

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Tuesday, May 31, 1988 8:00 p.m.**
Date: 88/05/31

[The House resumed at 8 p.m.]

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee of Supply, please come to order.

Before we proceed, it may be of interest to the visitors in the gallery to explain to them what we're doing. But before we proceed, could we have the permission of the committee to revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any opposed?
Hon. Minister of the Environment

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's indeed my privilege tonight to introduce two very good friends of mine, both in the members' gallery. The first is the mayor of the town of Swan Hills, Mayor Peggy Hanson, and with Mayor Hanson is councillor Joan Butler, also of the town of Swan Hills. These two ladies run a very dynamic community in northwestern Alberta and, of course, a community that has been put on the map of both Canada and North America and, in fact, some parts of the world recently as a result of the opening of the Special Waste Management Corporation in that community on September 11, 1987. I'd ask both ladies to rise and receive the warm welcome of all of my colleagues in the Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. minister. However, the best drinking water still comes from Lethbridge, I understand.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the benefit of the visitors in the gallery, tonight we're in what is known as Committee of Supply. The Speaker is not allowed in the House when permission is sought from the Members of the Assembly, regardless of the political party, for approval of expenditures. Tonight we're dealing with the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, of which 20 percent is dedicated to capital projects. Tonight we're dealing with that 20 percent, and the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services is about to seek the permission of the House for approval of a vote which amounts to some \$400,000 for expending here in Edmonton on the Capital City Park.

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

**Department of
Public Works, Supply and Services**

1 -- Capital City Recreation Park

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister of public works, do you have any opening comments to the committee?

MR. ISLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The vote we're dealing with is on page 12, Capital City Recreation Park, in the amount of \$400,000. The role of Public Works, Supply and Services is simply to reimburse the city of Edmonton, which purchased the land for the park. The planning and operation of the park was conducted jointly by Recreation and Parks and the city of Edmonton.

Just as a bit of background, the total original area of this park was 1,857 acres that involved 778 different parcels of land. Currently we're down to the point where there are only 28 land-owners left to deal with. The city seems to be dealing with them in a reasonably paced way. The amount of \$400,000 voted last year proved more than adequate, so I would request the committee's approval for the \$400,000 requested.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to the vote before the House?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I do have a few points to make, and certainly the hon. minister can count on my support for something as fine as a co-operative project between the city and the province in terms of the very fine Capital City Park that so many citizens of my riding and virtually every other riding in the city enjoy. I think, however, I'd be remiss if I didn't ask the minister a few questions about it.

He answered one, in that I was wondering how much more was left to be done in terms of acquisition of land. However, in view of recent public comments about extending Capital City Park and making it even more extensive than it already is, and in view of the long-term social and economic benefits of that kind of park system in an urban centre -- and to some extent I would say, especially in the capital -- I'm wondering if there are ongoing negotiations for in fact extending this program and extending the park, if the city has approached the minister to consider taking a suggestion to cabinet that the Capital City Park be enlarged and extended along the length of the river to a much larger size than it is now. If so, will it be getting the same sort of consideration that was previously given to this project? I can certainly see myself offering to lend my support to something that would extend and increase the parkland that the city has.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to congratulate the government on its support of the Capital City Park. It's been a major development in the city, the idea of keeping the river valley as park area. I commend him for that. I think it's been a great idea and a great success. I do think it should be continued as some present plans indicate, and I'm wondering if the government has any intentions of doing so.

Because the city, while they may be the ones drawing up a lot of the plans, are obviously going to need some help from the provincial government to finance an extensive network of parks from the Devon area right through to Clover Bar, I believe, or the Fort Saskatchewan area. I'd be particularly interested as somebody who likes to ride a bicycle in the park on occasion -- although I've got to admit I haven't had a lot of time in the last year or so -- to have the bike trail extended from Rundle Park right through up into Mayfair park. There does seem to be some difficulty in completing that sort of a linkup.

I wanted to ask a couple of other fairly specific questions. I see that \$400,000 was designated last year, and the minister might be kind enough to indicate whether all of that was spent or not and also whether the \$400,000 planned for this coming year will be enough to buy out all 28 landowners. Is the city proceeding that quickly, or are they just going to bide their time and leave some of these landowners there more than one year so that, in other words, this project will be dragged out a couple more years? I would hope that this isn't really the winding down of it, that in fact the government would intend to back the city in developing that system of parks even further.

I also wanted to ask the minister -- he mentioned something about the 1,857 acres. My understanding from your documents of the heritage trust fund is that it's now up to nearly 3,000 acres. Was that just what you were talking about at the start, and these figures are for now? Also, if we're going to expand in the future, do you know what kind of acres are going to be needed to complete this idea of going from Devon right through to Fort Saskatchewan?

Another question: are we going to see the science and technology displays open in this park area this summer? I'd heard that a lot of them were going to be closed for lack of operating dollars. So have we got another example of the government helping to build something very nice and then, through Recreation and Parks or Tourism or whatever, not being able to put the dollars together to operate these facilities so that people can actually get full benefit of what we spent our capital dollars on?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, in response to the questions raised, I believe the question from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry was with respect to whether there'd been any representation for expansion of the park. I'm not aware of any at this point in time. He may wish to raise that question in question period with the Minister of Recreation and Parks. As I pointed out in my opening remarks, the role of my department is simply reimbursing the city after they have purchased the land. We were not involved in the planning of the park; we are not involved in the operation of the park. So if they are making representation to expand the park, I doubt if they would come to my department first.

With respect to how much of the \$400,000 was expended last year, I mentioned in my opening remarks that we had more than enough money last year. The actual amount reimbursed to the city last year at their request was \$68,000. I assume from that that their buying strategy is to pick up those parcels as the owners are prepared to sell them, as opposed to any pressure buying, and I congratulate the city for that.

We are, again, not involved at all in the operating of the park. I'm not aware of any particular problems that the park is facing, but you may wish to follow that up with the city or the Minister of Recreation and Parks at an appropriate time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

[interjections] Order, please.

MR. McEACHERN: Yeah. I just thought I'd perhaps ask a question. I know this vote is only under Public Works, Supply and Services, but I wonder if the Minister of Recreation and Parks would have any information for us on a couple of the questions I asked and if he would be willing to comment at this time.

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MR. McEACHERN: I guess he hasn't heard the question maybe even. I'll ask the question again then. Could the Minister of Recreation and Parks perhaps indicate if there are any plans with the city to extend the Capital City Park westward to link up with a couple of the parks in the west end but also all the way out to Devon -- we hear talk of this in recent times -- and east on out to Fort Saskatchewan?

The other question I had was: am I right when what I heard was that we would not be opening these science and technology displays in part of this Capital City Park area for lack of money this summer? You know, we seem to have built this beautiful park, but now we're not quite sure we've got the money to operate it. I wonder if the Minister of Recreation and Parks has any comments on those two points.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The vote before us is from the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. If the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway were to choose to put the questions to that minister and that minister chooses to seek advice from a colleague, I suppose that would be in order. But the question has to go to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, although it's not even in the vote.

Hon. minister.

MR. ISLEY: My earlier advice was that that question be raised to another minister at an appropriate time. I was thinking of question period, but I will take it upon myself to seek out the answers to those questions and share them with the hon. member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 1 -- Capital City Recreation Park	\$400,000
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MR. ISLEY: I would move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

Department of the Environment

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are two votes on pages 8 and 9, Department of the Environment. The objective of each program is included on those pages.

1 -- Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister of the Environment do you have any opening comments to the committee?

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just briefly, the pages have just circulated three documents to all members of the House. One document is a graph entitled Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement Program Cash Flow Requirements as at March 31, 1988. It's always been the approach that I've taken in appearing before this committee, appearing before the committee of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and before Public Accounts, to bring all members as up to date as possible.

This particular schematic and graph shows the expenditure levels of this particular program to March 31, 1988, with total expenditures of \$362.4 million, and each of the specifics of the program are identified there. What is also shown is, of course, the budget forecast for fiscal 1988-89. It amounts to the figure of \$39.2 million. Hon. members will note that in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund estimates on page 8 the request that we're making for this year is for \$41.4 million. There's an asterisk at the bottom of the page indicating that there was an advance of \$2.2 million in the last fiscal year, so that you get the two balance figures that way. All hon. members will note exactly where those expenditures are going to be taking place in this fiscal year to the amount of that \$41.4 million.

The second vote in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund estimates is one dealing with Land Reclamation. To March 31, 1987, there's been an expenditure level of \$29 million . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, could we review them one at a time?

MR. KOWALSKI: Too complicated, hon. member, to do two at the same time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, we set a precedent the other night, I believe, with Hospitals and Medical Care that we would deal with the votes, 1 followed by 2 in that order. So perhaps we could deal only with vote 1.

MR. KOWALSKI: Absolutely, Mr. Chairman. I'm here as your servant, and I will certainly be conditioned by the direction of the Chair and, of course, conditioned by the direction of all hon. members in the Assembly as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That information is certainly noted, Mr. Minister. Thank you. Carry on.

MR. KOWALSKI: I would as well, Mr. Chairman, then with respect to the vote titled Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement point out that I've also circulated to all members a map, which is a map of southern Alberta, essentially, from that area of Alberta that will go from Calgary to Chinook and down into the southern part of the province, which outlines by graphics specifically where these various projects are. In addition to that, because in the latter part of the month of June 1988 it will be my pleasure and the pleasure of other members of this particular Assembly to participate in the opening of Forty Mile Coulee reservoir, I've also circulated a pamphlet which would outline some of the situations with respect to that particular project.

Mr. Chairman, any hon. member who's had the privilege of attending the meetings of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee or Public Accounts will know that all hon. members have the most recent and up-to-date information with respect to the Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems

Improvement, and the information provided today is a very specific breakdown where these dollar allocations are going to occur in this year.

As well, Mr. Chairman, I read through the *Hansards* of all of these meetings in the past several years, and I note that there have been a wide number of questions that hon. members have asked of me with respect to all of these programs, including research, new innovation, and the like, and *Hansard* contains all of those answers in very specific detail. So, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I'll stop at this moment and I'll pay attention to questions that hon. members might want to raise with respect to Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments, questions or amendments to the vote?

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't rehash everything that was asked of the Minister of Agriculture under a very similar vote that's intended for a very similar purpose, except to point out that it's amazing how many different departments get to spread out the money that's devoted to various irrigation projects. One wonders if it isn't perhaps to make it more difficult for people to add up the amount of money the government does spend on water management and irrigation. I've tried to do that, and I've pointed out, for instance, that in other areas of budgeting slightly over two-thirds of the money spent by the Minister of the Environment goes to water management most of which environmentalists claim is environmentally destructive in the manner in which this government does it.

Now we find here that up until March 31, 1987, a total of some \$315 million-odd has been spent on irrigation headworks. You look in agriculture: it was another \$207 million, for a little over half a billion. Once you throw in the completed cost of the Oldman dam, it's probably somewhere, depending on how accurate the estimates are, between a third of a billion and a billion. You start throwing in all of the other figures, and you end up with a rather astronomical amount of money being spent which I think, therefore, has to be justified. We have to start wondering when the government is going to say to all the people who are looking at Volkswagen Social Services, looking at education being downsized from a fairly comfortable air-conditioned thing to a Volkswagen, when you look at even most other areas of agriculture being looked at as not much above a Volkswagen, we still have the Porsche and Lamborghini water management school of thinking going on. Somewhere along the line government has to start saying that there are ways to accomplish these goals in irrigation in a global way that does not involve the amount of money being spent.

Now, in terms of improving our irrigation systems, I think the need for that one part of it has been demonstrated, and perhaps the rather large costs we're looking at now are in part related to the fact that successive governments ignored the matter for a large number of decades even -- not just a large number of years; right from their very inception. So we're making up for a lot of lost maintenance time.

That notwithstanding, I do have some serious concerns and questions. I have some questions about the accounting system used, and those questions were not answered when I asked similar questions of the Minister of Agriculture and his main sidekick on that issue. In fact, I seemed to get very contradictory answers out of them, so I will try to pose them in relation to this particular vote of this minister, that being that they are con-

sidered assets, and if they are assets, they are something that we must be able to sell at a cash value to some buyer. If they are, who does the minister see as a buyer, and what kind of price would he see us getting? If they could be sold for a cash value down the road in some kind of provincial emergency, then under the free trade deal that this government trumpets as being the salvation of western Canada, which indicates people who live in a fantasy world -- as nicely as one can put it. At worst, one would argue that they're trying to give the economy away to the Americans. I'm wondering: under that rather ill thought out and poorly conveyed to the public free trade plan the minister believes he could prevent selling these irrigation systems and the other dams and so on to American buyers who might want to buy them if they decided to sell them, because free trade argues that such things for sale would be for sale to all groups, American or Canadian, without discrimination. It certainly seems like a big problem he's running into.

I think the minister also has to look at another thorny problem under free trade that I asked him about once, and he certainly did not have -- in fact, I don't recall if he had any answer, let alone a satisfactory one. That is: how is he going to argue that these kinds of massive expenditures for one segment of Alberta's agricultural community cannot be called nontariff barriers under the free trade deal and would not therefore make our produce grown on irrigation farms subject to some kind of countervailing tariff if we try to ship them into the States? Now, the minister has argued and other ministers have argued and the Premier has argued that the whole point of the free trade deal is to get us guaranteed access to the American market. Well, the fact is that that is a myth, and there's nothing in the free trade deal that gets us guaranteed access to the American market. But even if that were true, which it isn't, I'm very worried that in fact the minister has to be dealing under free trade with the thorny problem of whether or not these kinds of expenditures are not going to be countervailable when we try to put that produce into the marketplace that the government so naively thinks it has gained guaranteed access to. It certainly seems to me to be a thorny problem that the minister has to be answering.

In many of our irrigation projects around the province I don't believe we're looking at the environmental concerns the way they should be. Now, perhaps what that indicates to me, and I've said it before, is that the Minister of the Environment is not the person to be overseeing these, that we've looked at one other irrigation rehabilitation project that's under the authority of the Minister of Agriculture, and in spite of the inadequate answers I received to my questions, I still think that authority for all irrigation, which is an agricultural venture, should be under the auspices of the Minister of Agriculture. Then the Minister of the Environment can more properly fulfill his role as guardian of the environment and the one who goes over to the Minister of Agriculture and says: "No, you can't do it that way. It's damaging to the environment."

We have a problem where the same person who hires the environmental scientists to say no is hiring the engineers to say yes and say how, and it really makes for a conflict of interest. I suppose it makes for a way to build an empire, in that the worse your engineers do environmentally, the more staff you can hire to figure out what went wrong with the environment and how to fix it up. Although that tends to be a standard operating procedure with Conservative governments, that's not the way it's supposed to be. So I hope the minister is not operating in that manner.

Under water resource development projects, I would appreci-

ate if the minister will outline the additional storage facilities, if he hasn't already, being developed in that list.

With that, I'll await the minister's answers and perhaps ask more questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister?

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the questions forthcoming from the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. Very specifically, the first series of questions had to do with irrigation with respect to the irrigation of the province of Alberta. I guess the record now shows once again that the New Democratic Party is opposed to irrigation, and I appreciate them at least coming forward and finally putting it in *Hansard* as clearly as they have done tonight.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, in terms of a price, in terms of an asset, what we're talking about is the heritage and the history of our province, and we're talking about a hundred years of history with respect to this. We would never sell the irrigation systems that we have in our province. They are part of the history of Alberta; they are part of the heritage of Alberta. They are no different than the road systems that we have in this province, a system that has been developed now for 60 to 70 -- decades.

Mr. Chairman, there was another question dealing with free trade. There is nothing in any free trade agreement which prohibits any state in America or any province in Canada from building a road. What we're talking about here in this particular vote in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund estimates tonight is the irrigation headworks and main irrigation systems program. We are talking about the physical infrastructure, exactly the same as any roadway in this province has been built or exactly the same way as light rapid transit systems are built in both the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. The free trade agreement doesn't talk about it, doesn't mention it ignores it. It's not part of anybody's debate.

Mr. Chairman, water is key to life. Without water we do not have life. The word "environment" basically by definition zeroes in on three elements: one is land, one is air, and one is water. It would be absolutely remarkable to me if in fact we were to have a Department of the Environment that wasn't concerned about water. I would like to point out as well to hon. members who may not be attuned to what's happening in other parts of the world that the National Geographic Society just in the last few days issued a very major news statement that basically indicated that those nations in the world who are not concerned about water conservation management and preservation and are not concerned about the building of dams and the retention of water are really those societies that lack leadership in a very dramatic way. That statement came out of Washington, D.C., by the best known international environmental organization that exists in the world: the National Geographic Society. It's a very common position that that particular organization's been putting forward for years.

In terms of additional storage facilities, the hon. member asked me that if I had not already responded to it, would I do so tonight. I would like to assure him that I've already responded to the question of identifying the basic specifics with respect to additional storage facilities, and I would once again ask him to take advantage of all the information that is contained in *Hansard* with respect to this. In meetings that I've held with either the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee or the Public Accounts Committee, a committee that I appeared before in this Assembly less than two weeks ago, there was not one ques-

tion forthcoming by any member of the opposition with respect to our expenditure levels in irrigation or water management in the province of Alberta. I sat in this very same Assembly, Mr. Chairman, for an hour and a half and responded to a multitude of questions that did come forth on a variety of activities with respect to the environment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ready for the question?

Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the minister if he could take a few minutes this evening to walk us through the government's pricing policy for water from irrigation systems. Is it the policy of the government that users of water should pay, perhaps, something that might be defined as the market price? Or is it the policy that the users should be using the water and paying for it on a nonprofit basis; that is, charging a rate that recovers the costs of delivery of that water with no return to the owner of the irrigation system or to the public for investment in that utility, no return on equity? Is it as I gather but I'd like him to confirm it that water use for irrigation users should be subsidized from the public purse through a variety of means, either through the rates charged or through construction and capital costs?

That may well be perfectly defensible. My concern is that in that kind of environment I wonder what the incentives are to encourage more efficient use of water, given that the minister has said, as he has said, how vital it is to life and how important it is for the southern part of the province, which has a lot of land that could be irrigated. But perhaps we don't have enough water all the way around to fully utilize it but might have if it were more efficient. So I'd like to know if it is a priority of the government to encourage more efficient use of water amongst existing users. If that is a priority, could he outline for us what steps he might be considering or has taken in order to provide that incentive to irrigation users, for example? Would it be reasonable, assuming that a publicly subsidized irrigation system is a perfectly defensible option -- would it then make sense to perhaps provide a capital grant fund for irrigation users which they could access to acquire more efficient irrigation systems; that is, rather than perhaps a spray form of irrigation, other types of equipment that might apply water to the land without so much loss to evaporation? Are there any kinds of programs being considered to encourage more efficient use?

I'd just like the minister to take a bit of time to explain, if he would. I presume that it's the third option that the government is pursuing. I don't see any evidence that they're interested in the market price or delivering water on a nonprofit cost-of-service basis. Given that it seems to be the government's wish to pursue publicly subsidized irrigation water use, how do we make sure that that doesn't result in wasteful irrigation practices? I'd like the minister to make some comments in those regards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Oh, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm just really pleased with the opportunity to enlighten the Member for Calgary-Mountain View with respect to some of the specific questions that he asked in this matter.

Really, the situation is no different at all than the hon. member endeared and experienced when he sat as a municipal alderman in the city of Calgary. We have, as an example, two sys-

tems in terms of water rates in our province in our two major cities. In Edmonton those who use water pay according to the metered volume of the water that they use, and it's proven to be rather efficient and effective. The aldermen in the city of Edmonton have basically determined that you should pay for what you use. In the city of Calgary that isn't the case. In the city of Calgary you have an unlimited amount of water, and you just have a basic charge. That's been something that the hon. member surely should be aware of, because he sat with the city council of the city of Calgary for a great number of years, and basically that was a determination that those folks in the city of Calgary chose to do.

Now, Mr. Chairman, those are the two most vital examples that we have in the province of Alberta. Just recently, in the last number of days, we forwarded to 1.5 million households in the province of Alberta, and we pointed out that example once again, in a little environmental newspaper magazine called Blue Sky Alberta.

The hon. member should be aware that the vote we're talking about tonight called Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement is the capital works side of the system. The questions that the hon. minister chooses to raise with the Minister of the Environment tonight are questions that should have been raised with the Minister of Agriculture just a few days ago, because basically the administrative side of the irrigation systems comes under vote 2, Irrigation Rehabilitation and Expansion, which is the operational side that deals with 13 irrigation systems in the province of Alberta. The vote that we're talking about tonight is the capital side.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I have to be guided by your direction with respect to: what vote should I be talking about as the Minister of the Environment? I have no great difficulty in talking about philosophy and concept and methodology and the like, but quite clearly the questions that were raised in this regard are not of the vote that we have before the Assembly tonight. Mr. Chairman, I have to be governed by your direction with respect to that. If you want me to deal with somebody else's vote, well, I've got no problem dealing with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe Standing Order 62 says that . . . [interjections] Order please. That one must deal with the section under consideration.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few questions and comments,

I want to thank the minister for giving us the update on the figures for planned expenditures in the future. It's better and more up-to-date information than we generally get from other ministers, I might add, and they might well start doing the same thing before committees and before this Assembly.

I would, however, like to set the record straight on a point that the minister made. He was complaining that none of us had asked any questions when he was before the Public Accounts Committee about certain things to do with irrigation. I would point out to him that he took a lot of time in introducing the topic, I was a little ways down the list, and he took so long answering the questions that I only got in once. And the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon and the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore both left because they couldn't wait that long and we were running out of time. So don't talk about the questions you didn't get at the Public Accounts Committee. As a matter of fact, a very similar thing happened at the last heritage trust fund

committee, and we invited you back, and you didn't get there.

But I do have a few questions I would like to ask. The first one is in regard to the fiberglass lining research. I would appreciate it if the minister could tell us if that project is finished, if it was successful, what are the plans for it in the future, are they going to be able to use something from that research, and what's happening with that? I notice that there's no more money to be spent on it, so I assume that the basic research has been finished.

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry was talking about how irrigation could be construed, perhaps, as a subsidy. It may well be that none of the terms of the free trade agreement call it a subsidy, but I know in other parts of the world we have looked at it. For instance, I was in Holland at one point, and they were building dikes and pumping the sea water out and renovating the land, rehabilitating it and getting rid of the salt in it and that sort of thing so they could grow crops on it. Don't tell the Dutch that they weren't subsidizing agriculture; they were very aware that they were subsidizing agriculture at a very, very costly rate because they didn't want to be totally dependent on imports.

Canada sits in quite a different position, not really against irrigation; you sort of blanket say we are, from the comments of my colleague. But we're just saying that you've got to look at it with a bit of a skeptical view, considering that we've got so much land in this country and grow so many crops so well that we have trouble selling abroad because the international market tends to be flooded, as the Europeans are subsidizing their agriculture very highly and the Americans are subsidizing theirs -- as we are ours. And you have to wonder at what point you produce expensive products and try to flood the international markets for agricultural products. So Alberta's in quite a different position than Holland, and I can understand why they would subsidize so highly an agricultural process, but I'm not so sure that in Alberta it makes a lot of sense.

I wanted to suggest also to the minister that he's talking about a lot of dams being needed still in the future, and I think that he is ignoring a lot of advice these days that suggests that there are other ways besides dams to manage water systems, that you don't necessarily have to build dams and flood river valleys, which causes a great deal of ecological damage and will particularly in the Oldman River system. So I think he should reconsider the methods by which -- some of the latest technologies of water control.

He said that we're asking the wrong minister about the cost of water to the users, but I would point out to him that I asked that of the Agriculture minister the other day, and he really didn't give me all that satisfactory an answer. So if you have one, we would certainly appreciate it. What I was suggesting the other day when I asked the question was that perhaps it would be more effective and efficient to have some kind of differential pricing for different kinds of systems, depending on their efficiency, so that people using the water would tend to become as efficient as possible. Perhaps the minister could talk a little bit about that area. Certainly I didn't think we got a very satisfactory answer from the Minister of Agriculture when we did ask that question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Those were important questions raised by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. Once again, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to respond directly.

At the outset, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member indicated that

-- he sort of chastised me for saying that, really, I'd spoken too long when I appeared before the Public Accounts Committee. My recollection of that committee is that it's the member's colleague, the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn who is, indeed, the chairman of that particular committee. I recall very vividly being invited to provide some information and at one point in time was interrupted by a couple of opposition members, and a whole bunch of other people said: "No, no. We want to get the information. We want to get the facts. The public have the right to know." I agree with that, and that's why I had a great opportunity to, in fact, provide useful information. It's also my recollection that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway did have an opportunity to raise questions and chose not to raise them on the area of irrigation or water management. So I think it's important that we get the record straight. I would know the hon. member would want me to do that, because it's extremely important.

Specifically with respect to the fiberglass research project that occurred several years ago, \$1 million was allocated and was allocated, really, from this particular vote. It went to a public tender process through the department of Economic Development. It was a research project to see what would happen in terms of lining on certain canals, to use certain types of fiberglass. This is part of an ongoing research project that has been concluded. It's proven to be rather efficient and effective but, unfortunately, expensive. It's really on that basis and with the current economic situation as it has been that there has been a bit of a slowdown on it. But it's a technology that I really, truly believe to be very important for our province. It's a technology that's been developed in our province and a technology that has been exported to other parts of the province of Alberta with Alberta engineers leading the way.

All hon. members should know that half of the irrigation in Canada is located in the province of Alberta. We have a vision -- at least the members, the men and the women of the Progressive Conservative Party who make up the government of the province of Alberta, have a vision about Alberta. We believe very strongly that food production is fundamental to our future, as it has been in the past. We believe that agriculture is one of our base industries, and we believe very sincerely that Alberta can be a food basket for the world. We have producers who can produce. We have technologists who understand what is happening. We have scientists who can bring us new crops and new visions for the future. We believe, as a government, that food and the surplus of food is fundamental to our economy, and we believe that we must go out and find markets for the food production. We believe our farmers are capable and competent. We want to do everything possible to encourage them and receive food production of an encouraging nature.

Now that's quite the opposite vision that history tells me has been fundamental to most socialist parties. I just, you know, know without any hesitation or doubt that all of the members sitting in the NDP have all stood up at one time or another in the last few years and said, "I'm a socialist and I'm proud of it." Well, I'm not a socialist. As a matter of fact, I'm a victim of socialism, and so is my family. To all those people who live in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics -- and underline "Socialist Republics" -- and all those people who live in Latvia and Estonia and Lithuania and Romania and Bulgaria and Hungary and Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and East Germany . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, the Chair hesitates to inter-

rupt, unless the Chair's missed something. Perhaps the hon. minister could come back to the vote before us, irrespective of the question put.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to be helpful, to respond to the question. I'm trying to point out that the Progressive Conservative Party has a vision that agriculture is fundamental to the future of this province. The Progressive Conservative Party believes that agriculture must be enhanced, that we must produce the best food in the world so we can feed the world. The socialist philosophy is, in fact, to make people dependent on the state. The easiest way of making them dependent on the state is to reduce the amount of food that they have. So when the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway says, "Should we produce more food in this province? Maybe we have a surplus," then I have to say that is not the vision that honourable men and women of the Progressive Conservative Party would ever adhere to. To all those thousands and millions of slaves who live in the socialist part of the world, they should know what dependency is and dependency is not.

The hon. member also asked me to comment about alternatives to dams. I would challenge the hon. member to stand up in this Assembly and tell me what those alternatives are. We live in a province called Alberta. Most of the water that we have in this province is generated from the melt of the snowcap in the Rocky Mountains. If one takes a look at the altitude of the snowcap in the Rocky Mountains and then takes a look at the direction our rivers flow, one would also conclude very quickly that there's a heck of a steep grade there. When those snows in the Rocky Mountains melt in the months of May and June each year, that water gushes, rushes downriver. If we do not hold that water, hon. member, we lose it. We don't waste it. It just goes elsewhere and becomes part of another environment in another part of the world. We have no other alternative but to intercept that water, to hold it, and then over the 12 months of the year, manage it, regulate it, conserve it, preserve it, and the like. I know of no other alternative.

Now it may very well be that some hon. members are confused by the usage of the words of "reservoir," "weir," and "dam." They are fundamentally one and the same. They are all holding tanks, and they are synonymous words that are used consistently and continuously in all debates with respect to this matter. So if the hon. member says, "Well, you can't have a dam; you've got to have a reservoir or a weir," well, they're all synonymous. They're one and the same. We have reservoirs such as Kehoe Lake, which is north of Lethbridge, which is basically a lake, but it is dammed. It's not a dam of the nature or the type of the Paddle River dam or the Dickson dam or the seven dams to the west of Calgary. But we have 140 of these infrastructures in our province today, and if we want to ensure that we have life, we have to recognize two things: one, that less than 1 percent of the total land mass of the province of Alberta is water; two, we're in an overall deficit position with respect to water in this province, and if we want to survive, if we want to have life in our province, we have to manage, and we can only manage if we first of all store. We can't conserve and preserve unless we store, and if we can't store, we can't manage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. It's somewhat of a daunting project to try to straighten out all of the inaccuracies, ineptitudes, and

misconceptions just presented, but I'll nonetheless try to do it, as daunting as the project might be. I taught high school English, so obviously I was willing to tackle daunting projects.

First off, to try to enlighten the minister in what was referred to by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, the difference between on-stream storage which floods river valleys behind on-stream dams and off-stream storage which uses other methods. He mentioned one of those off-stream storage methods, which was Kehoe Lake. In fact, he's heard me in this House suggest that Kehoe Lake and other similar ones could have substituted for the Oldman dam, which is an on-stream storage project. So I do hope the minister will not accidentally or intentionally forget the difference between those again. It's certainly a basic one that he should know.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

Another one is: the minister said categorically -- and this disagrees with some of what was said the other day in Agriculture -- that the irrigation systems are not for sale, will never be for sale; nobody ever intended them for sale. Therefore, I point out to the minister, they are not assets in accounting terms. Now, many things can be called assets in that general, linguistic, dictionary definition of asset. Talking about assets in accounting terms, an asset is what you can sell for cash if you need cash. That is an asset. Calling the irrigation headworks and other irrigation projects and our dams and all the rest of that assets in the heritage trust fund accounting is a deception. It is inaccurate. And once it's been pointed out by the opposition and that is ignored, one has to assume it is an intentional deception in the accounting system to make sure that people think there are more assets and more cash value in the fund than are really there. That is money spent.

Now, what we're discussing tonight is whether or not the expenditure of that money on something that is not a resalable asset is worth while. But I do wish somebody in this government would get their head on straight and tell us that all of these things that we'll never sell because they're part of our heritage are, therefore, not assets. Anyone who understands even the minimal amount of accounting that's necessary for an English teacher should understand that very simple fact. So I really hope the minister will try to straighten out the Treasurer on that one.

The minister quoted somebody from *National Geographic* and in very vague terms said he was staunchly in support of building dams and so on as measures for the environment. But then when I look at how totally and completely and abysmally the minister misunderstood me, I can only say that I'd rather read the article for myself to see if the words of the writer in *National Geographic* actually supported dam building as being environmentally sound, because if so, he's the only environmentalist on the planet saying so, as a general rule. As a general rule, building dams has environmental costs. They may or may not outweigh benefits. That again has to be looked at. Generally speaking, the costs do outweigh the benefits.

Now, I would like to straighten the minister out on one of the most important points that he misunderstood in what I said. Over and over again I am completely amazed at how conveniently the minister totally misunderstands what I have said and puts words in my mouth that never came out of it at least of my volition. So I will straighten him out again. I'm sure the Chairman will forgive me if it is a repetition of something I've said on numerous occasions, but the Minister of the Environ-

ment still doesn't understand. So I'll have to tell him again. That is, that I and my caucus colleagues support irrigation in principle. We ask that all of the costs, environmental and economic, be weighed, but in principle we support irrigation. Now, if we're going to call irrigation cost-effective, I have a fairly straightforward definition of cost-effective, and that is that the direct benefits outweigh the direct costs. It seems pretty simple to me: that you get more benefit than what you spent, that if you spend \$100 you get at least \$100.01 benefit to make it cost-effective. Hopefully you can get a little more than that.

Now, what I'm asking the minister to tell us is: what is the cost/benefit ratio in what he's asking to spend here? Now, I'm sure he can show us something a little better than what real economists using reasonable formulas show for the Oldman dam, but I would like to see him apply those reasonable formulas to this and prove that what he's spending on irrigation here, and maybe elsewhere, is going to be cost-effective. Now, it is Conservative members who keep telling us over and over again that business, government, individuals all have to look at costs and benefits and be cost conscious and cost/benefit conscious. The government certainly likes to apply that to things that many citizens would rather not have it apply to, like their education systems, where they can cut back the number of teachers, and say "Well, teachers can cope with 30-some," and the Minister of Education says that increasing class size has no direct effect on the quality of education. I'm asking that the minister apply some of their philosophy to irrigation. Let's see them doing some real, reasonable, honest, sensible cost/benefit analysis.

Now, I think the minister has to look, when they look at irrigation as well -- you can't just say, "Well, all of the produce grown by irrigation farmers is this, and it's worth so much, and the costs involved were this." You have to look at how much more they produced with irrigation than they would've produced without it, because that is the benefit of the irrigation. It's just the increase in production. So we have to look at how much it cost us as taxpayers to create that increase in production. Now, the more I see of this government's attitude toward irrigation . . . It is one of the areas of the budget -- anything to do with international oil companies is another -- where cost is no object. The public is only too glad to spend. Let's shovel in the money. I'm asking the minister to apply some reasonable cost/benefit controls and show us: what are the cost/benefit analyses? Now, if he's going to come here and say "Well, in fact the taxpayers lost X amount of dollars but there were all the social benefits of keeping irrigation farm areas going" and so on, then I would be willing to enter into a debate of the social benefits versus the economic cost to the taxpayers and get into that argument. But the government never, ever admits that possibility, and I think it's time we started looking at some of that.

The minister mentioned vision, so I think in response to the minister it's fair to point it out that when I look at the name Progressive Conservative I have to wonder whether it's a group that's looking forward while they walk backwards or looking backwards while they walk forward, but everyone would know that eventually that leads to accidents of one sort and another, and certainly leads to impossibility of planning. So I think I would prefer to be a socialist who looks forward, walks forward, and plans forward all at the same time. I've said to many people, and I'll say again to the minister, it's always been my preference to be a socialist rather than a fascist. I certainly think that's a very important point to be considered as well.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I'll answer the last question first, when the hon. members says a quote. He said something about putting words in the hon. member's mouth. I would never want to do that. The hon. member is quite capable and competent himself of putting the words in his mouth and expressing them. I just want to thank him once again for putting in the official *Hansard* of the Alberta Legislative Assembly the official position of the New Democratic Party in this regard. I can assure him that a great number of people in Alberta will look forward to reading those comments and once again want to speak to him.

He said that I should speak to the Treasurer about assets. Sure, I'll do that. I'll speak to the hon. Provincial Treasurer, have a good chitchat and see what we can do in that regard. I'm sure we'll provide some comfort level to the hon. member with respect to that. In terms of cost effectiveness, there's simply no doubt at all about the cost effectiveness. The most recent document that we made available to all citizens of the province of Alberta had to do with not a project that we're talking about tonight -- but because it was raised in terms of the dams and the Oldman River dam -- clearly indicated that using internationally known accounting principles, the dam would provide \$2.70 in return for each dollar of public expenditure provided to us. So I'm quite satisfied with that.

I want to assure the hon. member that I appreciate that he is a graduate of the public school system and probably even has a university degree and wanted to identify for me the difference between on-stream, off-stream, and conservation methodologies that I'm rather well aware of them. I'm just modestly educated; I only have three degrees. And I've done a bit of traveling here, there, and throughout the province of Alberta. The position of our government basically deals with on-stream storage, off-stream storage and conservation, and we do have a tripartite approach to it all.

I really appreciate his ongoing input, and I really appreciate his daily masochism that he provides to himself by getting up and continuing to make his positions known and the positions of his party with respect to these approaches. The difference is very obvious to me, Mr. Chairman. In putting forward this vote, the Progressive Conservative Party as visionary, believes in people, believes in an expansion of agriculture in this province, believes in ensuring that southern Alberta will survive in our province, will be a mainstay of the economy of our province of Alberta. And we have the alternative vision that would basically see southern Alberta turn into a desert.

Mr. Chairman, we could probably go on all night with this little chitter chatter back and forth, but perhaps it's time to call for the vote for \$41.4 million with respect to Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement and get on with the business. We can study these things to death. We need action, and this is what the Progressive Conservative Party is all about: action.

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

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gee, I was so anxiously awaiting this minister with three degrees. I have been waiting for the wisdom of that education to come forward. I'd hoped he would have earlier this evening with some of the questions I'd asked him, but perhaps he's a bit shy. I don't know what the reason might be tonight but if I ask him again, perhaps he'll reconsider and come forward with some of

that wisdom I know that he's just keeping hidden under that bushel over there.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I was interested by some of the things the minister said about the pricing of water. He made reference to the city of Calgary water system as an analogy. I would inform the minister that city council, in setting water rates each year, gets anywhere between 8 to 10 percent return on equity; meaning the equity that the city has invested in the waterworks system pays a dividend to the city of Calgary, thereby reducing the cost to the taxpayers. Now, if that is the system that is in place with the provincial irrigation system, perhaps he could just be straightforward and say that's the case. But if that's not, if it's something that he believes is worth while to have a fully subsidized capital cost arrangement on behalf of the taxpayers to the users of this system, that's fine. If he can just be straightforward about what the case actually is, I'd appreciate him saying that.

I still come back to what for me, is the bottom line, and that is: are any steps being taken to ensure that water is used more efficiently? Not that somebody be cut off, but perhaps by one user showing greater efficiency, it allows for more water to be passed on to users downstream or to the next-door neighbour down the road or down at the end of a canal or whatever. I just would like to know that somebody over there, particularly the Minister of the Environment, thinks that that's a priority and is considering doing something about it or is already doing something about it. If they're not doing anything about it, does it mean that efficiency is not one of the priorities of the system? That would be the only conclusion I would draw. Now, if the minister is concerned about efficiency and he hasn't got around to doing anything about it yet there's no harm in saying, "We haven't got around to doing anything about it but we're going to soon." That, it seems to me, would at least be a responsible reply. So I'd just like to ask the minister what are the pricing policies of the government whether it be his department or the government as a whole, cabinet as a whole, and how is that related? If not for more efficient use, are there some other programs they could consider or are considering to put in place to ensure more efficient water use? That's what I'd like the minister to comment on.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the principal question raised tonight is efficiency, and the easiest and quickest response to it is yes, there are numerous, numerous steps being taken to ensure efficiency in the irrigation systems in the southern part of the province of Alberta in the utilization of that water. I've gone through the litany of steps we've already taken before. The hon. member is a member of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee, and I have appeared before that committee and given a litany of examples. If it's important once again that I do that tonight, I'd be very pleased to do that, but I'll try and be very, very brief.

First of all, there have been dramatic changes in technology in terms of utilization of the types of equipment that have been used in the irrigation of parts of the province of Alberta, and that is a general statement. If the member would like me to identify the piece of equipment with its name and serial number, I would be very happy to do that. But perhaps, number one, there is a dramatic improvement in the type of equipment that's used in the irrigation system. Number two, we have continuous research going on, not only with Alberta Agriculture, the Farming for the Future, a program which is also funded by the Alberta

Heritage Savings Trust Fund, but of course we've also got Agriculture Canada with major research facilities in the southern part of the province of Alberta. So number two, continuous ongoing research, and we already have identified tonight one example of that kind of research with respect to the utilization of fiberglass.

Number three, Mr. Chairman, there's absolutely no doubt at all that the 13 irrigation councils also recognize, and recognize within their own jurisdictions, the importance of managing and conserving that water. They have adjudicated and adjust on an annual basis the water rates utilized by all the members within each one of those irrigation councils. Now, that is not a matter that comes under the debate of this particular fund tonight but it's nevertheless one of those things to be very specific in terms of responding to the hon. member, one of those examples of things occurring in the southern part of the province of Alberta.

I think perhaps the most important aspect of efficiency that is going on, Mr. Chairman, is the recognition that crops that are produced in the irrigation areas of the province of Alberta of course basically must fetch a price, for the most part, on an international commodity basis. So if there is a jurisdiction in another part of the world that can produce a particular commodity, whether it be a pea or a carrot or a tomato, cheaper in some other parts of the country, in North America, and imported into Alberta and sold, then in essence you have a driving competitive force which causes efficiency.

Now, everybody knows the climate of Alberta is such that basically we have to endure hardship during periods of the year. We cannot produce 12 months of the year, so in essence our producers can only produce in a limited period, a climatic time zone of three or four or five months. And they must be more competitive or increasingly more competitive in order to deal with people who can produce over a 12-month period, as perhaps agriculture producers in Mexico could. They could produce tomatoes in Mexico; we can produce tomatoes in Alberta. But because we have a limited growing season, we have to be that much more efficient and effective than those other folks are in another part of the province of Alberta. There's absolutely no doubt at all in my mind, and I would invite the hon. members to take an opportunity to visit the irrigation parts of this province, to meet with the irrigation councils to see firsthand what exactly it is that is happening in that part of the province of Alberta. I think he will come back absolutely enlightened, as all of us who've never had an opportunity to see something, once given an opportunity to see something could come back and say, "Hey, we really do have efficiency and effectiveness in our province."

MR. YOUNIE: A very quick and easy question, because the minister didn't quite answer the question just raised in terms of the costing of water for irrigation. I'll put it very specifically: is the cost that a farmer pays for water he puts on his field from the irrigation system based on a per litre or other per volume charge that reflects all the costs, including infrastructure costs, of getting the water to his farm, or is it based on something else? How do you calculate the cost per litre or gallon of water that a farmer uses? Is it based on that or is it a lump sum per year no matter how much he uses, or what?

MR. KOWALSKI: The principle is much the same, Mr. Chairman, as that which is utilized by Albertans in using the public roadways in the province of Alberta, or in fact citizens, I guess, in Edmonton and Calgary using the LRT. On the one hand, the province of Alberta provides massive capital grants to those two

cities, Edmonton and Calgary, to build the light rapid transit system, the municipal council puts some dollars in, the citizens pay a small tariff, and the local municipality then subsidizes or makes up the difference.

The word used in terms of allocation of water -- generally on an acre-foot basis is the reference used. There's a tariff that's assessed within each of the 13 irrigation districts as to basically the amount of water one would use. There's also licensing charges within some irrigation districts. The most important other addition, I guess, is: recently we've asked the Alberta Water Resources Commission to meet with all the irrigation districts and councils in our province to continue to move toward increased efficiency and effectiveness in the utilization of that water.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've been sitting here thinking a bit about some comments of the minister when he was talking about a vision of the world of the Conservatives. I wanted to extrapolate some of the directions they're moving into that world situation. I think it's, you know, part of this whole agricultural thing. If we subsidize agriculture in the south in irrigation systems, that's okay to a point. Perhaps one of the things we should be doing when we're doing that is diversifying the economy and growing different varieties of crops, market garden kinds of things perhaps, maybe even fruit we couldn't grow without that kind of water. But as the minister pointed out, we're at a bit of a disadvantage compared to, say, the southern States or Mexico, where they can maybe grow two crops a year.

Now, if you fit that into the vision of the world that says we should grow more agricultural produce, you have to stop and think about whether you're talking about more varieties or whether you're talking about more of the same, and you have to fit that into a context of the Mulroney trade deal with the United States. Is he suggesting that we become part of the American production of agriculture and the handling of food in this sense, that we specialize more, that we continue to buy our iceberg lettuce from the Imperial valley of California, that we continue to buy tomatoes from Florida and just produce wheat -- in other words, more and more specialization rather than more and more varieties of produce grown at home?

Is he suggesting that we become part of the American food system that says they use food in wielding power in the world -- which they do -- that through the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, and through the major corporations, where free trade enhances the chances of huge corporations, they continue to grow and leapfrog over nations and manipulate nations into systems that encourage big corporations to take over large chunks of land and big plantations in underdeveloped countries and insist between them and the IMF that they grow cotton and tobacco and export crops so they can get cash crops, rather than encouraging them to grow their own food? India has proved that they can grow their own food. Would you have us impoverish India so we can sell them wheat? Is that the vision of the world of the really big multinational, of the true Conservative philosophy that says we should have freewheeling private enterprise dominating the world . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the Chair is having a little difficulty relating . . .

MR. McEACHERN: I agree with you, Mr. Chairman, and I guess I won't carry that debate any further. But it is . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, you don't have the floor right now. [interjection] Order please. I just wonder if the hon. member could come back to the vote we are discussing.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, I was actually just taking the minister up on some of his comments arising out of this vote, so I will stop there. I think I've made my point.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make just one or two comments with regards to the capital headworks and kind of relate it to some of the discussion that's been going on in terms of irrigation and what actually happens out on the farm when irrigation stands before the farmer and you have to accept it there and take a certain responsibility. I'd like to address two areas that have been talked about tonight; first of all, the efficient use of water that is brought through the canal systems from the headworks, down through the canals which have been rehabilitated by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund through policy of the government. We have saved millions and millions and millions of gallons of water by reducing seepage in those canals by the rehabilitation work that's gone on, and we have to recognize that. It's been money well spent in terms of preserving that heritage water and also preserving thousands of acres of land that was turning to alkali because of seepage running with reckless abandon. If you look at aerial maps, you can see that how the growth occurred over the years in terms of those delivery canals and, as well, adjacent to some of the headworks.

As a farmer, I have witnessed more efficient use of water after it is delivered to the farm. I can recall, in my early days as an MLA and even prior to that in the 1950s, when the only technique by which a farmer could place the water on the land was to turn it loose at the top of the quarter section and hope it arrived at the bottom and flooded the land in between. There would be water furrows, there would be road ditches full, there would be the neighbours flooded out, there would be more alkali and a massive waste of water. Then we brought forward a bit of technology following that side-roll machines that could irrigate that land. Farmers began to manage the water as they applied it to the land. They have the pivots with a variety of nozzle systems today that apply the water even more efficiently. We have, along with that a number of irrigation farmers -- and if I were farming alone, I would do this as well -- using the computer to apply the water, determining when the tensiometer triggers the radio communication to the computer saying that now you water this plant, the bean or the pea or whatever it is that needs the water.

The technology is there, and as farmers we will put that in place as quickly as we can as the finances arise in our pockets. We don't save money as farmers; we keep putting it back into the land. I have been an irrigation farmer since 1975. Every dollar I have raised on that farm has gone back into new equipment and technology to use the water more efficiently, and anyone who wants to come and look at my systems can. But efficient water use has been magnified significantly. So anybody from the city who isn't aware of how farmers treat and respect that resource water today should come out and visit those farmers.

On Saturday morning three fanners were standing in the yard of my farm. The wind was blowing. I said, "What are you go-

ing to do?" They said: "Well, we're in a terrible quandary. If we turn our irrigation machines on . . ." And some of them did, because they had to keep water in them, otherwise they were going to blow into Saskatchewan. They said: "We hate watering, but we have no choice. One, we can lose our machine. Secondly, if we don't keep watering, we aren't going to get that machine to the other side to be able to produce a hay crop to feed some of these cattle," and also to bring a reasonable return for their production so they can continue farming in 1988.

But farmers try to be efficient, and they're the administrators of our water. I think anyone that even infers a criticism of that should come out and walk in the shoes -- if I can use that old cliché -- of the farmer and really witness what is going on. That's the first point I want to make.

There are two other points we shouldn't forget when we're talking about irrigation in this province, and they're often two points that are put aside and neglected. If we did not have irrigation in my constituency, in the constituency of Taber-Wamer, in the constituency of Macleod, we would have a minimum rural population. We would have opportunities there for . . . We talk about corporate farming, the inference that we're going to get into corporate farming. We would give the corporate farm access to . . . All that would be would be dryland down there. That is, as one person with big equipment, I can farm thousands of acres of dryland. It's a different kind of management. You can't do irrigation the same way. By destroying the irrigation districts or systems and reducing its size or reducing the use of water, one of the implications that would be very difficult to live with is depopulation. The minister didn't even relate to that nor do very many people talk about the consequences of depopulation.

In rural municipalities in this province -- the county of Vulcan, the county in the Taber-Warner area, the county of Warner -- in the last 10 years the school populations have already dropped 30 percent. We've got facilities there for that population 10 years ago, and we built them for increasing numbers of students in our rural education systems. We talk in this Legislature about trying to keep the rural school open. How do you keep it open if you allow depopulation to continue? One of the stopgaps of that is irrigation and maintaining young people on that land by making irrigation possibilities available to them. So I think when we as urban people start to talk about the cost benefits of irrigation, that is one we should not underestimate, nor should we forget the implications of depopulating rural Alberta any more than it is at the present time.

One of the other items when we question irrigation relates to all of our row crops. I think we as Albertans, and I haven't got the exact statistics - I wish I had my computer here so we could pick it up very quickly -- in terms of our budget only spend about 20 percent of our monthly budget on food costs. Other countries of the world, people in other places, spend anywhere from 40 to 60 percent of their monthly income on food costs. The money that goes from rehabilitation, that goes into capital works, indirectly subsidizes the food costs for all of us in Alberta and especially those that live in urban centres in this province. So we shouldn't forget that in the cost/benefit analysis that is being done at the present time. I raise those two points as something that's often forgotten when we start to talk about irrigation and the implications thereof.

The cost/benefit ratio: when government support was implemented, the 86/14 formula was implemented. I remember being at the meeting where Dr. Manning at that time, back in the '60s, outlined the reasons the federal government the provincial

government, and local governments benefit in a ratio, if you put the federal and provincial people together, of 86 percent, and it would cost local people -- they would benefit about 16 percent. In turn, that was how the ratio was set up by which the various levels of government would pay for rehabilitation and the cost of irrigation districts. There was a cost/benefit ratio done then, and that's why the finance came in the way it did. So I think there is substance to the way we spend money for irrigation.

So, Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to mention those things because I think there is a broader perspective we can look at. Also, irrigation can continue to make a great contribution to the economic development and social development of this province. Because I've been a rural representative for years and years and years, I think one of the saddest things I see happening right now is that depopulation of rural areas. It's going to be tough to prevent. But this is one of the things we can do: enhance the opportunity through irrigation for rural people, so that they stay there to build their communities.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 1 -- Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement	\$41,400,000
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MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

2 -- Land Reclamation

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the second vote up for discussion tonight deals with Land Reclamation, and the amount to be voted is \$2,160,000. The document in front of us also indicates what the cumulative amount has been to March 31, 1987: a total expenditure of \$29,133,000.

This is one of those programs that all members have heard me talk about with a great deal of interest in recent years. Basically what it amounts to is literally hundreds and hundreds of small land reclamation projects. They can be everything from scars in the earth that occurred before we had our modern-day laws in this province: the old gravel pits that were built in the decades of the 1920s, the '30s, the '40s, the '50s; old sewage lagoons that have been a long time abandoned. We've gone in with modest amounts of dollars for the most part and taken the land and improved it. There are just literally again -- and I repeat -- dozens and dozens and dozens of projects that we do each year.

All members of the Assembly that have such projects within their own constituencies receive updates from me once or twice a year. Those Members of the Legislative Assembly who recently had their projects accomplished or completed were recently noted that their municipalities had received little certificates from us as part of Environment Week 1988, congratulating them for them. Essentially the \$2,160,000 that we have before us deals for the most part with land reclamation projects, but it also deals with some land reclamation research projects that we have. Essentially, of that \$2,160,000, all of the money save for \$375,000 is for actual land reclamation projects. The other \$375,000 essentially is for research and some communications associated with it.

Mr. Chairman, I'd be happy to answer any specific questions hon. members might have.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to comment that there are a number of communities around the province that have benefited from the land reclamation program, and certainly some in my constituency. I would like to acknowledge the value of the program in that regard.

I would like to ask the minister, however, if he envisions the fairly substantial cleanup and reclamation that will be done sometime in the near future at the site at Duvernay. Would that come under the auspices of the land reclamation program in terms of this vote? Or does he envision that the funding for that, the interim funding -- because hopefully the department will be able to determine liability or responsibility for the mess that exists at the abandoned chemical plant site near Duvernay and recapture some of the costs from former owners or operators of the property. But I'm just wondering: in the interim, would the costs of reclamation come from this vote?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, we currently have a consultant that Alberta Environment has retained to take a look at the actual conditions of the Duvernay site, and we're expecting a report, at least an interim report, by the end of June 1988 with respect to this. Then we'll be geared in terms of the direction we would have.

To be very specific in terms of the response to the question, that will depend on the magnitude of the problem. This particular vote for the most part will deal with reclamation projects, I think, that we've envisaged for this year. The largest one would be approximately \$202,000: a reclamation rural garbage dump in Hinton. But most of them are much more modest than that, and should the Duvernay cleanup be in that magnitude of zero dollars to a couple of hundred thousand dollars, it may very well be that this would be the mechanism we would use. Failing that, we have an alternative that we could utilize dollars out of Alberta Environment per se. Or failing that, depending on the magnitude of the problem, I guess the only alternative, of course, if we don't have dollars budgeted for the project, and because this is a relatively new arrival, would be to ask my colleagues in the government to basically see if they would spring for it by way of a special warrant.

But just to recap, the first alternative would be this particular fund, the second alternative would be a funding mechanism within Alberta Environment, and thirdly, it would be a special warrant.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in terms of the process, then, if I might make sure that we're all clear: the minister is saying that in a case like this, it's the department's practice to ensure that the cleanup is undertaken and the land reclaimed and then worry about who's going to pay the eventual bill; that the people who live in and near the area won't be caught up in some sort of protractive legal wrangling. It's my understanding that the minister likes to move in, clean up, and then bill the polluter.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's certainly my approach, Mr. Chairman. Sometimes one gets into trouble. It's called the John Wayne approach by some, but that's the approach of this government. This government is action oriented. If we see a problem, we tend to respond pretty quickly to resolve the

problem. Sometimes along the way the government gets criticized for being too quick, but we would rather be action oriented than research oriented. So I would want to assure the member that if the problem is identified to be a problem for safety for people, we would want to resolve the problem. That's what a Progressive Conservative government is all about.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes. Just a couple of questions, actually, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to congratulate the minister on this program. I think it was certainly an essential program and a very good idea.

First, I'd like to ask him, though -- this program does seem to be winding down a bit. If you look at the figures for '85-86, it was \$3 million; '86-87, \$3 million. Then it was down to \$2.35 million in '87-88, and now this year it's \$2.16 million. There seems to be less money in each of the last three years. So would the Minister of the Environment tell us whether or not they intend to wind this program down, or is it that they're just running out of sites. I hope they're running out of sites, basically, and I would be delighted to hear that the whole province is cleaned up. This program surely, Mr. Minister, has taught the province a lesson, and that is that it doesn't make sense to go around creating messes and leaving them lying around until finally, later, somebody has to clean them up before they cause problems.

I guess it makes me wonder why we're now at the point where we have a city the size of Edmonton developing another landfill site dump when surely there's got to be a better way than that to get rid of at least some of that. I wonder if the Minister of the Environment wouldn't suggest that his government should take the lead in seeing to it that the big cities -- and come up with some bucks to help them -- find some ways to get rid of their garbage without creating these huge, big dumps that some future generation may feel they have to clean up, or that may start leaking into the environment and causing the same kinds of problems you've just been cleaning up with your land reclamation project.

My last question is -- looking back through previous documents, there was a third vote under your section called the Paddle River Basin Development and I thought it just might be an opportunity for you to give us the last word on that. Is that project totally finished and not costing any more money, or if there are any sorts of operating or ongoing costs, have they just been shifted over to the Department of the Environment as opposed to the heritage trust fund?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the last subject matter first: the Paddle River dam. What a magnificent project, a vision that this Assembly just engendered itself to several years ago: a dam. Yes, the hon. member is right. We don't have any estimates in here because the project is complete. It's been working for the last several years. All hon. members will know what a great deal of pride this government has with respect to the conclusion and completion of that particular project. Members will recall that in 1986 the worst flooding occurred in the history of our province of Alberta. The Paddle River dam was operational in 1986, built at a cost of some \$45 million, and we estimated, Mr. Chairman, that if the Paddle River dam had not been in place in 1986, the damage to agricultural land in that part of Alberta might have been as much as \$20 million. But

because the Paddle River dam was there, is there, and has successfully been operating, we've been able to save that, protect the environment and the like. I might also point out that on this 31st day of May, 1988, the only reservoir in the province of Alberta that has more than 100 percent of its capacity that we tailored or engineered the dam to is the Paddle River dam. It works very, very well. And I have a great opportunity several times a week to take a look at the Paddle River as I come and go from where I live.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, I should point out that really this estimate has nothing to do with the building of a garbage site or dump in the city of Edmonton. Perhaps that's another matter for another day, but I certainly want to thank the member for taking his interest. I'll perhaps just point out to him the way I operate as an MLA in the constituency of Barrhead. When municipalities in the constituency that I represent have a few concerns with respect to garbage dumps, I sort of walk in there and have a meeting with the council and say, "Hey, fellas, have you thought about this?" The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway of course is an MLA for the city of Edmonton, and I would sincerely suggest to him that I'm sure the mayor would just welcome him in city council. He could sit down with the council and say, "Hey, mayor, have you thought about doing this?" And there are a number of NDP members from the city of Edmonton that should go down there and say: "Hey, Larry, let's talk about this. You sure this is what you want to do? We're representatives of the people in the city of Edmonton." I'm sure he would welcome that. I look at the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly. He sat on Edmonton council for a number of years. I mean, I just . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I wonder if the hon. minister could come back to the vote, please. [interjections] Question?

Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister. There are a number of old and abandoned refinery sites, oil refinery and gas refinery and so on sites. I'm primarily concerned about oil refinery or oil storage sites around the province. My question is: do these sites qualify under this program as perhaps being viable to be funded through this land reclamation program? If they do not qualify for this program, perhaps the minister could briefly explain why not.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the only oil refinery sites that would become eligible under this program would be one that had been built in the early part of the province of Alberta and whose owner has now been lost. They've been abandoned, gone, no longer exist. It'd be a small company that doesn't exist. Our laws now in the province of Alberta indicate that liability rests with the owner of the land. That is the reason why we would not move in if an Imperial Oil or a Gulf or somebody else came along and said, "Hey, we want to give up." To do that would just throw a tremendous liability to the taxpayer of the province of Alberta. Our basic philosophy is that it's the polluter who pays. So he who owns the land and causes certain things to happen to the land, under the laws that we now have and have had since the 1970s, is responsible.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I would just remind the minister that I had asked him a question that he didn't answer. I said that this program seems to be winding down. How long do you think it'll be before it's complete? How much more money

is going to be needed? What kind of years are we looking at for time? I would also just remind him that he is the Minister of the Environment. I'm quite happy to talk to councillors, and I do on occasion.

MR. KOWALSKI: Very specifically, Mr. Chairman, this program has been very, very successful over the last number of years it's been in effect. Needless to say, the first projects that were helped under the program were the ones that were the most serious in terms of the impact on the environment. So the priority list basically, as each year goes by, now allows us to deal with items or projects that are less damaging to the environment than the ones we've already dealt with.

Something else has also happened as well. We've also learned through expertise as to how to reclaim these things, so our efficiencies and effectiveness have basically been reduced. So in essence you don't really need all the amount of dollars you've had before.

Of course, the last reason for the modest reduction of \$190,000 from the two fiscal years is simply one in meeting with the Provincial Treasurer's guideline in terms of the amount of capital dollars. But this is a program that as the Minister of the Environment I believe is extremely important and I would sincerely hope that my colleagues in this Legislative Assembly will continue to vote dollars towards it. And it's my intent to basically see that level stay in the \$2 million to \$3 million range for a great number of years to come.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 2 -- Land	Reclamation	\$2,160,000
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MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the vote be reported and certainly thank all colleagues in the Assembly for their contribution tonight.

[Motion carried]

Department of Recreation and Parks

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Next is the department of parks and recreation -- recreation and parks. Hon. Minister.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wouldn't wish to correct you, but of course it is the Department of Recreation and Parks.

I had the opportunity, Mr. Chairman, on May 16 to speak at great length with regards to the votes before the Assembly and the capital projects division for 1988-89. There are two specific votes: the Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas for some \$2 million and the Kananaskis Country Recreation Development for \$460,000. I think all hon. members at that time had the opportunity to voice their concerns, and I was pleased to have their involvement and their participation. I would now ask that all hon. members support the votes, as indicated previously.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of points I want to raise with the minister. We couldn't get to the minister of public works; perhaps this minister may respond. I'm talking about the Capital City Park. I just hope it will be an appropriate time to discuss it, presumably under vote 2.

Now, I know the city of Edmonton made available to members of the Assembly last year their master plan for the Capital City Park, which is really an extensive project, and assuredly the financial assistance that the province has provided to this point is well received and sure appreciated. I know that the city wants to continue to work and expand on this particular park area. Let me say -- and I've said it here before and I say it again -- that the river valley of the city of Edmonton, the way it's being developed, it's really becoming the jewel of the city and of the province and, indeed, of Canada. It's a very beautiful park, easily accessible and utilized very extensively by the people of the city of Edmonton and others who journey here.

Now, I do understand that the city did approach the minister earlier this year with a proposal for some funding, primarily to upgrade the trails and the biking trails, that totaled in the vicinity of some \$500,000 to \$600,000 per year. Now, the city requested the provincial government to at least match those amounts so that they can proceed with the development of, I believe, some five parts and some pathways and bicycle paths. As I understand it -- and I, of course, stand to be corrected -- the government really has not responded to the city relative to that particular request. Perhaps the minister may wish to comment on it. Obviously, we have some rationale and reasoning as to why that is the case. Again, I would hope that if in fact a request was made, the minister give very serious consideration to assisting the city with the continued development of this particular park.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

An article in the local paper recently alluded to the kind of ambitious program that is in place that would start in the southwest corner near Devon and would actually go right through to Fort Saskatchewan. I think this would develop this park very extensively. There are areas where it's being left in its natural state, where there is habitat of a variety of birds and animals, which I think is part and package of a beautiful park. I think the city is doing a great job of managing the river valley and at the same time providing to the citizens of this city a wilderness area within the city through that particular park management. But my real question to the minister is: are you prepared or are you going to make funding available, at least on a downscaled version as proposed by the city, to continue at least to the minimum of the development of their paths and bicycle routes throughout the river valley?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Chairman, if I may respond partially to the Member for Edmonton-Beverly -- and I certainly thank him for his comments and would agree with him as he makes reference to the Capital City Park project within the city of Edmonton being a jewel of the city. He should be aware, as all hon. members are, that I indicated on May 16 that the provincial government have contributed in excess of some \$40 million from general revenue funds towards the development of this park, and last year through the government, as well, some \$800,000-plus to further land acquisition to allow them to proceed with further developments.

I might indicate to all hon. members of the Assembly and report to them through you, Mr. Chairman, that I met with members of city council recently as well, and the Parks & Recreation manager, and we are having ongoing discussions and dialogue in reference to the comments that the Member for Edmonton-Beverly has referred to. I should indicate, as well, that there is a

large portion of operating funds that goes towards Capital City Park, which I think is significant in itself.

When the member has indicated that I've not responded, I certainly would like to correct that statement. Not only have we responded; we've met personally, are reviewing the concerns, as I've indicated in and through the media. I believe the report was very accurately reported by the media source, and my thanks to the media for doing so. I've indicated and will advise all hon. members of the Assembly that it is a matter of the timing and, of course, the priorities. I certainly believe and support the project in its entirety, although I believe that it could be best phased in -- and when I say "phased in," there are certain facets of it that could be developed on a more immediate basis -- and I'm looking to try and work out something on a five-year plan. I've met with the members, in particular on the government side with regards to those members from the Edmonton area, and will be having further discussions and am hopeful that we'll see shortly further announcements in this regard. I cannot give the hon. member the assurance or commitment at this time but can assure him that we're working very closely with the city of Edmonton in this regard.

I believe that should update the Member for Edmonton-Beverly, and I appreciate his remarks and his concern and, as well, his commitment, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Comments, questions, or amendments to vote 1, Recreation and Parks?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Vote 1 -- Kananaskis Country
Recreation Development

\$460,000

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, I so move that the vote be reported as you have stated.

[Motion carried]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 2, Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to make a few comments on this particular vote as well. Last fall we had the occasion to travel through parts of northern Alberta and meet with various members of councils, economic development people, people involved in the tourist industry, chambers of commerce, and primarily businesspeople in the communities in the northern part of the province.

Mention was made quite frequently of the lack of recreational facilities, particularly, I would suggest, in the northeast part of the province, as well as in the Peace River area. They understand that the province rates tourism as a high priority, that it's one of the areas where we benefit through the diversification or the attempt to diversify our economy by encouraging more tourism. Yet they point to their own situations and suggested to us that there really is not enough being done in the northern part of the province. They point with some degree of envy, I suppose, and perhaps some jealousy to what's happening in Kananaskis and the southern part of the province. At the same time, they look at what's happening to them, where in fact people coming from the city of Edmonton will bypass their com-

munities. headed to Saskatchewan to partake in some lake's recreation facilities there. They are discouraged by this turn of events and feel that for some reason they are being neglected. One must assume that that must be the case, in light of the fact that the abundance of green areas and lakes that exist in that part of the province -- that somehow no effort or very little effort is being paid to their needs in terms of diversifying their economy. Because they are also feeling the effects of the recession in the oil industry -- the constant low prices, the inactivity -- that at one time sustained their economies.

So I would ask the minister: under this vote what are the plans for assisting the communities in northern Alberta, communities in the Peace River area, in an effort to improve their economic state via the tourist industry?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Minister of Recreation and Parks.

MR. WEISS: Thank you. Mr. Chairman. I welcome the opportunity to perhaps clear up a little bit of a misunderstanding that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly may have. With regards to the Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas specifically the vote this year calls for \$2 million. Now, last year there were similar amounts. We looked at 20-some developments, and 30-some developments of projects this year. Those specifically relate to park projects or recreation areas within the \$100,000 vicinity. That would not be of enough dollars or magnitude of spending to develop what the hon. members are making reference to.

I would ask the hon. member, if he has the opportunity, perhaps to refer to May 16 *Hansard*, pages 1086, 1087, 1088, and 1089, where they had the opportunity at that time to respond to valid concerns that were raised both by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway and the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, who quite accurately pointed out similar concerns and which I then had the opportunity to respond to, I think in great detail and length, as to the specific issues and to what may be termed or called projects in northern Alberta, with a terminology of "adventures north" or "country north" or whatever concept may be used. We're working very closely with the recreation consultants and groups from all the municipalities. I have nothing further to report at this time but would only encourage the hon. member, if he did have a few minutes or extra reading time, that he would review that to see what comments I have made and what commitments were made as well at that time. I think the members for Edmonton-Kingsway and Athabasca-Lac La Biche covered it very extensively, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ready for the question?

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you. That is true. We had a very good discussion on this same topic -- you know, comparing our \$75 million proposal for development of northern tourism to the \$30 million that the Alberta government has decided to put into the community tourism partnership program.

But what I wanted to look at -- just thinking of some numbers -- and raise a couple of concerns, if I might, that I don't think I covered in exactly this way the other time when we debated this topic: if you look at Tourism in the estimates, there's some \$33.5 million planned expenditure, which is a 3.9 drop from last year. Considering that in the heritage trust fund estimates there is also a drop in the urban parks program, which put into five urban parks some \$62 million altogether, and that

seems to have been finished, it would seem it's not the intention of the government to carry that program into other cities. Then that's quite a bit of a reduction in terms of tourist dollars, which doesn't really sit with the idea that tourism is a major development of the province and will become one of the most important sources of revenue for this province.

So what I'm wondering -- and I know there's \$30 million slated from this community partnership program and some \$20 million for partnership with the private sector. But that is over five years, and this year it will hardly get off the ground. So I'm really saying to the minister that it looks like we've got a cut-back literally in the amount of tourism dollars this year, in terms of park development anyway, and I wonder if he could comment. It seems to me the government is going to have to do something rather than just say that tourism is the big thing and the big coming thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Minister of Recreation and Parks.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to respond to the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. While it wouldn't be my prerogative or responsibility to respond as it directly relates to tourism -- and the hon. member has referred specifically to some \$30 million -- he did use the words "the urban parks program," so I think it would give me that leeway to comment as it relates to the tourism component side of it.

Just to correct one slight error that the hon. member has referred to so it would go into the record, I believe the record should show not some \$62 million to the urban parks program as expended in the past, but those five cities, I believe, received a total of approximately \$88 million.

The municipal recreation/tourism areas specifically do increase and benefit tourism potential. We work very closely with the communities, the service groups, the Minister of Tourism, and our interco-ordinated, related departments as well. There are some ongoing economic benefits, of course, that are realized. For each \$100,000 park that specifically is developed by a community, we find that it's many times, three and four times, the amount of dollars expended in goods, services, and manpower components that go into the development of those specific areas.

Each community, though, that specifically is responsible for their tourism program under the Minister of Tourism will have that responsibility to try and best address how their needs should be met. If they see fit to have some of it go into these specific areas, that would be their prerogative. It isn't for me to say how they should best spend their dollars. All I can say is that I believe the urban parks program for those five cities was a very, very successful one. It's one that I would hope would be reimplemented in my tenure.

I have to accept the economic realities of the day as the revenue side of it is down, through the royalties and others. Hopefully through the Minister of Energy, when he has these new projects come on stream, we'll be able to contribute more dollars back into the Provincial Treasury. We'll then once again see projects such as this be approved, which I'm certainly aware that the member is supportive of. I, too, would encourage that they would then be reimplemented once again.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 2 -- Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas

\$2,000,000

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Department of
Technology, Research and Telecommunications**

1 -- Individual Line Service

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, do you have any comments?

MR. YOUNG: Very few, Mr. Chairman. Effectively there's been quite a bit of discussion of this area when we were dealing with the main estimates, and some in question period. I would just point out for hon. members that the amount before us tonight, \$57 million-plus, is directed to three areas.

In excess of \$4 million has been earmarked to provide for the \$110 rebate to subscribers who have or will be converted during this year.

A major amount of \$11 million-plus has been identified as that amount of money necessary to reimburse exchange circuit surcharges. That is, for those individuals who have purchased their own private lines and then have paid charges on them, these charges will be rebated retroactive to May 1, 1986, for a maximum of two lines and up to a maximum of \$1,200 for each line. So roughly in excess of \$11 million will be used for that purpose.

Slightly over \$40 million has been set aside for the conversion program proper, and that's the largest amount in any year to date.

I should conclude, Mr. Chairman, by indicating that in Edmonton Telephones' service area there were some small number of party lines, and a provision for slightly more than a million dollars has been set aside to provide the same kind of support for the conversion of party lines within their service area as within the corresponding service area of Alberta Government Telephones.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Comments, questions, or amendments to the vote? Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 1 -- Individual Line Service	\$57,460,000
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MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, I move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. members of the committee, in accordance with Standing Order 58(1) and 58(2), the estimates have all been considered. I want to thank hon. members of the committee for their co-operation in getting through the estimates of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund in five days.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the committee rise and report progress and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

Resolved that from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund sums not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989, for the purpose of making investments in the following projects. To be administered by Public Works, Supply and Services, \$400,000, Capital City Recreation Park; Environment, \$41,400,000, Irrigation Headworks and Main Irrigation Systems Improvement and \$2,160,000, Land Reclamation; Recreation and Parks, \$460,000 for Kananaskis Country Recreation Development and \$2,000,000 for Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas; Technology, Research and Telecommunications, \$57,460,000 for Individual Line Service.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report and the request for leave to sit again?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I regret that I'm unable to advise the House this evening its tomorrow afternoon's business. I am not sure whether we will be proceeding with the Capital Fund or with second readings or, for that matter, with several motions which are on the Order Paper at this time. I will advise the House Leaders at the earliest I can do tomorrow.

[At 10 p.m. the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]