

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, August 10, 1989 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 89/08/10

[The Committee of the Whole met at 8 p.m.]

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**
(Committee of the Whole)

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. It is now 8 o'clock.

Bill 1**Family Day Act**

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the committee would like to come to order, our first order of business in the committee this evening is Bill 1, the Family Day Act. I'd recognize the hon. Premier if he would like . . . No? Well, then, there are some amendments I believe the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore had tabled earlier. I'd recognize the hon. member to present those amendments.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to speak first to lay the groundwork for these amendments being presented and moved.

We have to agree, I think, with the Premier's intent to focus on family and the ways in which families can be strengthened. I have a concern, however, that as we focus on families, we may focus on them in isolation and fail to take into account that families flourish or wither in a social, political, and economic context that may be more or less supportive of families. I'm concerned that when we make strengthening families an individual rather than a societal responsibility, we miss the context in which families exist.

Part of this happens because we are so rigorous in our separation of the public sphere, the economic system or political system, from the private-sector sphere that is concerned with meeting social, emotional, and spiritual needs. That, of course, includes the family. What we do is we fail to recognize that these two sectors are part of a whole, which is the society in which we exist and live. We fail to recognize that what happens in the home and the needs of the families have an impact on what happens in the paid workplace and vice versa. What happens in the paid workplace impacts on the family and what happens in homes, because it is in fact a dynamic interaction in which both sectors are acted upon and modified in response to the other, for workers and family members are the same people. Therefore, when we want to talk about how families are to be strengthened, we must not only question what families can do to be stronger, we have to ask: what can we as a society, an economic, social, and political system, do to create an environment that makes it possible for family life to be stronger?

We must look at what is in our economic and political endeavours that weakens families and erodes family life possibilities. It is my belief that for the most part, for most people, creating a family and having a good family life is their most important goal. Being part of a loving relationship is a key aspect of what makes life good, for no matter how successful or interesting our lives, there is something lacking if we are without someone with whom to share our successes and our interests,

without someone to share our joys and our triumphs, and someone with whom we can share our sorrows and our losses, someone with whom we share our past and try to create our future. Human beings, I believe, have a great need not only to be loved but to love. So we join together to create families, communities, and even nations. We need to join with those who share our values and our vision of how we live our lives.

We create families in many ways: through blood ties, through legal contracts, religious consecration, and private commitments. I believe, therefore, that we can posit as a basic assumption that all human beings wish to create strong, healthy, and nurturing families, for even in times of high divorce rates young people commit themselves to each other and believe that theirs is a different union; it will endure. Given, then, that human beings as individuals want to create strong families, we must then ask: how is it that we create a social, economic, and political environment that makes it possible for families to be strong? We must ask: how do our public policies impact on families in their private lives? To do this, we need to analyze how proposed policy and legislation impacts on families in their diversity and in their particularity.

Let us then look at the legislation before us and what it will mean for the members in the diverse family constellations that exist in Alberta in 1989. This Bill calls for the establishment of a public holiday, Family Day, on the third Monday of February. We can ask: how will this Bill help the many diverse family constellations that exist in our society? Let us look at the impact or lack of impact that this holiday may have. Let us look at its impact on the single mother of a healthy infant who is required to leave her infant in the care of who knows who in order to seek employment in the paid labour force. How will this holiday help that mother and her child bond, a process so important if that mother is to be able to appropriately respond to her child's changing needs, and so important to the infant if that infant is to grow into a psychologically healthy child, adolescent, and adult. Will this Bill help this mother make choices about how she will care for her child? How, indeed, will her family be strengthened, and how will this holiday strengthen the 60 percent of families headed by women which live in poverty; indeed, the one in six families in Alberta that live in poverty? How will this holiday help the battered mother and her children, and how will it help the children in this province who are sexually abused by one or more family members?

In focusing on families because of this holiday, will the Premier and his minister focus on the needs of these families and bring into existence shelters, transition houses, treatment programs, and a provincewide crisis line, so desperately needed? Will this holiday aid the 93,600 poor children in this province and the increasing numbers who go to the food bank, surely a shame in this, one of the richest provinces in Canada, one of the richest nations on earth.

Will this holiday help us celebrate the diversity of families, including the family created by a gay or lesbian couple? Will it help to break down the age-old stereotypes and prejudices that have led to violence on our streets and ongoing discrimination in the workplace and in the area of tenancy? Will this holiday help those overburdened by the responsibility of caring for others: the young mother at home with children, the parents of the disabled child, the parents or family who have members who suffer from mental illness, the adult daughter or son caring for an aging parent or parents?

Will this help the families in which both parents are working

and worry about the lack of quality child care? We know that we have an excess of child care spaces in this province and that standards as to space and fire exits are high. But we have the lowest training standards; in fact, we are the only province in Canada to have no training standards for workers. These training standards are so necessary to ensure that child care is the kind of child care that benefits and enhances child development.

Many would say that we can't solve all these problems and this holiday, after all, wasn't meant to deal with such matters. However, my concern is that this initiative is part of the empty rhetoric that is supposed to make us feel good and lull us into a sense of false security and well-being so that we do not see what is happening to so many families in our province. It is a way to silence our concern about the well-being of all families, because the government can say, "We have done something." And those of us who object are then considered bad-tempered or ungrateful if we say, "How will this really strengthen families?" Buying cards, as the hon. Premier and associate minister suggested, may mean we think about and honour our families for one day in the year, but we need to do more than that if we are going to have families that are strengthened. This approach makes me think of the criticism often leveled against today's affluent parents who, it is said, give their children things instead of time and love, or the criticism we hear about the commercialization of Christmas: cards and things to soothe troubled consciences.

This brings me, then, to the major concern about this Bill, and that is that this holiday, the third Monday in February, is a public holiday. It is not a retail holiday. Indeed, we have few holidays that are retail holidays, and Christmas Day may be the only one. So how is it possible for many families, those families in which one family member is employed in the retail sector, to be together?

Perhaps, in looking at the changes in society that have weakened families, we can point to the opening of the retail sector on Sundays. I remember the days when Canadians decried the commercialization of the United States' society, best exemplified by Sunday opening. The profit motive took precedence over families' needs. I remember the controversy over mandated Sunday opening in Edmonton malls and the concern raised by owners of small family businesses and retail outlets in the malls. But again the profit motive triumphed over the needs of family members. The owners of small retail outlets and the workers in many retail outlets, both large and small, were not heard. Government members failed to understand what Sunday or holiday opening means for families in which one member is employed in the retail sector, because members say, "I'll be home with my family." Well, Mr. Chairman, they can be there because this House does not sit on public holidays.

I have also heard government members say, "We cannot legislate family togetherness," or as I heard during the election, and this is from one of my opponents, "We planned to be at home with our children, but they went skiing," a nice, upper middle class option that is not open to many families in this province. Nobody in their right mind would suggest we legislate family togetherness, but we can and do, in fact, legislate family separation if we fail to make this holiday one on which retail outlets are closed, for fathers, mothers, children who may want to be together may be forced to be apart. One father spoke to me about his young adult children who were putting themselves through school by working in a store part-time. They were not able to be at home on Sundays to be there for the family dinner or to participate in family activities.

We know about women, often mothers, being forced to work and being unable to be at home with their children. I was in Stettler recently and noted with interest the sign in one of the stores: "open on Sunday." How will this strengthen family life in Stettler? Many of the workers are women with children, and I know because I've shopped in the stores in Stettler for the last many long years. Some of them are rural women working off the farm to help support their families. Like urban women, under the conditions of this Bill they will not be able to spend this Family Day at home with their families. Forty-two percent of workers in sales jobs are women. Many are part-time workers without benefits or job security who are expected to work on Sundays and public holidays with minimal financial gain, especially if they have to find and pay for child care. This Bill does nothing to strengthen their families.

Mr. Chairman, if we want stronger families, we must create a social context in which families can be strong. Therefore, I wish to amend this Bill. I propose that this Bill call for retail closing on Family Day so it can be truly a family day. The hon. Premier has said on June 8, 1988, and I quote:

This government is going to support the family, and I welcome initiatives or ideas from anybody in this [House].

Well, here's an idea from across the floor. This amendment allows for the provision of essential services, entertainment, cultural, and recreational facility services, and tourist facility service.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Premier has said:

The emphasis that this government wants to put is strengthening the family, not separating it or dealing with the breakdown afterwards.

Surely the members opposite can see how Bill 1 will separate some families on the very day that they want families to be together. The Premier has said that we want to make sure parents are at home to care for their families. I ask the members of the government, the Premier, all members of this House, to demonstrate their commitment to strengthening families by supporting the amendments I now table.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Will the committee agree to reverting briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce a group sitting in the gallery tonight, a group named Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture. There are four directors and the president, Donna Graham. I wonder if the ladies would please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Innisfail.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly four gentlemen from the Alberta 4-H council. I would like to ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR CHAIRMAN The hon Associate Minister of Family and Social Services.

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**
(Committee of the Whole)

Bill 1
Family Day Act
(continued)

MR WEISS Thank you very much, Mr Chairman I was very pleased this evening to hear the remarks from the hon Member for Edmonton Avonmore I might say I was very, very pleased, in fact, because when she started out, she talked about the supportive intent re Bill 1, the Family Day Act, as introduced by the Premier She used such key words, and I hope all members of the Assembly heard and listened and listened clearly She emphasized such words as "strengthened," "stronger," "create an environment," "family life . . . stronger." And she went on to say how it would build communities and nations, share values and visions Do you know, Mr Chairman, I had to stop and wonder if she forgot what side of the House she was on, and I don't say that facetiously at all. [interjection] No, to the hon Member for Edmonton Kingsway, I don't say that facetiously, and I repeat it Because she's extending and expounding on all the views that the Premier and the government of the day have been saying for so long, truly all the views that we have so dearly fought for.

But then, Mr Chairman, what concerned me is when she went on to focus with regards to the public holiday, and having heard all the good words of wisdom and all the good words of support and strength, I then lost my true and initial feelings about what I heard. Because the whole focus then dealt with a holiday Well, I don't think it's a holiday, and I recognize there'll be some problems. But the proposed amendment, as introduced by the hon member, certainly would create chaos She went on to say, and I quote how would it help battered women, those sexually abused? I would like to say to all hon members of the Assembly that I really don't know. Does any body know? But maybe just the reality of knowing one day has been designated as Family Day will shock both sides of a broken family into the realities that there are problems in this world, and as a realist we don't run from them, we try and work towards improving them and bettering them from all sides It's not just "empty rhetoric" as quoted by the hon member.

I can recall another very important day in the history of all in Canada and throughout the world Remembrance Day. As a youngster I really didn't pay what true importance was meant with Remembrance Day, and to those more senior than myself who have personally experienced and been involved in such a day, I now realize what it meant. Only as I grew older and fully understood and appreciated what it was -- I can now recall, too, that many of us thought of it as a holiday. I don't want to show my age by saying I can think back even to the days when it wasn't even a holiday, when the city of Edmonton and other areas did not utilize it as a holiday throughout the communities. But as it's gone on in its time, I think the importance and significance of that day have truly been recognized, and many, many people, businesses, communities, municipalities, and others give us the honour of calling it a holiday, but not a holiday in a sense that it's a day to do nothing It's a day to remember and to remember those that lost and gave their lives for that very, very

special occasion to help all of us throughout this world. That's really what Family Day will be, a day of remembering the family. So I think that we don't want to recall it as a holiday but recall it for its true, special meaning.

As a former operator of small business I, too, faced the dilemma of Sunday openings, but I also remember how it affected my own personal life in that my wife is a nurse and was gainfully employed and working in the nursing profession for many, many, many years I believe it was some 17 years before she enjoyed her first sojourn at being a domestic engineer, if one were to use that term I do know it affected our personal life, because we, too, had to give. We had to give and take. There were very, very few Sundays, Christmases, special occasions that we were able to enjoy together. People that worked on shifts had to share those experiences as well. But do you know what we did? We pulled together a little harder and a little stronger You know, I'm sure we're like most people and most families. We argue, too, about some of those occasions. There are those who tell me they never have an argument, I say they're certainly in a different marriage than I'm involved in. We enjoy good, healthy, diverse views. That's like a good, strong, healthy partnership. If one only had one strength and you all shared that, then there wouldn't be any real interest in it. So maybe that's what builds and makes a stronger marriage. But I really believe that having shared that, I can fully appreciate and understand the values of what the Premier is introducing with regards to the Family Day Act. I think that we will all be able to reflect on the significance, as I said earlier, of what it means.

But I also wanted to go back and talk a little bit about a community that I live in, the community of Fort McMurray, where we have approximately 5,000 people employed in two major, major tar sands plants, where the majority of those workers -- and I say majority, with the exception of some management -- are involved in what's called shift work Those shift workers, by their choice and through their collective bargaining agreements in most cases, work at what's called four on and four off It's the twelve and twelve Do you know that many of those do not know what a Sunday is? It's because they work their shifts and their patterns, and then they enjoy as much as they can those four days with their families to do the things that others like you and I, if we have those free days to enjoy on a Saturday and Sunday -- and I know as an hon member of the Assembly that other members do not have that luxury on many occasions, but we try So we have to all make sacrifices, but I don't think they're too dear to pay or, as I've said before, what the earlier intent of what the Bill is.

So yes, Mr Chairman, to sum up, there may be some problems, but I'd like to ask the hon member and all hon members of the Assembly to try and support the Bill as it is, to see the merits, allow it a chance to work, meet all our goals, and as the hon member did say, strengthen the family. I truly believe she is right in that goal, with the exception of the amendments that are proposed.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

MR CHAIRMAN The hon Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M LAING Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would just like to respond to the associate minister. I would remind him that the word "holiday" comes from the word "holy day," and it is a day of memory, of remembrance, a day of celebration. When I use

the word "holiday," that is how I use that word, as a day at which time we remember and celebrate something that is special.

He spoke of Remembrance Day, and I, too, remember Remembrance Day when it was a special day when we remembered. The difference now is many people do not take that day to remember because it is a retail opening day and people are busy doing other things rather than taking the time to remember and to be together. I also was in a family in which one member was employed in an essential service and was required to do shift work. I remember how that felt for our family -- for my husband, for my children, for myself -- when we could not be together and take part in the traditions that are part of our culture, the traditions and rituals that strengthen family ties, that strengthen families, that help them to endure in times of adversity.

I would therefore ask for support for this amendment because I think it really does speak to the essential ingredient of holiday; that is, holy day.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Chairman, I wish to rise and to indicate support for the amendment. I have distributed the amendment that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar wished to pursue, an amendment much similar to the amendment that we're now dealing with at present. In fact, the difference between the amendments is that the amendment we're presently dealing with is much more specific. We would have preferred it to have been allowing an easier way of doing things, allowing cabinet to make decisions as to which businesses could be exempted and not having to come back to the Legislature for amendment, but our party is prepared to support the amendment on these bases.

Mr. Chairman, the idea of a holiday in February is a good one. The idea of celebrating a day for a family day is an exceptional idea. The idea of bringing together the children and the spouses, perhaps the grandmothers, all of the family that can be brought together is a good idea to create that strength of family unity or to build that family unity that's, I think, needed today. Today we have a society that is highly mobile, a society that has differences in strata of wealth, a society, therefore, that has people involved in crime and in drugs. It's a day like this that's needed to bring back the children to have the influence of the parents and the grandparents and uncles and aunts to ensure that things don't go wrong. So in principle we agree, the Liberal Party agrees, that such a day should be enacted. It's also a fact that in February we are in the doldrums of severe weather. We are troubled by a most cruel winter, so that gives added reason for having a special holiday.

Mr. Chairman, there is a problem, though, with this Act, and the hon. member that has introduced the amendment has made that pretty clear. It is that not everybody is allowed to celebrate the holiday. The moms and the dads and the grandmothers and the grandfathers and the uncles and the aunts and the children aren't able, many of them, to come back to that family unit to participate in that Family Day. Therefore, the Act isn't fair; it isn't fair to the thousands of people who must work. And I understand from the comments made by the hon. Member for Fort McMurray that there are those people that do have to engage in shift work. There are companies that have machinery that's needed to be working all the time. There are companies that can't be efficient unless they get that machinery going and shift work involved. I understand that, and I think the hon. member would appreciate and understand that as well.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, in trying to simplify the amendment, wanted to make that possibility of exemption one which the cabinet could deal with more easily than having to come back for amendments all the time. But I would like to remind the hon. Member for Fort McMurray that doing shift work is one thing, but working at West Edmonton Mall or the Heritage Mall or a Calgary mall or some mall where you're obligated to go to work on a day that's the Sabbath or a day that's Family Day doesn't make a holiday out of this particular day. What I suggest that this amendment does -- and I welcome this amendment -- is to ensure that those people who wish to take the day off are given that opportunity. You don't have to take the day off if you don't want to. Hon. Member for Fort McMurray, if you wish to go and work at West Edmonton Mall, it's a free country; you should be allowed to do that. But I think that those people who wish to take a family day off or take the Sabbath day off should have that opportunity without any kind of repercussions, without any kind of punishment, and that's all that this amendment does. It says that we're going to have a Family Day and everybody who wants to participate in that Family Day that can participate in it, not engaged in essential services, should participate in it.

So, Mr. Chairman, I think that we should support this. And I would ask the Premier to stand and to answer the question of why it is that we couldn't protect those many tens of thousands of mostly women who must go to work, to part-time work, who can't be part of this Family Day celebration. Why leave them out? Why not involve them?

And, Mr. Chairman, on the basis of this amendment by the hon. member that has introduced the first amendment, the fact that it is so close, the Liberal Party will not pursue its second amendment and will join in supporting this amendment.

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

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to draw the hon. associate minister's attention to the actual Bill itself, the Family Day Act, and just point out to him that in the first clause it makes reference to the fact that we are dealing with a public holiday and that the purpose of the Act is to create a holiday.

Now, I would also like to commend the Premier for bringing forward this Bill. I notice that it's patterned very closely to the Bill introduced by the New Democrat member, the hon. Member for Vegreville, called the midwinter holiday Act. There was a second Bill, I believe brought in by the New Democrat House leader, called the midwinter holiday name Act. There was going to be a process set in place to ask Albertans for their suggestions as to what name to give it. So I see that the Premier has adopted that suggestion and has actually named the Act the Alberta Family Day Act. So we're glad to see that they're taking some of our ideas, some of the positive suggestions we've made in the Legislature, and moving on them.

But, Mr. Chairman, I think all members would agree with me that the thoughtful and sincere comments of the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore were very well taken. She made her points beautifully and articulately, and I'd just like to thank her for the points that she brought up this evening and the obvious considerable thought and feeling that she has put into the amendments in front of us.

It's based very much on some of the Bill that I've introduced

in previous sessions as well, Mr. Chairman, the Retail Business Holidays Act. And while I don't take credit for having drafted the retail business holidays Act, I should note that it was first introduced in the Ontario Legislature by the then Conservative government to deal with a growing problem in that province. And that had to do with a common day of rest for families once a week, that being Sunday, being eroded by growing retail business operations staying open in Ontario on Sunday. In response to that trend the Conservative government in Ontario introduced the legislation to put a stop to it, and although it was challenged through the various court systems, it was upheld in the Supreme Court of Canada as being within the keeping of the Charter of Rights. I find it very interesting, having taken a personal interest in this legislation, to see that once the Liberals were elected in Ontario, one of the things that they did when they got a majority government was begin to erode that legislation. In fact, it was the New Democrat opposition in Ontario that prevented, or worked very hard to prevent, the Liberal government from bringing in legislation to dismantle the retail business holidays Act.

Just as it was the New Democrats in Ontario who stood up for families and the common day of rest for families, that being Sunday, once a week, so it has been the New Democrats in Alberta who have opposed that erosion of a common day of rest in this province as well. Because, Mr. Chairman, for thousands of families in this province Sunday has just become another work day. Many of us were concerned by that when the Lord's Day Act was previously thrown out by a court in this province and this government did nothing to replace that Act. They did nothing to try and deal with the issue the way that the Conservatives in Ontario did. As a result of inaction by this government, we have seen 52 family days a year disappear. With the advent of Sunday shopping now for many people -- it's thousands of people and thousands of families -- it means work on Sunday selling to accommodate those who want to use Sundays as just another retail day to sell goods to people in this province.

So now we have the situation that because of inaction 52 family days a year have disappeared in this province, and we're supposed to, I guess, applaud and slap the government on the back and thank them that we now get one of those days back. Well, quite frankly, losing 52 and getting one -- I suppose you have to take what you can get, but quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, I don't really think it's that big a deal to take away 52 and give back one. And then when you read it, you realize that you're not even really getting back one either, which is why the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore has felt compelled to bring forward these amendments to ensure that retail shopping will not occur on Alberta Family Day, so that for at least many families there can be something special about this day, that it's not just another day when they must go to work.

Now, the Associate Minister for Family and Social Services made reference to the fact that there are many Albertans who do shift work. There are also many Albertans who provide necessary and emergency services, and they have always been required to work on Sundays. I don't have any argument with that, Mr. Chairman. None of us are saying that we make it that every single family and all work of any kind, including essential services, comes to a halt on this particular holiday. But, Mr. Chairman, just because we can't provide a common day of rest for some Alberta families doesn't mean that we have to give up on providing a common day of rest for other families. When we want to recognize the family and create a special holiday, why

don't we take those businesses and those activities which are totally discretionary, are not necessary and are not essential, and ensure that for families engaged in services to the public through retail sales, they at least get that day off to spend in a special way with their families in the middle of a long, usually cold hiatus in the middle of winter in this province?

Mr. Chairman, I know what this government's going to do. They are simply going to vote down these amendments. I don't think there is any surprise in them doing that. But it's really a shame to me that they would miss the real opportunity that this Bill could provide to create a genuine Family Day, not just some bogus, poor substitute for something that we once had once a week in this province. It's a shame to me and a tragedy to me that this government over the years has failed to act in this important way. I think it's highly regrettable. Here is some small way that they could rectify an injustice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure that this Bill deserves the time and care that this party is giving it, but nonetheless I do have something I want to add.

As my colleague said, we're giving up something like 52 family days a year in this province for sort of a half a family day a year or sort of a promised family day a year that's not really delivered when you look at the Bill in detail.

I just wanted to point out to the members that when this idea of Sunday opening first came up, instead of closing once a week as had been the habit in the past, I took the month of June 1985 and door-knocked almost every retail outlet in my riding, and that is a considerable number; 124th Street has a lot of businesses on it, 107th Avenue, 118th Avenue; Westmount mall is in my riding, and Kingsway Garden mall is just on the edge of it. I door-knocked almost all the retail outlets in those malls as well to ask them what they thought, the people behind the counter, whether they were the owners or whether they were just the workers there, what they thought about one day a week off from work. Everybody was in favour of one day off a week. Only two people put up any slight argument about legislating that, wondering sort of whether it really should be legislated or not. It was absolutely overwhelming that everybody wanted family and workers to have at least one day a week. It didn't have to be Sunday; it could Saturday or it could be any other day of the week, but at least one day a week.

Now we find ourselves having given that up, sort of by default. We've allowed a situation to develop in our malls, for example, where lessees are expected to sign a document, if they're going to get into that mall, to say that they have to stay open mall hours, and mall hours of course to be defined by the owner, totally unfettered. In fact, the lessee is asked to sign, and the document has in it a clause -- I saw one such document anyway, and I'm assuming that most of them are similar. They not only had to sign that they would stay open mall hours, but they had to give up any right -- which I don't think they can legally do in this country. I'm sure it's an illegal thing. You can't give away a right that is so fundamental that it belongs in the Charter of Rights. I don't think anybody could make it stick. I guess is what I'm saying.

Nonetheless, they were supposed to give up the right to lobby any level of government or any government agency or committee or board to limit mall hours. So not only did they have to say, "We will stay open mall hours, whatever you, the boss, decide they will be," we can't even go out and lobby our

governments to put some kind of limitation on that time. That's the degree of control that owners of malls want in our society. I pointed out to the people on 124th Street that it wouldn't be long after the malls get -- with that kind of clout over the retail industry in the malls, those kinds of commercial pressures will just move out onto the street too, onto 124th Street and 107th Avenue and so on.

So I just wanted to add my voice to that of my colleagues to say for heaven's sake at least pass this amendment. At least this government should show some serious intent that people really will have at least one holiday a year. And I would ask the government to pluck up its courage and start thinking about one holiday a week, which is what we really should have in this province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the House ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The amendment is defeated.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	Hawkesworth	Sigurdson
Chumir	Laing, M.	Taylor
Decore	McEachern	Woloshyn
Ewasiuk	McInnis	Wright
Fox	Roberts	

Against the motion:

Adair	Elzinga	Lund
Ady	Evans	McClellan
Betkowski	Fischer	McCoy
Bogle	Fowler	Mirosh
Brassard	Gesell	Moore
Calahasen	Getty	Paszowski
Cardinal	Gogo	Payne
Cherry	Hyland	Severtson
Clegg	Isley	Shrake
Day	Johnston	Sparrow
Dinning	Jonson	Thurber
Drobot	Kowalski	Trynychy
Elliott	Laing, B.	Weiss

Totals: Ayes - 14 Noes - 39

[Motion on amendment lost]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 1 agreed to]

MR. GETTY: I move the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration the following Bill and reports the following Bill: Bill 1, the Family Day Act.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the Assembly agreed to the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. So ordered.

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

head: **Capital Fund Estimates 1989-90**

Public Works, Supply and Services

3 -- Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are discussing vote 3 of the Capital Fund estimates for 1989-90 which are to be found on page 13 of the book, and the elements are to be found at page 159 of the large book.

The hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to address a couple of questions to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services who has responsibility for construction of auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes in the province of Alberta. I'm not sure in terms of the budgeted amount, the \$11.7 million for Auxiliary Hospitals and the \$3.4 million for Nursing Homes, if the minister has provided us information as to which facilities that relates to in a specific way, but I did want to bring to his attention . . . Oh, that's in the element details; thank you.

I wanted to bring to his attention a project that I consider very important in the Vegreville constituency. The Vegreville auxiliary hospital and nursing home at present is a 90-bed facility that has been constantly filled to capacity with a waiting list of, I would think, anywhere between 30 and 50 people. The board went through the proper procedure in terms of applying for and receiving permission to build a 40-bed addition to that facility, and I gather things were going along quite well. However, at some point the realization came to the board and to the people in the Department of Health that were assisting them

in the planning that building a 40-bed addition, a brand-new, up-to-date facility, and attaching it to a 90-bed facility that in many ways is out of date and in need of considerable alteration perhaps didn't make the best sense either in terms of optimum patient care or in terms of the long-term economics. So the plans went back to the drawing board, and I gather they're at some point in the process now looking at and hoping to get approval for construction of a new 130-bed auxiliary hospital and nursing home to more adequately meet the needs of the population in the Vegreville area.

I should point out -- the hon. minister I'm sure is aware -- that the seniors population, the number of people over the age of 65, in the Vegreville constituency is the highest in the province. I believe somewhere over 17 percent of the people are in the 65-plus age group. That's a constituency average, but in the town of Vegreville it's considerably higher than that. Twenty-two percent or 23 percent of the people in the community are over the age of 65. I think in order to meet the present and future needs of an aging population, to provide for the original settlers and pioneers and seniors of our district, we need to take a serious look at building that facility in the very near future. I understand that the order to build comes from the sponsoring department. It would be a decision made in the Department of Health, but I do know that the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services takes an interest in these sorts of things, is a member of cabinet when decisions are made, and I just want to make that representation to him on behalf of the board of the Vegreville auxiliary hospital and nursing home and the people who anxiously await approval of that facility and the eventual construction of same.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for . . . The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, perhaps in terms of efficiency, at the time when the question is raised we might get a response, Mr. Chairman.

The Member for Vegreville basically provided the answer in terms of his question as well, that in essence, originally there was a look at a 40-bed long-term care addition, and then as a result of a series of discussions, consideration is under way in terms of the whole planning scope. But the hon. member is going to have to help me as well, Mr. Chairman. We have motion for debate 207 on the Order Paper which basically calls for a five-year freeze on any new planning and construction, and there's a little difficulty there for me to understand . . .

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

MR. KOWALSKI: . . . on the one hand a petition to do something and then a plan on the other hand to freeze it, so . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to correct for the hon. minister's understanding and the benefit of his caucus members that that motion specifically deals with acute care facilities and does not involve extended care facilities. We've been very clear about that, and I would hope he would be also. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Order please.

The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I have a number of questions on vote 3. On the item 3.4.42, the Sturgeon General hospital in St. Albert, I notice he's budgeted \$4 million for it. It was a long time getting under way, and I don't know whether this is in the minister's prerogative -- the Sturgeon General hospital for St. Albert. That's vote 3.4.42. That's been one of those hospitals that was promised in one election, they moved the dirt around for the second election, and now there's some activity going around and they'll probably drag it out till the third. So I'm pleased to see the \$4 million, but I was wondering if that's all in construction. Does it have anything to do with land and that because it was outside the city of St. Albert? I don't know whether this is in the prerogative of the minister or not, but I think there's a feeling that maybe we should be looking at an elected hospital board in the area. But if that's outside the prerogative, that's fine.

Now, also on that vote 3.4.55, the Immaculata hospital in Westlock which is moving towards replacement, which is about time. But there is a mixture in the land ownership that the public works minister may be familiar with. Part of the land the old hospital is on is owned by the Catholic sisters that had the hospital since almost time immemorial, but then part of the land is, I believe, owned by the provincial government. If that is so, has the public works minister looked at the possibility, when this hospital is closed down, of transferring it to the town of Westlock for a nominal sum like one Canadian dollar -- or something even higher, like one American dollar -- in order to facilitate them building a municipal establishment?

Next we move to vote 3.7.30, the nursing home in Thorhild. Now, I know that was also brought up by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, but seeing that it borders on my constituency and affects a lot of my constituency too, I'm reasonably familiar with it. I'm sorry that the Minister of Health isn't here, Mr. Chairman, but I can't comprehend why the department would build a nursing home -- which is really extended care facilities today -- in a town with no doctors when there are two towns, Westlock on one side and Redwater on the other side. So if it's political you could put it in Redwater; if you're nonpolitical and you want to try to win the next election, you could put it in Westlock. After all, if I get 13 community enhancement grants, another hospital just might do it, because I only won by 500 votes last time and I think a nursing home in Westlock could just do the trick and push me out.

AN HON. MEMBER: You might be ready for it anyway.

MR. TAYLOR: I might be ready for it, yes.

But all joking aside, though -- and I've talked to people at Thorhild -- people that get to the stage where they need extended care would like to go into a nursing home that has doctors nearby or ready access. In Westlock we have 50 on the waiting list to get into extended care. There's about that number or a little less in Redwater. So to go out in the middle of nowhere -- I don't understand the logic, Mr. Chairman. I used to drill mostly dry holes, wells. But if one guy said drill over here, and another one said drill over there, if you drilled in the middle you tested nobody's idea. Well, that's exactly what the minister seems to be doing. I mean, somebody wants it at Westlock, another one wants it in Redwater, so he puts it in the middle of

nowhere. There's no sense to that.

Now, I don't know what he's going to do to bring doctors in or dragoon them in, or whatever it is, but certainly Thorhild needs a senior citizen thing. But it'd be in the lodge area, not in extended care, and I can't for the life of me understand why they would put an extended care facility where there are no medical doctors. Maybe the Premier and the minister in charge of immigration know something we don't know. They're maybe going to put a big fence in there and import doctors and make them serve five years in Thorhild before they're allowed their freedom or whatever it is. But the point is that suddenly putting them there and asking senior citizens -- and this is a disservice to the senior citizens; it's not a favour. The minister may think it's like a statue of himself or a picture; it's an honour to the town. But it isn't. When you build something out in a town where there are no doctors around, you're condemning the senior citizens of that area to second-rate care. There's no particular sense to it.

So, Mr. Chairman, that's all I have to say. Those are the only questions I have right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. KOWALSKI: I wonder, Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, if we could just go into these questions and go through them.

The first one had to do with Sturgeon General hospital, Mr. Chairman. Recently, a public announcement was made. Authority was provided to the Sturgeon General hospital board to get under way with the actual final planning with respect to that hospital. There has been a public announcement with respect to that, and we can provide the hon. member with a copy of the release associated with it.

The question of land acquisition -- it was pointed out last night in phase one discussion of these estimates, Mr. Chairman -- rests with a local hospital board. It is the responsibility of the local hospital board to determine the site for the land and to acquire the land, and they will do it to the funds garnered by the hospital district. Normally, what would happen when there would be a number of municipalities who would come together to form a hospital district, each one of the various municipalities would be requisitioned for the costs of the land, and it is not the province of Alberta, not these estimates, that would provide any -- not one penny for the site acquisition, nor is the province of Alberta involved in terms of the actual determination. At least this minister is certainly not.

The same would apply with respect to Westlock. I think, Mr. Chairman, that while the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has thrown up at least enough baits for a very worthy debate with respect to the location of Thorhild, I might just refer him to *Hansard* of last night in which I did cover that subject matter. I know he didn't mean to say that Thorhild is "in the middle of nowhere." I just know he made a slip of the tongue that is really, I'm sure, quite regrettable, because I happen to believe that Thorhild is a vibrant, beautiful little community . . .

MR. WRIGHT: In the middle of nowhere.

MR. KOWALSKI: . . . in the central part of the province.

Well, now, Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona has the same ridicule of rural Alberta by saying, "In the middle of nowhere." I think that's very regrettable. I know it's a reflection of the New Democratic Party which says, "No more in rural Alberta." It's indeed sad that they would say it, but they have said it and it is in *Hansard*.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's on the record.

MR. KOWALSKI: It is on the record, Mr. Chairman, and I would be delighted to invite the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon to come with me to Thorhild. We would get up in front of all the good people of Thorhild, and the subject would be: Is Thorhild in the middle of nowhere? I would be opposed to that resolution. The member can be in support, and he can bring the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona with him to support.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My concern about these estimates relates to the balance between acute care spending and spending on auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes. The way I total these figures up is almost \$86 million going into active care types of facilities and some \$20 million in auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes. The balance is very clearly on the side of acute care types of facilities. When I talk to health care professionals around this province, one of the major concerns they have is the number of auxiliary and nursing home patients who are currently occupying acute care beds. People who work in the hospitals feel badly that they are not able to care for people who need the acute care type of facility because the patients assessed for nursing home or long-term type of care are in those beds. They feel badly about that, they feel badly for the people who are waiting to get into those beds sometimes, and also for the people who are in there. I know that the minister referred to Motion 207 on the Order Paper. I don't want to debate that; simply the balance that's in there in the budget.

There is a particular project I'm interested in, the Emmanuel centre project in Edmonton, in which the society presently operates apartment and lodge type facilities for nursing homes. They feel it would be a better model to manage patients moving, in some cases, out of a residential type of situation directly into a long-term care or nursing home type of situation. Most often, I think, people move from a residential situation first into an acute care hospital situation where they are assessed for longer term care treatment, but if that's not there, then they kind of sit there and occupy the acute care bed. I think the Emmanuel project is a way of addressing that. I know it's not funded in this particular budget, and I was hoping the minister might indicate that perhaps with the completion of some of these active care projects, the \$86 million that's in this budget, there might be some shift in future years towards auxiliary hospital and nursing home types of facilities and perhaps he might be considering the Emmanuel centre as one of those projects in the city of Edmonton.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, all good ideas will be reviewed by this government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask a question or two that I don't believe were answered a few nights ago for the minister, and that is the status of the application for funding by the Boyle McCauley Health Centre.

As the minister knows, they are bursting at the seams, and the process was this: they went to the minister of what was then hospitals and medical care last year and said, could you help with some capital funding? The minister turned the issue over to the minister responsible for lottery funds disbursement through the community facilities enhancement program, and they were denied funding on that basis. Now they have been told to go back to the Health minister. I don't see a vote here for the Boyle McCauley Health Centre, but I can assure the minister that the need is desperate. That facility serves people who otherwise might not get any medical attention at all or who otherwise might wait in hospital hallways for the attention they need.

They also are able to get the sorts of care that aren't available in any other health care facility, certain preventative types of care, for instance. The fact of the matter is that they just can't function in the old place they are in any more. The number of people who now go to the facility simply exceeds the capacity of the building itself.

I would like to also ask the minister one question related to vote 3.6.22, Edmonton Chinatown Multilevel Care Centre. I note that \$100,000 was granted last year and \$165,000 is to be granted this year. If he could spell out at what point the construction would be completed and the overall cost of that construction, I would be very interested to know. I do note that the community itself, after doing a lot of fund-raising in the past for its extant facilities, was also required to raise the more than \$400,000 to acquire the property adjacent to their current seniors' residence building, and that left them very financially strapped. Further commitments from the minister would be welcome news, I'm sure, to that community.

Those are my two questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, *Hansard* on page 1323 contains comments that I made last evening with respect to the Boyle McCauley Health Centre. Just to repeat, there's not one dollar allocated in these estimates. My understanding is that the Minister of Health is looking at that. It was pointed out last night that the Minister of Health will determine the scope of that particular project, so that matter rests with the Minister of Health.

In terms of the Edmonton Chinatown multilevel care centre, what we've got in this budget is a figure of \$165,000, and of course it is not for construction. What it is for planning and the continuation of planning. What was being looked at is in terms of 60 new beds for a long-term care facility. When that planning is concluded, presumably at the end of this year, the government will be in a better position to understand what the total project costs might be with respect to that facility and how it might be able to work it into the estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, a bunch of items that just are left dangling from the debate the other day. Just to continue on a bit with the Boyle McCauley Health Centre, I

would think the minister should know, as the Minister of Health I think is coming soon to know, that the Hyndman commission, when they visited and toured the facility, were most impressed. Word I have from certain commissioners is that they're going to be recommending this kind of health facility to be expanded and developed, and so I think these ministers of the Crown should wait with bated breath for some of the recommendations of the Hyndman commission in support of this kind of activity.

I was wanting to ask a particular question about the \$800,000 going to St. Mike's General hospital in Lethbridge. I see that it's quite an increase there of 70 percent. It's not a lot in terms of capital construction. I take it it might be for the conversion of some acute care beds to long-term care, particularly in light of the now brand-spanking new, up and running Lethbridge Regional hospital. Now, anybody from Lethbridge, of course, knows that this is a very delicate business between the two hospitals, the Lethbridge Regional and St. Mike's. I haven't been quite up to snuff in terms of how they're working out the different programs that each hospital is developing, although it seems that the Lethbridge Regional has the majority of ones and that St. Mike's is going to be doing other areas of long-term care. If that were the case, I'm wondering why this \$800,000 is under this vote and not under an auxiliary hospital section of it. Anyway, I just would like clarification of why such a significant increase there, and the state of St. Mike's Lethbridge with respect to the Lethbridge Regional.

A great area of debate which I'm sure this minister is ready for, is his comments the other day about, yes, indeed, he is responsible for capital equipment in hospitals. It finally dawned on me why this minister has responsibility here now. It's because he also has responsibility for lotteries, and of course as we know, the Alberta Medical Association has been lobbying hard for a medical lottery, particularly to raise money for capital equipment. I have yet to hear . . . Well, wait a minute. I'm sorry; I do recall the former minister, now the Minister of Energy, saying once that he did not support the notion of a medical lottery for health care except that there was some provision for funding to go to medical equipment. I would like to know what the full government policy is with respect to this. It's something that the AMA has pushed for, and it receives popular support from people who think it's kind of like the Irish Sweepstakes and it's a great way to raise money.

I think it is fraught with danger, but there might be some responsible ways of raising some moneys to purchase equipment which would be shared equitably and reasonably throughout the system. I was surprised, for instance, that the lithotripter which was paid for by lottery moneys went to the Misericordia, who didn't even have many nephrologists in order to use the equipment; that the University of Alberta hospital or the Royal Alex were probably the ones that would better use a lithotripter. Anyway, these kinds of equipment need to be shared, particularly if they're coming from lottery moneys. But I'm sure it's all under good control by this minister as minister of lotteries and of public works responsible for capital equipment in hospitals, but I would like a more official government response with respect to that.

Also, maybe he could give us some details in terms of how much of the capital equipment that's used to build hospitals or furnish hospitals or equip hospitals is bought from Canadian manufacturers. Is there, in fact, a preferential option for Canadian goods and services as they're produced, whether hospital beds or any one of a number of services that could be de-

veloped within a Canadian manufacturing of hospital equipment industry? My information is that most of it is bought from the U.S., that the discrepancy in our dollar is causing increased costs to purchase equipment and building materials and so on from the U.S. But it would, I think, serve us well to develop not only our health care system but the manufacture of health care equipment and furnishings for our hospitals.

Fire Code the minister mentioned. I've tried to do some more digging on it today. But our research and my information is from a source at a hospital in Edmonton that there are numbers of hospitals throughout the province that are below existing Fire Code. They don't think it's a matter for great danger, but at least something has happened to increase Fire Code regulations by one department of government and the hospitals department has not kept up with that newer standard. So as a result, a number of hospitals are currently below, and it's going to take a lot of money to upgrade them to the existing code. I'll try to dig out more of that. I did appreciate the minister's response that it's not a matter to play politics with, even though I wouldn't do that at any rate. I was just trying to raise it as an issue that I had heard, and I think this minister, if he's going to be responsible in this area, should get on this issue and find out if this in fact is the case and what extra moneys he's going to allow for the upgrade to meet Fire Code.

I was appreciative of the minister's comments that he's going to put a high priority on looking at disposal of wastes from our hospitals. I think there's a subissue here, which is how hospital employees who work and live day to day with a number of ingredients in the health care workplace are often left in dangerous situations. I'm alerted to an issue where sodium dichromate has been existing in the Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Grande Prairie, putting certain workers in that hospital at some risk. Now, this may be more in an area of occupational health and safety, and I think they are alerted to it, but at the same time, I think if there are some areas where even there are existing hospitals where the workers in the hospitals are subject to unclean air or at risk to certain wastes, then they, too, need to be protected.

And Thorhild. I'd like to take the minister up on his challenge. He said in the House the other day that he would like to debate the issue with me publicly before the people of Thorhild. I think this would be a terrific debate to stage, and I'm sure the minister, with his good graces, could arrange for such a debate, Mr. Chairman. So after adjournment of the session I'd be very welcome to be invited by this minister to go to Thorhild and discuss with the good people of Thorhild whether in fact they do want a facility such as a nursing home to be put there as opposed to the good people of Redwater, Andrew, and some others in the constituency, where I take it it's a really sparky issue. But I think it has the germ of being a lively debate which a lot of people could learn things from. The minister could present his point of view. I'd like to present my point of view and get a number of things on record for the people of Thorhild. So I would like publicly to take him up on his challenge to debate me on that issue, and I look forward to him setting the date and letting me know at his convenience when this shall be.

Thank you very much.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments made with respect to the Hyndman commission and the Boyle McCauley Health Centre, and look forward to such a report when it does arrive.

With respect to item 3.2.17, St. Michael's General Hospital, Lethbridge, the member basically, I believe, was asking for information with respect to what was being anticipated. The estimates show some \$800,000 with respect to the projects there. Basically, there is work going on at the local hospital board with respect to planning, and planning for the construction of a new 100-bed auxiliary hospital -- an auxiliary hospital. So that would work hand in hand with it.

With respect to a question of philosophy, I guess, and the interpretation of the government with respect to the utilization of lottery dollars for medical equipment, that position is well known. It's very clear. I've commented on it on many occasions since September of 1988. I do not believe it's wise for any government to dedicate lottery dollars, which are uncertain, for normal responsibilities which might accrue out of the General Revenue Fund. That is the position of this government. That has been the position of this government. I think it has to be made very, very clear, Mr. Chairman, that we've taken that position on the result of our understanding of experiences that have occurred in other parts of the world. The most blatant example that comes to my attention is what occurred recently in the state of Michigan. The elected officials in Michigan made a determination that they would allocate some billion dollars to education and health care costs in that state and it would come directly from lottery funding. Lo and behold, lottery revenues dipped to \$800 million, and an immediate reaction had to take place in that state Legislature to cut classroom services and hospital services by 20 percent overnight.

It's an uncertain future that we have with respect to lotteries; it is not a golden nest. What we have done: when this government has felt that it had an option, an option with certain lottery dollars, was to allocate, as we did in 1988, some \$8.8 million for the very specialized equipment that was required within certain facilities in this province. But all and all, to say let's dedicate lottery funds to one particular area, that is a most uncertain situation, and I can think of nothing more regressive than to find out all of a sudden that your lottery revenue in a certain quarter of a year had dipped some 30 or 40 or 50 percent. You would then say, "Well, fine, you've now got to reduce hospital services by 30 or 40 or 50 percent." That's simply not the way I think we are in our situation.

The philosophy with respect to the purchases of medical equipment, of equipment period, is one that I alluded to last night. Where possible, of course, we would want to concentrate on ensuring that we had an option in this country to ensure that a developed industry would allow us to purchase there.

I appreciate the comments with respect to the fire codes, and I've done a lot of dunking since last night when I heard the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre say that it had been brought to his attention. I sincerely hope he will again take up the opportunity to provide me with specific concerns or information on specifics with respect to this. I'm going to have the officials in Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services contact various hospital boards as well to follow up with respect to this. There is an onus on each independent hospital board in this province to be on top of these tilings, but we've got to work together to make sure that nothing has fallen through the cracks.

The concern with respect to pathological wastes and the protection of workers, of course, is not a debatable point. That's just a given, a given that has to go. The hon. member will know that at some point in time I will contact the local health care facilities in Thorhild to suggest to them that the Member for

Edmonton-Centre wants to come out and tell them why they shouldn't have a nursing home in Thorhild.

Agreed to:

3.1 -- Capital Upgrading	\$13,162,000
3.2 -- Medical Referral Centres	\$18,100,000
3.3 -- Specialized Active Care Facilities	\$38,000,000
3.4 -- Community-based Hospital Facilities	\$16,600,000
3.5 -- Rural Community-based Hospital Facilities	\$4,615,000
3.6 -- Auxiliary Hospitals	\$11,700,000
3.7 -- Nursing Homes	\$3,400,000
Total Vote 3 -- Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes	\$105,577,000

4 -- Construction of Water Development Projects

MR. McINNIS: The last time the Legislature was voting money for the Oldman River dam, I asked the minister a question. Instead I got a half-hour speech, which was well rehearsed and full of histrionics and certainly something I enjoyed experiencing at the time. I'm hoping when I ask a polite question today that we could refer to *Hansard* in respect to the half-hour speech, for the histrionics, in which the minister had the gall to accuse me of saying that southern Albertans should not be able to flush their toilets, of all things. Having lived there and married into a southern Alberta family, my family and I resent that accusation and that style of debate.

However, the question is a very, very simple one. Tomorrow morning the law courts are going to issue a decision in respect of a petition by the Friends of the Oldman River to seek a proper environmental impact assessment on the Oldman dam. I know the minister has personally been involved in killing many trees to create large stacks of documents which he has tabled in the Legislative Assembly and filed with the library. There were also additional documents provided to the Leader of the Opposition, which I have seen, and I certainly commend the minister's support for the consulting industry in our province and the printing industry in the production of all those documents. However, it turns out that's not entirely what's meant by an environmental impact assessment. An environmental impact assessment includes reports and studies. It includes impact statements which are the types of documents the minister tabled, but it also includes a process for consideration of those documents, consideration of how a project affects the physical environment and how a project affects the human environment, the people who are impacted in that area. Unfortunately, the Alberta process was lacking in that respect. The consideration of the impact of that project by way of public hearings was not a part of the process.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Now, there is some likelihood that the honourable courts will rule tomorrow that in fact a new environmental impact assessment has to be done. I think it's time perhaps that the government and the minister in particular faced up to the reality that that may happen in a court decision tomorrow. My question is a relatively simple one. In the event that there is an environmental impact assessment called for tomorrow, what is the government going to do? Is it going to halt construction of the project while the assessment is done on the, I think, rather sensible premise that you don't build projects while the environmental

assessment is being done, or is it planned to continue on with the project irrespective of any environmental impact assessment that may be ordered by the courts because of a deficiency in the Alberta process? That's question one. I think it's a relatively simple and straightforward one, perhaps not deserving of the same half-hour speech we had before. If you've got a good half-hour speech, if it's a new one, that would be one thing, but the old one, I'm not so sure.

The second question is really the one I was hoping the minister would answer last time around and he never quite got to, which is whether any consideration from an engineering point of view is being given to possible alterations in the project in the event that an environmental impact assessment finds that the impact as it now stands is unconscionable and really too much to be borne. Now, this is a question that can't be answered in the absence of an environmental impact assessment. My question is simply whether any contingency planning is going on in respect of possible alternatives that might be had. Because I for one would hate to see the money invested there wasted. It seems to me that it might be possible, if there were wise stewards involved in running this project, to consider what some of the options might be, possible alterations in the project in the event that the environmental impact assessment finds the project as presently structured is too harmful to the environment.

Two very simple questions hopefully deserving simple responses.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's absolutely impossible for me to speculate on what a court might say tomorrow. We will listen with a great deal of interest to what the court says tomorrow with respect to the Oldman River dam, but I should just draw to the attention of all members the speeches I have given, speeches various members of this Assembly have given, with respect to the importance of the Oldman River dam and also point out that there has been nearly 50 years of study with respect to the Oldman River dam. No project that I'm aware of ever in the history of this country has been more thoroughly reviewed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With all due respect, my question was not to do with the number of studies there but rather with the attitude of the government toward an environmental impact assessment on this project. You haven't had an environmental impact assessment at this point in time. You've had 50 years of studies and millions of dollars spent on studies, studies that are reviewed internally by the government, but the government hasn't given people affected by the project the opportunity to review those studies and to review with the people who prepared the studies what they actually mean, what it means to me and thee, my neighbours, and the people who live in that area and are impacted by it. Perhaps I can put the question another way so the minister doesn't have to speculate about what court decision might be made. Will the minister agree that an environmental impact assessment on any major project ought to take place in the absence of construction on that project? That's the question. Nothing to do with speculation.

MR. KOWALSKI: The citizens who live in the Pincher Creek area have had, first of all, opportunities to review what has been

planned, anticipated, under construction with the Oldman River dam. We have had in Pincher Creek an office staffed full-time every day of the week, every week of the year, to make information available to any individual who might have a question with respect to the Oldman River dam.

In addition to that, every document -- every document -- has been released with respect to the Oldman River dam. I've stood in this Assembly. Every library, including the Legislature Library, has all these documents. The Alberta Environment Library has all these documents. Libraries in southern Alberta have all these documents. We've had the major reviews with the Environment Council of Alberta. We've had the decisions that were made, the announcement that was made. We've had a whole series of elections, and as far as I can determine, every person who's ever been elected in southern Alberta since anybody's ever talked about the Oldman River dam has been in support of the Oldman River dam. The key critics who were opposed to the Oldman River dam have all been defeated. The people have heard the arguments time and time again with respect to the Oldman River dam, Mr. Chairman.

We essentially are on target with construction. The facility will be opened in the fall of 1991, and we will have put in place one of the most important conservation projects in the history of this country. It's for the protection of the environment, for protection of life, in southern Alberta. The basic question is that if this government builds dams, reservoirs, and/or the like, does this government undertake environmental impact assessment studies. The answer to that one is: yes, with every project I've ever been associated with. We've got all the documentation, and included in these estimates here, we've got other reservoirs that are being planned.

We've already appointed citizens' advisory committees that were done publicly. The names are all out there. Meetings have been held in other parts of the province of Alberta with respect to the other subject matters. That is a process that is extremely important. To my knowledge, not one with this degree of magnitude has ever gone without an environmental impact assessment.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, we're having some difficulty communicating here. I talk about public hearings and he talks about documents. I talk about process and he talks about politics, which critics were defeated and which ones he'd like to see defeated and this kind of thing. I think just for a moment maybe we can talk about the same things. I asked about contingency planning and a halt to construction. Both questions continue to be ignored. Let's try it one more time.

In the court proceedings the counsel for the government indicated that they would want the court to order a halt to construction, that the Alberta government would be disposed to carry on with construction during a federal environmental impact assessment unless the court ordered otherwise. Was the counsel authorized to make that statement by the minister? Did he authorize that statement? Did he know that the counsel was saying that? I mean, the clear implication of that statement is that a new environmental impact assessment would be ignored by this government and the construction would carry on apace, ignoring that process altogether. That's the position that appears to have been taken in court by the government. Is the minister walking away from that position, or is he saying that was his position?

Perhaps while I'm on my feet I could just ask a closely

related question. In another part of the court proceedings, the government announced that the minister had sent a letter to Ottawa unapplying for a permit that he had previously applied for and received under the Navigable Waters Protection Act, federal legislation. Did the federal government unissue the permit in response to the unapplication? Where does that matter sit?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair would just like to comment that the first of the last two questions appears to me to be somewhat hypothetical. But the second, hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I indicated in the response to the first question that I'm not going to speculate on what may or may not happen. Secondly, the hon. member also knows that it is tradition in British parliamentary history for ministers of the Crown not to comment on matters before the courts.

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

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister seems to think that all his critics have been silenced and defeated. I'd like him to remember that not too many days and weeks ago 10,000 of them gathered this spring on the banks of the Oldman River dam. If he thinks they've been silenced, he's certainly mistaken on that score.

The question, Mr. Chairman, if I could summarize it, was why the provincial government is spending all this money on this particular project. What is the rationale for this particular dam project? Mr. Chairman . . . [interjections] Yeah. The hon. member might be objecting to the language of referring to this dam project. He may want to go to the dictionary to find that "dam" is not necessarily a four-letter word.

So I did a bit of my own digging in terms of some of the studies the provincial minister has referred to, and one I found that caught my eye was done by Marv Anderson & Associates Limited in April of 1978. I presume this was one of the reasons, one of the studies, one of the reports the provincial government relied upon in order to proceed with this particular project. I found that the analysis was interesting and based on a number of assumptions.

One of them, Mr. Chairman, was that it did a fairly thorough analysis. Looking at the incremental net benefits from crop production with irrigation was one of the bases in reaching their conclusions. The other was increased benefits from livestock production, again based on irrigation. It also made reference to a number of incidental benefits to this project and tried to quantify those. For example, they concluded in this study that "The annual net benefit of flow regulation to municipal water users was estimated to amount to about \$34,000/year" -- and it looks like the Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District -- "and \$149,000 per year" in the St. Mary reservoir irrigation district. They made some further comments, Mr. Chairman, that

it was unlikely that the present water supply in the Oldman River basin (and east) would act as a serious inhibiting factor to industrial development. Given this conclusion, no attempt was made to quantify any direct or indirect benefits or costs attributable to industry.

They also refer to the fact that they didn't make any effort to assess what the recreational costs and benefits might be. They also noted, Mr. Chairman, that "flood damages might be reduced by an average of about \$36,000 per annum." I noted that

the minister said just a few moments ago that this was being constructed to prevent flooding. They also make some other notes as well about the benefits and costs in this project. Hydroelectric energy was not estimated because that was "outside the terms of reference," and I presume no one assumed very much was going to be generated in the way of electricity from this dam. No costs or benefits in regard to water quality and nothing in regard to interprovincial apportionment.

Now, those were the terms of reference of the study. Given those terms of reference, Mr. Chairman, the study concluded that based on these cost/benefit analyses, this project would score fairly high. I don't need to go into a great deal of detail in terms of giving you the actual numbers.

Now, after this study was done in 1978, there was an update done in 1986. It's interesting to note that the figures started to change considerably. Marv Anderson & Associates concluded in their '86 study that while the cost/benefit ratio in their 1978 study was "a relatively high 2.2, the revised estimate is 1.64" -- that's on a regional basis -- and whereas the original cost/benefit "was 3.1, this is now 2.17." It had deteriorated considerably in that time. As well, Mr. Chairman, they noted that the benefits, without irrigation, to this project -- they quantified it somewhere in the order of a little over \$400,000 per year.

Mr. Chairman, this study was further reviewed by a professor at the University of Alberta. His conclusions were interesting as well, because he discounted many of the assumptions made by the Marv Anderson study concerning numbers of acres to be irrigated, cropping scenarios, and so on. They eliminated secondary benefits. As a result of all this, I just want to make a point that the cost/benefit analysis on a provincewide basis dropped to .85. What that figure means is that we're basically spending \$100 million more in costs than the benefits we are receiving on the province as a whole. And he said to be fair, let's look on the regional basis. If you just take a look at southern Alberta, the figures change somewhat to the point that if you look at including the operating costs for irrigation systems, the regional benefit is about 1.5, which means that on a regional basis you are getting a bigger benefit than the costs.

But what I find interesting in all these analyses, Mr. Chairman, is that they are all related to the benefits to be derived from irrigation. Even given the analysis done by Professor Veeman, even discounting the optimistic crop prices that were included in the Anderson reports, even he has to admit that this project makes sense on a regional basis if you include irrigation as one of the purposes for this particular project.

Given all these cost/benefit analyses, Mr. Chairman, it was then with some considerable interest that the public finally got to have a look at the interim licence that was issued by the Department of the Environment somewhere in 1988. Now, the minister has made a great production and to-do about how it is that he has tabled all kinds of documents and studies in this Assembly. This was one document, Mr. Chairman, that he didn't table in the Assembly, to the best of my knowledge, because it was finally forced out of the minister by a court of the province of Alberta. I don't know why people would have to go to court to get an interim licence issued and made public, but there they did. They took the minister to court in his previous incarnation as the Minister of the Environment. The court ruled that the interim licence had to be made public. Once it was, it became very interesting to me to read what was in this licence.

The purpose of this project, Mr. Chairman, is
to impound water for water management, flood control, erosion

control, flow regulation, conservation and recreation.

That's the end of the list. There's nothing in this interim licence that speaks of irrigation in any way, shape, or form. Presuming then that this project is being built for the purposes outlined in this interim licence and just taking a look at what the benefits are in water management, flood control, erosion control, flow regulation, conservation, and recreation, we go back to the benefit studies that were done and find that in 1986 Marv Anderson and Associates concluded net benefits to municipal water users of perhaps \$343,000 per annum, potential net benefits because of reduced periodic flood damage estimated to average \$68,000. There you go, Mr. Chairman. This is a flood control project. It's going to save us \$68,000 per annum. Potential net benefits for stock watering -- I presume that's one of these. Somewhere in here. Water for water management. That's one of them. Even then, Mr. Chairman, it only adds up to a couple of hundred thousand dollars.

So I wonder then, in coming to the vote, why it is that we will be spending over \$90 million this year, \$66 million last year, in order to receive a benefit of perhaps \$400,000 or \$500,000 per annum. It doesn't make any sense to me, but of course I'm not one of these great fiscal managers that the government is. I don't understand how you could spend \$500 million to get a half million dollar benefit, but there you go. I don't understand how we got to have a \$10 billion debt in this province either, and I don't understand how the Provincial Treasurer can rack up over \$2 billion a year in deficits.

So I don't know what this government is trying to pull off. Either they're incredibly stupid or else they're not being honest about what their true intentions are. I don't see why, if this is an irrigation project, they wouldn't mention the fact that this was for irrigation in their interim licence. I don't know why they would issue a licence that . . . If it is to be an irrigation project, I don't know why that's not mentioned and made front and centre in the interim licence granting permission to begin this project in the first place.

There may be some third option unknown to me, Mr. Chairman. Many times people have speculated that the purpose for this project is in fact water management whereby water from the northern part of the province will be transferred to the southern part of the province using a series of reservoirs, and from the southern part of the province the water will be managed all the way into the United States. Now, if that's what the term "impound water for water management" means in this particular interim licence, then at least the minister is up front. But if this water project or this dam project is for irrigation, then I don't know why that isn't included in the interim licence, because every cost/benefit analysis I've been able to put my hands on indicates that it is key to coming even close to breaking even. You must have some form of irrigation and calculate those benefits in arriving at a proper cost/benefit analysis. Even given that, Mr. Chairman, and taking a more realistic look at the benefits of irrigation and the increased value of crop products, even then this project doesn't make sense on a provincial basis.

So I would like the minister to give us some indication of whether this is an irrigation project or not; if it is, why it wasn't included in the interim licence. And if it's not an irrigation project, then why are we spending half a billion dollars to get a half million dollar yearly benefit?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. No one's spending a half a billion dollars, at the opening. The cost of the Oldman River dam is \$349.6 million in 1986 dollars. Then shortly after that, in consultation with the locally elected officials in the MD of Pincher Creek, there was a request made for some additional transportation enhancements associated near to the dam, and an additional \$3.7 million worth of expenditures were committed to and publicly allocated. So let's get the facts on the table.

Fact number two: it is against the policy of this government to see any exportation of Alberta water outside of this province into the United States. The hon. member knows full well that not only is it against the policy of this government, it is illegal in the country of Canada. So for the hon. member to stand there and speculate with these funny little things . . . Then he should understand what, number one, the policy of this province is and, number two, what the law of the country of Canada is. That's clear, and there is no misunderstanding with any of this, Mr. Chairman. It's been discussed time and time again.

Thirdly, Mr. Chairman, I got lectured by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place for not getting up to give a half-hour speech about the rationale for the Oldman River dam. Then the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View gets up and lectures me for not explaining why we're having an Oldman River dam and what the rationale is. They can't have it both ways. *Hansard* has page upon page, paragraph upon paragraph, with respect to what the rationale is for the Oldman River dam. I'm going to make it very quick, and I'm going to make it very short. I'm going to make it very pointed. It is about the vision for the future of what this province will be about as we go into the next century.

We all know what is happening with the environment in North America in terms of climatic change and the like. We all know what the shortage of water is in southern Alberta. We all know that Alberta has interprovincial agreements with the province of Saskatchewan and the province of Manitoba. Alberta must deliver to Saskatchewan 50 percent of the water that flows out of our mountain watersheds. Saskatchewan in turn must provide 50 percent of that water to the province of Manitoba. If we want to see a survival of people, if we want to see a survival of habitat, if we want to see a survival of any kind of fauna and flora, if we want to see an enhancement of industry, if we want to see an enhancement of agriculture, if we want to see an enhancement of the towns and the cities and villages and the security of water for all of them . . .

The people of Lethbridge will not survive as a city, Mr. Chairman, if they do not have a bona fide source of water from the Oldman River. The only way we can do that, to protect ourselves from the uncertainty of the future in terms of climatic change in North America, is to ensure that we take every possible effort to hold, store, conserve, and preserve the most precious resource that we have in this province, and that is water.

For someone in Calgary to say that the people of southern Alberta do not have the right to a quality of life in this province is tantamount to stupidity, in my mind. Mr. Chairman, there are seven dams to the west of the city of Calgary. There are two dams to the west of the city of Edmonton. They provide for a controlled flow of water in these two major waterways. They provide for a quality of life in these two major cities, and there's no reason in the world to believe that the people of southern Alberta should not have the same right to a future, the same right to a destiny, and the same right to an opportunity to survive today, for their children, for generations untold.

This province is a magnificent province. It extends from the Montana border to the Northwest Territories border. For anybody to stand in this House and say, "Let's just write off a part of the province of Alberta because we don't think it's very good; we who live in one part of Calgary think it's ridiculous," because they heard somebody had a rock concert, somebody showed up and said, "Well, I don't know what it's all about, but I'm going to go find out what this is all about," is just ridiculous.

The Marv Anderson report showed on the evidence that we had at that time that there was a cost benefit -- a benefit -- of for every dollar expended a return of \$2.17. That does not include built into it what it would mean to a city like Lethbridge if all of a sudden there wasn't any water in the Oldman River dam. What happens? What happens to the thousands of people who live there if they do not have a water supply? What happens? They can't have it both ways, Mr. Chairman. They can't have it both ways.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether the minister has read the report that he alluded to. The report says: "potential net benefits to municipal water users of perhaps \$343,000 per annum." That was the benefit of this dam that this study he commissioned; that was their conclusion.

He didn't tell us whether the project was designed to expand irrigation in southern Alberta. I'd like to have him tell us: is this project to expand irrigation in southern Alberta? Because all the other benefits were identified in the Marv Anderson report. They were quantified. I've made reference to them. They add up to somewhere around a little over half a million dollars a year. I still don't understand how it is that we could be spending hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars on a project when the government's own study comes up with benefits, discounting additional irrigation, of only a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year. So what I'd like the minister to tell us is this: is this project intended to expand irrigation in southern Alberta or is it not? If its purpose is to expand irrigation, why didn't he include it as one of the items in the interim licence which his department, when he was Minister of the Environment, issued for this project?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to do it again. The Oldman River dam was built for a multitude of reasons; not just one reason but a multitude of reasons. First of all, it's to ensure a secure water supply for the upwards of 50 communities that will have either a current possibility or a current utilization of water from the Oldman River or to allow others to feed into a secure, controlled water flow on the Oldman River.

Number two, it is to protect the source of water that the people who live in southern Alberta will need. Now, the only way you can protect water, Mr. Chairman, is to intercept and hold the water. Each year winter comes. Each year snow falls. Each year spring comes. Each year snow melts. It just so happens that in our province of Alberta the snow melts generally in April, May, and June. It rushes down the mountain slopes, and it rushes into the coulees and everything else that feed into the Oldman River, and then it rushes down the Oldman River. So during those months of the year we have high flows in the Oldman River, but by the time June comes along, all that snow in the Rocky Mountains has essentially melted. So there ain't nothing more to feed into the Oldman River. At that point in time the water flow in the Oldman River becomes very, very

low. In fact, you can go down to the Oldman River today and probably wander across rolling up your pants to your ankles, because there's that much water in it.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I said the protection of water. The only way you can protect the water is to put some intercept along the river. Call it a reservoir; call it a dam. You grab the water; you store it. Then you control the flow of it over 12 months of the year so that you do have a protected supply of water. That's a second reason for the Oldman River dam.

The third reason, Mr. Chairman, is because this government is committed to the enhancement and the protection of wildlife in this province. In order for wildlife to survive and be sustained, it needs water. Otherwise, if you don't have water, what you have is a desert. I know the hon. member's an educated man. I know he's read Canadian history. I know he's run across a gentleman by the name of Palliser. I know he's read the stories of the surveys that came out when Mr. Palliser came out to the Canadian west and then drew a triangle from essentially Saskatoon down into the southwestern part of the province of Alberta and then almost into Manitoba. He said that this would be known as Palliser's Triangle. It would be devoid of opportunity for people in the future because there ain't no water; it will be a desert. Well, he was wrong, because we've got imaginative people who moved into southern Alberta and said: "Hey, we can do some things. We can protect. We can enhance our environment. We like birds. We like wildlife, and we like all the other things we like to see running around the countryside, but you got to have water."

You got to have water, Mr. Chairman. There have been countless numbers of projects that have been done with protection and security of water in recent years. People in southern Alberta tell me that even with what's been happening with the irrigation projects, the commitment that we have in this government, our commitment to storing and preserving water, our ongoing commitment, they see an improvement in the numbers of wildlife. That's good. That makes me feel happy. I feel great that I can take my children and other members in this Assembly can say, "Look, there are animals here because we have water here." That's a third reason for the construction of the Oldman River dam.

A fourth one is that we have a vision. The men and women in this government, the men and women of the Progressive Conservative Party -- and there are even some Liberals who have stood up and said that they are in support of the Oldman River dam. I appreciate that. They have a vision. Let's take southern Alberta. Let's recognize that we have incredible heat units in southern Alberta. Let's recognize that with water and heat units and good quality soil we can grow food. Now, we can do more than simply grow food. We can manufacture that food into a processed additional form with value added. But in order for industries in the processing of agricultural products to survive, they need water. The only way they can get water is by having a controlled source. So we in this government believe that we would like to see an expansion of agricultural processing in southern Alberta. It goes right back to the need to secure water. It goes right back to the need to store water. That's another reason.

There is another reason. Well, okay; fair again. Let's do all of this. Let's also expand irrigation if and where required and if and where there is a potential for it. We've identified that. So the hon. member can talk about something. He can take two lines out of a book that's 400 pages long or he can take seven

paragraphs out of a report that's 75 pages long and say, "This is my argument." It isn't so. I've been cautioned to be brief. I've been cautioned not to re-echo my speeches of the past. I would like to refer the hon. gentleman to *Hansard* where these speeches have been given time and time again. If that's not enough for him, I can send him a half a dozen or more speeches that I've given elsewhere throughout this province of Alberta that talk about the importance of the Oldman River dam. It is for people. It is for wildlife. It is for security. It is for the future. It is a vision about what Alberta can be with water preserved, stored, controlled, and utilized.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I mean there's a lot of wind power over there, and I know that's another alternative source of energy that we should be looking at, but the point is that the minister seems incapable of coming to grips with a very simple question, a very straightforward question. That is this: given that all these cost benefits, these studies, are based on the assumption that there will be added acreage brought under irrigation as a result of this dam, and all of them make that as a key assumption in arriving at their conclusions, how is it then that the interim licence issued by the Alberta Environment department made no reference to irrigation? I just want the minister to tell us in the Legislature this evening: will this project lead to additional acres coming under irrigation or will it not? That's a very simple question to ask. I think it would take a very simple response, just yes or no, without having to go through a long harangue about when the water falls and when the snow melts and when water runs downstream instead of up. So I'd like the minister to give us that very simple response.

Now, he seems to think as well that for some reason asking these sorts of questions somehow means that you're against industrial development and growth in southern Alberta. I would only go to, again, the government's own commissioned study that, as the minister has already indicated, goes into lots of detail and lots of volumes and lots of paper, and they come up with this conclusion. I didn't come up with it; they did. It says that a thorough review -- and he can look at it under summary and conclusions, chapter 6, page 122. If he thinks I'm standing here making this up, here's the reference; he can go and look it up himself. But they conclude:

A thorough review of present and future industrial water use in the study area suggested that it was unlikely that the present water supply in the Oldman River Basin (and east) would act as a serious inhibiting factor to industrial development. Given this conclusion, no attempt was made to quantify any direct or indirect benefits or costs attributable to industry from flow regulation.

That seems pretty straightforward. Even their own study didn't consider it worthy or significant enough to even make it a part of their detailed assessment.

In the areas that have to do with the municipal authorities, as I've already said, their conclusion was that potential net benefits to municipal water users come to about \$343,000 per annum. This is from the update report of 1986, again done by Marv Anderson & Associates. So I come back to the basic question that these incidental reasons in this government's own report are discounted as not being of a magnitude greater than a couple hundred thousand. I'll even go way out on a limb and say it might be even a million or a couple of million dollars a year. But that by itself can't possibly justify the expenditure of close to half a billion dollars in this project unless it's for some kind

of enhanced irrigation application in southern Alberta. Is that right or is it not, Mr. Chairman?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the Marv Anderson report concluded, and there's a very, very simple paragraph in there that says that for each dollar expended on the Oldman River dam there would be an economic return to the province of Alberta of \$2.17. Now, nothing can be simpler than that: for each dollar invested, there would be a return of \$2.17. Now, I don't think you have to be a Rhodes scholar to conclude that in the logic provided by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, if he says there's going to be a benefit of \$400,000 a year, then presumably the total expenditure would only be about \$260,000 or \$280,000 for the reservoir. That ain't the case. The member should read the document, conclude and agree that right now there is a very simple paragraph in that report -- it's not a thick report, not very many pages -- that says that for each \$1 invested, there's a return of \$2.17.

I will concede one thing: that it may very well be possible that two honourable gentlemen using the same source might have opposed views with respect to the interpretation. I'll give the hon. gentleman the benefit of that. The conclusion of the Marv Anderson report has never been doubted by any economist in this province that I'm aware of.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just before continuing, the Chair would like to observe that the same essential question has been asked three times. It has been responded to. One of the purposes of the chairman is to try to advance debate, and it is my observation that that is not occurring at the moment.

In any case, the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. Do you have something different to add?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, if the minister refuses to answer the question, then that's certainly his prerogative, but that doesn't mean, certainly, that the question should not also be put.

Yes, a professor of the department of economics in rural economy at the University of Alberta in Edmonton disagreed with the conclusions of the Marv Anderson cost/benefit analysis study, but that cost/benefit analysis done by Marv Anderson & Associates indicates and totally requires that there be enhanced acreage under irrigation as a result of this project. Even in analyzing it and disagreeing with the conclusions done. Dr. Veeman as well assumes that there will be increased acreage under irrigation as a result of this project. However, this project is not being built according to the interim licence for enhanced irrigation in southern Alberta, and I would like to ask the minister why not.

MR. KOWALSKI: With the greatest respect, hon. member, I believe that I've answered that question. I believe that *Hansard* has the answers to the questions not only today but on previous occasions, and I think we can probably go back and forth in this little tit for tat as long as he wants to do this. I believe I have answered the question. I believe *Hansard* will show that I've answered the question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 4 -- Construction of Water Development Projects \$97,495,000

5.1 -- Culture and Multiculturalism \$7,620,000

Total Vote 5 -- Construction of Government Facilities \$7,620,000

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now I'd like the minister to report.

MR. KOWALSKI: Is it appropriate for me to move that votes 3, 4, and 5 be reported?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[Motion carried]

Economic Development and Trade

2 -- Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I would have expected that the minister would have gotten up and explained a few things about what's going on with this vote. Perhaps I can put some questions, say some of the things that I understand to be happening, and perhaps he would answer some of the questions and observations I make.

This vote is only \$1.5 million, which is quite small, I agree. By comparison to the hundred million dollar things we've been talking about, it may not seem all that important. But this is, I suppose, the final payment, or the winding down of the costs of building the railway for the Daishowa plant to link it up to the CN tracks at Peace River. The project cost some \$17 million under the '87-88 budget and then some \$8.5 million under the '88-89 budget. Now for this year we just seem to be finishing off the last costs of the rail line for \$1.5 million.

One of the first things I'd like to sort of raise as a thought: if the rail line was a good way to get the resources from Daishowa to the rail line, and to market in this case, is it not possible that the government might have considered building rail lines in other situations as well around the province? The northern part of Alberta has a rather small population, and the resources are somewhat scattered in different parts of the province. I guess what I'm wondering is if the Economic Development and Trade minister or any other members of the government, the minister of transportation, for instance -- we asked him this question in the Public Accounts the other day, but he didn't particularly address it. There must be some cost benefits to using a rail line as opposed to a road. I am assuming there is going to be a road built as well, but nonetheless in terms of transporting a lot of heavy goods some distance, rail lines do have some advantage over roadways.

In fact, that idea, if explored, could be used even to bring goods out of the Northwest Territories or Yukon or right up to Inuvik, for example. We are talking about building pipelines to bring down gas and oil from that region. It could be that a rail line would make a lot more sense, because you would be able to take in goods as well as bring out the oil, as compared to a pipeline which has only the oil and gas flow one way. Then you have to use airplanes and boats, when you can use them, to move goods in the other way, so the people in those regions have incredible costs. So I commend to the government the idea

of looking at building more rail lines. The building of this rail line, if one assumes you have to build the Daishowa plant and a number of other assumptions being made, may very well be a good economic move. I would like the minister to address that question of the relative merits of using railways over roadways and perhaps expanding that idea to other plants that are also being built in northern Alberta.

I would like to say that the building of the Daishowa plant, though, may in itself be a questionable idea when you consider the number of pulp mills that the government is suddenly deciding to build in this province. I don't think they've stopped to consider the environmental impact of that number of mills being built all of a sudden.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's going to become an evacuation route.

MR. McEACHERN: Maybe the rail line will be needed for an evacuation route, my colleague was suggesting.

It would seem to me that a slower growth where you consider sound economic development policies that would lead to sustainable growth over the long term would be much more important than rushing in and building all these pulp mills at the same time. I think the government may very well have sold out those resources too cheaply and not gotten the best possible return on our resources by jumping into so many projects all that fast.

I accuse them of doing it in a hurry for two reasons. One, because they wanted to call an election shortly after the announcements. So if they had a whole bunch of announcements, it sounded like they were really diversifying the economy. Second, they also knew that the free trade deal was going to kick in in January of this year, and they were concerned about what the Americans might call unfair subsidies. So a lot of these handouts that we're giving by building rail lines and bridges and other infrastructure costs will probably be considered unfair subsidies under the free trade arrangement.

I can't help thinking that the Economic Development and Trade minister should have to answer some of those kinds of questions about why these projects at this time. Why so many of them so fast, and why so many dollars out of the government's kitty, as in this vote 2, to help a multinational corporation that has incredible amounts of money?

I would also raise the spectre that not only did we not necessarily guarantee the best return on our resources but that we, in fact, may end up with a bit of a boondoggle on our hands, much like we did in the coal industry when we jumped into that in a hurry and built too many coal mines too fast and then found halfway through the projects that the very companies that had been telling us how they were going to buy our coal at such and such a price suddenly decided there was a glut on the market and they didn't need them all, and therefore they weren't going to contract for that much coal at the kind of price that would make it viable. We ended up with Tumbler Ridge and Grande Cache as a couple of great boondoggles to show for jumping into the coal industry too fast. I wonder if the minister could give us some kind of analysis as to whether he expects the same thing might happen five years down the road in the forestry industry.

I guess the other thing that really bothers me is: why is it that this company is going ahead and building and clearing the site for the foundation when, I gather, all of the licences aren't

in place yet and all of the agreements as to exactly what the environmental conditions are going to be and that sort of thing? It seems to me that what we've done is we've said, "Okay, go ahead, and then we'll put all the other things in place later," when in fact a lot more work needs to be done. I guess it leaves us wondering if the company can meet all the licence fees and standards expected by this government in the long run, and if they can't and if they aren't willing to, then where does that leave us, having scarred the environment and spent a lot of money and then not having a company willing to go ahead on the terms that may be imposed upon them?

So I have a lot of questions, then, on this project and would ask the minister to reply to some of those thoughts.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to respond to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway and to share with him that I thought it was fairly self-explanatory on page 10 as to what we were voting on. I don't say that with any other intent. I recognized that it was fairly self-explanatory, whereby the funds will go towards the Alberta Resources Railway for the rail spur.

The hon. member's figures that he indicated to us as to previous payments are correct. I guess I could go through and say the short answer is yes to his first question, the short answer is yes to his second question, and the third question is more appropriately put to the ministers of forestry and the Environment. But I'm going to expand just a wee bit because I don't want the hon. member to think that I'm not taking him seriously, because I am taking him seriously, and I appreciate his concerns.

But just going in reverse order on the three questions, let me underscore again that as it relates to his concerns of the Daishowa plant itself, those concerns have been addressed in a very thorough way by the minister of forestry and the Minister of the Environment. I again appreciate him registering those concerns, and I feel -- and I recognize that he doesn't necessarily reach the same conclusion that I have -- that the other ministers have responded to it.

As it relates to his -- and I consider it an excellent suggestion on the cost benefits of railways. I've had an opportunity to discuss that with the Minister of Transportation and Utilities, and yes, in the event that there are cost benefits, we will examine the possibilities of expansion of the railways within the province. Again I repeat, as I indicated to him earlier in response to his first question dealing with the dollar figures that he mentioned -- the \$17 million, the \$8.5 million, and then this final installment of \$1.5 million -- those figures are correct as he relayed to the Legislative Assembly.

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

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on the heels of the minister's answer, I'm wondering in that we are discussing the capital grant to Alberta Resources Railway; the minister did say the economic benefits that will come about from a spur line. I'm wondering if either the Minister of Economic Development and Trade or the Minister of Transportation and Utilities can give us any idea of a spur line that's been talked about for some time in the Hines Creek-Dawson Creek area, because that's certainly an important area that's in need of transportation for grain farmers in the Peace River area and an area that's been talked about for a long period of time. A spur

line there could cause great economic benefit for the farmers in the area, rather than having to ship their grain all the way down to the capital city and then out to the coast.

Now, I just wonder if we're talking about all kinds of money going out to a multinational corporation, yet when we have another proposed spur line that would benefit economic activity in the Peace River country and the farmers that reside therein, we seem to have a different standard. So I'm wondering if either minister, or hopefully the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, could provide us with an update or an answer to that query.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Chairman, I don't have an immediate answer for the hon. member, but I will get him a written response to his very legitimate question, and I will have that to him within the next couple of days.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the quick answer to the Member for Edmonton-Belmont's question is if the farmers want a railway, they should incorporate themselves in Japan, and they'll get the thing fairly quickly.

This is a relatively minor part of a very large and complicated arrangement between Daishowa Canada Ltd., which operates as the Peace River pulp company, and the provincial government. Unfortunately, the large and complex deal only comes to this Assembly in bits and pieces: a million and a half chunk here and a little chunk there and a small debate there and this, that, and the other thing. We in this Assembly, or at least on this side of the Assembly, don't actually know all of the terms and conditions of the deal between Daishowa and the provincial government, which is unfortunate because there was a motion for a return in this Assembly which was debated and voted upon, hon. member, and if I'm not mistaken, you voted against releasing the information to the taxpayers and voters of the province.

One point five million dollars is part of the infrastructure that's being provided by the provincial government for the Daishowa project. As I understand, the argument for providing a railway free of charge to the company is that this is going to help with the problem of the transportation cost. It turns out, Mr. Chairman, it's a long way from Peace River to Tokyo, and therefore there are some additional costs associated. If you're going to supply bleached kraft pulp to a Japanese paper mill, you've got to get it there. The company feels that it's not very economical to ship all that distance without government financial assistance, so they went and asked for some infrastructure. My understanding is that the argument that's been presented for building a railway free of charge for Daishowa is that that's going to help make up for the distance from markets; i.e., the distance from literally where the tree grows to the paper mill in Japan.

Then there's also a road and bridge that is being built as well as part of this arrangement. In fact, as I understand it, the provincial government has a total of \$65.2 million that is being provided in the way of an infrastructure grant from the provincial government towards Daishowa, and there's a further \$9.5 million from the Western Diversification Office, for a total of some \$75 million cash infusion, if you like: grants from the taxpayers federally and provincially in support of the Daishowa

projects. It's not just a million and a half dollars, it's not just the other figures that have been mentioned, but this is part of a \$75 million infrastructure that's being built by the taxpayers on behalf of this project.

I think the major question I have is: where does it end? How much can be justified according to the argument that it needs to be made cheaper to bring bleached kraft pulp into the Japanese paper mills? [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. McINNIS: They've got the \$75 million that I've just referred to.

There is also the question of loan guarantees. I don't believe there are any loan guarantees in the case of Daishowa, but the province has granted \$589.6 million in loan guarantees in support of forestry projects. These infrastructure grants are a part of approximately \$160 million that's been granted that way, and there's \$420 million worth of debentures in various forest projects being bought by the government, as well as \$32 million in preferred shares. So it's a taxpayer infusion, if you like, of some \$1.2 billion all in support of this notion that it has to be made cheaper to ship pulp into Japanese and American markets. I wonder how much further it extends, because surely the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, aside from building railways, also has input in cabinet when all of the elements are discussed, such as the price of timber, which I believe has been set for a 20-year period, give or take a market factor, at \$2 per cubic metre. Now, that's a price which is, in my understanding, approximately 10 percent of the world price of that type of fibre in world markets.

So it goes beyond the infrastructure. It goes beyond the loan guarantees. It goes beyond the debentures. It goes beyond the preferred shares. It goes into the price of the fibre itself, which I understand is set entirely in negotiation between the companies and the government. Working back on the economics again, you know, darn, it's a long way from Peace River to Tokyo, and that gets worked into the price of trees as well. So, you know, who adds it all up? I know who pays it all. Who pays for it are the taxpayers. I'm just wondering: is the same argument used over and over again down the line for each one of these different types of what amounts to corporate welfare in the end?

The second question related to Daishowa. When the government considers the money it's spending on this railway, does it consider it value added? I understood from day one -- and the Member for Peace River would probably back this up -- that Daishowa always promised to build a paper mill. Well, last week the forest management agreement was made public in cabinet orders, and the paper mill doesn't have to be built until the year 2007. That's 18 years from now. Now, I certainly hope every member of this Assembly is around to see that day when it's built. Given that we are giving them cheap trees, we're giving them a free railway, an awful lot of money towards highway and bridge costs, why do we have to wait 18 years to get a paper machine in there?

I suppose related to the 18-year delay in the paper machine is whether the government did any studies about trying to tie the making of paper not just to pulp projects but also to the recycling industries in the province through economic development. If we're going to build railways, a railway can carry pulp out to Japan. It could also carry newsprint in to be recycled, or it could carry pulp out to be blended with newsprint in a recycling

industry, elsewhere in the province, perhaps in the county of Strathcona or Edmonton-Jasper Place or some place like that, which might be a good idea or it might not. But I imagine the minister has all the facts at his disposal, so he could probably enlighten the committee on that.

A related question -- and this was something that was asked of me when I was up in Peace River. I had a look at this railway, the rail bed. Something I haven't seen very often, usually a railway is either at the bottom of a river valley or up top on the plains. This one cuts halfway through, right down the valley. It cuts halfway up the coulee or the bank of the river. Now, I assume that the desperation is in the mind of the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. I don't know what he's desperate for, but some of the people locally are wondering why the rail bed is built halfway up the valley. I think probably it has something to do with costs. You have less bridge work and roadwork and less grade and so forth if you just cut along the coulee.

A question was asked of me: was there an environmental impact assessment done in terms of the effect of building a railway at that level in what is a notoriously unstable type of soil? I mean a coulee in the river valley -- most people wouldn't build a home there. They would look for more solid ground. Now, perhaps a railway is different from a home and it makes a lot of sense to build it along the coulee. Perhaps not; I don't know. But I wonder, before all of this money was spent, whether an environmental impact assessment was done and what process there was to involve the citizens who do have some concerns about that particular aspect. Certainly nobody wants to see several carloads of this high-grade pulp headed for Japan tumble down the river valley. That would be the absolute last thing we'd like to see, and then we'd have to come back and get a new vote to fix up the railways. So I certainly hope that doesn't happen. I wonder if the minister would enlighten the committee on those points.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Chairman, let me respond briefly to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place and indicate at the outset that I appreciate his representation, too, as it relates to a plant to recycle paper. We'll give both Edmonton-Jasper Place and Strathcona some consideration because there are a couple of proposals before us.

I'm sure that he would agree with me also that he's gone somewhat beyond the mandate of this present vote that we have before us in some of his questions. I recognize that we all do that, and I don't say that with any accusations to the hon. member. But I should indicate to him -- and I have had the opportunity of the benefit of the wisdom of the Minister of Transportation and Utilities in dealing with this because he has been so closely associated with it. He indicated to me that the railway bed itself is mainly in the bottom except for one small portion of the railway. We have had thorough engineering studies done, and I rely on their advice and counsel to make sure that it is put in the correct place. This is part of the infrastructure agreement that we did have with Daishowa. The hon. member is correct, too, as it relates to loan guarantees. To my knowledge there are no loan guarantees involved in this project. We are involved, though, as he indicated correctly too, with both the infrastructure cost of the railway and roadworks. I thank him for his representations, and if I have missed some area, I will endeavour to read *Hansard* and get back to him in those additional areas that more appropriately fall under other ministries.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 2 -- Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure \$1,500,000

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Chairman, I would like to report vote 2 of the Capital Fund estimates.

[Motion carried]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would now like to move to -- just a moment, please -- page 19, supplementary estimates of expenditure and disbursements for the year ended March 31, 1989.

head: **Supplementary Estimates 1989-90**

Agreed to:

Public Works, Supply and Services

Total Vote 4 -- Construction of Water Development Projects \$4,000,000

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I move that the supplementary estimates on page 19 of the Capital Fund estimates be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, is it necessary to carry the vote on page 5 for the total amount to be voted?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: My apologies. Page 5. Did I miss . . . Thank you, deputy House leader. Going back, then, to page 5 to the total amount to be voted for the Capital Fund estimates.

Agreed to:

Capital Fund Estimates

Total Vote \$305,928,000

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions and reports as follows.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1989, a sum from the Alberta Capital Fund not exceeding the following for the department and purpose indicated.

Public Works, Supply and Services: \$4,000,000 for Construction of Water Development Projects.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1990, a sum from the Alberta Capital Fund not exceeding the following for the departments and purposes indicated.

Economic Development and Trade: \$1,500,000 for Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure.

Public Works, Supply and Services: \$105,577,000 for Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes; \$97,495,000 for Construction of Water Development Projects; \$7,620,000 for

Construction of Government Facilities.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report, do you agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would seek the unanimous support of members of the Assembly to revert to Introduction of Bills.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 20
Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund) Act, 1989

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Provincial

Treasurer, I request leave to introduce Bill 20, Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund) Act, 1989. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends same to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Dave would you . . . See what happens when you stay in session long enough. The pages get just a tad older, but the quality is just as good.

[Leave granted; Bill 20 read a first time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it's the intention of the government tomorrow morning to call Committee of the Whole with regard to Bill 11, the Senatorial Selection Act, and other Bills on the Order Paper.

[At 10:52 p.m. the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]