

10 a.m.

Tuesday, October 29, 1991

[Deputy Chairman: Mr. Jonson]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair will attend upon the committee shortly, but the vice-chairman will get things going.

Just one reminder, and that is that the time of commencement of our meeting this afternoon is 3 o'clock rather than 2 o'clock. I hope you've all received notification of that. There's another proposed meeting switch that we'll deal with when we're through presentation and questions this morning.

I'd like to welcome the Hon. Ken Kowalski, Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, and his officials to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee. Today we're dealing with those responsibilities of his department that come under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and that is essentially the Capital City recreation park, Edmonton. There are certainly, of course, two completed projects listed, the Fish Creek provincial park and the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre, but the active project is Capital City.

Do you have any introductory remarks, Mr. Minister?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for the warm welcome. With me this morning, the gentleman to my left, to the members' right, is Mr. Ed McLellan, Deputy Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. The gentleman to my right is Mr. Ray Reshke, assistant deputy minister of finance and administration.

I think, alas, that this will probably be my last appearance before this very esteemed committee. I've always enjoyed coming here, but the projects that come under the jurisdiction I have as Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services have, in essence, come to an end. There has been no activity with respect to Fish Creek provincial park. There was one bit of activity with respect to the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre in the last fiscal year. All members will note that in the annual report of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund for the year 1990-91 - while the text on page 33 basically gives you an investment at March 31, 1991, of \$391 million, members might wish to quickly refer to the table on page 44. In the last fiscal year the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre has now wound down. We completed our audit during the last fiscal year, and the audit indicated that we had provided \$395,000 more to the Walter C. Mackenzie health sciences facility than was actually needed to complete the project, so a request was made to have these dollars returned. These dollars were returned; the \$395,000 went back into the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

[Mr. Ady in the Chair]

The other item is the text on page 32 dealing with the Capital City recreation park. During the last fiscal year the Assembly had approved a total of \$800,000 for land acquisition under the Capital City recreation park. We had received requests from the city of Edmonton for only \$485,000 in grant funding, so there was a surplus of \$315,000 left over in the fiscal year 1990-91. It seems that the city, for whatever reason it was, either was unable to do additional work or couldn't complete additional work, but in the last fiscal year we had assisted the city of Edmonton. As all members will know, the city basically purchases the property and we do a flowthrough of funds. There were six parcels purchased during the fiscal year 1990-91. One parcel was in Waltherdale, two parcels were in the Cloverdale community, two parcels were in the Riverdale community, and one parcel was in the Highlands

community. For all intents and purposes, that ended that program; that ended that expenditure level on March 31, 1991. We received no request for additional dollars from the appropriate authorities for Capital City recreation park, so all members will know that there is no request for 1991-92 with respect to that.

So, Mr. Chairman, several years ago expenditure levels were concluded on Fish Creek. Last year we did the final audit with respect to Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre, and there's a return of \$395,000. In terms of Capital City recreation park, we show an expenditure of \$485,000. I'd be very happy to answer any and all questions forthcoming from members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The minister has clarified where expenditures have moved from the heritage fund this year under his responsibility, and hopefully the committee will confine their questions to those expenditures and those projects.

The Chair recognizes the Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those two questions have been answered already by the minister, but I had wanted to ask him - this may not be a question the minister can answer. The very last page of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund report, page 56, talks about expenditure on capital projects in aggregate. I don't know to what extent all of these flow in some way through public works or whether they're all done independently, but there's an increase in potential claims from \$5 million to \$6 million this year. I don't know if the minister is able to tell us why or why not, and if he can't, that's fine. That was the only other area I thought he might have something to tell us about this morning, and I just wondered.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the only projects we would be involved in in a direct way would be the three we've already identified. We would not be involved in those other aspects, so I would not be knowledgeable to answer the question.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you have a supplementary?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: No, Mr. Chairman. The minister in his opening remarks adequately answered the questions I was going to ask.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Mr. Minister and staff. I'd like to ask about the Capital City recreation park. The minister has provided some information about the requisition that has been made on the \$800,000 commitment, but if I remember correctly, we've got a 3,000 acre park which is located in Edmonton and adjoining municipalities - the county of Strathcona, which I represent. It joins some 14 regional parks, I believe - some 55 kilometres of bicycle, pedestrian, hiking pathways, whatever, and it has lodges and science pavilions. It's an excellent facility. There has been in the past, especially by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, a thrust to see that additional funds may be allocated to this Capital City recreation park, so I'm zeroing in on the point that only \$485,000 has been accessed under the land acquisition part in the city of Edmonton and we've got a \$315,000 surplus. It concerns me a little bit that on one hand we're getting some requests for additional funding under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund to develop the park and that the land acquisition portion is not really falling in line. Could you tell me:

is the amount of \$485,000 the total reimbursement for land costs by the province to the city of Edmonton for this under that 1975 agreement? To me there was a \$2 million cap there somewhere.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the 1975 agreement between the city of Edmonton and the province of Alberta set a limit of \$34 million in 1974 dollar values for land acquisition and park development. The actual expenditures – again, this was a figure of 1974 dollars – to March 31, 1991, totaled over \$44 million. In the terms of the total dollars that were allocated for land acquisition over those years – Ed, do you have that figure right in front of you?

MR. McLELLAN: It's \$2 million.

MR. KOWALSKI: It's \$2 million of that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GESELL: Which is in line with that cap I was talking about.

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes. The cap, or the agreement that was reached perhaps is a more appropriate word.

MR. GESELL: Then in 1988, I believe it was, the city proposed an extension to the Capital City park. Are there some ongoing negotiations with the province in terms of providing some additional funding for land acquisition or capital construction for enlargement of that park?

MR. KOWALSKI: Interestingly enough, Public Works, Supply and Services does not negotiate directly with the city of Edmonton in this matter. It's the Department of Recreation and Parks that's the conduit to the city of Edmonton. On the other hand, when the city of Edmonton has successfully concluded a buy agreement with a land seller, they simply send the bill to us, and then we'll just pay the bill to them that way. To repeat what I said a little earlier, I've received no requests.

10:10

MR. GESELL: So is the minister's responsibility with respect to Capital City park concluded, and is the total Capital City recreation park now transferred to the Recreation and Parks department?

MR. KOWALSKI: Our responsibility is concluded, and the ministerial responsibility within the administrative structure known as the government of Alberta would rest with the Minister of Recreation and Parks.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister has done such a good job and explanation, as always. His projects are winding down. It looks like he has a fairly clean slate for good spending. But further on the question from the past member, I was wondering: once the Minister of Recreation and Parks takes this over, does this guarantee that no more money will be spent on this particular park, or is there some possibility, if they come back with another proposal for more development, that it would still qualify?

MR. KOWALSKI: I would think, Mr. Chairman, that this committee might choose to make recommendations for expansion. The city of Edmonton might request of the Minister of Recreation and Parks, and all those requests would be put on the whole capital side of the priority list for the capital development of the province of Alberta and decisions would be made appropriately. To be very specific to the question, there are always opportunities in the future.

MR. DOYLE: The Walter C. Mackenzie science centre, Mr. Chairman. I guess I'm not familiar with exactly how much land there is for further expansion. Is this Walter C. Mackenzie science centre completely finished now as far as public works is concerned or the minister is concerned?

MR. KOWALSKI: Indeed, that is absolutely correct, Mr. Chairman. It is concluding. There was one decision made in the last fiscal year, members will recall, and it had to do with the demolition of the 1950-57 wing at the University hospital. That request was made of me, not the utilization of Heritage Savings Trust Fund dollars but GRF dollars, and there was no request for dollars. It was a decision just made as the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, and we gave that affirmative decision on July 20, 1990. Members will recall that it arose during the estimates of Public Works, Supply and Services a year ago, but it was responded to.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, my other question has to do with financial spending from the department of supply and services, and it has to do with whether funds will be coming from the heritage trust fund in regards to settlements – for instance, with Jack Agrios and Hector McElroy and those people – to do with restricted development areas around the city of Calgary and in fact Edmonton.

MR. KOWALSKI: There would be no funds flowing from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund with respect to any land purchases under the restricted development areas in both Edmonton and Calgary. Those would be general revenue funds.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
The Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For once the Member for Calgary-Mountain View and the Member for Lacombe are in agreement that the minister gave a very informative, factual overview when he came here, and it answered all my concerns. I want to say thank you to the minister for coming here and laying it out so that it addresses the concerns of all parties. I have no questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
The Member for Wainwright.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning to the minister and his staff. I just wanted to ask you a question, and it might not be related to our heritage fund here, but I'm sure the minister will soon let me know if it's not. The recent announcement that we had with the Walter C. Mackenzie science centre on the construction of a new magnetic resonance imaging facility: is that going to come out of the heritage trust fund?

MR. KOWALSKI: There were two aspects of the commitment given on the magnetic resonance applicator. The construction

dollars basically would come under the General Revenue Fund, the estimates for the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services, and the acquisition costs for the machine itself which, as I recall, were in the neighbourhood of \$2 million, would come under the Alberta Lottery Fund.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you very much.

MR. KOWALSKI: Actually, the local hospital board itself would be providing some dollars as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have no further questions, member?
The Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, my question's more of a procedural nature, and I guess I should be directing it to you, but I think it would be useful for me to do so while the minister's in the Chamber with the committee. It has to do with schedule 6, deemed assets. My question is: with these projects now winding down, or at least their heritage fund sourcing concluding on such projects as Fish Creek provincial park, Capital City park, the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre, and so on - even though there are no further anticipated expenditures or investments from the heritage fund, these projects, of course, will continue to be carried in subsequent annual reports as schedule 6, or deemed assets. My procedural question is: as questions continue to arise with respect to those deemed assets, should they be directed to the minister who has operating responsibility for these assets, or should another forum, a forum other than the heritage fund committee hearings, be used for those kinds of questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the Chair has a little trouble answering your question. It would seem to me that again the committee may want to take a position on this through the recommendation forum, to set a direction for what they would like to see done on questions on deemed assets. Perhaps the minister could enlighten us in some respect on that and perhaps not.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'll only comment on the three areas that have come under the responsibility I have as Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. If there were any operational dollars, they would essentially come out of the General Revenue Fund, so there would be a venue and an avenue for that during the annual estimates overview, either the GRF or the Capital Fund. Those would be the sources, I would think. Of the three, Fish Creek, if there's any operational assistance, would come from Recreation and Parks; the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre's operational assistance would come under either the Department of Health estimates or the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services estimates; and again, if there are any operational dollars for Capital City recreation park, they would come under the GRF estimates of the Minister of Recreation and Parks. So there is a venue for that in place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further question?

MR. PAYNE: I'm just debating with myself, Mr. Chairman, whether I should use a current example to help all the members focus. This is not a hypothetical question I'm raising. I would anticipate that Fish Creek park will have some expansions or some improvements in the years ahead. Those enhancements will not come out of the heritage fund, of course, as the minister has quite properly observed; they will come out of the general revenue account. Nevertheless, they will affect the asset statement in

schedule 6, and it's because of that connection that I'm feeling my way as to how best to deal with questions arising from those enhancements. We have three alternatives. Do they go to the minister under whose name the deemed assets are shown in schedule 6; do they go to the minister, in the forum of the heritage fund committee, who has operating responsibility for that asset; or do we go to another forum? That's my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if I could just touch on that for a moment, it would seem to me that the deemed assets are carried under schedule 6 as a book value and that any money going from general revenue into Fish Creek park would not appear in schedule 6 as an addition to the asset because it would not be an asset accumulated from funds coming from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. So I don't believe that number would change. It would be an amount that would be debated under the annual estimates from the department of that particular year, and that would see the end of it. I believe that would be the circumstance.

10:20

MR. PAYNE: That's a helpful response, Mr. Chairman. I don't wish to take any more time in committee today, but could I leave it with the chairman, at his convenience perhaps, to pursue this procedural question so we're all working from the same understanding?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Is it my turn to ask questions? Oh, thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to address the deemed asset issue to begin with to follow up your point, and that is that on one hand, if money has been spent from the heritage trust fund on Fish Creek park, it is considered an asset. On the other hand, if money in the future is spent from the General Revenue Fund on Fish Creek park, it won't be considered an asset anywhere. In my estimation that underlines just how ridiculous the deemed asset designation is. So we have money spent from the General Revenue Fund that will just evaporate and will not be recorded as an asset anywhere; money spent within the heritage trust fund is very carefully reported as an asset.

But I really have one issue area that concerns . . . [interjection]

Well, then my question would be: what does the minister think about that apparent contradiction, and what would he be saying to the Treasurer in his cabinet deliberations to ensure that his government adhere to what the Auditor General is telling him, to take deemed assets, which would include his Fish Creek park, for example, off the balance sheet of the heritage trust fund? How can he sit in those rooms and allow that to occur?

MR. KOWALSKI: First of all, Mr. Chairman, I'm not quite as aggressive about the question here as the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark is, but maybe I will get that way in a minute or two.

What you've got on pages 55 and 56 is a schedule that basically looks at the expenditures and actual dollars on capital projects in the province of Alberta. What it is is a historical list of expenditures. We also know, as well, that we have other expenditures that tend to be of the operational side, and I don't recall philosophically where if we have invested maintenance dollars on paving of highways or fixing potholes, we would calculate that into the total cost of the asset of the road, but it's a possibility that those people in the profession known as accountants might want to come back and recommend to us.

So I have no difficulty with the question that's raised by the hon. member, and of course that's why all members in this committee were elected to represent all Members of the Legislative Assembly to deal with exactly that kind of question. You've been sitting here for a number of meetings now, and undoubtedly the committee will sit in serious consultation and debate for the next number of weeks. I think it would be helpful to the government if the committee were to come forward with a recommendation in that regard. I've spent most of the morning building buildings and haven't really addressed myself to the acute question raised by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, but perhaps I'll walk away from here tuning in the thought process in that regard, and perhaps a little later in the year we'll have a further discussion.

MR. MITCHELL: I'd like to say it's nice to see a less aggressive, kinder, gentler minister for once.

Mr. Chairman, my follow-up question refers to the fact that the minister referred us to this list of capital projects, deemed assets. Would he, in arguing that that is appropriate, therefore argue that as an appendix or as a schedule attached to the government's audited financial statements prepared each year by the Auditor General, there should be an exhaustive list of every capital expenditure - every hospital, every road, every school, every municipal and provincial building - as deemed assets for the purpose of . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, order please. I really think you're off the line of questioning. The minister is here to answer questions about his expenditures from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and give accountability for them, perhaps to give some outlook of what he may project at his good pleasure. To get into the discussion of the deemed assets and where it's recorded really falls under the venue of the Auditor General, whom we've had before us, and perhaps the Provincial Treasurer. Thirdly, you could even put that question to the Premier. We've had all three of those people here, and I believe the member has brought forth the deemed assets issue on each of those occasions. I don't believe it's this minister's responsibility to deal with that. Do you have a question that would focus more directly on his responsibility?

MR. MITCHELL: I do.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Not to be presumptuous, but have I been ruled out of order in terms of responding to the suggestion made by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has always been very lenient if a minister wants to take on a question that is questionable. If the minister would like to do that, the Chair, with the compliance of the committee, is willing to allow him to do it.

MR. KOWALSKI: Sir, with that caution that you put on the statement. I would just like to respond, though, that I think the question of an inventory of assets that are held by the people of Alberta is a question worthy for us to review. The infrastructure held by the people of Alberta and the province of Alberta that has been accumulated since 1905 is absolutely massive. When we look at the value of this building; when we look at the value of the 2,000-plus public buildings in the province of Alberta; when we

look at the value of the 100,000 miles of roads that have been built in this province since 1905; when we look at the value of the light rapid rail transit system that's been built in Edmonton and Calgary; when we look at the value of the hundreds of parks located within the province of Alberta; when we look at the value of the water, of the sewer systems; when we look at the value of the canal systems, the museums, the libraries, and what have you; and then when we see that the value of two-thirds of the province of Alberta is land held in trust by the people of Alberta, held by the government of Alberta - two-thirds of this province - the conclusion would be that we would have an asset value in this province in figures that would be absolutely astronomical to me. In other words, the basic bottom line of this is that the asset level, the investment the people of Alberta have provided to the citizens of Alberta, to all of us since 1905, is absolutely astronomical.

There is value in all of this should someone say: "Well, we should liquidate some assets, because are they necessary in 1991 or in 1992, as they were in 1927? This building that was built: is it still needed? Can we not sell it, put it on the market?" I think it's a worthy thing, because the conclusion of this is that I think the people of Alberta would be absolutely flabbergasted to know how rich they are and how well off they are and the tremendous commitment they've made since 1905. I have no difficulty, no difficulty at all, looking and saying: "How wealthy are we actually? What value do you put on two-thirds of the landmass in the province of Alberta? Give it a value." We would become the heaven on earth in terms of the perception of the people of the world.

MR. MITCHELL: I think many Albertans would be absolutely flabbergasted to think this minister thinks they in fact are wealthy when you talk to single mothers on welfare who can't feed their kids properly, to people lining up at food banks. This building doesn't help feed those people, and I think the minister should be careful in the manner and the context within which he makes those comments.

My next question . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the member asked for the asset figure, and I responded to his question on the assets. Now he wants to play political games. He asked the question to respond to assets. That is what I did. If he'd asked me to respond to questions with respect to social programs, I would have done that. But he didn't ask me to do that. So he can't have it both ways. He can't ask a question and then ridicule me when I give him the answer he asked for. He just can't do that. He can't speak out of both sides of his mouth, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: My question, Mr. Chairman, concerns the children's hospital. This is a specific question about money. The children's hospital decision has been made: it's going to be the University hospital, the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre. Does the minister anticipate that funds will be taken from the heritage trust fund to build that children's hospital?

MR. KOWALSKI: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister. I'm referring to the report of the standing committee on heritage

trust fund hearings that was issued in March of '91. In the last sentence of a paragraph in the minutes of the hearings with the minister last year there was also some discussion about the possibility of an air ambulance helicopter landing pad. They were discussing at that time, of course, the Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre. Has the minister got any comments on that particular issue?

MR. KOWALSKI: That matter was raised, I think, by an individual committee member. As I recall, Mr. Chairman, we dealt with that as well during the GRF estimates of the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. I thought something had been done by the University of Alberta hospital with respect to that, but I'd have to check. I'll respond to that.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Seeing how the Liberals were allowed a question on public buildings, I'd like to ask the minister if any funds from the heritage trust fund will be expended for the renovation or dismantling of the federal building on 107th Street or the empty Provincial Building on Main Street in the town of Edson. Or does that money come out of the general revenue for those types of projects?

10:30

MR. KOWALSKI: There is no commitment of any dollars requested by the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services under the current allocations for the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Mr. Chairman, this afternoon at 1:30 I'll be making an announcement with respect to the position of the government with respect to the federal building. Because these are our colleagues and colleagues should hear it first, essentially what we'll be doing is going to an international request for proposals asking individuals to come up with ideas with respect to how we might deal with the federal building. We put some caveats on that. One of those caveats is that the building cannot be demolished, and number two, the historical facade of the building must be retained, but aside from that we are going to the world and saying, "Look, you come back to us with proposals by the spring of 1992 as to how the federal building might be preserved for the people of Alberta and what would be a good marketplace utilization of that building."

In terms of Edson, there would be no Heritage Savings Trust Fund dollars.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

MR. DOYLE: I believe that's my final question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

That concludes the list of speakers the Chair has. We'd like to thank the minister and his colleagues, the government officials, who have come and appeared before us for the straightforward answers they've given and even going beyond their mandate in some cases to satisfy questions the committee members may have had.

Prior to accepting a motion for adjournment, the Chair does have one matter of business he'd like to bring before the commit-

tee. The minister may stay or leave. We'll just be very brief, and then we'll be concluded. Tuesday, November 5, is one of the days of the Alberta School Boards Association convention in Calgary, and we have heritage fund hearings scheduled for that day. The Chair would like to offer an alternative, that that day be moved to November 19, when the two ministers have agreed that they would come before the committee, if that's acceptable to the members. There doesn't seem to be another day besides the 19th that it can be fitted in with the ministers and the majority of members. So we either go to the 19th or remain at the 5th. Could I have input from the committee or a motion? Perhaps we should do it by way of motion.

MR. FISCHER: I would make a motion that we move it to the 19th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Discussion on the motion? The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: I have no objection, Mr. Chairman. Before adjourning, though, could I ask, maybe after the motion is dealt with, about the annual report for AHMC? Could I raise that before you call a motion to adjourn?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The motion on the floor: all those in favour of moving the hearing dates for the hon. Mr. Trynchy and the hon. Mr. Gogo to November 19? Any opposed? Carried.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View has raised the issue with the Chair that we don't have an annual report from the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation prior to the Minister of Municipal Affairs appearing before this committee. The Chair with the assistance of the legislative secretary has been in contact with the department. Because it is not ready, they're endeavouring to bring together pertinent information that would be included in the annual report and make it available to the committee hopefully as early as this afternoon. I believe that's the very best we can do to get information to you. At that time perhaps the committee could peruse it. I'm not sure we can move the hearing date of the appearance before this committee of the Minister of Municipal Affairs far enough into the future to have the annual report before us in adequate time.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: While I appreciate what you're doing, Mr. Chairman, to try and get information for the committee, and I know you're doing the best you can, this was raised a year ago when we were faced with beginning the hearings and not having the annual report for the trust fund itself. I think we made some motions at that time. This year we did have the trust fund annual report in advance of the beginning of our hearings, and I appreciate that. I think for our committee to work and for us as members to prepare ourselves for meetings with the ministers, we need to have that information ahead of time. So I just want to go on record at the moment in expressing my serious reservations about the lack of information provided to us. When I see what's provided this afternoon, then I'm prepared to raise it further if I'm not satisfied with the amount of information given, but I certainly want to register my opposition right now to the fact that we have not gotten the annual report for AMHC with any reasonable time to review it in preparation for the minister's appearance. I'll leave it at that for the moment, but I would like to follow up further with this after we've reviewed or received the information later today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, I would like to register my concern about this situation. Alberta Mortgage and Housing is, in fact, one of the most significant and difficult investments facing the heritage trust fund today and this committee today as well. Any time we're not getting properly structured information or hurried and rushed information is a time when one has to wonder why that is the case. I believe this committee is far too often vulnerable to being pushed aside and being held to near irrelevance, and if you want to put the nail in the coffin of irrelevance, simply give us hurried information without sufficient time to review. Give us information that's prone to being incorrect and I believe you seriously erode the responsibility with which this committee can conduct itself. I think it's unacceptable, and I think we should find a time when that minister can meet with us after we have the audited annual report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Chair acknowledges the position of the two members who have spoken to the issue, and perhaps it can be followed further after the interim information is made available to the members. They may find it satisfactory.

One other thing I would like to bring before the committee is that the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research has asked permission to spend 10 or 15 minutes with a slide presentation before the committee the day they appear. If the Chair doesn't hear any objection to that, he will grant that permission, and it will be presented in the adjoining room 312. All agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair would entertain a motion for adjournment till 3 o'clock this afternoon. The Member for Clover Bar. All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We stand adjourned till 3 p.m. this afternoon.

[The committee adjourned at 10:39 a.m.]