

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, May 14, 1990 2:30 p.m.**
Date: 90/05/14

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks as legislators for the rich diversity of our history.

We welcome the many challenges of the present.

We dedicate ourselves to both the present and the future as we join in the service of Alberta and Canada.

Amen.

head: Introduction of Visitors

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly a seven-person delegation from the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic led by the republic agriculture minister, Anatoly Ustjuzanin. Minister Ustjuzanin and his delegation are in our province for the third annual Alberta/RSFSR consultations on agriculture. We look forward to these consultations as well as to the next round of meetings, which will be held in the Soviet Union next year.

Mr. Speaker, our guests are seated in your gallery, and I would ask our visitors to rise and receive the very warm welcome of our Assembly.

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a report by the George C. Marshall Institute titled *Scientific Perspectives on the Greenhouse Problem*, which, contrary to statements by the Minister of Energy, in fact does not conclude that no action is required on global warming.

head: Introduction of Special Guests

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to be able to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly a very special young lady in my life. My daughter Lori is in the members' gallery, and she is accompanied by 54 of her classmates from the Mountview school located in the constituency of Red Deer-South. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Greg Atkinson, Mme Cathy Ziegler, Mme Andrée Caron, and parent Julie Hambly. I would ask that they now rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, it is a great deal of pleasure and honour for me today to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly on behalf of the Minister of Recreation and Parks

a constituent of mine who has dazzled the world twice in competition. Kurt Browning, the 1990 men's world figure skating champion, is seated in your gallery along with the Hon. Steve West's wife and daughter, Marie and Donald.

Mr. Speaker, athletes like Kurt are fortunate to benefit from the support of their parents, coaches, their figure skating clubs, and the Alberta Sport Council. Having become a world-class athlete, Kurt is now a role model for those grass-root level athletes who are in the same position as Kurt was some 10 years ago.

We are proud to have assisted Kurt throughout his athletic career with programs from the Alberta Sport Council and hope that he will continue to strive for excellence and continue to be the excellent ambassador for Alberta that he has been in the past. I would ask that they now rise and receive the warm welcome and congratulations of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted this afternoon to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly a group of social workers from local 6 of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly two groups from the constituency of Edmonton-Beverly. The first is a group of students from Sifton school. There are 31 of them. They're accompanied by their teacher Miss Johnson and a parent Mrs. Orr. I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly. They're seated in the public gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly, again.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The second group I wish to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly are a group of 55 students from the St. Maria Goretti school, also located in Edmonton-Beverly. They're accompanied by their teachers Robert Motut and Bob Boyechko. They're in the public gallery. I'd ask them to rise and also be welcomed by the Assembly.

head: Ministerial Statements

Tourism

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Tourism and on behalf of Mr. Joe Couture, president of the tourism association of Alberta, and my colleague Brian Evans, chairman of the Alberta Tourism Education Council, I am pleased to advise this House that May 14 to 20 has been designated National Tourism Awareness Week in Canada. This year in Alberta a variety of activities are planned to help increase awareness of the economic and social benefits of tourism. I hope that every member of this House will join us during National Tourism Awareness Week as we and our private-sector partners pay tribute to the accomplishments of the dedicated people of our tourism industry.

Tourism is hard at work for the benefit of all Albertans. The excellence of our tourism products is well known, and the

reputation of Alberta as a preferred destination is growing. With tourism now ranked as Alberta's third largest industry, this government realizes that the importance of managing our tourism resources, services, and products has never before been more important.

Some of our initiatives include: working with each of Alberta's 425 communities to assist them in completing their economic tourism plans through the award-winning and internationally recognized community tourism action planning process; support for the Alberta Tourism Education Council to help establish the highest levels of excellence in service quality, other important programming including the community tourism action program, the Team Tourism program; and a new attitude and awareness program which encourages every Albertan to give our visitors their Alberta best.

All of these programs are examples of the ways in which Alberta Tourism is working closely with the private sector to advise and assist the visionaries and entrepreneurs of our industry. Thanks to the unique partnership we maintain with our men and women in the tourism industry, Alberta is now a distinguished leader and is recognized worldwide as an innovator in tourism development. Government and private sector are a team working together, and as a result we're learning from each other and growing together. It's that spirit of family which lends such enthusiasm to the Alberta tourism industry. I urge every Albertan to get involved in the tourism activities of their community on an ongoing basis and to join us in celebrating this vital Alberta industry May 14 to 20.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's again hard to disagree with what's written in this ministerial announcement. I think we all would agree that this is a very important industry, and as much as we can encourage it, the better. But I would remind this government that it's hard to give away a third of northern Alberta to the pulp and paper companies and then expect that you're going to develop a tourism industry, at least in the northern part of the province. I don't think you'll see a lot of tourists flocking in to look at that, Mr. Speaker.

Along with that, I think perhaps the greatest asset we have for tourism is our natural beauty and our wilderness in this province. Throughout the world most of the natural regions are gone. It seems to me that this is the type of thing that will bring more and more tourists in. So we have to look at different modes. Not everybody wants to go to a Kananaskis for the rich, and I think sometimes we've overemphasized these sorts of developments to the detriment of natural beauty. So I'd leave that with the minister, Mr. Speaker.

The only other comment I would make, and I think and hope we're moving in this direction, is that we must recognize, as the minister says, that this is the third largest industry in the province. It is an important industry, and we must now recognize in our higher institutions, especially our colleges, that we have to do a better job with tourists while they're here. Having just been to the United States, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the minister that they seem to know how to treat tourists much better than we do. I think there has to be an overall assessment that not everybody can just take anybody off the street and they can be involved in the tourist industry, that there has to be some real movement in that direction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

head: Oral Question Period

Social Workers' Strike

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Labour. Albertans have to wonder where this government's priorities are. Last Friday the Labour minister refused to meet with union negotiators and instead sent a note saying, and I quote, "The Alberta government will play no part in a publicity stunt that is confrontational and counterproductive." Talk about counterproductive, Mr. Speaker. The minister must realize that by refusing to negotiate, she is prolonging that strike and leaving many Albertans at risk. Now we can add this minister's pride and posturing to the archaic labour laws that caused this mess in the first place. My question is a fairly direct one: will the minister forget about her pride, forget about her publicity concerns, forget about her conditions, and get back to the table and settle this dispute now?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, as I have now been saying for three weeks, it is our eager desire to get back to the negotiating table and to address the questions in dispute with the social workers at the table. We have never wavered from that desire from the beginning. But it wasn't us who walked away from the table, it wasn't us who refused mediation, and it wasn't us who have put the people of Alberta at severe risk. Until those workers come back off an illegal strike, we will not negotiate those issues in dispute with them.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's absolute nonsense. It's this government and their archaic labour laws that have put people at risk. That's the problem.

Talk about a publicity stunt that is confrontational and counterproductive. I noticed over the weekend we had an expensive ad campaign that was set up clearly to discredit the social workers. Call that counterproductive. I want to ask the minister this: will the minister tell Albertans how many taxpayers' dollars went to pay for this glitzy ad campaign when they could have been spent on reducing caseloads?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, let's do a little reality test here. Let's do a reality test on the information that advertisement contained, which is information, I do believe, that the people of Alberta are entitled to. After all, the \$60 million payroll for local 6 is, of course, taxpayer money, and they have every right to know how that is being spent or how we propose to spend it in dealing with local 6.

But let's look at the facts that are in this advertisement, Mr. Speaker. We have put the facts out very clearly. It is an illegal strike. We've offered mediation, and they've refused it. We want to get back to the negotiating table, and they refuse to come back to work, which would allow us to get on to a resolution. Let's look at this advertisement, which says very clearly, "Our commitment to the social workers."

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. minister. It's fine to deal with certain aspects, but that's not the real question that was asked.

Supplementary, the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the reality test is this: this is a bad government with bad laws. That's the reality test, Mr. Speaker. We know by the minister's refusing to answer the

question that there's thousands of dollars spent. This is the minister that says she wants to negotiate but won't negotiate because she's hiding behind bad laws. My question to the minister, then, is this: when will this government admit that their priorities are all wrong and start spending money on solutions instead of on radio and paper ads?

MS McCOY: Let's take an objective test as to how effective our laws are, Mr. Speaker. Let's compare how our social workers are paid. Let's compare how our social workers fare in the caseload issue. Let's see whether the right to strike in British Columbia and the right to strike in Saskatchewan and the right not to strike in Manitoba – the law came in, by the way, under an NDP government and did not give them the right to strike in Manitoba.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh. The truth is out. The truth is out, Ray.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order.

MS McCOY: Let's look at the pay issue. Of course, if we are successful in getting to the table so the social workers may accept our offer, which would make them the highest paid in western Canada – until that happens, Manitoba, without any strike legislation at all, has the highest paid in western Canada. With strike legislation, B.C. and Saskatchewan are lower, lower even than we are today. Ask me if this legislation is effective or whether the social workers are indeed being well treated by this government.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

MR. MARTIN: I wish this minister would start telling the whole truth in this Legislature. We wouldn't be having these problems, Mr. Speaker. That's the problem we're having.

Corrections Employees' Strike

MR. MARTIN: To the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker. We'll see if we can get some truth in this Assembly. The Solicitor General had a real red-letter day last Friday when he (a) frankly admitted that he didn't have a clue what the government was offering his employees at the bargaining table, then (b) refused to comment on the issues in the strike and chose to hide behind the Minister of Labour. That was a big mistake to begin with. But it was quite a performance, I must say, and I'll bet the correction employees were impressed by his answers. Now, I'm hoping the Solicitor General's had the weekend to speed up on what's happening in his own ministry. My question is this: can the Solicitor General confirm that people who have been ordered to serve their sentences on weekends are being sent home as a direct result of this labour dispute?

MR. FOWLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Well, that's a very interesting answer. I thought the Solicitor General was in charge of making sure that people serve their sentences. Isn't that his responsibility, Mr. Speaker? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Solicitor General, please take your place. Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: We'll give you lots of time, Mr. Solicitor General, lots of time.

But, Mr. Speaker, doesn't the Solicitor General – my question – realize that he's shirking his duties as the chief law enforcement officer in this province by cutting short sentences that were handed out by the courts?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I dearly wish that the hon. Leader of the Opposition would take the time to bring himself up to at least an elementary understanding of the sentencing procedure of this province. We currently have just a large majority of the correctional officers out on strike, a situation that bothers me very, very much because I'm convinced in my own mind that 95 percent of these people do not want to be on strike, and I rather suspect that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is aware of it too.

In direct response to that question, there are sentencing procedures in this province whereby in fact the judges have sentenced to intermittent time served, which means that that time is served on the weekends, on Saturday and Sunday. In no instances – in absolutely no instances – is there anyone on intermittent sentencing that is in fact a danger to the public. They never would have made intermittent sentencing had they been a danger to the public. So for a convenience for them in order that they can maintain their jobs during the week, live with their families, be of support there, there is the intermittent sentencing procedure. It is true, as I answered in the first instance, there has been a modification of this during the course of this strike, but the public should be aware, of course, that all of these matters will be appropriately handled as soon as the strikers are back at work, as I know at least 95 percent of them want to be.

Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: His figures are wrong; 100 percent want to be back at work. They want a negotiated settlement.

Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting. Now the Solicitor General is judge and jury. He will decide how long the sentences are going to go. That's a very interesting analysis.

But I want to come back to this minister. These workers are denied the right to strike because their services are supposed to be essential, yet the Solicitor General parked himself in front of a TV camera and said that they can stay out as long as they want. You can't have it both ways. I have a very simple, straightforward question to this minister: when is the Solicitor General going to get serious? You're new; don't act like the rest of them. When are you going to get serious and get involved with the settling of this dispute instead of talking out of both sides of your mouth?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I have attended at correctional institutes all over this province for long service awards, awards of excellence. We have people in the correctional services division that have as much as five years perfect attendance. I know these people, and I am concerned about them being on strike too. I know what goes on at the supper table of these people. I know what happens when cheques don't come into one-cheque families or fixed-income families. I'm well aware of that. I also know that a very small majority are in fact keeping the rest out on strike, and I want that to end, and we'll back at the bargaining table. I further know, Mr. Speaker, what the wage offers were up to the time they walked away from the table, and I know what the issues were.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Public Service Contract Negotiations

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased to learn of the weekend initiatives of the Minister of Family and Social Services to resolve the impasse we're in. I think this was a sensible move. I hope it signals an end to the rigidity we've experienced, a move to resolving the job action and the problems that provoked it.

Still we're left, Mr. Speaker, with the rather inflammatory ads that we saw on the weekend and incompatible positions causing a great deal of confusion. My first question is to the Minister of Labour. With the application of the regressive Public Service Employee Relations Act, there has been some considerable uncertainty as to what the term "essential" in fact means in this province. On the one hand, we have some workers charged with contempt, and on the other hand we have some workers who are not. I'd like to ask the minister: who decides essential? Does it depend on how hot the coffee is? Do we have a standard, or is it a double standard?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, it's clearly laid out in the legislation.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I have another question to the Minister of Labour. Since one of the very fundamental problems leading to the current labour unrest is the restrictive arbitration process which prohibits any discussion on working conditions, will the minister consider an amendment to the Public Service Employee Relations Act section 48(2) to strike the restriction from the arbitration process?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, let's compare our legislation, for example, to the legislation in British Columbia where, in fact, they have the right to strike. The items in their legislation that they are excluded from even bargaining include: the merit principle in promotion, pensions, administrative matters, job classification and job evaluation, training and retraining, et cetera. This is merely one illustration of the statutes across Canada, all of which have excluded items in them whether or not the right to strike is granted to their civil servants in the legislation.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the Minister of Labour is: will the minister now tell the House if she will be dropping any intent towards fines or punitive action against returning social workers? I believe these people need the reassurance from the minister that there will be no punishment if, in fact, they do go back to work.

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, it is my heartfelt preference that the social workers come back to work, and I can give them the assurance that they will not be dealt with arbitrarily. I can give them the assurance that they will have all of the protections afforded by their grievance procedures and other protections in the collective agreement. Those are in place, and certainly we have no wish to punish them. We do, of course, have as a government the responsibility to uphold the law, and, of course, what the judge might do in regards to disobedience to a court order is beyond our control. It is in his discretion or her discretion, as the case may be. I really wish the social workers would come back to work. Then we can get on to negotiating at the table to resolve these matters that are in dispute.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, today the leader of the illegally striking social workers is in Montreal at an annual convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, which would indicate to me that there might be less than some desire on their part to come to any resolution of the matter.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

Sale of Repossessed Properties

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Provincial Treasurer. During the mid-'80s, during the recession, a number of financial institutions in this province were forced to take over possession of various ranch lands, farmlands, acreages, and the like under such names as S C Properties, FIC/AIC, credit unions, and that kind of financial institution. A number of constituents in my area have asked me, "How does one go about finding out what properties are for sale, who's selling it, and what price?" Could the minister answer that?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure members will recall that on November 1, 1989, the Legislative Assembly put into place the Credit Union legislation, an Act which had been under debate in this Assembly through 1989. That also triggered a time when the administration of properties which were repossessed under the credit union system, the so-called S C Properties, were transferred for administrative and ownership purposes to a company called N.A. Properties. We've had a considerable amount of discussion already in this Legislative Assembly about N.A. Properties, but that entity is used to control all the dispositions of real estate owned by the province right now which has come about as a result of failed financial institutions.

To answer the question specifically, Mr. Speaker, anyone who wishes to acquire or to be involved in any of the property owned by the government could contact N.A. Properties, and they'd be able to provide information and details as to the sale price of those assets.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Provincial Treasurer, then: would the Treasurer assure my constituents who are renting such N.A. Properties that they would have a similar treatment to that which was announced in this House by the Minister of Municipal Affairs when he said that AMHC would give the tenant or the renter first chance at purchase? Will that be true with N.A. Properties?

MR. JOHNSTON: I think I can be as generous as the Minister of Municipal Affairs. What we can say in terms of policy, Mr. Speaker, is that the property has an inventory value which we have put into our records, and should somebody be interested in acquiring that asset, then, of course, the appraisal value sets the minimum price, but clearly preferences go to those people who are now within the asset, who are using it, and we would, I think, grant a right of first refusal to that person should the property come for sale.

As well, Mr. Speaker, it is possible for those people who know of properties under N.A. Properties or S C Properties to make a proposition as a real estate agent or as an interested investor, and those would be considered by the board of N.A. Properties,

who are set in place to manage the general affairs of these asset disposal entities.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Correction Programs for Shoplifters

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Solicitor General. In the city of Calgary alone, between \$30 million and \$60 million is lost every year due to shoplifting, and most of the offenders are women. In Calgary the Elizabeth Fry Society has developed a 10-week shoplifting intervention program which has a 90 percent success rate in preventing repeat offences, and this program is now run by Elizabeth Fry chapters across Canada. My question is: given that the Elizabeth Fry shoplifting intervention program in Calgary may be suspended in 1991 due to a lack of funds, will the minister now act to contract this program as one of the department's adult community correction programs?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the division contracts with a great many nongovernment organizations in the province. As a matter of fact, we maintain about 80-plus contracts with 49 organizations. There was a general decrease of 3 percent of all contracts in 1990-91. How that decrease was applied in respect to each individual organization was at their own discretion. If the Elizabeth Fry Society has decided to cut that particular program, I'm disappointed to hear it, but it was their option to do so.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the program may be cut for the lack of availability of funds. In other jurisdictions the Elizabeth Fry shoplifting intervention program is a sentencing option, thus providing an immediate opportunity for the offender to understand the root causes of her unlawful behaviour and to take steps to eliminate it. This is an appropriate, effective program for the perpetrators of this nonviolent crime, who are usually not deterred by fines or incarceration and may be further damaged by such interventions. Will the minister now take steps to designate the Elizabeth Fry shoplifting intervention program as a sentencing option, like alcohol and drug abuse treatment is, so that all women who come into conflict with the law through shoplifting can attend this successful and effective and cost-effective program?

MR. FOWLER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've had an ongoing, outstanding invitation from the Elizabeth Fry Society to meet with them in Calgary at my first opportunity. Apparently they haven't been able to make it to Edmonton, and as indicated earlier, there has been that general cut. Notwithstanding that, I believe in the work this particular organization does, as well as many of the other organizations we contract with. I will undertake to contact the Elizabeth Fry Society to see if they would like to meet with me, either possibly in Edmonton or if they want to continue to wait until I get to Calgary in order to set that meeting up.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark, followed by Clover Bar.

Global Warming

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 30, 1990, the Minister of Energy in this Legislature was careful to cite a study which he incorrectly said concluded that no action is necessary on global warming. Now we see that Shell Oil corporation is investing an extra \$40 million to build a North Sea drilling rig high enough to withstand sea level increases due to the effects of global warming. In Calgary Esso researchers are currently studying ways to compensate for the effects of global warming on Arctic natural gas production and transportation systems. To the Minister of the Environment: given that the oil industry itself is taking concrete action in anticipation of the effects of global warming, why do we still have a key minister saying that no such action is necessary to prevent it in the first place and a government backing it up with nothing more than a consultative "let's sit down and chat about it" clean air strategy?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are taking action. We recognize and understand that there are a lot of concerns with respect to global warming. That's why we have identified the gases that contribute or are alleged to contribute to global warming, such as CO₂, such as ground-level ozones, such as volatile organic compounds, such as SO₂ – sulphur dioxide – and we have set up a process whereby government can participate with the energy industry in this province, where the government can participate with other sectors of our society to get good, solid information on this particular issue and deal with it in a reasonable manner. That is what the Minister of Energy has undertaken to do in conjunction with the Department of the Environment.

MR. MITCHELL: I anticipated the old "we're doing a clean air strategy consultative process" answer, Mr. Speaker. That's what we always hear: talk, talk, talk, and no action. Since the minister keeps telling us that this consultative clean air strategy is so important and such a key element of his global warming offensive, could he please tell us why it is that on March 15 he announced that the details of this consultative process would be announced by the end of April and three weeks later still nothing has been announced?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I don't know where this member has been, Mr. Speaker, because it was announced quite appropriately in a news release.

MR. TAYLOR: Just told your friends, hey, Ralph?

MR. KLEIN: We told anyone who wanted to know. Obviously this member wasn't paying attention, but that's not unusual.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking action. We have recognized that this is a problem, and I think we have put in place a process that is going to lead us to some good, sound, reasonable conclusions. That's been the nature of this government: to take an approach that results in consensus and results in some good, solid data. You know, there's no way I can just reach into the air and pick out all the answers to these problems and simply sign a piece of paper saying, "Oh, all CO₂ is now outlawed; all sulphur dioxide is now outlawed; all volatile organic compounds are now outlawed." I mean, that's what this member would do. Thank God he will never be in a position to try something like that.

Multicultural Initiatives

MR. GESELL: To the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. There are claims in the media that the great Canadian experiment "multiculturalism" may be driving us apart rather than being a bond that unites us by creating peace and harmony among our varied races and cultures. On the basis of the Multicultural Commission report Focus for the 90's, will the minister take the initiative, through amendments to the Alberta Cultural Heritage Act, to ensure that newcomers to Canada, new Canadians, have the opportunity to develop skills and learn about Canadian customs so that they fit into our Canadian society to become full participants in Canada?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to tell the member and the House today that hopefully within a short period of time there will be amendments coming forward to the Alberta Cultural Heritage Act that will allow us to continue our work in that most important area. But I can also tell the member that prior to that legislation coming through, we have already developed a strategy that will in fact continue that work, working in three main areas: ensuring that all people are aware of the benefits of multiculturalism, that it's not just a program for ethnic groups and is a program, a policy, an idea that can benefit all Albertans; that we'll be working to ensure that all Albertans have an opportunity to have access to the institutions and the benefits of being an Alberta citizen, a Canadian citizen; and that all people have the opportunity, if they so choose, to fully participate in all aspects of our society.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To become a Canadian does not necessarily mean that one forgets about their ethnic background. Events such as the annual heritage festival here in Edmonton provide an opportunity for awareness and appreciation of that cultural heritage. Will the minister provide . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, I'd hoped there would be more harmony and peace in the House. Will the minister provide assistance to the more than 400,000 Edmontonians and Albertans that participate in the heritage festival?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the Heritage Days Festival in Edmonton is, of course, the showpiece of multicultural festivals across the province. As the member quite rightly points out, some 400,000 people participated in Edmonton's Heritage Days Festival. The government of Alberta, through the Multicultural Commission, has supported those efforts over the past number of years, admittedly to a small extent, because the festival is very successful and generates a lot of its own money internally and through the city of Edmonton. But there is no indication at all of any intention to change that level of funding this year. Our support to the festival continues, and I expect I'll be there on opening day to continue that great tradition.

Criminal Records Retention

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Solicitor General confirmed that his department maintains personal information on individuals who have been acquitted of criminal charges. This information can include full particulars of the allegations, fingerprints, photographs, detailed body markings, and more, yet the Solicitor General is on record as stating that

his department's policy is that the province will permanently retain this information. My question is: will the Solicitor General justify the province's retention of this highly personal information on individuals who have never been convicted of anything and are in law as innocent as you or I?

MR. FOWLER: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated the last time I responded to this question, apparently there are two records kept, one by the federal government in the RCMP files or in the CPIC information network, as well as one of our own. There is really no problem, in my view, in maintaining that record, because there's also another public record kept of the whole of the trial issue. That's in fact in the courthouse, something which I have no access to at all, and other rules apply to records of a court nature. So I don't see where destroying one set of records is a particular concern in any case, and in any event, where there is an acquittal, I don't understand the concern on the record being there in the first place.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, in this country the province does not have the right to haul someone off the street and subject him to the indignity of fingerprinting, photographing, and naked body searches. However, when this is done to a person charged with an offence who is subsequently acquitted, the least the province can do is destroy the person's file and not use the occasion of an unsubstantiated charge as a free ticket for gathering information on innocent citizens. Given that there is no way the Solicitor General can guarantee that this information will not find its way into the hands of a prospective employer or some board or authority, will he agree to change his policy so that acquitted individuals are afforded the same rights they enjoyed prior to being charged?

MR. FOWLER: Insofar as border authorities are concerned, that again is a federal matter, and there is no way I know of that we as a provincial government can get the federal people to retrieve the information once it's gone stateside. Because a concern on an international traveler is what is turned up on the computer system at the international airport or in other areas, and that is an area which we have absolutely no control over. No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot give this assurance at this time that we will in fact destroy all the records on those that have been criminally charged even though subsequently acquitted.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon.

Mental Health Workers' Caseloads

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Psychologists who work in mental health clinics funded by the Department of Health are also members of local 6, currently taking strike action. Now, many of the issues for these psychologists are the same as those facing their social worker colleagues. They're facing more and more responsibilities. They have more and more Albertans coming to them with problems such as depression from unemployment, family breakup, abuse, and the rest, and yet there are fewer and fewer professionals who are willing and able to work under the strain on the frontlines. Now, does the Minister of Health not agree that having over 40 Albertans with mental health needs on a three-month waiting list at just one clinic in the city of Calgary is unacceptable, and, as a result,

psychologists have just had enough of this kind of neglect and pressure and won't take it any longer?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I didn't hear the question.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, she certainly has not been hearing the questions or the complaints legitimately raised by psychologists, as she knows them, throughout the province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, one psychologist I spoke to, who has been working for 15 years . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ask the question.

REV. ROBERTS: This is my second question. The minister did not answer the first one, so I'm asking my second question. [interjection] It was there to be heard, Mr. Treasurer.

One psychologist I spoke to, who had worked for 15 years in a mental health clinic in Calgary, said that this strike action is the last resort, because she's had 15 years of no progress on caseloads and the strain she's under. So will the Minister of Health explain this situation: as to why staff at this clinic in the city of Calgary have been told that instead of receiving more help and assistance in the form of a new position of a psychologist, there in fact has been a freeze on hiring a new psychologist, which would alleviate the pressure they're under?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, there's no question that the issue of caseloads is one that is part of discussions that have been going on in this Legislature, and I think I'll leave it for the Minister of Labour to comment on the actual negotiations. However, the issue of caseload in the mental health field is different than the issue of caseload within child welfare or social assistance. Certainly there is a desire to enhance our capability to deliver services to Albertans through our mental health clinics, and that's certainly one of the goals I have as Minister of Health, as I've expressed several times. But to equate the two caseloads as the identical issue is quite simply not, in fact, the case.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Agricultural Assistance

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier, not the fellow in the Liberal-red jacket. Nice jacket though.

Mr. Premier, you quite correctly answered last week to the pocket revolt you had going from the members for Lloydminster and Smoky River, that brought up the fact that we still have not accessed the \$80 million to \$90 million that was available from the federal government for agricultural aid – your correct answer was that the federal government was responsible for bad prices. However, the provincial government in general has a history of being responsible for helping out those farmers that have had problems due to weather. We've had too much rain in the north and too little in the south. So my question to the Premier follows on some discussions I've had with the Deputy Prime Minister's office, that would accept giving their grant to the whole of the farmers of the province if the province matched it by topping it up in those areas where the weather had been bad. Would the Premier consider doing that in order to access the federal funds?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Agriculture may also want to respond to this when he is back, or indeed the Associate Minister of Agriculture today.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta is expending huge amounts of money to assist our agriculture community. The hon. members know the dollars that are flowing toward, first, the low-interest, fixed-cost, long-term financing. The hon. member knows that there are huge amounts of money going to help our farming communities with the dollars for protection, shelter against high energy costs: some 63 cents a gallon in the case of gasoline and some 88 cents a gallon sheltering in the case of diesel. I think the hon. member also knows that we are putting in some \$500 million to provide single-line telephone service to our farmers' and ranchers' homes. We have overhauled the crop insurance program, made it more flexible, put more dollars into it. We put some \$16 million into helping in northwest Alberta. We are helping with the paving of secondary highway systems.

Mr. Speaker, this government is making an unprecedented commitment to our farmers and ranchers, and I find it strange that the federal government now says if we'll find some other dollars, we can add to theirs to give to farmers and ranchers. When the federal government says they have the money but they don't want to give it – they have it, they say it's needed, but they don't want to give it – now this member is trying to say that we should do something to make them give it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, that answer even put his own cabinet to sleep.

The question here to the Premier is: you've already topped up some funds in the Peace River area – the government – for which I take my hat off. You've done all the wonderful things you said you did, ad nauseam. The point is there is \$90 million on the bench down there that the Deputy Prime Minister's office will pay to our farmers out here if you will top it up in those areas where the weather's been bad. Would you look into it and give a report back to the House in the next week?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture can look at the hon. member's question to see if there's anything additional he might want to add to my answer. But I tell the hon. member that if the federal government has the \$80 million to \$90 million and they say it's needed, then I think the obvious thing for them to do is pay it and stop playing games.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place, then Calgary-Buffalo.

Improvement District Boundaries

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend I had the opportunity of meeting with some officials of improvement districts in northern Alberta, and at that time they expressed some concern as to what effect possible boundary restructuring would have if they chose to move into the rural municipal district. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Could you share with my constituents, as well as all the people in improvement districts in the province of Alberta and this House, and give us some advice as to what you envision happening as far as redistribution of boundaries and what stage this is at?

MR. R. SPEAKER: 'Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member. Since taking on this responsibility, one of the concepts we've been working on is the rural district concept' with improvement districts of the province. We have had a number of meetings, a number of discussions. Our intent is to work out the boundary question with the improvement districts, not to impose a boundary on as such. One of the very key factors we must look at is the distribution of assessment base as well as the taxing capability of those jurisdictions so they can function well as an autonomous body, because our intent is to move them from an improvement district to a rural district and then to a municipal district at their own speed. When we do that, we must give them the capability of administering themselves as a very capable and functioning local government.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you. My supplementary is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs again, and it basically involves – the major concern, of course, is in the taxation process. Will there indeed be changes in the taxation process? Would the minister envisage that there may indeed be some adjustments as far as taxation is concerned? Would the boundaries be structured in such a way that the IDs or improvement districts could carry on in a fashion very similar to what they have today?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member. Yes, that is our intent: to have the improvement district, in the new form of government where they accept more local autonomy, to be able to carry on as they are at the present time. I would say that there is no intent to have any type of major reallocation or dislocation of revenue in terms of those governing units. We want to treat them fairly, and I'm sure as we work toward acceptable boundaries that will happen.

Tourism Projects Environmental Impact

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, there are five major tourism developments proposed for the Canmore area along the Bow corridor, an area much of which happens to be critical habitat for elk, bighorn sheep, and other wildlife. We have the Deputy Minister of Tourism on the public record as wanting to turn this area into Palm Springs north, with golf courses, resort hotels, and luxury homes as far as the eye can see. The first phase of these developments received preliminary approval. A land use bylaw was amended by the municipal district of Bighorn to pave the way for this new development. Given that these major tourism projects have significant environmental impact over a large area of land, I wonder if the Minister of the Environment will guarantee to Albertans that none of these tourism projects will be allowed to proceed without a full environmental impact assessment, full public hearings under the NRCB, as promised in the throne speech.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, in fact the department is now undertaking an environmental land use study of the whole Bow-Canmore corridor relative to the kinds of developments that can be accommodated there in the future. It's a fairly extensive undertaking and, once completed, should put in place some guidelines for development in that particular area.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, with respect, the question had nothing to do with development guidelines. It was: in view of the fact that these lands have fallen through the government's hands more times than Edmonton put the puck in the Chicago net the other night, I just wonder if the Minister of the Environment won't undertake today that the public will have an opportunity to review these studies and to have full public hearings under the NRCB before this development proceeds.

MS BARRETT: Just say yes, Ralph.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, it would be too simple to say yes. What we're trying to do is – of course, we're now working through the natural resources conservation board legislation and basically trying to define those projects that would be mandatory under that legislation. When we work this through, of course we'll be bringing that legislation to the Assembly and it can be debated more appropriately at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

Senate Reform

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just recently Mr. Bert Brown, chairman of the Triple E Senate committee, has written to the 11 first ministers, alleging that the Quebec and federal governments have misled the country and have no intention of supporting a Senate with equal provincial representation and effective powers. Now, this is extremely disturbing in light of the anonymity requirement and the fact that we've given up all our bargaining chips in the Meech Lake Accord. To the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, whose committee included Mr. Brown and visited all the provincial governments last year to discuss the constitution: is Mr. Brown right or wrong in his allegations?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, he's certainly right that the federal government has an absolute veto on any changes to the Constitution of Canada. Now, as to his speculation, it's just that.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, the fact is that Mr. Brown should have been venting his anger at this province for failing to represent the interests of the province.

To the Premier: since the Premier doesn't have any statement either in writing or orally from Premier Bourassa indicating support for the Triple E Senate, what evidence can he provide for Albertans that we're going to in fact get support for that concept in light of the fact that we have given up all our bargaining chips and they're showing a very negative attitude in discussions with Mr. Brown?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs just pointed out, this is an allegation being made by Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown is a respected Albertan who has a point of view and should be able to express it. As I said, he's a respected Albertan and able to express his views. At the same time, as the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs pointed out, the federal government doesn't have to conspire with anybody to stop Senate reform. They have an absolute veto. They can stop it all by themselves. It doesn't take unanimity in any way amongst the provinces in order to stop it. The federal government can stop it and always has had that power.

MR. SPEAKER: The minister of multiculturalism with regard to a matter raised the other day by the Member for Calgary-North West.

Cochrane Ranche Report

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday the Member for Calgary-North West raised an issue regarding a study done by some students from the University of Calgary and made some allegations and some innuendo in his question. He asked,

Is the minister aware that members within his department attempted to censor the report and change the recommendations which were against the development of the Western Heritage Centre [development in Cochrane]?

My answer was, "No, Mr. Speaker."

The member inferred from that that I wasn't aware that this report existed. However, it was discussed a number of weeks ago in the estimates of the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism, so I was certainly aware of the report. I was saying, in answer to the question, I wasn't aware of any changes.

Just by way of information, I should explain for the member the background of this report and others like it. The historic resources division has a standing policy with a number of educational institutions, and students in a number of disciplines often are involved in research projects that have a practical bearing on what they are being taught in school. Our department, of course, co-operates with them, allowing them free access to the historic site if that's what they require.

Occasionally the division will purchase copies of these reports, but at no time does the historical resources division in any way commission a report such as this or endorse the projects. There has not been a contractual arrangement made that involved the division promising to hire the students or officially endorsing this particular study on the Cochrane Ranche, but what happened and where the confusion arose – obviously the member was swept into that confusion. When the students finished the project and they released their report, they inadvertently included the name of the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism on it. Historic resources indicated that that implied a department endorsement and that before any copies of the report were going to be purchased, the department's name would have to be removed. Now, that is hardly either censorship or in any way removal of an implied endorsement. It merely indicates that the students did a report and the department indicated that they were not a party to that report and asked that their name be removed from it.

I indicated during the debate on my estimates that we were aware of this report and that if someone wanted a copy of it, they should check with the University of Calgary. But as I indicate, Mr. Speaker, this is not a department report, a division report, and was never endorsed or changed by it.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that supplementary information. I also have the report and have looked at it. My supplementary question, then, would be: if the report was not endorsed by the department of culture, why then would the professor who was involved with the preparation of the report request an apology from the Member for Banff-Cochrane regarding the production of this report?

MR. MAIN: That sounds more appropriate for a matter between the member and the professor.

MR. SPEAKER: Was there a point of order, Edmonton-Highlands? No. Thank you.

Orders of the Day

head: Committee of Supply

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the committee come to order, please.

Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Estimates 1990-91

Agriculture

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply this afternoon is continuing the work it commenced Friday morning. The Chair believes that on Friday we concluded by having the vote on vote 1. The Chair also understands that all the questions raised concerning vote 2 were addressed in committee. Is committee now ready to deal with vote 2?

2 – Irrigation Rehabilitation and Expansion

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: I have just a short question on vote 2, Mr. Chairman. I brought up the question of tree planting and trees along the irrigation canals, and I think the Member for Cypress-Redcliff brought up the answer, which was vintage 1920: them durn trees are taking up too much of our water, so they have to be cut down. I'd like to address this to the associate minister. As we know, the Agriculture department has quite an aggressive campaign now to try to get shelter belts, trees, planted, particularly in southern Alberta, where you can crawl up to the top of a windmill and see Chicago on a clear day, so a few trees would be quite handy to have. Yet as near as I can determine, there seems to be a program to destroy trees without any real concept – I suppose the idea is that because you see that it's tall and it's big, it must have got there by using a lot of your water, but it may not have. I'm just wondering if there are any real studies to show that the trees are using the water they say they are using, and secondly, whether you've done a cost/benefit analysis. All right; so it does drink some water. The fact is that it helps a shelter belt. Is there any work going forward in the department? I'd like to see that rather than the wholesale destruction of trees because they may be taking some water out of irrigation ditches.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Associate Minister of Agriculture.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Yes. Well, Mr. Chairman, on the last day that we addressed this, I did outline that we generally don't look at trees right along an irrigation canal, because of problems they cause with the canal. It is not a problem of them using excess water. It's the problem of the roots and what they do to the canal. So when that problem arises, then they do have to be removed to protect the integrity of the canal sides so that we don't have seepage and so on. Certainly there are areas, as I indicated, where trees are planted, and we look at those opportunities to enhance works around an irrigation area. But

to look at them being planted on a canal, it would be extremely unlikely.

The other thing I just wanted to mention and I should have mentioned in our past discussion on this is that we do set aside a portion of the funding for the program for research. So the projects for research are brought forward and the funding is there, because it is our desire through this program to use the best methods of preserving the structure and controlling seepage and salinity and so on. So trees are planted but generally not along canal banks, off from the canals. Certainly the water from irrigation is used to enhance the growth of those trees and to provide some pretty nice areas.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, just a short add-on to the same question. I spent some time and did some work in China a number of years ago, and the trees along the ditches, as the minister points out, do put out a root labyrinth and do bother the wall. However, one of the things that impressed me was the fact that because they raise carp in the ditches, and I noticed this was mentioned here, the root system becomes a fairly good place for wildlife and freshwater plankton and things like that in order to help the fish take on. The fish in turn help keep the water clearer than our water. Of course, their water moves a little slower, I think, in a lot of areas than ours does, more to the speed of the present government. Nevertheless, I think there is a whole environmental or flora and fauna thing that goes with trees along the ditches that I hope is not being forgotten in our engineeringlike efficiency. I'm an engineer too. You know, the shortest distance between two points is to knock down everything and get there in a hurry. The point is that there may well be, particularly now that you're thinking of carp in the ditches and so on, some use for the trees. I'm just hoping that there isn't a willy-nilly approach to destroying the trees without looking at what they could do to the whole new type of flora and fauna that you are rightfully thinking about.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Certainly the member is familiar with southern Alberta, and he would know that we do not willingly destroy a tree in that part of the country for reasons such as that. The carp we do use in some irrigation canals now where we have contained canals, where they don't flow into a river basin. The studies to this date do seem to be quite positive to the carp keeping the irrigation ditches clear of some types of algae and stuff that builds up. So it seems to be a very positive.

MR. TAYLOR: They like the shade of the trees.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Yes. Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions regarding the heritage trust fund provision on irrigation funding, and I think it follows quite nicely the comments from Westlock-Sturgeon about some of the environmental issues that are related to irrigation development. It's true that our rivers provide a valuable water resource for irrigation farmers. It's absolutely true that irrigation has the effect of making unproductive agricultural lands flourish and very productive, and there's great value added in employment and food to feed a hungry world. These are all good things. But my interest is in trying to determine how the Department of Agriculture views the broader picture. The river is not simply a water resource, but it's also a source of water for trees, birds, fish, otters, recreation, esthetics. There's a special relationship, a spiritual connection, of course, between native people and river systems.

Perhaps the first question I'd like to put is how it all comes together. How does the Department of Agriculture view these other potential values in relation to the river? I hearken back to the decision of the Federal Court of Canada in the case of the Friends of the Oldman River Society and various other people, including Her Majesty the Queen in right of Alberta, where the court found that a major irrigation project in the province of Alberta had not been subject to a proper environmental impact assessment. The court was very plain as to where the problem lay. They said quite clearly that the provincial regime does not

allow for the expressing of public concern and the availability of a full opportunity for the public to participate in the environmental assessment and review process.

They also stated that there was no guarantee of "the independence of the review panel" studying that project "in any discernible measure." That's a direct quote. The words "any discernible measure," it seems to me, make a fairly strong indication that perhaps when it comes to irrigation projects in the province of Alberta, some of the broader environmental issues are not always addressed. I wonder if the minister might indicate how Agriculture views these things, given that there's a vote before the Assembly today of some \$25 million for irrigation rehabilitation and expansion. I feel that if we're going to develop this water for potential irrigation or if we're going to improve the system, that's perhaps a good thing, but I would like to get on record how Agriculture views that particular criticism that was addressed by the Federal Court of Canada, Appeals Division.

Another question I would like to ask the minister is whether the Department of Agriculture utilizes the water resource management principles for Alberta which are published under the name of Alberta Environment – these particular guidelines were published in April of 1988 – whether these are applied by Agriculture in relation to these capital projects and the administration of these projects as they run their course. I would also like to ask, if it's appropriate under vote 2, what further plans are in place in terms of the development of additional irrigation projects in the province of Alberta?

Perhaps the minister could address those.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I guess the best answer to numbers one and two, I think they're intertwined, is that Alberta Agriculture's interest in this program – and we are dealing with the rehabilitation program in this vote – is that our interest is in the rehabilitation of our system that is in place and is for the best management of a very precious resource in this province, and that is water. Of course, that is key to us being involved in the rehabilitation program.

The question on future projects was a bit vague, but I would have to say that any irrigation project that were to proceed that isn't in place or licensed now would have to become licensed through Alberta Environment and that Alberta Agriculture gets involved when the water is brought to the farmers' fields through the canal structure. So future projects would depend on water availability and licensing through Alberta Environment, and as you've outlined, they have some guidelines on that, so it's a bit futuristic.

Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. New projects are dealt with by Alberta Environment and presumably Public Works, Supply and Services, so we won't be asking about those today. Perhaps the reference to the Federal Court of

Canada may have been a bit misleading in that respect. However, I think the water resource management principles have more to do with the day-to-day operation of these things, and I did ask a specific question about whether this is what's followed by the department in terms of the administration of the irrigation projects but more particularly rehabilitation and expansion of the projects. The objective of vote 2 is listed as:

To assist irrigation districts in rehabilitating irrigation systems which will ensure efficient distribution of water to Alberta's irrigation farmers.

I think the question of efficiency is an important one. Too often we tend to think we can solve problems by pulling more water into the system. Everybody's looking for water in southern Alberta, whether it's in the Highwood River, where we have a critical problem with the trout habitat – I learned of a proposal on Friday by an executive of one of the major oil companies that wants to move some of the water out of the Bow River to deal with another problem in a different part of southern Alberta. It's always the first call. We have an engineering tradition. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon identified himself as one of the guilty parties as an engineer, and I believe within the engineering tradition our water engineers try to do the best they can with some of the tricky environmental issues. I would like to ask in the vein of efficiency of water distribution what type of general research is under way within the Department of Agriculture and whether it might be funded under this particular vote into more efficient irrigation technologies, more efficient methods of utilizing the water resources that are there as opposed to forever dreaming up new dams and new projects, new storage reservoirs, new canals, new sources of water within the system, whether the type of sprinkler system we employ is the most efficient technology available, whether alternatives are being researched under this vote to try to find more efficient ways to utilize the water.

Similarly, I'd be interested in the type of research which would just track what happens to the water that we put in the irrigation system. You know, how much seeps through the cracks; how much is evaporated; how much finds its way to the delivery point where you want the water for the use of the plant at the right period of time; how much do we lose along the way? That is, some means of tracking the flow of irrigation.

I was a little surprised to learn that in the irrigation system there is no metering of water that goes out. My understanding is that you pay, if you're an irrigation farmer in most of these systems, by the amount of acreage that's hooked up rather than the amount of water that you use. Perhaps the department has considered whether a metering system might be helpful in trying to determine what does happen to the water that's used at the present time. I don't see anything in particular about whether the fees should be based on a metering charge or not, but I think that at the very least the department would want to have that information so that they could try to track water as it goes through the system, try to find out whether money might be better spent in improving efficiency or drawing new sources of water: that kind of thing. So perhaps we could zero in on those points.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I better go back to question number one. I thought I had answered that in saying that we do work very closely on the management of the water resource and do follow principles for the management of it.

Flowing from that on the research side, I would just like to give you a few examples of some of the research projects – if you'd like more detail, I could certainly get that – to give you an

idea that we're researching the same things you have outlined for those reasons. We've done projects in subsurface drainage, in canal linings – and of course that's so that we don't lose water in certain canals – the use of wind turbines, cut-off curtain evaluation, the testing of flexible liners, land reclamation where we have had seepage problems in old canals, and the shallow bedrock study. We have done a water conveyance efficiency study, which is I think one of the last points you mentioned – so, yes, we are looking at the efficiency of the conveyance of water – and a solonchic soil irrigability study to see what the effects are there. We've done a study on irrigation reservoir management and also on microhydro development. So definitely those are the ways that the research projects are directed into the most efficient use of the water.

It is correct that there are not meters used on each farm in the irrigation districts. The water is metered at the headworks when it is released. I would say that it would not be in the best interests of the irrigation farmer to put on more water than was necessary, because one of the high costs in irrigation is in the pumping. So they tend to watch very carefully how much water they do put on, because if they put it on indiscriminately, they will definitely incur higher costs, and that is an expensive part of irrigation, the energy cost.

Did I miss anything in that? I'd be happy to give you a bit more information on the research projects if you would like. I think the research project on the grass carp study is quite interesting and may be a way that we're going to address an environmental problem in a really great way, because it's going to give us some recreation. They tell me that's good fishing and that these fish grow to quite a large size. The other thing that we assist in funding is an irrigation research conference. I think that's another really important area, because definitely research is very key to the best use of the resource that we have and to most efficiently use it on the various crops. I could also add that you would note that in Farming for the Future funding there are some research projects that deal with irrigation too. Some of that is on crop variety that utilizes water to the best efficiency and some on what the minimum amounts are perhaps in the forage area. So that covers it.

MR. McINNIS: I thank the minister for her response. Perhaps I'm just not understanding today, but I'm not clear whether the water resource management principles for Alberta are employed by Agriculture in the administration of these projects. I just didn't hear that in particular.

I did understand the minister to say that there are several types of research, and I support what's being done, and I thank the minister for her reply. As I understand it, the metering is done at the point of the headworks, so it's very difficult to track what happens to the flow of water after it reaches that point, at least other than perhaps by doing some representative samples. I appreciate that the energy cost would be a limiting factor for the use of irrigation water, and I guess the suggestion is that that's sort of a surrogate for metering as a way to limit the use of water by any given farmer: because the cost of energy is high, then that will prevent them from putting out more water than they absolutely need to use.

I guess the question that we run into, if you look at it strictly from the microeconomic point of view, from the point of view of the farm operator, is when the energy cost of operating this system starts to meet the cost of perhaps using more efficient types of technology or using the water more effectively. There are an awful lot of places around the world where they use

considerably less water for irrigation because the supply simply isn't there, and I know that there are some other systems that are in place. The Member for Cypress-Redcliff, I believe, mentioned in the Assembly that he had traveled to Israel and looked at what they had done there with a very elaborate type of system in a part of the world where, I daresay, they have even less water to work with than we do here.

I'm just wondering if using the energy cost of pumping, whether that's natural gas or diesel or gasoline, really is a very good surrogate for the value of water, whether those two things can be equated. I do appreciate that as you pump more water, you spend more money on energy, but I'm not quite sure how that correlates to whether we're getting the wisest, most efficient use out of every drop of water that goes into the system, because, as I mentioned, there are an awful lot of other users. I hate the term "users" because you can't really describe a fish as being a user of the water. A user implies somebody who goes out and makes a decision to consume or make use of it. I suppose somebody who goes fishing or boating is a user, but the fish, the plants, the trees, the microbiology are not really users in that sense. They're a part of the river ecosystem. So we have to try to put all of these things together, and I think people who look at this from a public policy point of view want to be sure that the water that goes into the system is being effectively used. I really wonder if the minister does feel that the energy cost of pumping is a suitable surrogate in the economic sense.

But that really wasn't my question. It was whether it might be useful to the department to have that information that would come from a metering system in terms of policy planning, in terms of attempting perhaps to influence the way irrigation is practised within the southern part of Alberta particularly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready . . .

MRS. McCLELLAN: I think, Mr. Chairman, that I'd like to offer to send to the member some detail on the research projects that have been done on efficiency. I would remind the member that each irrigation farmer knows how much water he is expelling from his particular irrigation equipment by the rotation and the numbers. I would be more than happy to share that information with the hon. member in written form and also explain the metering that is done for discharge back into the rivers out of the system. That is controlled, and the quality is checked at that point too. The controls on it are a bit of a broad subject. So with his permission I would offer to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the vote?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

2.1 – Support Services	\$200,000
2.2 – Assistance to Irrigation Districts	\$24,800,000
Total Vote 2 – Irrigation Rehabilitation And Expansion	\$25,000,000

3 – Private Irrigation Water Supply

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be fairly short here if the minister could answer probably a couple of questions. I notice that it's Private Irrigation Water Supply, and I must

commend the department for the project. I think it's worked reasonably well. I've had a few complaints, but the department has been quite co-operative in ironing them out.

It did give rise to a couple of questions. Once the private irrigation projects started, there was some argument as to whether the cost of metering, which was, I think, a late add-on to the program, was put in because, and I think rightfully so, the Agriculture department wanted to know and so did the Department of the Environment how much water was actually being used through private irrigation. But that does lead to an add-on to the statement made by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place in that if we think meters are necessary for private irrigation projects, maybe we should have them in the public irrigation projects too.

One of the arguments that I like for meters is that as our population changes in the province of Alberta and in the urban/rural mix, those of us representing rural areas need all the arguments we can to make our case. It's bad publicity, indeed, to tell the people under water meters in many of our cities and towns that, no, the farmer who's using this irrigation water doesn't have to have a meter. So if we think meters are necessary for private irrigation, we've asked that they put them in, and meters are necessary for people in their houses in the cities, I think that from the point of PR alone – because I agree with the hon. cabinet minister when she says that likely that does not change the amount of water the farmer uses but it would sure make the whole case look a lot better.

To go on from meters, though, in private irrigation, most of the private irrigation done in North America really is out of aquifers; in other words, out of wells, not out of springs, creeks, rivers, or lakes, as we've mentioned here. I have been very disappointed at the lack of knowledge throughout this whole government. I've talked to the other Minister of Agriculture. I've asked in question periods, and he's foisted the question off on the Minister of the Environment who has foisted it to the Premier who has foisted it to the Minister of Energy. I can find out how much oil and gas we have, declining pressures on nearly any gas reservoir we have, but nobody has any idea of the decline of some of our different aquifers. As a matter of fact, there's not even names for the aquifers here. As you know, if you go across the border you've got the Ogallala aquifer, one of the big ones. The aquifers are so well known and mapped in the western U.S. that they're actually named. They're so unknown and unmapped here that there's no particular name for them.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Sure there is.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, maybe you have one in your area; that's good. You should have more than one; probably two, three, or four.

But the point that's bothering me here – I'd like to ask the minister two questions. One is: does this system handle wells too? Or is it just a typing error that it's left out? Is there some purpose of leaving wells out of private irrigation? Because after all, that is probably the handiest source of water in the dry areas of this province. There are very few springs, creeks, lakes on farms once you get south of Red Deer. When you get down in my country, as I said, you'd take old dogs, 10 or 12 years old, before they even see a tree, let alone a lake or a creek. So aquifers are where private irrigation is likely to come.

Now, that opens up a whole new field. The minister shook her head when she said it doesn't apply to wells. Then are we

contemplating private irrigation schemes to wells? We do contemplate private exploitation of aquifers for the oil companies. They get the first 50 percent. That's a recent rule that's passed. An oil company is allowed to drill into an aquifer and take supposedly 50 percent of that aquifer out in the next few years. Personally, I'd like the first 50 percent and let the oil companies look after the last 50 percent. It's not going to make any farmer too happy to know that Esso and Shell say: "Oh, don't worry, buster. We're only going to take the first half. We're going to leave the last half for you." Well, how much is half? Apparently the only recognition of what a half is is what the oil company says is in the aquifer, not our ministers of environment or agriculture.

Agriculture, as far as I can see, have washed their hands of aquifers, and that's as far as determining how much water is to be taken out of them, what their pressures are over a longer time. That's the first part. The second part: when you start depleting an aquifer, as any hydrologist can tell you, you may bring in contamination that normally wasn't going to be there, so half may sound like a great deal. But I think the West Germans and French can tell you that if you deplete an aquifer by half, sometimes you suck in surface contamination from fertilizers and pesticides.

MRS. McCLELLAN: They're not . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Well, I know. But the point is if they're not there, Mr. Chairman, why aren't they? I mean, the point is that private irrigation is much more accessible through aquifers than it is through lakes and creeks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are just two or three questions I'd like to ask the minister. I think she would go away disappointed if I didn't ask her any questions this year. They're to do with the specifics of the program, I suppose, and one of the questions I have in mind is: do you have limits per applicant? Are these limits set in terms of acreage, in terms of the size of the body of water you're tapping into, or just what the applicants feel they might want to have?

Getting to the specifics, I would wonder how they arrived at the amount to be voted, the \$3 million. My understanding last year was that it was the first year of the program and it was a bit of a fishing expedition that came up with \$1.8 million. Now we're at \$3 million, and it may well have good reasons for it. However, at this particular time, with the government finances as weak as they are, I think a lot of thought should be given to any new program that's initiated, and this appears to be an initiative that started last year that now may take on program status. If it is, is there a time limit? Is this the last year of it or the second last year? If we have applicants, people who would drive this number up to, say, double what it is, would they be taken into consideration this year or in further years?

Getting on to some of the specifics: for example, wages have had a significant jump. I thought, "Oh, boy; we've now hired some more people in the department." That's not the case, so it begs the question: did you replace the two individuals with two more qualified individuals or did they find out that you had a couple of underpaid individuals and doubled their wages or did we have a sudden influx of fringe benefits that made the joys of working in this particular area all the better? So I'd sort of appreciate a comment or two on that one.

The other one that stems more from last year's vote than this year's, I guess, although it's here too, is that between last year and this year for this particular vote, if you will, we've now accumulated over \$40,000 worth of fixed assets. I would like to know pretty much what those are all about and where we're going to be heading with that particular little item in the budget. I realize the item is small, but I think it's a good principle behind it.

The other question that was debated before is the amount of money that's being allocated to irrigation in one form or another through the various departments. I certainly don't want to sound like we're depriving the southern Alberta farmers of anything. Would it not be more prudent to take this particular incentive, initiative, if you will, out of some other existing program with the idea of keeping the costs under control, because if we go through what happened in the other votes – for example, Irrigation Rehabilitation and Expansion – either they're doing exactly the same rehabing in vote 2, where they take into consideration the inflation factor so every year they go back a little bit, or else it's just a magic number that's dropped and the participating irrigation districts would then match the dollars and they'd only do that much work. I don't know quite what it is, why the numbers keep on going. I do know this had a significant jump, and I would appreciate slight explanations if possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I have a number of questions here, but I wonder if it wouldn't be more expeditious if the minister just stood up and told us a little bit about this program and how the first year has gone. It would probably save half of my questions. So if she would give us a little bit of an outline of what's happened, I could then see which questions I can tick off and which ones I would still like to ask.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Go ahead and ask the questions.

MR. McEACHERN: No, no. Well, I'm sure that most of them you would answer in a normal dissertation about this particular . . . No?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Just go ahead.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, all right. I'll ask them then, but then I'll have to . . . Okay. It would have been faster the other way around, I thought.

Well, the first question is: how much of the \$1.8 million that was allocated last year was actually spent, because that's just the budget estimate, and how many farms were helped? In other words, how has the first year gone? What has happened in the first year? The numbers here can't tell us that, so we're left asking questions because we don't have that kind of information. It would have seemed to me that the minister might have volunteered it first, and then we wouldn't have had to ask those simple questions.

Something else I wanted to know is the ratio of costs paid by the individual farmer that's being helped and the government. Is there a formula? What are the percentages? How does that compare to the percentages paid for the districts that operate, where I believe it's 14 and 86 percent?

MRS. McCLELLAN: I can send you the brochures.

MR. McEACHERN: Yeah, I'm sure you could, but you also could have mentioned a few of those things before I started, and I wouldn't have had to ask these individual questions. Anyway, what areas of the province are responding to this program the most? What geographical regions would we find these programs centred in?

I'm just looking at one of my other questions here and seeing how to fit it into the last lot.

The question has sort of been half asked or hinted at already in some of my colleagues' questions, and you've maybe half answered that, but I can't help wondering about this percentage that we have with the districts, where the government pays 86 percent of the capital costs, I think, and the district pays 14 percent. I think that's the same ratio that holds for the distribution of the water costs, is it not? [interjection] No; that's not in this program that I was referring to. I was referring to the district programs. In this program I don't know what the percentages are. I guess I wanted to ask the minister if there was any intention of reviewing that idea of fixing the cost rather than making it a certain amount per gallon or per acre-foot of water or whatever measurement is used for irrigation projects. I'm sure that will be too big a measure for these individual farms.

Anyway, those are some of my questions, Mr. Chairman, if the minister could be allowed to answer some of them.

MR. McINNIS: Vote 3 relates to privately owned irrigation systems: "capital works necessary to divert and convey water from a spring, creek, river or lake to their land for irrigation purposes." I assume this would include the Little Bow irrigation farmers who operate a privately owned irrigation system, that they would be part of the ambit of this particular program. I do have some questions about how all of that operates. My understanding is that the Little Bow irrigation district has proposed a major capital works program which . . .

MRS. McCLELLAN: Could I just answer that? I should make one answer. I'm sorry; I really thought that in the second year the members would be more familiar with the program.

The Alberta private irrigators program is not eligible in any water irrigation district. The private irrigators program is only for people who are not within an irrigation district and not served within an irrigation district. It is for people to use across Alberta: north, central, south, wherever. Funding is not eligible to be used within an irrigation district, of which there are 13 in the province. So I apologize.

Perhaps I'll just go on and help with one more answer. It's a 50-50 cost sharing to a maximum of \$150 an acre or \$30,000 a project, whichever. So that's the maximum. The water meters are included in that program, and yes, I encourage that. That is the only exception in the funding: because we encourage it, we will pay up to 75 percent of the cost of the water meter. So it's 50-50 with the exception of the cost of the water meter, which is 75. But it is still within the maximum of \$30,000. So I think that might help a little bit.

For any project to go into this program, they would have to have an interim water licence, which would mean that it is a new project, and they would have to have that from Environment before they could apply to this program.

I'm sorry I didn't outline those. I guess I thought you would remember that from last year.

The reason there was less spent – and I was just checking to see if I had the figures on it last year – was because we were

late starting that program last year. The \$1.8 million wasn't spent. We can check in our budget book, and it will show how much was. The reason we applied more this year is because it is into the second year of the program and we do expect a larger take-up. I should say that this is a five-year program, so it is \$10 million over five years, if that is used. The reason it is five years is because the funding is paid out over a three-year period: you get 60 percent of the funding, then 20 percent and 20 percent. So you don't just get the lump sum on application; the funding is distributed as the project proceeds.

The reason for a wage position is, of course, that last year we were late starting the program. This year we expect it to be into full use, so we have had to have some extra technical assistance, which I'm sure you would agree with, in that program. That's the same with fixed assets. I don't have it exactly at my fingertips, but I would expect the computer system to keep the applications flowing and have a way of entering them, because we don't pay it out just on application. They do go through a process.

I think that covers a few of the questions; that may help. It is all over Alberta. The meters are included. The amount that's voted this year is an estimate, and of course, if it isn't used, it will carry over. I think that's what I had for notes.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I had been expecting an answer as to why aquifers were not considered in private irrigation.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, I had a hard time in your discussion, hon. member, to know whether – on the one hand you're really worried about not having any water in the province and that we don't know how much is going on, and on the second hand you wanted to use it for irrigation. So I had a little problem. But they are not included. I will certainly look to the reasons. To me it makes all kinds of sense, but then I don't know everything. However, I would say again that the aquifers, the water sources – the rivers, the streams – are controlled by Alberta Environment. We get involved in irrigation after a licence or interim licence or permit has been granted by that body. So we do not control them.

I would like to just tell the member for his information that I'm sure the name of the aquifer in my area is the Belly River aquifer. I'm sorry I don't know all of them in Alberta, but I think most of them are named. The other long name you gave also is in Alberta, south of us. But it is done through Environment; it is not done through Agriculture. I will check, and I will give you a response from the department as to their reasoning for not including aquifers in irrigation.

MR. McINNIS: I'd like to thank the minister for those remarks. I guess what threw me off was the term "legally constituted producer groups" as being eligible under this program. It's not just individual farmers but producer groups as well. I wonder if the minister would have the information handy as to how many farmers have qualified under this program to date, how many were producer groups, and what types of groupings we're talking about here.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I did mean to mention that. In some cases, there are groups that are called water users associations that get together to form a system collectively, co-operatively. That would be the type of groups we are talking about. As you would probably know, we have groups that have community wells, for example, where they get together and do that. We

have a similar type of thing that does happen in this. They're called water users associations, and they're put together for that purpose. [interjection] How many? I'll see if I have a total. In the last year there were 46 projects – that was as of April 25, 1990 – and they do range across the province, because I think that might be the next question, from the south to the central, to Rocky Mountain House, to Wembley: quite a wide ranging. I would think, too, that it would be a fair comment to say that with grain prices and economics a little tight right now, that could be one reason we anticipate that it hasn't been taken up to a greater degree than it has. Because it is expensive, and this only assists a water user to bring water to the edge of their field. It does not assist them at all for any capital costs for the water on their fields, and that is quite expensive.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before recognizing the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon . . .

MR. TAYLOR: I think it's probably more a statement than a question, to try to focus in *so* the hon. member can see where my complaint is. First of all, just to get home, now, Belly River is not an aquifer; that's a geological formation about 700 feet thick that has maybe four or five aquifers in it, and you know much more than most of the Department of Agriculture if you know that. But what is bothering me, as an old water engineer and hydrologist that's done a lot of work in Asia, is that the Department of Agriculture is doing literally nothing on aquifers, leaving it to the Department of the Environment. Whether you know it or not, the Department of the Environment has given the first half, first dibs, to the oil companies. Now, that's awful; that's horrible. No self-respecting Arab or Chinese or Indian would ever do that. Water's more important for use on the land than it is to chase out oil. But we're doing it; we're doing it because we can produce oil slightly cheaper than using the fossil water or crappy, nonpotable water. That's number one.

The number two part, Madam Minister, is that you say, "Well, do I want water taken out of that thing or not?" Well, we don't know. We don't have any idea of what type of water is in there, so this is why water is excepted and not in this agreement, because we have no bloody idea. But we'll turn around blissfully and tell Esso, "Oh yeah; you could go drill water, run some tests on it, and use half of it over the next few years." If a farmer does it, he's liable to get lined up and shot, because you know what you'll tell the farmer? "Well, George, we don't know how much water's down there. Hell, you might be using it all over the place. But we'll trust Esso." What I'm getting at is that I believe you are asleep at the switch in Agriculture. You'd better get some of your own geologists and hydrologists to watch the Department of the Environment, because they're selling your water. They say they're not selling it, but they are selling it, because when you use fresh, potable water to chase oil out, you get the oil out with less expense than you do using nonpotable water. Therefore, you can pay more royalty; therefore, they're selling your fresh water to the oil companies in an indirect, roundabout way. So I'm saying: get your dander up; cock your fists; talk to your people up there and tell them to get the plug out and wake up. [interjection] All right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The minister, I understand, thanks the hon. member for his representation. Is the committee ready for the question on vote 3?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 3 – Private Irrigation Water

Supply \$3,068,000

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister would like to report votes 2 and 3?

MRS. McCLELLAN: I would ask that votes 2 and 3 be reported.

[Motion carried]

Public Works, Supply and Services

1 – Capital City Recreation Park

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vote 1 is to be found on page 21.
The hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, what we have before us today under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital fund is a request for an expenditure of \$800,000 in the fiscal year 1990-91. This request has to do with the Capital City Recreation Park here in the city of Edmonton.

All members will recall that in 1975 an agreement was struck between the city of Edmonton and the province of Alberta, an agreement that set a limit of expenditure of \$34 million in 1974 dollar values for land acquisitions and park development. Several years ago, Mr. Chairman, \$2 million was earmarked for the completion of the property acquisition with respect to this particular project. In fiscal 1988-89, \$400,000 was expended; in fiscal 1989-90, \$800,000; and this request now before the Assembly for the fiscal year 1990-91 is for \$800,000.

The city of Edmonton currently has to acquire a small number of land parcels; in fact, 16 parcels and approximately 35 acres. The city of Edmonton undertakes the need for it, the study, the negotiating, and what we do as a province is simply provide the dollars for it. It's a flow-through basis in that regard. The city of Edmonton determines the need; we accept in terms of what the request is. This final request now, Mr. Chairman, is for the remaining \$800,000 in terms of provincial responsibility and provincial participation, going back to a project that was set up in 1975 and given clear parameters associated with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, thank you, Mr. Chairman. [interjection]

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

MR. WICKMAN: I was ready to proceed on this. Are you changing your mind?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess so.

MR. WICKMAN: I understand.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to make some remarks on the Capital City Recreation Park, into which the province has now put over \$43 million for land acquisition and park development in the capital city, a park that is very much appreciated by people who are in the capital district

and those who come to visit from all over the world. It's a very important feature of the capital district; in fact, it's a tourist attraction. We're very, very fortunate that city fathers and mothers in decades past had the good sense and foresight to try to preserve as much as possible of the river valley for park development, for its natural beauty and splendour, for a place where you can have a good outdoors experience without leaving town. And in today's world, Lord knows, we need that well enough.

The questions I have mainly have to do with where we go from here. As the minister knows, the Capital City Park sort of springs from the centre of town near the precincts of the Legislative Assembly and ambles in a northeasterly direction out towards the edge of town. That's the historic pattern of Capital City Park development. The land acquisition and the park development: the first \$40 million-odd was spent almost entirely in that northeasterly direction leading from the Legislative Assembly precincts.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Now, of course, the city of Edmonton, and I believe the province of Alberta, is interested in developing the park in the other direction, towards Fort Edmonton in a southwesterly direction. While the minister didn't indicate, I assume that some of the \$800,000 which is before us in vote 1 is in the direction of acquiring property and in the direction of park expansion in that southwesterly direction, where it impacts with the residents of Edmonton-Whitemud, Edmonton-Jasper Place, Edmonton-Meadowlark, and Edmonton-Glenora. I'm sorry the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark is not here to speak to this vote today as well, because I know he has some interest in it. But this is a provincial resource and a provincial expenditure.

Now, when the park was built, the planning that was done centred around a network of asphalt-paved trails and some picnic shelters, a type of use which was oriented toward foot traffic and bicycle traffic primarily. One of the things that's happened is that there's been a change in the type of bicycles that people ride. When these parks were developed and built, most of the people utilized a 10-speed type of narrow-tired road bicycle. Well, nowadays an awful lot more people use all-terrain bicycles, which have fat tires, knobby tires. I can tell every hon. member that they're an awful lot of fun to ride, but not so much when you're on paved asphalt roadways, especially when those roadways are also – roadway is the wrong term: this type of nonmotorized vehicle pathway – quite heavily used. You have fathers and mothers with their children in carriages. You have an awful lot of people jogging, running, walking. They're very congested these days, and there is starting to be a bit of congestion. I think a safety hazard exists from bicycle traffic and pedestrian traffic utilizing these same corridors. It's not dissimilar, I guess, in some ways to what happens on other roadways, but because there's less protocol, less law, less regulation, less policing, there are more difficult situations to deal with.

Now, it so happens that the people who ride mountain bikes like to get off the paved trails and away from the congestion as much as possible and on to some of the unpaved trails. The unpaved trails in parts of the Capital City Park are designated as being for equestrian use. There's a section in that southwesterly direction that I described, on the south side of the river from William Hawrelak Park to Fort Edmonton, which is designated for equestrian use only. There's an equestrian centre

there. There's another parallel trail that's designated for pedestrian use only, and you get a lot of mountain bike traffic in there.

Where I'm leading to is that I'm hoping that in the expansion of the Capital City Park we consider the needs of the all-terrain bicycle users as well as the kind of asphalt multi-use trail concept that we had to this point in time. I'm wondering if the minister could enlighten the Assembly as to whether that type of use is being built into the planning of the expansion of this park in funds that are voted under vote 1. Now, of course, if you talk about planning, that implies that you have some type of a plan, that you have an idea of where you want to be and what steps you're going to take to get there. I guess that's the one thing that's not quite clear, looking at vote 1 and the \$800,000 primarily set for a grant for property acquisition. How long will it be before we complete the Capital City Park in the city of Edmonton in the province of Alberta?

The city has done some planning work where they've looked at development of picnic shelters; they've looked at pedestrian/bicycle roadways. They have a plan in place. I'm not certain from the minister's comments whether that's also the plan that he's working from. You know, I think when we look at expending money towards park development, that type of planning should be in place. The city plan is a fairly elaborate one, and the sums of money involved are large. My memory is that it's \$30 million or so required to complete the Capital City Park program, and I am wondering the extent to which the Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital projects division will be available for the completion of that park. What we have in this particular vote is acquisition of land, which would be an important part of the completion of the park, but without the plan in place, without the commitment in place, it's difficult to know how this \$800,000 fits into the expansion and the completion.

So I wonder if the minister might just elaborate a little as to where we're at in terms of the park development side of the ledger: where the discussions are between the provincial government, his department, and the city; whether they have agreed to a concept plan and whether we have a timetable for the completion of this very important provincial facility and this very important tourist attraction for the city of Edmonton and the province of Alberta.

Thank you.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the opening remarks that were made by the minister, I appreciate the comments he made on the perception of the Capital City Park, because it is regarded as the jewel of Edmonton. Some visitors may come to the city and regard West Edmonton Mall as the jewel, and there was a time that Wayne Gretzky was regarded as the jewel of Edmonton. But, by and large, most people that come to visit, when you ask them before they leave, "What's the thing that impressed you the most about Edmonton?" they talk about the river valley, the uniqueness of that river valley and the efforts that have been made to preserve it and to retain it and to make it usable. And that is unique, because so many of these cities you go to have allowed any waters they have to be used for other purposes, locating industry nearby, and so on and so forth. It makes it so special.

I can recall, Mr. Chairman, during my time in city council from 1977 to 1986, it was during that period of time that we saw that development occur, and we marked the progress. It was a good mechanism – there's no question about it – having the capital city development group in place and the participation by the province and participation by the city. What we see happening down there now with the redevelopment of areas like Rosedale, Cloverdale, Lavigne, and Edmonton centre is not going to be damaging to the river valley; in fact, it's going to enhance it. It's going to make it a more livable place, because it's a very, very controlled type of development, and there *is* no fear of the river valley turning into a sea of high rises. That is not the intent at all of the redevelopment plans that have been approved by the Edmonton city council.

When we look at the proposed extension to the west end, which I know is of concern to the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, it's also of concern to me because of course it does impact on the constituency of Edmonton-Whitemud, and this is where I have some questions. We should make every attempt to develop it, to make that portion of the park, the extension, usable and make it part of the Capital City Park. If we're talking in terms of using heritage dollars for an ideal purpose, this has to be an ideal purpose, because when we leave the river valley behind, when we preserve it, when we retain it, we in fact are leaving a great heritage, a great legacy to future generations. Even if it was a question of using surplus lottery funds for that type of extension, I wouldn't have problems with that. I think it's a very, very worthwhile use, and if there's an area that the province does deserve to be commended on, it is for their participation in that particular program.

For some questions . . . I may have misunderstood the minister; I may have heard the minister incorrectly. I'm not sure if he made reference to this being the last year of the existing agreement that pertains to the maintenance and such of the existing area that is developed or if there's automatically a new agreement put into place because of the ongoing operational costs that are involved, the maintenance costs, and then of course the ongoing costs of additional land acquisition which takes us into the west end. Now, my reading of the extension is such that dollars that have been committed to date do not come out of this particular budget, do not come out of this vote, but instead come out of a budget that falls within parks, recreation and wildlife. There was in the last year's budget process an amount of dollars earmarked – I can't recall if that figure was \$200,000 or if it was upwards to a million dollars – to allow for that planning process to take place.

When I talk with city officials, with aldermen, and when I talk with Recreation and Parks people, I get the indication that there has been a cutback from the original plan that I anticipated was going to be announced during the last election but wasn't, that the overall master plan, which I thought called for an expenditure in the neighbourhood of about \$56 million or maybe even as high as \$64 million, has been cut back considerably, to a figure of maybe \$11 million or \$12 million. Now, I may be incorrect in some of those figures, and there's still some debate as to whether that extension is going to take the form of the present Capital City Park where you're going to have walkways, where you're going to have bicycle paths, or if it's going to be more preservation of its natural state, because there are the forces on both sides. There are those who want to see it preserved in its natural state as far as possible and those who are saying it should be more usable, and I know there are some compromises.

Now, the minister responsible, the provincial government, may not have that much involvement in it. In fact, other than being a supplier of those dollars, I'm not sure that the minister's department does have the opportunity to direct, other than to determine how many dollars are going to be provided to influence the process, as to what extent that extension is going to take. So, in a nutshell and to conclude, what I'd like the minister to address is, as the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place put it, where do we go from here as far as the existing agreement is concerned and as far as the extension is concerned? What is the anticipated cost from the provincial government's point of view for the extension, and what is the involvement of the provincial government when it comes to determining the form that extension will take?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ready for the question?

Hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, it's important, I think, to respond to the questions that were raised. The original question from the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place had to do with the future with respect to Capital City Recreation Park, and in many ways Edmonton-Whitemud basically raised the same question. What we've got before us today is the estimate associated with Public Works, Supply and Services, and I pointed out that this is for the reimbursement for land acquisitions required to complete the park. My colleague the Minister of Recreation and Parks is the minister of the government who would deal with future planning with respect to Capital City Park and/or all expansions associated with it. The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is absolutely correct when he says, "Or is this minister solely responsible for reimbursing the costs for land acquisition?" That's what this is all about, and that's what this minister's responsible for.

So, Mr. Chairman, I think that answers the questions, and if there aren't any more, I'd be very happy to move the reporting of this vote.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 1 – Capital City Recreation Park \$800,000

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you wish to have the vote reported?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to move that vote 1 be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Moving then to vote 1, Occupational Health and Safety Research and Education.

REV. ROBERTS: Point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes. Point of order, Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: I do realize that vote 2 does not allocate any

funds, but it is listed as a vote, to which I'd like to address some comments.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no vote to be taken there, hon. member.

REV. ROBERTS: I don't know what Standing Orders provide for. It is listed. I was told that if it wasn't listed, then it couldn't be spoken to, but since it is listed, it may be that we decide there should be some money there. I'm not sure, but I think the matter is open for debate.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. member, the Chair will check whether it is appropriate to have debate. I'm sorry I do not have the answer right now. If so, we will return to it at an appropriate time.

The schedule for today, however, involves going to vote 1, Occupational Health and Safety Research and Education, on page 17.

Executive Council

1 – Occupational Health and Safety Research and Education

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The minister of Occupational Health and Safety, any opening remarks?

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to briefly give the members some information. I passed out to all members the annual report of 1908-89. I was going to spend some considerable time providing a status report on this, but now that I've been able to obtain a copy for every member, I would hope they would look at their status report, and that brings the whole program up to date.

But I did want to say a few things. It's the 10th year of operation for this fund. It's a commitment that was made by the government in 1981. There was \$10 million set aside for this program, and so far the program has awarded a little over \$800,000. This would be the last year, ending on March 31, 1991. The program was set up to fund education and research initiatives outside of government which would help to prevent work-related injuries and illness and to promote occupational health and safety. There's no other program in Alberta or Canada that has this mandate, and there is no other source of funds available to support the initiatives stimulated and sponsored by this program.

Over the past two years the grant program has been focused strongly on solution-oriented projects, and we intend to fund projects that will help to solve high-priority problems. Such projects should have and will have a direct impact on workplace health and safety, we want to stress strongly. We've identified several high-priority problem areas, and we intend to fund projects which address these critical areas. Those are fatal and serious injury accidents, occupational health and safety problems in small business, and barriers to communicating occupational health and safety information to the employers and the workers, including those that have English as a second language and those with poor reading skills. As I've said, I was going to go through the funding of it, but that's all in that document. Hopefully that will help the members with their questions.

Since the start of this program, Mr. Chairman, the program has received 511 applications. Of those 511 applications, 186 applications were approved, and 57 percent of all the grant funds were funneled towards educational projects. Our research

projects have received 40 percent of all grant funds; conference projects have received 3 percent of the grant funds. All applications go to a grants steering committee, which is composed of a number of members from labour and employer and government. They've met, since April of '81 to March of 1990, some 73 times. This committee reviews all applications to it and from those applications recommends certain programs to the government, and of course I bring them forward.

We are moving this year with a considerable funding vote to the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary. The funds to be used with the University of Alberta will be for a demonstration project which will work towards adapting safe work practices in a hospital setting. I raise that because of the 10 highest injury industries during the last decade, hospitals ranked number five. To date accidents in hospitals have taken over first place, so we want to make sure that we work towards a reduction there. The University of Calgary will be spending a lot of time and emphasis and funds on service to small- and medium-size businesses. Small business employs a large number of the employees in Alberta and also has a large number of compensation cases or injuries. We want to take a look at that and see how we can work with small business to make their workplace a safer place for all.

As I mentioned, Mr. Chairman, those are the two largest funds out of this year's applications. We have 12 applications, I believe, before the board. One of them is from the health safety centre in Edmonton here. I will look forward to the recommendations from the board as soon as possible and also would now entertain any questions in regard to this program.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make a few comments on this very important program. To the extent that it is rather unique in the country, I'm glad to give the government credit for having it. I just would like to ask a few questions about it, though.

The minister just said in his opening remarks that the program was planning, if I understood him correctly, to end in 1990-91. I understand there's an evaluation program that suggested there should be an extension or continuation of the program, that it was achieving a lot of very useful and productive purposes. Perhaps the minister could give us some indication this afternoon if he and the government are planning to have an extension of this very worthwhile program and, if not, what the implications are going to be for many of those projects that got started. Surely, I would hope, the government is not going to just let them go cold turkey in the middle of the projects and stop the research that they're doing. Perhaps he could address that.

Secondly, just looking at the amount that is before us in this vote, the amount of grants is down, Mr. Chairman, from \$1.2 million last year to \$1,038,000 this year. That's down 13 and a half percent. If you add another 4 and a half percent for inflation, we lost purchasing power from last year to this year of 18 percent, almost a fifth. That seems like a very substantial cut, especially when you consider that in the overall Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital projects division we have an expenditure of some \$158.9 million, which is 12.6 percent higher than it was last year overall, and for Occupational Health and Safety Research and Education, the grant's barely a million dollars. That's less than 1 percent. I'd be interested in the minister's comments, but

that doesn't strike me as being a great priority when it's less than 1 percent of the total. Then on top of that the grants are decreased by over 13 percent when the overall capital projects division budget is being increased by 13 percent. So it does seem that this is getting a significant downgrading in priority from the government, and I would appreciate the minister addressing that particular fact.

The other comment I want to make here is that out of the million dollars, somewhat, of grants in the '88-89 annual report all I can see of projects with organized labour is \$3,855, one project with the Alberta Federation of Labour. Now, \$3,855 out of \$1 million is less than 1 percent, about a third of a percent, and I really have to wonder if the minister in this particular program is serious about working co-operatively with organized labour when the grant program would suggest that the projects submitted by organized labour are given such low priority.

I would also like to ask the minister if he might address the question that if we're looking at a million dollars in grants, we're looking at \$130,000 for salaries and wages and another \$50,000 for supplies and services – we're looking at about \$180,000 of overhead for a million dollars in grants. That's administration of 18 percent, which strikes me as being a rather high figure. Now, if the grant levels were higher, then those administrative costs would be a smaller percentage. I have to wonder – 18 percent is a very high figure, I think, for administration, and I'd appreciate the minister answering that.

Now, the minister also did make a reference to the current projects, including the one submitted by the Worker's Health Centre in Edmonton, and I wonder if he just might be able to give us some indication as to when those people, the sponsors of the Worker's Health Centre project, will be hearing from the grant program on their particular application.

Another point I just want to make, Mr. Chairman, about the grant program, occupational health research and education, which is so important and many good materials have come out of it: I wonder if we're doing everything we can be doing or should be doing to ensure that the results of this research work are getting to the people who need to benefit from it. For example, we have had some discussion about this question before, and that's the toxic and dangerous hazards that welders are daily exposed to. While we have this good instructional program – videos and materials for welders exposing the various hazards and how to protect yourself from them – I'm not convinced and I don't believe that we've had a major effort to follow that up and make sure that every welder in the province is aware of that and benefits from the money that went into the development of those materials.

I think the same thing could be said of other programs. I don't think it's enough to simply have these materials deposited at the Occupational Health and Safety department library and just wait for people to borrow them. I think we have to be much more proactive than that. We have to ensure that when these materials come out and are going to be a substantial enhancement for preventing accidents – and we all know that we had something like 62,000 last year. It's way, way too high a rate of accidents, and I wonder if we would be having those rates of accidents if all the workers in the province were able to benefit from the materials that are developed from this particular program.

So I put that to the minister and would like to see if he would endeavour to be much more proactive in ensuring that the workers of this province do, in fact, benefit from the materials

that are developed from this program. I would look forward to the minister's response to those questions.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, due to what's to take place at 5 o'clock, I beg leave to adjourn debate, and I'll get back to the member.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion to adjourn debate, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. HORSMAN: I move that the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

[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 sums from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1991, for the purpose of making investments in the following projects.

Agriculture: \$25 million for Irrigation Rehabilitation and Expansion, \$3,068,000 for Private Irrigation Water Supply.

Public Works, Supply and Services: \$800,000, Capital City Recreation Park.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital projects division for Executive Council, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Those members in favour of the report, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Thank you. Government House Leader.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor will now attend upon the Assembly.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair]

head: **Royal Assent**

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

[The Honourable W. Helen Hunley, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, took her place upon the Throne]

HER HONOUR: Please be seated.

MR. SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has, at its present sittings, passed certain Bills to

which, and in the name of the Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

CLERK: Your Honour, the following are the titles of the Bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed.

No.	Title
1	Premier's Council on Science and Technology Act
3	Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Amendment Act, 1990
4	Licensing of Trades and Businesses Amendment Act, 1990
5	Insurance Amendment Act, 1990
6	Alberta Health Care Insurance Amendment Act, 1990
7	Change of Name Amendment Act, 1990
8	Individual's Rights Protection Amendment Act, 1990

[The Lieutenant Governor indicated her assent]

CLERK: In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Honourable

the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these Bills.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[The Lieutenant Governor left the Chamber]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

Just a brief note, hon. members. In that situation it is required that all members stand and remain standing until invited to sit. In particular Edmonton-Meadowlark, in this case, is one. Sorry.

Government House Leader.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's not proposed that the Assembly sit this evening.

[At 5:06 p.m. the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]