

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

## Subcommittees of Supply

**Title:** Tuesday, February 27, 1996      **8:00 p.m.**  
**Date:** 96/02/27

head:                    **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd call the committee to order. I wonder if the committee would give unanimous consent to the brief introduction of guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

head:                    **Introduction of Guests**

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure tonight to introduce a representative of the agricultural industry, a member who is dedicating himself to the industry, a member who ran for election, been identified by his peers as a true representative of the industry, today coming from and traveling from a distance to be part of agricultural discussions. John Konynenbelt is a councillor for the county of Lethbridge, and I'd ask John to now rise and be recognized by all the members of this House. Thank you, John.

#### Designated Supply Subcommittees

Mr. Day moved:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Orders 56(2) and 56(2)(a) and (b) five designated supply subcommittees be appointed comprised of the following members:

1. Health: Dr. Oberg, chairman; Mrs. Abdurahman; Mr. Clegg; Mr. Dickson; Mrs. Fritz; Mr. Havelock; Mr. Kirkland; Mr. Renner; Mr. Sapers; Mr. Stelmach; Mr. Woloshyn; and Mr. Yankowsky.
2. Environmental Protection: Ms Calahasen, chairman; Mr. Collingwood; Mr. Coutts; Mr. Friedel; Mr. Herard; Mr. Hlady; Mr. Langevin; Dr. Percy; Mr. Stelmach; Dr. L. Taylor; Mr. N. Taylor; and Mr. White.
3. Education: Mr. Magnus, chairman; Mrs. Burgener; Mr. Doerksen; Mr. Henry; Mr. Hierath, Mr. Jacques; Dr. Massey, Mr. Pham; Mrs. Soetaert; Mr. Stelmach; Mr. Woloshyn; and Mr. Zwozdesky.
4. Economic Development and Tourism: Mr. McFarland, chairman; Mr. Bruseker; Ms Carlson; Mr. Dunford; Mrs. Gordon; Mr. Kowalski; Mr. Sekulic; Mr. Severtson; Mr. Tannas; Mr. Trynchy; Mr. Van Binsbergen; and Mr. Woloshyn.
5. Family and Social Services: Ms Haley, chairman; Mr. Amery; Mr. Brassard; Mr. Dickson; Mrs. Forsyth; Ms Hanson; Mrs. Hewes; Mrs. Laing; Ms Leibovici; Mr. Stelmach; Mr. Shariff; and Mr. Woloshyn.

[Motion carried]

MR. DAY: I move that the motion be reported when the committee rises and reports.

[Motion carried]

Mr. Day moved:

Be it resolved that:

1. Pursuant to Standing Order 57(1) four subcommittees of the Committee of Supply be established by the Committee of Supply with the following: subcommittee A, subcommittee B, subcommittee C, and subcommittee D.

2. The membership of the respective subcommittees be as follows:

Subcommittee A: Mr. Clegg, chairman; Mr. Magnus, deputy chairman; Mr. Ady; Mrs. Burgener; Ms Carlson; Mr. Doerksen; Mr. Havelock; Mr. Henry; Mr. Hierath; Mr. Jacques; Mr. Jonson; Dr. Massey; Mr. Mitchell; Dr. Percy; Mr. Pham; Mr. Renner; Mr. Rostad; Mr. Sekulic; Mr. Wickman; and Mr. Zariwny.

Subcommittee B: Mr. Tannas, chairman; Ms Haley, deputy chairman; Mr. Amery; Mr. Brassard; Mr. Cardinal; Mr. Dickson; Mr. Evans; Mrs. Forsyth; Mr. Germain; Ms Hanson; Mrs. Hewes; Mrs. Laing; Mr. Mar; Dr. Oberg; Mr. Sapers; Mr. Shariff; Mrs. Soetaert; Mr. Yankowsky; Mr. Zariwny; and Mr. Zwozdesky.

Subcommittee C: Mr. Tannas, chairman; Mr. McFarland, deputy chairman; Mrs. Abdurahman; Mr. Beniuk; Mr. Bracko; Mr. Dickson; Mr. Dunford; Mr. Fischer; Mrs. Fritz; Mrs. Gordon; Mr. Kowalski; Dr. Nicol; Mr. Paszkowski; Mr. Severtson; Mr. Thurber; Mr. Trynchy; Mr. Vas-seur; Dr. West; Mr. White; and Mr. Wickman.

Subcommittee D: Mr. Clegg, chairman; Ms Calahasen, deputy chairman; Mrs. Black; Mr. Bruseker; Mr. Chadi; Mr. Collingwood; Mr. Coutts; Mr. Dalla-Longa; Mr. Day; Mr. Friedel; Mr. Germain; Mr. Hlady; Mr. Kirkland; Mr. Langevin; Ms Leibovici; Mr. Lund; Mrs. Mirosh; Mr. Sekulic; Mr. Smith; and Dr. L. Taylor.

3. The following portions of the main estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997, unless previously designated by the Leader of the Opposition to be considered by the designated supply subcommittees, be referred to the subcommittees for their reports to the Committee of Supply as follows:

Subcommittee A: Advanced Education and Career Development; Education; Executive Council; Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs; and the Provincial Treasurer.

Subcommittee B: Community Development; Family and Social Services; Health; and Justice and the Attorney General.

Subcommittee C: Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Municipal Affairs; Public Works, Supply and Services; and Transportation and Utilities.

Subcommittee D: Economic Development and Tourism; Energy; Environmental Protection; Labour; and science and research.

[Debate adjourned February 26]

MR. BRUSEKER: Just so that I'm clear, Mr. Chairman, is the order of business at the moment further discussion on supplementary supply estimates or the notice of motion as presented by the Government House Leader yesterday? Regardless of which of those two, we are prepared to debate. I am prepared to debate either one of them, so I look to your direction to advise the Assembly.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is my understanding that the committee has before it the motion that was proposed pursuant to 57(1) and (4), establishing the four subcommittees of the Committee of Supply. That's what we have before us now.

MR. BRUSEKER: If that's the indication, Mr. Chairman, I would like to address some comments to that particular debate. I took the liberty of getting some reference material from the library, so I'm prepared to debate that at the request of the government. I think it probably will come as no surprise that I will be speaking in opposition to this particular motion, but in case anyone was unclear, I just thought I would articulate that opposition right from the outset to make everyone aware that I do not support – although perhaps with the power of debate I might be persuaded, but I rather am doubtful about that.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of concerns with respect to this motion before us today. First of all, we have the issue of these four subcommittees that are being proposed. Now, the four subcommittees at this point within the motion – the intent of the motion as it currently exists does not include any discussion about the idea of what I will refer to as double tracking.

I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. Is there . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: It's all right. Just the Chair is experiencing some discomfort by having two sources of information coming at the same time and not being able to make clarity of either one.

Please continue, hon. Member for Calgary North-West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't want to proceed inappropriately.

In discussions with myself as Opposition House Leader and with the Government House Leader the intention of this proposal of the motion, although it's not included . . .

MRS. GORDON: Right now that's the problem: in discussions with yourself?

MR. BRUSEKER: Opposition House Leader and Government House Leader. Obviously the Member for Lacombe-Stettler missed that part.

The discussions between myself and the Government House Leader were that the intention is to double track these subcommittees; in other words, we will have two subcommittees occurring and holding meetings simultaneously. The concern I have with that, Mr. Chairman, is that that indeed will create some difficulty for members who may wish to attend more than one of the subcommittee meetings that are being proposed. Now, the difficulty with that is that as representatives of constituents from wherever across the province we are duty bound . . . My apologies, Mr. Chairman.

#### **Chairman's Ruling Decorum**

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, we do appear to have a number of people who are standing and speaking at the same time, and there's only one who's recognized to stand and speak and that's the hon. Member for Calgary-North West. If we'd just remember that from our previous committee captures.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The difficulty with that proposal is that it would make it extremely difficult for

an individual to be in two places simultaneously. My concern with that is that, for example, recently I have been reappointed as the critic for economic development, which of course we've now designated as one of the five designated supply subcommittees in the motion just passed, but should I wish to attend other subcommittee meetings – it's no unknown fact, for example, that I have a strong interest in educational issues. Well, if the meeting of the subcommittee that is to deal with educational issues is meeting at the same time that the Department of Economic Development and Tourism is meeting, I cannot be in two places at the same time. That creates an impossibility for myself as a representative of the constituents of Calgary-North West.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the issue of representation is what I wish to deal with in particular. I went to the library and found a book on the concept of representation, in terms of what it is that are the duties of a member and certainly also the obligations of a member to one's constituency. I know this is an issue of concern to all members: what exactly is the role of a member with respect to the constituents that they represent and also what is it that the constituents can expect from their member in representing their concerns. This ties into of course the issue that was put forward, the proposal of the subcommittees, because we are, all of us elected, wearing a particular hat, if you will, that being the political party affiliation that we run under.

MR. HENRY: What's yours?

**8:10**

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, it's the same as the colour of the jacket here, hon. member.

Certainly that requires some obligation on our part, but also of course we are elected to represent our constituents.

In this book entitled *The Concept of Representation*, written by Hanna Pitkin, she talks about – and this is from page 209. She says:

The representative must act independently; his action must [also] involve discretion and judgment; he must be the one who acts . . . Despite the resulting potential for conflict between representative and represented about what is to be done, that conflict must not normally take place. The representative must act in such a way that there is no conflict, or if it occurs an explanation is called for.

Well, Mr. Chairman, this motion deals with the issue of how we will debate what is probably the central most important issue that comes before this Legislative Assembly on an annual basis, and of course that is the debate of the estimates, the questioning of members from both sides of the House, that being members that are not members of the cabinet, questioning the appropriate cabinet minister at the time with respect to issues that are of personal interest to individual constituents, to the member, him or herself, and also of course in terms of gaining information from the minister to take back to the constituents that one represents.

On the original notice – now, I know that it is changed, but for example I believe that the proposal from the hon. Government House Leader is that on Thursday afternoon we would double track on that particular afternoon two departments, that being Energy and now being proposed is the Department of Labour, because the Official Opposition House Leader has requested that Family and Social Services be designated as one of the departments to be discussed in one of those designated supply subcommittees. But if we have individuals who want to debate issues in both the Department of Energy and the Department of Labour, it becomes absolutely impossible for an individual to be in both

places to listen to the captivating words. I can hardly anticipate the stimulating oratory that we are certain to receive from the Minister of Labour on Thursday afternoon with respect to his budget estimates at that time. I would hate to think that I would have to miss that in order to be listening to the Minister of Energy as she presents her budget estimates. Certainly the Department of Energy is a department that is crucial to the economic well-being of this province. I think every Albertan knows how important that is to the well-being of this province. I find myself in a quandary on one hand because I have raised issues certainly with respect to the Workers' Compensation Board, issues that I have raised with the hon. Minister of Labour, the Government House Leader, who has responsibility for the WCB, yet I'm asked to make that choice between the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Energy.

I would suggest that that division is inappropriate, and in fact in the book that I've quoted earlier from, *The Concept of Representation*, the author talks about something here that I think is very seminal to this issue, talking about how we arrange our affairs, because really what we're debating here tonight is how it is we are going to arrange the affair of dealing with the budget estimates. The author on page 221 makes this observation, just a couple of sentences, Mr. Chairman:

Political representation is primarily a public, institutionalized arrangement involving many people and groups, and operating in the complex ways of large-scale social arrangements.

Well, that's true.

What makes it representation is not any single action by any one participant, but the over-all structure and functioning of the system, the patterns emerging from the multiple activities of many people. It is representation if the people (or a constituency) are present in governmental action, even though they do not literally act for themselves.

Mr. Chairman, what this says is that we need to set up in this proposal before us today a mechanism that will allow for the greatest voicing of our constituents' concerns, on one hand, and also for us as members to receive from government the greatest voicing of government concerns back to us so that the interchange and interflow of information back and forth between ministers and private members on both sides of the House can occur to its greatest degree.

Now, this motion we have before us, Mr. Chairman, will fundamentally prevent that from occurring. If we look at the motion, which is a rather lengthy motion of course, three pages long in total, you will see that the motion proposes the membership of the four subcommittees to be created and indeed creates also the apportioning, if you will, or the division of the budget into various departments in terms of how they will be dealt with in the Legislative Assembly. The motion of course has already dealt with the issue of the five designated supply subcommittees that are withdrawn from the consideration of these particular subcommittees because they are in the designated supply subcommittees. But we still have a number of issues that occur.

I might point out some of those concerns. For example, if one has a quick review of the list of those individuals whose names are mentioned on the different subcommittees, then one finds a number of duplications in a variety of locations. Depending upon how the tracking is going to occur, in fact you can see that some of the names appear on more than one of the subcommittee lists, and that will create an absolute impossibility for that member to be in both places.

Now, the purpose of these committees of course is to address the issue of the estimates, and the Government House Leader has

used the argument that anyone can go from one to the other to the other as that member sees fit. It makes it difficult for a member to get the flow of questions as they occur in one department and the answers that come forward from that area. Also, it's important to note that if we provide different members to attend these different subcommittee meetings, the end result will be that only the members of a subcommittee may indeed vote and provide any recommendations to the Committee of Supply. Now, I do not want to prejudice anything that might come forward out of these subcommittees, but there might indeed be a recommendation to change the manner of reporting, to change some issue in that particular budget estimate, and it would make it absolutely impossible for a member to be in both places at the same time when one could have votes in both areas.

When I look at the list of members in the motion, subcommittees A, B, C, and D, indeed one finds a number of duplications. So from the list – I don't mean to breach protocol – for example, one finds the name Mr. Germain at two points on that list, both in subcommittee B, as in Bob, and D, as in dog, or whatever you'd like to choose. Similarly we find the name Mr. Dickson occurring in the list at subcommittee B and subcommittee C. I use those two names only by way of example, Mr. Chairman, because certainly those two individuals will find themselves in difficulty if those two subcommittees run concurrently. Now, the reason I raised those two names is that if B and C run together, then Mr. Dickson finds himself in difficulty. If B and D run together, then Mr. Germain finds himself in difficulty in terms of being able to represent his constituents in the debates of those estimates.

8:20

Now the important part, and the reason this is such an important issue, Mr. Chairman, and the reason I raise concerns about this issue at this point is that indeed if this motion goes forward . . . The purpose of estimates debates is largely for members to gain information back and forth. If I can just leap ahead for a moment to the point where we have indeed completed our estimates debates and we are at the point where we are ready to receive the Treasurer's appropriation Bills that inevitably follow the estimates, then we face a situation wherein the debate typically is more restrained and more formalized from the standpoint that the appropriation Bills are usually – in the past at least – much smaller in terms of the detail and the information that is before us. The whole purpose of having the budget and having the budget estimates debates is to peruse the thick volumes of material that the Treasurer provides for us. So if members are restricted in their ability to debate those issues because of time constraints or separate physical location constraints, then that creates some problem for members to truly represent their constituents.

I think that as a responsible member trying to get information from and to my constituents, to promote that interchange of information, I need to be able to promote this interchange of information that would happen here in this Legislative Chamber. Certainly, Mr. Chairman, at least as far as my tenure in this Legislative Chamber, which is the same as yourself, sir, this is the first time we have seen this structure for budget estimates being introduced. One thing that I will say that I agree with the hon. Government House Leader on is that we need increased scrutiny of the budget estimates, but I am not persuaded that this particular proposal will solve that desire.

One of the things we have suggested from the Liberal opposition is that perhaps what might be more fruitful is if the opposition had more input at the start of the process rather than,

relatively speaking, near the end of the process. We have budget debate, but let's face it: in the seven years I've been here and we've debated budget estimates, I have only seen one line item changed in all of those budgets. That was to eliminate a \$1 million grant to a corporation that no longer existed. With that one exception, Mr. Chairman, I have not seen any changes in any line in any department throughout the budget debates. So rather than impose this kind of structure – and I'm not opposed to subcommittees per se. I am opposed to this double-tracking system and a splitting apart that is being proposed by this motion, a splitting apart of members of this Assembly and having to make a choice in going to committee A or B or C or D.

Indeed, one of the difficulties I have with this particular motion is that it does not specify how many of these will run together. The discussions I've had with the Government House Leader are that the intention is to do the double tracking, if you will, but there is nothing in this motion that would prevent all four from occurring simultaneously. That would make it virtually impossible for this to occur. Now, there's no mention in here one way or another that they will run singly, doubly, or whatever. The motion is unclear as to the mechanism that would occur or the mechanism that would result if this indeed were put into place. So, Mr. Chairman, I am concerned about the lack of definitiveness, I guess, of this motion with respect to the entire mechanism.

For example, we have just recently, only minutes ago, passed a motion with respect to designated supply subcommittees. Now, here we have a motion that has subcommittees A, B, C, and D proposed. [Mr. Bruseker's speaking time expired]

I'll get back to you on the rest of that when I can, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to address really clearly and succinctly and point by point the issues raised. First, it's important to note that this entire matter was brought to the attention of the entire House via the Speaker. The Speaker made a very clear ruling – and the ruling has been presented; I won't read it into *Hansard* again – that in fact this is appropriate, that there is no case whatsoever of privilege. When the opposition leader raised this matter yesterday as a point of order, he had to have it explained to him that it was not a point of order and that he could try a point of privilege. He did try a point of privilege. It's interesting that the Speaker in his ruling even said, "the Leader of the . . . Opposition did not make clear how the motion to establish subcommittees . . . was a contempt of the House." The Speaker then went on to clarify anticipated points here.

So I hope members of the opposition are listening carefully to the points that I will now pose on this item, and I hope for the last time. The Speaker has ruled that everything being done here, none of it in any way is a point of order, is in violation of the proceedings of this House, or is a matter of privilege in any way, shape, or form. That has been the ruling. Now, what also is very clear and evident, point by point here – and even if they would just raise their hands or nod if they agree with me or not, it'd be interesting to know how they can dispute or refute the points I'm making here.

First of all, nothing is new. This is not a new process. The Leader of the Opposition said last night a number of times that this is a new process. It is not new. It has been in Standing Orders for close to 25 years. It has been used for years. It is in Standing Orders now.

AN HON. MEMBER: Not here.

MR. DAY: Yes, here, Madam Member. Yes, right here in this Assembly it was used, and it was urged to be used again in 1991 by the Liberals. They said: do this again. It is also used in other jurisdictions, not just in estimates but in fact in consideration of legislation. I hope in some session, Lord willing, if I'm still here, to bring forward the prospect that we even in committee on legislation look at this process of subcommittees.

So let me make that very clear, and there can be no dispute on that. That is just the factual evidence. Nothing new. It's been in Standing Orders for 25 years. It's been used many years. It was urged by the Liberals in 1991 to use it again. As a matter of fact one year they took 11 estimate days to analyze 20 departments; another year, right here in this Assembly, we took only 16 days to analyze 29 departments. Interestingly, those were all surplus years, all surplus years. So very clearly there is nothing new.

Second point. Debate is not being reduced by one second. Debate is not being reduced by one second. As a matter of fact, there's a possibility, should members so decide, to have increased time of debate. There is no reduction in debate. Period.

Next point. The issue of two subcommittees running concurrently is absolutely common practice. It has been common practice in this Assembly in the past. It is common practice in other Assemblies across the country. Absolutely common practice.

The issue that some members might be somehow chained to their seats and not able to move from room to room is another red, very red herring. Members have freedom of movement. They can freely participate in debate and question ministers back and forth. Added to the process which we have never had before – added to the process – should a member become so transfixed that he or she is not able to remove themselves from one particular committee room and they are so rooted to their seats by the binding level of debate and they somehow don't make it to the other room, that night there's a reporting back mechanism: only two departments each night in the reporting back process to the full committee. To the full committee. So should a member even not be here in the House at all, as is common practice for some, or for some reason not want to leave a committee on a given night, it comes back right here. I hope the members have heard that. There is absolutely no restriction – I repeat, no restriction – put on any member in their ability to be in and to debate in the estimates of their choice. This has never been done before, a reporting-back process, only two departments at a time, reporting back to the House: an added measure, enhanced debate, giving members more flexibility than they ever had before.

8:30

I'd like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that even if we had not provided that extra provision, the Speaker ruled quite properly. I make that clear that we have provided the extra provision: another night for members to come back. The Speaker states very clearly in his ruling that in the matter

about there being two meetings in which members may wish to participate, the Chair refers to *Beauchesne* at paragraph 77, where it is stated:

Freedom of speech does not mean that Members have an unlimited or unrestrained right to speak on every issue. The rules of the House impose limits on the participation of Members and it is the duty of the Speaker to restrain those who abuse the rules.

He goes on to point out that this in no way is a restriction, even if we were not providing the extra, added, reporting-back night. There is no restriction. Do all members understand that? More time for debate, two departments at a time, and an added night, which we've never had before. We have never had that before. We are adding that.

Interestingly, the opposition leader raised the issue of more than one of their members on one list. Over the process of time, an extended time, in informing the Opposition House Leader that we were moving in this process, the Opposition House Leader and I, though we don't agree on everything, do let each other know how we feel about things. I think that in the entire time in which I have had the privilege of working with the Opposition House Leader, we have always informed each other fully and openly, and at times when for strategy reasons we choose not to, we directly say to the other person: for strategy reasons I am choosing not to give you some information. I want to make that clear, that I have enjoyed that process with this Opposition House Leader. It has always been up front and straightforward.

The Opposition House Leader showed on behalf of his caucus – and it was the caucus position – that they would not submit names for these subcommittees because obviously they don't like the process and they don't want to be seen as co-opted or buying into it. So, as Standing Orders allow, we instituted the list of names, and we did it with real caution and care as to the various critics, though those are not necessarily government-recognized positions. We took great care to make sure the critics were put into committees to which the estimates would point. That is why in some cases you will see members' names on more than one committee. We were trying to be sensitive and make sure they had maximum flexibility.

Mr. Chairman, we've also said to the Opposition House Leader: if there are any names on those lists the arrangement of which you do not like, just let us know; we will give unanimous consent to have the lists and the names changed. No problem. So the naming on the lists was something we had to do, something Standing Orders allow us to do. But we say to the opposition: any changes, any shift you want is no problem; let us know.

Also, I'll say again, something that's never been done before. We gave to the opposition the entire calendar for estimates and said: in the past you've been able to designate one day a week; designate every day. We gave the entire calendar to the opposition: designate every day. They chose not to, so we had to move ahead and accommodate members as well as we could. Yet the opposition is still allowed to designate certain days each week. That'll be up to them.

The opposition has stated very honestly and openly and publicly, as did the members for Edmonton-Gold Bar and Redwater when they were in the Parliamentary Reform Committee – and it's in *Hansard* – really why they don't like this process is because they think it means less question periods for them. Now, estimates has absolutely nothing to do with question period, absolutely nothing to do with it. We also know that the length of session and therefore the number of question periods is dependent upon the amount of legislation. Estimates has nothing to do with question periods, but in *Hansard* the opposition members in the Parliamentary Reform Committee openly stated: here's the real reason we don't like it. They knew there was no point to be made on the process of estimates.

Mr. Chairman, there was today introduced, if needed, a motion of closure on this particular motion. It's important to note that this is a standard motion to move into subcommittee. I won't get

into the details on that. I've already started that; I did that at the beginning of my remarks. There's nothing new here. These are Standing Orders. This is a motion to move into subcommittees, and the Opposition House Leader, reflecting apparently the will of the caucus, has said: we will debate this and debate it and debate it. It's like debating a motion to move into committee or to move back into the full House. It is an absolutely standard motion, and they have indicated that no matter what, they are just going to debate it, forever if need be. That is why there has to be a motion of closure.

This is a standard motion. I've explained why we're doing this. What they are hoping for – I understand the strategy – is that by us coming with a motion of closure, they'll be able to run from here and crank up the printing presses and do their flurry of press releases at how they're shocked, dismayed, and appalled at the loss of democracy. They'll run all those out, hoping to stir up some kind of interest because of this vicious tool called closure.

You know, it's fascinating, Mr. Chairman. In recent history, only some months ago, the most atrocious use of closure that I am familiar with in modern parliamentary history in Canada took place. It was brought in by Liberals. It was brought in by Liberals in the federal House, who were talking on some of the most sensitive issues known to Canadians: on the issue of distinct society and on the issue of regional vetoes. The Liberal Prime Minister brought in a motion of closure eliminating debate on constitutional items, and I didn't hear one voice of opposition from these Liberals about him using closure on items of that significance, items that the country has ground to a halt on. The Liberal Prime Minister brought in motions of closure. There was not one bit of opposition. I will send to the member across from Edmonton-Meadowlark my public statements on that atrocity and also the letters that I sent to Liberal MPs saying please don't do this. So on the issue of closure, when I hear the feigned protestations and the declarations of shock, horror, and dismay, I will be wondering: where were they when closure was really used on an important item, not on a housekeeping item like this?

Mr. Chairman, I am circulating an amendment to the motion. The reason I'm doing this, the reason I'm going the extra mile on this amendment – I don't have to. One of the things that continues to come up was in a Liberal press release authored by the opposition leader, not the House leader, striking fear into the hearts of good Albertans by saying that we would be having possibly four subcommittees on a night. Again, gross exaggeration and discouragement. Member for Lethbridge-East, that's in your leader's press release, saying that we would be having four of these running concurrently. Again, trying to stir up shock and fear.

So this amendment, Mr. Chairman, is an addition to the already painfully clear motion, and I'll read it now:

Be it resolved that the motion be amended at the end by adding:

4. When the Committee of Supply is called to consider the main estimates, it shall on the first six calendar days after agreement of the motion establishing the subcommittees, when main estimates are under consideration, resolve itself into two of the four subcommittees, both of which shall meet and report to the Committee of Supply.

See that? Two. For those of you reading *Hansard*, wherever you may be, I'm holding up two fingers now. Members opposite, this is not a peace sign, because there's no peace on this issue. These are two.

So it's being added. This is an amendment being added to the motion, making it very clear that there will only be two subcommittees meeting, driving another stake through the heart of the

false fears that are being promoted by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Chairman, I'll say it again: this is so painfully clear. I don't want to repeat everything I have just done. I have now added to the motion an amendment making even more painfully clear the process we are following.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I am going to take my seat. I will look for something which refutes the very clear points that I've raised here. I won't enunciate them and articulate them again. I've explained why we will proceed with closure on this item. We have to move on with the estimates, which both sides so desperately want to look at. I will look forward to debate on the amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**8:40**

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to speak tonight on the amendment. There are lots of things about this amended motion that need discussion. I think one of the most interesting things is that the member who brings this forward and pontificates about it in the House is the same member who brought about Bill 57. Another hit to democracy: that's his point. And you know what? He goes on and on and on. When we're speaking to these issues, they all talk to each other. What does that tell people in the gallery about democracy? They have no respect for it. [interjections] It's obvious that side has no respect for democracy. The more time they take out of the Legislature, the happier they are. [interjections]

#### **Chairman's Ruling Decorum**

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, hon. members. I think courtesy and parliamentary procedure would indicate to us all that as the hon. members allowed the Government House Leader to go on at some length about his motion, it's only fair that we allow people who may differ from that view to speak without being drowned out.

The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

#### **Debate Continued**

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's appalling that the government can't handle that all of us would like to speak to the different estimate debates. For example, here we have a motion that suggests that two committees can go on at once. Now, if I want to talk about transportation and highway 794, that has absolutely no shoulders from Highway 16X to Westlock, except for a two-mile chunk near Westlock . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Barrhead-Westlock is rising on a point of order.

#### **Point of Order Clarification**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, all hon. members should know that that section of 794, which is just south of Westlock, does indeed have shoulders for a much greater distance than two miles. It was delivered in 1995 for safety reasons and safety improvements, and it's well accepted and well appreciated by the good

folk who live in that part of the world.

Mr. Chairman, it is very important in this House that there should be clarity and in fact truth with respect to all statements that we would expect from all hon. members of the Assembly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. We didn't catch the citation, but I'm sure it must come under clarity.

Hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, do you wish to first of all comment on the point of order?

MRS. SOETAERT: Yes, I'll speak to the point of order, whatever it was. Mr. Chairman, had the members over there been listening, I said: except for a stretch near Westlock, which needed wider shoulders. I've often traveled to Westlock; I have relatives there. That's been a dangerous curve for years. Several people have died on it, and further down the road there are more accidents. You can't change a tire on the side of that road because there's no shoulder. My point is that I want to be at the transportation estimates. You know what? I can't be there because maybe I'd like to speak to Health and the mess that's happened with the Westview board, an absolutely disastrous mess, especially with the last appointments. I'll bet the Member for Stony Plain would agree with me about the last appointments being very disappointing to Westview. [interjection] Well, he's not in his seat to argue, so what the heck.

Now, let's say I want to speak to both of those issues. Now, the Minister of Labour says you can hop from one to another. Well, just go figure. What if the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, who needs a hip replacement, who's on a waiting list – she can't run from one room to the other. I think it's appalling that you think members should be able to hop back and forth at will. So, Mr. Chairman, time to look at . . .

MR. DAY: Point of order.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader is rising on a point of order. Hopefully it won't be a point of agreement, as was the last point of order.

#### **Point of Order Relevance**

MR. DAY: Under 23(h), suggesting that I would cause or want a member to have to do that. The point was made clearly by the Speaker that, first of all, two subcommittees meeting at once is not in any way seen as a restraint, and will the member please address the issue of the night of reporting back, in which three departments at once will come back, and members opposite, all the members of the Assembly, without jumping back, including people with hip replacements, will be here to address those items without having to move. Will the member please address that? Three departments a night reporting back, all members together: please comment on that.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert on the point of order.

MRS. SOETAERT: There is no point of order, Mr. Chairman. I made a very good case about members not being able to go back and forth and coming back. If I want to take the entire evening to debate . . . [interjections] So what? She has a right to be at two things. Yes she does. So I'm sorry; there's no point of order.

Now can I continue?

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I'm not certain that the hon. member is in any way challenging the Speaker's ruling that that was not a breach of privilege and that there were some limits. Nevertheless, for the purposes of debate, the plight of someone having to be in two places at the one time is a perfectly normal observation. So I would rule that if you're not challenging the Speaker, you are quite free to make the observation that if there are two events going on at the same time, it is not possible to attend both. That seems obvious to all.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you. Well, that's the point I was trying to make. So I can continue now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

### Debate Continued

MRS. SOETAERT: Now, the minister talked about if we combined these estimates, we wouldn't shorten the length of the sitting. Well, hello, hello, hello. If we speak for 11 days instead of 20 on estimates, that shortens the time in the House. Now, I know the cabinet doesn't like to answer questions. That's rather obvious, and though we ask questions about Multi-Corp and about Health and about Education, we get a lot of roundabout answers. So you know what? I think the people of Alberta deserve a chance to ask questions, and that's our job. We ask those questions; they don't like answering. Well, that's part of the democratic process. Pretty soon they'll mandate no question period. They've taken you off the . . . [interjections] See? A blatant display, a blatant disregard for democracy.

So back to this motion and the amendment, Mr. Chairman. I've got to say that I'm very disappointed with the fact that we can't give each committee – I can't even sit on every committee. That's sad. I have lots of issues within my riding. I have agriculture in my riding. I have a highway or two that need widening. I have three health boards in my riding, one quite dysfunctional at the moment, and I have all kinds of issues: social services, WCB. It goes on and on. But no. The other side says: we don't need to take time for that. Now, I feel sorry for anybody watching in the gallery tonight, because as we voice our concerns . . . [interjections] We've certainly woken them up, haven't we? We have.

**8:50**

Well, I had a few more points to make here, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to honestly see on the motion and the amended motion how members justify this. I know they have an eloquent minister who loves to pontificate about the rights and wrongs of the Legislature, but what he always forgets is that democracy – you know, they're just not used to a large, effective opposition. When there were only two or three or four members in the opposition, it wasn't an issue. Now that we have 29, 30 members in the opposition, they just can't handle the fact that we're far more effective in debate, far more effective in question period, and they don't like it. I really fear that with this motion and the amended motion, we are losing our grip on democracy, and that side of the House, they laugh. They think that's funny. Very arrogant. A very arrogant crew that feels they can put in anything they want and pass it in this Legislature, including inhibiting my ability to debate on every issue that affects my riding. That's not democracy.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll probably end pretty soon now, and I know that saddens many people. I think this Conservative government doesn't like sitting in this Legislature. They don't like acknowledging that this is part of the process. They don't

like this process. They know that each day we sit in the Legislature they are held accountable by the opposition. They don't like that. But you know what? Whether they like it or not, that's our job, to hold them accountable. We deserve a fair chance to debate \$11 billion. We should debate that. That's our job. That's our responsibility. You know what? This government resents answering questions, resents being held publicly accountable, and resents being told that there are better ways of doing things.

We've got several suggestions, and the Member for Lethbridge-East is going to suggest some of the ways that we can better debate estimates. Mandate for Change was an excellent document that suggested a better way of doing this, but of course this government doesn't understand how appreciating and using other members of the Legislature that don't belong to their caucus could work to their advantage. They don't seem to get that.

Anyway, I was elected to be a voice in this Legislature, Mr. Chairman. [interjections] And I've done that, haven't I? I take this job seriously, despite the laughter from the other side, and I will do my utmost to prevent anyone from hindering my ability to do so. This government does not value democracy.

Thank you.

MR. DAY: Well, as I feared – and I was hoping to be proved wrong. I was looking for some salient points on the issues raised. There were none. The debate on this is degenerating . . .

MR. HENRY: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre is rising on a point of order.

### Point of Order

#### Referring to the Absence of Members

MR. HENRY: I know we're not supposed to refer to the absence and presence of members on either side of the House, and I'm not going to do that, but I think that the hon. Government House Leader, if he's going to refer to the remarks made by the Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, he's going to have to wait until the Blues come out so we can find out what was really said, because I can't refer to the fact that he wasn't here for a period of the debate.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: On the point of order, hon. Government House Leader.

MR. DAY: I believe I heard a point of order on what the member thought I was going to say. That's a new one to me, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the Chair would agree that anticipation is often the greater part of realization, and here we've found it expressed very well.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Chairman, on the point of order.

THE CHAIRMAN: Continuing on the point of order?

MR. HENRY: On the point of order. I regret that the hon. House leader has become so predictable that I've been able to anticipate his every word and move.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, with that explanation on the point of order, I think we'll rule that it's not found, and we'd invite the hon. Government House Leader to continue.

MR. DAY: Well, I hate to disappoint the member by not, in fact, referring to things which he thought I was referring to. Just work with me on this one, Mr. Chairman.

### Debate Continued

MR. DAY: It's clear that the opposing debate is degenerating rapidly. For instance, the member opposite keeps saying that we're going to sit for 11 days. That's the purpose of this amendment; it shows that we sit for at least 14 days. There are only six calendar days in which we do these two subcommittees, only six. The 11 is false – I repeat, false – or misunderstood. Take your pick.

Given the fact that there has been no – I repeat: there has been no – direct refuting of any of the points I've made, I feel that we do need to get on with the important consideration of supply estimates, and so I'd move to adjourn debate on the motion as amended.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. Government House Leader, the motion has not yet been amended. It's been proposed, and the amendment has not been approved. So, we're really adjourning the debate on the motion.

MR. DAY: On the motion and the proposed amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

All right. All those in support of the motion by the hon. Government House Leader that we do adjourn debate on this item, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress on the motion and proposed amendment when the committee rises and reports.

[Motion carried]

### head: Supplementary Estimates 1995-96

THE CHAIRMAN: We have now before us the consideration of the supplementary estimates, and we invite the Minister of Energy.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to have an opportunity to respond to some of the questions that were raised by the members opposite last night. I don't have the *Hansard* as yet, but I believe that I do have a copy of the Blues. I hope I will capture all the questions that were asked. If I don't, I do make a commitment to respond to the hon. members as soon as I get all of the questions down.

The first questions came, I believe, from the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, who had inquired as to who the contractor

was for the MRIS program. I believe he was inquiring as to who the original contractor was, and clearly that was a company called LGS. They are no longer the lead contractor on this project; it has been changed to IBM. That occurred in November of 1994 when we realized we were having some major problems with this project, so we did switch project leaders both internally and externally so that we could bring the project along. I might say that the people who have worked diligently on this program from the start have put in an awful lot of time to bring this project back onside.

The second question that the hon. member asked related to whether the contractor did business with other departments. I have not been able to ascertain whether they have or not, so I can't give you that information.

### 9:00

The third question was: are we getting caught up on the system? Clearly, we are. We were backlogged for a very long time. Through the co-operation of the industry, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, and our department working together, we were able to put out estimated numbers for year-end closings. We are now moving forward, and we're putting out actual invoices. We're moving from estimate to actual about every seven to 10 days, so we anticipate being caught up before the end of this year with the backlog.

One of the other questions, Mr. Chairman, I believe was from the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods: was the cost mainly being borne on people or on design? In fact, the cost is based on the actual new system development, which is focused on a client/server basis. So it's a combination of both, but the main cost is in the software development, based on the business rules that are attached to the gas royalties, which are very, very complex. There are well over 100 types of variables involved in the calculation of gas royalties, so it is a very, very complex system. In fact, it's the largest system in the government. When you consider the results of being able to capture the Crown royalty on gas, it's a very important system and can't be taken lightly.

The other question that was asked was whether there were penalties, et cetera, involved in the system and in collection of the funds. In fact, there was an agreement, because of the delay, that companies would pay an estimate to us based on the best information they had available and run through their own auditors, their own outside auditors and internal auditors. At the end, once the catch-up was completed, those that had in fact paid us additional funds would receive interest on that, and those that had not paid sufficient would be charged interest. This has again been checked through the Auditor General's department as well as the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the industry players. We won't have that exact number until we are finished the catch-up on this, but we believe it will be relatively a wash between the two. I don't have that information.

The one question that was asked by the Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan was: are these systems going to take us into the next century? System development is something that changes very, very quickly. Hopefully when you put a system as important as this and as extensive as this in place, in fact you may have updates and upgrades done to it without starting all over again, because it is a very, very complex program and you certainly don't want to go through major reworks on a regular basis. But upgrades will have to be made as times change.

I think overall, though, Mr. Chairman – someone asked about co-ordination between departments even. Clearly, there has been a review process in place on this side of the House. As we enter



into more automation, there needs to be an awareness of what is happening and a co-ordination between the government overall so that we are utilizing the best material available to us and in fact co-ordinating our efforts on system development.

One of the things that becomes abundantly clear is that there also must be a direct linkup of where you can look at daily utility concepts, where ease of information, ease of access to systems is very important, not only within government but for those that need to access the services of government. That's a co-ordination that is going on with a group now and I believe will carry us into the 21st century with a good framework for information being gained by the government and being disseminated by the industry.

Our program, as I say, is on track. We are moving forward. We've had a lot of ups and downs to face on this system, but we have worked very closely with the industry to bring this to a close. It's been a very lengthy project and it has been very costly, but it must be completed. It's critically important because as you look at this year's budget, where you see revenue numbers attached to our ministry, it is important that those dollars are collected and collected on a timely basis and can be accounted for. That's what this system will do, but it has had its problems. As I say, we've had to make a number of changes within the ministry to bring the system forward and complete it, and we expect it will be completed this year. I can tell you that there isn't one person within our ministry that isn't looking forward to that day, to say it's finished.

So I believe those were the questions that arose last night. If there are any others, Mr. Chairman, I certainly will assure hon. members that I will answer those in writing.

Thank you.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. With regard to supplementary estimates I have a few questions that I would like to raise in a variety of the departments, and perhaps I'll be able to get some answers for that.

I note in Advanced Education and Career Development that \$500,000 for additional interest payments to banks has been requested in this particular supplementary estimate. My question: is it not possible – I know that when trying to project interest rates over the next year, it's a bit of a guessing game. But I'm wondering – and perhaps the minister can get back to me at a later date – whether any discussions have happened with the banks with regard to an agreement on a formula for projecting long-term interest rates for subsidizing student loans while students are in school, therefore giving us a bit more predictability with regard to the interest payments, and sharing equally with the banks any dramatic upturns and downturns in national and international interest rates over time, rather than just the taxpayer of Alberta taking the whole hit. This is a bit of a cash cow for the banks, not only in terms of the guarantee provided by the government for the student loans but also the advantage of getting access to future likely business from those students once they start banking with that particular institution. I'm just wondering if any discussion has happened with the banks about locking in for periods of time and sharing that kind of risk on an ongoing basis between the banks and the government.

Moving on to Community Development, I note that there's \$1.75 million being asked for to pay for cash benefits and health care insurance premiums for low-income seniors. This particularly addresses part of the problem, that the government underesti-

mated the number of individuals at a particular income threshold or below a particular income threshold who would apply for the assistance. I'd like to know from the minister a couple of things related to that particular kind of estimating.

Number one, the \$500 per individual, \$1,000 per couple special assistance: how many applied for that and how many were able to get that? What impact did that have on the budget? The \$1 million that was announced by the Premier for that particular program: how much of that has actually been accessed? Perhaps a step before that: where did that money come from, and how is that being accounted for? It was after the budget was passed that the Premier and the minister announced there'd be an extra million dollars, so I'd like to know where in the budget that money was found. Then subsequent to that, how much of that has been used? Is it still sitting there, or is it part of that overall lump sum that this \$1.75 million will go to, I assume, supplement?

Also with regard to that particular line item, the Alberta seniors benefit, I'd like to receive from the minister any studies he's done with regard to the threshold levels. There are two subject areas that I'm interested in, Mr. Chairman. Firstly, I'm interested in impact studies. Has the ministry done any impact study to see if indeed the threshold is at the appropriate level and what the average living costs are of a senior who is \$1 above that particular threshold?

9:10

What I'm leading to, of course, is: are we at the appropriate threshold for seniors benefits? I can tell you that aside from perhaps Calgary-Buffalo, I have the highest proportion of seniors in my constituency of any of the 83 members here, with many of them on low fixed incomes. One of the things that I'm hearing repeatedly is that the threshold levels for the Alberta seniors benefit are too low and that we need to raise those. Again, in summary, I want to see from the minister any studies that the ministry has done or any internal reports or correspondence that would address how that particular threshold level was arrived at and any of those items – internal reports, studies, or correspondence – that analyze what it costs a senior to live on a yearly basis relative to that threshold.

The second issue I'd like to address with that threshold is that I'd like to see from the minister what the cost would be on an incremental basis if we were to push that threshold up. Of course, we not only have to look at the benefit, but we have to look at the cost. So if the threshold was raised by \$500, what would that cost the Treasury, the Alberta taxpayer? I know those figures must be available in the Department of Community Development, but we've yet to see them. I've yet to see them, and I offer apologies if they've been presented and I haven't seen them, but I don't think that's likely. I would like to see any reports, studies, or correspondence the department has been involved in that actually cost out what the cost would be of incrementally increasing by levels of \$500 the threshold for the Alberta seniors benefit.

In addition, I would like to see what the benefit is to the Treasury, or conversely the removal from those who receive the Alberta seniors benefit, as the old age security and CPP indexing comes into force every quarter. We know that as the old age security and the Canada pension plan and the guaranteed supplement from the federal government continue to rise every quarter because of adjustments for the inflation rate, that puts the senior in a slightly higher – I know it's minimal, but it is higher – income level, which then reduces their Alberta seniors benefit. So I guess, in summary, I want to know specifically how much

the Alberta seniors benefit has taken away from seniors or has not had to pay to seniors as a result of federal government increases to seniors in old age security, guaranteed income supplement, and CPP payments. I'd like to see that from the minister in order to be able to see whether they really need the \$1.75 million or whether in fact they're just taking that money from seniors and doing something unmentionable with it.

I'd like to move to Education, if I might. The department has asked for \$5 million for supplementary estimates: public and separate schools, \$4.65 million, and \$350,000 for private school support. This is specifically to ensure that each school in Alberta has access to the worldwide computer network colloquially known as the Internet. I have some questions. I applaud the government for moving forward on connecting schools to the Internet. Alberta has been behind on that compared to other provinces. Where we now have between 40 and 60 percent of our schools connected to the Internet, you go to places like New Brunswick, where there's 100 percent, and you go to places like Manitoba, where there's 80 percent of schools connected to the Internet. In our province there are not accurate statistics in terms of how many schools, because some of the larger jurisdictions are actually service providers to the Internet themselves. So if you use a 60 percent figure, you assume that every one of their schools is connected through that server to the Internet, and that's not the case. It's somewhere between 40 and 60 percent connection in Alberta. So I'm glad to see that this is moving forward.

However, there are several components, and I'd like to see a more detailed breakdown. I will support the \$5 million, but I'd like to be able to see a more clear breakdown of how that money is going to be distributed and what it is going to be used for. Is that money going to be used for infrastructure? Goodness knows, our province is back in the 19th century when it comes to fibre optics and infrastructure. Is this money being used to put the appropriate wiring, et cetera, in schools? Is it being used to purchase hardware, software, or provide inservicing for teachers, not only in terms of how to use the equipment but how to integrate that equipment into the curriculum? I'd like to know what the breakdown of that is.

As well, related to that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to know what benchmarks the government has established with regard to technology in the schools. It's fine to say that we're going to have every school hooked up to the Internet, but if you have a school of 1,400 or 1,600 students, as we do in my jurisdiction, having one computer hooked up to the Internet isn't really going to service that school very well. I'm encouraging the government to establish benchmarks, to have one computer for every three students as a target, a benchmark, in the high schools, and one for every six in the elementary schools. That's based on some solid research that's been done by Apple corp, south of the border, where they have looked at various models of computer uses in schools and have come up with the optimum level.

As the government moves into this technology – we know this \$5 million this year was announced in conjunction with \$40 million for the next three, and I'll be asking the question more specifically in subestimates, assuming the government wins its motion. I'd like to know how the government's going to distribute that money – we know there are some jurisdictions in Alberta that have been fairly flush with money over the years because of the previous inequities in property taxes – and whether we're going to distribute this money simply on a per capita basis. Or are we going to help those jurisdictions that have been lower in terms of assessment and lower capacity to purchase computers and

get on to the Internet? Are we going help to move them up in a faster way or just treat everybody the same, which we know is not equitable? I'd like to have that information from the minister.

The hon. Minister of Energy spoke earlier, and I know that the members on this side have dealt with that issue. If I have time at the end, I'll come back to Energy, but I did want to talk about Environmental Protection. What I would like to see is in the \$3.211 million requested for the supplementary estimate for the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation. Our notes from the department tell us it's to settle business commitments of the corporation. I'd like to have an itemized account of what those business commitments were. Are those business commitments severance packages? Are they simply paying out old debts or writing down bad debts? Are we writing down debts and then giving extra cash to the partner because of bad debts and assuming half of those? Are we paying out some contracts or are we canceling some contracts for services and goods that we're no longer going to use because it's private? We're being asked to vote this kind of money, yet we have no idea really what it's for.

I understand the shared financing costs while the divestiture was being negotiated – and I know that the hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw believes he worked very, very hard to get that deal in place so to save us, but he's obviously cost us \$2.1 million in shared interest payments by not coming to a final deal within the time lines given to him by the Premier and the minister. He's still going to have to work very hard, I think, to make up that \$2.1 million before he gets on the front bench. We'll see in time. Perhaps he'll cross the floor again and become a Liberal when we form the government, and we can talk about him being on the front bench.

I remind the hon. member the first time we met was at a Liberal convention. I won't go into that. Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to get into that, but I have to tell you, he pinned a Ralph button on me. Ralph for Liberal leader. He did. He did. This is the absolute truth, and I stand in my place for the record. I've never said it in the Legislature, but the Member for Calgary-Shaw came to the convention when I was president of the Liberal Party and pinned a Ralph for Liberal leader button on me. I have to add that I didn't leave it on. I took the button off, and look where I am. On the side of truth and justice and all that's right about Alberta.

**9:20**

Back to the debate on the estimates. I'd like to go to Health, if I can, given that the hon. Health minister is here. The minister has asked for \$56 million for practitioner services, unbudgeted payments to physicians. At a certain point the eyes glaze over, Mr. Chairman. We keep hearing: the physicians have agreed to save \$50 million; no, they're going to get \$47.2 million more this year, but they're going to save \$50 million more next year. This is an old trick when doing budgeting. What you do is throw a pile of extra money in this year. Tell them we won't cut it next year, and it'll look like it dropped a lot. But you haven't really dropped a lot from what you budgeted. I'd like to have more information about how that fits into this year's budget compared to next year's, and perhaps I'll get into that in next year's budget estimates.

Blue Cross nongroup benefits is \$9.3 million. My question to the minister – and she may not be able to answer this, but I will ask it anyway – is: if the Conservative Mulroney government had not used closure and rammed through the Bill giving patent protection to multinational pharmaceutical companies, would we

not have indeed lower drug costs in our province and would we not be here asking for \$9.3 million more if it were not for the cousins of the folks sitting in the government here who used closure and rammed this through in Ottawa a few years ago? We all remember that fight. We all fought that fight and we lost it, and now we're paying for it. Funny how things come home to roost.

The minister, her ministry, has also asked for \$11.45 million for dedicated program funding. What we're missing here, Mr. Chairman, I believe, is a long-range plan of how we're going to do it. In the estimates the government talks about cardiac surgery and joint replacement surgery. For cardiac surgery we're talking about \$2 million in Edmonton. The fact is that in the Edmonton region, unless you are sick enough that you have to be in hospital, unless you are an inpatient, you're not going to get into cardiac surgery at the University hospital. I know that because I've been trying to get in several of my constituents who are ill at home, one gentleman in particular who may not last until tomorrow. Every day he doesn't know if his valve is going to go or not, and because he's not an inpatient, he hasn't got a hope in Hades of ever getting his surgery done with the current situation. This is going to take care of a little bit of that, but I'd like to see what the long-range plan is.

Are we're going to be putting more money in because we have an aging population? What's the plan for funding cardiac surgeries as well as joint replacement surgeries? It won't take a rocket scientist. There are health care economists both in Edmonton and Calgary who, based on our population trends, can tell us approximately how many cardiac surgeries and how many joint replacement surgeries we're going to be needing three, four, and five years down the road. We're going to be needing more. We already know that in the Edmonton region for hip and knee replacements we're sitting at about 1,100 people. My neighbour finally had her knee done this late summer, early fall, after over a year's wait.

Now, to be fair, the mean waiting period of time and the average waiting period of time is more around five to six and a half months, depending on the severity. But my understanding is that this money is going to allow an extra 100 or 200 procedures, and that's not going to clear up the backlog. So what I'd like to know from the minister is: what are her plans for the next two years or three years in terms of clearing up that backlog? I don't believe that my constituents should have to wait for surgery that is needed now because this government has not adequately planned its health care - I'd like to say reform, but it's just been dismantling in our province.

As well, I would like the minister to commit to releasing the draft business plans and the financial requests from the Capital health authority in my area and her responses to each and every one of those pieces of correspondence. Given that we're talking about two public bodies - one appointed, one elected - it seems to me that should be public information.

Mr. Chairman, I could go on longer, but I think I've asked the questions, and I would await answers to those questions and will welcome an opportunity to get back into the debate when I receive those answers. I look forward to more information coming out in the estimates for 1996-97.

Thank you.

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

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [some applause] Well, thank you. Thank you. Prior to addressing the

questions which were asked not only this evening but last night regarding the Environmental Protection supplementary estimates, I will confirm for the House, based on the Member for Edmonton-Centre's comments regarding our first meeting, that it is true that I did meet him at a Liberal convention and I was wearing a Ralph for leader button. It's obvious that I was smart: I kept my button. He didn't, and look where we're at now.

Last evening the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud asked a few questions. To begin with, he did raise the issue regarding the severance payments that we have suggested have to be made with respect to winding down the operations of the corporation. I will advise the House this evening that we have yet to negotiate the severance payment amounts. We are looking at two positions. We've budgeted approximately \$100,000. The packages will be based on years of service and existing salary, and they will be consistent with government severance packages which have been negotiated with people in similar positions in the past while. So we've budgeted approximately \$100,000 for that.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Another issue, a question, that was raised last evening by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was the financing costs of \$2.1 million. So the members are clear, this relates to the interest charges which accrued on the \$147 million settlement regarding the joint venture agreement which we negotiated and closed in November of last year. The number was arrived at effective July, and what we did from that date forward is have any expenses incurred in the operation of the facility, including system contribution, apply against the sum. We also then had interest accrue on that amount beginning September 1. Basically the interest associated with the money being held in escrow pending closing worked out to being split about 50-50. Bovar did not have the interest accruing basically effective the same date that we had the expenses offsetting the amount. So that was a benefit to the taxpayer.

The Member for Sherwood Park asked quite a few questions last evening. One was a general question as to where the dollars were coming from, whether it was a transfer of funds or new dollars. I will say that these are new dollars to the extent that they are required to again offset any advances which were put in place by the department of the environment to facilitate the closing of phase 1, plus any costs associated with the winding down of the corporation.

I'll go through some of those specific costs for you at this point in time. The \$2.1 million I think is quite clear. If we look at the sum of a little over \$1 million, this is to cover the period January 1 through to June 30 of '96. We're looking at staffing expenses of approximately \$97,000. We have professional fees, primarily legal, associated with the negotiation of phase 2. We have budgeted, though we certainly hope we aren't going to wind up spending, one-quarter of a million dollars for those fees. We have approximately \$500,000 to \$800,000 set aside for some environmental cleanup which was necessary at the Nisku warehouse sites, which the special waste corporation owns, and, as I mentioned earlier, we are looking at approximately \$100,000 for severance. So if I've done my math right, that comes out pretty close to the \$1.1 million.

9:30

The Member for Sherwood Park asked a question regarding how the industry will work in the future in light of the fact that the corporation is being wound up. That hasn't been entirely

determined at this stage. However, the intention is to have the department of the environment basically handle any agreements that are in place, oversee the enforcement of the regulations, and if necessary continue to enter into contracts with respect to collection sites throughout the province. Basically we're trying to get this to a stage where we can wind up the corporation and have the department assume any and all responsibilities for overseeing this particular area of environmental protection.

Another question raised by the Member for Sherwood Park specifically is whether the \$2.1 million was determined prior to or subsequent to the arrangement with Bovar. Interest charges. I know the Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*, being a lawyer, will certainly appreciate this. Whenever you're negotiating arrangements, there are certainly a number of adjustments which take place from the effective date which you happen to choose and the closing date. The negotiation with respect to the interest was just one of many items which we had to negotiate through that adjustment period. So I guess to answer the question: it did occur subsequent to agreeing on the \$147.5 million, but again it was in the normal course of business and formed part of that negotiation.

AN HON. MEMBER: We're all asleep, Jon.

MR. HAVELOCK: You're all asleep? Well, then it's working. The Health minister's awake, though, but not listening. Oh, she is listening. I apologize.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's the *Dinning* style of mumbling.

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. If I speak quietly enough, no one will hear me.

Anyway, another question raised by the Member for Sherwood Park was, in the terms of the financing costs, whether or not these dollars would flow through to the Royal Bank. As I've explained before, these dollars will flow to the numbered company, and it's the numbered company which has basically assumed all the obligations and responsibilities under the joint venture agreement. I guess you could indirectly argue that the bank is going to benefit, because of course there's approximately \$148 million in the kitty of the numbered company. The bank eventually may look to the dollars in that numbered company in order to pay off the loan, and certainly Bovar will be looking to those dollars with respect to the performance of the numbered company's obligations under the agreement.

AN HON. MEMBER: Speak up.

MR. HAVELOCK: You can read it tomorrow if you have nothing else to do.

The Member for West Yellowhead actually made some comments, and I'm disappointed he wasn't able to make it this evening. Some of his comments indicate that he certainly has not read the documents which have been tabled in the House. He did indicate that I, as chairman of the Special Waste Management Corporation, had stated that it would cost \$100 million at a minimum to reclaim the site. That's not the case. I've estimated it in the past to be anywhere between \$30 million to \$50 million. As members of the House know, we put in a budget allocation of approximately 7 and a half million dollars last year. If, for example, we're going to reclaim the site 20 years down the road, by the time it's required the fund will have built up a sufficient amount in order to handle the reclamation.

He also made the statement that we haven't heard as of yet anything regarding the term or the period of time which the plant will stay open. Again, the phase 2 letter of intent, which was tabled in the House, indicates quite clearly that if we close phase 2, there is an obligation to keep the facility open until December 31 of '98. He also mentioned the aspect of profit, and in particular there was an article in the newspaper not too long ago indicating I think about a \$4 million profit which had accrued as a result of operations at the facility. As members will recall, the present joint venture agreement requires that there is a guaranteed rate of return. I can't advise the House at this time whether the guaranteed rate of return has actually been achieved and therefore whether we will be sharing in that profit which has been realized. However, if and when I find out that information, I would certainly be happy to pass that on.

The other issue regarding profit which was set out in the letter of agreement is that if we close phase 2, 40 percent of any net profits generated at the facility will accrue to the government. That declines to 10 percent over an eight-year period, and thereafter there will be no profit sharing.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that answers all the questions asked by members last evening and this evening, and I thank the House for their time.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I had questions in a couple of areas. Since the hon. Health minister is here this evening, perhaps I can start with that.

MRS. McCLELLAN: She was here last night.

MR. DICKSON: Well, that's the wonderful thing about our Health minister. She never leaves the place, Mr. Chairman. She's always here, always in her seat.

I refer the hon. minister to pages 38 and 39 of the supplementary estimates, volume 2, and want to make some inquiries with respect to 3.3.20, the dedicated program funding. I appreciate that the minister has in the estimates broken it out in terms of some specific health procedures to which the additional \$11.4 million is going to be dedicated, but I guess my question would be when the hon. minister said at page 213 of *Hansard* last evening:

The final item of \$11.4 million is requested to address pressure points in the health system. Alberta Health is committed to continue to monitor changes and to take action when necessary to maintain high-quality health care.

Well, those were the comments made by the hon. minister in introducing her dedicated program funding. I'm trying to reconcile those things that she indicated warranted dedicated program funding on a supplementary estimate basis with the kind of feedback I'm getting from my constituents, Mr. Chairman.

I'll start with one of the most pressing needs, and it has to do with long-term care for seniors. The Colonel Belcher hospital is located in Calgary-*Buffalo*. Since 1991 that long-term care facility and its 135 beds have been dedicated to providing long-term care for eligible veterans. It of course is also the home of the Calgary regional health authority at this stage. My concern there is from meeting with residents in the hospital and families because many of the families of veterans have specifically located in the area in Calgary-*Buffalo* proximate to the Colonel Belcher hospital to provide support. In meetings with the residents there was a great deal of concern about cuts anticipated April 1, 1996. The CRHA has simply suggested there will be cuts, but there's no

indication of what precisely those cuts will be. Now there's some speculation it's going to mean losing the recreational therapy program in the Colonel Belcher hospital. There's a concern in terms of staff cutbacks.

I want to tell the minister that there's some concern. So we've got a number of seniors, veterans – not that any senior is any more or less important than any others, but one would like to think that no seniors would be better provided for or more deserving of care in this province than people who had participated in a war on behalf of our country and all of us. And the concerns would be this: in the Colonel Belcher hospital during the graveyard shift, for example, we're now down to one registered nurse being on duty between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. So we have one RN responsible for 135 residents located on levels 2 and 3 of the Colonel Belcher hospital. That is far below the standard that would be maintained I think in any other acute care facility in the province. That's a concern.

9:40

On an understandable basis we've got veterans' families wondering, "What else will be cut?" Madam Minister. You know, why is it that that doesn't register? How is it that the concern for those 135 seniors, 35 of them designated in acute care, doesn't warrant the same kind of attention that each of these other items does? I appreciate it's tough picking and choosing. How do you decide what should have priority and what should not? I'd just come back and say again: if these 135 veterans don't warrant priority, who on earth would? I mean, who ought to be higher on the list than these veterans?

There's a concern with morale of residents in the Colonel Belcher hospital. I appreciate, Madam Minister, because of its size it's a very close-knit group in terms of staff and family and patients. A lot of concern in terms of the stress on staff. We've got residents who require assistance in eating and have family members who must come in and provide that kind of service. There's a lack of a hospice type area for the dying residents, level 3, special care unit. This would be Alzheimer's and dementia. You've got people spending their dying hours, Madam Minister, watching television. That's a concern.

The cuts in the area of therapy – occupational, physio, and recreational – have been particularly damaging. A number of the residents are people who have come from, say, Nova Scotia, Madam Minister, or Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland, and they don't have extended family in Calgary. They don't have people who can come and sort of shore up where the gaps are or attempt to fill in some of the gaps in terms of service.

There's a concern that there is going to be a \$500,000 cut in support in the area of recreational – well, what they describe as support, \$100,000 in therapy. This is still rumour, but Madam Minister will appreciate that this preys mightily on the minds of the veterans and the families. I understand that she may say this is a decision for the Calgary RHA, but as the MLA for these people you, Madam Minister, are the person that I speak to in this Assembly. I've raised my concerns with the Calgary regional health authority as well. It's not that they're not helpful, but we get into a bit of a game of they say they don't have the resources to be able to do this. In any event, I wanted to particularly draw that to your attention.

There are also concerns with the federal government. You can rest assured that I've raised concerns at that level and in that forum as well.

That also takes me, though, into the related concern, long-term care. This is my first opportunity in this session to raise this,

Madam Minister. I have a huge number of seniors, mainly low-income seniors, in Calgary-Buffalo, and in preparation for commencement of this session, I went around and held meetings. Some of the lodges are very large. One of the buildings has 430 seniors. I've been having meetings in these buildings to get input from them, to prepare myself, frankly, for coming into the session. One of the concerns that I hear most frequently is home care. If I use the word "crisis," I don't want to quibble whether others regard it as a crisis or not. Clearly, it's an issue.

As I understand it, in downtown Calgary here's the problem. The RHA had visions of recapturing a large bundle of money by closing, firstly, the Holy Cross hospital and the General hospital. Now what's happened, for a number of reasons, is that the closing of the Holy has been delayed and deferred. Maybe it's closer at hand, but it hasn't been closed yet. The General hospital, that's been postponed significantly, and it may be at least another year before that closes. Many of us hope it does not close. The point is that the Calgary RHA was counting on those hospital closures to free up substantial money. When I've raised my concern about long-term care for seniors, the response has been that they're trying to find the money within the envelope you've provided them. They were hoping to get some of the money through those hospital closures and then the recaptured maintenance operating costs and so on. In the meantime what's happened, just from a layperson's perspective, is that we have too many my age coming out of hospital a day or so after surgery, and the committed home care dollars are being siphoned off to assist somebody like me to recover in my home or wherever. So where the real crunches come is with those seniors who require long-term care.

One of the examples that still bothers me most is a senior who had phoned me, and I still recall her name quite clearly. She and her husband both have some locomotion problems. They live in their own home, and they were getting home care, somebody to come in two hours a week to clean their bathroom and their kitchen, and because of problems of incontinence and so on this speaks to a health issue, not just a question of tidiness. What's happened is that that couple has been told their home care has been cut from two hours a week to two hours a month. Now, they appealed – and I know everybody is trying to make it work, and I'm not insensitive to that. There's a provision for an appeal. Well, they appealed to a nurse, who came out and met with them. What she was able to get them was three hours a month. But the reality to this couple is that they're no longer going to be able to live on their own. They're going to have to make their way into some kind of a long-term care facility, and the cost to taxpayers will be vastly more than it would be if we could provide them with the support in their home, and I expect the minister agrees with me.

I guess the difficulty I have is when the minister comes in and talks about the \$11 million to regional health authorities and she describes it as: "to address pressure points in the health system." I guess I'm saying, Madam Minister, that I find in Calgary-Buffalo on a regular basis with the large number of seniors plenty and plenty of pressure points. My own office staff tell me that home care and concern of seniors continues to be a repetitive, frequent, frequent issue. I don't know whether it's because I have an inordinate number of low-income seniors, but I suspect this is a problem that exists beyond the narrow little boundaries of my small, compact constituency. Even if it did not, I'd suggest that the 38,000 people I represent, a significant number of them, would sure like to see some action in terms of addressing those long-term care needs of seniors.

Now, I hear lots of other issues, and I'm sure the minister is probably inundated with suggestions in terms of other needs. So I may just leave her with that concern on home care and the concern on seniors in particular, and I hope that she's going to be able to address that in some fashion.

I wanted to then turn to the Member for Calgary-Shaw, and I'm hopeful that he's going to be able to provide some explanation. I understood him to say a short time ago something in the order of: part of the supplementary estimate related to Swan Hills, in the Department of Environmental Protection, was \$250,000 for legal costs. I'm curious, hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw. The Department of Justice civil law section has so many lawyers they're falling over themselves. What we have are Crown prosecutors being absolutely bogged down and swamped with work. In the civil law section we've got an awful lot of Crown lawyers, and I'm not sure that we're making real good use of that talent. So my question would be: to what extent are Department of Justice lawyers providing legal advice on trying to resolve the Swan Hills issue? What portion of the \$250,000 – well, presumably none of that would be attributed to Justice department lawyers. I'd be interested in knowing why Justice department lawyers aren't providing the kind of civil advice and assistance that's required.

9:50

In terms of work that's been contracted out, I'm hoping that either the Minister of Environmental Protection or the Member for Calgary-Shaw will provide me with a breakdown in terms of which law firms are billing the Alberta taxpayer for services. I'd like to get an indication of what the definition of the retainer is for each of the law firms and a breakdown in terms of how the \$250,000 is being attributed. I'm interested. Just in case anybody thinks I have a vested interest, I'm on the inactive list, so nobody can accuse me, Mr. Chairman, of a parochial interest. So I'm hopeful I'll get that information.

I think those are the primary concerns I've got. There may be, I'm sure, other questions from other MLAs. So thanks for your time, Mr. Chairman.

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

MRS. McCLELLAN: Hello.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sorry. We'll get you next, Shirley. [interjection] Okay.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I just want to take a quick turn.

MR. DINNING: Shirley, that's not like you.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Yeah, I know. I'm trying to get even with one of my hon. colleagues from across the way from a few minutes ago.

MR. WICKMAN: Remember, this isn't question period. You can drag it out . . .

MRS. McCLELLAN: Can I? Oh, don't tempt me.

Calgary-Buffalo raised a number of items, and while last night I covered I believe all of the items that members raised, I just wanted to cover a couple of these. They really did not pertain to the estimates that we're dealing with tonight, but I did feel that

they were raised in the context of genuine concern and tied in some fashion to the estimates by debating priorities. I hope the hon. member will be able to attend the budget debate on my ministry so that we can get into some of the detail that I know he would like to have.

The issue raised around the Belcher hospital: I certainly will attempt to get the hon. member any information on items like the respiratory therapy program from the regional health authority. I am glad he acknowledged that the federal government does have a role there and that he has been making representations on behalf of the residents, the veterans in that institution.

The area I want to really clarify is the issues around home care. It is an important area to seniors. I wasn't clear whether the hon. member was referring to seniors who lived in lodges. He could maybe just nod.

MR. DICKSON: In their own residences.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Oh, in their own residences. You mentioned lodges, and I wanted a clarification.

I think we have probably one of the most developed programs for support for seniors staying in their own homes. I want to point to the hon. member the difference between home care or nursing or medical care, for which there is no fee whatsoever, and homemaking services, for which there is a fee. Homemaking services is an added program where we subsidize the payment of people to come in and assist with things like shopping, clearing walks, vacuuming, cleaning, things like that that are maybe just the difference as to whether a senior or a senior couple can stay in their own homes. The charge for that is \$5 an hour up to a maximum of \$300 a month, but if a person or persons finds it difficult or is unable to pay, that fee is waived.

The other important part of that program that I want the hon. member to be aware of is that that money that is generated through that stays with the program to enhance the program and in fact make it more available, particularly to those who cannot afford to pay. So the dollars that are generated by the region for that program stay with the region and enhance the program, but there is no charge for home care. What I would invite the hon. member to do if he does have a concern with the couple that was raised – if the hon. member doesn't feel that those concerns are being met, he could just write me a note with the name and I will certainly look into that individual situation for him, because as he described the situation, I do believe that it can be probably addressed and looked after.

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

I listened carefully to the member's discussion on the timing of change of the closure of the Holy Cross, which is scheduled to close at the end of March this year, and the Bow Valley centre, which is scheduled to close for next year, and the fact that the region had had some time difficulties there, so the savings were not achieved as quickly. I will remind the hon. member that we in fact gave \$40 million in bridge funding last year to the regional health authorities, one-time funding to cover some of that bridging. The regions did come to us and say that because of some timing of announcements of capital dollars from the province they had not been able to move ahead with the relocation of services. So we did put that one-time \$40 million bridging money in last year.

I also want to remind you, hon. member, that we are proceed-

ing with the additional \$40 million in community dollars. This is in addition to what they have. It's part of the \$110 million reallocation over the three years of transition, and that is on top of what was already there. Now, it is expected that those dollars were there to take up that change in people leaving hospitals sooner, being able to have day surgeries rather than being in for two or three days, and that was the very reason for including those.

I'd remind you that our home care budget itself has increased about 500 percent over the last four or five years in this province, and that recognizes the demand on the program and the value, I believe, of the program. I think that's recognized by looking at the statistics, that the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs could probably give more accurately than I. But I think I would be very close in saying that the average age of persons living in our lodges has risen 10 years over the last very few years. I think at one time it was an average age of 75 years, and now it is about 85 years. So obviously we've met some success in being able to support seniors to stay in their own homes and remain independent and live with dignity and quality of life, and I hope that we can continue to improve that.

As the hon. member indicated, he does have a highly intensive seniors population in his community, so if he would bring me some specifics on those, I would be happy to work with him on addressing some of their concerns.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-West, are you still wishing to speak?

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the Energy minister about four or five questions that I don't think were already asked - I don't see where they were already asked - in the supplementary estimates.

The minister talked about interest being charged on and would be given on royalty payments that were underfunded or where they were overpaid. I was wondering if the minister could let us know what that rate of interest would be on the over or underpayments. My concern is on these late payments, on the late invoicing. They've got the Institute of Chartered Accountants in, auditors, and whoever else. What assurances do the people of Alberta have that none of these royalties are going to slip through the cracks, that in fact the province will recover all of the moneys that they are entitled to? I forget what the figure is, but we're something like six months in arrears, some huge amount. So what are the assurances that the province will get all of its money?

**10:00**

The other question I have is: when is this all sort of going to come together? LDS was in place, and then IBM came in second. I can understand that in implementing a new computer system you're going to have these sorts of problems, maybe not always as bad as they are here. What is the targeted date when this system will be up and running? What is the targeted date for getting all of the invoicing and all these late payments and overpayments cleaned up? Do we have a target?

The other thing is related to the computer system, the MRIS system. What assurances do we have, Mr. Chairman, that we won't have a 200 percent overrun? We're now 100 percent over; we're at 5 million and something. Is this the end of it? Or are we exposed still to additional overruns?

Those, I think, are the additional questions that I have. Thank you.

Agreed to:

<b>Advanced Education and Career Development</b>	
Nonbudgetary Disbursements	\$500,000
<b>Community Development</b>	
Operating Expenditure	\$1,750,000
<b>Education</b>	
Operating Expenditure	\$5,000,000
<b>Energy</b>	
Capital Investment:	
Net Transfer from Operating Expenditure	\$3,000,000
New Appropriation	\$2,700,000

THE CHAIRMAN: The next department is the Department of Environmental Protection: operating expenditure, \$3,211,000. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:05 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

For the motion:

Amery	Forsyth	Mar
Beniuk	Friedel	McClellan
Black	Haley	McFarland
Burgener	Havelock	Paszkowski
Cardinal	Herard	Pham
Clegg	Hlady	Renner
Coutts	Jacques	Shariff
Day	Kowalski	Stelmach
Dinning	Laing	Thurber
Dunford	Langevin	Woloshyn
Evans	Magnus	Yankowsky

Against the motion:

Bruseker	Henry	Sekulic
Chadi	Leibovici	Soetaert
Dalla-Longa	Nicol	Wickman
Dickson		

Totals: For - 33 Against - 10

[Motion carried]

Agreed to:

<b>Health</b>	
Operating Expenditure	\$67,950,000

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader would like us to report the supplementary estimate vote?

MR. DAY: Exactly, Mr. Chairman. I move the votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

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

[Motion carried]

10:20

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions and reports as follows.

The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the 1995-96 supplementary supply estimates, No. 2, general revenue fund, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

Resolved that a sum not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996, for the minister and purposes indicated.

Advanced Education and Career Development: \$500,000, nonbudgetary disbursements.

Community Development: \$1,750,000, operating expenditure.

Education: \$5,000,000, operating expenditure.

Energy: \$2,700,000, capital investment.

Environmental Protection: \$3,211,000, operating expenditure.

Health: \$67,950,000, operating expenditure.

Resolved that the transfer be authorized of \$3,000,000 from the operating expenditure vote of the Department of Energy for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996, to the capital investment vote of the Department of Energy.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a list of those resolutions voted upon by the Committee of Supply pursuant to Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has also had under consideration a certain resolution proposing to establish subcommittees of the Committee of Supply and reports progress thereon. I wish to table a copy of an amendment proposed in relation to this resolution considered this date for the official records of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to table copies of a motion passed this day in Committee of Supply appointing members to the designated supply subcommittees under Standing Order 56(2).

THE ACTING SPEAKER: All in favour of the report by the hon. Member for Highwood, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I will carefully request, as is the standard process, for unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Bills.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The Government House Leader has requested unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Bills. All those in favour of granting unanimous consent, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? [interjections] Order. We'll try it once more. If we don't get our way the first time, we try again.

The Government House Leader has requested unanimous

consent to revert to Introduction of Bills. All those in favour of granting unanimous consent, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

**Bill 10**

**Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1996**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 10, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1996. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

[Leave granted; Bill 10 read a first time]

[At 10:26 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]