that it's got white marks doesn't mean anything.

MR. SPEAKER: We're not going to pursue question period under the guise of a point of order. The Chair will review the submissions of both sides and make a ruling on Monday.

**Point of Order  
Explanation of Speaker's Ruling**

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

MR. SAPERS: Well, yes, Mr. Speaker. I'm actually rising to seek your advice. On my previous point of order if your hearing and retelling of my question is not consistent with what in fact appears in *Hansard*, I'm wondering how that would have bearing on my request for your reasons for ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will review *Hansard* to see if there's any reason for reopening this matter.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Point of Order  
Factual Accuracy**

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

MR. WHITE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask your indulgence in dealing with the matter raised by the Minister of Energy, and your ruling will be forthcoming, I suspect, in subsequent days. I wish you to review 319, which says that a member should bring to the Speaker's attention immediately and how, sir, you were able to hear that, when in fact it did not occur at that time. I just ask that you review that at the time and look forward to your ruling.

[Mr. Day rose]

MR. SPEAKER: You're not going to pursue this any longer, Government House Leader.

**Point of Order  
Anticipation**

MR. SPEAKER: Enough time has been spent on points of order already, except that the Chair is required to respond to the point of order raised yesterday, April 20, when the hon. Opposition House Leader raised the point of order relating to a question by the hon. Member for Little Bow to the hon. Minister of Environmental Protection about the McGregor reservoir and dam.

The hon. Opposition House Leader's point of order was that the question could have been addressed during the estimates of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division scheduled for yesterday evening and accordingly violated the rule against anticipation. The Chair gave a preliminary ruling and indicated that the Chair would further review the matter of heritage fund estimates. It was clear from Standing Order 23(e) that members are not to anticipate any matter "for consideration on that day." *Beauchesne* 409(12) contains a similar provision specific to question period. The issue is canvassed more fully in *Beauchesne* paragraphs 512 to 514. The Chair has been unable to find any previous Speaker's rulings on anticipation relating to the heritage fund estimates.

As the Chair indicated yesterday, heritage fund capital estimates are somewhat different than main estimates. There are six ministers who could be questioned about the heritage fund capital estimates. Clearly, it would be inappropriate to have a general restriction on all questions to those ministers on the grounds of anticipation. There must be some greater flexibility with respect to what constitutes anticipation when these estimates are up for debate. In order to be anticipation, a question would have to relate directly to a specific project within the minister's responsibility under the heritage fund capital estimates or relate to the heritage fund itself.

With respect to the questions yesterday by the hon. Member for Little Bow, the Chair notes that there are projects in the heritage fund estimates under the authority of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development relating to irrigation rehabilitation and expansion and private irrigation development. The Chair notes that the hon. member's question was to the Minister of Environmental Protection. There is a project in the heritage fund estimates relating to water management systems under the Minister of Environmental Protection, but the Chair could not presume to know

whether the dam project raised by the hon. Member for Little Bow would be under that vote or not. Accordingly, the Chair affirms yesterday's ruling that the question did not breach the rule against anticipation.

In matters of anticipation concerning the heritage fund estimates, when it is not clear whether the question is covered in the specific votes which are not expressly outlined, the Chair relies upon ministers to indicate when such a question is covered in the estimates. As always the Chair welcomes and relies upon the assistance of members to enforce the rules of this House.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Private Bills**  
head: **Third Reading**

[It was moved by the members indicated that the following Bills be read a third time, and the motions were carried]

No.	Title	Moved by
Pr. 2	Lethbridge Foundation Amendment Act, 1994	Renner (for Dunford)
Pr. 3	Companions of Angela and Francis (Koinonia Association) Act	Bracko
Pr. 9	Tammy Lee Barnes Adoption Act	Gordon
Pr. 8	Shaw Communications Inc. Act	Renner (for Dunford)
Pr. 10	Janna Adella Marie Kinnee Adoption Act	Sapers (for Collingwood)
Pr. 15	Silvia Kathleen Miles Adoption Act	Renner (for Zariwny)

### 3:10

MR. RENNER: Mr. Speaker, if I could just take a moment of the House's time to speak to a number of the private bills that we've addressed over the past few days. I would like to express my appreciation as chairman of the Private Bills Committee to both respective House leaders for their assistance in dealing with these Bills this week, and I also would like to express my appreciation to members of the House for having faith in the members of the Private Bills Committee to follow our recommendations on these Bills. I trust that the House will be as cooperative with the second half of the Bills that I will be bringing forward in about three weeks' time.

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll call the committee to order.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee is reminded that we are in the third day of the estimates of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division.

Are there any comments or questions that the members might have? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate being recognized. I stand to speak specifically about the part of the fund that goes to support cancer research in this province. Of course, cancer, illness related to cancer, death caused by cancer is a topic

that concerns each and every one of us, because as the years go by, there is an increasing chance that ourselves or a member of our immediate families will be affected by this disease. Currently one in three living Albertans, statistically, we know will become afflicted with cancer. I believe the Minister of Health was relaying some statistics that indicated that for one in four men, their cause of death will likely be cancer and slightly lower than that for women. About 22 percent of deaths of Alberta women in this generation will be related to cancer. This is a horrible, horrible toll on the lives of Albertans. Of course, cancer research needs to be supported in the hopes that the research will lead to cures, to links in the etiology of the disease to help us find ways for those afflicted with cancer to better cope, to treat the cancers that weren't prevented, and to ease the pain and suffering of those who will inevitably die from cancer or a cancer-related disease.

Mr. Chairman, there's been somewhere between \$50 million and \$55 million expended out of the fund on cancer research in Alberta over the years, and we've had some tremendous progress but clearly not enough. I understand that there are now some 27 or 28 projects that are funded out of this pool of money, maybe 15 new projects that were added in the last year. There are some concerns about all of this because we're not sure how the priorities are set around this expenditure of money. We're not sure where the direction, what the level of co-ordination or degree of co-ordination with other studies . . .

MRS. McCLELLAN: You should have listened. I outlined that.

MR. SAPERS: The hon. Minister of Health is engaging me in debate, Mr. Chairman, and referring me, I believe, to her remarks in *Hansard* of April 19, which are on page 1296. I can assure through you to the minister that I'm aware of the rules of the House and understand that that's the way debate goes, and I am familiar with her comments in *Hansard* of that day, but I do thank her for drawing it to my attention nonetheless.

There are some questions about the degree of co-ordination not only with projects within this province but also nationally and internationally, also the degree of scrutiny that comes to bear on how these moneys are expended. Mr. Chairman, I can draw the attention of the Assembly to the controversy surrounding the breast cancer studies being co-ordinated out of the United States but taking part in Montreal as well and the questionable data and the allegations of even fraudulent data manipulation that have come out of those studies and the bearing that those studies have had on similar research or companion research that may be funded here in this province.

Mr. Chairman, it's not good enough, I think, to tell women that there's other research that backs this up. I really think that we have a responsibility to look carefully at how projects that we fund in this province relate to other projects across the country and, as I say, internationally as well.

Mr. Chairman, the Alberta Cancer Board, which is the recipient of much of the money and administers much of the research money, has also operated with some controversy in its recent past. I in no way mean to cast any cloud over the very valuable work of the board and the dedicated men and women who work directly for the board or are under contract to the board or those scientists and physicians and researchers who are funded through the fund or through the board, but it is true that there have been some questions about the department of epidemiology, the research that's been done. Particularly, one of the directors of the board did some research that was published in a very well-respected journal, the *New England journal*, and subsequently his research was discredited by some others, some would say for no good reason and some would say for very valid reason.

Mr. Chairman, the board has since then been in search of a replacement for that position. They haven't been able to successfully fill it. There is a cloud, and I think it's very important that we remove that cloud, that we clear the air, and that we find out on what basis that research was questioned and what's been done about it. Has there been any provincial responsibility for that? Are we now sure that questionable research isn't being done that's funded by this fund? Can we assure all Albertans that there will be no discredit brought to the cancer researchers of this province the way discredit has unfortunately befallen some of the cancer researchers in other places in this country?

3:20

Now, the research work that's done is done in association with university departments and medical schools, and I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if there are opportunities here to look for savings in terms of duplication of administration. We've got the Alberta Cancer Board. We have the medical ethics and research boards of the two medical schools in the province. We've got the faculties of medicine themselves. We have in fact the various branches of the Cancer Society and other parts of the medical profession which all have a stake and a say in how cancer research is conducted in this province. I wonder if there's been a careful look at tying those together, looking for ways to save money administratively. Are we at the point, particularly with the discussions going on about regionalization, where we should begin to look at the continued existence of specialty boards such as the Alberta Cancer Board and look at them critically, not with an eye towards what they may have been doing wrong – because certainly that's not what I'm saying – but just with an eye towards what could be done better? What is the best administrative structure? What is the most efficient way to fund, monitor, and evaluate cancer research in this province?

Mr. Chairman, before we can be convinced that the 51 million plus dollars that have been spent to date and the millions more which are being committed in this vote are spent on cancer research, I think we have a responsibility to make sure that that money is all being spent in the most efficient, the most appropriate, and the most productive way possible. I would welcome the comments by the Minister of Health or any of her cabinet colleagues on this question. I hope that we will be able to gain a higher degree of confidence in the administrative costs and know that everything possible is being done to trim these costs absolutely to the bone so that the money can be spent in the majority where it can do us the most good, and that's actually on the applied research which is going to save lives and decrease misery and in fact help researchers around the world develop cures for these most deadly diseases.

Mr. Chairman, with those comments I'll take my seat at this time and would also look forward to an opportunity to rise again during this debate.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I was going to respond, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, sorry. The minister is going to reply, if that's all right.

MRS. McCLELLAN: If I could just beg the indulgence of the hon. member, I will be very brief. There were a couple of comments that I thought might require some response. One is on

the process – and I did draw the hon. member's attention to the procedure – for choosing projects. There is an expert committee that reviews these quite separately from the Minister of Health. I receive the proposals from them for projects, and certainly I do have the ultimate approval, but I can assure the hon. member that this is an expert committee. All of the people on it – I think he would agree looking at that committee that they are in the best position to determine those projects. I should say that that is not an Alberta committee. That is an advisory committee on research made up of international as well as national and provincial experts. I think that's very important. They make the recommendations to the management of the Cancer Board, and they flow through the Cancer Board to the minister. Obviously, as this is under the heritage savings trust fund, the minister has the final authority to sign those off.

The other important part of it – and I think it's important to all of us – is to ensure that our resources are used in the best way, that they are not duplicating other efforts. That is achieved, one, by the international, national, and provincial committee being involved. That way we know what cancer research is occurring not only in Canada or the U.S. but in the world. That's very important.

The other important part is that we have the Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. While the cancer research is applied research – and the medical foundation may fund all types of research – the Cancer Board and this committee work very closely with the medical foundation to again ensure that we are not duplicating or repeating research that can be handled in another way. I think it's very important that we have that type of co-ordination. The resources that we have in research in Alberta may seem very large in comparison to other provinces in Canada; however, they are very precious, and it's very important, I think particularly in this area, that we do ensure that those resources go to the very most important areas of cancer research. I am very confident that that occurs through this process. If the hon. member or other members have some suggestions as to how to strengthen that process, I would be glad to hear those.

Secondly, the comment was raised on a research project that had some question of credibility or data used. That was a national research project, and I am sure that Health Canada, who is responsible for national projects, is ensuring that their guidelines are such that this will not occur, at least will try to ensure that it doesn't occur. Certainly we have looked at that very carefully to determine whether any of the difficulties in that research project really in any way skewed the results of the research or that we were having information that might cause us to do something that we wouldn't have done without it. It is our opinion that that would not be the case, that it would not in a detrimental way skew the research findings. So I think that's important. Certainly we encourage Health Canada to strengthen those areas, and I can assure hon. members that the Cancer Board is very diligent in its role in cancer research and its responsibility in Alberta.

So I think those were the two areas that I wanted to comment on, and as I say, if the hon. member questions in any way the credibility of the process of selecting projects, then I think it would be most incumbent on any hon. member that has that question to provide a better way, and I would look forward to that rather than just leaving the question out there.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, thank you for your patience.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to make a few comments on the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital

projects division. I'd like to have everyone turn to page 11, the Community Development project 1, urban park development. I guess one can go back a number of years ago when the heritage trust fund was first set up. There was a mentality at that time to spend, spend, spend, and even though excess dollars were coming in – in some cases it was almost obscene, the amounts of surpluses that some fiscal periods ended up with. I recall the one year where there was something like a \$3 billion surplus that the Premier of the day had to kind of dispose of. Some of it went to the heritage trust fund. Some of it went to the municipalities in terms of a \$1 billion bailout.

Mr. Chairman, the difficulty with the philosophy, the economic approach that was being used at that time – rather than use a stabilizing effect where you banked for a rainy day, when it dipped down, during the good times so that you could take from that surplus during the bad times and kind of stabilize the economy, particularly from the point of view of the private sector in terms of construction and new projects . . . Unfortunately what happened to a large extent with the heritage trust fund – and the concept of it may have been initially good. Different jurisdictions have handled it differently. Up in Alaska, for example, half of it is given out in direct dividends to spur the economy somewhat. But it appeared so often that the heritage trust fund was simply used as a cover-up, as a means of funneling dollars that a government would have a difficult time justifying if it came out of normal revenues. But because it came out of the heritage trust fund, they would say, "Well, that's not general revenue; that's not taxpayers' dollars." But it was still public dollars no matter how you looked at it. I can even recall watching when the – what? – \$67 million face-lift was given to this building out of the heritage trust fund. The white sands down south there on the golf course: out of the heritage trust fund. If the government tried to do those kinds of things with the so-called taxpayers' dollars, they would have simply been hung. What the government failed to do was to recognize that those dollars, even though they came from oil revenues, were still public dollars, because members of this Assembly are simply servants of the people, and we are mandated to ensure that those dollars are spent properly and money isn't blown.

3:30

Mr. Chairman, years and years have gone by, and we look at a lot of the projects that have been developed out of the heritage trust fund. That's why we're here. If the heritage trust fund were to be liquidated, it would be maybe \$8 billion, \$9 billion, whatever, even though some people are under the perception that it's worth \$16 billion. But it's not. The U of A hospital, for example: a heritage trust fund asset. That can't be liquidated. I don't even think Dr. Modry would be interested in buying the U of A hospital. I don't consider that an asset in terms of the book value that is indicated.

Years later the same process, to the minister over here, is really being used. We look at the objective here: "to provide funding to assist municipalities in completing urban park projects which are under construction." They started to get under construction with heritage trust dollars. It talks in terms of 11 municipalities: "Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Lloydminster and Grande Prairie received a total of \$86.7 million." Now, in this particular budget we have another expenditure of \$4 million for park expansion. Yes, we all love our parks. There are many, many times that if the dollars are there, fine, you do that park development.

Mr. Chairman, the difficulty I have is when I hear talk of the Children's hospital possibly affected, when I see threats of the

Grey Nuns hospital being closed down or converted, when I see the educational system being just slashed and totally restructured and I see libraries denied money and I see social services – there are people out there, believe it or not, that are virtually starving. If it weren't for the food bank and some of the community agencies out there, they would starve. I know \$4 million wouldn't correct all the problems, but it's symbolic of this government's approach to fiscal management. It's not that long ago that the bungee jump was approved out of lottery dollars, which are still public dollars. Just the other day in this House it was raised about a golf course being approved at – what? – \$60,000, while at the same time we see major slashes, the initiation of a roadway of destruction to our educational system, to our health care system, which at one time were the pride of Canada.

Mr. Chairman, in a way I almost feel a degree of compassion for the position that the former Premier, from Edmonton-Whitemud, was put into, in that he took over in a period of time when the dollars were just flowing and virtually anybody could have sat on that pot of gold and could not have done wrong.

MRS. McCLELLAN: The NEP fixed that.

MR. WICKMAN: Virtually anybody could have. Now, that particular Premier, of course, had in his cabinet a cabinet minister that eagerly signed that NEP and drank that bottle of scotch or champagne with the federal minister of energy, if I recall correctly. Anyhow, rather than get off course . . .

We saw that mentality set up. The next Premier came along, and he felt that he had to do bigger and better than the former one. Bigger and better meant finding \$2 billion to pave postsecondary roadways throughout Alberta. A billion dollar announcement for this. I believe in '89 there were announcements of something like 6 point something billion dollars during that 30-day period promises were made. So there was a mentality that had been set because of those excess dollars. A lot of times the villain that was pointed to was the heritage trust fund. The heritage trust fund became the justification for everything else. At the same time, a lot of government members didn't realize that the federal government was indirectly penalizing Alberta: Alberta was losing out on certain things because they were deemed to be so rich because of the perception behind this heritage trust fund.

Mr. Chairman, there's absolutely no doubt that any economist worth a pinch of salt would agree that the heritage trust fund should be liquidated, those dollars should be used to pay down the debt, and the heritage trust fund should no longer be used as a means of trying to mask proper fiscal responsibility as a way of manoeuvring through pet projects, projects that the electorate would not deem appropriate during this period of time. But despite that, there is a protest there. We saw the protest in the city of Edmonton, for example, in the west end where people were saying, "How can you spend money, heritage trust fund dollars, whatever, for parkway expansion when so many other things are desperately needed?" What was city council's approach? I guess the logical approach one would expect: "Well, it's not our money. If we don't spend it, somebody else is going to get it." So they felt an obligation to spend that money because the provincial government was saying: "Here are these dollars for you to spend. If you don't spend them, we're going to give them to somebody else to spend because we want these dollars spent." I don't know why they want them spent. I don't understand why this \$4 million would simply not be deleted from the heritage trust fund budget at this particular time as a capital project; put these types of things on hold until we get our fiscal House in order, until



we get health care functioning properly, until we have education functioning properly.

Mr. Chairman, it is difficult when one hears stories of people – and the Minister of Health is here – that are in desperate need of medical attention and cannot find it. Somebody came into my constituency office the other day. For 48 hours her grandmother lay in a hallway in a hospital, sick, in pain, waiting for a hospital bed. Now, you try and tell that person that spending \$4 million on parkways right now is a good idea, and I would venture to say I would have a pretty good idea as to how that person would respond.

The bottom line is that the government has to reassess its way of doing things, and we've got to get back to those essential types of programming that the electorate expect from us: that's health care, that's a reasonable level of social services and education, and of course creating jobs, jobs, jobs. Not these kinds of frills right now when we can't afford them.

I would hope that the Provincial Treasurer and the minister responsible for Community Development both take the time to read *Hansard*, to read the comments that are being made this afternoon.

On that note, Mr. Chairman, I'll conclude because I know my brilliant colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud and the one from Edmonton-Roper are anxious to speak.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to speaking to this particular set of estimates because I think they're very important in terms of the pattern of expenditures of the government. I think it's also a very useful venue at this time to talk about the forthcoming review that the hon. Provincial Treasurer has promised.

Let me put it into context for you, Mr. Chairman, so that the relevancy is known directly. The issue as I see it is that this committee once struck will have to assess the divisions of the heritage savings trust fund. If we look at the capital projects division – these were questions that I had posed to the hon. Provincial Treasurer, and I know that at this very moment he is working on them. What happens to these types of projects? I will give you two examples. We have seen a significant level of expenditures under project 2 in the Agriculture, Food and Rural Development department, and that's with regards to irrigation rehabilitation and expansion. The issue here is that we've made significant capital expenditures. Where are the operating funds? How are they going to be maintained through time? What are the criteria, then, if this project is to be shifted into the department of agriculture? Will it still be maintained? Will the operating expenditures to maintain the investments that have been undertaken in the past be there? How do we ensure, then, the sustainability of the irrigation network that has been put in place?

3:40

A similar question I think is easily posed with regards to Environmental Protection and project 1, water management systems improvement. Here again, Mr. Chairman, is a project that I think all Albertans would view as being part of our social infrastructure, would view as being worthy. Again one would ask: why is it being funded out of the capital projects division? Why hasn't it been moved directly into a departmental line item so that it can be assessed in terms of priorities and so that if there is this long-predicted review, but still not yet announced, we can be sure that these expenditures are maintained and we can be sure as well that the respective departments are putting aside the operating expenditures to maintain this capital infrastructure once in place?

The second set of questions, again to the hon. Provincial Treasurer, relate in fact to the estimates that we have in our hands. For example, if we flip casually through this, we'll see that there is a listing here of full-time equivalents of 25.3. Now, again when I look at the summary by object of expenditure and I see salaries, wages, and employee benefits of \$1,124,000, I know for sure, Mr. Chairman, that that can't be for those 25.3 employees, because that's a heck of a salary. So I know that there is some uncertainty when you look at page 5 as to exactly where these 25.3 employees are, what the costs of them are. It's clear it's not \$1,124,000. So I would like the Provincial Treasurer to highlight exactly what the salaries are, then, with respect to this manpower authorization and how the items under summary by object of expenditure – the salaries, wages, and employee benefits – are set out. We have this line item here, but when we look through the various votes by project, we do not see that type of detail, and we would like to know when we look at these.

For example, if we look just at project 2 in Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, we see that the operating expenditure is \$18 million. We see the total capital investment this year is zero. Of that \$18 million, exactly how much of it is payments to salaries, wages, employee benefits? How much of it is supplies and services or, for that matter, grants? So although there is a summary detail provided on page 5, there is not the type of line detail available by project, by department that gives you an idea of the labour intensity of these types of investments and the extent to which it's just sort of payments on intermediate items such as supply and services.

My third question. Again, I had posed this to the hon. ministers of environment and agriculture when I last spoke on this Bill. I will amplify my comments because indeed I know that at this very moment they, too, are working on answering the questions and reading *Hansard*. How do you integrate, then, the projects that are funded in Agriculture, Food and Rural Development – project 2, which is irrigation rehabilitation and expansion; project 3, which is private irrigation development assistance – with the items that we find under Environmental Protection, particularly project 1, which is water management systems improvement? The issue here is that of streamlining and integration. It's very clear that we're dealing here with a system of water delivery. Part of it is for watershed protection, and that falls clearly under the domain of the department of environment, but part of it as well is for irrigation. It's clear that these two things are very closely integrated, and they're tied up with the much larger issue of the financing of our overall irrigation and drainage system.

This is an issue that is of fundamental importance to the rural sector and, for that matter, to the urban sector, Mr. Chairman. Water is going to become an increasingly scarce resource. It is going to become an increasingly scarce resource because there is pollution that is in fact despoiling part of our watershed and water supply, though – and again the government should be congratulated – steps are being taken to try and minimize that type of loss. There is the allocation between urban consumption, rural consumption. Within the rural sector there's the allocation between irrigation and rural communities. The issue really is that this is a scarce resource. The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection has in fact now gone to user fees for water. When one moves down that route, one has to ask: how is that linked, then, to the projects that are funded here?

I have inquired of the minister of agriculture before about the financing under project 2, which is the irrigation rehabilitation and expansion, exactly how the costs are allocated. The hon. minister replied very quickly that it's on an 86-14 split, with the 14 percent

being borne by farmers, being based on a survey that was completed, I believe he said, in 1989. But this is a survey, Mr. Chairman, of consumption. It's not a survey on the basis of allocating that water to highest value use. In pursuing my question the hon. minister said that the government believes that the best determinant of how that water should be allocated by the agricultural sector is the farmer, and indeed I agree. But the issue here is in part the allocation between competing uses in the agricultural sector in rural communities and, for that matter, urban communities.

This 86-14 split comes about in large part because we have perhaps underpriced part of our water resources. We're not sending out signals to allocate it to its highest value use. The beauty of the market mechanism, as some of my hon. colleagues will agree, is that the market signals increasing scarcity. It signals how to allocate resources to their highest value use, and if you don't price it, you tend to overuse it. The issue then is: how can we ensure that the thriving and growing agricultural sector – and we've heard time and time again that it's moving certainly to increasingly higher value-added production – gets an allocation of water consistent with the best use of that water? I think that in fact we may do damage to the rural sector by not allowing it to gain access or to compete for our water resources.

Now, I bring this up because when we look at the expenditures under project 2 and project 3 in Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and project 1 in Environmental Protection, we know that they deal with water. We know that they deal with the transfer of water. We know that they deal with some watershed issues, but we really don't know how that water is allocated. There's a historic formula that is used in Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, but we don't have a very clear idea, for example, how the priorities set by the Department of Environmental Protection in terms of its water management systems improvement integrates with the priorities that might be set out with the rural sector and set out by the hon. minister of agriculture. To the extent that those priorities are set out, it's not at all clear, Mr. Chairman, how those priorities are linked in any way to highest value use of the water as opposed just to a historic allocation that came about from a survey, a survey undertaken when perhaps water was treated as a free good.

Certainly it is a birthright of Albertans. It is something that I think Albertans feel very strongly about, which is that water never be exported. What we're talking about then is the internal use of that water, Mr. Chairman, and how to ensure water conservation, how to ensure its allocation among competing uses. So it's an issue that is worthy of discussion, because so much, then, of the expenditures in this particular vote for the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division is tied to water allocation. I think that in terms of making these allocations, we have to know: to what end? It's just not to reallocate water among regions; it's to ensure that we use that water wisely and that that water is allocated to its highest value use.

I would very much appreciate the hon. minister of agriculture outlining, first of all, how the priorities were set under projects 2 and 3 for investment, the extent to which those priorities tie specifically to notions that these represent the highest value use of that water. I would very much appreciate the hon. minister also indicating to what extent, then, the allocation of costs, 86-14, is subject to any signals from the market that perhaps more water should be used in agriculture and less elsewhere. So really my plea is for a little more detail to justify the allocation of these expenditures.

3:50

Similarly, with respect to the Minister of Environmental Protection and the water management systems improvement, again the issues there are: how are the priorities set; how are nonmarket values taken into account, watershed protection, amenity value and the like; and how do those types of values, which sometimes are very difficult to put a price tag on, tie in to those types of water allocations and investments which, for example, from the agricultural sector are very easy to put a price tag on? How do we ensure integration, then, between the expenditures undertaken in projects 1 and 2 in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and those undertaken in the Department of Environmental Protection?

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

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

MR. CHADI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's indeed a pleasure to once again rise and speak to the estimates of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital division. I have some further questions and comments that I'd like to make with regard to the fund and the capital division in particular that I haven't already mentioned. There are some that I am going to just highlight over again because I have not received responses to questions that were raised in the previous days.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes this process of debate becomes frustrating, frustrating inasmuch as you know full well – or at least I do – that when I speak and ask questions and make comments, they really don't go very far, and even if the questions were answered, it makes no difference. So that's the frustrating part. I would hope very much that because they're read into the record, someday perhaps maybe the ministers responsible would be looking at these and saying, "You know, that wasn't a bad idea; we ought to have considered that." Or maybe we shouldn't go so far as saying that in the future we would like to see this happen; I would like to see it happen now.

There are only a few departments, and they are Environmental Protection, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and Community Development, very worthwhile departments of government, Mr. Chairman, and the programs that were implemented through the capital division of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund were indeed worthwhile projects – worthwhile projects in their day. There comes a time when one has to look at that and say: "Is it feasible for us to continue on with what we're doing today? Is it really worth our while, when we know full well that we are expending \$1.5 billion to cover the debt alone in this province?" We can no longer continue to accept some of the practices, the expenditures that were taking place in the past. We have to now pull in the reins a little bit. We've got to say to ourselves that we have to be far more conscious of how we're spending our money.

Every family in this province in this day and age is doing the same thing. Not only the poor families, Mr. Chairman: right from the lowest of incomes in this province to the richest people of the province. On occasion I go to Safeway or Food for Less or one of those major stores, and I can tell you that even the people shopping that are dressed up in fur coats and are driving Mercedes and Jaguars are looking at how much the prices are. Maybe they're not buying the brand name anymore. Maybe they'll just go down and buy something a little bit different. Perhaps it's going to be some generic brand. I note that people are doing that in pharmacies; they're not expending the funds that they used to expend. People are a little more wise now. They decide that

what they have to do is watch how they're expending their funds. We have to do the same thing in the province. I know we're making an attempt to do that. There's no question about that whatsoever. Some things take just a little bit longer and just maybe a little push from the government side and from the opposition side, but it does get done.

One of those examples, and a really good one, is the Alberta Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation. I believe it was in the Alberta heritage savings trust fund committee that we met with the hon. minister and discussed that. I believe it was the Minister of Health that we discussed it with. Perhaps it was moved over from Community Development. It was in the 1992-93 annual report of the capital projects division. This is a program where quite clearly, Mr. Chairman, it was decided that we can't expend these funds anymore.

You know, as at 1993, March 31, we were already into this project to the tune of \$2 million through the capital projects division – \$2 million. I think, if my memory serves me correctly, during the discussion that we had and the debate of the heritage savings trust fund committee, we expended a further, say, \$700,000 into this foundation. So that brings it up to a total of about \$2.7 million and closer to \$3 million. So a budget of \$5 million had been set aside, and \$3 million – I'm using these numbers because I'm trying to just give you a rough idea. I'm not quite sure whether it was \$3 million or \$2.7 million or \$3.5 million but in that range. We expended those funds already, and this government saw fit to stop it, put an end to it: "Don't bother expending the million and a half or the \$2 million that was allotted for that foundation." I applaud that move. I clearly recall the Minister of Health in that discussion say that AADAC was already doing some of these things. AADAC was doing just about everything, if not everything, that the Alberta Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation was doing. Therefore, it was rather redundant. It was duplication. It was overlap. The grants that were going out to this foundation were already being duplicated by grants going out to AADAC and as a result, with people coming forward and saying, "Why are we doing this?" the government saw the wisdom in putting an end to it. I applaud them for that.

That isn't the only example that I'd like to highlight. There are other examples. I think it was in Energy, the renewable energy research. What gets me is when we expended these funds, I think we expended up until – I note that in the 1993-94 forecast there was another \$750,000 that went into that particular program. So when we look at that, up until March 31, 1993, an expenditure of \$2,220,000 goes into this renewable energy research; another \$750,000 from the 1993-94 fiscal year. That puts it around the \$3 million level. So now we're talking about \$3 million into a project called renewable energy research and then scrapped. It was ended. It was ended because this government saw the wisdom of ending it for the reason that it was getting us nowhere. There were no realizable benefits that were to be achieved from this thing, so they put an end to it. I applaud them for that.

I really have a question for the Minister of Energy within this renewable energy research, and that is: what sort of benefits have we achieved from this expenditure? An expenditure of \$3 million from the heritage savings trust fund, capital division went into that program. What did we benefit from it? There must have been some sort of a tangible benefit. I would hope that the minister could come forward and say: "This is what we achieved. This is how much we utilized. This is some of the money that we received as a result of selling some of this technology," anything to that effect, because I would like to see what benefit was realized from the renewable energy research.

4:00

I would like to ask the Minister of Health now the same thing: what sort of identifiable benefits were there that can justify the expenditure of approximately \$3 million in the Alberta Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation? There must be something there, something tangible so they can say, "This is what we achieved; this is what we got for the money." It has to be something that is tangible, something that can prove to me that we spent that money wisely, that it wasn't being duplicated and overlapped in other areas. If it was, again, identify it so that we can see all that happened.

Another area that I want to talk about somewhat is in Environmental Protection, and that is the land reclamation program. I recall once again – and the beauty of being able to speak in this House on a number of occasions with regard to the heritage savings trust fund capital division is having the benefit of sitting on the heritage savings trust fund committee. That is one tremendous asset, to be able to get on those committees, things like that committee, committees like Public Accounts. I'd encourage all members to enthusiastically get involved in those committees because they're just a wealth of information. They are just a wealth of information when you come back to estimates debates and start talking about it. Let me tell you, Mr. Chairman, I have never felt so confident in all my life speaking about a subject like I am speaking about the estimates today. Why? Because I sat on the committee. That committee is a tremendous asset.

In the Environmental Protection land reclamation program we expended \$42 million up until March 31, 1993. Now, I know that this year within land reclamation we projected no more dollars to go into that program. Last year we spent \$2.437 million, bringing it to a total of \$42 million. One thing I have to comment about is that the program itself says that it reclaims lands that have been disturbed as a result of human activity which was not governed at the time of disturbance by the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act.

Since 1976 over 1,400 projects have been completed. Now, they've been completed to the end of, say, March 31, 1993. Mr. Chairman, 1,400 projects completed is admirable. When I look at what reclamation some of the properties have had done to them – it's things like abandoned garbage dumps, sewage lagoons, gravel pits, and mines. I ask the minister responsible for Environmental Protection: just what sort of interest did we take in the land by way of, say, a lien or maybe as a tenant in common as a result? Let's assume that it was private land, and we walked in and we reclaimed some of that property. We cleaned it up on behalf of the property owner. Whether it was owned by the Crown, by a municipality, or by a private corporation or individual, is it or was it the practice of this department within this program that we actually tried to recover some of the costs that were incurred, particularly the \$42 million that we expended within this program? Were we able to try to recover some of those costs?

I recall speaking to Bill 5, which happened in this Legislative Assembly not long ago, and that related, Mr. Chairman, to something called orphaned wells. I thought that sounded kind of strange, but after thinking about it for a while, I realized that an orphaned well is a well that may have been abandoned some time ago. The reclamation that was discussed in the debate was such that the government through industry would establish a fund, and this fund would assist in the reclamation of those wells. I had a question there with respect to somebody like an unsuspecting purchaser, but I'm going to come back to that in a second. My question to the minister would be: did we place a lien on any of

these properties that we expended \$42 million on? Because I think within Bill 5 there was a provision whereby the foundation could place a lien and be indeed ahead of any mortgage lender. They would be in first position entirely. So if it was good for Bill 5, my question is: why wasn't it good for the land reclamation within the capital division?

The problem that I would have had and continue to have right now with land reclamation is things like unsuspecting purchasers. How often this happens I'm not sure, so my question to the minister would be: have we had anybody come back to us as an unsuspecting purchaser and say to us: "I've bought a piece of property. This has been reclaimed land, and I had no idea that this actually happened"? I'm wondering if we shouldn't place some sort of caveat on the title, on all the titles, including Crown land and land owned by municipalities, Mr. Chairman, so that a purchaser can look at that piece of property and that says to him, immediately upon looking at the title, that there has been some work done in terms of reclamation and just to beware, to be careful. So a caveat can go a long way towards helping in that area.

Now, I know that the Alberta Real Estate Association had been going around for some time now asking that very question. I know because they met with me, Mr. Chairman, in my office in the Legislature Annex. When they did, I gave them some ideas as to what I would like to see the Alberta Real Estate Association come forward and discuss, at least give some ideas to government as to what they would like done. One of those areas of concern for the Real Estate Association was exactly that, that there would be a process in place where it would alert a purchaser that there was an environmental problem with the real estate they were about to purchase, and the way that they could identify it is by putting a caveat on that property.

So I think that would go a long, long ways in assisting us in the future. I understand what's happening today. If my memory serves me correctly, the people from the Alberta Real Estate Association who discussed this with me suggested that nowadays the purchaser can go back on the realtor and sue the realtor, in fact. So I'm wondering how far they can actually take that. If they're going to sue the realtor, then perhaps maybe they're going to come back on the government anyway. They're going to come back to us and say that we didn't warn them. I think that should be in there.

Another area that I'm kind of pleased to see within Environmental Protection and the capital projects division is the Pine Ridge reforestation nursery enhancement. This area is something that is of quite an interest to me. It appears as though again in this program we have spent \$23 million to March 31, 1993. Again, the insight that I've received from being on the heritage savings trust fund committee is such that we are no longer going to have to inject any further funding to Pine Ridge reforestation, which is wonderful news.

I think that now the Minister of Environmental Protection has to look at this to see if we can in fact recover some of our money by way of maybe - maybe - the privatization of such an enterprise, the enterprise being Pine Ridge reforestation nursery. This wouldn't be a bad idea. The question that I would have is: if we were to sell the Pine Ridge nursery, would the funds then come back to the heritage savings trust fund? It seems to be that in some of the other areas that we've expended in, things like urban parks for example, I suspect that if we granted funds to the municipalities, those funds and those improvements in the properties are belonging, then, to the municipality, and the government would get nothing out of it. So if they were to sell it off or privatize an urban park, which is really not an unrealistic

thought in this day and age, I would think that maybe we ought to have had some kind of a caveat on it or maybe even an interest in it like a tenant in common or putting a lien on it.

4:10

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

I guess, Mr. Chairman, my time is up, so I'll allow other members to continue.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a privilege this afternoon to stand up and speak to the estimates on the heritage fund. This is a program that really has a lot of opportunity for Alberta. We put it in place a long time ago to carry over the earnings that we had from our depletable resources in the oil and gas industry so that we can have these dollars to keep us on beyond the time that they were contributing to our economy directly. So this is a really good program, and the idea that the dollars here are being used to expand the productive capacity of Alberta in terms of the economic system is really a good opportunity and something that we should continue to support.

I'd like to address a couple of the line items in the expenditures today, particularly beginning with the Farming for the Future area under the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. There is an indication that there's going to be some reduction in the amount of dollars that are going into Farming for the Future. This brings up a couple of questions. Is this a normal reduction in the program because of reduced earnings that are coming into the income account of the heritage fund, or is it a planned reduction? It leaves me questioning the minister's actions when in his general revenue estimates he's talking about making an increased commitment to the area of agricultural research, yet now in the heritage fund, where he has the major component part of the dollars that are allocated for the research, we're seeing the cutback.

I was just wondering here, in terms of the commitment that the minister keeps talking about to his consultation, whether or not and what process he went through in the consultation for reductions in the heritage fund? Does he have specific areas where the heritage fund will be reduced? In terms of its focus of research, will this be the field plots, will it be the on-farm demonstrations, will it be basic research out of the number of different categories that are supported?

Also in the focus of this research effort a question comes up with how this is going to be co-ordinated with the research systems that are funded out of the general revenue component part of the minister's activities. We see that there's been a lot of emphasis put on research. There's a change in the funding that's going on in the administrative part of research support within the general revenue dollars. How is that going to tie into how the dollars are spent out of the heritage fund allocation?

On the basis for prioritizing expenditures under Farming for the Future, I'd just ask the minister if he could comment on how these dollars are prioritized. Is it done on a co-operative basis with the sector? What area is given priority? We see the expenditure patterns that are being put in place now for research. Does this mean basic research, is it support for production, or does it go all the way through to market development, into the kinds of research that are now much more important for producers when they're trying to seek out the niche market in the agriculture sector? So

we need to have an idea of how this prioritization was put in place. It's easy to say that there's a base level of funding that's going out there, but in order for the sector to be adequately represented, it needs to be looked at from the perspective of how this priority was put in place and whether or not the sector was consulted.

The Alberta Agricultural Research Institute, which is funded out of the general revenue part, is again another administrative part of the ag research program. Why is it that we in essence have a separate administrative unit to deal with general revenue funding and another unit that deals with the heritage trust fund funding for agricultural research? I think it would be appropriate if the minister looked seriously at the opportunity for combining the administrative function of agricultural research and the focus of agricultural research under a single board and under a single administrative unit.

Also, I've questioned the minister in terms of the direction that his support and his commitment to agricultural research and promotion of value added in the industry will be hindered if the review of the Alberta heritage fund program, when it comes out, suggests that this program should be liquidated and the dollars used to pay down the debt, so that then we no longer have this ongoing contribution. I think this would be a very sad time for Alberta in terms of the potential that we have there to get increases in our economic base through the research and the programs that are supported by the Alberta heritage fund.

The second item that I'd like to address briefly is the commitment of dollars from the heritage fund for the irrigation rehabilitation and expansion program. Here we see that there's a commitment to reduce it from \$19 million to \$18 million. I'd like to have an explanation of how this works in with the overall plan for the rehabilitation of agriculture or the irrigation districts, how this fits in with the long-term plans of both the district and the ministers, and how this was derived through the consultation process.

We've also seen in the upcoming business plans, the business plans that project three years into the future, the potential of a water tax coming out of the department of the environment. Is there going to be some relationship between this water payment that's going to be charged to users and the replacement part of it for the irrigation rehabilitation program?

We see in the business plans as well that there's a commitment to phase out this program. I was wondering if any studies have been put in place that would really show that the projected and the planned rehabilitation will be totally complete within the districts by the time this phaseout has occurred.

The commitment by the government and the ministry to support an endowment to kind of replace the annual cash flow, or the cash commitment, to irrigation rehabilitation is also being phased out. What is going to be the future in terms of irrigation rehabilitation? Is this eventually going to become a complete user-pay program? If that is the case, is the minister now negotiating with the irrigation districts or the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association for specific plans that can be implemented in terms of creating a fund that will support the rehabilitation needs of the irrigation districts into the future? This is an important part of the agriculture sector in rural Alberta. The need to keep it upgraded and effective so that it can sustain this contribution to the economic system in southern Alberta is really important. I'd like to see the minister discuss some of the options that are available for a long-term commitment.

4:20

Also in terms of the program that comes out and the commitment to the phasing out of the funding, what or have any studies

been put in place that would show the level of support that is needed on an annual basis to maintain the system, whether it comes from heritage fund, general revenue, or producer-pay dollars? Is there a long-term plan there that kind of shows an annualized requirement to maintain the system? It's been done on a strong commitment by the government in the past, and as this moves from a government-supported activity into a potentially user pay, it's important that the producers and the landowners have a strong indication of where they stand and the kind of financial commitment that they'd have to make to keep their system at an effective and efficient operating level. This is really important when we start tying in the environmental impacts with the water use requirements of southern Alberta, because as the distribution networks and the headgates - their effectiveness is reduced. They wear out. What we end up with is more leakage, more potential there for salinity. So we need to have an ongoing commitment to maintain these irrigation networks, whether it comes from the public dollar or from the private commitment.

Also, under the irrigation rehabilitation program the minister has indicated that he's going to reduce support from the 86-14 level formula that they're using right now to a 75-25 funding formula over a period of two or three years. What I would like to know is how the minister can justify a sudden shift in his commitment to a funding formula when he's been such a strong supporter of the 86-14 relationship, both in this Legislature and in community meetings, when discussing these funding relationships with the irrigation producers and the irrigation districts. Is there new information that would contradict the study by the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association last year, which reinforced a strong commitment and strong economic support for the 86-14 funding?

I'd like to just go on to the next line for a minute, private irrigation development support. What we see here basically is a 50 percent reduction in the dollars that are going to go out of the heritage fund into private irrigation development support. I take it from this cutback that this is the beginning of a phaseout process. How does this work in with the licensing that is now being put in place for water users? Is this going to mean a change in the way licensing is put in place, how people apply for it, the need for a new or modified application process where under this application process an applicant would have to show some kind of a financial ability to develop the water delivery, the water access system, that previously has been supported through the private irrigation development program?

The other issue that comes up in terms of the phaseout of the private irrigation development deals with the equity issues of the producers who are funding private irrigation development as opposed to the producers who are dealing with a district irrigation development. They end up with some public dollars or some funding mechanism to support their production, whereas the private water user has to deal with the total cost of obtaining the water and the delivery system under their own financial resources. So what we need to do is have some feeling here for how this is going to affect the commitment to equity of producers in the same area.

The next issue that I wanted to address dealt with the rehabilitation again, basically the grazing reserves enhancement. Under this area we see that the minister is committed to making a change into cost recovery, again by the '96-97 fiscal year, and he's putting in about \$3.7 million in this fiscal year. Is this going to effectively complete the enhancement of these grazing reserves under this program so that when the cost recovery begins in the '96-97 fiscal year, all producers would be treated equally in the sense that they're all starting from the same base, as opposed to having some where their grazing lease has been upgraded and in others the

brush has not yet been removed? I just was wondering if this is a commitment over the next two years that would really bring all of the grazing leases onto a par basis so that the people who then are going to be charged for their use would be dealing with the same kind of productivity and the same kind of prior commitment from the government to a standardized level of performance of that grazing reserve.

I think these are good programs, and the idea that the government has been putting dollars out of the heritage fund into them gives us a feeling that the opportunity for farmers to put their cattle in there and know that they're getting the best use is good. I just was concerned that as the dollars are removed, there be some equity maintained between the users.

The other issues that I'd like to deal with, then, are basically associated with the department of the environment, again dealing with some of the irrigation issues under water management systems improvement. We see here that the water management headworks and main canal rehabilitation is going to be winding down, yet we see the government making commitments to some new dam construction. How is this going to work in? I understand that some of these proposals that are now at least at the environmental impact assessment stage will require public dollars. Where will these dollars come from?

Also under the water management development I was wondering how the projects were prioritized. We see some of them going in. There's a lot of work that has to be done with the United States on the Milk River project. By the fact that the government is now committing dollars to support the Milk River project, does that mean that approval has been obtained and some kind of a co-operative agreement entered into with the U.S. government on the water sharing and the storage requirements that are associated with that project?

I'd also like to talk a little bit about the relationship between water management. We see that the minister is also responsible for the waterworks and the environment, and I would just ask for some clarification in terms of how the minister is making out in terms of getting the management team put in place for the Oldman River dam. This is getting to be a real crisis situation where some of the environmental groups that work within the province of Alberta are now asking for a reversion to recommendation 1 by the federal government, where they stipulated that if a satisfactory management plan wasn't put in place, the dam would be decommissioned and actually have to be torn down.

Basically, that covers the issues that I wanted to address. I'll cede the floor to someone else now, if they want.

4:30

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. [some applause] Thank you very much.

AN HON. MEMBER: Support from the ranks.

MS LEIBOVICI: Support from the ranks, yes.

I rise to speak to the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division. In terms of the dispensing of the funds within this particular fund, there's a question that immediately comes to mind. When we look at the document that's before us, it's exceedingly thin. One of the questions that I wonder is – we've seen with the other estimates that have been brought before this Legislative Assembly that there have been business plans developed for a three-year period. There is no business plan for the

Alberta heritage savings trust fund, and there are significant dollars that are at risk, potentially, with regards to the expenditure of these dollars. So the first question that I would put to the minister is: why is that the case? Why are there no projections, and why isn't there a three-year business plan so that we can see where the fund and the expenditures are heading for in the next three years, especially with the government's commitment to deficit reduction?

The reason that I bring this up as an issue is that in effect we've seen some doublespeak by this government with regards to certain items. We've heard the government say: "Oh, no. It's not us that are closing down hospitals; it's they that are doing it. It's not us that are dealing with the issue of kindergarten; it's they that are doing it. It's not us that are cutting transfer payments to municipalities, but – oh, we'd better step back. The federal government wants to do it to us, and, heaven forbid, that shouldn't occur."

So I think we need, in terms of the Legislative Assembly, a clear-cut plan as to where we're heading with this savings trust fund. Now, I think the government can stand up and say, "It's not us that are doing this," but when we look at the estimates and when we look at the dollars that are being provided to sectors such as health care, to sectors such as social services, to sectors such as education, there's only one conclusion that comes, and that is that there is a bit of a charade that is going on. I'm sure that the public has already caught on to the charade, this "Oh, no; it's not us, but on the other hand, we're not providing the dollars so that you can provide the services." Perhaps Albertans have been standing back and have been saying: "Well, we hope that it's going to be worth the pain. We hope that the problems, the inadequacies of the systems that are going to occur as a result of the cuts to our budgets are going to be worth all of the pain."

Yet when we look at examples upon which this government has built some of their deficit cutting, when we look at New Zealand, all we see is that there was lots of pain and there has been no gain. When we look at that kind of a scenario and we look at this government who refuses to accept responsibility for the impact of its decisions, then I think we're going to see Albertans who are going to say, "No longer is this something that we have to endure because we're going to see something good come out at the end of it, but in fact there is no coherent plan, the business plans are a sham, what we are seeing is a lack of fiscal responsibility by this government, and this budget is just a slash-and-burn budget but is not one that is based on good, sound fiscal management."

I can think of some examples when one looks at the Grace hospital in Calgary, and there are a lot of MLAs that are from Calgary. I've had the privilege of taking a tour at that particular hospital, and I see the benefits of the programs that hospital brings forward. Those are benefits that are going to in the long run and have in the short term proved to be effective and efficient with regards to the kind of care that's provided. Though when you see a slash-and-burn budget, then what happens is the things that are good, the things that are efficient, the things that are effective are in fact cut out of the budget and cut out of people's lives.

Perhaps for some of the members sitting here, when you look at figures of millions and billions of dollars, these are just numbers on a page. These are not numbers that have a reality and do not translate into people's lives and do not translate to the effect on people. The effect that we are seeing is low employment. We are the only province in Canada that has had an increase in terms of our unemployment. We're seeing restricted access to educational facilities, and we're seeing difficulties arising in the hospital sector.

I was just on the phone with a constituent of mine who is going into one of our city hospitals within a month to have three-quarters of her stomach removed. After that kind of an operation she's

going to be kept in the hospital for one night, she is told by her physician, and then she's going to be sent home. Her husband is not able to take care of her. She is on a disability pension at this point in time and is not aware of and is not sure whether there's anyone that's going to be able to take care of her and give her the community help that this government widely has proclaimed is in place to take care of her. To top it all, to show how severe her disability is going to be, she can't even get into a car when she's let out of the hospital. The doctor has informed her that she is going to have to get an ambulance. Can you imagine this? It's no longer taking people from their homes to the hospital; she's going to have to get an ambulance to take her from the hospital to her house because she can't sit in a car. This is the result of these cuts. Then we hear the minister and we hear the Premier saying: it's not my fault; it's not us that are making these decisions. Well, I think the buck has to stop. The reason it's occurring is because it's occurring in this Legislative Assembly through the budgets that we're seeing and through a slash-and-burn budget.

Now, when we hear the minister talk about the beauty of the plan – I believe the Premier has said that as well – and that what's going to happen is we're going to get rid of our deficit, we have heard no talk whatsoever as to what happens to the debt. We have a \$30 billion debt, just to remind people, that in three years will be a lot higher. That debt is estimated to be \$34 billion.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, excuse me for interrupting. I'm having a hard time figuring – you're not on the topic.

MS LEIBOVICI: I'm getting right there.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You're coming there. I hope so.

MS LEIBOVICI: I'm right there.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Because you've been off for quite a few . . .

MS LEIBOVICI: I thought you were going to say there was too much noise in the Assembly, and I was going to agree with that a hundred percent.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, that's a problem too, but the problem is – I felt very sorry for that lady and everything, but I think you were off the topic, hon. member. So let's get right on to the . . .

MS LEIBOVICI: I am right on topic, and you'll see how it just flows right into it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MS LEIBOVICI: We've got a \$34 billion debt, and in fact what we need to look at is the heritage savings trust fund – see, I promised you next sentence – that was supposedly going to be saved for a rainy day. Now, if this is not a rainy day or a stormy day, then I don't know what is. In fact, the question is: what are we waiting for? [interjections] There's thunder and there's lightning, I'm being told by the members in the Assembly, and I quite agree with them.

Now, the mandate – I think what we need to ask ourselves is what is going to happen with this debt, and where does the heritage savings trust fund fit into that particular scenario? I question as to: is this the government's next election campaign?

Are they going to say: "Well, we've got rid of the deficit. Now in three years' time we're going to be attacking the debt. Trust us. We're going to get rid of the debt now"? If we've seen pain before, then I think the pain that we're going to see as a result of the debt reduction process is going to be something that no one can bear.

4:40

Now, the question of course is: how much is this actual fund worth, and how much can we get our hands on? When we look at the difference between the book value and the market value and we look at different analyses of this fund, it is scary that somewhere along the way we seem to lose \$2 billion or \$3 billion or \$4 billion. I think this is something that needs to be addressed so that if we were to liquidate, we would know exactly how much we can get our hands on.

The government has been delaying the review of the heritage savings trust fund, and again I ask: why is that the case? There have been numerous calls, including from the Liberals, that say there should be an effective way to liquidate the heritage savings trust fund and apply it directly to the debt. If any of us have mortgages – I know I do on my house – the reason for that is, of course, that what you want to do is you want to pay down your principal as quickly as you can. Otherwise, you're paying interest forever. That's what the idea is behind trying to pay down your debt, so that your interest does not eat up all of your revenue, which in fact is what's happening. Half of our revenue out of the heritage savings trust fund is being eaten up by the interest.

So we've had the Auditor General say that the Treasury Department should initiate a review. We've had the Alberta Financial Review Commission state that there should be a review and a liquidation of the heritage savings trust fund. We've had the Institute of Chartered Accountants recommending that there should be a review. We've had various professors indicating that there should be a review. Yet the government is still stalling on that review, and again, why is that? Is that so the government can say in three years' time: "Trust me. We will get rid of the debt. You will feel no more pain"? I don't think there will be much trust in this government from Albertans in three years' time.

If there is to be a true accounting of this particular fund, what we need to have is a consolidation of the budget. I ask: why is this separate from the various other budgets that we've seen? Why is there a section in here that deals with occupational health and safety under Labour? Why is there a section that deals with Community Development in terms of parks? Why are those not incorporated if there is to be a true business plan, again of those particular departments? Why do we not see an incorporation of these particular areas within the departments, so a department such as Labour can say, "If we require or if there is a need for studies to be done with regards to occupational health and safety, they can be co-ordinated and viewed as a whole"? I've addressed this numerous times in the Legislative Assembly in terms of the departmentalization, as it were, of different departments within government, and it seems that now carries over into the fund as well.

There are a couple of other points that I would like to make in terms of the particular fund. I think it is noteworthy to see that on March 31, 1987, this particular fund was valued at \$12.745 billion, and by March of 1993 the value was now \$11.951 billion. So in effect we have seen a lessening of the value of this particular rainy day fund. My suggestion is that before government gets their fingers into it any more, it be liquidated and applied towards the debt.

Now, we've heard government say that they don't want to be in business anymore. Well, then we're looking at items such as the

Lloydminster bi-provincial upgrader; there was a question asked in the Legislative Assembly about that. These are areas that have been funded by the fund. The Prince Rupert grain terminal, Ridley Grain: the province has \$126 million invested in this particular terminal. Millar Western Pulp: we know that if no principal or interest payments are made by 2004, then Albertans will have lost another \$550 million in income.

So I think what we should really look at within these estimates is sending a strong message that what we need to do is to say – and I will quote the chartered accountants of Alberta. They say that to keep the fund in its current form only invites further direct intervention by the government in the economy, something which can only lead to further losses of fund dollars.

This is not a fund that is efficient. It is not a fund that is effective. This is an area that the government needs to look at, needs to incorporate within its general estimates, hopefully for the next session. We need to see the items that are within, that are being supported by the fund, being addressed within the business plans.

Thank you.

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

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, due to the time, I'll have to keep it rather short today. I know the members opposite will be dying to get home for a little golf.

MR. LUND: Is that a promise, Lance?

MR. WHITE: It's a promise, Ty.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of things to be said about this particular fund. I'll restrict my comments today on a theme, and it's quite simple: it's the political interference and the political expedience of some of these expenditures. I'll go through them rather quickly so that it won't bore you and others that are present.

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

We wonder now why so noble a venture when it was first conceived as the Alberta heritage savings trust fund was – and it still should be, but unfortunately it has come off the rails a great deal. It being a savings plan, I'll start with some of the expenditures that occur.

I'll start with Environmental Protection. There are water systems. Water systems are provided throughout a great deal of the rural communities, and landfills also, but we'll stick to water main systems right now. Now, how is it that one can say that former governments did not lend a helping hand in a particular area to develop a water supply system over another area? You can't say, "Oh, it's just on the basis of need and the ability to pay." Well, the problem is, of course, that any urban setting knows that they in fact must pay. Some of the smaller centres actually know that also, but when the largess of a government hand comes to lay it upon them and says, "Yes, this is the way we will be doing business," there's a fine line between that deliverance of service, as any politician should and could, and political – I can't say "patronage" because it certainly wouldn't be that, but it is a little extra helping hand in one area versus another. That has to be questioned. You know, if we had a real freedom of information, we could tell where that was so that you could stack up the criteria for which any one of the funding areas would be required.

Likewise in landfills; there's a great deal of money in Environmental Protection spent on land reclamation and land filling. Well, you know what occurred there is that someone, some bright light, way back in the past decided that you just found an empty spot and dumped. The surficial geology does not support that kind of thing in any modern sense. Of course, the governments had to look around to find those areas, because the pollution runs far and wide once you start letting it go.

4:50

Who has to pay? Well, classic economics would say that the users pay, or in modern terms one would say that the polluters pay. If the municipality doesn't have a lot of money, you either have to force them to do it or pay for it. Well, this government paid for it. Now, I have a little difficulty with that when it's been known for years and years and years that any landfill should be on a clay bed in that it's the natural impervious layer to prevent soil saturation of pollutants, and it in fact holds them. You don't need to be a rocket scientist or, in Don Cherry's words, a rocket surgeon to understand that, nor did people quite a while ago.

Unfortunately, a lot of the municipalities just simply ignored that for the sake of expedience and went out and dumped. This government in the largess or past governments of the same persuasion decided that that was not sufficient grounds to have those people in fact clean it up and spent a great deal, millions and millions, \$42 million in accumulated dollars, which is a lot of money recognizing that there were only some 75 sites in this province that I'm aware of that had that service delivered.

Moving on to the community development area. Here we have the Alberta Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation. We all know exactly where that came from. That came from one former member of the House. One member, and it was his personal tragedy that brought it on. We all felt sorry for him for sure, but it was absolutely and completely politically motivated. As this government has made amends and has corrected that error through the member from – I can't quite recall the area. She has decided that it need not be a burden any longer and rolled its funding and responsibilities into AADAC, which is a very wise thing to do. The political motivation spent at least \$2 million accumulated up until the end of March of '93, and that's all that was accounted for. Certainly, there was a lot of heartache in AADAC and push and pull in order to find out what in fact their responsibility was. That fortunately has been solved, but it should never, ever, ever be revisited, that sort of thing, that one politician can take these funds that are the heritage of all Albertans and push it solely in that single direction.

We move on to urban park development. Now, one would think that fairness and equity would prevail there, and if one comes to the conclusion that a savings fund should be spent on parks and recreation areas, one would say that we would have to survey the opportunities for parks and recreation in whatever part of the province one lives, disseminate those funds on an equitable basis. This of course was certainly not done in this instance, because the rural areas received a great deal of funds.

I refer to the notes here, but as I understand, the rural areas in fact under a special program called municipal recreation/tourism received \$14 million. That's aside from all the provincial parks that are next door to a great number of these areas, which in fact to the province's credit has put a great deal of service into those. We know of a number of areas where these parks in fact serve very, very few people. In fact, in some instances, and one in particular in the former constituency of Taber-Warner, I understand there are a couple of communities that actually have parks that are out of town. They have given up cutting the lawn,



because the last person that was there left the lawnmower out, and it sits there. Nobody cares any longer. Now that is a gross error in expenditure of funds. You can't believe the local municipality. Somebody laid the money on them and said: "Here it is. Put a plaque on it, and I'll be back to visit it once every X number of years." Well, unfortunately that didn't occur, and we have these ridiculous expenditures throughout the province which are an embarrassment to this government and to all future governments, because everyone knows that it's simple political motivation that causes these things to occur.

We're talking further about urban parks. Now, you'd think again that this would be disseminated on an equal basis. It certainly was not. The smaller centres here versus the larger centres have a 7 to 1 to 10 to 1 difference in ratio in the amount that was spent. Now, urban life at the best of times is a bit of a trade-off and a sacrifice, but when your provincial government through political motivations does not deliver that kind of service, one does get a little bit of a jaundiced view of the political system.

Time is moving on, so I'll have to speed up here a little.

Economic Development and Tourism. Again here are the classic ones. Here we are spending \$221 million on a program called the individual line service, 115,000 lines. That's \$2,000 per line. Two thousand dollars a line. Now, an urban centre doesn't get that, I can tell you. Urban centres, whether it be Red Deer or Lacombe or High River, all pay their fair share. They pay for the deliverance of the service because they have paid for that by the regular rate. Not so rural Alberta. This program happened to come into existence just before an election. It was revisited one more time again just before an election. I can't think of a more ridiculous amount of money being spent on an area that really doesn't need it, particularly now that we're getting into an age of wireless communications. That \$2,000 per line could've done wonders, absolute wonders for a cell system in this province that is coming very, very soon. Within seven to 10 years we will have modular cell systems that will work extremely well in all kinds of conditions.

Also, we have Transportation and Utilities. In transportation there's the expenditure of air terminal buildings. You know, they didn't end up in Lacombe, or they didn't end up in any larger centres where in fact terminal buildings were used. No. There's one down again, strangely enough, in Taber-Warner that is used for one aircraft. I wonder who owns that aircraft. He just happens to be a former minister. Now, this is absolutely ludicrous, that we could expend those kinds of funds on services like that.

Now, I have no illusions that politics has to play somewhat in virtually every decision of this House, but one can line them up and compare them and say: lookit, this is a reasonable expenditure on behalf of the citizens of Alberta, and this one is not. Those that I have just gone through certainly do not meet that test.

The last one is a little bit of a hybrid, and that's more of an investment in Lloydminster. The only area of difficulty that I have with this and the political connection is that freedom of information would allow us all of that kind of information we spoke about earlier today, and we would not have to question the chairman of the board, a former Tory member of this House. A very good chap. Perhaps very, very competent at what he does. He was a very good farmer at the time, I'm sure, and still is. What gives him the special talents to be the chairman of that board, other than having been a friend of the government? The answer is quite simply: absolutely, completely none. Now, to make these decisions on the basis of Albertans I would prefer to have a free and open competition. Yes, perhaps if he or she happens to be a knowledgeable person and an acquaintance of this government, I can accept that, but certainly as nice a chap as Mr.

Miller is, as knowledgeable as he is in heavy oils, corporate finance was and is by his admission not one of his strong points.

Due to the hour I would prefer to let other members of this caucus in. Thank you very kindly for your time, sir.

5:00

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He hasn't recognized you yet. Edmonton-Whitemud, would you like to speak?

DR. PERCY: It's a pleasure to speak again to these estimates. I would just make three points, Mr. Chairman, to conclude comments on the heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division. First, when you look at the array of projects here, each by itself may be worthy of support. But why it is here, why it's not in the line item of a department is not clear. I mean, is it historical accident that just this collection of projects is here? There have been no answers given to that question, and I think it's an important question, particularly when this forthcoming review emerges. I think that this fund could easily be collapsed, the projects evaluated to see how they fit into departmental priorities, and that we could eliminate the capital projects division of the heritage savings trust fund and just do it through the departments and use those funds that are presently used here elsewhere, either to finance, to save and live off the interest income, what have you. So that's one point: why this collection of projects?

Second is just the decision-making process that leads items to be funded out of the capital projects division as opposed to, you know, the general revenue fund. What is the division, Mr. Chairman? Why here and not the GRF?

The third point is the degree of integration that exists among some of these projects. I think I dealt at some length with the potential overlap between those projects in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and those in Environmental Protection. That issue should be addressed, because if the name of the game is streamlining and ensuring integration of delivery of government services and an overall plan for government investments in capital projects, the type of demarcation that we have here probably is not in anyone's best interests.

So with those comments, Mr. Chairman, I will conclude. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee is reminded that we have under consideration, then, the estimates of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division, and we'll go through project by project.

Agreed to:

**Agriculture, Food and Rural Development**

Project 1 – Farming for the Future	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$4,800,000
Project 2 – Irrigation Rehabilitation and Expansion	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$18,000,000
Project 3 – Private Irrigation Development Assistance	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$250,000
Project 4 – Grazing Reserves Enhancement	
Total Operating Expenditure	\$3,712,000

**Community Development**

Project 1 – Urban Park Development  
 Total Operating Expenditure \$4,000,000

**Energy**

Project 1 – Renewable Energy Research –

**Environmental Protection**

Project 1 – Water Management Systems Improvement  
 Total Operating Expenditures \$1,665,000  
 Total Capital Investment \$14,635,000  
 Project 2 – Land Reclamation –  
 Project 3 – Pine Ridge Reforestation  
 Nursery Enhancement –

**Health**

Project 1 – Applied Cancer Research  
 Total Operating Expenditures \$2,800,000  
 Project 2 – Alberta Family Life and  
 Substance Abuse Foundation –

**Labour**

Project 1 – Occupational Health and Safety  
 Research and Education  
 Total Operating Expenditures \$750,000  
 Total \$50,612,000

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that the vote be reported on the heritage savings trust fund, capital projects division.

[Motion carried]

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

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 the approval of the following estimates, and requests leave to sit again.

Agriculture, Food and Rural Development: \$4,800,000 for Farming for the Future, \$18,000,000 for irrigation rehabilitation and expansion, \$250,000 for private irrigation development assistance, \$3,712,000 for grazing reserves enhancement, for a total of \$26,762,000.

Community Development: \$4,000,000 for urban park development.

Environmental Protection: \$16,300,000 for water management systems improvement.

Health: \$2,800,000 for applied cancer research.

Labour: \$750,000 for occupational health and safety research and education.

Total: \$50,612,000.

**5:10**

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

All in favour of the report?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it's been a long week. We have sat late and risen early.

[At 5:12 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]