

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, May 16, 1988 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 88/05/16

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us a daily awareness of the precious gift of life which You have given us.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we dedicate our lives anew to the service of our province and our country.

Amen.

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery is the Hon. Ted Blanchard, the Minister of Labour for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Accompanying Mr. Blanchard is Ms Mary Pridham, his executive assistant. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give notice of a motion that I would subsequently ask hon. members to consent to dealing with today. If I may read the motion into the record:

Be it resolved that the Assembly join with all Albertans in extending our congratulations to Alberta's team the Medicine Hat Tigers, its players, coaches, and management on becoming the sixth team in history to win successive Memorial Cups, emblematic of major junior hockey supremacy in Canada. The success of the Tigers can be attributed to perseverance, discipline, and good sportsmanship. The success of junior hockey is a further testimony to the many volunteers involved in minor hockey in Alberta and western Canada.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 30****Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 1988**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 30, the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 1988. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill puts into effect the organizational changes that were announced on March 31. It proposes to divide the administrative and governing function from the appeal function by establishing a part-time board of directors and a full-time appeals commission.

[Leave granted; Bill 30 read a first time]

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly, a number of individuals who've come from a long distance, the great country of Japan, to be with us today.

These individuals within the delegation represent the Osaka Meat Purveyors' Association. They are a very influential beef organization in Japan. We had the opportunity under the leadership of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade to visit with them last October when we were involved with our trade delegation. They are examining our beef facilities and the possibility of purchasing additional quantities of beef from our province. They're in the members' gallery, and it would be my deepest pleasure to ask them to rise so that this Legislative Assembly can extend a very warm and cordial welcome to our honoured guests.

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, 28 grade sixers from the Stony Plain elementary school. They are accompanied by their teacher Milton Mellott and parents Pat Hopp, Judy Duke, Marylaine Titley, and Christine Ayers. I'd ask that they rise and receive the warmest welcome of this Assembly.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly today, on one of the rare occasions that I get to do so, 30 high school students from the Medicine Hat high school in grades 11 and 12. They are accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Linda Gagley and Mr. David George, as well by their bus driver Mel Fauser and his wife. I would ask that these 30 students, two teachers, and Mr. and Mrs. Fauser, all good Medicine Hat Tigers fans, stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, 59 students from Bishop Savaryn school in the riding of Edmonton-Glengarry. They're accompanied today by Mr. Garry Marler and Mr. Taras Pyzyk. They're in the public gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, 25 students from the grade 6 class of St. Luke school, which is in the Cooking Lake area. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. John Detka. These students are in the members' gallery, and I'd like them to rise and receive the recognition of the Legislature.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Department of Tourism**

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, in support of the tourism industry of Alberta, I am extremely pleased to declare May 16 to 22, 1988, Tourism Awareness Week in Alberta.

The purpose of Tourism Awareness Week is to raise the pub-

lic's understanding of the importance of the economic and other benefits of tourism in Canada. The slogan for Alberta Tourism Awareness Week is "Alberta Grows with Tourism." Similarly, the Canadian slogan is "Canada Grows with Tourism."

Tourism Awareness Week is a celebration of tourism in all its facets. It is a tribute to the thousands of communities and businesses which strive throughout the year to heighten the awareness of the importance of tourism. Tourism Awareness Week has been established to provide a unifying activity for these efforts and to encourage greater involvement at the local, regional, and national levels. I call on all Albertans to join their fellow Canadians to commemorate and celebrate this country's second annual National Tourism Awareness Week.

I join with Alberta's tourism industry in reminding you of the economic importance and infinite growth potential of this industry. Tourism currently employs over 100,000 Albertans and generates approximately \$2.3 billion in annual revenues. Tourism is expected to be the single largest economic activity in the world by the year 2000. In little more than another decade Albertans can make tourism in Alberta an industry employing over 200,000 people and generating \$10 billion in revenues. Through increased awareness and understanding of tourism, we can capture our share of the promise offered by tourism. Tourism is part of our economic diversification in Alberta. Let's not let it become a social program.

The Department of Tourism works with the private sector to assist development of economic opportunities. In March 1988 the hon. Premier and the Minister of Tourism announced a \$64 million package of post-Olympic initiatives to bolster tourism and awareness. Included in the package are a \$30 million community tourism action program, the \$20 million Team Tourism marketing program, a \$10 million Alberta awareness program, and a \$3.5 million Alberta tourism advertising campaign, along with the Alberta Olympic business program follow-up.

Programs and services available to the tourist industry include the Travel Alberta zone assistance program, our Canada/Alberta tourism agreement, the Tourism Education Council, the Take an Alberta Break program, a range of development services and marketing programs, and our one-window approach in the business services unit.

I urge each and every Albertan to join all Canadians in a salute to the tourism industry and to help celebrate Tourism Awareness Week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it's hard to say anything negative about tourism. Certainly I think all of us on both sides of the House would agree that Tourism Awareness Week in Alberta is important, as it is across Canada.

But just a couple of comments. First of all, I think I would agree with the government that this can be a major industry in this province. But almost every economy around, when they're in trouble, look for a quick fix, and I often think we're doing this. If we're serious about tourism, one of the things that clearly we're going to have to do is educate our public about how to deal with tourists. That involves both our postsecondary education and these sorts of things, because I can tell you that we get many complaints about tourists coming up here and not being treated in the proper way. I think that in the past we thought that anybody could be in the tourist industry, because we tend to give the lowest possible wages and hope that they make it through on tips. Other places, the United States -- some of the states that I've been in -- take a very different viewpoint:

they do a lot of upgrading, and they know that this is an important industry. So I would hope we're looking into that aspect of it, because I think it is very important.

Also, Mr. Speaker, if I may say so, there are different aspects to tourism, and I often feel that this government thinks that tourism is great if we can build an Esso station and put a ritzy hotel on top of every mountain in the province. We must remember that there has to be a myriad of different responses to tourism, and let's not forget that the main tourist attraction we have is the natural beauty of our province. I hope we keep that in mind.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I hope he will be talking to the government in terms of northern Alberta, because we in the Official Opposition caucus do believe there's a tremendous potential for a type of development in northern Alberta, call it Kananaskis north or whatever. But it seems to me that if you look at the tourist dollars, northern Alberta has been shortchanged, and I hope the government is looking at this and will change this imbalance quickly.

But all in all, I guess we're all for tourist week, and we hope this does become a major industry in Alberta in the near future.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Free Trade

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Attorney General. It's my understanding that last week the Attorney General met with the federal trade minister, Mr. Crosbie. Will the Attorney General advise the House whether the purpose of the meeting was consultation regarding the enabling legislation for the Mulroney trade deal and whether he expressed any concern with regard to matters which might be in provincial jurisdiction?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the two questions contained in the hon. leader's questions: first of all, the answer is yes. I met in my capacity as Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs with the Minister for International Trade, Mr. Crosbie. We discussed a number of topics, including implementing legislation which the federal government is considering and various options that they have under review at the present time. We also discussed the issue of continuing provincial participation with respect to the dispute resolution mechanism. We also discussed at some length the provincial role in the GATT discussion. So it was an encompassing discussion with the minister.

In answer to the second question, the answer is yes. We certainly did express our views that the provincial constitutional responsibility must be respected in implementing legislation that the federal government has under consideration.

MR. MARTIN: Well, specifically then, Mr. Speaker, to come back to the minister. Under article 103 of the trade deal, the federal government purports to guarantee that the provinces will be bound by this particular agreement. Now, it seems to us that this guarantee extends federal powers into the matters of placing and distribution of Alberta's energy resources specifically and that U.S. customers will have access to our resources at prices which are the same or lower than Albertans now pay. My question is, very specifically: why does the government now agree to place this power in the hands of the federal government?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I said on many occasions,

there's nothing in the free trade agreement which amends the Constitution of Canada, nothing, indeed, which in any way derogates from the role that the province has to play in terms of ownership, management, and control of its natural resources.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's what you say, but the writing says something different. I would come back to article 103. Clearly, that provincial compliance is there. How does the minister justify this? Is it not that the federal government under this international agreement, under that compliance, can in fact tell us what price we will set for our resources?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the federal government has in previous years tried to tell us what price we should receive for our natural resources under something called the national energy program, supported by the NDP and the Liberal Party in Canada. The hon. Leader of the Opposition should not be allowed to forget that. The fact of the matter is that this free trade deal will guarantee that we shall never have again during its currency another national energy program shoved down our throats by the federal government. It is protecting the interests of Alberta's ownership, control, and management of its natural resources, and the Leader of the Opposition and the NDP are out to lunch on this particular question.

MR. MARTIN: Well perhaps it won't be shoved down our throats by the federal government; it'll be shoved down our throats by the Americans, Mr. Speaker.

Rather than rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, people want to know the answer. What does article 103 to this minister mean, then, where we give provincial compliance that we will in fact follow this? Does that not mean -- it does to everybody else other than this minister -- that we can no longer set our prices, that they have to be as low for the Americans as Albertans? Does it not mean that?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, what the deal provides for is what this government has been seeking for a very long time; that is, market prices for our natural resources and not prices artificially set by governments at either the federal or provincial levels. The hon. Member for Vegreville waves the American flag in some kind of mockery, obviously, of our best friends and neighbours.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Attorney General, back to the original question. Was the very important subject of transition programs discussed at this meeting with your federal counterpart, and what is anticipated to be the federal/provincial relationship in regard to this? Who's going to be responsible? Who's going to pay?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, that particular topic, while it is important, was not on the agenda for our discussions last week. That is a matter that has been under discussion, however, between myself and my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade with the federal representative, Dr. Norman Wagner, on the federal transition committee. So that particular topic was not discussed during the course of this meeting a week ago. But it is a matter of real concern to us, and we are working carefully on that.

I trust that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar heeded the advice the mayor of Calgary gave to the Liberals in Lethbridge on the weekend.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: [Inaudible] but anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Allocation of Lottery Funds

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. Concerning the grant out of lottery funds recently to the Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts by the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism of half a million dollars earmarked for TV -- and in his constituency, I may say -- and \$300,000 for a TV/video support arrangement, the minister of culture described as "bunk" the notion that TV and video are not literary arts. Will the Minister of Education be good enough to have someone from her department, preferably someone from the audiovisual aids section, explain to the minister of culture the meaning of the word "literary"?

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps we could go on to a supplementary that's a little more important.

MR. WRIGHT: To the Attorney General then, Mr. Speaker. The grant I refer to may, of course, only be made to literary arts under the provisions of the Cultural Foundations Act. Will the Attorney General consider having someone from his department lay out for the chairman of the board of the Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts the implications and pitfalls that can arise if large sums of public money are paid out for powers not allowed for in the governing statute?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, if one of my colleagues in another portfolio seeks advice from the Attorney General's department, it will, of course, be provided. That is done all the time, and I would be happy to take the hon. member's question and representation under consideration.

MR. WRIGHT: I'm very obliged, Mr. Speaker. It may be needed.

To the minister of culture. Before giving out this money on April 21, did the minister familiarize himself with the powers of the Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts, as set out in the governing legislation, by reading the relevant section of the statute or, if that's too literary a demand, by taking them off the back cover of the annual report of the foundation, which the minister filed in this Assembly just 30 days beforehand?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that the member has finally decided to ask a question to this minister when he is able to be in the House, and not as he did on Friday.

AN HON. MEMBER: Where were you?

MR. STEVENS: On Friday I was doing other things, as many members are required to do.

But, Mr. Speaker, in making the announcement about the allocation of lottery funds, it was clearly indicated by the minister responsible -- as I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition on Monday last -- that funds would be channeled to six recipients in accordance with previous guidelines established by this government for the four foundations. Each foundation

chairman has been given advice by this minister as to how those additional funds will be allocated in a broad respect. I can't believe that this particular member does not understand that when one prepares a film or when one shoots a video, one has to have a writer to first prepare the script.

MR. WRIGHT: To the minister of culture: in that case, how much of the \$800,000 set out for TV and audio was for scriptwriting? [interjection]

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, yes, I think that is a question for the Order Paper.

But in general terms the amount of money that was expended for the Banff Television Festival -- and not a television station, as reported to have been the understanding of the member, but for the television festival -- was \$450,000 in the last current year, and this year it'll be \$500,000. That is far less in increase than the amount of money going to literary, publishers, writers, throughout this province as a result of the 52 percent increase to the total foundation.

MRS. HEWES: It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we now find lottery funds in operating expenses and education. I would like to ask the minister: is this the new budget method to be used to do end runs around the legislative process of budget debate?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, there are government funds that are debated in this Assembly in each department. In addition to those, as the member knows fully, there has been a decision made with regard to the lottery dollars. Those dollars will be spent to supplement, to augment, programs that are available for the recipients, whether they're writers or publishers or artists or performing artists or creators. There will be no duplication of the funds that are spent, either by the department or by the foundations.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Ambulance Service

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in the House I think all welcome the completion of the long-awaited study on ambulance services, a critical and essential component of health care. We hope that the government will move expeditiously now to act. I'd like to ask the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care: will the minister and the government now place my private member's Bill, Bill 234, on the Order Paper as a government Bill? We don't need to wait any longer. The homework has been done and it's ready and available.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it's our intention, after having made public the report by the policy advisory committee to myself on emergency health services, to allow some length of time for individual reaction to the comments and recommendations which are made in this report. I believe the letter which accompanied this report, which was signed by the chairman, the hon. Member for Drumheller, indicated that we would like to receive responses to the report by the middle of September. It would then be my intention to try to see what changes need to be made as a result of those responses and then to seek support from our cabinet and the government caucus and finally from the Legislature, hopefully next spring, for new legislation in the area of

emergency health services, and to be able to move with some of the recommendations that are in this report.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, it's overdue. There's no reason to wait any longer to do it. It seems to me that the exhaustive process was designed to do exactly what the minister is talking about. To the minister. Will the government provide in the new legislation a funding formula that's adjustable so that rural and remote areas could obtain higher per capita to cover what may be their considerably higher costs?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it's likely that legislation which covers the policy area providing ambulance services in Alberta would have within it funding formulas. It's not normal that that would occur. However, the hon. member should be aware that when the policy advisory committee studied this issue of funding, they did note the wide discrepancy in cost relative to delivering ambulance services to more remote rural areas as opposed to the two metropolitan cities and other cities and towns which are in between. So whatever the government does with respect to any funding formulas would obviously have to take into account the recommendations of the committee in that regard.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is it the government's intent to fund the ambulance system in its entirety, or will municipalities be expected to pay a proportion of the service through local property taxes?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, the government has not formed any intent on any part of this report yet. As I indicated in my opening answer, we intend to get feedback from all of the interested parties and the general public over the course of the next few months before we take any position on the report. The report does indicate that there should be some assistance in funding various parts of the ambulance system by the provincial government, and certainly that will be something that's considered. But I reiterate that there has been absolutely no decision at this point in time as to whether or not any funding would be forthcoming and, if so, the nature of it.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, it makes municipal planning for these services very difficult. Will the government consider making the Alberta Ambulance Operators Association the governing and administrative body to oversee Alberta's ambulance system?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the report does not recommend that. It recommends that a commission be established to oversee ambulance services in Alberta. Again, the government has taken no decision on the recommendations in the report, so it would be premature to say whether or not we would accept the recommendations of the report or the offer that I understand has been made by the Alberta Ambulance Operators Association to provide some kind of overall management of the system throughout the province.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care agree with the Minister of Career Development and Employment that emergency services such as ambulances are not appropriate areas for funding from lottery dollars from the province?

MR. M. MOORE: I'm not sure that I get the import of the question or if there was a question.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm asking if the minister agrees with the minister of career development that no, you will not get lottery funds for ambulance service in the province.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, this is four times now that I've said that this report is one we expect to get feedback on over the next four or five months, after which we will make some firm government decisions on the direction we go. One of the recommendations in the report that the committee made involves the funding of onetime-only grants to ambulance authorities for the upgrading of their equipment, and they suggest that that could come from lottery funds. That's simply a decision that again will have to be taken, firstly, if we decide to provide some funding and then, secondly, where it comes from.

MR. SPEAKER: Clover Bar, main question.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I could have asked a supplementary on this question, but I think there are one or two reasons why I should set the record straight for my Liberal friends and my NDP friends about whose resolution was passed in this Assembly. To get a resolution passed from a backbencher is really an accomplishment. To the hon. member sitting to my left: that is over 12 years ago that a resolution was passed, so in case they want to steal something, they're stealing mine.

I would like to ask the minister, in light of the fact that we've had 12 to 14 years to study the issue and now we have nearly 40 recommendations, would the minister consider doing some things that are required very, very quickly on an interim basis? The first one is a central dispatch system. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I think we're all aware of what happens in crossing jurisdictions. There is no one to co-ordinate if there are ambulances needed in St. Albert that are available in Morinville; there is no way of communicating that at this time. Would the minister give some consideration to doing some of these things, that cost very little money but would be very efficient, on an interim basis?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we've already been doing that in the last few months, trying to figure out ways to co-ordinate, particularly with regard to interhospital transfers and air ambulance services. But without a central number it does get difficult to co-ordinate neighbouring ambulance jurisdictions such as the hon. member mentions. But certainly if there's something we can do that is useful in the interim, we will. But I don't want to prejudge the public's comments or the care givers' comments about the report, so I think we need to have some length of time to get that feedback before we move in any particular direction. I just say in conclusion that I'm glad we were able to act so quickly on the hon. member's resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Is this now the main question?

DR. BUCK: Well, that was my main question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I see.

DR. BUCK: There was nobody on the floor, so I just assumed that I was next in line. Smooth, eh?

Also, a problem that has been a problem for quite some time,

Mr. Speaker, and this is the question of some minimum standards right across the province. Is the minister in a position to indicate if that interim measure can be taken within the near future so that all ambulances in the province will have a certain standard across the province?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, again a very good question. The report does recommend that there be a minimum standard called basic life support, which is a well-defined term in the ambulance field, that no ambulance be able to operate with less than basic life support personnel. I believe it would require legislation for us to enforce that. In addition to that, it would require some gearing up by some ambulance services. So one of the things I'll be doing over the course of the next short while is saying to municipalities that they should review that recommendation in the report, because I, as Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, strongly support the minimum being basic life support services. So while we won't in all likelihood have any way of enforcing that as a minimum standard until new legislation is brought forward, we certainly will be encouraging municipalities to move in that direction.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. On the requirement that personnel be available, can the minister or his colleagues the Minister of Advanced Education or the Minister of Education indicate if the programs are being put into place so that we will have personnel available when the standards are brought up to a certain level?

MR. M. MOORE: My understanding is that certainly the training courses are now there. There is some recommendation in the report that there be better co-ordination of the existing Advanced Education training courses that are available from several institutions. I'm aware as well that there are courses available that are taught by computer, by correspondence, so that people don't necessarily have to leave their community for long lengths of time to gain expertise in basic life support. So I think all the tools are presently there within the Advanced Education system to accommodate that recommendation. I would like to have seen perhaps more emphasis in the report on having a lot of communities even move toward advanced life support, which is a further step yet in providing emergency health services.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, is it the intention of the minister that vehicles that transfer patients from hospital to hospital will also be equipped with people on that vehicle who will have basic life support service?

MR. M. MOORE: Again, Mr. Speaker, the report makes recommendations that all ambulance services be provided with basic life support services personnel as a minimum -- as a minimum. We have not yet made a decision as to whether that will be in the legislation when it's forthcoming, but I would fully support the recommendations of the committee in that regard.

MRS. HEWES: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Will he guarantee to the House that the use of any lottery funds for this purpose will come to the Legislature first for approval?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it's my expectation that sometime within the next month or two we'll have Royal Assent to a piece of legislation called Bill 10, after which time . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. It is a question with Bill 10. That's at third reading stage; therefore, it's out of order.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, ambulance service to date has primarily been a service provided and paid for by the municipal authorities. I wonder if the minister could assure the House that any new provincial mandate with regard to standards and levels of service will be accompanied by appropriate levels of provincial funding.

MR. M. MOORE: In fact, Mr. Speaker, no, I could not assure that. There are some municipalities now that take their responsibility for providing ambulance services very seriously and do provide a good level of service. There are others who practically refuse to do anything. If anything, there's a message in the report indicating to municipalities that the provision of dollars for ambulance services is a major responsibility of theirs as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Redwater-Andrew, followed by Edmonton-Belmont, Edmonton-Meadowlark, Edmonton-Kingsway, and Edmonton-Beverly.

Fire Fighting Responsibilities

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is directed to the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Due to the lower than normal rainfall this year the province appears to have a greater threat with regards to forest fires in particular and grass fires in general. Can you outline your department's responsibilities there?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, there have been some very serious fires as of late, but as of today we have no fires out of control. We have, I believe, eight or nine fires that are still burning at the moment.

The question that was asked, Mr. Speaker, is: what is the responsibility? The responsibility for Forestry, Lands and Wildlife is within the green area, and the jurisdiction doesn't extend into the municipalities or counties. However, if needed and particularly if there's life at risk or if asked, we have also been helping in those areas.

MR. ZARUSKY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly the funds available for the control of forest fires during the 1988 fire fighting season?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: That, of course, is part of the budget process. And as I have stated before, depending on the fire season, more dollars may be needed by special warrant.

MR. ZARUSKY: Second supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Did the minister's department lend any support by way of crews and equipment to the county of Strathcona in an effort to contain the blaze that has been burning for almost three weeks in that area?

DR. BUCK: The answer is yes.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ZARUSKY: Well, I'm glad my colleague from the west of me can answer those.

Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In the event of the 1988 fire fighting season being long and costly, can the minister give an indication to the Assembly whether sufficient funds will be available to contain and suppress any fire that threatens life or property?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I assure the hon. member that we will do all we can to protect property, and life particularly, and any dollars that are needed to help fight fire in these extremely dry conditions I am certain I can count on my colleagues to provide.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

School Board Members Selection

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 4 at page 814 of *Hansard* the Premier responded to the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona regarding funding from one level of government to another that:

Now, the argument stands up in the next step: that the province should not impose conditions on municipalities. They are elected. They are representatives of their constituents. If they are doing things that are wrong, their constituents will change [that].

To the Premier. Can we accept this statement as a policy of your government?

MR. GETTY: In a general basis, yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, on a general basis, Mr. Speaker, that seems to contradict section 225, both (a) and (b), of the proposed School Act, which allows for the Minister of Education to impose a ward system on municipalities that have greater than 300,000 electors. Can the Premier please explain that contradiction?

MR. SPEAKER: . . . a legal interpretation. [interjections]

MR. GETTY: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can raise questions with regard to the School Act when that legislation is in front of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps we can go to the Minister of Education. The minister is indeed a supporter of local input and representation, but I'm wondering how it is that she, in the new School Act, would impose the government's will on a board that is elected by the very same constituents that elect us. Do you not see a contradiction there?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: The authority to impose a ward system, Mr. Speaker, in the School Act is permissive.

MR. SIGURDSON: Indeed it is. But then why did not the Minister of Education allow for a plebiscite to be held, thus allowing the electors to choose whether or not they want a ward system?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to prevent any local government from having a plebiscite on any issue they

wish to have a plebiscite on. That authority has been in legislation long before Bill 27 appeared on the Order Paper in this Assembly. I think it is fair to say, though, that certainly on the government side we are of the view that from the input we've received from people residing in the large metro areas of Edmonton and Calgary, there is a very keen interest in seeing the principle of accountability, which is part of Bill 27, extended to a ward system within those municipalities.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, will the minister then tell the House why this section was put in in the first place? What is, in fact, the rationale for putting it in?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was in response to the high degree of input we received from Albertans all across the province as we did four years of unprecedented public input towards the new School Act, which is now embodied in Bill 27 before this Legislature. I look forward to the debate in the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Senate Reform

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Senate reform is critical if we are to redress the problem of regional imbalance in this country. We have lost an important leverage now in pursuing that objective by virtue of the fact that we have accepted outright the Meech Lake constitutional proposals. If we are to salvage anything with respect to Senate reform, we need to have an effective strategy, well-managed, by this government at this time. Could the Premier please inform us what work is being done internally in his cabinet and in his government to develop specific Senate reform proposals for presentation to the federal government?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, surely the member jests if he wants us to lay out for him discussions that go on in cabinet. That's hardly something that is the thing to be discussed in the question period. But I will say this to him: he does make the point about Senate reform being critical. That is the reason why for the first time in 110 years the government of Alberta has taken the lead in the country, and because of the government of Alberta we have Senate reform as the number one constitutional matter to be dealt with in Canada. People have talked about it before, but until the Alberta government took this on, went to the first ministers and insisted and got it as the number one matter for constitutional reform... We're looking forward to having the Triple E Senate be the result of this reform. Again, that's an initiative from the Alberta government. It's interesting to see now other parties trying to get on the bandwagon. Well, we welcome them. But nevertheless, it's our initiative, and we're going to keep fighting for it.

MR. MITCHELL: Never any specifics. If we're going to get it, we have to get started. Could the Premier please simply tell us whether he has a committee of cabinet or a committee of senior bureaucrats in his government taking specific steps to come up with specific proposals with respect to the mandate and the powers of a Senate for Canada which he will be presenting to the federal government at some specified time?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member has been out of touch with the progress that has been made in this area. First of all, it's the number one item for constitutional reform. Secondly, the federal government has said that they'll be bringing their recommendations. The provincial government had in the past a committee of the Legislature which came up with the Triple E Senate recommendation. It's been agreed to unanimously in this Alberta Legislature. We have provided details of that report to all governments. At all of the constitutional meetings that were held over the past several years, this matter has been raised. Just the other day the federal government -- I think this is certainly progress -- sent their member of cabinet for interprovincial relations here to Edmonton. He said, "We've bought two of the Alberta government's Triple E items, two of the Es." As I've mentioned to the House before, we're making progress there. We also have two Premiers who are now supporting us on this issue; I hope we will get more. We're making progress. It is very important, and we're going to keep fighting for it.

MR. MITCHELL: Clearly, the question of powers for the Senate is critical to the question of Senate reform. Could the Premier please indicate to us what he wants to see specifically as the powers of a Senate, an elected Senate, in Canada? What's your view of what the veto should be? Should it be suspensive? Should it be complete?

MR. SPEAKER: You asked the question, hon. member, thank you.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, what I will do is provide him with a copy of the report on the Triple E Senate.

MR. MITCHELL: As everybody knows, that report is a general report and didn't outline a specific proposal and approach, and it's also years old. Is the Premier saying that it is sufficient to wait for the federal government to come to us with a specific proposal about Senate reform, how Senate reform should be, and that it is not acceptable or not required that this government should be taking an aggressive leadership role in establishing proposals and a format for Senate reform for the Senate reform debate in this country today?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to see the Liberal Party now scrambling to get on the bandwagon when they know how important this is for the people of Alberta. All the time they were in government, nothing happened. They just appointed their sleepy old friends to the Senate; they never in any way did anything to reform it. The Alberta government has now taken the leadership role, has been pushing a Triple E Senate, and has been able to get all of the Premiers and the Prime Minister agreeing that this is the number one matter for constitutional reform. It's interesting to now see the Liberals saying: "Well, we're pushing for this. We're really pushing for this." I say that I welcome them getting on the bandwagon, even though it's so late.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the Premier touched briefly on the question; I'd like to ask the supplementary. This is the question of attitude. Do the politicians from central Canada understand and realize how important it is to the maritimes and the two extremes of the country to have senate reform? Are the politicians in central Canada understanding how severe the problem is, and

is their attitude changing, where there is some hope that they will finally realize that it's a very, very important issue to keep this country together?

MR. GETTY: I agree with the hon. member's point that he made in asking the question: how important it is and how it will help to hold the country together. No question about that. Attitudes are difficult to judge, Mr. Speaker. We have had many meetings on constitutional reform, obviously, and it resulted in the constitutional reform known as Meech Lake, which is before all the Legislatures. I think it's fair to say that all the Premiers feel that the Senate must be reformed, that it should be elected, and it should be effective. The debate, as I've said before, is going to come down to the third E. Whether we all agree that it should be equal, as we would want it, or whether they would argue that it should be equitable distribution of the number of senators per province: I think that is really going to be where the debate finally settles.

MR. SPEAKER: Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary on this question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As the chairman of the select committee on Senate reform that carried out a study a few years ago, would the minister refresh our memory that that report carried the process in detail on Senate reform, contrary to what the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark said?

MR. SPEAKER: I think the Attorney General would be responsible to answer that question, but not the Minister of Municipal Affairs in his present portfolio.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I realize it's an unusual question in terms of parliamentary democracy, but I would make the point for the hon. member who raised the question that in a very specific sense regarding the powers, the duties, the outline of where Senate reform is to go, if he'll read the book, it's in it. We decided that in this Assembly several years ago, and that should answer the questions the hon. member has in mind.

MR. SPEAKER: That's a rather unusual circumstance for question period.

Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, followed by Edmonton-Beverly.

Conflict-of-interest Guidelines

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the government of Alberta document Main Principles Towards a Credit Union Act, released on February 15, 1988, the Treasurer laid out some provisions to generally prohibit all transactions with related parties. On page 5 of the same document:

- "Related parties" of a body corporate [is defined to] include:
 - directors and officers;
 - [their wives and] children;
 - partners of persons described above;

and others such as advisers, trustees, and affiliated corporations. Does the Treasurer intend to see that these tough conflict-of-interest rules apply to all financial institutions in Alberta, including the Treasury Branches?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the credit union legislation, what we have done in a general sense is to introduce

most of the format of discussion with respect to financial institutional reform across Canada. We believe that in some cases we have followed the average suggestion; in other areas we have, I think, been very specific as to what we see to be the outline of the legislation. We intend to, in the case of credit unions, flag this for discussion. We have done that already with the document referred to. We're now in the process of accepting input as to its appropriateness.

MR. McEACHERN: I did ask if they'd intended to apply it to the Treasury Branches.

Given that the Treasury Branches are operated as a treasury fund under this minister's department, will he now admit that allowing a Treasury Branch loan to a company one-third owned by a related party, namely his wife, would be a conflict of interest if his proposed credit union legislation applied to cabinet ministers and to the Treasury Branches?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I guess we have gone through this debate to some extent. I should say first of all that the rules and standards that we operate under are reflected in the legislation. If someone wants to suggest that there is another interpretation of the law, then they have put themselves above the law. What we must guide by is what is, in fact, in the legislation. That is essentially what we will do with this piece of legislation, with the application of the law to other standards which society generally believes to be appropriate.

In this case, the Legislative Assembly Act, which is the reference the member made, is a new Act. It's been recently debated, reflects the dynamics of the time, and as Winston Churchill said, it's a practical piece of legislation. We have had to change that legislation to allow MLAs to receive benefits from the government. That was unheard of five or six years ago. We've all gone through that process. This legislation sets out the law, and the law is being followed.

MR. McEACHERN: One rule is for credit unions, another for Treasury Branches.

Given his proposed rules to prevent conflict of interest in the credit unions, is it the intention of the Treasurer, then, to set an example by undoing this offending Treasury Branch loan to his wife and her partners?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, care and attention is to be given to the fact that it's a company. We're not dealing with a spouse of anybody in this Chamber. [interjection] It's not within his administrative responsibilities as minister.

Supplementary.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, my last question, then, is to the Premier. Is the Premier prepared to tolerate this double standard, one for the cabinet and their families and another one for the directors and officers of credit unions and their families?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there's no double standard, as we've already discussed in the House. I guess the hon. member has no other issues that seem to be important, so he now wants to continue to come back to things that have been dealt with in the past I guess it just is the measure of the level that the question period has sunk to as the House has gone on.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, supplementary.

MR. MITCHELL: Given the recurrence of recent questions relating to conflict of interest by members of the cabinet, will the Premier please structure an all-party committee of the Legislature to consider this issue definitively and simply to clear the air once and for all, to set guidelines for the future so that these questions won't continue to arise?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member feels that he has conflict of interest charges to bring, he should bring them and not sit there and parrot his leader, the very questions that he has been asking in the past. Frankly, we operate under the Legislative Assembly Act. As I've said before, that could be called the conflict-of-interest Act for all members in this House. Now, if the member feels that someone is breaking the Legislative Assembly Act, I say he should stand up and make the case and not try and dodge around and just cast aspersions in some kind of a hoping that if you throw enough mud somewhere, you'll get some to stick on somebody.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

We have a request, as given earlier with verbal notice under Standing Order 40, by the Attorney General with regard to a motion. Speaking to the urgency of debate, do we have unanimous consent that this motion be dealt with?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Attorney General.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, all members have received the notice of motion, and I'll read it into the record again.

Be it resolved that the Assembly join with all Albertans in extending our congratulations to Alberta's team the Medicine Hat Tigers, its players, coaches, and management on becoming the sixth team in history to win successive Memorial Cups, emblematic of major junior hockey supremacy in Canada. The success of the Tigers can be attributed to perseverance, discipline, and good sportsmanship. The success of junior hockey is a further testimony to the many volunteers involved in minor hockey in Alberta and western Canada.

In moving this motion, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to the fact that I've made specific reference to the team being Alberta's team. I would like to point out for the benefit of members of the Assembly the fact that of the 23 players who are members of the team, 17 of those players are, in fact, residents of Alberta: four from Medicine Hat, one from Redcliff, four from Edmonton, one from Sherwood Park, seven from Calgary. We have two from British Columbia, two from Saskatchewan, and two from Manitoba, so it's certainly a western Canadian team. But really that makeup should make all Albertans very proud.

It was just about a year ago, on May 19 last year, that I rose in the Assembly to make a similar motion. Given the nature of junior hockey, I didn't expect that I would be in a position to repeat a year later, but that is the happy circumstance I find myself in today.

I'd just like to say in closing that in addition to this particular accomplishment, on the Canadian junior world championship team that was gained earlier in Moscow were five members of

the Medicine Hat Tigers. For the record, I'd like to read their names in: Mark Pederson, Trevor Linden, Rob Dimaio, Scott McCrady, and Wayne McBean. Those key players played a very major part in Alberta's and Medicine Hat's victory over the Ontario junior hockey league champions, the Windsor Spitfires, who, along with the other teams in the junior hockey leagues in Canada, participated in this tremendously great accomplishment of the Memorial Cup. I'm extremely proud as the Member for Medicine Hat in this Assembly to move this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries unanimously.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert briefly to the Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, two visitors from Beijing, China, who are from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The most prominent project between Canada, Alberta, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences is now ongoing. This summer's expedition to the Gobi Desert in Mongolia in north China will involve the examination of dinosaur fossils as young as those discovered in Alberta. The two gentlemen are seated in the members' gallery. They are leaving shortly for Ottawa. They are Mr. Su Fenglin, senior engineer and chief of the Division of American and Oceanian Affairs of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Mr. Cao Jinghua, program officer of the division, Bureau of International Co-operation of the academy. Would they please rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly?

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Musgrave in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will please come to order.

ALBERTA HERITAGE SAVINGS TRUST FUND CAPITAL PROJECTS DIVISION 1988-89 ESTIMATES OF PROPOSED INVESTMENTS

Recreation and Parks

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, would you like to make some opening comments?

MR. WEISS: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased this

afternoon to begin by taking a few minutes to provide some background information regarding the two projects specifically under Recreation and Parks.

MR. FOX: With respect, hon. minister, on a point of order, if I might? Last year, Mr. Chairman, when we embarked on this discussion of the specifics of the capital projects division, it was initiated by a very rare general kind of discussion about the Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital projects division, and I think all members found that to be a most useful discussion, initiated, I might add, by the hon. Provincial Treasurer. I wonder what consideration the committee might give to a broad, general kind of discussion to provide some sort of background prior to getting into the specific votes of the ministers involved.

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Chairman, we had not intended to have that kind of discussion. The Provincial Treasurer has some obligations elsewhere this afternoon very shortly. If indeed we had one of those discussions last year, then one ought to do for four years. I'm not at all clear why we shouldn't stay with the estimates themselves and get on with it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On the point of order.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, when the budget is brought in for the Assembly -- I'm talking about the main budget for the government -- there are a few days in which we discuss in general the fiscal policies of the government. When they brought in even the estimates themselves, Bill 32, the Treasurer stood up and spoke at some length to that overall game plan of sense of direction and purpose as to where the fiscal policies of the government were going. We talked about that a little bit and then we got into the specifics, or we'll get into specifics in Committee of the Whole. I do not understand why we should jump into the middle of this, Recreation and Parks, out of the blue.

There is a philosophy -- at least I hope so -- and a plan and some kind of idea of where the heritage trust fund capital projects division is going. We should be able to hear some idea from the Treasurer along that line so that we can respond to it before we get into the specific estimates. I really don't understand. Usually the Treasurer is quite happy to brag about the heritage trust fund. I wonder if he's not so enamoured of it any more these days or what the problem is. Would the Treasurer not give us a little bit of an opening statement and let us debate that, at least to some extent, before we jump into the details.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, please stick to the point of order. I don't want a general discussion on policy.

The Member for Edmonton-Centre -- Edmonton-Highlands; pardon me.

MS BARRETT: That's okay. I'm used to it, Mr. Chairman.

I'd make the point -- I understand the Treasurer has signaled the Government House Leader. You know, every member of the Assembly books up time throughout the day and evening. Perhaps the Treasurer and the Government House Leader would allow this debate, which does take place annually. This is a convention. This is a major budget every year. Perhaps he would give one or two words. Let him go to his meeting; he's perfectly capable of reading *Hansard* afterwards. Maybe he'll get an idea of the notions that were generated and exchanged in the Assembly today on the broader discussion of the trust fund as a whole. There's nothing that prevents the minister responsi-

ble for the overall administration of the trust fund to come back on another day and respond.

I think the point of order is fair, Mr. Chairman. It is a convention that every year we debate the broad issue of the trust fund and its expenditures prior to going into the detailed components thereof. I don't think this year should be considered any different from any other year. I'm sure the Treasurer, who loves to be on his feet, would really like the opportunity to read *Hansard*. It'd give him time to school and bone up a little bit and then come back fighting. Right? Come on.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Chairman, on the point of order. I found last year's discussion highly unusual in terms of how the Heritage Savings Trust Fund has handled estimates of the capital projects division. If the hon. members wish to have such a general debate, they can do so in the appropriation Bills in the committee stage of the Bill. The Committee of Supply has discussed the specific estimates of the departments which are put forward, and that's the way I think we should proceed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before we call on the minister, would those who wish to speak please raise their hands so we can get the list?

MR. PIQUETTE: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Point of order, Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: I'd like to also express my opinion about this unusual handling of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the capital projects division. You know, as a critic in these various areas, we were expecting at least, if we're not going to have a general debate today, to be going alphabetically in terms of the presentation of the various capital funds estimates. I find it very unusual that all of a sudden we're jumping to the letter "R" here, Recreation and Parks, today without any advance notification from the House leader. If we're going to be in any kind of way doing an adequate job here, at least the Government House Leader should be making the Official Opposition aware of which ones are coming up on a day-to-day basis. I object completely to this lack of professionalism on the part of the Government House Leader, to not even forewarn the Official Opposition.

MR. YOUNG: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman. First of all, when the Budget Address is brought in, there's an opportunity to debate, and that covers the whole broad financial direction of all the estimates that will come before the Assembly.

Secondly, with respect to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, there are very extensive hearings that go on in a special committee established to review it in detail. I don't believe there is an expenditure anywhere in government that gets the kind of scrutiny the Heritage Savings Trust Fund estimates receive, and the direction and philosophy of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

Now, with respect to the order in which estimates are called, I advised the House last week that we would be moving today to this capital projects division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. There is no way I can predict how long any members of this Assembly are going to choose in committee to debate a particular estimate, just simply no way. I've tried it and there's no way I can do that. Furthermore, I doubt any members

themselves know how long it's going to take.

Finally, it is the prerogative of government, and we do it -- we call estimates not in the particular order they appear here. For the information only of hon. members, we're doing it because of a possible personal commitment that the hon. member who is charged, the Minister for Recreation and Parks, may have later this week. We're trying to assure that the committee is not detained because of his unavailability later in the week. That's why he's being called first.

Mr. Chairman, let's proceed with the estimates.

MR. MITCHELL: That might be . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I think we've had enough debate on this issue, and I would suggest we proceed. [interjection] Well, perhaps you can put your name down on the list and we'll hear you later after the minister. Any others who wish to speak?

MR. WEISS: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to all hon. members, for allowing me the opportunity to participate this afternoon. While I may not be as eloquent as the Provincial Treasurer and respond to the individual needs of all departments specifically as they relate to the capital projects division of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, I would like this opportunity to perhaps provide some background information as it relates to the two votes under Recreation and Parks.

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

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is this a new point of order?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes, it is. Well, it relates to the old one. We haven't even heard your ruling on the original point of order. We haven't heard the reasoning behind it. We just jumped to the conclusion.

Secondly, I'd like to understand why it is that I don't get a chance to speak on this point of order. On what basis can you possibly rule that I don't have a chance to speak on this point of order?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The basis on which the Chair made the ruling was that in the 15 minutes there were no new arguments being presented, and if you wanted to discuss the estimates, I suggest . . . [interjections]

MR. WEISS: Once again, Mr. Chairman, before I was interrupted on the last occasion, I thought you had ruled and, by allowing me to give the introduction, I was given the opportunity and the floor.

So once again, trying to address the two votes that are under the Department of Recreation and Parks, I'd like to ask all hon. members to keep in mind that I believe those two votes have a common goal, and that goal is the enhancement of natural heritage resources for all Albertans. I'd like to outline my remarks keeping that in mind.

Now, the two votes are the Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas, more commonly referred as the MRTA program, and Kananaskis Country. As you know, Mr. Chairman, the MRTA program was approved for funding in October of 1986 under the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. This program has been very well received and supported by Albertans throughout the province. The program allows grants of up to \$100,000 per

capital project. These development projects are identified by the municipalities, with significant portions of the development cost provided by municipalities and community organizations. Now, past estimates show, Mr. Chairman, that the government investment is matched or exceeded in many cases by private contributions to many of these projects. I have mentioned that many times in this House.

These grants are distributed to communities for the development of recreation facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches, docks, beaches, ski hills, golf courses, and other park amenities. These projects are small in comparison to some of the other grant programs being conducted by various departments. However, the size of these projects does not decrease their overall significance. MRTA grants do a great deal for the communities in which they are utilized. There is a strong sense of pride and of ownership. All this, Mr. Chairman, enhances the quality of life and recreation opportunities for all Albertans. Our request for funding in 1988-89 is for \$2 million for this program. We anticipate that we'll be able to provide grants to more than 31 municipalities throughout Alberta. Now, while some have been committed, Mr. Chairman, I have not finalized the program and look forward to further announcements in this regard.

Under Kananaskis Country, our second request for funding is for the completion of the development of recreation facilities in Kananaskis Country and specifically for the purpose of completing the Kananaskis Village project. Some \$460,000 is required, as noted under vote 1, for the fiscal year of 1988-89. This will allow them to complete the landscaping, the trails, and related infrastructure in Kananaskis Village and the adjacent areas. The expenditure of these funds will primarily be through and the responsibility of the Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services department. The Kananaskis Village was begun several years ago and was substantially completed in the previous fiscal year. As well, Mr. Chairman, the three hotels that were developed on this site by the private sector were open in 1987, well before the Olympics. The project includes a facility known as the Village Centre, which operates as a visitor information outlet and was designed to accommodate the needs of visitors enjoying the surrounding facilities without having to be a registered guest at one of the hotels. In addition, the centre includes a convenience store, a meeting room, public washrooms, showers, lockers, a hot tub, and sauna and steam room facilities, which are available to all visitors whether or not they are guests of the hotels.

The disbursement of these funds for Kananaskis Country culminates over 10 years of development funding from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. This Heritage Savings Trust Fund investment over the past decade has left a legacy of recreation facilities and amenities to be enjoyed by Albertans and their visitors alike. Kananaskis Country is now drawing in the neighbourhood of close to 4 million visitors every year.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to note that these projects are quality-of-life initiatives. They contribute to the quality of life by making recreation opportunities more available and more accessible for all Albertans. These projects build on our natural heritage resource and the space, and add to the legacy we'll leave for the future generations of all Albertans. It's most encouraging to note the private-sector involvement, because they are a key partner in these programs.

I hope I've briefly outlined some of the concerns that hon. members may or may not wish to address, and I look forward to try and answer any of their questions and concerns.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The money that is spent to fund these projects has to come from somewhere, and that somewhere will be the rest of the heritage trust fund, because as you know, the trust fund has been capped. So although this particular project is winding down, nonetheless it puts strains on the rest of the heritage trust fund. I would just illustrate by saying that if you cap the assets of the fund and then take some of the funds in some of the other divisions and swing them into the capital projects division, then you are in fact eroding the capital of the fund.

I want to just take a minute and explain that point a little bit to some of the members who perhaps don't sit on the heritage fund. The deemed assets, as these capital project things are all called -- that is, except for the Vencap part -- are really expenditures. The government knows that and realizes that, but at the same time they try to get around it by calling them deemed assets and pretending they're part of the assets of the fund and therefore somehow they haven't spent the money of the fund. Now, that's obviously not true, and the expenditure of some \$460,000 under this section when added to the other sections amounts to some \$164.5 million that is going to be spent by this government in this...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I wonder if you would stay with the estimates for Recreation and Parks and never mind talking about deemed assets and the total fund. Let's just deal with what's on the agenda.

MR. McEACHERN: It is only a part of the heritage trust fund deemed assets, Mr. Chairman, and if one can't relate the expenditures in this section to the whole section, then what are we doing here? Are you trying to suggest that all we can do is talk about Kananaskis itself? Oh, it's a wonderful park: is that what you want to hear?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay. But I've also got a lot of people sitting in Edmonton-Kingsway that have to go to food banks to get enough to eat, and they're not going to get down to that park. Is that what you want to hear me say? Or do you want to hear me talk about the heritage trust fund and the money that's in it and where it's being spent and where it's coming from? This money, Mr. Chairman, has to come from other parts of the heritage trust fund, as I already pointed out, and it's really the source of the funds...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was making exactly the same debate last year, according to *Hansard*.

MR. McEACHERN: So? If the government didn't listen last year, maybe if you tell them again, they might listen this year. Is there some rule, Mr. Chairman, that says I can't repeat something this year that I said last year? If the intention of the government is to just be obstructive and not to debate the heritage trust fund, then sorry, that isn't the way it's going to happen. We'll hear about the heritage trust fund. The heritage trust fund...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the Chair is bound by Standing Order 58(2), that only those estimates before the

committee may be considered. Now, if you want to change the rules...

MR. YOUNIE: On a point of order on pertinency of debate. I think it should be obvious to all members that trying to relate a single expense to an entire program and to other expenses coming from the same area is very pertinent to the debate, and to try to restrict debate to one thing without allowing it to be related to others and to discuss whether or not the expenditure was better here or there and how it fits into the whole picture is extremely unfair. So I would like to hear what all members, including some government members from the northern part of the province, think about recreation costs and what's going into the south and so on. Let's take a look at a larger picture.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, the expenses on Kananaskis Country, the sum total of \$221 million, is a major part of the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund. Even though this particular expenditure is only a small part of that -- it's sort of the finishing off of the project -- that does not mean that the source of the funds for that expenditure should not be something we can debate at this time. I do not understand why you're saying that somehow we can't talk about where we're going to get the money for this. The fact of the matter is that the Treasurer, because he's the one in charge of the heritage trust fund, will have to take money out of some of the other sections of the fund -- for instance, the cash and marketable securities section probably, although he may take it from the Alberta division now, the way he's handled that part of it. And I think that's a germane question or topic for all the people of this Assembly to hear. It is not something I said last year, as a matter of fact, because the money out of the Alberta division was not possible last year; it was not being done in such a way that there was money available for this kind of expenditure under the capital projects division.

The fact is -- and I've got the quarterly statement for December 31 here. It says that in the cash and marketable securities sections, which is where I assume this money will come from -- although it might come from the Alberta division, and I'll get to that in a minute -- some \$1 billion has been taken from the cash and marketable securities sections by the province of Alberta, I assume the general revenue account then, to do certain things. Now, I thought and I understood, Mr. Chairman -- and here I'd want to digress just for a moment -- that that money went mainly to the farm credit stability program and the small business term assistance Act. But according to this, only \$387 million of it went to the farm credit stability program and \$200 million of it to the small business term assistance plan. So I'm wondering where the other half-billion dollars went. I suppose some of it might have gone into this...

MR. YOUNG: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the estimates that are called right now relate strictly to parks and recreation, and that's what we should stay on. So the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway should get back there, and if he has a question or comment on that, the committee should be pleased to hear him. In the meantime, let's not skate all over.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, on the point of order, if we're going to discuss the expenditures of these dollars, we have to also -- no one understands where they came from, why they're being spent that way, and what process the government used or the Treasurer used to decide where that money would

come from. So I don't understand why they're so touchy. Are there some things about the heritage trust fund you don't want us to know or don't want to tell us or don't want to learn? Is that the problem?

MS BARRETT: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me that just a few moments ago in the Assembly we had a debate about considering the broad scope of these estimates all together just as we do on an annual basis. The government used its majority to bully a vote through that says, no, we can't do that, even though it violates the tradition of this Assembly.

Now, on an annual basis we do the same thing with the main budget as well. It seems to me that the government wants it both ways. They didn't want to deal with a main debate even though that is the convention of the Assembly, and they don't want to deal with anything that isn't purely related to a specific vote. Now, I remind you, Mr. Chairman, that in this instance we don't have a vote that says vote 1, for instance, like the minister's office when it comes to the main budget estimates. One needs to put things in context, and I think one needs to wonder just what the sensitivity is on behalf of the government, why it is that they want such a grossly strict application of rules which are vague to begin with, why it is that they don't want to entertain . . . [interjection] I'm on your point of order, Mr. Young, and I get my turn just like you got yours. Why it is that they don't want to permit debate that embraces the broader context of the expenditure of these funds and from whence they come -- it seems to me that's fair game.

Mr. Chairman, I point out that there are many days for the debate of these estimates, and if the government doesn't want to consider the broader context, well, that's too bad; the opposition does. It is our role under parliamentary tradition to keep the government accountable, and that includes keeping them accountable for their expenditures within the context of what's there, what isn't, where else it is being spent, and where else it should be spent. That's fair game, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks. I would like to support my colleagues in the New Democrats on this particular point of order. This is not a point of ideological support, however. It is merely support on the question of the philosophy of parliamentary democracy.

The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that expenditures have to be put in the context of the priority-setting process. We look at this particular vote this year and it's \$164 million. Last year it was \$140 million. How was it that this government arrived at those two figures? Are they arbitrary? Do they have a relationship to some other source of revenue to government expenditure priorities overall? Until we can determine answers to those kinds of questions, until we know what criteria it is upon which the priority is set so that \$164 million somehow seems to be the figure for capital expenditure out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund versus the capital expenditure out of general revenues, then it is very, very difficult to determine at this level whether \$460,000 is reasonable, unreasonable, unreasonably high or unreasonably low. We require, therefore, the opportunity to de-

bate the Heritage Savings Trust Fund's capital fund estimates in a broader context. It is abhorrent to the proper process of parliamentary democracy that we should be stymied and stifled in this way by the Government House Leader.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: On the point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're dealing with these estimates by provision of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act. I just make that comment because it's obvious that this is done in the context of the overall Act as a whole. We're dealing with the capital projects division:

the making of investments in projects which will provide long term economic or social benefits to the people of Alberta but which [may not necessarily] by their nature yield a return to the Trust Fund.

Mr. Chairman, investments

shall only be made if money is first appropriated from the Trust Fund by an Act of the Legislature specifically for a purpose described in subsection (1)(a),

which I've just referred to. But here's the point that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway was making: these investments

shall not exceed 20% of the assets of the Trust Fund.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, debate on these estimates can only take place within the context of the overall assets of the trust fund. The point he was making, and he said it very clearly: there's been a cap placed on funds accruing to the trust fund generally. If that cap is there, obviously expenditures which we're being asked to approve for the capital projects division are going to have an impact on the other assets of the fund. That's very clear from the legislation.

He made the point in his opening remarks, he's been coming back to that time and time again throughout his debate, and I think it's quite appropriate and in order for him to make the comments he's making, Mr. Chairman.

MR. YOUNIE: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before I listen to the hon. member, I would point out that this debate was carried out last year by almost the same members that are doing it this year. The chairman is in the hands of the committee. I am bound by the Standing Orders, that the only . . . [interjections] If the hon. members would keep quiet, they could hear what the chairman has to say.

I'm bound by the rules that the only matter for discussion is the estimates of the particular department. Now, if the committee wishes otherwise, then that's your decision and I'll be bound by that rule. But I would point out that last year there was a vote taken, and it was the decision of the committee to continue on with the estimates.

Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. I would just like to make a couple of points. One is that I think the arguments that have been presented show that within a reasonable interpretation of the rules what was being presented was very much in order and that the member was trying to fit single expenditures of what we're discussing in a larger context, which I think anyone would under-

stand is a very important way to look at it. You can't just look at it in isolation; you have to look at it as it affects the entire fund.

That being said, I would like to look at another thought that reflects on the comments you just made, Mr. Chairman, that being that even if you were to judge that perhaps by the strictest possible interpretation of the rules, and only by that, you would say it was out of order certainly in terms of the original point of order that came up before, that we should have a general debate on the fund itself first -- perhaps a more reasonable and less picky interpretation of the order -- that we be given the broadest possible scope to relate these individual expenditures and individual budget lines to the larger picture of the fund, the philosophy of the fund and where those individual expenditures would fit into it, would be a fair and reasonable way for you to rule.

MR. McEACHERN: On the point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This will be the last member on this point of order, and then I'll ask the committee to rule.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, in terms of whether or not we had a debate other years, in each case when these estimates have been brought before the House, the Treasurer has stood up and made some opening remarks, and he loves very much to brag about the heritage trust fund. He waxes eloquent about how the revenues are equivalent to a 7 percent sales tax, which is nonsense. [interjection] I've got the numbers to show that it's nonsense. He waxes eloquent all over the map, and the chairman never interrupts him or tells him he can't say those things. So that engendered a debate last time. This time obviously he wasn't prepared to lay it on the line. I don't know if he's not as confident about the heritage trust fund anymore or what, but he would not make any opening comments, and you think that you're going to get rid of the debate totally and be able to just isolate it into little compartments when, in fact, what my colleague from Edmonton-Glengarry just said makes sense: you cannot -- well, you could if you wanted -- isolate one particular thing from the whole. But there is no reason to, even under the strictest of interpretations of your rules.

So I would submit that what I've been saying, because it's in context in regard to this expenditure, in fact is in order, even under your strict rules.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. McEACHERN: I thought you said I would be the last speaker on this point of order . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are absolutely right, hon. member, but . . .

MR. McEACHERN: . . . with respect. But I don't really mind, if it's just him.

MR. HERON: With all due respect to the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, the relevancy we've heard so far has never been a point of order.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out section 62, Standing Orders, and relate that

The standing orders of the Assembly shall be observed in the

committees of the Assembly so far as may be applicable.

Move down to section (2):

Speeches in committees of the whole Assembly must be strictly relevant to the item or section under consideration.

And we move down there:

The Chairman shall maintain order in the committees of the whole Assembly, deciding all questions of order subject to an appeal to the Assembly.

It's quite clear that if you're questioning the chairman's authority, it's given to him under section 62.

I might also add in this point of order, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway has had adequate opportunity when he was a member of the select committee for the heritage trust fund to go on at some length in discussing his grand philosophy about how it should operate, without being specific in that committee. So now he's trying to bring that kind of distraction into this committee, and I appeal to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all members of this Assembly to stay strictly relevant.

MR. McEACHERN: These two points that he made need to be reacted to. One is that we've never challenged the the authority of the Chair. We're merely talking about the interpretation of the rules, which is a very, very different thing. Okay? We are not challenging the authority of the Chair at all.

The other point is: you say I had a lot of time in the heritage trust fund committee. But, in fact, when the Treasurer came before the committee, I got three sets of questions in at the start and never got back in because you, for one, asked him a lot of silly questions that he could talk about for about 20 minutes. He talked out the rest of the two hours, and we never go to ask him a lot of important questions. So now is the time when we can make some of the points to some of the people in this Assembly that didn't hear those debates.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What the Chair was trying to achieve is that -- we spent almost half an hour arguing on how we are going to conduct the business this afternoon. I think the hon. minister spoke for about five or six minutes. Now, if the committee wants to continue on this way, I would suggest that a motion be made that the general discussion be held.

But I would point out that the rules of procedure and debate are laid out by the Legislative Assembly, and I think it would be rather strange if this committee decided to change the rules on its own.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. McEACHERN: You'd like to carry on the discussion, then, to Recreation and Parks?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are speaking to the estimates? Yes.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes. Well, the estimates of \$260,000 for the finishing off of Kananaskis Country is part of expenditures of \$164.5 million for the 1988-89 fiscal year. And I would just point out, Mr. Chairman, that that number is up again. Last year the total expenditure was \$140 million. That was down from the year before, a figure of \$236 million, and the year before that, \$287 million. It seemed to me the government had embarked on a program of cutting back on and not using the capital projects division as an expenditure of taxpayers' dollars, and

then suddenly this year they've reversed that again. I'd like the Treasurer or somebody on the other side to explain to us whether that's a planned change or whether it just happened by accident.

I would point out that when you spend money in that section, you are indeed not continuing to develop assets -- in some ways I know you keep trying to call them assets -- but in fact you are spending the money, and it probably would make more sense from the point of view of the normal procedure of budgetary expenditures to approve them as expenditures in this Assembly under the budget. It is certainly obvious that a lot of these expenditures will generate expenditures in various departments, and I guess I would like to ask the Minister of Recreation and Parks if that's the case here. It's all very well to spend \$460,000 under the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund -- and in fact over the time we've spent \$221 million -- but those expenditures will generate other expenditures on the departmental and budget side. I think the minister should stand up and explain to this House what some of those operating costs will be that come out of this kind of expenditure. He should explain what other capital projects were generated on the department side in order to finish the Kananaskis project.

By the way, those numbers I was reading a few minutes ago are for the last four years. If you take the total expenditures in the capital projects division, it comes to \$2.8 billion. Mr. Chairman, that's a lot of money for this Assembly to approve in this manner. It seems to me it's incumbent upon this government to bring in before this Assembly some kind of plan, some kind of sense of direction statement, and lay out what it is they're trying to do with the capital projects of the heritage trust fund in a more comprehensive way than just this document which comes before us with, you know, a few little numbers and a very, very brief -- in fact too brief -- explanation.

I do think that the point about the pressure on the 20 percent is an important one. The fact is that this Assembly will have to -- or not the Assembly but the cabinet . . .

MR. YOUNG: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. The 20 percent -- if the hon. member wants to get to it, he can do it under a number of other forums, but this is not the time that's specific to this. If he can't do the arithmetic necessary, perhaps someone here sitting beside him will do it for him so he can work out what 20 percent means. Then he can be reassured or otherwise, depending upon whether he's made an error or not.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway should get back on track.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I hate to get up and repeat what I said earlier, but obviously it hadn't registered on the other side. We're here today only because of legislation containing the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It states in the legislation that investments under the capital projects division

(a) shall only be made if money is first appropriated from the Trust Fund by an Act of the Legislature specifically for a purpose described in subsection (1)(a),

(b) and shall not exceed 20% of the assets of the Trust Fund.

Mr. Chairman, the legislation is very clear why we're here. We couldn't be here if it weren't for the legislation. The legislation puts a cap on what percentage the assets of the trust fund should be. It seems quite pertinent and relevant to me if the hon. member wants to make reference to subsection (2)(b) of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, that being the 20 per-

cent cap of the assets of the trust fund go to the capital projects division. That seems to me quite relevant, in keeping with the legislation which guides us in this place this afternoon.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would like to point out to committee members that I am bound by the rules that the committee must deal with the estimates of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Recreation and Parks. If you do not agree with my suggestion, then I suggest you make a motion that we have a general discussion, and we'll see whether or not the motion passes.

MR. McEACHERN: The House leader is the only one who can make that carry, and you know that. So if the House leader is willing to do it . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any member of the Legislature can get up if he's recognized by the Chair, and you're recognized, Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. If you want to make a motion, make a motion, and it'll be on the floor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. McEACHERN: All right, then. I will move that the heritage trust fund projects division . . . [interjections].

No, Mr. Chairman. On balance, I think that the remarks I've made . . . If I make the motion that you're asking me to, you're in effect saying, then, that I don't have the right to talk about the overall amount of expenditure in the context of a single expenditure. You know very well that when you talk about a single expenditure, you should be able to talk about the effect on the overall, just the same as when you're talking about the overall you can use specific examples to illustrate. Those are common debating techniques.

If I make the motion that you suggest, it will merely be voted down, and then they'll use that as proof that I don't have the right to speak in detail or in overall about the effect of the heritage trust fund expenditures. So I don't concede the point.

I think that if we can spend \$460,000 on Recreation and Parks or, over time, \$221 million, and if that -- and I just read here in the budget document that in 1988 the forecast of the capital projects division will be . . .

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is way off on an irrelevant topic.

MR. McEACHERN: No, it's right here. You've talked about it, and I just want to explain to you.

MR. YOUNG: That's not the document before the committee this afternoon, hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: I can draw my sources from other places.

MR. YOUNG: You can draw your source from any place you want. You can get inspiration from the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, if you can find any. He found the Holy Grail by reading twice what the statute says, which is exactly what we're doing, and it really tickles him pink. I could see him going on like this -- you know, Mr. Chairman. But if you want to find your inspiration there, you go on too.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member, while this set of estimates is before the committee, should stick to the point as he is bound

to do under our rules. And that is not a relevant consideration. The rules suggest that the hon. member should stay with the estimate, and the estimate is strictly that of Recreation and Parks.

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

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. If I may draw an analogy to this, in the estimates debate under the Department of the Environment I talked at some length about the Oldman dam. I talked about the expenditures of that department on irrigation. I drew information out of the Department of Agriculture, and at that time the Minister of Agriculture didn't jump up and down in any silly fashion saying I was "Out of order, out of order," perhaps because he didn't want to, for whatever reason, try to stifle debate on how the Environment department expenditures related to Agriculture department expenditures or the overall fiscal plan of the government. Now we find, as soon as anyone tries in these debates on the heritage trust fund to take a single expenditure in a single department and relate it to other departments and other expenditures in the overall fund and what that reflects for the overall plan and why this individual one comes in that position within the overall plan, we've got members jumping up and down.

Now, one could argue what reason they might have for trying to stifle debate at some length, but I think it becomes obvious. I think it's perfectly in order to comment that it's totally in order to argue all those larger questions and how these individual expenses are part of it, and an attempt to put things otherwise and to narrow them unfairly otherwise is an attempt to stifle debate and make sure nobody gets to see or discuss that very important larger picture. I don't think this Legislature should be aimed and argued to create just a very narrow view of the heritage trust fund and the individual expenditures, and an attempt to do so is blatantly wrong and unfair.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, what is happening here is we're spending the entire afternoon debating how the meeting shall be handled and how the points of order shall be discussed. If the hon. member -- whoever is speaking -- can skillfully relate the moneys under Recreation and Parks to a particular section of the heritage fund that he or she is concerned about, then the Chair will not have any problem with it. But the Chair is bound by the rules of the Legislative Assembly. And I'm sorry; the Chair has to adhere to those rules.

I would also point out that the Chair is able -- I believe it's under Standing Order 22 -- to rule that there's been sufficient debate on a point of order, and I therefore suggest that we've had enough debate on this particular point at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, on the main question then, there is no reason to suppose that that \$240,000 isn't an important component in the part of the capital projects expenditures that will lead to pushing on the 20 percent, and I think that is an important and relevant point: this Assembly should not spend money that would put the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund over 20 percent of the fund; otherwise, we are in violation of our own laws. For me to point that out and explain the dilemma is something that's perfectly relevant to whichever part of this particular document one started to speak, and I do not see why the House leader keeps jumping up and telling me that I

cannot talk about that.

The budget speech -- it says right here that we've already spent 19.3 percent of the total assets of the heritage trust fund under this division. So there is a very tiny margin, and if we are to make that margin big enough, then we have to raise the percentage from 20 to 21 or 22. In fact, there is such a recommendation from the heritage trust fund standing committee to the cabinet, who may very well do that. They do not have to -- as the legislation happens to read -- come to this Assembly to ask for permission, although I think they should. But certainly it's up to this Assembly to see to it that they don't overestimate . . .

MR. YOUNG: I regret very much to have to say this, Mr. Chairman, but your ruling is not now being observed, and if you, Mr. Chairman . . . [interjection] It is my responsibility, if we have to take special motion with respect to this, hon. member, then perhaps we will have to do that. But Mr. Chairman, maybe the hon. member can get back to the order of business.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has been talking about the set of estimates overall, the government's fiscal plan. He's had lots of opportunity to do that in other areas, and he has wandered far, far away from parks and recreation and also from your ruling.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, the House leader is being just miserable, is all he's doing. He's not got a real good point of order. He's just trying to be miserable to make it difficult for me to explain what's going on here.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, poor Alex.

MR. McEACHERN: I'm okay. I'll survive. The House leader doesn't particularly daunt me.

Mr. Chairman, there are a few questions -- one could put it the other way around, then, and ask the minister of parks and recreation: is he concerned that that \$460,000 might help us to push on that limit and have us doing something illegal in this House, or has assured himself that the Treasurer and the cabinet have decided to do this in a way that will be perfectly legal? It would seem to me that that same question could be asked over and over again at every juncture, at every possible vote that we're asked to approve in this document, and that it would make a lot more sense to have one person ask it at the start and get some kind of feedback or some kind of input from the government so that we would then have an explanation and we'd all know where we stand.

I pointed out a minute ago that the committee, in fact, did recommend to the Treasurer that they raise the percentage from 20 to 22 percent, and I would like to say that our members agreed. We had some ideas of some expenditures that we thought should be included in the deemed assets or the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund, and we knew that in order to handle them we would have to raise that ceiling. Unfortunately, the government chose not to take us up on either of the proposals. I don't know if I should mention them, but they were endowment funds for Advanced Education. I suppose I should wait till Advanced Education is up before I mention them, but doubtless my colleague from Mill Woods will.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is straying again. Please, please stay with the Recreation and Parks or be skillful in relating it to Recreation and Parks.

MR. McEACHERN: But we are talking about the expenditures pushing on the ceiling of the 20 percent, and I do submit that that is relevant to the debate on Recreation and Parks, the same as it's relevant to Public Works, Supply and Services, the same as it's relevant to Agriculture, the same as it's relevant to all the other parts. And I just said that unless you want me to go through that argument every time for every one of the estimates, then let us do it once in a general context of this thing and not get too excited about it.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's absolute defiance of the Chair.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay. I'll bring it back to that, and wind up my comments then on this.

The Kananaskis park is a good park. There's no question about that. It's a beautiful area of the province. But the government needs reminding every now and again that they started out with a \$40 million project and ended up with a well over \$200 million project, and that the Auditor General roasted them good and proper in the early '80s for their lack of accountability and their lack of adequate procedures for controlling costs and expenditures, that sort of thing; that they were doing that in a period while this province was experiencing quite a recession and that there are a lot of people in this province who -- well, as I said -- line up at food banks while other people build Kananaskis golf courses. The government was very slow. It took them four years to sort of wake up and realize that the party was over, even though a lot of the real estate companies in this province could have told them that, had they been listening.

So I just say to the Minister of Recreation and Parks that, yes, while he has a park that he can be proud of, he should also consider that there are a lot of areas in this province that are very beautiful in the north as well, that they've not looked at very closely. I would recommend that he start talking to some of his colleagues, and whether they do it out of the heritage trust fund or out of the departmental estimates, I don't really mind, but they should look more closely at our \$75 million proposal for development of tourism in the north. I think I'll leave more detailed comment on that aspect of the park development and recreation development in this province to some of my colleagues.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to comment on the estimates in this year's budget for the Recreation and Parks component of the trust fund expenditures as well.

I see that the total expended on the Kananaskis park up to March 31, 1987, is \$221,238,000, and on top of that, we're now asked to vote for an additional \$460,000 out of the trust fund. This will help develop the recreational facilities and transportation infrastructure" of the Kananaskis region. As everybody has noted, the Kananaskis park -- although I've never been to it, I confess -- is reported by everybody to be very nice indeed.

What I'd like to look at, Mr. Chairman, though, is a sort of history of expenditure in northern Alberta compared to southern Alberta by the Alberta government, and urge the minister to start dropping some announcements with respect to development of northern Alberta. I'd like to just point out that it was northern Alberta that experienced the highest levels of unemployment through this protracted recessionary period. It's northern Alberta that tends to have, you know, the blue-collar work, and southern Alberta tends to have the financial industry

work, which is itself inherently a bit more stable. On top of that, recreation and parks has been largely ignored by this government when it comes to expenditure in northern Alberta.

I'll point out a few instances, Mr. Chairman. In southern Alberta you have a number of interpretive centres which could be funded, I suppose, by the Department of Recreation and Parks under the trust fund program. Currently most of them are not. But we have a fairly high expenditure on these interpretive centres. I relate to you: Tyrrell Museum, \$228 million -- that's in Drumheller; the field station at the Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, another \$2.3 million; the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, \$5.2 million; Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, \$10.3 million. These things are really good, Mr. Chairman, and they're very useful and really appreciated. But it seems to me that you look at northern Alberta, and what do you get? You get the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village at \$14 million and the Fort McMurray Oil Sands Interpretive Centre at \$9 million.

I look at parks, and it's the same sort of thing. In northern Alberta we have a total of \$33.7 million having been spent on provincial parks in northern Alberta compared to \$241 million spent in southern Alberta, including the Kananaskis park itself.

The fact of the matter is that we're not going to have the important tourism that the Tourism minister mentioned earlier today in his ministerial announcement unless we start concentrating our efforts more in the northern half of this province. I remind you that the population in the northern half is actually slightly larger than the population in the southern half of the province. And yet -- and yet, Mr. Chairman, we have a total of \$62 million having been spent on these information centres and interpretive centres and parks and so forth in northern Alberta compared to a total of \$421 million in southern Alberta.

Now, I do acknowledge that the fact of the 1988 Olympics in Calgary will have skewed this somewhat. But surely it shouldn't be so skewed that northern Alberta is as shortchanged as it is. For instance, on the 1983 Universiade games the Alberta government spent \$3.5 million, and comparatively, then, in the '88 Olympics in Calgary, \$129 million. Sure, the Olympics have put us on the map internationally; there's no doubt about that. But wouldn't it be nice if northern Alberta could be put on the map as well? We have beautiful lakes, beautiful woodlands, in northern Alberta that could be used to entice people not only to come to northern Alberta but actually to stay in northern Alberta as well. We actually are desperate for those tourist dollars, and what that means is adequate development of recreation and parks in northern Alberta. The same thing can be said for travel information centres. We have the same sort of skewing where the ratio of expenditure between south and north is damn near -- well, it's about 4 to 1. The capital expenditures: it's about 2 to 1, just on interpretive centres alone. The provincial parks are, of course, extremely distorted, where southern Alberta is \$241 million and northern Alberta \$33.7 million. You see that the relationship is not exactly balanced, and I wonder if the minister would explain, first of all, if it's his intentions . . . And I know he's only recently inherited this portfolio. He doesn't answer for the Lougheed years; I understand that. But I think it's incumbent upon this government to indicate what it plans to do to rebalance the expenditures so that northern Alberta gets its fair share.

Now, remember that Banff and Jasper are national parks, so those don't figure into the picture, Mr. Chairman. But what we are looking at is the need for greater emphasis on what will attract and keep tourists in northern Alberta. The northern Alberta product development group has designed a checklist, and I know

that the Tourism minister was at a meeting I attended a few weeks ago at which this issue was discussed. It was a good, co-operative meeting. It involved MPs from the Edmonton area, MLAs from the Edmonton area, and city council representatives from the Edmonton area, as well as representatives from the private sector. There was real consensus. The facts couldn't be disputed. There was real consensus that we need to have a new emphasis on the north.

So, you know, we could start with things like a major zoo development for Edmonton, expansion of the Capital City Park beyond that which is currently allocated for under the Public Works, Supply and Services budget of this trust fund here, maybe even looking at a stem-wheeler riverboat; enhancement of the old town market, a combined farmers' market with retail entertainment; a restaurant complex right in the downtown area, the old part of the downtown area that is now looking at being redeveloped; and a permanent home for the China/Canada dinosaur exhibit. That would be great, you know. When that touring group came back from China, there was a lot of excitement generated. People were very anxious just to look at the slides they had, Mr. Chairman. I think if we can have an exhibit in Edmonton that shows the comparison between the dinosaurs, which, as you probably know, are very similar, people would come and look at that. That's exactly what they do when they go to Drumheller, as you know. It's amazing how much interest there is in the history of our planet and the remnants therefrom.

There's a notion that we could develop a native cultural interpretive centre in the Slave Lake area and perhaps a marina and breakwater project and a golf touring facility that would keep people in the area for more than half a day, where they just run to the local McDonald's, grab a quick bite, head to the car, and go back to West Edmonton Mall. In Peace River, another riverboat project is being considered, the river travel interpretive centre. I mean, let's face it: Peace River, the mighty Peace, has got a great history. I think people could be attracted to stay there if there was some emphasis and some government incentive through the trust fund to get people there and to stay there, perhaps developing a campsite on the Peace River as well. We have, you know, the oil and gas interpretive centre possibility for Devon and, for the county of Strathcona, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village expansion. I'm not just talking of completion of phase 1 but completion of phase 2. Remember phase 2? It's not even talked about anymore, Mr. Chairman. But I remember it was a big part of it when Lougheed first launched it. I think we should get back and start talking about phase 2. Even with the announcement of the phase 1 completion, there still isn't enough money to do the final restorations that are necessary, including, you know, period costumes and artifacts and the purchasing and upgrading of those things.

Grand Centre could sure benefit from a beachfront recreational development in the Frenchman's Bay area, and I think that would really be worth while. There's an area that is going to, in the long run, face greater economic expansion. But what good is it going to do if you can't get people to stay there during the summer or attract people in? We need to use the same might that we've used in developing Kananaskis to get people into and staying in northern Alberta, where wilderness is a major attraction and where wilderness need not be sold out in order to enhance tourism through the development of recreation and parks. Similarly Athabasca, another historic town, Mr. Chairman, that has an awful lot to offer. An interpretive centre or museum there, with provincial help, would be more than welcome. Recreation of the cage slung on a wire that was used to carry peo-

ple across the river: that'd be just wonderful.

You know, there's no limit to the number of ideas that have been generated by representatives of towns and cities in northern Alberta for recreational development that would help bring dollars in from both inside the province and outside the province. I mention other names like the Alberta Yellowhead west area that could benefit from forestry and transportation interpretive centres. Currently those towns, Edson and Hinton, could do with some beautifying and do with something else other than the industry that keeps them alive. As you know, they're practically single-industry towns.

You know, we've got something here in Alberta that'd be really fun to develop, and that's some of our ghost towns in those areas. It's a sad part of our history that we've had single-industry towns develop and then die, and the result therefrom, of course, is ghost towns. But ghost towns themselves can tell a lot of history, and it's amazing how much people want to absorb history these days. It might be a trend, but gee, what the heck, why don't we cash in on it if it's a trend? We've got other recommendations from Grande Prairie and Leduc and Grouard. There are all sorts of areas: Dunvegan, let's say the fort upgrading; Fort Vermilion; Lloydminster; Spruce Grove. There are all sorts of locations that could attract this government's attention if the government was willing to look at it.

I'd like to hear if the minister himself is considering this, because, you know, the trust fund expenditures are always going to be largely related to what sort of money we have, and we need to know if the money is being spent fairly and wisely compared to what it could be. You have a look at the overall amount of money that we're being asked to support here in both of these votes. Between Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas, that's \$2 million, and then \$460,000 for the Kananaskis -- well, let's hope it's a completion, but I doubt that it will be a completion. Where's the fairness in what has been spent, and where's the fairness in what the government proposes to spend in the future for northern Alberta? I think I speak on behalf of a lot of members of the Assembly and consequentially their constituents when I make this bid to the minister. I look forward to his comments.

The other thing that I would say, Mr. Chairman, is that we've had a history -- I mean, there have been years in this Assembly where as much as \$605 million was coming forward to be debated prior to their expenditure from the trust fund, which has been established for several years, since 1976, and we're down to a very small amount now, as you know. It tends to grow in years that are around election years and then fall off quite dramatically thereafter. I'd like this minister's commitment that that's not going to be the case with his expenditures, that he's committed to making expenditures in northern Alberta from the trust fund that will help even out the score, which hitherto has been skewed by departmental spending which emphasized southern Alberta. I'd like his commitment that this isn't just going to be a bunch of promises that are dropped during an election year, as has happened in the past, but actually a long-term commitment in which we can see, for instance, a five-year development plan so that northern Alberta gets its fair share and it knows where it's going from one year to the next, whether or not an election intervenes.

Those would be my comments. I look forward to the minister's responses, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to make a few comments relating to Recreation and Parks. I would like to start off by asking a few questions of the minister relating to the municipal recreation/tourism grants allocation that he's announced already here, I believe today. My first question to the minister is relating to the first one named. The Three Hills MLA, the Hon. Connie Osterman, announced a grant totaling \$100,000 for two recreation areas in her constituency and annual operating grants available for the sites upon completion of the projects. No description of the projects . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I wonder if the hon. member would tell the Assembly how something in Three Hills relates to Kananaskis Country.

MR. PIQUETTE: Well, it has to do with the Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas, the designation under the vote we're talking about, which is a \$2 million vote this year. I would like to get some more information relating to that project, because all other projects announced so far have been designated to a town or a municipality or an organization, nonprofit, and never to a particular MLA to be deciding what project will be funded without any commitment on the part of the minister.

Now, the MRTA, I think, is a very good program. I think it's a program that should be encouraged and developed over the years, because one of the most positive aspects of that grant is an ongoing commitment on an annual basis. For example, every grant, whether it be \$50,000 or divided from \$100,000, carries a \$10,000 or \$20,000 annual operating budget, which is very important for many rural communities where they have lack of accessibility of grants in order to maintain a lot of these various park/recreation developments in their own community. So I welcome those kinds of grants to be used in the future even more so by the province, because I think it's a grant which provides funds for various communities or community groups to develop a lot of their community action plans. And I think it possibly could be integrated with the community action plan as announced by the Minister of Tourism, because I think then they would be to a larger extent much more a master plan which would be set up by the whole total community or region, as opposed -- right now I think the MRTA is now administered separately from that department. I'd like to see the minister look at incorporating that within the community action plan.

Going to the whole question of Recreation and Parks relating to vote 1, the \$460,000 which is being voted on this year to compete the infrastructure for the Kananaskis Village at Ribbon Creek, it's again a continuation of a large amount of money, \$221.238 million voted by this Assembly out of the heritage trust fund capital budget for that particular project. As members have already indicated, northern Alberta is looking for its rainy day kind of budget as well, and I think the comment that has been directed to the minister over the last two years is that for northern Alberta, in terms of the expenditures that have been provided through the Alberta heritage trust fund committee, the capital budget expenditures are very much weighed in favour of the south over the north: \$421 million for southern Alberta as compared to \$62 million for northern Alberta. We have the same discrepancy in terms of provincial parks allocation: southern Alberta, \$141 million; northern Alberta, \$33 million. It doesn't make any difference how we want to rationalize that whole expenditure. It is not seen to be fair by the people of northern Alberta.

I'm quite sure the minister by now has read the letter from Mary Kazicki outlining some of the problems encountered by a St. Paul group attempting to get the government to build a park east of Lac La Biche, where a small group of concerned citizens have spent the past two and a half years trying to get the government to consider setting up a wilderness park in northeastern Alberta, a park which will ensure that some untouched wilderness would remain intact for future generations and, at the same time, would have the future potential of developing some areas for Alberta citizens' recreation as well as the tourist industry. The group then goes on to indicate the kind of runaround they received from the Department of Recreation and Parks in their attempt to, first of all, declare that area east of Lac La Biche a wilderness area and, number two, to provide the funding to develop a lakeland park for that part of the area. All the studies have been completed; I don't know what the minister is waiting for.

We as members of the heritage trust fund committee tried to find some money out of our heritage trust fund capital budget this year which would be to put aside a \$75 million pool of money in order to develop an Alberta North parks proposal. It was turned down by the members of the heritage trust fund committee. However, I was led to believe by the minister that he was attempting, either through general revenues or other funding through the heritage trust fund, to set aside money for parks development in northern Alberta. We have not heard anything out of the budget or anything since in terms of making sure that some of these very important parks, whether they be in the Lac La Biche area or whether they be in the Peace River country or in the city of Edmonton or north of Red Deer -- that we could go on with having an available pool of money over a five-year plan so that we know on an annual basis exactly what's available for development of various provincial parks, et cetera.

So I would like from the minister today to find out what his agenda is in terms of parks development in northern Alberta. I mean, we would like to see a commitment by the minister which will not leave this whole area again without any definition of what the government is proposing to do in terms of developing interpretive centres, historical parks, and parks relating to the Lakeland region, which has been identified by his own department as one of the possible tourist attractions which really, next to the mountain parks, could be the next provincial parks which would attract millions of people to northern Alberta.

One of the problems we have in northern Alberta is that if we're going to be developing tourism, we have to copy to some extent the same kind of a plan of action that's been set up for southern Alberta: that in order to attract tourists, you need to have something which lures a tourist to that area. And we do have the natural beauty, the kind of environment which, if we develop it wisely for the future generations of Alberta, will lure the tourists into the northern parts of the province and provide small businesses opportunities to expand their operations in terms of serving the tourism sector to its maximum capacity.

So the Minister of Recreation and Parks and the government must come to grips very shortly with this very important development of northern Alberta, to develop a master plan which will not only originate from the community action plan but, at the same time, develop in co-operation with the ministers of Tourism and culture a source of ideas and funding which is tied in together, as opposed to perhaps at the present time having various pools of funding with no master plan in terms of being able to develop to its maximum potential tourism development in northern Alberta.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Centre. Oh, he's not here. Sorry.
Mr. Minister.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to try and respond to some of the hon. members' questions. First of all, may I thank them for taking the time and for their sincerity in delivering the questions. I would treat some of them with a great reluctance in trying to respond directly, because some of the questions, Mr. Chairman, actually are in the departments of culture, Tourism, and others. But I'll try and be general in my remarks. In specific, I'd like to respond to a couple of the hon. members.

The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. When he referred to his questions, I had a hard time originally to differentiate between the points of order and the questions, so until we got into the remarks themselves, it was sometimes very difficult to deal with. But I, too, agree with him when he says that the money must come from somewhere. Yes, it does, Mr. Chairman, and that's why we're here today to vote on these two specific items. It's not taking away money from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I remind him and all hon. members that this was recommended by the committee. These are projects that were voted for and approved by the Assembly, and now we're coming forth with the final request for funds, in some cases to complete the program or cany on an existing program. I certainly would not at any time want to cast any aspersions to the members of the Assembly that we're looking for more or less funds. We're only specifically coming in and asking for funds that are required to complete the projects or to complete the program, as I've indicated; no more and no less. I believe it has to be fair and there has to be that balance, and the balance as well to other departments that would be coming forth and looking for funds as we present them in similar manner.

The hon. member referred a couple of times to \$164 million. I heard another hon. member refer to some \$221 million, in reference to Kananaskis Country, I might add, Mr. Chairman. The actual figure, and it should be recorded just so there is no mistake -- the total expended to March 31, 1988, is some \$224,613,400. I won't try and discuss the merits of the deemed capital assets. I believe that's best answered by the hon. House leader and, of course, could be dealt with by the Provincial Treasurer in discussion with him inside or outside of the House or the Provincial Auditor at any time as well.

I would like to indicate, though, to all hon. members of the Assembly, and thank them for raising the questions and concerns with regards to their views of the north and the development of the north, that it's certainly no secret that I am going to be 53 years of age, and of that 53 years all but three of them were spent in the province of Alberta. As a northern Albertan, having lived in northern Alberta for all of those 50 years, I certainly believe that I, too, can try and represent and speak for the views of northern Albertans. So I have some bias; I share that. I have tried many times, Mr. Chairman, to not show that bias in dealing with proposals that come forth and are generated from all comers of this province. I've always maintained that I'll try and be fair and equitable in reaching those decisions.

I listened very closely to the views as presented; in particular, the views with regards to the \$75 million proposal suggested that originated from the hon. members of the opposition, from the New Democratic Party. I would like to remind them that if they look back as far as *Hansard* of 1983, they will see that I, at that time, generated an initial suggestion that there be

development similar to Kananaskis Country in northern Alberta. Once again I had the opportunity to speak on that very clearly with regards to that proposal at the time the department's estimates were presented. I certainly don't want to go into large detail, because I am a firm believer -- and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands brought out some very significant points as she related to the different structures or infrastructure that could and should be developed. I believe those unique characteristics can be developed and expanded on, whether they be interpretive centre facilities or the natural pristine beauty or improvement of some of the existing amenities.

So I certainly stand very committed to development of a northern project, but as I've said before and repeat again, I also have to be a realist. The economies of the day just do not dictate and allow us to proceed with such a project. I certainly hope that I would see it in my tenure and that it would be there. I might like to say that I can recall my predecessor the hon. Member for Whitecourt, who at many times did indicate that such programs as the urban parks programs and the Capital City Park program and others which were so well done should be reinstituted and reimplemented. I think if one were to check back on *Hansard*, and I'm speaking for myself as the member representing the constituency as well, they would find that the hon. member at that time gave a commitment that the city of Fort McMurray, which was then under the New Towns Act, would be the first city, if such a program were to be implemented, to qualify for the urban parks program.

So I just wanted to bring those points out, because I certainly don't wish to appear argumentive or defensive as to the overall development of any such future projects. I would like to say, though, Mr. Chairman, that really the choice here today to all hon. members is to either accept or reject: to accept it as what it stands for or reject it on the overall merit that they do not support the development. It's not the question of what we're going to do or how we're going to do. I can't crystal ball to all hon. members, and I'm certainly not going to at any one time sit here and divulge what we may have in our back pocket. I make no secret about that, Mr. Chairman, because I believe as a progressive government we must be looking towards and for the future as well.

To the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, who mentioned in particular a young lady by the name of Mrs. Mary Kazicki -- I should indicate to the hon. Chair and to the Assembly that I've had occasion to speak and meet with the good lady on many occasions. I've also had the opportunity and took the time, on a very, very cold, wintery, blustery day in a snowstorm, to drive and meet with her and her Member of Parliament, the Hon. Don Mazankowski, in the home riding of the hon. Member for Vegreville. At that time I gave her the opportunity to present and listened to, her concerns, and as well presented the overall picture as to what we were doing for the projects in the north. The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche is well aware of the commitments with regards to the land and the development into the north, with regard to the Lakeland study as well. It should be noted that somebody . . .

MR. PIQUETTE: Where's the action?

MR. WEISS: Well, I just overheard the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche call for action and say, "Where is the action?" I take that as a personal remark, to the hon. Chair, and would suggest that there is action, not inaction. We certainly will be working on that as I've indicated by the number of

meetings that I've had and will continue to have. I have a proposal before this government as well and have appeared before the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee, which I hope he and other members -- and I'm sure the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, as he has indicated -- would support. So as it comes to the realities of the day for the funding to be in place, to the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, that project will proceed, and I hope he would be here to share it, as I will be. I say that I hope he will be here to share it as I will be, because I don't expect him to be here after the next election, through the hon. Chair.

When the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway referred to the operating portion and others talked about where are these dollars coming from and are they taking away from overall expenditures, I would like to say to the hon. member that that's when we had the opportunity to discuss these items by detail, in the department's estimates. In vote 5, for example, of the Kananaskis division, which is some \$13 million this year -- which is down, I might indicate, from previous years, to show our control and our restraint -- that's where we've had the opportunity to review those particular items.

My responsibility, once again, Mr. Chairman, is to bring to this House and bring to the committee a realistic valuation and request for funds to see these projects completed, no more and no less, as I've said before. To ask for more would be a completely frivolous waste, and I don't look at myself as being a wasteful person, from having good schooling and upbringing from my parents, who didn't have the opportunity for many things that we have and share today.

One of the hon. members, and I should say that it was the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, made reference to what started at some \$40 million and ended up at \$200 million-plus. It would indicate, then, that there was some waste or negligence in the overall development and project. To the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway I would like to say, and stand very firm, that we have a \$200 million-plus facility that we're all proud of, and it will be there for many, many years for Albertans and others to enjoy. I've indicated, as I said in my opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, that close to 4 million visitors this year will enjoy Kananaskis Country. That is a record we can be proud of. We can be proud of some of the decisions that went into those costs, as I've indicated in the past to this Assembly as well, some of the costs as referred to in the white sand and the high cost of building the lock vault toilets. Those costs were certainly well considered, and I applaud the hon. Member for Whitecourt, who made those decisions, in conclusion, because of the fact that we have the white sand still there without it having blown away with any additional cost of replacement, and the vault toilets are standing up exceedingly well and look as good as the day they were first built.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands should, I believe, be complimented, Mr. Chairman, in that her remarks were so very accurate in giving me and all other hon. members a little bit of a history lesson and geographic lesson in taking us around the various areas in the north to talk about the site specifics and what could or could not be used or built. But in paying the compliment to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, I should say that she was not very astute, because she should have been addressing her remarks to the Minister of Tourism or the minister of culture. All of those projects are specifically under the jurisdiction and development of the two related ministers.

The northern Alberta projects that she spoke about I won't come back to. I've tried to address it in my overall remarks as it

related to my commitment. I was pleased, though, that she did, in fairness, list the interpretive centres, in particular in my home constituency in the city of Fort McMurray, some \$9 million-plus. I would hope that the hon. member would have an opportunity to come up and visit, as well.

MS BARRETT: I've been there.

MR. WEISS: I should say that I know she was there because I know who she visited when she was there. I say that with tongue in cheek, through to the Chair. The moccasin telegram works very well in the north, as the hon. member is aware.

The hon. member, though, should have pointed out as well that there are many, many facets of tourism as it relates to the north -- and to the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche and others who talked about specific projects. When we talk about tourism, tourism should not be just restricted, then, to such things as what we do in Recreation and Parks. I'll be a little general in this field, Mr. Chairman, because I believe, in fairness, that the Grande Prairie and Lloydminster areas, through their urban parks program -- some \$40 million in excess -- are part of that overall project. For example, the capital city recreation program in the city of Edmonton, which comes out of general revenue funds, was in excess of some \$40 million. That's tourism too.

But I want to be specific, because I think it's unfair that when we turn around and we're critical of things we do -- and in fairness, the opposition has the right to point out those areas of criticism and, as I've indicated, I certainly agree with some as well. But I don't know if the hon. members of the Assembly are aware that there's over \$500 million in one project alone that has been beneficial to the northern Alberta areas. Do you know what that is? I'm being just like in school. Could one hon. member answer the question? Where has some \$500 million expenditure been related to the development of tourism and infrastructure in one specific area or one specific project and from one department in northern Alberta?

AN HON. MEMBER: West Edmonton Mall.

MR. WEISS: No, it is not West Edmonton Mall. It is the development of transportation corridors and roadways in northern Alberta.

The municipal recreation/tourism areas as well: some several million dollars have been extended in those particular areas. In forestry, the tar sands plants, and others, of course, the money is well noted.

Reference was made to Kananaskis Country and the balance. I've tried, Mr. Chairman, to point out some of the inequities when those comparisons were made as it relates to dollars. I'm not here to try and talk about specific dollars to the north or the south. I'm trying to be fair and realistic, as I've indicated before, and would like to try and be more specific in relation to the \$460,000-some expenditure in the Kananaskis Country vote portion and as well to the \$2 million in the Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas. It may be that the Minister of Tourism and others would wish to supplement at some time, but that would be their prerogative.

Interesting, as well -- the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands brought out and, I think, was very right in mentioning the development at Frenchman's Bay in the Cold Lake-Grand Centre area. We hope to involve the private sector in that, and I think it's very exciting. I hope that it could be expanded on. I

can't comment on the ghost towns and others. As I've indicated, they're not within the jurisdiction or the mandate.

"What are we going to do?" was the question put by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. I've indicated, as I say, that we're not going to try and crystal ball anything. We're going to try and be realists. This Assembly will make the decisions, Mr. Chairman, as they relate to the urban parks programs, country north or northern adventures, whatever name is attributed to any such further developments.

Specifically, though, the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche asked the question as it related to the municipal recreation/tourism areas program and referred to the Three Hills constituency and said that no description was made in reference to it. I'd like to indicate to the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche that, no, there was no description. There was a commitment made by myself to see developments take place in that constituency because the hon. Member for Three Hills has not had any municipal recreation/tourism area development, unlike the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, who has had two in the previous year. So, unlike him, she has not had the opportunity to share. This was her turn, if it may be put that way, through to the Chair. We have not had the opportunity to finalize with those community groups, and hence the specific development projects were then not announced. As I did say in my earlier remarks as well, Mr. Chairman, we're looking forward to later announcements in this regard. I hold true by that statement and will try and address other members as well.

I'm very pleased that the hon. member spoke about the grants and just what they mean and how they relate to the overall programs. I thank the hon. member for his comments in that regard, because I, too, agree that it's a very important facet of the overall program, and it is within the municipal recreation/tourism area program that we're asking the \$2 million for. It should be noted that there's some \$20,000 per year goes towards operating grants for 25 years to those specific projects.

The community action plan and tourism initiatives were referred to by the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. We work very closely with the Minister of Tourism, and our departments and our staff work very closely in ensuring that there isn't any duplication or overlap, in particular with the community groups and the development of their marketing strategies. We as a department, as well, address these concerns to ensure that they fit in and are part of that overall tourism strategy for the communities. So we'll continue to work together in those areas.

The hon. members generally referred to Kananaskis Country as being an exceptionally good park, and I would only go back to one point that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands raised when she did indicate that she's not had the opportunity to have attended the park. May I extend a very personal invitation. I would hope that she'd be able to do so, because I'm sure once having had the opportunity, she, too, would like to stand up and expound about the benefits and the good things that have been done in the overall development.

So with those few remarks in general, Mr. Chairman, I would ask all hon. members to support the request for expenditure as indicated under [votes] 1 and 2 and would hope that we'd be able to proceed with other member's estimates as well.

Thank you very much.

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

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly would

like to make a few points about these expenditures and other broader points directly related to them. I will certainly try to bring those broader points back to the topic at hand with enough frequency that I won't be interrupted with undue frequency, because I do believe they relate very directly.

Certainly I think that when we start looking at Recreation and Parks, we have to consider some of the related environmental issues very carefully, because generally just by the nature of what it is in this province that attracts tourists and makes areas suitable for parks and recreation facilities, we start moving into areas where the potential damage to wildlife habitat and wildlife itself is greatest, and therefore the need for care is greatest.

I mentioned under the Department of the Environment that I would suggest renaming the department the department of water management and environmental destruction. Although I did say that to some extent with tongue in cheek, I felt it was fair. I think it's unfortunate but accurate that this department was renamed some time back from Parks and Recreation to Recreation and Parks, because I think it indicates a change in strategy, a change in philosophy, and a change in outlook; that being that its outlook was to provide for recreation opportunities sometimes in relation to provincial parks and that in fact a number of our provincial parks were being downgraded to recreation areas. So although I think the name change was legitimate and more accurately reflected what is being done, especially through what we're looking at today here under Kananaskis Country and others, it indicates a change in philosophy that might not have been a change for the better.

Under Kananaskis Country itself, looking at what was described for the purpose of that \$460,000, I'm concerned with something I brought up in question period; that being the long-range plans for that whole area along Highway 40 right from Highwood House to the park and into the park. I'm really worried that some of those developments will in fact make impossible one of the goals or objectives stated here; that being "preserving or enhancing critical wildlife areas." I'm concerned that some of the long-range planning described in the implementation part of this will make that impossible. Some of the things that I believe are being considered right now, from everything I've heard, will make that preservation of wildlife impossible.

Just as an example, the minister referred to the golf course and how the expenditure on white sand was justified because it's still there, it's still white, and it still buries a golf ball as effectively as it did when it was first designed and still looks as nice against the backdrop of the snowcapped mountains and that the high-quality outhouses were still functioning well without falling apart. Those are important objectives, but I would point out one thing. That is that that area was criticized more for what it would do to wildlife habitat than the sand and the outhouses. Although the news media glommed onto the white sand and the expensive washroom facilities, real conservationists and environmentalists were concerned about what it would do to wildlife, especially to the elk herd.

From what I can find out in fact the elk herd they were worried about, except for a few remaining remnants, has been totally destroyed by that destruction of their habitat to create a golf course. I would suggest that perhaps golfing in Edmonton or Palm Springs or places like that is suitable and that we don't need to drive to the mountains to golf. We drive to the mountains to see mountains and wildlife. That should have been more the theme of the park. Driving there in our air-conditioned vehicle and our three-piece suit, because that's the people who can afford it is not necessarily an appropriate goal at that point.

I'm also worried about how much out of this -- I've been told that it was the Kananaskis park budget that paid for the winter surfacing of the roadside pullout areas along Highway 40. I'm wondering how much of this budget paid for that, because winter surfacing roadside pullouts, especially when you only do it in the safe areas and not in the avalanche areas, indicates that no sane person could argue that it was part of the planning for the Olympics. Those are being winter surfaced for staging areas for winter recreation activities in future, for a road that government policy says will remain closed through the winter. I'm worried when in fact an expenditure that may come under what we're looking at here today may be part of planning that contravenes an existing government policy.

As I said before, the government is still in the denial phase, because it's still not ready to let the public know what it did, which is the general method the government uses of telling it. In fact, the minister himself said that he makes no secret about the fact that he's not going to tell us what they may have in their back pocket, so to speak, so I'm worried about what they have in their back pocket.

MRS. CRIPPS: The wrong pocket.

MR. YOUNIE: Not really.

I'm worried about what it may be and what effect it may have on the goals stated under the objective of preserving critical wildlife areas, which that whole area is.

I'm worried about some aspects of the ski facilities which may be reflected in this particular portion of the budget, especially in what I've heard and read about a chemical used in the snowmaking equipment. I'm wondering what research was done on the chemical itself. What registration procedures did the minister make sure had been gone through before the chemical was allowed for use? What research was done on the effect that chemical would have in subsequent summers on the vegetation that is so important for summer wildlife habitat? I think that has to again be looked at very carefully. We have to wonder, if we have to use chemicals to keep the snow hanging in there as snow instead of melting, if we didn't perhaps make a ski hill in the wrong place in the first place.

Another question, and this I would hope relates more to the next one, Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas. I've long pushed for the government to promote economic activity by helping municipalities and spurring municipalities on with recreation activities. In specific, I'm concerned now about Fort Dunvegan as an historical interpretive centre. Although I realize that now that the area is represented by a government member rather than an opposition member, he can only say things in caucus and can't lash out publicly at the time it's taken to get that project going. On behalf of the people of that area I would like to ask the minister: does this particular vote include some development of Fort Dunvegan?

I've visited a number of those interpretive forts, two that come to mind. One, many of us will be meeting with the Lieutenant Governor at a very fine one here in the city of Edmonton. The first one I saw of that nature was Old Fort William in the Thunder Bay area, and it fascinated me to the point where I will go a long ways out of my way on my holidays to visit such a facility. So Fort Dunvegan, if developed to its fullest potential with a number of other things related to it, would draw a lot of tourists not only north of the Trans-Canada but, as the brochure we received the other day said, north of the second Trans-Canada, Highway 16, and up into that area where so much of

our tourism could be going and isn't going because we haven't developed it as well as we could. So I really think we should be looking at that very, very carefully and pushing forward with it as quickly as possible.

I'm concerned as well in both of these votes, but especially in the second one, about tourism in the rural areas if this minister hasn't been lobbying very carefully with the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and the minister of economic development -- who had a line in his budget for Daishowa but no money allocated under it, which was rather strange -- if he hasn't been talking to them about how important the forests are and how important the wildlife they support is to tourism in this province and how in everything they do and in every FMA they grant and in every timber quota they look at, they should be looking at the long-range impact and in some cases even the short-range impact it's going to have on tourism in an area. People come to most parts of Alberta to experience our nature and wildlife, with all due respect to West Edmonton Mall.

I think we have to realize that, and I think we have to safeguard and protect it. So I would hope that some of what we are doing under this second vote is geared towards making sure that the efforts made here aren't circumvented and sometimes even made wasteful by things we do in other areas that aren't done as wisely as they could be. We really have to be very careful that those two areas of economic development are kept compatible. I believe they can be, but I'm not confident with some of our philosophy about clear-cut logging and so on and some of the difficulty that whole regeneration process seems to be running into, which creates pressure for spraying herbicides, which are not good for wildlife. I don't believe the two areas may be compatible, the way we're looking at it now, and I hope this minister is lobbying very successfully in other areas to make sure that they are kept compatible.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to address briefly the estimates of the Minister of Recreation and Parks, specifically the vote concerning the municipal recreation/tourism areas program. The minister said that we had two choices: to either support it or not to support it. Well, it's clear that we do support it. It's a good program. It's in the third of a four-year staged implementation, and I think it's clear to everyone that it's benefited a large number of communities and areas right around the province. I think it's helping to provide, to build that kind of infrastructure that we need to make Alberta a major tourist destination. When people do come to view some of the better known tourism attractions in our area, in Alberta, be they major interpretive centres in different parts of the province or provincial parks, they need to have places to go and stay when they're traveling to and from these different major attractions. I think that's where this program comes in really handy.

It also provides destinations for local people who are taking an Alberta break to go and perhaps enjoy a little bit of rest and relaxation and some of nature's beauty without being subjected to the kind of crush that there might be at the major tourist facilities: you know, not having to involve yourself with quite as many people. So I think the program has been very good.

I can refer to a project in the Vegreville constituency that the minister approved for funding in the first year of the program, and that is the Elks/Kinsmen park in Vegreville, more popularly known as the pysanka park, where the world-famous Ukrainian

Easter egg stands at the entrance. The park has been upgraded. It's a beautiful attraction. It'll provide much needed overnight accommodation for people who are traveling to Vegreville, you know, for whatever reason. They may be traveling to take part in the big festival, Festival '88, this summer. The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village a little bit further down the road might be something that would attract them, and they can stop at the Elks/Kinsmen park, view our world-famous pysanka, the big, beautiful Easter egg. So the people in that area really appreciate the funding that's come for that park. The minister hopefully will have an opportunity -- I know his schedule is busy, but hopefully that will be a day when he's able to come to Vegreville. The official opening is July 2, I believe. So we're looking forward to that this year.

There are a number of other projects in the works. I'm hopeful that we can get some encouraging news on them in the near future. I would like to again bring to the minister's attention -- and I know he's got it under consideration -- a couple of projects in and around the village of Ryley. The village itself has applied for an MRTA grant to help develop their sports grounds facility. They have quite a nice little sports and recreation area in the northeastern part of the village. They want to not only develop that, but they want to access this program so that they can provide overnight camping facilities for people that may come to the village of Ryley.

Then the county of Beaver has a proposal for a development at Black Nugget Lake, Mr. Chairman, which is just a few miles south and west of the village of Ryley. That's a really unique kind of park at Black Nugget Lake. It's an old coal mine that has been developed into a recreation area, and it's very nice. You've got several little lakes that are very narrow but very deep, and there's some excellent fishing that's provided there. Being able to access funds through the MRTA program would be a big help to both of those facilities in terms of providing some enhanced overnight camping and picnicking kinds of facilities.

The reason that those two projects are especially important, Mr. Chairman, is that there's a very exciting private-sector development proposed for the region just south of Ryley, and that is the Battle River motor-sport centre. There's a group that has put forward this proposal to develop a world-class racetrack facility just south of the village of Ryley. It's a very encouraging project, and it looks as if the lights are green and things are going ahead. If the MRTA program can provide the kind of facilities we envision, both in the village of Ryley and at Black Nugget Lake, I think it would be a very good complement to this racetrack development south of the village of Ryley. It would guarantee that the people who travel from virtually all over Canada to take part in the activities at that racetrack would be able to stay in the local area, camp overnight at either Black Nugget Lake or the Ryley sports grounds and spend a little bit of that coveted tourist dollar in the Ryley-Tofield area.

A couple of other projects that the minister is aware of and I know his department is giving consideration to -- the Beaverhill Lake bird observatory, a very exciting project with great potential, that I know is something the Minister of Tourism is aware of also. That project at Beaverhill Lake -- world-class potential. There are visitors from all over the world who come now to see

Beaverhill Lake. It's one of two nationally designated nature viewpoints in Canada, and I think the long-term potential of developing that in a very thoughtful way as a destination for tourists and people interested in viewing birds and natural beauty at its best -- we'll look forward to some future thoughtful development there.

Then the town of Two Hills, as well, Mr. Chairman, has an application that they brought to the minister's attention some time ago to develop their old hospital building. Rather than see that building just sit there empty and going to waste, they've come up with a very thoughtful plan that would make it a multi-use kind of facility that is open not only to groups in the community for their office and meeting space, but they want to develop it as a tourist facility to provide service to people passing through or visiting the town of Two Hills. We're hopeful that we can get some funding sometime in the future to help develop some things outside of the hospital building and the grounds, be it stations for trailers to access service or miniature golf facilities, picnicking facilities, things like that: a wide range of possibilities that people there have envisioned.

So I just want to again thank the minister for . . .

MR. FISCHER: Don't spend it all.

MR. FOX: Now, the minister is a thoughtful guardian of his budget there, Member for Wainwright, and I just want to thank him on record for the project in Vegreville that'll be officially opened this year and put in a bit of a plug for these other worthwhile projects.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question has being called.
The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to put in a plug to the minister for MRTA funding for the Lac La Biche Mission historical society under vote 2.

MR. YOUNG: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, but in view of the hour I would move that the committee rise, report, and request leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

[At 5:29 p.m. the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]