

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

**Title:** Monday, March 11, 1996 10:07 p.m.  
**Date:** 96/03/11

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

head: **Main Estimates 1996-97**

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll call the committee to order.

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Chairman, subcommittee C of the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of Public Works, Supply and Services, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the committee concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

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

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to table copies of documents tabled during the subcommittee of supply meeting this day for the official records of the Assembly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the committee concur in this report?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now move that the committee rise and report progress and request leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to table copies of documents tabled during Committee of Supply this day for the official records of the Assembly.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

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

### Bill 11

#### Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1996

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 11 being the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, this is required in order to ensure that the government has sufficient funds to operate the government programs and provide financing to hospitals and schools and municipalities and government public servants from the . . .

10:10

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Provincial Treasurer, I had difficulty hearing what you were saying, and I hear other members who are saying that they can't hear you. There are times when we are able to hear you, and I'm not just sure whether it's a function of your voice right now or the microphone. Could you speak a little louder though, please? I cannot hear you.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have come from one of the most successful Progressive Conservative conventions that we've ever, ever had, and I'm suffering a certain bout of weariness, so I'll do my best to slightly raise my voice.

This is an important piece of legislation to get through, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that there are sufficient funds to provide for public-sector expenses beyond April 1, and it's our hope that this Bill can get speedy approval in this Assembly.

I so move second reading.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak against this Bill on principle. The first point is that the hon. Government House Leader has circulated a note which sets out very clearly that the estimates will be completed by March 21. A number of us will be meeting at 7 o'clock tomorrow morning after a very late night, but it is clear, given the process that has been put in place, that we will finish the budget estimates on the 21st. Moreover, if you look at Standing Orders 61(3) and (4) about the movement of appropriation Bills through the House, when that Bill is brought in, it has to be voted upon that night. So it's very clear, first, that the estimates debate will be over by the 21st and, second, that the appropriations Bills will go through in a three-day passage, probably ending on the - oh, it would be about the 27th or 28th of the month.

This Bill is entirely redundant. It's been brought in because the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing, that their whole process of estimates would get this completed by the end of the month. Now the House leader and the Treasurer want us to say, "Yes, thank you very much; here's a blank cheque for a quarter of the budget, 2 and a half billion dollars" when in fact we won't have debated it, when we will have debated it, though, by the time the money is due April 1 thereon. So this interim supply Bill is clearly irrelevant. It's redundant, and we're going to be here debating it tonight because it was not removed from the Order Paper despite a rather polite request to do so.

The bottom line is that on a Bill like this, which is redundant,

given Standing Orders, given the process for the budget's debate that was imposed with closure – it's there. The hon. House leader can count like any other person in this House. He is aware that by the 28th of this month the budget Bill will have been passed. So we're here tonight and we'll be here till quarter to 12 debating a Bill that we don't have to debate, which is clearly redundant because of some – I don't know what. The bottom line is though: this Bill ought not to be debated right now, but because it's going to be, we're going to make a point of principle on this, and anytime a silly, superfluous, redundant, irrelevant Bill comes forward, we're going to make it very costly. A number of us, as I said, on both sides of the House are going to be here tomorrow morning at 7 o'clock, bright and early, for the environment estimates.

DR. WEST: Shame on you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, I've heard the hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities talk about waste. This Bill is waste. It doesn't have to be here. It could have been removed, but it hasn't.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer is rising on a point of order.

#### **Point of Order Appropriation Process**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I would refer to section 948 of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, sixth edition, wherein it says:

Interim Supply provides the Government with money to meet its obligations during the time before the main Estimates are approved.

For the hon. member to stand now and say that this Bill is superfluous – I will remind him of discussions that were undertaken earlier today with the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, with the Opposition House Leader, with the Government House Leader. The request was that there be some assurance, Mr. Speaker, some guarantee, in fact, that the full appropriation Bill would get Royal Assent and be approved before March 28. No assurance of that kind was forthcoming from the opposition ranks of the House.

I would stand tonight and I'll say in this Assembly right now – let's put it on the record. If the opposition would stand in this Assembly tonight and give the assurance to the government side of the House that the full appropriation Bill would be passed and would be able to receive Royal Assent by March 28 at 1730 hours, then we would not need to proceed with this Bill. It was because no assurance could be or would be given by the members across the way this afternoon that we are moving with this Bill this evening, sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud, you had the floor when the point of order was made; you had the floor for your speech. Now we'd ask you to address the point of order that's been raised by the Provincial Treasurer.

DR. PERCY: With regards to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the government controls the agenda. If you read Standing Orders 61(3) and 61(4) – and I bring it to the hon. member's attention – it sets out very clearly the appropriations

process. The House leader set out very clearly the estimates process, and it's going to be complete by the 21st of this month. That happens to be a Tuesday, and that leaves the Wednesday and the Thursday. It's very clear that . . .

MR. DINNING: So why wouldn't you give us the assurance? Give us the assurance, Mike.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Provincial Treasurer, now we can hear you more loudly than I care to. I wonder if we could have the response to the point of order made by Edmonton-Whitemud, without interjection, and then the Chair would be prepared to make some comment.

DR. PERCY: In reply to the point of order I'm going to make three points. First, it is the Government House Leader that controls the agenda. When the Government House Leader introduces the appropriations Bill, it must be passed before the normal hour of adjournment. It's very clear. So if on the 22nd the hon. House leader brought in the appropriations Bill, that night it must be voted upon. At committee stage it would have to be voted on on the 23rd. Then on the 27th, when it was brought in for third reading, it must be approved. It's as clear as the bright day that we had today, Mr. Speaker. So the process is there.

I can't – heaven knows, nobody can – control the hon. House leader. Otherwise, we wouldn't be debating Bill 11 tonight. For me to have to give the hon. Treasurer assurances as to what his House leader would do – well, it's beyond belief, Mr. Speaker. I won't do it.

The other point I'd like to make in reply to his point of order is that it is true from the citation that the hon. Treasurer read that the interim supply provides financing for the activities of government until the budget is passed, but the budget is going to be passed before March 31. [interjections] It's up to your House leader. Ask your House leader. That's why you have a House leader. Mr. Speaker, the House leader determines the timing of the appropriations Bill. All the hon. Treasurer has to do is turn to his right, speak to his House leader, and he would be told when the appropriations Bills would be brought in. I'm sure that the hon. House leader would tell him that they would be brought in so that the budget would be passed before March 31.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, thank you, hon. members. I think what we have is ample description of a debate and not a point of order. The point of order is raised on 948, and that's quite correct.

Interim Supply provides the Government with money to meet its obligations during the time before the main Estimates are approved. Interim Supply is normally requested in the first supply period for the first three months of the new fiscal year for all departments of government.

That certainly fits the appropriation Bill that we have before us, so the rest of the discussion is really just a continuation of the debate.

**10:20**

The Chair finds it very difficult to rule on what may or may not have been agreements between House leaders that may or may not be within easy reach of the Speaker at any given moment, so we must deal with what we have before us. The Chair will rule that the point of order raised by the Provincial Treasurer is in fact in order. We will continue to debate the interim supply Bill that we

have before us and would invite Edmonton-Whitemud to continue his arguments either for or against the Bill if he would.

Edmonton-Whitemud.

### Debate Continued

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the issue – and again I'm speaking to the point of principle that I'm referring to in speaking against this Bill. The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities said that this is a waste of time. I agree. This Bill is a waste of time given the process that has been set out. In terms of the budget estimates your hon. House leader was adamant that this was a timesaving process. It's clear, then, that the hon. House leader wasn't aware of what was implied by the process that he put in place, that in fact we would complete . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

### Point of Order

#### Offending the Practices of the Assembly

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Section 23(1). I would argue that the hon. member opposite is bringing in matters here that offend “the practices and precedents of the Assembly.” As you so correctly pointed out, interim supply Bills, as indicated in 948 of *Beauchesne*, are a very well accepted part of the budgetary process in this Assembly. The hon. member opposite, instead of keeping his debate to the Bill, is trying to move off into other directions and question decisions by the Government House Leader as to why this has been introduced. That's totally irrelevant to this debate this evening. You have made a decision and asked the hon. member to get his debate back on to the appropriation Bill, because it is consistent with our rules and with *Beauchesne*, and I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that we keep to the issue.

We may well be here until late tonight if the members of the Liberal Party opposite choose to force that. That is again standard procedure under the rules. But let's get on with the debate on the merits of the Bill. We have an obligation on the government side to ensure that we have moneys available come April 1 to continue the business, the responsibilities of this government to fund our hospitals, to fund our schools, et cetera, et cetera. Let's get on with it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You're going to respond to the point of order, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: You bet, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Minister of Justice cites 23(1). The curious thing about that is that since it refers specifically to offending “the practices and precedents of the Assembly,” I think it's incumbent on him to point out specifically what practices, specifically what precedents. What we had was the minister, I think, taking advantage of an opportunity to try and debate a point of order that I thought had been disposed of by you at an earlier time. So I think that there's absolutely no basis on the authority cited by the member.

He refers to the practices, but I think the best way of responding to that is to cite the passage that the hon. Provincial Treasurer used a few moments ago. He referred to *Beauchesne* 948, and if one looks carefully at *Beauchesne* dealing with interim supply, you will see: “In addition, Interim Supply is requested for other items in the Estimates depending upon the need in each case.” I can't think of anything that would be more salient, anything more

relevant than a discussion of whether it was needed in this case. That's exactly and precisely the point being argued by my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud.

So not only does the hon. Minister of Justice cite no precedent and cite no practice in support of his application, but on the basis of the authority just cited by his colleague the Provincial Treasurer it seems to me that what's being said by my colleague is absolutely relevant and completely on point.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: While agreeing with the hon. Deputy Government House Leader that should the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud introduce any matter in debate which offends the practices and precedents of the Assembly, he should be called to order, the Chair wasn't of the view that such had occurred. The Chair holds that we were just getting back into the debate, and as the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has observed, maybe the tenor of what he's talking about does in fact lie in that latter sentence under section 948 of *Beauchesne*. Only time will tell, should we get the opportunity to hear Edmonton-Whitemud further.

So at this point, no point of order, and we would invite continued debate.

### Debate Continued

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm referring to the whole estimates process in order to buttress the argument I'm making that on principle one can oppose this Bill even though one wholeheartedly supports the funding of hospitals, schools, universities, school boards, and all forms of local government supported by transfers from the provincial government. The issue here in second reading is that of the principle underlying the Bill. The point is that this is a Bill that ought not to have been introduced, and it's our duty and responsibility as opposition to make it patently clear that such Bills just don't make sense given the budget process which the House Leader has brought into play for budget debate.

With regards to interim supply itself, on previous occasions I and other members on this side of the House have argued that if we are going to go for interim supply, it's not at all clear why we want to give a blank cheque for 25 percent or more of the provincial budget before the debate on the estimates is complete. I mean, it again is not being either responsible or performing our role of holding the government accountable to simply say, “Yes, by gosh, here's a quarter of the budget, and, oh, by the way, we'll give this to you in advance of ensuring that the estimates are appropriate.”

In this case the debate and review of the estimates will be complete before the end of the fiscal year, and the appropriations Bills will be passed before the end of the fiscal year. So not only, then, is it not really relevant to give the government a blank cheque this early for a quarter of the budget; it's clearly not required since the whole budget process is going to be complete.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Just further to the observations of my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud, I think that what he did very effectively and with the assistance of the hon. Provincial Treasurer earlier is make the linkage between interim estimates and main estimates. In fact, it was the Provin-

cial Treasurer who demonstrated the nexus between the two. I wanted to add some additional observations to what's been said by Edmonton-Whitemud.

You know, if one looks at why we deal with an interim estimate, why we deal with interim supply and if that imports, as you've already held, a consideration of "the need in each case," I want to spend a couple of minutes, Mr. Speaker, and just deal with the need here for interim estimates. It seems to me that that invites a consideration of this whole budget process that's been introduced in this session of the Legislature.

As members know, the government tried to do something very different in estimates this year. Leaving aside what the motivation was of the Government House Leader in his new system of concurrent committees, let's address some of the problems that have existed and that bring us to deal with Bill 11 today.

**10:30**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat is rising on a point of order. You will share it with us, I'm sure.

**Point of Order  
Relevance**

MR. RENNER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, 23(b)(i). The member is not sticking to the question under debate. He in fact is getting into the argument that the opposition has been in for the past number of weeks on the process. I think the fact that this member is arguing the process really emphasizes the need for this Bill. In fact, they've been pulled kicking and screaming into a very fruitful, productive process. I think it's quite obvious that the opposition would like nothing better for us to forgo the interim supply Act so that they can pull some silly little game and throw the whole process off track and have the funds not available to the government when the appropriate time is there.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members are all reminded that when we make points of order, the point of order is sufficient. Once we start getting into impugning what other people are trying to do, then I think we're moving beyond the point of order. So if the Chair is alert enough, we'll try and catch that.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo in reply to the point of order raised by Medicine Hat.

MR. DICKSON: I tried to anticipate exactly such a concern, and that's why I cited the hon. Provincial Treasurer. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, that's why I specifically cited the hon. Provincial Treasurer, who drew the attention of members to 948 in *Beauchesne*. If in fact the consideration of interim supply depends on the "need in each case," then how could we possibly be constrained or prevented from assessing the issue of need? That imports a consideration of where we are on main supply. It seems to me that the Provincial Treasurer has made the argument in a far more compelling way than I possibly could, so I just rely on the observation and the argument of the hon. Provincial Treasurer to answer the question from Medicine Hat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would agree with Medicine Hat's point that relevance is always an important consideration in debate. However, one of the oldest traditions of parliament is to bring the government to account, and that occurs when estimates are here. While we may feel that the hon. member does stray from the immediate appropriation that is before us, the Chair has generally given some leeway to it. However, I think it is important to realize that although relevance is not always easy to

define, I think we would all at this late hour appreciate the bearing down to the particulars of the appropriation Bill that we have before us, notwithstanding what we've said earlier about the broadness that members are allowed in bringing the government to account in estimates.

With that, we'll ask the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo to continue.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much for that direction, Mr. Speaker.

**Debate Continued**

MR. DICKSON: Well, what we've got, it seems to me, is a bit of a tautology or a bit of a circular argument going on here. The government argues that in some fashion they need interim supply, yet what's been demonstrated, I think quite clearly, is that they do not need it, and that really is the issue here. In terms of whether they need it or don't need it, one has to look at what's happening with the debate on the main estimates. When we do that, what we see is that we've got a series of problems. Firstly, the effective result of the government's decision to run concurrent committees is that MLAs are precluded from being in two committees at the same time. We've got a question of insufficient advance notice of when committees are meeting. We've got subcommittees that have been set up because they mirror the Conservative standing policy committees, not because they make sense from any other perspective. We've got a problem with . . .

DR. WEST: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities rising on a point of order.

**Point of Order  
Relevance**

DR. WEST: Yes. We're debating second reading of a Bill called 11, and we're into debate on process between subcommittees and how they work. We had that debate before. As a reminder, we stayed here one night till 1:30, if I'm not mistaken, on the debate that this hon. member is bringing into this Bill. What he's talking about is totally irrelevant to this question at present here tonight.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo to speak to the point of order.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Well, the short answer to that is that the Speaker ruled on whether there was a prima facie case firstly of contempt and then a week later in terms of whether there was a breach of privilege. He made his findings. I haven't heard anybody here trying to reargue in terms of asking for the same relief. I'm not asking for you to find as being in contempt of the Legislature. I'm not asking for you to find a breach of privilege.

I don't understand the point advanced by the hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities for the reason I'd suggested before, that the hon. Provincial Treasurer has made the linkage between the main estimates and Bill 11. He's made it as clear as can be, so I'm not quite sure why his colleagues insist on continuing to try and repudiate what the Provincial Treasurer has himself said. I accept the observation of the Provincial Treasurer that the reason we're dealing with this is because of concern with process on the main estimates, so how can I possibly be denied the chance to

challenge the proposition that the main estimates are still very much within the government's control? I don't understand the point of order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, I'm not sure that the Chair is going to agree with either of the responses. Bill 11 is necessary because there is absolutely no way to predict what may or may not happen in the ensuing weeks prior to March 28. So it is required. To continue to argue that it is not required is fine enough as a debate, but the Chair has already tried to indicate that we should be debating Bill 11, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act.

Many things can occur between now and March 28 that may delay the main estimates, so it's right and proper and good, I guess prudent action, to have this kind of thing. Continuing to sort of debate whether or not that's relevant is a debating point, but really if you're trying to bring the government to account somehow through that, that's one way to approach it. It certainly doesn't deal with the provisions of Bill 11.

The process is perhaps not to the view of the hon. members but nevertheless is a normal, prudent action of a Provincial Treasurer and of a government. So I would just invite you to continue debate on the Bill that we have before us, and hopefully we'll get through the evening.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, you're offering some observation, but I hope that you in your position as chairman and as an independent person in this process are not suggesting that you have formed a judgment on the argument made by my colleague for Edmonton-Whitemud and have rejected his thesis. Mr. Speaker, I didn't understand that to be the issue before you.

#### Debate Continued

MR. DICKSON: In dealing with the \$2.9 billion that is in front of us in Bill 11 and wondering whether in fact this is necessary, because that's the very key to interim supply, in my respectful submission the government must indicate that it's necessary, that it's essential, that they have no other way of doing it. I thought that was a point that had been made very effectively by my colleague for Edmonton-Whitemud.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

So if we look at that, we have to ask ourselves: what's the test? What sort of filter do we put this through to determine whether in fact Bill 11 is necessary, the government couldn't do it in any other way? My colleague went through a whole series of reasons, but what he argued was the cumulative effect of two different things. Firstly, the provisions in Standing Orders dealing with supply, specifically Standing Orders 61 and 62, set out a process and indeed a timetable, but he added to that and conjoined with it the process as has been outlined by the Government House Leader in fact had been approved by the House over objections. So let's look at that a little further, and let's break it down and look at the component parts and see whether indeed it measures up.

10:40

Now, the government insists they need to get authority to spend the \$2.9 billion, and this is the way they feel they have to do it. One might ask, Mr. Speaker, if in fact there weren't a better way of doing it: doing it as part of the main estimates and, if they

were to do that, do it in a way where they didn't have the same degree of hammerlock that they do over the process currently. If, for example, they used a process as we have in the House in the past where you had Committee of Supply sitting at a single time to deal with estimates for a single department rather than having it split into concurrent committees dealing with different departments at the same time, one would wonder whether they would still have a need for this authority to spend the \$2.9 billion.

One might wonder, Mr. Speaker, if we were in a position where we did it in the normal fashion in this Assembly and there were *Hansard* that was available within 24 hours of the questions that had been asked and the responses given by ministers. That of course doesn't exist with the existing concurrent committees of supply, where in fact we may go days before we see the *Hansard*, not 24 hours. That's not the fault of the people that provide *Hansard* service, because my understanding is that they're double-shifting and working extra time to be able to try and meet the needs. The point is that we don't have available to us in Committee of Supply now the questions asked or the responses given by the minister at the last Committee of Supply dealing with the same department. Why? Well, because of the concurrent committees.

We've got situations now where we still don't get responses from ministers. In some cases you may get an oral response to a couple of the questions asked. But we are asked and will be asked again to vote on estimates before we've received responses to information sought.

So in terms of the \$2.9 billion sought in Bill 11, we have to again look at the process used on main estimates with subcommittees and the way they've been set up. What's clear, Mr. Speaker, is that subcommittees were set up to mirror the standing policy committees of the government caucus, and all that does is invite the kind of situation where you have MLAs who may have an interest in two different departments being subject to concurrent committees on the same evening or the same morning or the same afternoon. So what happens . . .

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

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities.

#### Point of Order Relevance

DR. WEST: On relevancy. Once again I stand as the member takes another path and heads off into a debate that we had in this House till 1:30 in the morning on the structure of subcommittees. This is Bill 11. It has to deal with a request for \$2.9 billion. He's going off on process still upset because he didn't get the answer he wanted on the formation of subcommittees and that process. I can't understand why this House allows him to continue in this charade.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many more chances this evening I'm going to get to again thank the Provincial Treasurer for making the connection and pointing out the importance that you can't deal with Bill 11 without looking at the treatment of the main estimates. The Provincial Treasurer said it. He referred us to the provision in *Beauchesne*. Once again, it's *Beauchesne* 948, and I'll quote again on this point of order. It says, "In addition, Interim Supply is requested for other items in the Estimates depending upon the need in each case." Well, "need" means that not only do we look at the needs of the

department, but surely we're entitled to explore the needs of the government to be able to deal with this in this kind of a fashion, in an expedited process with an interim supply Bill.

So I cite again as my authority the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker.

**THE ACTING SPEAKER:** On the point of order by the Minister of Transportation and Utilities, he certainly has got a point of order. We're here tonight on second reading of Bill 11, Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act. Certainly your comments, hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*, were fine. The only thing is that you are going into process too much. The decision has already been made by the Deputy Speaker, so if you would mind just talking about estimates instead of process.

**MR. DICKSON:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly going to focus on only that process that's directly related to the estimates in Bill 11, because clearly that's the important part.

**THE ACTING SPEAKER:** Hon. member, obviously you didn't hear my ruling. You can continue, but the next time I will take the next speaker.

**MR. DICKSON:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps you'd help me with this clarification then. Is it your position that in debate on Bill 11 this evening at second reading, any reference to budget process is out of order? Could I have that clarification please?

**THE ACTING SPEAKER:** Certainly that wasn't my ruling. Anything to do with estimates is in order, but it's not in order because you got into the process, which you were debating more than the estimates. If you stick to any estimates, then you're in order, but you're not when you get into process.

**MR. DICKSON:** Mr. Speaker, I may be simply not following your reasoning, but would you clarify for me: are you suggesting that any discussion about process related to Bill 11 is out of order?

**THE ACTING SPEAKER:** Yes.

**MR. DICKSON:** Okay.

#### **Debate Continued**

**MR. DICKSON:** Mr. Speaker, in terms of looking at Bill 11 and the \$2.9 billion in interim supply, this represents 26.4 percent of the total expenditures for the government for 1996-97. This is an amount in excess in terms of what's required, given the process that's already in place to deal with estimates. I think it's a pretty basic proposition. The Member for Edmonton-*Whitemud* made it and I think made it clearly.

I think the government would be in a vastly stronger position to say that Bill 11 were necessary had it not invoked, taken the steps they have in terms of main estimates. I think that's a self-evident proposition. So one might ask: why did they choose to do that if they felt it were necessary to deal with Bill 11? I think there's scant information in terms of need, and if one looks at the various steps and manoeuvres and processes put in place by the Government House Leader, it makes this a curious thing. It makes it an oddity that, with respect, doesn't belong here.

No doubt there will be ministers or the Provincial Treasurer who will say that the opposition in some fashion is trying to deny

money to the legislative officers, to the Legislative Assembly, the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Chief Electoral Officer, or perhaps even the Ethics Commissioner or the Information and Privacy Commissioner, or may suggest that we're attempting to deny money to advanced education or agriculture or any of the other departments listed in the Bill. But one need only refer back to the argument advanced by my colleague for Edmonton-*Whitemud*, who made it abundantly clear in at least three different ways that at some point we have to talk about accountability because that surely is what appropriations are all about, that's what interim supply is about.

How do we ensure accountability, Mr. Speaker? How do we do that? Well, we do that by ensuring that every member in this Assembly has ample opportunity to review the money that the government is seeking, that every member has ample opportunity to ask questions of ministers, and that every member is able to receive responses and information from ministers before we're asked to vote, whether it's the entire budget amount or \$2.9 billion. To me, that's the most basic proposition.

#### **10:50**

There are members here, I know, with experience on municipal council. I've watched the Calgary municipal council, and I've looked at the way they deal with a budget process. My sense is that very rarely do aldermen in the city of Calgary not get responses to their questions. Maybe it happens sometimes, but you get the commissioners in, the commissioners bring their staff with them, and every member of council gets a full opportunity to ask the questions that are important to them on behalf of their constituents. And, you know, I think it probably even works that way with the Lethbridge city council. They have that same sort of opportunity. You know, those budgets are a whole lot smaller than the one we're dealing with tonight, Mr. Speaker, a whole lot smaller.

So it becomes a bit surprising that there is so much effort to try and stifle debate. How many points of order have we had this evening? Why is it that the government is so agitated and so exercised over somebody trying to challenge the various manoeuvres and the attempts they're making to jam Bill 11 through?

I think this is an opportunity, as my colleague for Edmonton-*Whitemud* said, to attempt to reinforce the principle of accountability. This is the time to do it. I expect there are other members in the Assembly who share that feeling and look forward to the opportunity to join debate tonight.

With that, I'll take my seat, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**THE ACTING SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for Calgary-*Montrose*.

**MR. PHAM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I would like to join the debate on Bill 11, Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act. I fail to see the reasoning of the opposition party from the last two speakers.

I'm going to use the very simple predicate logic of a first-year university course in logic to tell you why we need this Bill. There are two cases that can happen. Number one, if the main estimates cannot be done on time, then I think every member on the other side has to agree with me that we do need this Bill. The second case . . .

#### **Speaker's Ruling Relevance**

**THE ACTING SPEAKER:** Hon. Member for Calgary-*Montrose*, you're getting onto exactly the topic I called the hon. Member for

Calgary-Buffalo on. Let's get onto the Bill itself. We're not here to argue whether we need this or whether we don't. That's already been determined.

Hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

### Debate Continued

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Bill 11, because the members from the opposite side keeps saying that we don't need this Bill, that's the reason why they keep standing up and dragging it out longer. The point I'm making is that this Bill is very essential because we are talking about the principle of the Bill here, the principle of such an important Bill that we have to have in this Legislature. I'm not talking about the procedure of the Bill. I'm talking about the principle of the Bill, why we need it.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by accepting your ruling as to the necessity of this particular supplemental appropriation Bill. It seems to me that to the extent that there are supplemental estimate Bills and interim supply Bills, it represents either poor planning at best or incompetence at worst on the part of those individuals who are setting up the cash flows of the province. So I accept, of course, your ruling that this Bill is probably necessary, and I allow the Alberta taxpayers to determine on what basis it is necessary.

I also noticed during the most excellent debate presented earlier, Mr. Speaker, that at least one of the members, I believe from Lethbridge-West, seemed to feel that discussing \$2.9 billion of expenditures in this Legislative Assembly was a waste of time. I think the hon. minister of transportation concurs in that particular thought process as well. I want to say on the record – and I want to say it on behalf of all Members of this Legislative Assembly – that surely we cannot take the expenditure of \$2.9 billion for granted in this Legislative Assembly. A Bill that comes forward in an interim way like this comes with a steep burden, a heavy burden on behalf of the government to come forward by department and show the rationalization and justification for the Bill itself and for the numbers contained within the Bill. This particular Bill does not satisfy the rationalization, first of all, for the Bill, and it does not satisfy the rationalization for the numbers in the Bill.

Now, my learned colleagues have presented several arguments tonight concerning the rationalization for the Bill. We have had ample debate on that issue. I want to talk about the rationalization for the numbers. I think the hon. Member for Bow Valley would be interested in this, and I know the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake and the hon. Member for Barrhead-Westlock would be interested in this. I just want to point out to all of the hon. members that the ministers involved here should stand up in their places one right after another in this debate and explain why they need this money, what it's going for, and how much. Now, it is too tempting and too easy for the hon. Minister of Health to say, "Whoa; if you don't vote for this Bill, hospitals will close," or for the Minister of Education to say, "Whoa; if you don't vote for this Bill, schools will close." But what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, is interim spending.

Now, let's analyze each of these spending components, because during your most lucid rulings this evening, Mr. Speaker, I have been able to calculate some aspects of this budget that bear closer scrutiny. I want to take the members to the first estimate in this

particular budget process, if you'll allow me. I know that members will want to review this, because their constituents will ask at the door. Their constituents will say: "Where were you when the government spent \$2.9 billion? Were you snoozing? Because when you snooze, we as taxpayers lose." When people are asking questions in this Legislative Assembly, trying to pad up their résumé for their door knocking, better that they ask questions about why. Better they ask questions about why, for example, in this interim appropriation Bill – get your pocket calculators out, folks – the Minister of Energy wants approval to spend 64 percent of her capital budget. How does that tie in with any time line that the government proposes?

Now, let's move on and pick up some of the other golden beauties here. I found one here. What about the Department of Justice? That great administrator of law and order wants to spend 50 percent of his capital budget here in the first 60 days of the year. Why is that? What projects? Can they be deferred? Can there be some additional savings? What systems has he put in place to try and save some of the money? All of those things, Mr. Speaker, are important issues. Whether it is 11 o'clock at night or whether it is 1:30 in the afternoon, they are important to Alberta taxpayers. Every Member of this Legislative Assembly should be asking: where were you when the government of this province slithered their hands deeper yet into my pocket and extracted \$2.9 billion out of it? Where were you? So now let's press on with that. Let's press on. Well, everybody will know where I am because what I'm going to do is record – *Hansard* will record all of this.

11:00

AN HON. MEMBER: Bow Valley woke up.

MR. GERMAIN: They're all awake now, Mr. Speaker. They're all awake.

Let's talk about Environmental Protection, that great fighter for green issues everywhere. He wants to spend 77 percent of his capital budget in the first 60 days of this year. What projects, Mr. Speaker? Is anybody sitting back there bothering to ask why? You know, is there anybody who wants to find out why? There may be a totally honest and honourable explanation, but surely when the government comes forward with this type of appropriation Bill in advance of debating the main estimates, those answers should be given.

Now, Mr. Speaker, perhaps those answers were given. Perhaps in the split committees that have been running concurrently, those answers were given in one committee when I was scheduled and appearing in the other committee. So I'll ask my colleagues here tonight: is there anybody on either side of the House that attended any of those sessions that can tell me why the minister of environment has to spend 71 percent of his capital budget in the first 60 days of this year because otherwise the department will collapse? Why is that?

Let's just talk about Community Development then. Some people are saying, "Whoa, we get spring in the first 60 days of the budget." Well, we get spring up in Fort McMurray, Mr. Speaker, but my constituents will still want to know why the hon. Minister of Community Development, that great Elvis Presley impersonator, will be wanting to spend a hundred percent of his capital budget in the first 60 days of this year. Why is that? Surely there should be a burden, surely there should be an obligation, surely there should be an onus on those ministers to stand up and tell us why they need to spend this money now. If that is not directly relevant to this Bill, if that is not talking about the content of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, then I do not know what

else I can say. Surely, surely we should be speaking about this.

Now, the Minister of Energy . . . [interjection]

Well, let's talk about the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health is in a different conundrum here. The Minister of Health wants to spend exactly 25 percent of her operating expenses and 25 percent of her capital budget, not a single decimal point different, in the next 60 days to have her department unfold in terms of the universe unfolding as it should. What is it that she has to spend capital expenditures on that cannot be deferred? What specifically must she spend \$84 million on that she couldn't phone up the creditor and say, "You know, we're going to be a little short this month; you're going to have to wait till next month to get paid."

So we go down the list, Mr. Speaker. We look at public works. Public works is in a situation where they want to spend 30 percent of their capital investment in the first 60 days of this year. Now, why is that? Are we going to blame that on spring again? Are we going to say, "Because spring is coming." What does that mean exactly? Why is it? [interjection]

Well, the learned minister in charge of agriculture has come alive. Let's talk about what his expenditures are. Surely the Members of this Legislative Assembly are entitled to some explanation why these figures were picked. If they're simply a random calculation, let's say so. If they're simply a random estimate by their staffs, let's say so, but don't come forward here with all of these detailed numbers and suggest that the Legislative Assembly simply accept it *carte blanche*, not even look at it, just throw up their hands and say: well, trust me; we're from the government. How many times have you heard that? If you go to any one of the saloons and taverns around the province and suggest that proposition to them, they'll sure show you where the door is in a heck of a hurry.

Now, agriculture. The agriculture spending, Mr. Speaker, is an interesting one. He's spending 22 percent of his operating expense and 95 percent of his capital investment. Now, he may have a perfectly legitimate explanation for that. He may have an absolutely sound and fundamental reason for that, but let's hear what it is. Let the hon. minister stand up and explain it. Otherwise people are going to be asking all of the Members of the Legislative Assembly: where were you when these budget estimates were passed? If they say that it's going to relate to the weather, what happens if we have a 60-day cold snap and spring is delayed? Then what happens? Let's have explanations for all of these things.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when the ministers of this hon. cabinet take their oath of office, they promise to give the taxpayers fair value for their dollar. It is not unreasonable or inappropriate – and it should not be subject to derision – that the ministers will each stand in their place and take a couple of minutes to explain what it's all about and what's going to be spent and what steps we took to defer the matter so that we could debate it all in the one main estimate. Every year here we have preliminary votes on money. Then we have the main estimates. Then we have at least one supplemental estimate, and this year we had two supplemental estimates from some of the same departments, including Energy, for example, that had ferocious cost overruns last year in certain of their computerization, are back again this year for more money, and do not come forward with any explanation whatsoever when we talk about an appropriation Bill.

We come to this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, with an open mind. We come saying: "Okay. Show us where you have to spend a dollar, and if it makes sense, we'll vote to help you spend a dollar." There is nobody here elected to office that is intellectually deficient. Now, some of our critics may suggest that

that is in fact the predominant characteristic, but there is nobody in fact in this Assembly that is intellectually insufficient, and as a result we will understand when the minister of agriculture stands in his place and tells us what it's all about. We will understand the same when the Minister of Education does and when the Minister of Health does. But how patronizing and how dangerous is it for us to be asked to vote on these estimates simply because the government needs some money to operate? And to criticize a paltry one hour of debate and to roll eyeballs into the inside of your heads and say: oh, why are we doing this? – we're doing this, Mr. Speaker, because whether rightly or wrongly, some Members of this Legislative Assembly believe that they were elected to office to ask questions, to enquire about things that are important to the taxpayers and to the citizens of Alberta.

I cannot think of anything more predominantly on the minds of the citizens of Alberta than the 'wastitudes' at all levels of their government. We can't do anything about the 'wastitudes,' if any, at the federal government level, so there's no sense us fed bashing here. We can't do anything about the 'wastitudes,' if any, at the municipal levels of government so there's no sense us bashing away at those. But we can do something here about the 'wastitudes' of the provincial government. We should ask the right questions, and we should keep asking the right questions, and we should not stop asking them until we get the right answers.

So far today, Mr. Speaker, and so far in this debate there has not been one single answer forthcoming as to why we have to vote for this Bill and this amount other than that the government needs the money. Well, I need the money too, and every one of my kids needs some money. Most of us in this Assembly – and the Speaker has indicated with a gesture to his pocket so I'm presuming that he needs the money as well. If you got a call from your child and the phone call started, "I need \$2,600," what would your first question be? Would your first question be, "How do you want me to send it to you?" Or is it more probable that your first question would be, "What do you want it for?"

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Nah. What kind of a parent are you?

11:10

MR. GERMAIN: The hon. minister of agriculture wants to go on record as saying he would say to his child, "How do you want me to send it to you?" That would be his first question. I must confess and I plead guilty to this statement that my first question would be, "What do you want it for?" Surely when you throw a few extra zeros on the amount, the question should be even more pointed, even more crisp, even more directed, and even more should be raised the questions: what alternatives have you decided, and what can you do to avoid spending it right away?

Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful for the kind cheers of encouragement from the opposite side of this Assembly as I once again tonight spoke up for Alberta taxpayers everywhere, whether they're in Slave Lake, whether they're in Calgary, whether they're in Edmonton. I urge all Members of this Legislative Assembly to ask now the hard questions: why do we need to spend this money and why do we need it now and is the roof really going to fall in if we don't spend it? Maybe when we call the vote on this Bill, people will say no.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those conclude my comments tonight.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to stand up in support of this Bill. What we have just heard from the hon. Member for Fort McMurray is the most irresponsible, ridiculous debate that I've heard in a long time in this Assembly. I'm sure the hon. Minister



of Health is going to stand up and start answering the question that he just put before this government: why do you need this?

I'm going to start in defence of this Bill and describe why Transportation and Utilities needs a guarantee that this Bill is passed in time to advance moneys to support the progress in this province of its infrastructure development, rehabilitation, and the protection of the citizens of this province from a safety point of view. If that isn't important to the loyal opposition, then they shouldn't be here.

Tonight I stood up because I want it recorded that a quarter after 11 at night the members of the opposition chided and made fun of the process that's duly honoured by the citizens of this province: that the government they elect gets on with the business they have entrusted to them in an orderly fashion and runs this province like a business, as they have to do each and every day of their lives. I can't sit here hedging a bet on risk management at the expense of 2.7 million Albertans. I can't sit here and get back to what we were talking about before: don't take insurance out; we'll just run the province willy-nilly. We might have the money to start the projects; we might not. That's what they would like us to do here tonight so that Transportation and Utilities can't get on with some of its safety issues, with some of its new construction, and some of the direction that we have announced in the throne speech.

Let me tell you why we need the advance of capital, \$25 million, administration of \$163 million. Here's the first. We have some strategic highway improvements in this province that we have to get on with. You say: why would you need to do that? Well, the elimination of the federal rail subsidies for grain transportation will substantially change the way our agricultural products are transported, and it will likely change the focus of our agricultural export markets. In addition, the federal government plans to make significant changes to Canada's rail and port systems, creating uncertainty about our future long-term ability to efficiently ship our exports through Prince Rupert and the port of Vancouver. A four-lane north-south highway to the United States border will provide Alberta with an effective nonrail alternative to existing east-west export routes. It will also service the significant increase in trade that we are experiencing under NAFTA by providing a continuous four-lane trade corridor to Mexico. Access to an efficient highway system servicing export markets will also provide a strong incentive for industry to locate in Alberta. In summary, a fully developed north-south highway corridor is critical to Alberta's future economic competitiveness and growth, and it will contribute substantially to the Alberta advantage.

The improvements that are needed in '96-97 – and we're going out immediately to design construction and right-of-way development. Also, we will be going to tender calls to the private-sector contractors who, by the way, expect us to have money to do that because they – the people that work for them, the people that get up in the morning and require jobs – are dependent upon this budget to move forward and move our construction program forward.

In the north-south trade corridor let's look at the projects that we have in the budget, and if you'd go to the budget documents, you can see why we have to have Bill 11, because we have already announced these. Let's look at the north-south trade corridor.

The southern Alberta trade corridor, Highway 4. We need detailed engineering design, initial purchase of right-of-way, and preliminary construction of a four-lane highway from south of secondary 845 to south of the CPR overpass. That costs \$2 million.

The central Alberta trade corridor. Highway 2, preliminary engineering design for the Deerfoot Trail extension and for interchanges at Highway 22X and Highway 2 south of Calgary. That's \$800,000. Highway 1, the Trans-Canada bypass, Calgary ring road: undertake the detailed engineering design and preliminary construction of a two-lane highway between Highway 1A and Highway 2. This is the first phase of a plan that would ultimately result in a four-lane freeway. That's \$4 million.

The north-central trade corridor. Highway 2: initiate engineering design for the interchange at Ellerslie Road south of Edmonton. That's \$200,000. You go and tell the people of Edmonton that you don't want that to go ahead. Highway 2 and Highway 16: detailed engineering design and preliminary construction of four lanes on Anthony Henday Drive between Highway 16 and Highway 16X, including interchange at Highway 16X and the CNR overpass. That's \$5 million. You go and tell the mayor of Edmonton – and we sat with him the other day – that you don't want that to go ahead. Highway 16X: initiate engineering design for interchanges at 215th Street – that's Winterburn Road – and 231st Street, the city boundary on the western edge of Edmonton. That's \$300,000.

Subtotal: \$12,300,000.

Now, let's look at No. 2. One of our priorities is enhancing safety on that north-south. Widening and reconstruction of narrow highways. Highway 37, grade widening from secondary highway 794 to Highway 2: \$3.7 million. Preserving highway infrastructure. Primary highway rehabilitation projects. Highway 43, asphalt overlay from Little Smoky River to Fox Creek: \$2 million.

The total of that is \$18 million, and you ask why we need to start these. It's springtime, folks. If we don't get under way within the next 60 days and if we don't have the money to do that, we let this province down. We let the highway construction industry down. We let all the municipalities down.

Let me give you a critique of what we have to do in enhancing safety in this province and project to start the thought process in engineering for some projects that are coming down the tubes over the next three to five years in our business plan.

To provide for safe and efficient transportation of people and commodities throughout the province: widening and reconstruction of narrow highways from a width of generally less than eight metres with some sharp curves and narrow ditches to a width of 10 metres or 11.8 with flattened curves and standard ditches. Highway 2A, Wessex to Red Deer, is going to cost \$25 million. Highway 36 north of Viking: \$5 million. Highway 37, Highway 43 to Highway 2: \$15 million. Highway 40, Grande Cache to Smoky River coal mine – and there's an hon. member over here waiting for that – \$5 million. Highway 61, Highway 4 to Manyberries: \$35 million. There are people from the southern part of the province who are waiting for that.

#### 11:20

Let's look at the projection for four-laning of high-volume commuter routes – these are the roads that your families, your children, you travel each and every day – to protect the safety of them. Do you want to walk out some morning and find your family lying at a four-way stop because you have held this Bill up? Again speaking to the need for this Bill 11. Speaking to the need. Four-laning of high-volume commuter routes. Typically, two-lane highways are improved to four-lane highways when volumes are in the range of 5,000 to 6,000 vehicles per day.

Let's look across the province and see what's going to trigger the next construction for safety in this province. Highway 1A, Cochrane to Calgary: 6,400 to 8,000 vehicles a day. That four-

laning is \$10 million. Highway 2, Grande Prairie to Sexsmith: 4,900 vehicles a day. When that twinning hits, it'll be \$10 million. Highway 2A, Okotoks to Highway 2: 9,800 vehicles per day right now. That's a \$5 million upgrade. Highway 3, east of Coaldale to Taber: 5,500 to 7,000 vehicles per day. That's a \$15 million upgrade. Highway 11, Sylvan Lake to Red Deer: 7,000 to 11,700 per day. That's \$15 million. Highway 13, Camrose to Highway 21: 7,200 vehicles per day. Cost: \$5 million to upgrade. Highway 15, Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan. Is there anybody here? That route has 6,600 to 11,600 vehicles a day from Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan, and to upgrade that, it'll cost \$20 million. Highway 28, Grand Centre to Cold Lake: 7,600 to 9,000 vehicles per day. It needs a \$5 million upgrade. Highway 28, Edmonton to Gibbons – is there anybody here awake now? – 4,200 to 7,200 vehicles per day. That's going to cost \$10 million. The subtotal of that: \$95 million.

We also need the construction of an interchange on Highway 14 and Whitemud Drive, and that was something that was scheduled when Anthony Henday is finished. You're going to vote against that here, you people from Edmonton? This will be required when the city of Edmonton extends Whitemud from 34th Street to Highway 14.

Let's move backwards and go and see what the big picture looks like as you go to the north-south trade corridor. If you'll just wait with me a minute till I put this in perspective. As I said before, I want to put the total picture of the initial start-up of the five-year project that goes into the north-south trade corridor. Some of it will be repeated. I put down the \$18 million that's going in it in '96-97. Now, let's project this out because we're just starting, but we've got to get started. You've got to have this Bill. We've got to initiate the design and construction of many of these projects.

The southern Alberta trade corridor will start – and these are the costs. Highway 4, four-lane construction from Coutts to Lethbridge: \$75 million. Highway 3, completion of four-lane construction from Lethbridge to Fort Macleod: \$30 million.

Central Alberta trade corridor. Highway 2, construct interchange with south end of Deerfoot Trail extension. That's \$15 million. Highway 2, construct interchange with Highway 22X: \$15 million. Highway 2, construct Deerfoot Trail extension to four lanes between Highway 22X to Highway 2 south of Calgary. That's \$45 million. Highway 1, construct a two-lane highway between Highway 1A and Highway 2, northwest ring road at Calgary to provide enhanced Trans-Canada Highway connections to the north-south trade corridor. That's \$80 million. On Highway 1, again, construct interchange with Highway 2: another \$15 million.

The north-central Alberta trade corridor. On Highway 2 construct interchange at the Ellerslie Road, as I said. On Highway 2, Highway 16, Anthony Henday Drive, again, construct four-lane west to Edmonton, Edmonton ring road between Highway 16 and Highway 16X: that's \$20 million.

On Highway 2 and Highway 16, Anthony Henday Drive, construct interchanges at Highway 16 and 16X: that's \$30 million.

The Winterburn Road and 231st Street interchange in Edmonton: \$25 million. On Highway 16X construct interchanges between west of Edmonton at secondary highway 779 and the campsite road: \$25 million.

The northern Alberta trade corridor, Highway 43. Construct four-lane from Gunn to Valleyview: \$200 million. On Highway 34 construct four-lane from Valleyview to Grande Prairie: \$75 million. On Highway 2 construct four-lane to 10 kilometres west of Grande Prairie: \$5 million. Subtotal: \$280 million.

If we don't get started right now – and it's in our year's budget.

We've got to start right away. We're starting up in the Grande Prairie area, and we're moving south.

Now, let me talk about why administratively we need \$163 million. I talked about capital on one set of projects alone. We have about \$420 million expected to go out to our municipalities, to our cities to start construction on secondary highway programs, to start rehabilitation of connector routes within our cities, and to give maintenance moneys to our municipalities, both the cities and rural municipalities, to upgrade and rehabilitate and put safety precautions in on roads, whether it's stoplights, whether they're safer interchanges, or whether it's straight overlays on our highways.

We've been sending letters out in the last two months, and most of the members know that. Everybody's included in the letters; I send them to all of you. You know that the municipalities are going to tender. They are putting out tender packages today. There you are; they're waving it eloquently at me. If we don't have this money to advance when they go to initial construction, what kind of an embarrassment is that when I turn and tell them that the loyal opposition at 11:30 at night refused to pass Bill 11 so that we could get on with the year's development project?

We're not talking just brand-new projects. We're talking the repair of potholes and flattening out curves and widening roads for safety, and it is looking after signage. We've got a great program that we're looking at to look at school bus safety and look at impaired driving and look at the type of signage that we need out there to slow people down on icy days, to stop them running into the backs of snowplows. We need a whole new program out there of safety measures, and we're starting that very shortly, and this is part of the reason we need \$163 million in this Bill.

Now, let me have a look at how much. [interjection] You asked. Now, why would we need lottery fund money advancements, \$26 million, in here? Somebody says: why, look in here; they even want lottery funds. Well, each year we put out about \$123 million to everything from ag societies right through to arts foundations, the Wild Rose Foundation, the Sport Council, the rec and park foundation. We put \$8 million into medical equipment. We put money into education. We put money into the Science Alberta Foundation. We're advancing those moneys because we haven't finished, and we're starting the next year's contract that goes to these. There are three-year contracts that go to all of these foundations. Without this money we would financially embarrass all of those volunteer and charity groups out there that do so much in our communities. Do you want to go and tell them that we held up a Bill and just by risk management happened to fail to advance their money, that the grants going to every little society out there – I'm sorry, but they can't have them for another six months? Would you like to do that?

**11:30**

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: I just want to go home.

DR. WEST: An hon. member just said: I would like to go home. Well, we didn't start this.

[Motion carried; Bill 11 read a second time]

MR. EVANS: Despite something in the back of my mind suggesting that we move on to another Bill at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to let caution be my guide. I would now move that the Assembly adjourn until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[At 11:32 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]