

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Tuesday, April 19, 1988 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 88/04/19

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will now come to order. Before I call on the Minister of the Environment, however, I would like to ask permission of the committee if we could revert to the introduction of guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ELZINGA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. May I take this opportunity, sir, to introduce to you and to Members of the Legislative Assembly, three friends that we had the opportunity to visit with briefly this evening, beginning with Bill Devereux, the chairman of the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board, Sako Strikwerda and Lawrence Yuzyk, who are with Calmar Feed Mill. They are in the members' gallery, and I'd ask if they would rise so that they could receive the warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**  
(continued)

**Department of the Environment**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would now call on the Minister of the Environment to make some introductory remarks.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and to all members of the committee, thank you very much for being here. I think it's rather an auspicious occasion when I can be presenting my estimates at the same time that the president of the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board is in the gallery in the audience. I mean, pork producers from around this province make a very, very important contribution to the economy of Alberta. Of all the politics that I've ever been involved in in my life, I think pork politics without doubt is the most fascinating and stimulating.

Mr. Chairman, the budget of Alberta Environment which is being presented to the Legislative Assembly tonight is a very important budget. In the elements book you'll see a total figure of \$113.709 million. That budget basically reflects the new approach that's been taken by the government with respect to the Department of the Environment in our province. All members will recall that a year ago when Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor presented the Speech from the Throne, there was a very important mandate change that was given to Alberta Environment. It said that we would move away from simply protecting the environment and we would now move into a situation of both protecting and enhancing or improving the environment of the province of Alberta.

Over the past year and following through with the budget for the fiscal year 1988-89 is a series of initiatives with respect to this matter. Just briefly, Mr. Chairman, to highlight some of the initiatives in this particular budget, you are going to see the dollars allocated to increased vigilance with respect to environmental protection and enforcement: a 68.6 percent increase for recycling; a streamlining of the administrative processes of the department; a major emphasis on staff development with no layoffs of permanent staff in the Department of the Environment; a major commitment to reclamation in the province of Alberta with the Blairmore coal slack piles reclamation project; a continued priority of our government that has been talked about so often by the Minister of the Environment, dealing with waste management and the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation; a continuing construction of and development of the Oldman River dam project in southern Alberta; and a major emphasis in communication and education and a commitment to spend loads of dollars in fiscal 1988-89 on this whole subject matter of education and communication with respect to the importance of the environment of our province. There is, of course, a very continuing and sophisticated approach to research as well.

Specifically, all members can look at the elements document and see the allocations and the reshuffling of dollars from one sector of the department to another sector of the department. But overall, to repeat, the budget for Alberta Environment is \$113.709 million. Members will also know that permanent full-time positions in Alberta Environment have now been reduced to 991 from a total of 1,020 in the previous fiscal year. In terms of full-time equivalent employment positions, that figure is now 1,137.8 as compared to 1,201.3 in the previous fiscal year.

In addition to the dollars that are allocated to Alberta Environment and the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation that all members will find in their document, I should also point out that there are additional dollars allocated to Alberta Environment in other budgets that will be presented to all members within the ensuing weeks. As an example, if members were to take a look under the vote for Public Works, Supply and Services, they will see that there is a dollar figure of \$1.25 million allocated for construction projects, a figure of \$4.64 million allocated for Land Assembly. Under the Capital Fund estimates, another estimate that all members of the Assembly will be dealing with later, we'll see an item called Construction of Water Development Projects, a total figure of \$66.3 million. And of course, under the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund estimates you will see the figure of \$41.4 million for Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement, and a figure of \$2.16 million for Land Reclamation. Now, these latter figures, of course, are not up for review and debate tonight; they'll come at another opportunity and another opportune time. Tonight, basically, we're dealing with the figure of \$113.709 million, which is located in the elements book.

All members will also have on their desks a little kit of information along with a pin, the most recent edition of Alberta Environment's new, colourful little pin which has all of the colours of the province of Alberta. I sincerely hope all members and all my colleagues will wear the pin with pride because, after all, Alberta is our home and it is the home we share. It's on that subject matter of the home we share that I would simply like to just draw to the attention of all members what is really in the kit that they have. We'll have Environment Week in the province of Alberta in the first week of June, and we're going to have

prepared for anybody who wants one this very colourful and beautiful poster of the province of Alberta. It's an activity poster, and the members can turn around and they can see a whole series of things. As an example, to my good friend the leader of the Liberal Party: if he were to take the back side of the poster, there's a little peekaboo section, a bracket box where it says "peekaboo." And if you hold up peekaboo and show it up to the light, it's amazing what you'll see. So I draw that to your attention. As the minutes wear by and as the evening wears on, if there is an opportunity here for some activity that all hon. members would want to deal with with respect to the environment and Alberta, the home we share, I would certainly draw your attention to this poster.

I would also like to point out that should any member in the Assembly wish to order these posters in droves for school kids, somebody in grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, grade 4, grade 5 -- and as you go out and visit with these children, and I know that all hon. members of the government caucus do that continuously and consistently -- we'd be very happy to provide you with a number of these posters. You can stamp your name on it "with the compliments of Mr. Jack Campbell," as an example, "MLA for Rocky Mountain House," and the like.

Also in the kit, of course, is information with respect to the very major announcement we made this morning with the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association called the Great Drug Roundup Month of May, and I think that's very important information.

I'd also like to draw to all members' attention a hot-off-the-press new inventory of businesses in this province who are involved in waste management. It was yesterday, I believe, that the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn asked me: "Now, what will happen if somebody has some sludge. Where will they go with it? What will they do with it?" Well, I'd like to draw all members' attention to this very important document, which includes businesses from around the province of Alberta that are now involved in waste management. The document is called the Alberta Special Waste Services Directory. I should point out that it's a directory of Alberta firms which have indicated

their intention to provide certain services to generators of special/hazardous waste

in the province of Alberta. We've had created in this province the Alberta Special Waste Services Association. It

has been formed to ensure the development of a specialized hazardous waste management industry in Alberta. The association [which is nongovernment] will endeavour to provide information about the industry to the public, encourage the development of sound regulations, ensure the opportunity exists for technology transfer and development, and promote the services of its members

to the province of Alberta.

It is environmental protection, it is economic development, and it follows through with the whole concept of a very major report that I had the privilege of signing my name to last year, in 1987, in Canada, which has been described by some as an outstanding document in terms of sustainable economic development in our country.

Mr. Chairman, I sincerely hope that members of the Assembly will take an opportunity to ask for clarification of some of the votes with respect to Alberta Environment. I will listen very carefully, and it will certainly be my intent to provide succinct, precise, to-the-mark answers to all of the questions that are raised, because I think it's important that we all recognize that Albertans have the right to know. All members will know that, going back two years ago when I had the privilege of being

asked to serve as Alberta's Minister of the Environment, I said communications would be a fundamental objective of the department, the portfolio, the areas that I would be responsible for. I think that all members know that I have no difficulty responding, getting involved in debate and the like, and I will look forward to that.

But most importantly of all, Mr. Chairman, I'd like everybody to know once again that I am extremely proud to be the Minister of the Environment in the province of Alberta. Anything that I can do to enhance anybody's information base with respect to the importance of the environment of this province is a challenge that I would welcome.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. I do have one or two questions I would like to ask the minister about the Environment department and the things that are going on in the department and some of the things that aren't going on in the department.

Before I do, I would like to refer to a matter I'd like to clarify, that being a comment that was misunderstood by the people who run the Environment library. About a week and a half ago the minister had given a list in his usual 500 words per minute fashion of places where one could get information. And referring, I guarantee, to him in his official capacity, I said it's like getting information out of Fort Knox. That did come right after the reference on the minister's part to the Environment library, and they thought I'd been referring to them. I will assure everyone publicly in the same forum that I made the comment that was misunderstood: I've had nothing but co-operation from the Environment library. But to quote a staff member when I asked her to get information from the minister's office: "Oh God, no," In fact, they never get told no; they just never get the information. The Environment library doesn't do that, and I do thank them for their past co-operation.

A few points about the Environment department and the estimates and I'll go directly into some of the votes, if the minister doesn't mind. I'm concerned that when one looks at all of the expenditures he mentioned, including a couple of others that aren't really up for debate tonight -- but he did mention them anyway -- all of the money spent by the Environment minister amounts to some considerable millions, and 68 percent of it goes towards water management, primarily the building of dams. I think, based on the renaming of other departments in the past, the minister should very seriously consider renaming his department the department of dam building, water management, and environmental pollution. That would more accurately reflect what seems to be happening within the department, so he should certainly do that.

Under Pollution Prevention and Control there is a 7.5 percent increase in vote 2.2.2; that's Environmental Quality Monitoring. I'm quite concerned about that. Previous attempts to take polluters to court have almost invariably failed. When they didn't fail because the Environment department appeared on behalf of the polluter, they failed because the monitoring done was not sufficient to guarantee a charge. I really worry that a decrease here could make that even more difficult in the future, so I'd ask the minister to look at that possibility.

In vote 2.3.1 there's a 9.3 percent increase in Air Quality, under Standards and Approvals. I would heartily approve of that, and I would especially approve of it if it's going to lead to

tighter standards for air pollution, especially where it pertains to the sour gas industry and sulphur emissions, because if increases here led to sufficient monitoring and an increase in the standards to best available technology, it would be very beneficial for the entire province.

I worry about an 11.9 percent decrease in Chemicals and Pesticides in the Wastes and Chemicals division. It's an area of concern for the entire province, and it's an area that shouldn't be cut. Now, if the explanation is that the Swan Hills plant is taking up the slack, then I think the minister should look at the false economy involved, in that he is spending millions to save thousands. Obviously, there's more to the Swan Hills plant than that; still, I don't think this is an area that can be cut on any excuse.

Under vote 4.2.7 there's a 22.6 percent decrease in the Oldman dam. Now, if I thought that indicated they were winding down the project for its eventual shutdown and cancellation, I would be grinning from ear to ear and applauding the minister. I do not believe that, however, so I won't, because vote 4.2.8 shows a 180 percent increase in Capital Construction -- Debt Repayment. I would ask the minister what portion of that vote, especially the 180 percent increase, has to do with paying off debts on the capital construction of the Oldman dam.

Votes 4.4 and 4.5 both show decreases. I would consider that unwise in Data Collection and Inventory where Hydrology is being cut by 11.3 percent, in that it may hamper a couple of important things. I'd like the minister to confirm or explain my concerns one way or another. One would be our ability to do the hydrological tests to be sure that irrigation land that is going to be expanded onto is actually suitable. Because if we cut that, we may be moving into large expanses as a result of the Oldman dam, and we may not have done the tests to see if we can avoid salinity problems so often associated with irrigation. The other one is that it might reduce our ability to test dump sites or landfill sites as completely as possible if there's a cut in that area, so I really think that has to be looked at.

Vote 5, Interdisciplinary Environmental Research and Services, in other words the Environmental Centre. It's been almost a 15 percent decrease, and most of the decrease, about three-quarters, comes in the Director's Office and Administration and Technical Support. I would fear that this would really hamper the centre's ability to co-ordinate efforts and monitor spending on research projects, that if you're going to do the same amount of research, you want the kinds of controls and co-ordination to make sure that in fact you're not duplicating efforts somewhere else and wasting more to save less. It certainly would not be wise to do that.

In votes 5.4.2. and 5.4.3 we have decreases of 11 and 23 percent respectively. Under Animal Sciences, these two deal with Aquatic and Wildlife Biology, respectively, and I'm wondering how these two cuts relate to the province's move toward eventually privatizing wildlife under game ranching proposals and so on. Does it indicate that the entire provincial responsibility for wildlife will eventually be shuffled off? That certainly concerns me.

Under vote 7, the Overview and Co-ordination of Environmental Conservation, in other words the ECA. I worry about a cut of 6.2 percent there, although considering that the ECA has been an outspoken opponent of the minister -- or critic, not so much opponent -- in a number of areas and has been a very serious critic of the Oldman dam and things that should have been done before it went in, I'm not surprised at a cut except that maybe one might have expected it to be bigger. I do have a re-

quest of the minister, and that is: I believe that the most valuable aspect of the ECA has been its willingness to be critical of the minister and act as a watchdog. I think we all understand that a minister may do everything he can in cabinet to promote the environment or whatever cause his department represents, but once the political decision is made in cabinet, then the minister is charged with the responsibility of supporting the cabinet decision. The ECA is under no such compulsion. They can, in fact, criticize the environmental consequences of what may be a political decision that an environment minister may not have as much leeway to criticize. I think it might be one of the greatest ironies in the universe, for instance, if this minister had made representation in cabinet against the Oldman dam and is now forced to support it in the face of all the criticism.

What I would ask the minister is to make a promise -- and I've mentioned it in question period -- that he will use the same kind of process, which is possible but not required under the Act, that was used to appoint Mr. Crerar in the first place, that being open competition. Now, it is not required. The minister could pick a good friend that he knew would never disagree with him. I would hope he would not do that unless that person was also the best environmentalist in the province. I think it's important that whoever is appointed to that position is found through open competition, open advertising. I would ask the minister to make a promise that even if it's not required under the Act, it is possible, it has been used before, it has been used to good effect and to the protection of the environment, so will he do it again?

AN HON. MEMBER: Your tie offends the environment.

MR. YOUNIE: Under Special Waste Management -- and I won't promise that if a vote goes against me, I'll send it up to the Swan Hills plant for disposal.

Anyway, under Special Waste Management Assistance I think the minister should have some concern that the increase in spending on that facility alone more than accounts for the increase for the department, meaning that in fact all of the other portions of the department estimates that we're discussing tonight have a net loss of \$3 million, because \$3 million more than his increase actually goes to the Swan Hills plant. When you consider the concerns there have been about the largesse flowing to the joint venture partner, the concern about a special warrant already granted last year in addition to the budget, concerns expressed by Lorne Mick that there may be another one this year -- on top of this increase, there may be required an additional warrant -- I would ask the minister to very seriously consider that.

I would have some other questions for the minister on the Swan Hills plant. When will he announce tonight that when the option comes up under the joint venture agreement, as it will, he will withdraw from the joint venture and run the Swan Hills plant as a public utility that is being operated in the public interest, not in the interests of a profit-making, private-sector company? I've got nothing against profit-making, private-sector companies. I just don't believe they should be operating monopolies in co-operation with the government to make a profit, because that's not free enterprise. Anyone who knows anything about free enterprise would agree with that. I presume the minister, who promotes free enterprise so much, will obviously then agree with it.

Will he consider a number of other measures that would reduce the cost of disposal to the users of the plant? We're doing

lots to provide profit for the joint venture partner; we're not doing enough to provide cheap rates of disposal for users. So will he consider a couple of things that would reduce the cost of using the plant and the whole production of toxic waste in the first place? One is the special depreciation allowance for equipment which reduces the production of toxic waste. Would he consider lobbying the Treasurer to enact that kind of special depreciation, because it would be helpful?

Will he consider allowing businesses to send up to 2,000 kilograms to the Swan Hills plant free of charge, then pay the going rate over and above that? I think the minister can see as well as I can that this would be much more helpful to very small businesses than to the large ones who might be able to afford the more expensive disposal. The small companies that only produce 1,000 or 2,000 kilograms would certainly find that very helpful, and it would help them stay in the marketplace. Will the minister concede that the higher the cost of disposal goes, the greater is the motivation to dump in other places? All other considerations equal, the more you raise the cost, the more motivation there is to dump. I think that's so obvious I can't imagine anyone disagreeing with it.

Will the minister make a provincewide audit of the producers of toxic waste and the present volume of stored waste so that we have some idea of where we're at right now? If he has done so, I'd appreciate a copy of it. In his news release on hazardous waste regulations, I will quote directly from the minister or at least from his news release. Listing the five places that people can send their waste or what they can do with it, he said:

If an appropriate treatment method exists, and if the producer is licenced to do so, waste can be treated on-site in Alberta in order to make them safe for disposal.

I have a couple of important questions there. Does "on-site" mean on the site of generation, or does it just mean on any site owned by that industry? So they couldn't buy a site, say, in Wanham and build a plant there, and a consortium of several companies couldn't amalgamate, buy a site, build their own plant, say, around Wanham, for handling their own hazardous wastes? I would hope the minister will confirm what his head shake said just a few seconds ago, because if that were the case and he doesn't confirm it and they can, in fact, buy another site and build their treatment plant there for only their own wastes, who would then do the trucking?

Now, under point 5 the minister says:

Wastes can be sent to facilities outside of Alberta.

I would question again: who is allowed to do the trucking? Is it only Chem-Security? Does their monopoly extend to that? Can the generator truck them? I think there are a number of potential problems. The minister's head nods won't show up on the record, so I presume he'll translate it into words later.

I also have some questions about the transfer stations. We have a couple of temporary transfer stations, and I would wonder if the minister could define what he means by temporary. How long will the Forest Lawn site and the Nisku site be temporary? I would rather not have this temporary status continuing when I'm in my dotage and my grandson is sitting here arguing these issues. I would like it to be defined before then. Will they become permanent, and if so will they be upgraded to meet the highest possible standards that one would require of a permanent transfer station? Because I'm absolutely convinced that the temporary ones do not meet the kinds of standards I would insist on for permanent ones. I would also wonder who owns the land, and so on.

In terms of future plans, the Special Waste Management Cor-

poration will need about six transfer stations around the province. I'm wondering if the sites have been picked yet. I'm wondering what standards are being used for construction operation and emergency response, who developed those standards, what operations will go on in the stations, and will they become storage depots in light of the fact that Swan Hills can only store a two-week operating supply? Will these transfer stations also become storage stations?

I'm wondering, in view of the lack of public involvement in the siting of Nisku and Calgary as temporary transfer stations, will we have some public involvement in the siting of the permanent transfer stations when that comes, seeing as, I would believe, the potential hazards are just as great and people have just as much right to know what's happening with them. I would suggest that in fact the minister conduct a baseline study and environmental impact assessment of those before he goes ahead.

On the Oldman dam, I have -- and I'm sure the minister would be disappointed if I didn't ask -- a number of questions. I consider it to be not just the single biggest blunder of the present administration under the present Premier but in fact the biggest blunder of the Conservative Party since it formed the government about -- what? -- a decade and a half ago. I won't go into the entire history of the dam, and I could ask the minister to do likewise and spare us all of hearing it again. I think everybody in this House and practically everybody in the province knows the history of the dam up to this point. However, I do have some questions for the minister, and I am looking forward to very straightforward and accurate answers.

Number one, how can the minister possibly omit or exclude irrigation from the licence? Really, how can we not tell the public when we apply for a licence to build that dam that we're not building it as an irrigation project? As I pointed out to the minister, considering what he has on the licence, that the only water to be used according to the minister is going to be the evaporation: it's an awfully expensive humidifier for Lethbridge or Fort Macleod. I would suggest that, in fact, it is an irrigation project, and he should define it as such on the licence. I would like the minister to give me what other reason he has for not putting it on there, if the reason is not to avoid his responsibility under section 77, I believe it is, of the Water Resources Act:

All applications and plans filed in respect of any application under this Act shall be open for inspection by the public in the Department during ordinary office hours.

If the minister said on the licence that it's an irrigation dam, then the plans for irrigation would have to be public and on display with the Environment department. As long as the minister continues the legal fiction on the interim licence, that in fact it is not an irrigation project, then he can avoid doing that.

I would like the minister to explain how he can irrigate 170,000 acres with the dam, which would use up the entire storage capacity, and still have water for, I think he said it was 55 downstream communities. Likewise, if he's going to use most of that water for the downstream communities, how is he going to have water left for the 170,000 acres? I would also again ask him if he will provide me with maps that show exactly which 170,000 acres will be irrigated. I have a number of people who would like to look for themselves to see whether or not those acres are suitable for irrigation or will be very problematical.

The licence mentions recreation, and I'm wondering how people will make recreational use of a reservoir which will fluctuate over very short periods of time, right from a full reservoir to a trickle, and leave hundreds of feet of mud flats surrounding

the trickle that's left at its lowest point. Obviously, that is not going to make a very pleasant camping area, certainly not where I'd like my kids to trudge along. It will dry out; there will be dust storms. It is not going to be a spot where the Minister of Recreation and Parks is going to build a recreation area, I'm sure. If he is, he's going to be sweeping a lot of sand away from it during the low water period.

I'm wondering what the minister has done to arrange for a number of threatened species that have their habitat in the lower, protected, treed river valley, how he is going to convince them to move uphill onto the windswept hilltops once the valley where they live now is flooded temporarily between low and high water.

I would also like to have the minister comment on what I have heard but not confirmed. I would ask him to confirm or deny that there was, albeit a minor one, a cave-in during construction on the diversion tunnels. I'm wondering if the minister will either deny or confirm that there was a cave-in in one of the diversion tunnels; as I said, a minor one during construction. If so, will he guarantee that there is, in fact, a very thorough . . . I would remind the minister before he shakes his head and makes any comments about PCBs being spilled on the highway and digging up tarmac, that also happens. So check it out before making snide remarks, please.

If the minister does confirm this, then I would ask if he is going to in fact do a thorough review of the construction procedures to make sure that, for instance, sufficient rebar was used and there wasn't any cutting of corners to increase profits to the contractor or anything like that. I would also wonder if it's going to affect the building timetable.

Seeing as I don't know if the minister's seen it yet, I would like to quote a little comment from the National Farmers Union presentation to the government earlier today, about three and a half hours ago, I believe. They made this comment about the Oldman dam that will illustrate to the minister that not all farmers do in fact support the dam. Not even all irrigation farmers support the dam.

The province has made a firm commitment to proceed in the construction of a \$350 million Oldman River project which, to say the least, is a highly controversial and divisive decision among Albertans, including the farm community. Consequently, we recommend . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. member. I wonder if we could have some order in the committee, please.

Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: I think some of the rural backbenchers should listen to what a farm group of the stature of the National Farmers Union has to say. I realize that most of you don't care as much as we do about farmers and what's important to them, but at least be polite enough to pretend you do.

Consequently, we recommend that work on the Oldman River project be delayed pending full and open public hearings to assess its positive and negative implications and to review water conservation and river management policies in southern Alberta.

So I would like the minister to consider that as well.

When I asked about the Hardy report, the minister had some things to say about it that I think he should clarify. His statements in answer to my question led me to believe two things, and I hope both were erroneous. One was that because it was commissioned by the Peigan nation, it was somehow biased and not to be counted for much. If that was what he intended, I

would consider it unfortunate. He will obviously tonight have ample time to clarify that matter. The other one is that the authors of the report, Hardy BBT Limited of Calgary, had repudiated the report or no longer had confidence in its findings. Because I consider both of those to be false. One of them was declared false to me by the general manager of Hardy. He said he stands behind the findings of the Hardy report on the Oldman dam and its siting, that the preliminary engineering presented the problems he listed. He had no way of knowing if further engineering studies had alleviated those problems or not because he had not been hired to do any more study of it. So he had no way of giving a professional opinion one way or the other. But they did exist. So I think the minister has an obligation to clarify some of those.

To some of the specifics. The design of the dam is based on an assumption, and the minister again tried to muddy the whole issue of the comments I made about earthquakes, hinting that I had said the dam would cause earthquakes, which is totally ridiculous, although when you consider that an earthquake of 5 on the Richter scale has been caused by an oil project in the province in the past, maybe it's not so ridiculous. But that notwithstanding, what I referred to -- and I think it would have been very clear had the minister been listening carefully -- is that the dam was designed based on an assumption that the maximum earthquake you could have in the area that would affect it was 6.5 on the Richter scale. The Hardy report recommended that in light of earthquakes in the northwest corner of the North American continent that exceeded that considerably, it should be increased -- my gosh, time flies when you're having fun -- to 7 or 7.5, and I was wondering if the minister had had that done in later engineering studies. If so, has it affected the cost?

I will ask the minister to comment on the fractures and dilations in the rock structure underneath and the pressure grouting that is going to be required and, I understand, is even now being done and how much that will increase the cost. There's only \$1.5 million in the new tender document for it. Likewise, the slaking mudstones along the banks could cause it to fill in more quickly, and I think the minister should answer to that. I'm sure he'll answer eventually to all of them.

A couple of comments on the sour gas industry, and I did allude to it earlier, specifically the Carbondale plant by Norcen. They're building a gas plant to process sour gas, and it will be located on prime farmland just north of the city boundary only a few miles from a more appropriate industrial subdivision. They bought the land on a farm foreclosure, and it's nice and close to the meeting of some of the pipelines, so they like it for that reason. They have convinced the MD to rezone the land heavy industrial on the assumption that Norcen go back to the ERCB and get a requirement to install the Lo-Cat process.

The questions would be: will the minister guarantee tonight that if the ERCB does change the application for Norcen and requires the Lo-Cat process, come hell or high water he will make sure that Norcen keeps that promise to the MD and that he will use his power under the Clean Air Act and the Department of the Environment Act to make sure that that standard is met, even though it may not be required by the most stringent standard of his department? Will he also ensure that as soon as possible all gas industry in this province goes to best available technology to scrub all of the sulphur that is technologically possible to scrub out of their emissions? We do not need the acid rain we're creating. We do not need the level of sulphur deposition we're making. The minister is in a position to do something

about it, and if he won't, I would like an explanation of why.

Under alternate energy programs I'd like to ask the minister about a promise made by the government for a wind and solar energy research centre in the Pincher Creek area. It was promised in the last election in a timely way to help decide a close race. I'm wondering if it's going to be promised again next election or if it'll be built before the next election, or are they going to go ahead with the local advisory committee that they have put in place to give advice on what they should do and whether or not they should keep the promise that was made during the election campaign by the present Premier?

I would also like to know how the minister managed to leave Ernie Sinnott off that advisory committee in the locality. Considering his research into wind generation, the fact that he's lived there all his life and he understands the area, I can't see how a person of his valuable qualifications could be left off the committee unless it is that the government is angry at his work with the Small Power Producers, and the friends of the government would rather the Small Power Producers didn't get power into the grid at a fair rate of return and he has pushed for that. I would recommend the minister, in fact, put him on that committee.

With about half of my notes gone through, seeing as I have about 30 seconds left, I will relinquish the floor and put my hand up to come back later.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I can't blame the person who hollers for the question. It would give him a chance to go watch the hockey game, I think. It's a big temptation. However, since my speeches have become required reading for most of the schools of the province, I thought it my duty to the public to get up and give a speech on the environment. That's the more progressive, if you'll pardon the pun.

Also, I have just a number of short, sort of disjointed questions to give to the minister. He mentions that special waste is one of the first things that hits your eye and that the estimates are up, and understandably so because, although this plant was originally built to try to make money out of bringing in waste from all over Canada, in spite of what the government tries to say, spilling some PCBs on Ontario highways caused everybody to change pace. Now we have a big facility there that can't be supported economically, and probably it shouldn't be. There's no particular reason for that. And I think the minister would do the taxpayers a favour if he negotiated with the Bow Valley group now, which is no longer controlled or owned by the great old Tory family, the Seaman family, but by British money and a few others, to see whether or not they shouldn't be bought out and the thing run as a public facility.

I think as long as we're in there guaranteeing a profit to a group, it's a bit of a dichotomy, and it will also slow up processing possibly in the future or new ideas of processing that you may want to add to this plant or you may want to change. The idea that you have a private entrepreneur in there that has to make a profit -- and I don't blame him for that either -- will cause a certain amount of management problems, especially for somebody as autocratic as our minister is rumoured to be, Mr. Chairman, from time to time. I don't think he would want to deal with a minority or not necessarily a minority, a holder in there that would affect how we Albertans would want to see our waste processed or the process updated. So I would think it's just a good friendly tip from one entrepreneur to another, that in

this particular case you'd be a lot better off to have the whole thing government owned and run as a government utility and be damned at the cost because, after all, it is much more important to look after environment and the waste in Alberta than it is to worry whether or not there's a rate of return for some shareholder.

I noticed going through the figures that this government, always likes to say they're number one. Well, actually they are close to being number one. The provinces of Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec are in a dead heat in the amount of dollars per capita spent on environment: Ontario \$45, Quebec \$47, Alberta \$48, which is probably as it should be but also serves to indicate to you that maybe these provinces aren't as good at having a clean environment as the fact that they're spending more money cleaning up the mess that their business side has been allowed to create rather than the idea of making or creating a pristine environment that's better than any other province. I think the fact of the matter is that when you see three provinces like that running neck and neck -- those are the three provinces that have the most manufacturing and the most acid rain and so on -- it's maybe an indication of not leading the pack in looking after a clean environment; maybe it's an indication of a government that dirties the environment more than any of the others.

However, moving on, one of the things that doesn't come through from this government is that environment is in the forefront. Admittedly, I do think the hon. minister is more aggressive and probably has spent more money singing the praises of himself and his department than anybody else has in the front bench; nevertheless, maybe it's not that bad to have an egotist occasionally in charge of a department like this because it does raise the level of knowledge and the level of attention for the department up to the point where people should be looking at the environment a lot closer than we have been in the past.

I am fond of saying to the various graduating classes I address at the University in mining, engineering, and geology that more jobs will be created in the future by conservation than were ever created in the past by exploitation. This is one of the things that I think our minister . . . In all fairness to him, if I can hand out a posy, I do think that his high profile has helped bring a lot of public attention to environment. It may not always be the type of attention he wants; after all, a tobacco-smoking environmental minister has got to expect to get a little static now and again from a pot-smoking critic. As long as they're both sucking on something or other, you can expect some wild ideas to come out now and again.

Environment is probably one of the most important departments we have because we are indeed stewards for the next generation. Now I have been one that argued for many years that good environment is good business. There is no such thing as environment being costly. Environment regulations developed for a good environment inevitably, in time, prove to the economy that that economy that's had good environmental laws is ahead of the one that hasn't.

I'll give a slight example. I remember as a young, bushy-tailed engineer many years ago in the metropolis to the south of us -- that'll probably end up as the Stanley Cup winner -- being put in charge of putting a gas plant in. It happened to be out into the Jumping Pound area of Alberta. At that time there was absolutely no use for sulphur, and I came up with a plan that we could bum, I forget, about 100 tonnes a day and get the smoke-stack up high enough so it would just clear Calgary before it came down. But the government of the day wouldn't let the firm I was with get away with it. I think this is where I had my

first lesson. Twenty years later, in the '40s, that plant was making three times as much money out of selling the sulphur -- the government had initially forced them to put the plant in to take the sulphur out -- than it was out of selling the natural gas, which was the original intent of the plant. Sulphur was considered not even a by-product; it was considered an impurity. I think we're going to see that in many other areas down the road. I don't think any Environment minister -- and I'd like to encourage this one -- should ever be afraid to ask for inhibitors and machinery to take out any polluting material.

Sulphur is almost passé. As a matter of fact, the Lo-Cat or low catalyst method that Norcen is talking about putting in, I think I had something to do with, because I've been fairly familiar with sulphur for years. Sulphur, I think, as an issue, hopefully, will be within the next four or five years. But others will raise their ugly heads: cesium and the rare earths, various trace metals, vanadium, nickel, or any of those others. I hope our minister has a department that's going out, doing research, and trying to keep ahead of this, not waiting, as we did with sulphur; many hundreds of thousands of square miles had been polluted with acid rain in the eastern U.S. and Europe before they really discovered the harm of sulphur. Now, of course, it's almost unthinkable. This government, I think, is one of the few places in Canada where we could still build a sulphur plant near a highly populated area and put any sulphur up at all.

Now, that leads to another area that I don't think has been touched on enough here. Here again I find myself pushing for the Minister of the Environment's department to be expanded. Not that I think that he is one of the greatest ministers of government since Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great; it's just that I think that the Minister of the Environment should carry a wider ambit and much more weight than the department has up to now. Because time and again I've asked questions, whether it's on aquifers, whether it's on impact study in forestry, or whether it's on wildlife, and I've seen the front bench all looking at each other as if, "After you, Alphonse." It's not because of the devastating, cutting wit that I use on them that they hesitate to answer. I think it's just because they don't know any better. Nobody knows who's in charge at that particular moment, and so they pass the problem on. The Minister of the Environment should be one of our major officers in government, and if the minister ever feels that a call from me to the Premier would help his cause, I would certainly be willing to do so.

When we get to the environment -- and this is where I talk about authority -- one of the facts that's come out in the Canadian Occidental request for a sulphur plant at Mazeppa was that even though an agreement may be reached between a municipality and the builder of a plant to put in tougher regulations than what the Alberta Minister of the Environment asks for, unfortunately, by law apparently, these regulations are not legal. In other words, the municipalities do not have the right in this province to impose rougher antipollution laws than what the Minister of the Environment does. They can reach an agreement with whoever is doing it, but apparently the agreement will not stand up in court if it's challenged. I would like the minister to work on the government, and particularly the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and I'm interested in his opinion as to whether or not it shouldn't be a basic right of local government to ask for more stringent pollution laws and have them backed up by law. Because right now my understanding of the court case that happened down in Mazeppa is it would appear that if later on a party that's operating a plant wishes to reject the agreement, they can do so and get away with it.

The other area I'd like to talk on for a minute, Mr. Chairman, is weather modification. Now, this has been bandied all over. Sometimes I find that it's the Associate Minister of Agriculture, sometimes the Minister of Agriculture, and I think the hon. minister should probably be quite interested in weather modification because it was only about three hours after his appointment as chairman of the new "find water for the drought areas" that it started to rain. I don't know whether that's due to his prayers or a rain dance done by him and the Associate Minister of Agriculture. But whatever happened, it has started to drop a little moisture out there. Nevertheless, weather modification is something that I think the Minister of the Environment should have more input into than he has, and I'd be interested in hearing his opinion as to whether or not maybe weather modification shouldn't come under the Minister of the Environment's department.

Leaving weather modification in agriculture I think downplays the importance of it. Weather modification now in the western States is used as much for tourism -- in other words, creating snow pack in the mountains for skiing -- as creating water for the rivers, for the dams that our minister loves to build, and so on. So I would be interested in hearing what the minister would say to the idea that the weather modification program should come under his aegis.

Next, I wonder why this minister, who likes to think of his department as being progressive, has not enshrined an environmental Bill of rights here in Alberta. I know I've introduced one as a private Bill, but it would go through much faster with the help and assistance of the Minister of the Environment. In fact, he might even pull a surprise and get up in the House some day and ask that it be moved over onto the government business. Because it is a good Bill. It is something that our public is demanding, because leaving the policing of the environment just to the Minister of the Environment himself or his agents is not good enough in this world. Albertans want to have access to the courts to enforce their right to enjoy a clean and healthy environment.

That access isn't there now, and the traditional British law is that you cannot charge anyone in the courts unless you can prove damage to yourself; whereas an environmental Bill of rights would allow any individual, where he or she saw that the environment was in jeopardy, to have access to the courts. We should require all government and private initiatives which would disrupt the natural or human environment to develop environmental protection plans. That should be almost a must. The Minister of the Environment of course now is occupied with air and water, but the environmental impact on forestry, on wildlife and trapping, is entirely out of his hands. Here again, I'm asking for more power for the minister.

The only restriction on an environmental Bill of rights, Mr. Chairman, should be the public's right or the farmer's right to farm. I suppose that right would have to go in at the same time as the environmental protection laws because I guess we have to face that farmers do change the environment. They cut down trees, they plant the soil, they have manure piles out behind the barns, and stuff like that, so overenthusiastic environmental laws could stop that.

But I'd like to also wonder if the minister would comment on -- he mentioned himself there were over 30 plants that may be built, sulphur-emitting plants around the population areas now of Calgary and Edmonton over the next five to 10 years -- whether now isn't the time to look at air pollution on an air shed basis; in other words, as a total amount: set out a long-term plan of what the limits will be for an area and try to move downward,

in effect saying to industry, "Well, if you want the plant to put X tonnes of pollution a day into the air, you have to cut back on other plants you have to where there is more than room enough so that the total effect is less than when before you built the plant." This is one of the areas that I believe this government has been sadly negligent in.

I also feel establishment of a specialized group of environmental prosecutors with the mandate to vigorously enforce breaches of environmental legislation may well be an idea. I notice the Attorney General was watching me very closely a while ago, and I think he'd be quite overjoyed to see members of his profession in sort of a make-work area. I'm sure that we have such a surplus of lawyers now it wouldn't be that hard to create a specialized group of environmental prosecutors. Tougher penalties for crimes against the environment including giving the courts the option of jailing officers of companies whose negligent efforts endanger health: this, too, we could push for. I think justice demands that where there's serious harm or risk possible, environmental offences are in fact crimes of violence and should be prosecuted just as vigorously as any other crime of violence.

One of the problems I'd like to ask the minister about is this denuding of road of the allowances that I see as I drive around Alberta. I know the municipalities claim it's easier to maintain the road; the farmers get the acreage right up to the edge of the road. But then at the same time we have people complaining about the lack of wildlife, the lack of cover. Now, I would suggest that there should be some sort of system whereby those road allowances that aren't poisoned or stripped down to the ground -- maybe those municipalities could get a bit of a grant. That might be one of the best ways of encouraging tourism and hunting that we have. Yet we drive down road allowances -- at one time we used to have abundant game -- with the brush and trees now, it is indeed now like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. There's rarely an animal or bird along the highways, and it's all done for the sake having nice, clean open air to get into the road to dry it out and the farmer to pick up another couple of acres to farm that is really in the public domain.

We have questions here on the dioxins and pulp mills. Suspiciously enough, Saskatchewan and other provinces have answered what the analyses show in their rivers and streams, and what they've recovered in dioxins downstream from pulp mills, but this department, this government still has a thundering silence as far as that is concerned, Mr. Chairman. I don't know whether it's because it's bad news or that the minister would like to give the impression that there are no dioxins around.

Another item that's very close to me -- I think the Minister of the Environment here could have his authority expanded in that area too -- is in the area of subsurface water or aquifers. I am very concerned that the use of aquifers by industry, whether it's the meatpacking plant down at High River -- I think they're putting four wells in; I'm not sure if hon. members should do that -- tapping into that water. Oil companies are tapping into it in eastern Alberta for water for waterflood projects. I believe that we could be exhausting a resource that we well would need for farming and, well, for people that are living close by.

I don't believe the studies on our aquifers have been done properly, Mr. Chairman, or have been done at all. What we have is the Minister of Energy, with the Energy Resources Conservation Board -- which is the biggest misnomer there has been in modern politics. The conservation board is there strictly to exploit not to conserve, and they've paid little or no attention because of the government pressure to look after the money-

making things of oil and gas. We know much more about our oil and gas than we do about our aquifers, yet if there's anything important a hundred years from now, it'll be our aquifers. Oil will have come and gone. A hundred years ago, nobody gave a damn about our oil; a hundred years from now I don't think they're going to give too much about it either. But water will be one of the most important things, and that seems to fall through a crack. It should be in the minister's department, Mr. Chairman, and not left as it is now, apparently partly under the Minister of Energy, partly in wildlife: I don't know where. But aquifers and the use of them should certainly be one of the main areas that we could do.

I'm rapidly approaching a close, I guess, as I should because there are others that want to talk here, but I can't exaggerate enough how afraid I am of forest sprays, agricultural sprays. They all sound good on the short term, but the idea of spraying trees, hardwoods, in order to make room for softwoods I just do not think is proper. I think we put sprays in the water to keep blackflies down, mosquitoes; all these areas are areas that chemical sprays could come back and haunt us. I don't believe our Environment department has been working as hard on that looking for substitutes or just maybe letting more people have mosquito bumps than they normally would have and more blackflies to take care of than they should have, and maybe letting the alder, now that we can sell it for pulp, choke out the spruce now and again. If the only way we can change our environment is by using chemical sprays, it's a poor way indeed.

I close off with one last comment. It just seems to me unjust to the environment that this minister can go out and prosecute farmers and landowners for diverting or trying to keep water that is heavily loaded with fertilizer, heavily loaded with pesticides from neighbouring properties, from coming onto their property. I know it was an old law in the early settlement of western Canada that no water beds should be interfered with, that watercourses shouldn't be touched, but in those days God made the water and that's the way it flowed through, and it flowed through in its very best quality. But now a small stream or overflow that comes onto a person's property may be one of the most polluting, poisonous things they could get, and yet the neighbour that has poisoned that water, the neighbour that has polluted that water, can go to court and force the neighbour downriver from him to let his water flow onto his property because ostensibly it is a natural watercourse. That is a grave injustice, and I'd like to see our Minister of the Environment say what he's going to be doing about that.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Drumheller.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My constituency is in the south-central part of the province and, accordingly, I'm always very concerned about the water situation. While we have been very fortunate in the last couple of weeks in and around Drumheller in receiving a very heavy, high-moisture content snowfall, about 16 inches -- I must extend my appreciation to the minister for his sensitivity in helping us in the area of snow removal in the city -- that snowfall has also fallen partly in other parts of the province. Therefore, the prospect for improved May-September water flow from the mountains is there but the supply is still below normal for the Milk River, Oldman River, Bow River, Red Deer River, and North Saskatchewan River basins. I've heard from time to time in the



Edmonton media that there's even some concern about dryness in and around the city of Edmonton, which surprises me. I hope the *Edmonton Journal* and certain other members of this House will be aware of the fact that there isn't an unlimited supply of water even a close distance to this city.

So parts of my constituency are dependent on irrigation water. Of course, the one most dependent is the Western Irrigation District and those farmers who draw from it in the visible sense. But there are many constituents and residents of my constituency who are invisibly dependent on the Bow River basin, and those are the communities of Strathmore, Standard, and Rockyford who depend on water of the Western Irrigation District for their drinking supplies. Now, that relates to water management questions, but other parts of my constituency have no access to mountain-fed streams. These areas rely on plains runoff to replenish stock water dugouts and domestic farm wells, and I know there are many other areas apart from my constituency that are in the same boat. To date, there has been well below normal plains runoff conditions in nearly all parts of this province, and we've heard about the situation, the potential drought in the constituency of St. Paul, which is, to the best of my knowledge, northeast of Edmonton. So this potential drought extends over vast areas of our province. The potential drought situation is intensified because there's been below normal runoff over the last decade and groundwater aquifers have not been recharged. If things don't improve soon, there will be failures of stock water and domestic farm wells.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my first question to the minister will be this. If this potential drought does in fact materialize, have we enough budget flexibility for contingency plans to aid the farmers who are affected by that drought?

The second thing I'd like to spend a moment or two on is the future of water management projects in this province. We've heard the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry criticize again, for the umpteenth time, the Oldman River dam. I don't know why he asks for more studies, as this project has been absolutely studied to death. I don't know why he wouldn't look at the material that's already been produced on this project. As I understand it, the Oldman River dam was set for construction in the Social Credit administration of Harry Strom. If anything, I would say that the Progressive Conservative Party has been very dilatory in producing the Oldman River dam, and it in no way has rushed into the project. As far as I'm concerned, we should be now well advanced on another water management project of similar magnitude to come on stream after the Oldman River dam is in place.

I don't know why the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry can't understand that 80 percent of the population of this province, and that includes the population of the city of Edmonton, which he says he is representing -- I don't think he's representing it at all well -- his own area is dependent on 6.5 percent of the water supply of this province. Now, why can't my hon. friends in the NDP realize that; that 80 percent of the province is trying to get along with 6.5 percent of the water supply? Now, if you think we're going to . . . It was just better luck than good management that we've been able to get along as well as we have so far. Why can't you get it through your noodles that something has to be done to make better use of our potential water? Therefore, my second question to the hon. minister would be: is there anything in the present estimates that would lead to an early commencement on another major water management project in this province, which we desperately need?

I guess the third question and area I'd like to discuss for a moment is that relating to recycling. It results from a meeting I attended last night with the association of agricultural service boards, who are quite interested in whether or not something will be done to help them store pesticide containers, and the same people who were . . . [interjection] Sorry; herbicide containers. Not pesticide containers. One of the attendees at that meeting was also a member of a health unit board, and he thought there was some danger involved with the large proliferation of these containers that are in storage with no apparent means of disposing of them.

Those would be my questions, but I would like to wind up by congratulating the minister, who I believe is a very sensitive minister and is doing an excellent job promoting the interests of the environment and those dependent on the water supply of this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

DR. CASSIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take this opportunity to again acknowledge the minister and his department for doing an excellent job of keeping with the mandate of this government to reduce the costs where possible but at the same time applying the funds to those very necessary and essential programs. We've heard a number of comments already this evening, and I would like to perhaps just dwell on two or three.

The question of recycling has been raised. It has many benefits other than helping to clean up the environment. It also creates jobs. I had a call today from one of my constituents who would be very interested in establishing another depot and again had some concerns from the standpoint of the limitations that have been imposed, recognizing that the demand for that type of service will increase because of the new legislation that will be and has been introduced from the standpoint of containers, and is looking forward to some direction from the department on the question of recycling and how we're going to respond to the increased demands.

I would also like to comment, as many others have, on the Oldman River dam. This has been a major issue, but it represents more than just a dam. It represents water management, which is so important to this province, particularly the southern part of the province. There doesn't seem to be enough recognition of the need, not just for irrigation but for the communities and the population of 125,000 people or more in southern Alberta who will benefit from this. There doesn't seem to be sufficient consideration to the agreements we have with our neighbouring provinces to provide them with some of the runoff from our mountains. Nor has it been considered what the impact would be, if we were not able to provide and to manage the water from the Oldman River dam system, on the other water streams we have and enjoy in northern Alberta and particularly in Calgary, where we have the Bow. I find it interesting that most of the criticism of the Oldman River dam comes from Calgary and from points north in the province. I'm not certain that those critics would be as strong in their criticism if it were to impact their water supply and their recreational potentials. They don't seem to consider our neighbours and our people who live in the southern part of the province.

I would also like to compliment the minister for the action and the committee that's been set up by the Premier in the event that there should be a drought in this province during the sum-

mer of 1988. I think we all sighed with relief today when we had some precipitation. Hopefully, this is an indication of more that will follow. I'm certain that the farmers and the people in the southern part of the province will be much relieved to have even a little bit of moisture at this time.

I could go on at length from the standpoint of water management, but those points have already been addressed this evening, Mr. Minister. I would like to perhaps deal with one other problem that hasn't been raised. The assessment of the Oldman River dam also includes the development of an environmental mitigation plan that permits the Environment department to identify the significant historical and ecological resources of the area and to minimize the potential impact of the dam on those resources. My question, Mr. Minister, is whether any part of vote 4.2.7, page 64, includes continued funding of the environmental mitigation to preserve and protect the archaeological and historical resources, wildlife, and habitat in the dam area?

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Wainwright.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first of all like to congratulate the minister and his staff for the good work they've done over the last year with the department. It's also nice to see our Deputy Minister Vance MacNichol here tonight and some of the staff that are interested in what's going on here tonight. I guess the Environment department certainly is a tough department to administer. I've been here for five and a half years, and I don't think I've heard anything positive that your department has had to deal with.

I would also like to say thank you to our Minister of the Environment and the deputy minister for their visit to the Wainwright constituency to tour the incinerator. We have the only incinerator in the province. It's an experimental one, and we've had a lot of problems with it. Certainly the local authorities have appreciated your visit, and I have to say that Ken is a great guy to travel with -- one way.

Also, I would like to talk for a minute about the use of potable water policy that we are studying in this province. The problems we've had with the oil field injection of potable water in the Wainwright constituency certainly have been great. I do know that we've had a study done and some recommendations made to put a groundwater potable water use policy in place, and I would like to know exactly where we're at with that policy. There's a number of people in the area that have had a lot of problems with that in the past, and we've had people from the department out to help us explain how the system works. I might mention that Lew Fahner in your department has been out a number of times to my area, and certainly I appreciate the good work he's done in explaining how we use that water. Certainly it's our most precious resource, and we have to do some careful assessment of how we use that. I would also like to remind you of our original policy, that we use that water domestically first, that agricultural use is second and industrial use third.

I would also like to ask you about a study that was done by an in-house committee. Nigel, Frank Appleby, and I were on that study to assess the use of our sanitary landfills. It was to help streamline it so that we could get through the bureaucracy in order to make it easier for our local authorities to obtain the sanitary landfill. In that study there were some awfully good recommendations of how to handle our wastes. I haven't heard very much about that study recently, and I would like to know where we're at with that.

In that study, of course, we did mention recycling, and I had an opportunity a few months ago to visit a recycling plastic plant here in east Edmonton. Probably you're familiar with it; it's Polymer applied research. They took all the plastic pop bottles, melted them down, recycled them, and made some new plastic items again out of them. These items were long, strong strips; they were used for strapping bands on packaging, and also they were used in plant holders and a lot of greenhouse equipment.

There was great potential for that company. I couldn't help but think when we were in there: we've got all of these chemical plastic containers that are piled up in our regional landfill sites all across the province, and I'm sure that with just a little bit of research we would find some way to extract the chemical that does penetrate the plastic just a little bit -- and they were not able to use that. But it seems to me that they're just on the verge of being able to do that, and I think that if our research, through our government or through some kind of help, could break through and use those chemical containers -- and certainly that is a big problem for us here. I'd certainly like you to comment on that, and possibly we could look into that as a government.

The other item that I had on my list here for you is that we do have, just west of Irma -- and I'm sure everybody knows where Irma is, anyway -- a CNR burial ground for all their wastes right across Canada. They have bought 40 acres along the railway track and they dump just about all their waste for almost all across Canada in there. We do have a problem wondering what is in there. I know that I've asked you to have your department monitor that before, and I would like to have your thoughts about what's happening with that.

Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, there comes a point in the evening when there have been a fair number of questions that have been raised here, and now perhaps it would be in order to respond to some of them for elucidation in the event that by way of providing the answers now it would, in fact, respond to some of the questions other members might wish to raise a little earlier. I'll take them exactly in the reverse order in which they have been presented and begin, first of all, with the questions raised by the Member for Wainwright.

First of all, dealing with the incinerator. It was only two days ago that I had the distinct pleasure of being in Wainwright and having a firsthand review of the incinerator, which is a unique research venture that we have in our province. To this point in time some \$1.3 million has been expended upon the project, and we're working closely with the local waste management authority to ensure that it is delivered and functioning in a usable situation so that it can be of benefit to all of the citizens in the area.

The member also raised questions with respect to the groundwater policy. That policy has been under review now with most of the provincewide organizations who've explained an interest with respect to it and have had an opportunity to basically provide input and reflections with respect to this matter. I'm hopeful that as we go through 1988 we'll be in a position to make public this new groundwater policy that will certainly bear in mind and consider the strong recommendations and positions put forward by the Member for Wainwright.

The study that the Member for Wainwright was talking about, that occurred as a result of authorship of himself and other members of the government caucus several years ago, was

one that is now in the process of being implemented, and I sincerely want to congratulate and thank not only the Member for Wainwright but the Member for Innisfail for showing determined leadership with respect to this particular document. All members will know that in the last year or year and a half there has been a new system with respect to greater co-operation with local municipalities in having them involved in terms of regional approaches to waste management, and, of course, the idea of recycling that these two members of the government caucus so rightfully addressed their ideas to several years ago resulted part and partially with respect to a major program of study that the Environment Council of Alberta undertook, and a whole series of practical recommendations. I want both members to know that as result of their good work and good efforts, in fact we are now in the implementation phase with respect to this matter rather than simply the talk-about phase.

The member also talked about the need to do additional research with respect to containers. The Member for Wainwright was not the only member who raised this issue with respect to herbicide, insecticide, and pesticide containers. All members will recall that in 1986 I put a moratorium on the landfilling of these particular containers. We now have a reservoir of some 700,000 of them in the province of Alberta, and I'm hopeful once again that we will very soon, in 1988, be able to find a useful recycling alternative for it.

With respect to the burial ground of the CNR near Irma -- and of course, every member in this Assembly knows where Irma is; it's one of the progressive communities in the province of Alberta, and it's very, very close to the heart of the Member for Wainwright. That particular site was one of the ones looked at during the Help End Landfill Pollution program. I think we are in a position to have fairly good knowledge of what's in there, and it appears at this moment that there's nothing that would cause any concern for anybody.

With respect to questions raised by the Member for Calgary-North West, I appreciate the position that he's made with respect to the Beverage Container Act in our province. Alberta is the only jurisdiction in North America -- in fact, Alberta's the only jurisdiction anywhere -- that has the mandatory Beverage Container Act system in place. Nowhere else does there exist a system whereby pop bottles and bottles of that type are by law required to be returned to a container system. That's not only helped us with respect to the protection and the enhancement of our environment in our province but has also provided an economic resource. There are now some 225 to 235, I think, beverage container depots throughout our province. There is always the demand for additional people to come into the system. Once we set it up, though, a number of years ago, we gave some assurance to the people who were going to get involved from a capital investment point of view that in fact they would not have, I guess, questionable competition addressed to them. So we have a guideline that basically says there will be one beverage container unit allocated per a certain segment of population. In the urban areas it is, I believe, some 25,000 people in population. So in the city of Calgary that would be approximately, I guess, 20 to 25 of them, depending on whether or not you count the lower or the greater population of Calgary associated with it. It, however, is something that I'm continuing to look at, because I recognize there is going to be more product coming into the system.

I appreciate the member's comments with respect to the Oldman River dam. There's absolutely no doubt whatsoever in my view that the Oldman River dam is a crucial, important re-

quired project for water management in the province of Alberta, and be that as it may, that there may be some critics with respect to it -- the critics may want to raise a few questions with respect to it -- water and water management is fundamental to life in this province. Less than 1 percent of the landmass of Alberta is water. Few citizens of the province seem to understand or appreciate that. We've now gone through the 13th abnormally dry winter in a row in our province. We currently have the second-lowest snowpack in the last 20 years in our province, and we need the Oldman River dam as we need each of the other 140 water management structures in our province.

Those members who live in Calgary must understand that there are seven reservoirs in the Bow River in Calgary: seven dams. Those members who live in Edmonton have to appreciate that there are two major reservoirs, the Brazeau and the Bighorn, that govern and regulate the flow of water in Edmonton. If we didn't have them, the flow in the North Saskatchewan River through the city of Edmonton today would be one-quarter of what it currently is.

Moisture is a comment I appreciated hearing something about. With respect to specifics in vote 4.2.7 with respect to the Oldman River dam, yes, member, there are dollars allocated in there for the historical, archaeological habitat and fish remediation plants, as there are also some dollars associated under the capital projects fund.

To the Member for Drumheller. His astute comments with respect to moisture and drought conditions in this province are very, very much appreciated. He understands it. He lives in an area of Alberta where water management projects are essential, and I think I've already commented with respect to the recycling concerns that he did raise.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. I want to thank him very, very much for his positive comments with respect to the Member for Barrhead and the Minister of the Environment. I thought that I perhaps was in another Chamber for a moment or two, but I take with a great deal of pride his use of the word "autocratic." I want to thank him sincerely for that word which appears to characterize me, and I want to let him know that that's very important.

He's erroneous, however, Mr. Chairman, with respect to indicating that Alberta is tied with two other jurisdictions in this country as the number one spender in environmental mitigation. The member quoted figures basically saying that on a per capita basis Alberta spends approximately \$45 to \$48. That simply isn't correct. As I opened this evening with my introductory remarks, I listed a series of environmental programs and budgets that I had. I quickly total them up, and it comes to \$229 million. There are 2.3 million people in the province of Alberta. A quick bit of mathematics indicates to me that the commitment from the province of Alberta to environmental protection on a per capita basis is over \$100 per capita. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, the leader of the Liberal Party, said that the next closest jurisdiction in Canada was spending approximately \$45 per capita. That puts us nearly 200 percent better than the next jurisdiction in this country, and I think that's something that I want to sincerely thank all of my colleagues in this Assembly for, for being very, very supportive of me.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon also said that he would be quite prepared to talk to the Premier to see if I needed any support. I'll say thank you to him, but it's really not necessary. I have the support of 60 colleagues who sit in the government caucus, and I can't think of a greater group of people and a better group of people to ask for support of and receive support

from when it comes to protection of the environment in this province.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon made some other interesting comments, and he basically talks about environmental prosecutors. Well, gee whiz, I sincerely wish that he and other members of the Assembly might just want to take a look at vote 2, which talks about pollution control. There's a sector in there dealing with Investigations and Environmental Compliance. We are bringing in this budget an environmental prosecutorial group, an enforcement group. So, Mr. Leader of the Liberal Party, we have that. The leader says that we should have tougher fines, including jailing. Well, Mr. Leader of the Liberal Party, we currently have that, and those of you and all other members who currently looked at recent announcements with respect to hazardous waste management in this province will know that jail terms do exist and rather significant fines do exist as well.

The member also indicated that we should have air shed areas in the province of Alberta. A year ago I responded to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon in the affirmative to that question, telling him that, in fact, we do have such a facility with respect to looking at which plants might be located in urban areas. The member also indicated that he was concerned about sour gas plants, and of course he knows that I am as well, because I've recently responded to questions with respect to that matter.

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry raised a series of questions but began with a kind of quasi apology to Alberta Environment with respect to some nasty comments that he made recently with respect to some employees of Alberta Environment. He basically had said, and he was quoted in *Alberta Hansard*, that getting information out of the library is like getting into Fort Knox. He was accosted for making such rude remarks by the branch head of the library services, who basically pointed out some important information to him. And while he did not apologize tonight to the members of Alberta Environment, I think it would be appropriate as part of the written record, Mr. Chairman, that I file with this Assembly copies of the letter that the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry [inaudible] pointing out the excellent work that men and women of Alberta Environment do and pointing out the openness of those employees as well as the openness of the minister's office with respect to that matter. I think it's an important adjunct to the public record that we have that on the situation.

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry said that 68 percent of this budget goes towards water management. Well, isn't that wonderful, because the last time I looked at any definition of the environment, the environment included water, air, and the land. One percent of the land base of this province is water. That's all; no more. There's a myth that there's more, but there isn't. We're in a short supply, we're in a deficit supply in this province, and we have been for years. We have to commit to the most important aspect of life, water and water management in this province, if we're going to have life in this particular province. I find it a bit contradictory that on the one hand, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry said that 68 percent of this budget goes towards water management. Then later down in some of his comments he points out where there are in fact reductions in certain particular allocations and said, "Gee, it's too bad we've had those reductions." Well, hon. member, you can't have it both ways, and you can't speak out of both sides of your mouth. It's going to be one or the other; period. You can't have it both ways.

The comments with respect to the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, in saying that there was a monopoly in the province of Alberta, are completely erroneous. The member contradicted himself by pointing out that there are in fact five alternatives to waste management disposal in the province of Alberta. One of those is to take hazardous and toxic wastes and ship them to Swan Hills. There are four other alternatives. A generator of such wastes can have built on his site -- on his site -- a generator capacity that will in fact allow those particular toxic materials to be destroyed. A third alternative is to take those toxic materials and send them to a recycler. A fourth alternative is to put on the Alberta waste exchange, which is a stock market exchange handled hand in hand with the Alberta Research Council, a situation where he as a generator of waste can say: "Look, I have this particular material. Does anybody out there want it?" The buyer and the seller can meet, and something can happen. The fifth alternative, of course, is that those goods can be shipped out of the province of Alberta. So for anyone to suggest in this Assembly that there is a monopoly is completely erroneous, and time and time and time again, ad nauseam, I've pointed out these five alternatives. It's amazing to me how people continue to stumble onto one particular aspect and believe that's the only one.

I think as well, Mr. Chairman, that it's probably worthy of a minute or two's worth of comments with respect to the Oldman River dam. This matter has been discussed on numerous occasions here in this Assembly. All of the questions that the member asked with respect to the Oldman River dam I have already responded to in this Assembly on previous occasions, so I'd simply ask him to take advantage of *Alberta Hansard* and a complete rereading of that. There has been no cave-in in the diversion tunnels in the Oldman River dam -- where people come up with these silly kinds of statements, and then they say them in this Assembly, is beyond me -- as there will not be an earthquake potential in Alberta as a result of the construction of the Oldman River dam, as there has not been a highway uprooted because of a PCBs spill outside of Edmonton recently. There was a small area on the shoulder of the road that had to be replaced that was approximately three feet by eight feet because we did overkill in terms of picking it up because of the commitment that I said before we would take to safety in public perception. That is hardly the uprooting of a highway.

I suspect that if somebody used the phrase, as was used this evening by the member, to say that the highway was uprooted -- I suspect that if the minister of transportation would have put out a contract and said that he's going to be paving a highway, and it turned out that he was only paving a patch three feet by eight feet, undoubtedly he would be ridiculed for making the announcement that he was paving a highway. Surely one knows that the English language is very precise. The English language has words in it. Words each have meanings, and of course we put several words together and we get a thought. Quite clearly, that is a perception problem that the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry has that should be corrected.

I appreciate that the member has got some consultations with the National Farmers Union with respect to the Oldman River dam, but the fact of the matter is that we need water in this province; we need to manage water in this province. And I'm not interested in politics; I'm interested in helping people, and that's what this government is all about.

Comments with respect to the Hardy report. In saying, "Hey, somebody said something to him -- no names -- that they're going to hold true with the Hardy report": I think we

should put in the record that Dr. Hardy, the original author of the report, who unfortunately is now deceased, was a gentleman who worked on our international safety committee that we had with respect to the Oldman River dam. The original comments that he made were by way of a preliminary report, all found to be corrected with the final designs of the Oldman River [dam]. Of course, it was only recently that I tabled in this Assembly all kinds of maps and documents and pictures and questions and answers with respect to the construction of the Oldman River dam. That is part of the public record. I should point out, Mr. Chairman, that that information was all available to the public before it was requested with such gusto and drama in this Assembly by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. All he had to do was go down to Alberta Environment and request it. That was not done. There was great big fanfare in this Assembly saying that certain things had to happen.

In terms of the sour gas industry, I think the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon in fact answered the questions raised by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry with respect to that one.

Small power, of course, is an option that we have in this province and one that as the Minister of the Environment I have been advocating for some period of time, and I'm quite enthusiastic about its potential.

Thank you, sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'd like to point out to the hon. minister that according to our rules and regulations -- 37(1) -- tabling of documents has to be done in the Assembly.

MR. KOWALSKI: Oh. Well, Mr. Chairman, I would sincerely apologize for that oversight, but I just thought that the issue, as it was raised by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, should have been dealt with tonight in the estimates, being of an urgent, important nature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question has been called.  
The Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Chairman, I have two issues that I'd like to raise with the minister. I've raised them previously. They're of vital concern to my constituents. They are really environmental issues. The first issue probably comes as no surprise to the minister, but it has to do with the Hub Oil plant that's located in Calgary-Forest Lawn. The plant has been subjected to testing by the Department of the Environment, and because it continues to operate, I have to make the assumption that it has passed environmental regulations with respect to clean air quality. But the fact is that the plant still continues to spew fumes on occasion that really create problems for residents. The smells, in their view, are just impossible to put up with. In addition to that, the plant is a very ugly looking plant. It's visually very unsightly; it does nothing for the enjoyment of the residents in terms of being able to live within their communities. I'd like to point out that no fault or blame should be attached to the people who own the plant. That plant was located there long before residential developments occurred in that area of the city. [interjections] Mr. Chairman, I'm just having a little trouble with the hubbub. But in any event, those plants were there first.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I wonder if the Committee would come to order, please.

MR. PASHAK: Hub Oil plant was there first. No blame attaches to the owners of that plant for that reason. Residential development occurred later, but again the fact of the matter is that it was governments at both the municipal level and the provincial level that allowed those developments to take place. So I think there is a bit of responsibility that devolves, first of all, on the city of Calgary, and then secondly on the province of Alberta -- and probably more importantly on the province of Alberta because the cities really have no constitutional authority and the powers that they have come from the province. So I think that ultimately if there's an environmental situation anywhere in the province, it's the province that must assume responsibility and deal with that matter.

The plant, in addition to the fact that it was there first, also can be justified on the basis of the fact that it does provide a very important environmental service: it reclaims about 10 percent of the waste oil that's produced annually in this province. The waste oil, through being recycled, creates a lot of valuable employment. Oil that's produced through this process is first-quality oil. It can be used without any inhibition in automobiles; it's the same quality that virgin oil is.

Another major reason why we should support environmental initiatives like the Hub Oil plant is that if that waste oil wasn't being recycled as it is there and at the Turbo plant in Edmonton, that oil would just fall into the ground. It would become part of the groundwater and create enormous problems for future Albertans because it would be very difficult to separate that oil from the groundwater. Already in areas of North America where the groundwater is in short supply, they do have problems from the fact that that groundwater is contaminated.

I suggested on earlier occasions that the minister and his department should get behind an expanded project of recycling waste oil, that there are lots of ways this could be encouraged. A premium could be placed on waste oil so that when people who bought oil took it back in, they'd get their deposits refunded to them, much in the same way that we recycle liquor, whiskey bottles, beer bottles, and things like this. A second suggestion that was made was that government vehicles could be required to use waste motor oil. A further suggestion that I made was that perhaps the federal government could take a look at removing the double tax that is placed on recycled waste oil and that perhaps our provincial government could make that kind of representation to the federal government.

But in addition to all of that, I think there's a real need for a public awareness campaign to get Albertans to become aware that it's important that we recycle as many of the waste products that we produce in this province as possible, and one of the key products in that regard is waste oil. If we don't recycle it, we get into some horrendous problems. Either it goes, as I say, into the groundwater or it has to be transported to recycling plants at great costs. So we should be encouraging solutions to this problem.

One of the solutions might be, at least in the Calgary case, to relocate the Hub Oil plant. I think that could be done with a once-only government grant, some form of assistance. I think it should be relocated in an industrial area, and its capacity should be expanded to produce and recycle even more waste oil than it currently does. I think the citizens of the province of Alberta would look upon that favourably. I think they'd see that any of the costs that would be borne in the short run by such a plant would be made up for in the long-term economic benefit that such a plant would provide. I would like the minister to at least look at the possibility of doing that.

Two years ago the minister promised he'd tour the plant site with me; the minister hasn't done that yet. Last December his assistant came down and met with some residents in the area, and his assistant promised that he'd report back. That report was never forthcoming. I'd just call upon the minister for his help once again in this project, because without his help nothing will happen. He's the key to improving that situation, as far as the residents of Calgary-Forest Lawn are concerned.

The second concern I have that I'd like to present to the Minister of the Environment, and it's also a request for help, is the fact that Calgary-Forest Lawn is not an urban area that's blessed by a lot of the amenities you'd find in other urban areas. There are no art galleries. There's not a movie theatre; there's a drive-in theatre. Seventeenth Avenue is a major truck route. It splits the centre of the community; it's the major artery that runs through the community itself. It's very dispiriting to people who live along it to have to contend with the enormous truck traffic. All I'm trying to do, Mr. Minister, is present a picture that the area is not particularly well-favoured geographically, in a sense. It has a lot of internal problems. There are no universities or colleges, and there are no regional parks.

There are plans to build a park in the east side of the riding. The site that the park is proposed for is currently a landfill site. It also contains a lake that collects runoff. The lake is highly toxic; ducks have been known to die in it. But that's the site that's being proposed by the city of Calgary for a major park. That site won't be available for 15 or 20 years, and in the view of many people it would be better to become a golf course than a major park. So there's only one site that could meet the aesthetic needs of the people of Calgary-Forest Lawn, and that's along an irrigation canal that runs right along the western boundary of the constituency of Forest Lawn.

On the edge of my constituency water comes out of the Bow River, and it becomes part of the Western Irrigation canal that takes water from the Bow River right in the heart of the city of Calgary all the way to Lake Chestermere. It's about 13 miles long. In 1978, Mr. Chairman, his department developed a really forward-looking, positive proposal for development along that canal. It was divided into five areas. The first two of those areas run through my constituency; the third area runs through Calgary-Millican. With a very limited amount of money that park could be developed to meet the needs of the large number of residents who live in my constituency.

They're not asking for very much; in fact, they're not even asking really for any financial assistance from the Department of the Environment. They think they could raise a lot of money locally. They think they could appeal to various men's clubs within the area and that sort of thing to get help. There are other government programs that would provide some funding. But what we need is the support of the Department of the Environment to go ahead with that project. The canal is under consideration for widening and improvement. They want to do something with the banks along the canal, and I would just hope that the minister might intervene with some of the officials in his department to ask that they co-operate with some of the community leaders in the Calgary-Forest Lawn constituency.

I'd just like to tell the minister that if he showed that kind of spirit of co-operation -- and I think there are levels at which all Members of the Legislative Assembly can co-operate with each other. I recognize that as members of the opposition our duty is to oppose. Even if sometimes -- heaven forbid -- we might even agree with you, we do have to go on record with an opposing point of view. But I think there are many other occasions, Mr.

Chairman, when actually we can co-operate with each other. And I could just tell the Minister of the Environment that there'd be a large number of citizens in the constituency of Calgary-Forest Lawn that would be most grateful to the Minister of the Environment for his generosity and his understanding, his magnanimity of soul, if he should get behind solving either of these two problems that I've just tried to bring to his attention again. In fact, he may go down in history as perhaps even the best Environment minister that this particular government ever had.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much. I think that after such gratuity brought to me by the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, one really should respond to that.

I think this is really quite an evening. I recently, Mr. Chairman, looked at one of my foremost critics in southern Alberta who recently wrote a report in the paper. He writes the following. It's with respect to the report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy. He says:

The report asks for comment and debate by the public. Not only did Mr. Kowalski sign this report but he also helped shape it.

If the report fulfills its promises, Mr. Kowalski could very well go down in Canadian history as one of the shakers and movers of this century.

And now to hear this from the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn. I think that would prompt me, Mr. Chairman, without any doubt whatsoever, to take a visit to Calgary-Forest Lawn sometime in 1988 and walk along the banks hand in hand to take a look at these important environmental concerns.

I would like to point out as well to the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn that it was only a few days ago that I did have an opportunity to echo in my own mind many of the concerns that he has brought to my attention. I recognize the importance and the concern of Hub Oil, and it is a matter of concern to all of the people of Alberta, along the lines in which the hon. member has pointed out his concern with the recycling industry in our province.

With respect to a potential park, I feel sorry for the citizens of Calgary-Forest Lawn; they don't have a park. But I'd have to learn a little bit more about that. I appreciate what the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn has said, and he will find me most co-operative in terms of assisting with the environmental improvements within his area. I apologize if I haven't had an opportunity to have been as quick about it but that simply is because so many of his other colleagues and our colleagues have brought drought and other kinds of concerns to our attention. But I've listened very carefully to what the hon. member has said. I hope he will accept my word of co-operation with respect to the concerns of the citizens of Calgary-Forest Lawn.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and request leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: It's been moved that the Committee of Supply request leave to sit again. All those in favour, please say aye.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

[At 9:53 p.m. the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

