

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, March 1, 1995** 8:00 p.m.
 Date: 95/03/01
 [The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please be seated.

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

Bill 7 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1995

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Provincial Treasurer I would move third reading of Bill 7, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Bill.

[Motion carried; Bill 7 read a third time]

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: I would call the committee to order. The committee is reminded of the relaxed rules of the committee stage. There is one rule that we would like to try and maintain as best we can: that only one member be standing and speaking at the same time. You may stand and walk out of the Chamber, but if you wish to engage in conversation, we would appreciate it if you would move over to the person with whom you want to engage in lively or quiet conversation or else go into one of the lounges outside the Chamber.

head: **Main Estimates 1995-96**

Labour

THE CHAIRMAN: We would ask the hon. Minister of Labour to make some comments before we ask for comments and questions and amendments.

MR. DAY: I'll make some brief comments, Mr. Chairman, and then see if there are any comments from the other side. If not, we'll just call it an evening. We'll see how it goes.

I just want to do a quick recap, if I can, and just take a few minutes to do it. Reflecting the overall direction of government, where we're going and where we want to be, you're going to see a continuation, as is plainly indicated in our business plans, of simplifying legislation, regulation, and looking at improved service delivery, looking continually at our overall approach on all issues, which is facilitation, and looking at and analyzing what the Department of Labour needs to be doing and what in fact it doesn't need to be doing and what others could be doing more effectively.

As you know, just using as an example, in the past we've combined two pieces of labour legislation. We've taken seven pieces of legislation and looked at combining those under the Safety Codes Act. We've simplified occupational health and safety regulations. We've amalgamated the former OH and S office locations with Alberta Labour offices, and there's been the establishment of some delegated administrative organizations, being the Petroleum Tank Management Association, working there with Environmental Protection in dealing with some of the issues faced by business and consumers in Alberta.

In terms of having a philosophy which encourages proaction and a proactive approach to issues, especially labour issues, I want to just highlight our issues management division, which works very aggressively in terms of trying to anticipate where there may be concerns related to labour issues and getting out in front on them and be there in a facilitating advisory capacity and able to offer services. We've seen a reduction in days lost as a result of strikes and work stoppages of 75 percent from 1991-92 to '93-94. You project that on to the Alberta advantage, and it certainly speaks volumes about the high level, I think, of improved co-operation that we're seeing, both on the labour and the management sides of issues and the realization from both sides that co-operation, collaboration, communication is the way to work and not take things from an adversarial perspective.

As we've said clearly in our business plan, there are areas of privatization which are being followed through. We will be continuing, for instance, the mediation services, the occupational health and safety laboratory – that's in '96-97 – looking at a number of areas that can move to more effective delivery systems. Basically we've been able to achieve, in terms of cost and cost savings, an 18 and a half percent ratio of administration costs to program costs. I think that's something that's also worthy of note in terms of our achievement there.

Basically, I can sum up by saying that I believe the figures clearly show that the approach that we're taking to issues, being out in front – and whether we're talking, as I've already indicated, labour/management issues or whether we're talking employment standards or whether we're talking about occupational health and safety issues, we want to be clearly working in a collaborative way with the various stakeholders and partners that are involved. The word "partners" is a key one. What we've been able to establish and see established in terms of partnerships in business as related to occupational health and safety issues has been significant.

There's no way this or any government could hire enough people to be out there taking the message about the importance of occupational health and safety onto every work site. So what happens through a combination of incentives and encouraging partnerships is that you have the industries themselves form their safety associations, and they become the deliverers of the message. They pay a levy into their association, so there's an incentive for them to get a return on that. They, then, work on the work site: management, labour, frontline people, supervisory people working in an industry association to address the issues that are of prime importance. When you get that happening and industries themselves taking the initiative with their personnel, that's when you start to see real results in terms of injury reduction, and that in fact is what we have seen: that level of co-operation with industry associations taking on the issues with occupational health and safety, leading it or encouraging the partnership and being there to audit, being there for policy development and, when necessary, enforcing regulation. When you can bring both business and labour in a particular work situation to an awareness of the opportunities for people – and it's not just the bottom line but in fact for people in terms of increased safety, increased awareness – the results are notable and the results are verifiable.

That's the approach that we're going to continue to take: looking for maximum efficiency in delivery, maximum results in performance standards, all reflecting areas that the government as a whole is highlighting. We are actively putting in place and have over the last two years in the department. The numbers speak for themselves.

At this point I would entertain observations, suggestions, and of course the usual constructive criticism from my own colleagues or members across the floor. Thank you very much.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for those opening remarks. I'd like to start the evening with some general comments and move from the general to the specific. In terms of the Department of Labour, the department was one of the first departments in this government to work on three-year business plans and has continued that trend. What we're now starting to see within the department are actually business plans within business plans. We're starting to see that there are various areas within the Labour department that are working on business plans, some of which are finished and some of which have yet to be developed, and unfortunately we don't have those provided. One of my requests to the minister will be to have the minister provide the business plans for those areas that are developing their business plans so we can look at those in more detail.

8:10

The minister has indicated over time, and the department is moving towards – and I'll quote actually from *A Better Way II*, which is a sequel to *A Better Way I*:

The department now operates on principles designed to promote facilitation and partnership rather than intervention and regulation.

In fact this is a laudable goal, but the reality is that one of the functions of the Department of Labour must be a policing function. The Department of Labour, though it seems to be moving away from that responsibility and believes it can all be delegated away, in effect has to remain the policing type of function.

Now, the department talks about an audit function, and my fear is that the audit function – and I've addressed this before – is purely a paper review, that there are perhaps not enough bodies there to actually go out on site and provide the inspections that are necessary in order to regulate. Though regulation seems to be a dirty word for this particular government, in certain areas it is something that needs to be maintained.

This department was also the first department, in reality, to look at the third option or the delegated regulatory organizations or, as they became known, the delegated administrative organizations. The department is continuing to move along that way. It's continuing to say that there are certain areas that can be privatized, that there are areas that are being delegated out, one of which is the boilers and pressure vessels, which, in my understanding, is very close to completion.

But there are still dangers inherent in terms of the whole concept, and it's also my understanding that not everyone is particularly pleased with the direction that some of the DAOs are taking, in particular when you look at the boilers and pressure vessels. One of the concerns there is in terms of the fees. The fees were set in September. All of a sudden here we are. It's April of '95. The fees are going to go up again. The reality is that the government is I don't think willing to let go of its revenue base. When you look at the long-range plans for the department, the department is planning to move to a self-funded ratio of 28.3 percent.

In September of '93 the department was talking – and this was in a response from the minister to myself in September of '93 – that the self-funded ratio was going to be 35 percent. Now, there are questions in terms of: what's caused that change? What is

the real figure? There was somewhere else where I noticed a figure for a self-funded ratio of 29.5 percent. How are these figures determined? On what basis? In order to achieve that ratio of funding, what needs to perhaps happen is that the fees will continue to rise. This is of great concern, of course, to all those individuals who are looking at putting their hands in their pockets and taking out dollars to pay for these services. So that's a question in terms of a general sort of overview as to the direction this department is going.

Work force adjustment comes up a number of times. I have brought that up as well in the past estimates that we've looked at. The department – I think it's in the *Better Way* document – indicates that the work force adjustment is something that is of importance to the department, especially across the different sectors. Now, it's a little after the fact, shall we say, when we've seen layoffs occurring on a yearly basis within the department. Every January public servants get a bit of a belated Christmas present from this government in terms of the layoff slips. What the Department of Labour is now coming to realize is that there have been different work force adjustment strategies at work across this province. Even when you look at different hospitals – for instance, I can think of dietary technicians in Calgary who, depending on when they were told they were going to be laid off, did not receive any severance packages at all. Alberta Hospital Edmonton is another situation – and perhaps the Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan will address that later on in more detail – where again it seems that the employees are being penalized because of when they became part of Alberta Hospital Edmonton and when the severance packages are being given out.

The Member for Fort McMurray also has an example of nurses who are being differentially treated in terms of rehiring, whether they are considered in management or out of management. So there seems to be across the province a lack of standard with regards to work force adjustment. Now, when you look at other provinces, Saskatchewan in particular, in terms of what they've done, they have set a standard across the province for employees who are going to be laid off. Now, I don't really think that's funny. There seems to be some laughter, and I would hope that that wasn't addressed towards the individuals who are being laid off.

Professions and occupations is one of those areas that seems to be designated to turn into a DAO.

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

THE CHAIRMAN: A point of order, hon. member. The Minister of Labour is rising on a point of order. Would you care to cite, please?

Point of Order Imputing Motives

MR. DAY: Under 23(i). I honestly don't think that the member opposite was trying to allege that laughter was coming either from me or directed to her comments. In committee, where the atmosphere is somewhat more relaxed, there was some laughter off to the side as a couple of members were talking. Just for anybody who follows *Hansard*, I would want that very clear, that there was no laughter coming from me or from any of the members here related to that particular incident. I don't think she was intending that, but I just wanted to clarify it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Chair would suggest that perhaps one would deal with it as when you're reading a Shakespearean play:

there were sounds of laughter off stage. I'm sure that's what you were referring to.

MS LEIBOVICI: I wasn't. I just wanted to clarify that the laughter was not directed towards that, and I would never have suggested that of the hon. minister, because he would never have done that.

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: In terms of the professions and occupations area, that is an area that is looking at becoming . . . [interjections]

Chairman's Ruling Decorum

THE CHAIRMAN: Order. The committee is reminded that we just wanted one person speaking out loud, and if the others could temper their enthusiasm to a lower pitch, then we would be able to hear clearly the words and the questions from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

8:20

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: This is an area that is looking at becoming in a sense privatized even though it has a number of very important functions that it's undertaking right now: one, in terms of the Health Workforce Rebalancing Committee; the other is looking at the draft document that the minister had provided with regards to the implementation of a DAO in professions and occupations.

A concern that I had raised in I believe it was last year's estimates was in terms of the validity of having an MLA as a chair of that committee. I would think that especially given the current chair's admirable consideration of the public dollar when you look at Family Day, perhaps this is another way that this particular chair could actually save dollars for this government and either refuse to take the extra salary that's attached with being chair of the professions and occupations committee or indicate that, no, there really is no need for an MLA to be chair of that, that this is an area that runs quite well without an MLA chair and the extra \$15,000 or \$18,000 that's attached to that.

The department has, like other departments, put forward benchmarks, and in looking at the benchmarks, some of them are questionable in terms of whether the department itself has an impact on the attainment of those benchmarks. For instance, one of the first ones is the person-days lost as a result of labour disputes and work stoppages. When we look in more detail in terms of the area of the department that would in effect have an effect on this particular area, it would probably be the issues management area or the mediation area. When we look at mediation, mediation is now provided for on a fee-for-service basis. The issues management area is being cut back. I would pose the question as to whether in fact the issues management area is actually able to have an impact on this particular benchmark.

Also when we look at strikes that are starting to occur, like the projectionist strike, where there is a request for a 67 percent rollback, and when we look at other issues such as a Bill that the minister has proposed with regards to certification of firefighters, it begs the question as to whether or not the issues management area has indeed been able to impact on those two areas. Perhaps the cutbacks are as a result of that.

Now, what I'd like to do in terms of looking at the document itself, which is the mission and mandate document, A Better Way, is go through that and then go through the specific votes. If I run over my time, I'll have to come back.

In terms of looking at the first section of A Better Way, Labour, where it talks about the business plan targets for expenditure reduction, revenue generation, et cetera, it appears as if the department has met its goal, but given that there has been a reaccounting, it's hard to follow. I realize that this is something that the Auditor General did request, but it just makes it difficult for myself to look at '94-95 based on last year's estimates and try and figure out how we fit in. It looks, on the face of it, as if the department has met its goals and has achieved some of its budgetary reductions, and that's something that the department has done in the past as well.

There are revenue increases being planned in various areas: workplace safety fees, safety fees, the Alberta Fire Training School, employment standards fees. My question there is: what is the breakdown – and I don't know if we have to wait for public accounts for that – right now in terms of how much those specific areas bring in? As well and specifically with regards to employment standards: are those the fees with regards to the kits or are those the costs that are attached to individuals who have been negligent in their coming to terms with employment standards and following through?

On page 5 the department talks about

- the transfer, elimination or implementation of an audit role of non-essential services saving \$250,000 related to . . .
- Employment Standards functions.

I would appreciate from the minister a breakdown of what exactly that is, of what more is being planned in employment standards.

There's a question in terms of information services. On the one hand it looks as if we have increased the capital with regards to I think it's computers in the Labour department, yet on the other hand we seem to be decreasing in terms of information services. That just doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense, but I'm sure that the minister will be able to explain that.

The other is that there appears now in the mission statement, if you wish, of the department the responsibility

- for research and education [programs] addressing the development of solutions to workplace health and safety problems, the health and well-being of Alberta workers and the establishment of occupational health and safety associations.

I think the minister may have touched on that a bit in his opening statements. Again, if we're seeing a decrease in terms of information services, how are we going to be providing the support for the research and education projects?

On page 6 the department talks about "the continuation of results-based budgeting" and greater attention being "placed on defining 'core results'." I'd like to know what those core results are. Are those the measurements, or are those other kinds of results that are defined by the department in terms of knowing whether or not the program delivery is consistent and whether or not the program delivery is appropriate?

When we go to number 3, the document talks about "ongoing restructuring and cost reduction wherever possible" and again talks about the fact that the government's going to be providing a policy or audit role. It seems that we're now setting up new bureaucracies, that we now have a new audit unit, that we now have a new unit that's going to deal with delegated administrative organizations, which interestingly enough were allowed under Bill 41. The Department of Labour was pretty canny in terms of allowing itself within the schedule the ability to set up DAOs just in case Bill 57 didn't make it. I must give credit to the department for making sure that all their bases were covered. What we're seeing now when we look in more detail at the budget itself – it seems as if we are setting up another bureaucracy, which was

one of our fears, and that in fact this is going to cost us more dollars, not less dollars. So there's again an inherent danger with these DAOs.

Point of Order Decorum

MR. GERMAIN: Excuse me. Mr. Chairman, a point of order, please. I'm sitting right next to the hon. member who is delivering an excellent speech, an excellent member who is articulate and glib, and I can't hear her. [interjections]

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members. [interjections] Hon. members. [interjections] Order. The hon. Member for Fort McMurray makes a very good point. If you need to discuss something in lively form, please go out into the lounges that are outside the Chamber. The Chamber is a place for debate and for speeches.

Thank you, hon. member. There is no time taken from the minute and something that remains of Edmonton-Meadowlark's talk.

8:30 Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. The DAOs are something that I think needs to be looked at and kept watch over very carefully.

I notice also on page 7 of the document that "the Occupational Health and Safety library in Calgary has been centralized into the Edmonton departmental library." Later, as we get into the votes, I'd like to know where exactly, under which vote, that particular library is accounted for. Also, I'm interested in terms of how the services are going to be provided, if again that's perhaps why the computers are required, whether it's for a computer linkup, and how much is required in terms of allowing for this centralization.

When I move further down the page, I notice that once again we have the "competency based classification and compensation model" that is continuing to be developed. It seems as if this is a project that is going on forever. I'm just wondering: what is the end date on this particular project? It seems as if it started before 1994. Again, my memory could be wrong on this, but . . . [interjection] Page 7, number 5. Again, it just seems to be going on forever.

At the bottom of that particular page an incentive plan was mentioned, and I guess it would nice to have some examples of what were some of the cost-saving measures. When we look at what happened recently - I think it was at the library over at the university, where because of cost-saving measures, jobs were actually saved. We're not quite seeing that right now. So my questions are: what are some examples? How much has it saved? Will those savings show up in the public accounts?

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Much of what the hon. minister talked about in his opening statements are actions that he is now able to take under the provisions of Bill 41. I just want to read this section to refresh the minister's memory. Section 2 says:

- (1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations
 - (a) delegating to one or more delegated persons any of the powers, duties or functions of the Minister or of an official under an enactment, except the power of the Minister or official.

They can make regulations. They can appoint members to boards. They can do a lot of things.

In the same Act, section 4 says:

A delegated person and the person's employee, agent, director or officer or member of a committee may

The word is "may."

with the consent of the Minister, disclose information that the person, employee, agent, director, officer or member of the committee obtains while carrying out a delegated [authority].

We're talking about release of information. We're talking about freedom of information. We're talking about the public being allowed to see what's going on: transparency.

Then at section 6 of that Act, it says:

The Financial Administration Act does not apply to a delegated person with respect to a delegated power, duty or function.

I picked up the Financial Administration Act, Mr. Minister, and it's got some neat provisions. It says, for example, in section 6 that there is a power to obtain information. That is, the Provincial Treasurer, the Crown, is entitled to get information relating to any matter that affects revenue or expenditure.

Further along in the section, it talks about the failure to account for public money, that the Treasurer has the responsibility to make sure that accounts going out, payments going out, moneys coming in, are properly dealt with, that there are proper rules and regulations that deal with that, and that there should be an appropriate control over this. The Financial Administration Act is the ability for this Legislature to ensure that public funds are properly accounted for.

Now, the Act says that the Financial Administration Act doesn't apply. The minister is talking about delegating authority away. He talked about mediation services. That means that these mediators that are selected can collect money for their services; they can expend money for their services. According to the Act, there's no accountability. They don't have to do the same thing that every department and agency of government has to do under the Financial Administration Act. So my question, Mr. Minister, is: what kind of mechanism have you put into place to ensure that the same kind of controls that exist over your ministry, over the people that are accountable to you, will now ensure accountability through these delegated positions or offices or purposes? How do we ensure that collection of money and expenditure of money, because it's public money, is being done properly?

Secondly, Mr. Minister, tell us how, when we're getting a freedom of information Act that says, "Here are the ways that information shall be made available to the public," we could have an Act that says that maybe some of this information will be made available through these delegated contractors or officials or whatever. How could it be that we pass legislation in this Assembly that says that there are certain ways you can get information and we now have an Act that says, well, maybe, maybe not? I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, what regulations you've put into place, if there are some regulations, that ensure that there is compliance with the freedom of information Act, compliance with the Financial Administration Act.

Now, I looked at the Auditor General Act. I was always of the understanding that if there was something that was going awry, any person, a member of this Legislature - I've done it myself. When I wanted the Auditor General to look in on Gainers, I wrote a letter to the Auditor General and I said: "I think there's something going on there. I'd like you to investigate." That particular Auditor General decided he wouldn't do anything. We don't even seem to have that authority anymore. The government doesn't have that authority because we're dealing with private

businesses, private contractors. So, Mr. Minister, tell us how the public is going to be protected with moneys going in and moneys going out that are public moneys dealing with public issues.

We have a strike, for example. We've got projectionists that are not happy with the way things are going. You've talked about something called an issues management division. If you anticipate difficulty, I guess you can suggest mediation and so on and so forth. Well, somebody has to pay for that, and I want to know how the Auditor General Act is going to allow for that kind of regulation to take place where it exists in every other department.

8:40

The second thing that I want to pursue, Mr. Minister. I'd like a little information on FIGA. There's a reference in the documentation in FIGA that suggests that there has been an agreement struck between the provincial governments, I understand, and the federal government which would allow for labour mobility. I'm just going to refresh the minister's mind by reading the section to him. This is in the performance measurement document of the Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs ministry. It says:

Reduction of internal trade barriers will expand market opportunities and lead to more competitive business in Canada. Alberta will be better positioned to participate in markets.

Then it says:

The recently completed agreement on internal trade covers procurement, investment, labour mobility.

First of all, I'd like to know what the objectives were that preceded the agreement. What was it that our province wanted to succeed in achieving? What sort of impediments existed insofar as we were concerned? Were our tradespeople, were our professionals, were our technical people in some way prohibited from doing work in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, or wherever? If they were, and if there were impediments, what in this new agreement has changed, and what needs to be changed, if change needs to take place? What sort of action is your ministry going to be taking on the issue of labour mobility? I once rode on a plane, Mr. Minister, not long ago with a tradesperson who complained that there was difficulty in Canadians from the provinces except Quebec getting into Quebec, that tradespeople were being somehow frozen out, and that there was a certain amount of freezing out of people from Quebec into trades and professions in the rest of Canada. Is that correct? If it is, what are we doing about it, and is that part of the agreement that you struck? I'd like to know a little bit about the people that have been put in charge of this: who are they, and what do they do? What's their mandate? What's the time line for bringing forward some success?

Mr. Minister, when you talk about contracting out, I note with interest that we're looking at employment standards, which you're now reviewing to see how much, I guess – or perhaps all of that section should be privatized. There's a certain strength that goes with a government agency dealing with a small company or a small entrepreneur when they come along and they say: "Look, you haven't paid the holiday benefits. You haven't paid whatever kind of benefits to this employee. You seem to be using the money on your own. We want you to ante up and give that employee the proper amount of money." Now, are we going to get a diminishing of that strength by not having government being able to do that? Exactly how far are you going in privatizing this employment standards area? I'd like some specifics on how you're going to contract out debt collection services to the private sector.

Mr. Minister, I'd like some information on the mediation services process. You talk about these services being privatized. Is it up to the people involved in the controversy and the difficulty

to find their own mediator, or is it your issues management division that gives a list of suggested mediators? Is there some way that the department forces these people on the parties involved? Is there some sort of suggested hourly rate or daily rate? How do you guide these mediators to provide the best service at the best price? I'd like to know how this is going to be structured, how it's going to be forced if it's going to be forced by the ministry.

I'd like to have the minister tell the Assembly – he talked a little bit about privatization in his opening statements. What other areas under Bill 41 in his ministry does he intend to pursue to privatization? Is there anything that we haven't read in our documentation that is being considered for privatization? If there is, what is it?

Mr. Chairman, one of the areas that I'm very much concerned about is occupational health and safety. On one occasion last year an individual contacted me from the Slave Lake area to complain that there wasn't the proper attention given to safety problems in a certain mill. The suggestion was that there weren't enough people to look after those safety needs and force the company to put proper safety standards in place. There's going to be a \$511,000 decrease in the operating expenditures of occupational health and safety. I'd like to know and I'd like you to assure Albertans that there isn't going to be an effect on safety standards in mills, that this isn't in any way going to put Albertans into jeopardy. Can you convince us that your productivity efficiency, as you've noted, has improved so well that you've got enough people to do the investigation of mills and places where there is danger to employees to ensure that those dangers are minimized? I think we need a very specific explanation in this area.

Mr. Chairman, I'll end on that note and ask for the minister's indulgence in his reply. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members of the committee, last evening we invited the minister to answer at any time the minister felt inclined or ready to answer some of the previous questions that came up. If not, then we'll proceed with our group of people that are wishing to speak.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to asking a few questions about the Department of Labour – it's my first time – a department that I'm not as familiar with as I would like to be. I know it's a very important department, one that looks after safety as well as fairness across the province. Many years ago when I was timber cruising, counting trees, one of my colleagues was killed by a widow maker, a tree that fell. He had no hard hat on, and the result was quick. We've come a long way in health and safety since those days, and we want that to continue.

I know that there are questions in here that I'd like to ask, but I don't really want to use up the Assembly's time on the questions. I was wondering if the minister could assure me that there would be someone that I could phone up and get information from for questions that may be simple questions. I know that's not the case in Municipal Affairs. Previously I had to write a letter. You asked certain questions, and then when you got the answers, you had to ask more to get a better understanding. So it would be appreciated if this could happen.

Some questions I have. One is on the mediation process. When the mediators were from the government, they would perhaps not be looking at extending the mediation process like a private company may do. The longer you extend the mediation

process, perhaps the more fees or money it will cost the two sides. I was wondering how the minister will address that. Or will he leave it up to the two sides to determine a price before and get a certain amount paid only for that service? I think that's an important issue, one that could be cost-efficient to both sides in the mediation process.

Another question I have. What is the capital investment being spent on, and is the capital investment being used to balance the Labour budget?

A couple more questions that follow. Why are computers being purchased when personnel are being laid off and departmental functions are being privatized? If we could have an explanation. What are the capital assets being purchased with the \$36,000?

Moving over, Mr. Chairman, to the 1995-96 action plan. A question on workplace safety fees. Are these going to increase over the three years, or is there going to be a set standard? Who sets the fee for these? What is the process here?

One on the Alberta Fire Training School. It says that there's an increase of \$0.05 million through these revenues. Is this from fees from students or fees from firefighters sent from municipalities? Will the increase be strictly from fees? What else would it be from? Is this the fire training school at Vermilion?

8:50

Another one, the employment standards fees. I'm not quite sure what that is. Is that a yearly fee? What is the fee for?

The last one, the "general miscellaneous increase to move towards full . . . recovery." What exactly is that, the miscellaneous increase? Where do you see those increases taking place?

Also in the '96-97 plan there's a decrease of 83.8 full-time people. How many of these do you anticipate would be going to the DAOs or private companies? [interjection] They're not numbered. Oh, page 16. Do you anticipate that some of these will be going to the DAOs or private companies and their jobs will be transferred over, perhaps without loss of their occupation or job?

Those are my questions at this time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time it gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak to the Labour estimates. The first question that has been coming to my mind since I've become a Member of this Legislative Assembly is the relationship between public works and other government departments. I'm wondering if we've achieved a level of efficiency within government that is achievable. I'll use where we see a function in Labour related to the Alberta Fire Training School and the dollar allotment. Then immediately you look at the public works budget, and you look at the capital dollars and the planning and implementation of construction for, for example, the Alberta Fire Training School in Vermilion. When we start to look at efficiency audits, and how we're spending the public's money, I keep questioning in my mind: how indeed can we really get a handle on it, if we're doing the most effective job with our dollars, when we've got different departments doing functions that actually belong together?

Mr. Chairman, through to the minister, I became more aware of this through the health care area, the frustrations that used to happen when you were trying to get an efficient and effective development or an upgrading or a maintenance done between Health and public works. I'm putting that proposition to you. I

think it might be timely that the government looked at some of the functions that Labour does and what public works does and really look and see if you have achieved that level of efficiency that you can say with certainty that you can't improve it anymore? I would question that we haven't done that.

I also would like to state at this time, when we go to the mission and mandate document, that I've got increasing concerns where we're going in the province of Alberta. We look at the mission and mandate on page 3:

In the pursuit of our mission the department is mandated to provide services to meet client demands as they relate to:

- Issues management
- Safety services
- Workplace health . . .
- Pension administration
- Employment/work standards
- Fire fighter training
- Mediation services
- Labour relations adjudication
- Professions and occupation policy development

The reason I say that I have a concern there is because I look at Bill 41 and the power that it has given this government to delegate, to my mind. As I said when I was debating Bill 41, this is undemocratic; it doesn't show accountability. So I jump back to the mission and mandate, and I question, Mr. Chairman: how indeed are you going to achieve the mission and mandate as set out by your department? I would suggest that that's going to be increasingly difficult when there's a lack of accountability.

I have an increasing concern when I look at what's happening with workplace health and safety and look at the reduction, for example, in the radiation health and safety. I go back to my municipal days, and I know how important it is that you have an effective inspection system, not just in my own community, to ensure that labour standards are met and not only the worker is protected but also the community. That is the essence of good government. That's a responsibility that government must assume. I know from my municipal days, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, that that always wasn't achievable without some political pressure being brought to bear on certain parties, and I see us going down that road.

Now, when we're talking about workplace health and safety, there's a very close relationship to community health. I can remember well the days through delegation and privatization, which this certainly is the business plan of the Department of Labour, where within community health we privatized Aids to Daily Living. Rather than it being cost-effective, horror of horrors, the minister of that time, who indeed is now the Provincial Treasurer – we saw abuses by the private sector that were unbelievable. It took some time to identify why the Aids to Daily Living program costs were increasing so significantly. What happened, Mr. Chairman, in the private sector was that where there was agreement between private-sector people comparable to carteling, instead of maintaining, for example, a wheelchair, they were putting in orders for new wheelchairs, so the production of wheelchairs was constantly increasing.

I would suggest that the way you are delegating through DAOs – and I'll use the example of the mediation services. I would want to know: how are you going to control the costs? Let's face it. When you're in the business of business, profit is your motivation. If you are privatizing mediation services, quite frankly I'd want that mediation to go on as long as it possibly can. Because I in the private sector am going to benefit. So I'd want to know: what controls are you going to put in there to ensure

that you have cost-effective mediation services through whether it be contracts or whatever methodology you use, and how are we in the Legislative Assembly going to be able to see if indeed the accountability is there back to this Assembly? [interjections] You can make light of it, but I have seen governments in the past make light of areas where it was quite clear that things could go off track. When you don't have accountability, indeed it is costly back to the taxpayer.

One of the questions that I would like answered – and I ask this question out of ignorance. I see that you have stated in the document that the Industrial Wage Security Act has been withdrawn. I'm not aware of the content of that Act, and I'd certainly like to be made familiar of what was in that Act. Did some further legislation replace it, or was it completely redundant in today's present society?

9:00

Another area that's an ongoing concern, because I don't see this situation improving – and my colleague from Edmonton-Meadowlark touched on it – is: when we're downsizing in the health care system or some other sector, we're seeing employees being treated I would say unfairly. They're being caught. When I say they're being caught, there's a debate as to where they belong when it looks as though they're going to be terminated or offered a package to retire. Management says that they didn't belong there, yet these same individuals were working with confidential information and for all intents and purposes were part of management.

I've used the example where you have administrative assistants working closely with the board, closely with the chief executive officers, but when it looks as though that position is not going to continue, suddenly they belong within the union. Now, the union doesn't really go to bat for them. Management doesn't go to bat for them. They're in no-man's-land, and the best advice you can give these people is: find yourself a lawyer. Well, to the minister, we know that by the time these people use their lawyer and go through the legal system, any benefit that they may have got will have gone. This is indeed unfortunate. Our lawyers, Mr. Chairman, might look indignant, but it's the reality, it's the fact, and we need to do something about it.

Mr. Minister, I firmly believe and I would ask you to ensure in these difficult times of restructuring that we treat people fairly within the labour legislation and that the people that I am pointing out who are facing these difficulties are indeed protected. There is a larger group within, specifically Alberta Hospital Edmonton, that also falls into that category. I believe they've communicated with the government of Alberta, and I sincerely hope that they will be protected.

Now, at a time when we're looking at getting the most effective utilization of our dollar, we have to look at vote 3, Mr. Chairman, to the minister. It would appear that we're spending more money on vote 3 for administrative support. So I would ask: why at this time is that happening? It seems to be contradictory to the philosophy of this government. The other question – and this is another area of fairness to employees – is: how many of these positions are part-time, and how many full-time positions have been created?

Now, with regards to occupational health and safety, I made a comment that it's important we ensure that we've got the best standards, the best legislation, and the best enforcement, because, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, I would submit to you that that is prevention and it saves public purse. In the long term we will save money. I would suggest as well that we should be looking

through occupational health, community health, and the research that we're doing to look at the status of health in our communities. We know that we have significant problems with certain autoimmune diseases within the province of Alberta. I think it would behoove us, whether it be through Labour, Health, or the environment, that we really get a handle on the health status of our communities and ensure that when we're directing dollars, whether it be in labour or whether it be in health, that they're going into the areas that will do the best job: the most effective use of your health care dollars, the most effective use of your environmental dollars, and the most effective use of your labour dollars.

I firmly believe that in 1995 we have to ensure ourselves that the asthmas, the sclerodermas, the Hashimoto's disease, all the arthritides that are autoimmune, that are indeed possibly genetic but no one can be sure whether they're genetic, whether they're environmental, whether they're dietary – we need to know those answers, because, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, they are costing our health care system a very high dollar cost. These illnesses result in dialysis in many instances, transplants.

Now, you may say, "What's this got to do with Labour?" It's got a lot to do with Labour, Mr. Chairman. I go back: we should not be cutting our budget when we're looking at radiation health and safety or any area where there are inspections to ensure the safety of our workers in our community.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to take the opportunity to enter the discussions that are up to day on the Department of Labour. [interjections]

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, Calgary-North West is recognized.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your intervention there.

Just a couple of quick questions and then two particular areas that I want to deal with. Looking at vote 1, program 1, departmental support services, while I do note that the minister's office expenditure estimate for this year is lower than last year's estimate – in fact, it's higher than the actual dollars that he is spending, and I'm wondering why he is projecting to spend more money in his own department, in his own ministerial office. I've got to make sure to hold these ministers accountable, and if the Treasurer won't do it, then I guess the opposition members have to do that.

Within that first vote I note that it seems to apply in a couple of situations: vote 1.0.1, minister's office; vote 1.0.2, executive management; and personnel, 1.0.3. The estimates are lower than last year's estimates but significantly higher than last year's projected actual forecast. Now, the same thing applies in the assistant deputy minister's office, where we see a significant increase. So I guess the question is the same in all of those situations. Why do we see an increase in the estimate value proposed for the 1995-96 estimate year when we look at the forecast for 1994-95 and it's substantially higher?

Now that I'm on program 2 and vote 2, I want to deal specifically with the issue of mediation services. There were some individuals who came to see me, Mr. Chairman, who were concerned about the fact that by the end of this fiscal year the mediation services will in fact be privatized. The concerns that were expressed to me by some of these individuals who are

currently working for the government department – in fact, the Department of Labour – as mediators themselves were a couple of things.

First of all, quality control was a question that was raised. Once the government moves to privatize mediation services, how will the government ensure that people who are in the role of mediator, which is currently under vote 2.0.5, will in fact be skilled in the art of negotiation and mediation? This is a service that has been necessary in the past. I understand the concern about the government moving towards fee for service, pay your own way kind of a thing, but this is a concern that has been addressed. So the first concern with respect to mediation is the issue of quality control of the mediators themselves.

The second issue that was raised with me about this particular issue, Mr. Chairman, is that presumably cases would come forward and then once the services had been privatized and we had a number of private offices, I guess, set up, then potentially what might happen is office A may get a contract which in fact is quite lucrative and long term, depending upon the size of the conflict, whereas office B might get a substantially smaller contract being offered to it because it's a smaller firm, fewer number of employees, what have you. So the question that came was: how do we ensure a fair rotation, if you will, or allocation of the contracts that come forward when mediation services are being requested? Right now there is no vested interest, shall we say, in assigning them to one person or another or to one company or another, but once we get private contractors, private firms being set up to offer this service, then of course if you are on the right list versus the wrong list, it might determine whether you get contracts at all or whether you get large contracts, small contracts, how quickly they come, and so on. So those were two issues that were raised as possible concerns with the concept of mediation services.

9:10

Having said that, that of course leads to the obvious question that if this is in fact going to be privatized and delegated off, there is still a significant budget. Last year's estimate of \$848,000 is replaced by this year's estimate of \$636,000, which still seems like a fair chunk of money when much of the service in fact is going to be delegated off. So I would question why it is that the figure of \$636,000 is still as high as it is, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, for that particular area.

The other section that I wanted to address in particular is the program for development of policy and legislation for professions and occupations. This particular issue I note is under the auspices of the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, so she may wish to address this particular concern, or the Minister of Labour. I'm not sure which. The concern that has been expressed to me in one particular case – and I understand it's not unique to this one area; the issue is amongst other professions – is in the psychology profession, the Psychology Profession Act. In reviewing that piece of legislation, Mr. Chairman, the concern that has been expressed to me by psychologists is that while the Act gives the psychologists protection of title, it does not necessarily give protection for scope of practice.

I know the minister probably remembers the case in Calgary not too long ago where there was a woman who advertised in the Calgary yellow pages as a psychologist and held herself forward as someone skilled and trained in this area, and in fact when the Psychologists Association of Alberta investigated this particular woman, they found she had no training in this and subsequently

and virtually in the middle of the night one night disappeared in the wind, so to speak.

The concern that was expressed to me by the Psychologists Association of Alberta was: how do we deal with protection of the public? From what I understand, things have not changed significantly or have not changed at all in terms of the legislation. What we see in the budget is a slight decrease in the budget item, which is vote 6 in this department. Under the objective of the program it says, "administer . . . professional statutes," amongst a long list of things mentioned on page 242 of the budget document. So if we don't have protection of practice in terms of the scope of the practice, then what can happen is the situation can go forward where in fact anybody can hang their shingle, so to speak, by putting an ad in the yellow pages.

I did phone the Psychologists Association again, and I have discovered that in fact that situation is still current today. If you open up the Calgary yellow pages today – and I can't speak for the Edmonton yellow pages because I didn't ask that question – you can flip to psychologists and there are individuals who are advertising as psychologists in the Calgary yellow pages who are not registered members of the Psychologists Association of Alberta. That is a concern in terms of protection of the public because if you get . . . [interjection] Certainly, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Hon. Member for Calgary-North West, now that we're able to hear you.

MR. BRUSEKER: I'm just about done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If you get someone who is advertising that they have skills that in fact they do not have, the concern is that not only may you get someone who is not adequately trained to provide a service but may be providing something that could in fact be harmful.

In the particular case that I was referring to, one of the concerns that was raised I know with the medical profession as well as the psychology profession is that this woman who held herself forward to be a psychologist was recommending to people to quit taking medical treatment, quit taking prescription medication that had been prescribed by their medical doctor, potentially, then, a very serious not only mental health but physical health situation for the individual she was treating.

Now, my understanding is that other professions have the same kind of concern. I'm using the psychology profession because it's one that I happen to know the best in terms of the difficulty, but I understand that other pieces of profession legislation have similar concerns, wherein protection of title is given but not necessarily scope of practice.

So my question is: how is it that we can assure not only the members of the professions but, more importantly, the members of the public that in fact when they go to see a psychologist or they go to see a lawyer or whatever other – and I don't know the long list, to be honest, of all the professions that are governed by the Professions and Occupations Bureau. We need to be sure that people can have some sense of confidence and comfort that the person they are seeing for whatever service they're looking for in fact has the credentials and the ability to provide a quality service to them.

So with those comments, Mr. Chairman, I will cease and let someone else jump in.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. There was one specific matter I wanted to raise with the hon. minister responsible for Labour in this province, and it arises from a situation which came to my attention a number of months ago in my capacity as the human rights critic for the opposition. The issue is this. What's happening, particularly with some large corporations, some large employers, is that you have a situation where trainers are brought in, and in the course of re-engineering a company, some of these trainers, perhaps overzealous, require employees to participate in this kind of an exercise. In some cases the pressure is overt, in other cases it's more subtle, but employees feel they have little or no flexibility in terms of participating in this kind of session. What has happened, at least in some of these sessions, is that you have a trainer who puts an employee in a position where that employee has to disclose personal information, personal history, has to indicate things that they find offensive. They have to perhaps criticize their coworkers, criticize their immediate managers. I have enormous concern. I don't want to suggest that this is perhaps a widespread abuse, but when it has come to my attention, certainly the impact has been enormous on those individuals who have been put in that position.

Certainly if one looks through the Employment Standards Code, there's no protection, there's no provision that deals with this. It seems to me that you deal with this either through human rights legislation or you simply tell people to go and hire a lawyer and sue, a course which I know is always unpopular in this Chamber, sometimes for good reason. The third thing is that you look at employment standards legislation and you look for a quick remedy. It seems to me, Mr. Minister, through the Chair, that in 1995, recognizing that this is going on and that it's perhaps becoming more frequent as more corporations are looking to find ways of harnessing the full potential of their work force, as corporations are looking to re-engineer their process, there's a potential for this kind of abuse happening perhaps more frequently. So I'd like to ask the hon. minister how he plans on addressing this particular kind of mischief and whether he contemplates some regulatory change or some legislative change to respond to this particular kind of problem. I think it's a concern, and I think the best way of dealing with it would be through the Alberta Employment Standards Code.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank my colleagues, who have been very generous in allowing me to jump the queue to be able to raise this concern, which is of considerable import to my constituents in downtown Calgary but I think has broader application in other parts of this province as well.

Thanks very much.

9:20

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I have a few brief remarks and questions for the Minister of Labour. Firstly, I'm interested in having some answers from the minister regarding the health work force rebalancing initiative. Now, I understand by looking at the section in professions and occupations that there is absolutely no detail provided for the close to \$1 million spent. In line 6.0.1 we just see the gross amount of money to be voted, but we don't see any details on how it's to be spent. At this point it would be good to know how much money in fact has been spent on that initiative, what exactly that money's been spent on. Many

people that I have spoken with who have participated in the discussions of the Health Workforce Rebalancing Committee have raised the point that from their perspective there was nothing broken. So what is it exactly that the government's trying to fix? It looks like we're spending close to a million dollars on the problem. I'd like to know what it is that they're trying to fix.

Mr. Chairman, the monitoring of the process I think has been absent. On the one hand, there was an early commitment made by the member who was then the chairman of the Professions and Occupations Bureau to record the proceedings of the committee discussions and then circulate those proceedings so they could be verified for their accuracy and so people could comment directly on them. To the best of my knowledge, that has never been done. There hasn't been anything close to a verbatim transcript or, for that matter, even a summary of the minutes of the individual meetings. I was at the inaugural session in Calgary when that question was put to the chair and when that commitment was made, and it hasn't happened.

Then you've got the monitoring after the fact. We're all well aware of how the original consultation document was challenged by many people who commented on it, but we haven't seen a summary report back of exactly which of those issues have been taken to heart by the government and what they're doing about them. So we're not really getting a good picture of what it is that the government has learned from the consultation and what they're doing about the issues raised. Furthermore, we don't see any evidence that there are in this budget allowances made for following up on the health work force rebalancing initiative. Certainly the College of Physicians and Surgeons, amongst others, has made considerable input to the committee and there are budget implications, but there's no way of knowing whether the government has treated these particular considerations with any seriousness.

Now, I'd like to turn for a minute to occupational health and safety issues. Where exactly in this department's budget will we see the increased costs being covered as this government moves towards more and more commercial enterprise in health care? In particular, I'm looking at the cost of certification of things like lasers for eye surgery, X-ray equipment in dental offices and other private surgical suites, private MRIs. We know there is more and more privatization. We know that just as recently as this weekend in Edmonton there was another surgical suite opened up with two new lasers. We know that the government is required to ascertain the accuracy of this equipment, to make sure they're properly calibrated, to make sure the people who are using them will not be exposed to unnecessary X-ray or other hazardous by-products of the technology, but I'm not sure what provisions have been made in this budget for that certification, for the ongoing calibration, for the training. Mr. Chairman, a while back the minister floated an idea with the dentists of this province that would change the way the X-ray equipment in private dental offices was to be regulated, and I'd like to know what the outcome of that was. I know the dental community was not very happy with the minister at that time, and I'd like to know what changes, if any, have been made.

Now, I'd like to also, while we're talking about occupational health and safety, ask the minister a couple of questions. There's tremendous variation in line item 5.0.6. We see that the forecast for '94-95 for laboratory services was \$284,000. We see that actually \$342,000 was spent, and now we see a '95-96 estimate at \$307,000. It's a pretty wide variation in terms of what was originally forecast, what was actually spent, and what's being

forecast for the next fiscal year. I'd like the minister to explain that variation in a very important core service.

Also while we're looking at occupational health and safety, looking at line item 5.0.5 under capital investment, we see that radiation health and safety is calling for an expenditure of some \$16,000, I suppose it is. I'd like to know what that capital expenditure is for. We don't have any details, and I'm curious to know what that money is being spent for. It's also a pretty huge variation from the comparable 1994-95 estimates, so again I'd like to know what exactly was required last year that isn't required this year and what exactly that money will be spent on.

Now, the third area that I'd like to hear from the minister on is the health work force readjustment dollars. This government has been bragging for an awfully long time about \$15 million to be spent on assisting health care workers who are going to be forced out of their jobs as a result of this government's destructuring of the health system. When you take a look at this \$15 million and you look at the fact that there are 17 health regions, you're immediately struck with the realization that if you were just to divide this amongst the 17 regions, you've got less than \$1 million per region. Now, the money is not going to be allocated that way. There's a much more complicated formula.

That formula was in fact developed in a joint process with management and labour in the health care field, and that formula is reprinted in the joint regional committee handbooks. These are the joint regional committees that'll be responsible for spending the health work force adjustment money. But that formula still raises almost as many questions as it answers, because what these committees have been given to work with is a whole series of assumptions by the government that they were not allowed to challenge. They were given a finite budget that they were not allowed to challenge. They were given some open-ended plans in terms of what the impact would be on health care workers.

I'll give you an example of what I mean by that. If you look at laboratory restructuring in the private and public medical labs across the province, there have been estimates ranging anywhere from between a thousand to two thousand lab technologists who will lose their jobs across the province. We don't know what the net impact will be, yet we haven't seen any flexibility in the formula to take into account the wide variation of people who may in fact be unemployed because of the changes that this government is forcing in that particular part of the health care field. So what you have is a situation where the joint regional committees are supposed to be providing programs for a population of people, but they don't know how many are going to be in that population. This seems to me to be a very backwards way of planning and not tremendously helpful in a program that was supposed to be designed to assist those people who are going to lose their jobs.

I will also note that there were supposed to be reviews at six-month intervals of how the money was spent. I'd like to know if in fact those reviews have taken place. If so, what was the nature of the reviews? Are the reports available from the minister's office or from the committees? Are they public? If not, why not? The contents of the report I think are very important, not just to the health care workers of this province but for all those people, which includes us all, Mr. Chairman, who depend on those health care workers. What changes have taken place as the result of the reviews? Can we look forward to ongoing reviews over the life of this project?

Mr. Chairman, the \$15 million that was allocated by this government has been talked about as though it will solve a whole bunch of problems. At least in Calgary and Edmonton, the two

areas that have opened up, I believe, the first two centres, it's clear that very little of this \$15 million has made its way to health care workers.

9:30

Now, in Edmonton, for example, pretty much the sum total of the support, other than things like creative job search or resumé writing, boils down to \$1,500 – \$1,500 – one time to apply towards postsecondary tuition. This applies to maybe half a year's tuition at most postsecondary institutions. So it only applies to people who have already lost their jobs, who qualify for postsecondary training, who get accepted into the institution – we all know that because of the changes being forced by the minister of advanced education, it's no mean trick just getting in – and then the \$1,500 will go to the health care worker.

This doesn't do anything at all for those health care workers who need upgrading that takes place outside of a postsecondary institution. It doesn't do anything for those people who know they are about to lose their job. They won't be helped in terms of their transition. It doesn't do anything in terms of actually a substantive number of the program items that are in the checklist, and if you look at page 17 of the July 1994 joint regional committee handbook where it says Developing the Programs, there is a checklist that's provided.

If you take a quick look at this checklist, you see that the work force adjustment is supposed to be first of all proactive, so you'd think it would apply to people like these laboratory technologists I was referring to who know that they're going to be unemployed soon, but it doesn't. Then it says that there should be also reactive measures to help those who are unemployed, but of course it does go on to say, "or soon to be unemployed." Again, the program seems to have ignored that group of workers.

Now, under the first program area in the checklist it says, Communication and Information Sharing. Of course, communication and information sharing is very important. It does duplicate some other services that are offered by the federal government and in other places. I will give some credit to the joint regional committees for underlining the importance of communication and information sharing, but being told that you're going to be out of work and being told to go look for a job hardly meets the need that these people who have just lost their livelihood face.

The second major area is Training and Redeployment. Again you have to look at some of the individual bullets. One of them is "educational leave." One of them is "flexible work arrangements." There's absolutely nothing that I have seen in any of the joint regional plans that talks about how those particular things are going to be funded.

Now, most troubling is the third major area, Income Support. "Income support and security, mobility assistance, employment or wage subsidies, direct employment creation programs, early and flexible retirement arrangements" are all items that were supposed to be addressed with this \$15 million. I'd like to know if in fact that's the case anywhere in the province, because I haven't been able to discover any evidence of it yet. Perhaps the Minister of Labour can tell me otherwise, and if he can, that would be tremendously good news for all those health care workers who have lost their jobs or are about to lose their jobs.

Mr. Chairman, I mentioned a minute ago the federal government and the role that they play. We were supposed to allocate this \$15 million to the direct assistance of health care workers. If you look at the health workers' resource centre in Calgary, what you find is that it's actually an office that's set up by a consultant under contract to the federal government and that the

provincial program actually sort of squats in one corner of this office that's funded by the federal government. What you find is that while the federal government's program was up and running in anticipation of all the chaos, in anticipation of all the turmoil, the provincial program was lagging far, far behind. Now, that's despite the best efforts of those very, very competent people and those very dedicated people on the Calgary Joint Regional Committee. It's because of how slow the money has been forthcoming from the government and how badly planned really the transition has been and because of the nature of the relationship between the Department of Health and the Department of Labour.

Now, while we're talking about the relationship between Health and Labour, I'd also like to know from the Minister of Labour: what exactly are the areas of interaction between the health work force adjustment strategy out of his department and the health work force education project hosted by the Minister of Health? We have a project that has just completed its first round of a request for a proposal in terms of re-education, and that's all happening on the Health side. There seems to me to be a tremendous amount of overlap and duplication with what's going on in Labour. Now, if it isn't overlap and duplication, that's great, but I'd like to know exactly how the two differ. We also need to be assured, Mr. Chairman, that they're at least talking to each other, that the one process somehow plugs in or relates to the other process.

So I would like some assurances from the Minister of Labour that what's going on with the health work force adjustment strategy is going to put the maximum amount of money, the maximum amount of that \$15 million into the pockets of those health care workers who need it. I'd like to make sure that the government is not wasting money by duplicating somehow a process on the health side in terms of the Department of Health's work force education project.

Those are my initial sets of questions and concerns, Mr. Chairman. I would hope that the Minister of Labour would take the opportunity to answer some of those now. I do have another set of questions, but I would like to get some sense of the answers, because the answers of course will have some bearing on the next set of inquiries that I have.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to address the estimates of the Department of Labour, and I would like to draw on the freedom we have been allowed in such discussions in the past – and I think that was confirmed by the Chairman last evening – to back away from the details of the estimates and to query the minister about the underlying philosophy, the underlying framework of the Department of Labour. I would really appreciate some comments from him in terms of their beliefs, the belief system. What drives that department, and what causes it to do the kinds of things that it does?

If you look at the move to privatization, the great faith in being able to privatize government and government functions that the department seems to have in its business plans, you would have to question the focus that they have. There seems to be a uniperspective on society: there's one way of looking at the world and only one way. There's only one organizing principle, and that is the demands of the market. That's shared with competitiveness, and it turns the world into a world of commodi-

ties. So that view of the world seems to dominate everything that the department is involved in.

They may talk about diversity, as they do in the business plans, but the management principles are all similar. There isn't the diversity that they talk about. Numbers, accountability, and monetary values are the values that dominate everything in those documents. Again I go back to the comment that there's one system. They have discovered the system, and it's the cure-all for Albertans in terms of the Department of Labour.

"We have discovered the true path" seems to be what comes from the minister and the materials that have been produced by the Department of Labour. I hope that's not true, and I hope the minister will bring some information to bear that will prove that that's not true. If anything I think we've learned historically about government that every time we go down that road, every time a government professes to know exactly how things should be done that will lead us to this utopia, it turns out to be in the final analysis anything but.

As I listened to ministers the last few days since the throne speech and as I listened to this minister this evening, I had a feeling of *déjà vu*. I've heard some of this before. This is not new. It prompted me to go back to my bookshelves and to pick up a book from 1983 that was written by Ronnie Dugger. The book was his assessment of the Reagan years. That was 1983. That was a dozen years ago. There are three chapters in that book that I would recommend to the Minister of Labour.

9:40

One of the chapters that I'd have him look at is The Board of Directors of the United States. Now, you can substitute Alberta for the United States. The notion that Reagan was criticized for in the book is that

government [is] transformed into a giant conglomerate corporation. Although one of the directors runs the Labor Department, no one from labor sits at the table.

So I think it would be worth him looking at that chapter, because we have the feeling – and again it's confirmed. If you look at Lisac's recent book, it's confirmed. They have a listing of the people that have the government's ear. He catalogues them in a chapter, and he comes to the conclusion that this is fast becoming corporate Alberta run by a board of directors.

Another chapter I'd have him look at is a chapter that was entitled "A Wholesale Giveaway to Private Interests." Again, if you read some of that chapter, just one small portion, the writer says, "We're going to get things fixed here . . . and you guys are never going to get it unfixed when you get in." That sounds reminiscent of words we've heard in this very Chamber in the last few days. Again, if you read the chapter, it's not a very flattering assessment of what actually happened under Reagan.

The third one I would particularly have the minister look at is Trusting Business with Health and Safety, and I think it refers directly to his comments when he introduced his estimates this evening. The very last few lines of that chapter talk about trusting business with health and safety. It says about Reagan:

He is saying, trust business to protect people from business practices and products that jeopardize the public health and safety, and look how much money this will save business! But even if one agrees to convert health and life into dollars, one can hardly claim the reduced costs of business as gains while leaving out of the equation the reduced health and safety of the people.

So I think it's a relevant chapter that the minister might pursue.

There are others I think he would find informative, informative in terms of revealing the kind of image that his department is

projecting: The War on Social Security, Big Money and Big Business in the White House, Unleashing Free Enterprise, Sneering at the Women's Movement, and Punishing the Poor, not directly related to Labour but certainly related to the kinds of activities we've heard this government talking about and engaged in. So it's almost as if you could go back and read Dugger's book and it would give you an assessment of where we may be a few years down the road when this government's work is done. I think the result of pursuing the philosophy that they seem to be pursuing is abundantly clear.

I go back to that underlying philosophy, and that faith in business I think is laudable, but it's only one area that I think government should be looking at in terms of guidance of their actions. I think it's also a little naive in the extreme to place that kind of faith in business and in private enterprise and in privatizing government.

Again I go back to looking at the underlying values that differentiate private enterprise and government. If you look at the role of competition, private enterprise thrives on competition, yet government is supposed to be dedicated to co-operation and to bringing groups together. If you look at the notion of the individual, again in business survival of the fittest is a dominant value while for government building community, making sure that the common good is paramount is a prime value. Again, look at the role of profit. In private enterprise businesses are in business to make a profit. That's not supposed to be true of government. Government is supposed to be dedicated to a sharing of resources and to making things fair.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion I'd like to indicate that although we've heard several times in the Chamber how different things are and that the government is reinventing government, I think in the final analysis what is happening is that they are really aping others.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the wide range of questions and a lot of really direct ones too, some of which I can give some response to tonight and some of which I can't, just for detail purposes, but I will as usual commit to do that. I don't think I'm tipping my strategy hand when I tell members opposite that the Department of Labour is also scheduled to come back again. As you know, some departments will be back twice. So anything I don't address tonight or to them individually in writing before then, Mr. Chairman, I'll try to get addressed the second time that Labour comes back, unless of course it's designated earlier than that.

So much good, constructive criticism that I just don't know where to start. Some of it has been good; I don't mind saying that at the risk of getting struck from behind while I say it. The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark did mention that not everyone is particularly pleased with the process and the things that have been accomplished and are about to be accomplished through the Department of Labour business plan. I recognize that; that's a reality of life. I think she expressed a comment related to boiler and pressure vessels and talked about the fees there. I don't anticipate another fee increase. The whole boiler and pressure vessel DAO, that delegation has been, if I might use the word, relatively successful in terms of the users, in terms of those who will be managing it, the stakeholders that are involved. We're watching it carefully to make sure that if there are some pitfalls there, we can learn from it when we do future ones.

I'm not sure, but maybe the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark could get back to me. She had some questions on the self-funding ratio. The 28.3 percent is the one that we're looking at, and she had remarked on 29 percent or a previous year at 30. I'll try to get some clarification on that, but 28.3 percent is actually the stated goal and figure, and we are working towards that.

Work force adjustment being after the fact. I think Edmonton-Meadowlark's comments were different than Edmonton-Glenora's, who was talking mainly about the health sector. I think Edmonton-Meadowlark was talking about the layoffs that have occurred overall. It's difficult for me to comment why somebody may have received a layoff slip at one point that doesn't quite compare to the same process or procedure as someone in another department. I can say that when those do come to my department, even from employees from other departments, in terms of some inconsistency, we do follow up on those, and I do take that information to the minister involved and ask why there is an apparent discrepancy. Sometimes those are worked out to the employee's satisfaction and, frankly, sometimes they're not, but we do follow up on those particular concerns when they are brought to us. Also, another factor there could be different contracts and different groups. Dietary technicians in Calgary have no idea, without looking at the actual documents, what kind of collective agreement they have, what kind of contract they have. So there's some diversity there.

As far as Saskatchewan setting a standard, if the member would send to me some elements of what Saskatchewan is doing that would benefit us and help us to improve, I'd be happy to look at those. I wonder if she is advocating that we also close 52 hospitals, which I believe was the number that were closed in Saskatchewan. You know, that's a standard they've set. I don't know that that's what the member had in mind there, but if there are some things from that fairly massive restructuring that's been happening there, if there are some elements that she thinks would be beneficial, by all means let's take a look at them.

9:50

There were a couple of people who mentioned the projectionists and the 60 percent proposed reduction in salary. Remember that there's been a change there in certification, that even 50 years ago, 40 years ago, maybe 30 years ago people who were projectionists had to be highly skilled. If you go back 60 years, you were dealing with certain types of luminary devices that could literally explode. You were dealing with some fairly extensive electrical knowledge that was required in terms of power surges and everything else. Really, the state of the industry has evolved, at the risk of making it sound too simple, much like the VCRs where you're pushing some buttons – I don't want to oversimplify here – and you can control a number of theatres, as a matter of fact, from one location. It certainly still takes training but not the journeyman level that was once required.

So with the pulling back from that level of certification, then obviously you get a little more competitive in who can run those machines. If it's in the neighbourhood of something like a 60 percent reduction, it's still, as I understand it, going from around the \$30, \$32 an hour mark – that's for a projectionist – down to \$16 or so, somewhere in that neighbourhood. That's a big reduction, but there are reasons behind it, and that, like any situation, we are monitoring. We do make our facilitators available for that should the sides be ready for those types of discussions in terms of getting it resolved.

Under point 5 in terms of our mandate, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark asked in terms of the continuation of –

and we're quite open and pleased to say – innovation management and personnel practices. Yes, we do see that continuing. The member didn't mention it, but I'm sure she read the comment there that the Hay Management Group has indicated. This is a fairly extensive evaluation, and of course the Hay group is always right, so we didn't want to dispute with them. It indicated that

in all their work across North America and Europe they had not encountered a public or private sector model of team management which was as advanced as the model in place in Alberta Labour.

That was their evaluation, not ours, and you can't pay for that type of evaluation. But it's that type of acknowledgement that signals to us we're on the right track. Yes, there's going to be continuation as far as possible of innovative practices.

In terms of so-called privatization or delegation we've laid those clearly out in the business plan. We don't anticipate other areas unless there is a mutual coming forward of groups that would be asking for that. That may develop, but there's nothing hidden in terms of a big one out there that we're planning on privatizing, delegating the authority out, and purposely not telling. The business plans are indicating that pretty clearly.

Some of her questions on breakdown of fees and information services – I'm going to get that exact information, and also the other questions that she's got in there.

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry was suggesting concerns about the Financial Administration Act and section 6 there of Bill 41. I can maybe give some partial assurance certainly in saying that if you follow and look at what's been done already in the areas that we have delegated out, you'll see that in fact it's very fiscally responsible. Looking at schedule 10, "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may" – and I realize the word there is "may". But it gives the ability to make any kind of regulations. The member mentioned fees or payments, collection, respecting records, the annual reports. The only reason it says "may" there is because this is a new process we're moving into, and certainly if there are areas that have to be addressed and tightened or broadened, then we want to do that. We're monitoring each one as we go.

In terms of full disclosure, for instance, the member mentioned the mediation services, and a few members mentioned that. What's happening here is that the people who are presently in mediation services as employees of the government will be – and it's in the business plan – moving out, but it's going to be in a staged way to make that something that's easy for them. They'll move out, but for one year the dollars that they are receiving now as government employees are going to be applied to them as a division in mediation services. So it's still fully accountable. After that, there will be a list of mediators available to groups who need a mediator, to the two sides. I'll send it to the member. It's a very extensive criteria list that you have to qualify for to even get your name on. I don't want to scare members opposite here, but then really the market will decide if you've got a reputation as a good mediator. Your name is on the list, so you've met all the criteria that are there. You have some history of consensual request; that is, you've got a history where two parties have asked for you to be the mediator. Those are the types of people who will be doing the mediation: proven records, extensive criteria lists. Hourly rates will be set with daily maximums also set. There were some questions on that. It will not be the government – and I think the Member for Calgary-North West mentioned this – giving a contract per se. We will audit and our policies will be applied to the people on that list, but it will be the competing parties between themselves who will agree that Mr. or Ms X is the best mediator, and they will then take those services on.

As an encouragement we will be saying to groups that the first two days of mediation will still be covered by the government. So with the cost of those first two days being covered by the government, we think there will be some good incentive there for the groups to do all they can to negotiate before day 3 kicks in, and then both parties are covering the costs. When the member talks about full disclosure as related to mediators, the full disclosure will be there. Their record, the criteria they've met, the money they can charge, and then their track record: that's the type of disclosure. Then you don't need the Financial Administration Act applying to individual operatives.

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

MR. SAPERS: I'm just wondering if you could call for some order in the Chamber so that we could hear the hon. minister, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman's Ruling Decorum

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. Obviously, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora is exactly right. I said the other night that I had good hearing, but all I heard was a roar. Before we started tonight, the hon. Chairman said that if you wanted to talk to somebody, you could go out the back way. Good point, hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

The hon. Minister of Labour.

Debate Continued

MR. DAY: Thank you for bringing my colleagues into line, Mr. Chairman, something I'm not able to do, obviously.

Some of the areas in employment standards – the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry and some others mentioned this. In terms of privatization, it's not a wholesale privatization of especially the regulatory and audit and policy roles of the government there, but there are times where, for instance, investigations have to take place. That can be done and contracted by investigators skilled in those particular processes, and I will get some more detail to the member in terms of what can be accomplished.

Safety standards in mills are not in any way being diluted, being compromised in any way, shape, or form. I can assure you that with the officers that we have in the field on a regional basis, they are there to monitor that. We know, especially in that Grande Prairie region, where forestry is certainly on the upswing and there's a lot of development going on, that our people are in there. Again there's an industry association, too, related to forestry that's working with standards in that area. So we are watching those, and we are not, absolutely, going to let that in any way be diluted.

There are quite a number of questions related to fees. I will get to the member, in fact to all members.

The Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan talked about some concerns related to radiation health and safety and the budget there. There is an increase under vote 5.0.5 for radiation health and safety of about \$9,000, which is 2.1 percent from the comparable estimate, and that's as a result of adjustments that have been required to fund the current level of activity. Just a little over a year ago there were some significant registration requirements for all people owning or operating radiating devices, and that would be not just dental offices but in fact tanning salons and other places. You know, we even heard some concerns from the business community and from the dental community that we

were being too aggressive there. We felt, looking at the analysis and the requirement for registration, that with aging equipment we do need to know who's got what equipment and how it's being maintained. We did push that through at a cost to the providers of the service, to the business community there. So we took some pretty aggressive moves that some businesses frankly even saw as maybe too aggressive, but we felt that that wasn't an area that could be let up on.

10:00

The Industrial Wages Security Act: that was repealed last session. I'll send to the member what actually happened with that. Yes, there are other elements and vehicles that are in place now to still provide for the possibility of, let's say, a forestry company or a mining company shutting down and employees not being paid. We have addressed that in other ways than the somewhat redundant ways that were done by that Industrial Wages Security Act. So it is covered through some financial supply provisions, and I'll get the details to the member on that.

People being designated in management and then shifted to the union. If it's a management/union situation, the LRB is there to first of all judge whether someone can even come out of the bargaining unit and go into management if there's any dispute. In fact, there was a mention of the firefighters provision here in Bill 3. What Bill 3 is allowing is if there is a dispute, if the chiefs or management want to bring somebody out of the bargaining unit and there's no agreement on that, all that happens now with the Managerial Exclusion Act is that it can go to the LRB for a decision. They have a very clear criteria list of who is management, what functions are management, and those can be decided and adjudicated on that basis.

The Member for Calgary-North West also – I think I've addressed some of the concerns there related to mediation.

MR. BRUSEKER: Professions and occupations.

MR. DAY: Yeah, professions and occupations. Talking about the psychologists, the Psychologists Association not too long ago was requesting, as I understand it, not just scope of title but in fact a scope of practice, whereby they wanted to define everything they do in terms of relating to psychological therapy and then say that you had to have their requirements to do that when in fact there are a host of other areas where that type of service would be provided now: the clergy, for instance. Someone in the clergy may have a different degree than a psychology degree but obviously still should be able to provide services which would be called having a psychological effect on people. So they definitely do have the title provisions, but in terms of a sweep of practice, it was not felt that that would serve the public.

There are people, as we know – we heard about somebody in Calgary, a woman who disappeared. But there was a horrendous case, if you remember, just last year in Edmonton of somebody who did have the qualifications of a psychologist, was deemed a psychologist, practising certain things in his basement, which I don't even want to get into here. So even somebody who is designated and titled can still go haywire, if I can use that. I'll look for suggestions from the member, if he's got some, in terms of how we can improve that without overburdening people.

The Member for Calgary-Buffalo raised the issue of companies forcing their employees to get into these various training programs. Yes, some of those are a concern. There are rights that are presently provided for and protected: certainly disclosure and what an individual has to disclose in a group setting or a group therapy session. There are some clear rights that you have even in filling out questionnaires and forms and things like that. I don't know how extensively you want to get into that whole process. Companies regularly bring in, you know, authors or people who've accomplished things. I understand people bring in people, for instance from New Zealand, to comment on different practices. It's a tough thing to regulate, but protection of employees and letting employees know what cannot be imposed on them in a training-type session is something that could be highlighted. I'm not sure exactly how, but we're going to look at it.

I'll just close, then, as members are getting restless, by sharing with the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods a thought. You know, he said: there seems to be only one philosophy, and we've discovered the true path. That comes from the documents. He talked about the professions and occupations paper. That document is very clear in terms of words like: this is a discussion paper; we want to see what might be proposed; we want to ask the various professions. So I will give an extensive listing to that member and to others of the wide degree of consultation that goes on before a process is put in place. It's very extensive, and many times the consultation causes the path to change.

So that we have the energy to continue changing and dealing with transition, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest, given the hour, that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Labour, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.
The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Well, recognizing, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Government House Leader is rather tired because of the nature of the questions that were asked and his responses this evening, I would move that we now adjourn and reconvene tomorrow afternoon at 1:30.

[At 10:07 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]