

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, April 19, 1991**

10:00 a.m.

Date: 91/04/19

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the honour today to present a petition signed by 90 people who are in the bricklayer trade. They're concerned about the proposed changes to the Alberta apprenticeship system and argue for the enhancement of the apprenticeship program rather than its demise.

head: **Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 93, I wish to report that the petitions for private Bills which have been received by the Assembly have been taken under consideration by me as chairman of the private Bills committee, and all the petitions received complied with Standing Order 86 with the exception of the following: the petition of the town of Grande Cache for the Grande Cache Tourism and Business Development Authority Act; and the petition of the Lutheran Church, Canada, for the Lutheran Church, Canada, the Alberta/British Columbia Corporation Act.

The private Bills Committee has had these petitions under consideration and recommends to the Assembly that the deadline for completing the documentation required by Standing Orders be extended in respect of these petitions to enable them to be presented to the Assembly once the documentation has been fully completed. I request the concurrence of the Assembly in this recommendation.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there a call for the question?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file the response to Written Question 165.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 1989-1990 annual reports for the following: the Alberta College of Art, Fairview College, and Keyano College.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Legislature the 1990 annual report for the 75th anniversary of the Public Utilities Board.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like the Assembly to recognize the presence of two guests in the public gallery today. They are Nancy Truscott, the Calgary-area manager for Xerox Canada, and Mr. Denis Doyle, the controller from the national office for Xerox Canada. I'd like the Assembly to extend warm greetings to them this morning.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I draw your attention to guests in both galleries. There are about 120 people here from Fairview junior high school in the constituency of Calgary-Egmont. They also include some members from the constituency of Calgary-Fish Creek. I'd ask that they rise and be given the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Ministerial Statements**

75th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, 75 years ago today Alberta became one of the first provinces in Canada to give women the right to vote and hold elected office. I want to commemorate this important anniversary by inviting all members of the Assembly to join in paying tribute to the many women and men who worked so hard to win political equality for women. Their triumph is as important today as it was in 1916. Besides, if it weren't for them, at least 13 of us would not be here in this House today.

Many of those Albertans were brilliant, determined crusaders who helped form the social conscience of modern Alberta. They were women like Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy, who thought it wrong that a country like ours had laws that said, and I quote: no woman, idiot, lunatic, or criminal shall vote. They also believed men and women had a duty to participate in the wider community. These were new ideas, and the attitudes opposing them ran deep. The Premier of Manitoba denounced Nellie McClung as a hyena in petticoats. Her own brother begged her to "pipe down." Some people burned her in effigy, and many others wrote her letters telling her to stay home and darn her husband's socks. McClung once said she had trouble believing one man's footwear could excite so much public interest.

The old attitudes ran deep but luckily not wide. Most Albertans supported political equality for women. They believed, as McClung and Murphy believed, in equity and fairness for everyone. They believed women would use the vote to make the world a better place. Today, 75 years later, Alberta is a better place, but we still have plenty of work to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, in paying tribute to those who won the vote for women, let us also renew our commitment to the values of fairness and equity, the pioneer values that built this province, the values that allowed women to win the vote, and the values that will enable us, men and women, to continue making this a better world and a better province for everybody.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in the Official Opposition would also like to commemorate the 75 years since women got the vote, but if I may say so, we're a long way from equality in this society. The minister alluded to 13 people, but I would remind her that there are 83 members in this Legislative Assembly, which is a long way from 50 percent.

Also, I say we're a long way from equality when we look at the facts. Working mothers put in an extra month of 24-hour days a year juggling their jobs and household responsibilities as compared to working fathers in North America. After divorce men experience a 42 percent increase in the standard of living while women and children experience a decline of 73 percent in Canada. Sixty percent of single mothers and their children live below the poverty level in Canada; one and a half million Canadian women are poor. In Alberta, women working full-time earn an average of nearly \$12,000 less than men. One in nine women who are married or living common-law are battered in Alberta, and in 1990 more than 5,300 families were turned away from battered women's shelters in this province. Mr. Speaker, I stress again that's a long way from equality.

Now, there are things this government can do if they're serious about it. A number of them have been mentioned here on this side before: pay equity would go some direction; better wages, prorated benefits and greater job security for part-time workers; more job-sharing flextime; an increased minimum wage; raising social assistance benefits to reflect actual living costs; increased student loans for mature students; better job training; tying government grants and contracts to corporate track records on pay equity, day care, affirmative action, job sharing, et cetera; extending parental leave; increased funding for battered women's shelters; reproductive choice. We've got a long way to go to achieve equality, and I will make sure we work on it.

Thank you.

head:

Oral Question Period

10:10

Heritage Savings Trust Fund

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the esteemed Provincial Treasurer. By now, people all over this province know about the bag of tricks this government has used to try – and I stress "try" – to hoodwink them into thinking the budget is balanced. This would make Houdini blush with envy. The problem is that some of these tricks will end up blowing up in Albertans' faces down the road. I'm talking specifically about this preoccupation with a so-called – and I stress "so-called" – balanced budget. Now the Provincial Treasurer is talking about selling off the heritage trust fund assets. I'd remind him that when it was set up, it was for a rainy day and also to diversify the economy, neither of which the Treasurer is talking about now in selling off these assets. My question is this: given that the fund was set up for a rainy day and given the Treasurer's repeated statements that our economy is the strongest in the universe if not the whole solar system, will the Treasurer tell us why he now wants to get his hands on some of the best assets of the trust fund and sell them?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has turned his attention to the importance of the heritage fund and the way in which it has provided diversification to this economy and, in fact, how it's played a significant role in the fiscal plan of this government over the past, I guess, more than a decade now. There are some

important strengths that are attractive to Albertans that are found in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Among them was the opportunity Albertans had to save money. Now, there's one thing that Albertans do understand; that is, you have to manage your own household and the government finances in a parallel way. You have to be much the same in the way in which you do it. When you have an abundance of dollars, you save money; you invest it. When you have to draw upon that money, you use it for the purposes for which it was intended. That's fundamentally what the Heritage Savings Trust Fund has done.

Now, the member talks about some of the assets in the heritage fund. I've heard members of the opposition parties saying there's no value in the heritage fund. Well, now they're finding out that there is value there, in fact \$15 billion in assets of which \$12 billion are financial assets. What we want to do is the following. We know that we have recognized the diversification of this province through the heritage trust fund in part. We have invested in strong assets where the private sector was not exactly anxious to go. We took additional risks, but they've paid off. We've diversified the economy, we've developed new resources, we've generated jobs, and we've added value to the heritage fund. Now what are we going to do, Mr. Speaker? Well, we're going to take some of those assets, which are controlled by a board elsewhere, which have already served the purpose of diversifying the economy and adding value for the people of Alberta, and we're going to put them back in the private sector. The only thing we're going to do is to take the profit that's been earned. Profit: now, there's a word that is anathema to the socialists across the way. There's a word they don't understand. What we will do is take the profit and . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjections] Order. Order. Now perhaps we can get around to a second question and a second answer, both of them short.

MR. MARTIN: Anathema? Give me a break, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Second question.

MR. MARTIN: My second question is this. Yes, he's right, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Treasurer that Albertans do understand good fiscal management. It's this government that doesn't; that's the reality. I remember when the Liberal leader announced that he wanted to sell off the trust fund and the Conservatives railed up and down against this idea. Now they want to sell off probably the best assets and keep the nonperforming assets, sell off the good parts and keep the losers. That's good fiscal management.

My question to the Treasurer is simply this: isn't it true that the Treasurer is really preparing to sell off the house to pay the mortgage; that is, to sell off the fund's assets so he can try to continue his phoney balanced budget act? That's what this is all about.

MR. JOHNSTON: I know the words are difficult for the Leader of the Opposition. He doesn't understand commerce or business. He doesn't understand the role the heritage fund has played.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that the assets in the heritage fund are above the recorded value in the fund, and therefore we can take those profits out of the fund, put them in the General Revenue Fund, and leave intact the fundamental value of the fund itself. Why would we do that? Well, we would use those

liquid dollars, because you know, dollars are very universal these days, and they're not selling the assets of the house in that example. They're very universal dollars that can be re-employed to generate new developments in this province, to generate new jobs, which is our priority, and to show to the people of Alberta that we can fiscally manage this province.

The message is very clear to Albertans though: this is a balanced budget. This is a balanced budget. [interjections] I know the member doesn't like that. Well, what does a balanced budget communicate? It's more than simply a balance sheet, as the Premier talked about. What it does communicate is the following: that we will not increase government expenditures and deficits so that you have to levy an unusual tax burden on people and investors, and that we're sending a signal that this province is one of the best places for investment, and it's showing up right now. We're going to continue to diversify this economy so that high-value jobs are available to the youth of this province. That's what this plan is, and that's how this plan is working, and those people don't understand it and don't like it because it is working and is successful for Albertans.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I guess I don't understand commerce and business. I'll have to learn how to hand out millions of dollars of money to corporate friends so taxpayers can take it back. I'll have to learn that from the Treasurer.

But I want to move, Mr. Speaker. Before the Treasurer gets so impulsive and gets carried away with this plan, because he has no absolute mandate to change the trust fund and what it's supposed to be doing, and before the Treasurer acts in an impulsive way to sell off the best assets of the trust fund, would he agree – and I'm saying: change the mandate – to go around the province and hold public hearings before he does anything on this matter?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, there's no change in the way in which the heritage fund has been operated over the past three years. What Albertans have requested, and which this province has agreed to, is that we should use all the resources during the recession of '86 and the difficult times of '87 and '88 to ensure that the tax burden on Albertans has not been too difficult. In fact, we maintained that objective, because Albertans pay the lowest tax of any province in Canada.

We use the resources of the heritage fund, Mr. Speaker. The income from the heritage fund is about \$1.3 billion a year. The total amount that's been transferred from the heritage fund to the General Revenue Fund is about equal to the value of the heritage fund itself, some \$12 billion to \$13 billion. What has that done? That's allowed Alberta to not have a retail sales tax – unique in Canada, the only province without a retail sales tax – and to maintain the lowest tax regime of any province in Canada so you and I as Albertans can take the money home for our own purposes and attract investment here. Because people want to come where they know the fiscal regime is attractive to investment, where they can earn a return. That's what the heritage fund has done in complement with the rest of our fiscal plan, and it's . . .

Speaker's Ruling

Brevity in Oral Question Period

MR. SPEAKER: That's good. Thank you.

Now that we've had this exciting first question, which has lasted almost 10 minutes, let's have shorter questions, no preambles on the supplementaries, and shorter answers, please.

MR. MARTIN: Well, I always hesitate to go to the Treasurer. I know it takes a long time, Mr. Speaker.

I'll designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

Women's Equality

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this day that we celebrate the 75th anniversary of women getting the vote, my questions are to the minister responsible for women's issues. Suffragette Nellie McClung hoped that obtaining the vote for women would be a means to social change, including economic equality for women. No doubt she would be disappointed to see that in a province which was among the leaders in according women the vote, women still earn only 65 cents for every dollar earned by a man. My question is: why is this government lagging so far behind other provinces when it comes to ensuring women receive equal pay for work of equal value?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity this morning, all of us as women in the Legislature, to sit around the table and compare notes on how we got into politics and also how far we have to go yet and how we might proceed on that. But I think one of the more interesting things we did was trade some of Nellie McClung's statements. One of her famous lines is: give 'em hell and let 'em howl. I think as we continue to advocate for fairness and equity in Alberta, we all get engaged in that.

Pay equity. As I've said many times, I support the principles of pay equity, and rightly so. It's a question of how we achieve the result we all want, and that is economic equality for women. Judge Abella was very clear in her report that she did not think pay equity would solve the entire wage gap; she thought it would solve maybe 5 percent of it. I am still to be convinced that bringing in legislation on pay equity such as Ontario has brought in is the right way to go.

10:20

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, my second question. Alberta women have made progress towards equality since they obtained the vote in 1916. A year later two women were elected to this Legislature. However, women have a long way to go, which is obvious by the fact that there are only 13 of us in this Assembly, only 16 percent of the seats. My question to the minister is: what initiatives would the minister propose to facilitate women's participation in the electoral process?

MS McCOY: That's a very good question, and I think, more and more, we are all saying to people that we need to have more women elected and would welcome having more members. Not, of course, that there is any one of our colleagues we would want to see replaced, but as time goes on, we would hope that others . . . [interjections] I have some in mind. I think it's something we all have to do to help more and more women be involved.

I know that we all have conventions from time to time. At the last one for my particular party affiliation, a very successful convention, I took my 14-year-old niece with me, and she was very pleased to be there. But I think, without having to say anything, she saw role models around; she saw ways of getting involved. I think that is one of the ways we will encourage and facilitate women getting into the political process.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, another woman active in the movement to obtain the right for women to vote was Judge Emily Murphy, the first woman magistrate in the British empire.

Unfortunately, as two woman judges of the Supreme Court of Canada have recently pointed out, our court system still does not give women equal treatment. My third question is: will the minister support the suggestion of former Supreme Court Justice Bertha Wilson that the province set up a task force to investigate gender bias in the courts, thereby starting the process of much-needed reform?

MS McCOY: I certainly support the efforts that are under way already. I know, for example, that the president of the Law Society of Alberta is now a woman for the first time in history; the Canadian Bar Association, Alberta branch, is now headed by a woman, again a first. The Law Society of Alberta, for example, has launched a study on gender bias in the profession. I know the courts in Alberta, the judges themselves at the Provincial Court level and the Court of Queen's Bench and Court of Appeal level have undertaken extended study sessions addressing gender bias in the court system. I know that the YWCA in Calgary is looking at doing a study. I know that the Advisory Council on Women's Issues here in Alberta is looking at doing a study. All of those consciousness raising efforts are under way and I think will continue to be undertaken.

Certainly I support anything that raises our awareness to the extent that eventually we get to the place where gender is no longer an issue. We don't look at how somebody is packaged. We say: "What are your abilities? How can we be partners together? How can we make this world a better place?" Anything that takes us down the road to that destination I support.

Economic Development Strategy

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, Albertans continue to be appalled by the huge number of industrial failures in our province. In the early 1970s the then Premier of our province indicated that an industrial and science strategy or plan was needed for Alberta and there should be subsequent plans to guide the destiny of Albertans. Those plans have been forthcoming. The last plan ended in 1990. My question to the minister of Economic Development is this: why is it that the minister hasn't kept up with the custom of providing and publishing these plans so we can see the needed direction for industrial development for our province?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the hon. member didn't listen when the throne speech was introduced, nor did he take the opportunity to read it, because there we did highlight the industrial strategy in some of the plans we have for the future. They were highlighted last night again in my budgetary estimates, if the hon. member would have seen fit to be present, whereby we are working with Albertans. We indicated in the Speech from the Throne also that we're going to have a conference on the economy in the fall of this year, whereby we can receive input from interested Albertans as it relates to the industrial strategy this government has followed and is proposing to follow, because we recognize it's a partnership role we have with Albertans themselves in creating jobs for Albertans.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars and the failure of the minister to control and to properly provide stewardship for those moneys is ample evidence that the plan is either a phony baloney plan or there is no plan. There was supposed to be a formal document filed; that was the

belief Albertans were left with by the previous Premier. It's my information, Mr. Minister, that such a plan has been submitted to you, and I'd like to know why you haven't published it. Where's that plan?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we're in the process of receiving input from the various departments of this government and the various ministers so we can introduce that discussion paper which will offer direction as we go toward 2000.

I should indicate to the hon. member, though, that he says we have no plan. Well, all one has to do is look at what is taking place in the province of Alberta. Let me highlight it again for the hon. member for the hundredth time. We've got the strongest economy in North America. We've had some 102,000 jobs created within this province over the last five to six years. We've got the highest investment per capita. I highlighted in excess of \$20 billion worth of projects that are taking place in the province of Alberta. Exports are increasing. Our manufacturing shipments are increasing. Diversification is taking place, whereby the majority of the jobs that have been created in this province over the last number of years have taken place outside our traditional areas of agriculture and energy. The record speaks for itself. But we want to build on that record and have the opportunity of having input from the public, from individual Albertans as to where we go toward 2000.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps talking about the success of the diversification plan. I don't know of any government in North America that has lost more money than your government under your stewardship, Mr. Minister. Now, one of the things the minister has been flashing around . . . [interjections] Given that this is the document the minister has tabled and uses to show there is supposed to be some sort of plan in place, the front page shows NovAtel as the great success story, Myrias as a success story. Why are you flogging this, Mr. Minister? Why are you flogging the failures of you and your government as the success story for economic diversification of our province? Why are you doing that?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about other governments. Well, this government is the envy of other governments, and that has been relayed to us on many, many occasions. They envy the strength of the economy we have within the province of Alberta. The hon. member opposite can holler and shout all he likes; the facts speak for themselves, whereby we've got the strongest economy, we're creating more jobs, and we've got the highest investment per capita, in excess of \$20 billion worth of projects taking place within this province, all because of the economic strategy of this government, which goes on to provide meaningful employment and thousands of jobs for individual Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

10:30

Constitutional Reform

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. As the wide publicity of Premier Getty's visit to Quebec and Ontario is coming up, it's been interesting to see the various position statements coming from those . . .

MR. DECORE: They don't want him there.

MR. TAYLOR: You mean the lynch mob.

MR. SPEAKER: Order till we get the question out, please.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been interesting to see the position statements that are coming out of those provinces, almost in preparation to these informal discussions. I wonder if the Premier would advise us today if he is going to address any of these suggestions specifically on behalf of Albertans, things like Premier Rae's suggestion of a constituent assembly for dealing with constitutional issues. Are any of these going to be addressed specifically?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do note with interest that more and more premiers are participating in anticipation of important constitutional discussions that will come in the coming months in our country. In terms of details such as the constituent assembly, that may be raised by Premier Rae and perhaps even discussed in some way by Premier Bourassa, but it would not be my intent to respond to that matter except along these lines: this is exactly the kind of thing that I would hope our special select committee of this Legislature will be able to determine Albertans' views on. As a matter of fact, as I recall the position paper, it's one of the exact questions: should that type of constituent assembly option be followed? I'll be looking forward to hearing, first, from the other premiers but more importantly from the people of Alberta as they provide the grass-roots input to our special select committee.

MR. DAY: Well, it's somewhat reassuring to hear that the Premier will be taking the message of the absolute importance of the views of the people to these two other premiers, but my question is: as it's going to take some time for Alberta's views to be formulated here, will the Premier be continuing to take a message to these and other premiers, or are these upcoming meetings a sort of one-shot deal?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think what we are facing in Canada is one of the most important and difficult challenges that we will probably ever face as a nation, and I believe it will take all the wisdom and all the generosity and co-operation possible to solve this. But I also believe it's a long, long trip, and it will take some time.

For my part, I find I'm looking forward to the discussions with Ontario and Quebec as a perfect lead-in to an important Western Premiers' Conference, which will be coming up in several weeks, where I will be able to pass on the views of Ontario and Quebec to my colleagues the western premiers. We will be able, I trust, to start to develop the type of solutions to Canada's problems that will have a very strong western input, because we're going to make sure that any new deal or any new order – as some have discussed it – will reflect western needs and western interests. One of the strongest is going to be our determination that any new deal, any new order, is not a centralized one; rather, it will give to the provinces who don't have the huge populations an opportunity to have more meaningful input on national issues.

Kananaskis Golf Course

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of recreation, parks, and wildlife. At the time the Kan-Alta golf course was built in Kananaskis Country, it was located on one of the most sensitive areas of that part of the province. It's one of the three most critical areas of wildlife habitat, so critical that the adjacent lands were set aside under the mitigation plan

for wildlife. I quote from the cabinet policy document in 1977: no facilities will be located east of the village and golf course. Now, in view of the fact that the managing director of Kananaskis Country reports directly to the minister, unlike the other parks, I would like to ask him to explain why the department is now considering expansion of the golf course onto those critical lands that were set aside in the mitigation plan in 1977.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite refers to the Evan-Thomas area of Kananaskis Country. If we go back to the public meetings that were taking place in those days, some 10 years ago, this area was identified at that time in the integrated resource management plan of Kananaskis as a potential recreational area.

Any progress on a golf course in that area will be under an environmental review. The Minister of the Environment told the proponents as lately as one month ago that they will be going through that process, and they're going to be calling public meetings in that respect in the future.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some dispute on that point. The Kan-Alta project is now one of several which is inching towards approval while the cabinet dithers on proclamation of the Natural Resources Conservation Board Act. In view of the fact that Kan-Alta is composed of close personal associates of the Premier, such as Jackie Parker, Norm Kimball, and Brian Bygrave, I'd like to ask the Premier if he would give his personal assurance that the government will not approve expansion onto this wildlife habitat without an independent review by the Natural Resources Conservation Board.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member pointing out that I have many friends in the province of Alberta. Just two weeks ago I was able to meet with thousands of them and then last Saturday with hundreds and hundreds in the Stettler area where they came out. I think there were double the number who showed up when the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry tried to hold a get-together recently.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Recreation and Parks has answered the hon. member. I don't know why he would want more than asking the people for input. That's what the minister is doing.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

Native Issues in Education

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The lack of understanding about native Canadians is manifested in our society in ways which lead to discrimination and injustice. This is a situation which could be reduced if more of us were aware of native culture and lifestyles, native spirituality, and so on. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Education about the excellent curriculum materials which have been prepared. However, I would like to also ask the minister why native awareness is optional only and not mandatory somewhere in the school system so that more of us would know more about our native peoples.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it's an interesting subject. I appreciate the hon. member's accolades. It is mandatory in certain parts of the curriculum. When I look at the elementary social studies program, clearly there are a number of sections

within grades 1 and 2, and I see in the grade 6, grade 7, and grades 8 and 9 social studies curriculum that our native people and our focus on Canadians and the diverse makeup of Canada is focused on. We encourage all young people to understand and to become more accepting of Canadians of all origins.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, my understanding from teachers in this area is that there is not enough material and that some very good material is optional.

I'd now like to turn to the Minister of Advanced Education and ask if he would speak to his colleague the Minister of Education about those 19- and 20-year-olds who are in the school system, who want to remain in the school system, but who receive no funding there. The minister a few weeks ago said that the AVC will do it. Students want to stay in the school system. Could you co-operate with each other and provide funding so they can stay in the school system and receive the education they request?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I think we set a fine example of co-operation in the postsecondary system with the Department of Education. A very important element in the whole scheme of things obviously is Career Development and Employment, because they provide substantial funds for many of these native people to return for upgrading in our system. I appreciate the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight asking the question. Although in our view we do a good job, we can always do a better one.

10:40

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, if I may supplement.

MR. SPEAKER: Briefly, sure.

MR. DINNING: I want to point out to the hon. member, as I said the other week, that any child who enters our high schools at the age of 19 is fully funded for that school year beginning September 1. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the provincial government through the Department of Education provides nearly \$11 million this year to school boards to mount adult education programs. So amongst the departments of Advanced Education, Career Development and Employment, and Education we believe we are going the distance to provide those educational opportunities to our young people as well as those more mature Albertans.

International Trade

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, this week I've had the opportunity on several occasions to meet with business leaders in Calgary. They have praised our government on its initiatives to balance the budget in spite of the difficult times, and they, too, are struggling with balancing their own budgets. These businesspeople have also expressed a view that they would like to become more aggressive in the international market, and that is their stronghold, especially in the Soviet Union and in the eastern bloc countries. I'd like to ask the Minister of Economic Development and Trade to indicate his department's initiatives, in view of his budget restraints, in helping facilitate these many Alberta firms who want to go to these countries to develop the market there.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that we did have a budgetary cutback of some 14.8 percent, we feel that we can still be very aggressive in pursuing trading opportunities

for Alberta companies. As members are aware, we have taken a threefold thrust as it relates to our trade initiatives: the U.S., the Pacific Rim, and the European Economic Community. We've worked very closely with the private sector in facilitating the sale of products that are produced within the province, recognizing again the importance that exports play in job creation. It is estimated that for every billion dollars worth of exports there are 19,000 jobs created. We export in excess of \$16 billion worth of products from this province, which is a very important job creation component of the economic well-being of our province. So the short answer is yes, we're going to continue to aggressively work with private-sector companies in accessing not only our own funds but also federal funds.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, these same people feel that there's an abundance of opportunity for Alberta firms in Thailand and Indonesia but the government does lack the guidance and aggressiveness in helping to capture these markets. Could the minister outline the department's role in these countries as well, if there is any?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we work very closely with a number of departments within our own government. The Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs takes the lead role as it relates to our foreign offices and our foreign contracts.

It's interesting to note, though, that the opposition parties are suggesting that we shoot our salesmen so we curtail the exportation of goods from Alberta. This is not a thought that we share. We believe it is important that we have individuals abroad selling the province of Alberta, selling our products, thus in turn creating jobs within this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain.

Gas Pipeline Safety

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is blessed with many thousands of miles of natural gas liquid pipelines. These pipelines carry methane, ethane, propane, and butane under extreme pressure in order to have them in their liquid state. There is only approximately three feet of cover over these pipelines. We have had disasters in Mill Woods and near disasters near Fox Creek and near Stettler. These lines unfortunately are very frequently put through populated areas, both rural and urban. My question to the Minister of Energy is: will the minister update the construction standards by requiring more frequent installation of block valves to decrease the volume of leaks, and secondly, by requiring a greater coverage in urban and in populated areas to prevent accidental damage to these lines by landowners, all of this in the interest of safety?

MR. ORMAN: I'd be pleased to review it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I appreciate the minister putting me on hold on that particular question. I would appreciate being a part of that review, because it certainly is becoming a very serious problem. In addition, the transmission of natural gas liquids is being increased to the extent that we are now using crude oil pipelines to do the same. This creates another potential hazard. I would like to ask the minister if he is prepared to develop an emergency response plan so that if there is a problem, people would be evacuated properly and they would have full knowledge of what to do to avoid a potential disaster in advance.

Currently these kinds of problems are dealt with by the individual operators, and there are certainly many individual operators of pipelines.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, to answer the first question, we have some very capable people, so I won't need the Member for Stony Plain's input on that.

On the second point, we do have an emergency response plan in place.

Gravel Trucking

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, gravel truckers in Alberta are frustrated that they're unable to get government work due to the government's method of hiring truckers on the basis of the core list of preferred workers. This system is unfair, and it excludes many qualified people who depend on the gravel trucking industry for their living and livelihood. Will the acting minister of transportation admit that this core list system is elitist and unfair, and will he promise to move to a quota system for hiring to ensure that truckers get a fair chance to work in the province of Alberta?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I can't think of a fairer system in terms of providing opportunities for entrepreneurs in the gravel trucking industry than the system we currently have in the province of Alberta. The comments the hon. gentleman made in several different phases of the question I do not believe relate to the Alberta that I'm aware of. Any individual in this province who wants to participate as an entrepreneur can purchase a gravel truck. Work is made available through the tender system of Alberta Transportation and Utilities or Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services or other departments. Those individuals can either bid for work or can sign up through a variety of regional and district transportation offices that the province has throughout Alberta. There are restrictions to ensure that in fact an individual can have no more than several vehicles running at any given time. There is a minimum haul rate that is provided to ensure that these entrepreneurs, for the most part individuals who own their own gravel trucks, can participate.

Mr. Speaker, when we start talking about quotas, I think we start talking about a form of central planning that is really a little away from the environment of the marketplace and private enterprise that we have in the province of Alberta. This quota and central planning idea is now being abandoned for the most part in most of the socialist environments throughout the world.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, in the past winter two projects were undertaken in the Peace River area, and both of them were given to truckers who were on a government core list, but the minister's employees in his own department have told us that the core list is slowly being phased out. If this list is really being phased out in favour of another system, why were these large government projects given to those on the core list while other workers had no work at all?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, there may be a case here of misunderstanding by the hon. member. What is a core list?

We have 21 regional transportation offices throughout the province of Alberta. Truckers come to these offices and say to the employees, the civil servants in the province: "Is Alberta Transportation and Utilities going to be paving this road or gravelling this road? If so, can we sign up so that when a contract is tendered, we will know when the tender is going out?

Would you then let us know who the winner of the contract is so we can go and sign up to do it?" That is, I guess, the core list that the individual was talking about: it's an opportunity for individual truckers to go to a district transportation office to seek information on when a project might be made available, to allow them to find out who would win the contract, to allow them to sign up in hopes of getting work. It is not a list that says that only the first four or the first six or the first eight people who signed up are going to get work; it is a list of availability to ensure that the private sector, the entrepreneur, the gravel trucker in this province has an opportunity to seek work throughout the whole province of Alberta. At each of these 21 district or regional offices there is an information package which shows where work is throughout the whole province, and these truckers can move throughout. It is a convenience and an assistance to the private sector.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Calgary-North West.

10:50 Ski Resort Development

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's claim that they're interested in promoting the tourism industry to be a \$10 billion industry by the year 2000 is becoming, quite frankly, less believable. The Alberta ski industry is falling behind the British Columbia ski industry because we're not offering what the tourists want, which is on-hill ski accommodation. The Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife has turned down the application of Mr. Joe Couillard to build condominiums on his resort. He needs to have that development to ensure ongoing viability. He doesn't want money; he just wants permission. What has the Minister of Tourism done to persuade his colleague in the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife to provide that permission so that this development can go ahead, create the jobs that we keep on hearing this government wants to promote, and develop the tourism industry?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, very definitely the ski industry demands on-hill accommodation, and every ski facility in western Canada is addressing the issue. Skiers today want high-speed chairs and on-hill accommodation as part of that convenience, so we do lose from Alberta a good number of skier days because we don't have those types of facilities.

I'm sure the member opposite will know that I've made representation to my other colleagues and the specific colleague he mentioned. The policies in that area have to be reviewed if we are going to maintain the skier days that we would like to see in the area.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, Fortress ski resort has been around for 23 years, and they're concerned about the next 23 years. Given that the government paid for all the underground facilities at Kananaskis Village to help promote Nakiska, including water lines and sewer lines and even underground parking, will the minister give us some assurances that this is not simply some kind of means of protecting the government's investment in the sweetheart deal given to the friends of the Premier who are running Nakiska down the road?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, there has been some expansion on the hill that the member speaks of. The project is under

consideration, and in due course I'm sure the policy changes will be considered.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Very briefly.

DR. WEST: Just a supplemental. I didn't want to leave an inaccuracy standing on the floor. The hon. member led us to believe the government paid for all the services that were in the Kananaskis Village operation. That is not true; they're being cost-shared by the private sector that's involved in those hotels that are there.

Heavy Oil Upgrader

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, with some concern I have been noticing in recent months a widening in the price differential between heavy and light crude oil. That price differential has been as large as \$9 or \$10, and that has significant ramifications for our heavy oil producers. I'm wondering: can the Minister of Energy explain to the Assembly today the background or the causes of this widening price differential, and can he indicate what he's prepared to do to help promote the recapture of some of this price differential for Alberta's heavy oil producers?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, regrettably the price for heavy crude oil is about \$5 to \$7 U.S. when the price for west Texas intermediate is trading around \$21 to \$22. That's a differential of \$14 to \$16, which is very significant. It's significant in the sense that Alberta is producing more and more heavy oil as the profile for lighter crude oil is declining.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek asked about the reasons. One of the primary reasons has been the Gulf war. Since August 2 the Kuwait refinery has been taken out of production. The Kuwait refinery was one of the biggest in the world that upgraded heavier blends to a lighter crude oil, for jet fuels, as a matter of fact. North American capacity and European capacity is full. For this reason there is a downward pressure on the heavier end, and it is creating this wide disparity between heavy and light. It is regrettable. This speaks to one of the reasons we have the Lloydminster upgrader and why we have agreed that Syncrude can take excess capacity bitumen from other projects to continue to upgrade the heavier blends in the province.

MR. PAYNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, in view of the government's involvement with the biprovincial upgrader at Lloydminster, I'm wondering if the minister can advise the Assembly as to the progress on construction of that very significant project.

MR. ORMAN: The Lloydminster upgrader is to do exactly what concerns the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, and that is: capture the differential between \$5 to \$7 for heavy oil; upgrade it to get the price of \$21 to \$22. That is a very significant difference that we could capture in the province of Alberta. As a matter of fact, the biprovincial upgrader only requires about a \$4 differential; today we're seeing a differential of three to four times that, so it makes the Lloydminster upgrader extremely viable today.

Mr. Speaker, there are some 1,800 people working in Lloydminster today – Albertans and people from Saskatchewan – building the upgrader. It will have 330 people working when it is fully operational. The cost of the project is around \$1.2

billion. We're very hopeful that we will be able to meet the target date of November 2 so we can capture this very significant differential between heavy and light oil.

MR. SPEAKER: As a follow-up to a previous question period, notice of a question, Calgary-McCall, with response to Edmonton-Avonmore.

Substance Abuse Programs

MR. NELSON: On April 17 the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore asked a question referencing the Jimmy Wolf Tail Memorial Society, which runs a halfway house for native people on the reserve at Brocket. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to indicate first of all that one of the reasons for the decision – I might add that these were AADAC's decisions – to reduce the service at the particular place in Brocket was due to the lack of members that were accessing it. First of all, the use of the facility was at 37 percent over the last two years, and because of the lack of utilization and, additionally, the amount of facilities that were available to the native people on the reserve, we decided we would close that facility, recognizing that there are Peigan counseling services at Brocket, there is the St. Paul treatment centre in Cardston, there's a Blood reserve outpatient service at Standoff, and AADAC has full facilities at Lethbridge and the Blairmore and Crowsnest areas offices and the Lander treatment centre in Claresholm. So, Mr. Speaker, in addition to three other facilities in the area . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. This is not a ministerial statement. Thank you.
Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, AADAC was forced to cut back on services because they had insufficient funds to continue. My question to the chairman of AADAC is: in view of Justice Cawsey's recognition of the urgent need for alcohol and substance abuse treatment alternatives in places where native people can access them, what commitment will the chairman of AADAC now give to ensure that there is treatment for natives and to meet the urgent need for that treatment?

MR. NELSON: There is no lack of commitment from this government to the treatment of native people in the province of Alberta. All treaty natives work under the program from the national native alcohol and drug abuse program, and the Metis, which come under the auspices of the provincial government, are well serviced.

Mr. Speaker, 49 percent of AADAC grants went to native programs in the province of Alberta in the last year and will continue to do so. In addition, 40 spaces have been made available for native adolescents in St. Paul this year under the auspices of the Solicitor General. So as you can see by this, we have not only maintained the services to native people in the province; we have increased them in this fiscal year.

head:

11:00

head:

Orders of the Day

Committee of Supply

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the committee seems to be in order.

head: **Main Estimates 1991-92**

Public Works, Supply and Services

MR. CHAIRMAN: These estimates are to be found at page 265 of the main estimates book, with the elements commencing at page 109 of the elements book.

The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services may wish to introduce these estimates.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's always a pleasure to have an opportunity to deal with estimates. I'm really pleased this morning to be able to introduce the estimates for the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services.

Mr. Chairman, you've correctly identified where in both the government estimates book and the element details book these estimates are to be found. I would at the outset indicate that the total amount of dollars that we're asking the public of Alberta to provide to this particular department is \$524,159,500, and that's a .2 percent reduction from the comparable estimates of last year.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make several comments in bringing all hon. members up to date with respect to both the estimates and the various projects associated with this. At the outset I'd like to make a few comments with respect to the Oldman River dam. While the construction is funded from the Capital Fund, administrative costs associated with the Oldman River dam are included in vote 4, Planning and Implementation of Construction Projects. As I've said on many occasions, the Oldman River dam is probably the most important water development project ever undertaken, and I'd like to just spend a couple of minutes bringing members up to date with where we're at in terms of progress on this very important project.

We had a two-day inspection tour and meeting this week with an independent review board that reviewed all of the consultant's reports on the status of this project. As I've indicated on numerous occasions in here, these individuals are senior engineers experienced in international dam design and construction. The review board acts independently of the project engineering consultants and reports directly to Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services. Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to advise, and this is the first time that I have had an opportunity to advise, that the independent review board for the Oldman River dam project has confirmed that the project is ready to store this year's spring runoff.

Mr. Chairman, all members of the Assembly will know that construction on this very important project was announced in mid-1986, and construction on the main dam began early in 1988. Since that time a substantial amount of work has been done. Some of the quantities of material that have been used in the construction of the Oldman River dam include: 1.4 million cubic metres of compacted clay core, half a million cubic metres of sand filters, 300,000 cubic metres of gravel drains, nearly 3 million cubic metres of random rock fill, 2 and a half million cubic metres of gravel fill, and over 600,000 cubic metres of rock riprap and bedding. In total, over 8.2 million cubic metres of material was required to build the main dam.

The only work remaining on the dam, Mr. Chairman, and there are estimates included in the budget for 1991-92, is the paved road surface and topsoil and seeding of the downstream face. The spillway is ready to carry the spring flows this year. This contract was awarded in the summer of 1988, and since that time over 128,000 cubic metres of reinforced concrete have

been placed. The remaining work is in the spillway crest and the bridge deck, and total completion of this structure is scheduled for May 15, 1991. Upon completion of the spillway, installation of the seven vertical liftgates and hoists will begin, and these gates will allow the final 10 metres of water depth to be stored to bring the reservoir to full water supply in the summer of 1992.

Work is also under way on the remaining tunnel valve. The river is presently flowing through the first valve, which was completed in February of 1991. The reservoir clearing has been completed; all local road crossings and utilities have been removed so that the reservoir is ready to store water. The reservoir ring road has been completed except for a short connecting segment over the spillway headworks, and construction of two major bridge crossings over the reservoir is complete along with the new Canadian Pacific rail crossing.

Remaining work to complete the project includes some minor road construction, paving, site reclamation, gate and valve installation and control systems, and the ongoing program of environmental mitigation and enhancement. The project, Mr. Chairman, will be transferred to Alberta Environment for full operation and maintenance prior to the official opening ceremony that we are tentatively scheduling for the summer of 1992.

Because of the above average snow conditions in the mountains this year, Mr. Chairman, conditions that may be as high as 200 percent above the norm, it is expected that water levels upstream of the dam will rise rapidly over the next two months. It is highly probable that the water levels will reach the level of the spillway crest prior to June 15 of 1991. At this level there will be approximately 60 metres, upwards of 200 feet of water depth, upstream of the dam. This represents about 260,000 acre-feet of stored water, which is upwards of 70 percent of the total reservoir storage capacity.

That is an incredible amount of water. The actual storage of 260,000 acre-feet equates to 320 million cubic metres of water. By comparison, Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly, the city of Edmonton uses approximately 310,000 cubic metres of water per day. The volume of water stored in the reservoir of the Oldman River dam would be equivalent to a 1,000-day supply of water for the city of Edmonton.

All members will know that just in the last few days major studies have come out from Ottawa that basically said that among the various people of the world the greatest abusers and misusers of water are Canadians. Sufficient documentation is there to suggest that and to show that that is occurring in other environments. In the province of Alberta we understand what conservation is all about and what enhancement and protection of the environment are all about, and by midsummer we will have this water stored for ongoing usage in an efficient and effective manner. This water will of course augment river flows during late summer and during all parts of the year and is needed for a multitude of downstream uses.

Mr. Chairman, this is really for me a personal long-term involvement. While we're not finished with it yet and will probably still be dealing with the Oldman River dam for upwards of another year, we are now in the fifth year of involvement with the Oldman River dam. It's almost like growing up with a child of your own in the sense that you were involved in terms of developing it and now coming to see the fruition, the conclusion.

This is all being done, essentially, through the private sector. We have a minimum number of public employees that we have associated with this project, very senior individuals in the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services, and in my view they have simply done an outstanding job. There are a

couple of individuals. I would like to publicly state my strong endorsement of what they have done with respect to the Oldman River. Dan Bader, the assistant deputy minister, project management and reservoir development, and Jake Thiessen, who has been involved in this particular project for a great period of time, are well deserving of our compliments and the respect that they should engender and enjoy.

We will continue to conclude the Oldman River dam. It will be done as a protection project for the people of this province.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a couple of comments with respect to the grants in lieu of taxes program that is included in the estimates as well. I had an opportunity yesterday to point out that there is a whopping increase in terms of the 1991-92 dollar allocation for the grants in lieu of taxes program. In fact, the element book points out an 18.7 percent increase in grants in lieu of taxes, and that will allow us to deal with the concerns that were raised in consultation with the representatives of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the table officers of the Association of Alberta Improvement Districts. The government made announcements with respect to the grants in lieu of taxes program on January 7, 1991. We followed up in writing to all municipalities in the province of Alberta in recent months, and I've had a very, very large number of positive statements and letters back from our partners in government in the province of Alberta.

11:10

Mr. Chairman, one of the things that I talked about in the estimates a year ago and one of the things that we said we would be doing would be to continue our focus on green products and practices within the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services on behalf of agencies in all aspects of government. Members will recall that a year ago I announced our intention to increase government procurement of recycled and other environmentally responsible products in those areas that are under my responsibility. The members will recall that I directed that certain green products such as recycled paper, redefined oil, and recharged laser printer toner cartridges be used exclusively wherever possible. In the past 12 months over 70 types and styles of green products have been made available to the various departments of government. These products include several types of recycled office papers, recharged laser printer toner cartridges, recycled papers of a great variety, recycled envelopes, file folders, and photocopiers. In the area of recycled general-purpose paper 39 million sheets have been provided to departments from our warehouse in the past 12 months. This represents nearly 12 percent of the total general-purpose paper sales from the warehouse, and that exceeds my first-year target which I outlined a year ago at 10 percent. So we're doing about 12 percent of the volume. We indicated a year ago we wanted to reach 10 percent in the first year.

Where will we go now? We've said that we've initiated some 70 types. Where are we going in the future? I'd like to point out to my colleagues today that the volume of currently available green products will be increased. For example, the target for recycled general-purpose paper sales from the warehouse for fiscal 1991-92 is being set at 60 percent. A year ago it was 10 percent. This year's target is 60 percent; that is a very significant increase. We're now into two years of this program. All printed requests handled by the government Quick Print centre will be completed using recycled paper unless the requesting department has sufficient justification to use some other paper product. So the policy is: you will use recycled unless you can prove that

there is a reason why you can't, which is a very strong affirmative endorsement program on our part.

In our central duplicating plant the use of rolled paper stock is being phased out to permit the use of larger quantities of recycled paper. More products, Mr. Chairman, will be evaluated and made available to the various government departments. In particular, emphasis will be placed on items which result in less waste going to landfills, and in order to complete the recycling loop and make our blue box programs economically viable, high priority will be given to products made with recovered waste material. Green products will continue to be promoted within the totality of the government, and in some cases the possible use of less environmentally responsible alternatives will in fact be restricted. Additional green practices will be adopted in this fiscal year. A pilot project to convert six courier vehicles to use compressed natural gas is scheduled in this budget. A refrigerant recovery unit will be used in the government garage to eliminate discharges of vehicle air conditioning coolants to the atmosphere and will allow reuse of these coolants, and engine radiator coolants will also be filtered and reused.

Mr. Chairman, it's an aggressive program in terms of greening all aspects associated with the government, and I know that individual members would probably have a great number of ideas to say, "Well, would you consider this as well?" I want all members to know that we're open. We should have a complete renaissance of thought with this. While we're moving rather rapidly in some areas, there may be some other areas that individual members would like to recommend that we should continue working in.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make some comments with another aspect of this budget, and it follows through on the whole area of environmental awareness, environmental aggressiveness, waste management. It deals with the subject matter of biomedical - hospital, pharmaceutical - waste. I want all members to know that biomedical waste in Alberta is being addressed interdepartmentally by three departments of government: Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services; Alberta Health; and Alberta Environment. With today's environmental standards and the ever increasing costs associated with hospital waste disposal by individual hospital incinerators, government can no longer afford to continue to provide funding to each and every hospital for their incinerator operations as we have done in the past. We must find a better way. We must find a more cost-effective way.

All members will recall that when I had the privilege of serving as an Alberta Minister of the Environment, I in fact closed down a number of hospital incinerators throughout the province simply because they were not meeting the standards that we had brought into place. We said we had to move to find other things. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the answer lies with the private sector, and I believe that very strongly. We have the tradition in Alberta of the Special Waste Management Corporation. I believe that within the area of biomedical waste over the longer term the private sector is the solution to our concern. We have to encourage the private sector to establish in Alberta, so we will be involving them in the development of our plans. In this regard Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services, Alberta Health, and Alberta Environment are developing a policy which will outline government positions. The policy together with our plans will be conveyed to all concerned in the very near future.

Essentially four policy parameters will be looked at. The first one will deal with the environmental standards, hospital waste management practices. We have a large number of hospitals, some that have put in incinerators and storage facilities at

various times in the past. We want to make sure of where they're at in 1991, that they use the highest possible standard of equipment that is available. It's no longer cricket, Mr. Chairman, to have incinerators being utilized in hospitals that would emit whatever it is that they would emit into the atmosphere that we think would be less than acceptable. Part of that means understanding where we're at in terms of the technology.

The second policy parameter, Mr. Chairman, that would be looked at is a continuation of what I said just a minute or two ago when I said that we have to take a look at the overall hospital waste management regional program that they have. It's not imperative that every hospital have an incinerator. We have to be able to rationalize the system to make sure that there is efficiency. In the budget that we and the Provincial Treasurer talked about, we are going to commit a few dollars in this fiscal year to in fact work in that area.

One of the key things that has to be done in the policy parameters, Mr. Chairman, is to identify the waste product streams and volumes that are currently going into hospitals. We have to talk about biomedical waste. We're not going to pay for highly sophisticated incinerators and demand highly sophisticated standards for hospitals to use these very expensive instruments along with their filters to simply get rid of and burn normal kinds of garbage where there already is a system in place in the local municipality. If hospital boards are prepared to do that, then hospital boards in fact, I think, are violating the principle of integrity in management. That will be a difficult one, but it's one that has to be done in this year: to identify very clearly the product that will be acceptable under the name "biomedical waste." Simply throwing out tissue paper that somebody has blown their nose with doesn't fulfill that mandate, in my humble opinion. We have to be very clear that if we're going to pay the prices and have the standards, the standards have to deal with biomedical waste.

We have to identify very, very clearly the role that we would expect of the private sector so the private sector knows exactly what will be required of them.

Mr. Chairman, in the interim I indicated that there will be some dollars committed to doing some enhancement with the current system in hospitals in the province of Alberta. The message the government wants to put out and the message that will continue to be put out is that we the government want the private sector operating in the province of Alberta in this area. I've taken the liberty of doing a fair amount of research, at least in the last four or five years, in this regard. The leadership in this area rests with the private sector. Government can move in and government can put in place, but we have to go to the private sector to get the international expertise with respect to this matter.

I want to make it very, very clear that we expect the private sector to be in place and to do this. We're going to give them some time to have that happen. I think we're looking essentially at fiscal '91-92. The message is very clear: "Private sector, we want you involved." If the private sector is not involved and does not become involved, then there is no alternative but for the government to be involved. So we're not going to allow a situation to develop whereby there's a vacuum in terms of the response. The last thing in the world that has to happen is that hospitals decide that they figure that waste management is an area for them to be involved in. Hospitals are involved in health care delivery systems not waste management, and it's the expertise of health care delivery systems that they should be focusing their attention on and not competing in waste management. That's a matter for other people.

11:20

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments with respect to project management for hospital construction. As all members know, the management of capital projects for the construction of hospitals and nursing homes in the province of Alberta is the responsibility of local hospital boards. The province essentially pays 100 percent of the capital cost of construction for hospitals and hospital boards. Those projects are funded by the budget of Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services. This department works along with Alberta Health in terms of identifying those priority needs. The engineering and technical expertise of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services has been applied to some capital construction projects, but I believe that further benefits could accrue with additional co-ordination of the management responsibilities for these projects in an experienced agency like Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services. Benefits would include savings in the construction costs of hospitals, more timely scheduling of projects, and consistency in the management of projects in dealing with consultants and contractors.

Mr. Chairman, it would be my intent during fiscal '91-92 to discuss this matter further with my colleagues both inside and outside of government. In essence, the nutshell of this is that if we're going to put out dollars to hospital boards, asked for in this Assembly, and hospital boards then compete with one another in finding consultants, architects and put three or four projects into the marketplace at the same time, where costs go up and are not leveled and controlled, there is a need, in my humble opinion, for a much greater role by the government of Alberta in the delivery of these projects and by the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services in the co-ordination of these particular projects. It would be my intent in this fiscal year to advance that argument from a policy point of view. Those hospitals boards that I have already just tested the idea with have come back to me in the affirmative and basically said, "That sounds really positive, and we want to do it in a co-ordinated way." In essence, the purpose of all of this is to save unnecessary costs for the taxpayers and to make sure that we are in a position to deliver what is needed in the health care system and not in turn deliver Taj Mahals for the egos of various individuals who are either planning or designing these hospitals, or hospital board chairmen. That basically is the essential policy approach that has to be taken in that regard.

I want to point out and make comments with respect to the sale of surplus lands. I indicated in my estimates a year ago that this would be an area of activity that we would want to take, and I want all members to know that we're actively pursuing the sale of surplus lands held by Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services. In the 1990-91 fiscal year we sold or traded approximately \$21 million of land. The majority of this was surplus lands in the Edmonton and Calgary restricted development areas. Surplus lands as well were sold at the Oldman River damsite, and there were a number of other individual parcels throughout the province of Alberta. We've identified, Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly, a package of surplus lands that the province has accumulated in the last 86 years of its history, lands which the province continues to hold title to, lands which would be more efficiently and effectively held in private hands. So we're going to continue to be aggressive in that area.

I'd also like to point out how we're going to do this. We've undertaken consultations in the last year, Mr. Chairman, with the Alberta Real Estate Association to formulate an agreement as to how we might dispose of these lands. In essence, we're

working on a policy with the Alberta Real Estate Association so that lands can be multiple listed throughout the province of Alberta, and hopefully we will be able to conclude such an arrangement in this particular fiscal year. The last thing in the world that I want to see happen is for some hon. member in this Assembly to stand up and say, "Well, why is the realtor who is selling this surplus land the buddy of the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud or the buddy of the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place?" So the system that we would use is one that would basically say that we've got the Alberta Real Estate Association involved, and the multiple listing one would be there, and people would hustle and work with respect to a commission basis.

Mr. Chairman, increased focus on supplier development, making the individual entrepreneurs and suppliers in the province aware of what the province needs, is a major objective that we've had. We have created and established in Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services a supplier development branch, and we're basically saying that we want to allow all the suppliers in the province the procurement opportunities we have in the province of Alberta. We want to promote regional procurement initiatives. We want to address the trade barriers that exist that may be preventing Alberta suppliers from competing for public-sector procurements in other jurisdictions in this country, and we want to continue to work aggressively with the federal government to make sure that Alberta attains an even better share of federal procurement. This is being done in consort with my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and we've been rather aggressive.

One of the things that we've announced, Mr. Chairman, is a magazine that's available to all Alberta entrepreneurs called *The Source*. It's information on marketing in the government. It identifies how you procure. It has sections in here about environmentally-friendly products being good business. It points out the commitment of the government in that regard. It tells any entrepreneur in the province of Alberta how you can access. It talks about a guide to completing tenders, if there's anyone out there that says, "Well, how do you get into this maze?" We talked about matching business with opportunities and how we'll sit down with entrepreneurs and say there are options.

I also pointed out, Mr. Chairman, that we had created an organization called the western purchasing information network, which is a program. Any entrepreneur anywhere can just sit down, irrespective of where they are, and find out what is being offered by the government on a particular day and can bid on it, in fact, almost electronically if they will. It was just a few days ago, on April 17, that we issued a press release saying that the first western purchasing information network construction contract has been awarded here in the province of Alberta. A \$244,400 construction contract to upgrade the mechanical systems of the Red Deer Provincial Building was awarded to a firm called Western Combustion Sales & Service Ltd. of Calgary. It was accessed and dealt that way. So the system is there, and the system is working.

There is so much to talk about. This is a very exciting area of government. I've never understood why people look at the minister who is responsible for Public Works, Supply and Services and say: "Well, you know, not much going on in that area." Holy mackerel, Mr. Chairman, I can't think of a more exciting department of government. Use a little bit of imagination, get a little renaissance of thought going, and ask the people to come forward with some brilliant ideas, and it's amazing what really happens. We've got a major budget. Efficiency and effectiveness are the basic key. It's a minor reduction in terms

of the budget of last year. It's a service department for the province of Alberta.

I'm going to be very, very pleased to respond to any question that hon. members would make, but just three quick comments. There are oftentimes questions that members raise about information. Members will recall that on Tuesday of this week there was a motion for a return asking for information on government aircraft. Because the usage of government aircraft falls under the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services, I showed up here with thousands and thousands and thousands of pages of material. I said, "Why would we want to waste thousands and thousands of dollars duplicating this material?" I said, "Hey, any member anywhere who wants to come to my office can sit down at my desk and look at the stuff." I made that announcement publicly on Tuesday, Mr. Chairman. I directed it entirely to the members of the Liberal caucus who have been yapping and whining for a great period of time that they can't have any access to information. No one has shown up yet, and it's 11:30 on Friday. There's even some guy by the name of Richard Helm who wrote an article in the *Edmonton Journal*. I think he works sometimes in a conspiracy with the Liberals. He says that the government remains mum on flights paid for by taxpayers. Well, Mr. Helm hasn't shown up either. You know, enough is enough. You want the information. I'm making it available. Get off your butt and come and see it, because it's there. We'll even offer you a coffee and give you a cookie. This nonsense of standing up in this Assembly and whining and then not doing anything about it is just absolutely silly.

A few days ago, you know, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon got up in this House and said that we're putting out a tender and we're spending \$200,000 on air conditioning units for people. That's nonsense, Mr. Chairman. I don't know where people get that from, but the record is that we purchased 933 vehicles. We purchased them on behalf of hospital boards. We purchased them on behalf of the Ponoka brain injury unit. Nine out of those 933 vehicles had air conditioning units, and there's a reason for each and every one of them. The total cost is \$7,200, not \$200,000 as foolishly stated by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. I'm speaking loud because he's got to hear for once. You know, I've been hearing this guy yap for years, but once in a while the truth will sink through if I speak loudly enough, and that's the reason why.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to give one more statement of correction and that's to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place who on April 12, 1991, made a very strange comment in *Hansard* – it's on page 501 – when he said that the government gives a "\$2.3 million subsidy . . . to the Racing Commission." Totally, totally, totally untrue. The government doesn't provide any. What we do is tax the pari-mutuel bets in the province of Alberta. It's not GRF money that goes to the Racing Commission. It's a tax on the racing industry that's recycled back.

11:30

If the member wants to know more, I'm going to basically point out that there was one newspaper article just recently. It was actually very good in this area. I want to congratulate some young man by the name of Al Dahl of the *Calgary Sun* who wrote an article that the development fund gets a shot in the arm and basically said: "Horse racing has been treated kindly in the new provincial budget." Mr. Chairman, it comes from the horse players themselves. It is not the taxpayer; it is the horse players that go and attend these things. I think the truth is important.

Mr. Chairman, that's just a short précis of many of the things that I wanted to convey to hon. members, but I sincerely will listen very carefully. This budget is a modest one. It's in service on behalf of all of the people of Alberta. I'll have a chance to come back, I guess, on two or three other occasions, because we've got the Capital Fund, we've got the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and I guess I'll also have a chance to come back as the interim Minister of Transportation and Utilities and, I guess, the interim minister responsible for the Northern Alberta Development Council. So we'll have a great opportunity this spring, Mr. Chairman, to deal with any and all the issues that people have in this very exciting area. I certainly hope there's no confusion today: it's the estimates of Public Works, Supply and Services. [Mr. Kowalski's speaking time expired]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: I never looked forward to that bell more in my life.

The minister has been very fulsome in his introduction to the estimates of the exciting Department of Public Works, Supply and Services. I believe, because of the great impact that he has had upon people of southern Alberta, I'd like to recommend to the Peigan people that they give him the honorary name Ken Born-with-a-mouth. I think that would absolutely suit the performance we've had this morning.

The minister began discussing the Oldman River dam. I can't resist making a couple of small points dealing with that project. We've hashed over the merits of it many times in this Assembly, but today we have a situation in which, as the minister said, the construction is nearing completion. I believe he gave the date of May 15, 1991, as the date upon which the project will be substantially complete.

At the present time there is an environmental impact assessment under way on that project. The federal Environmental Assessment Review Office is conducting this review under a court order. Now, Mr. Chairman, the significance of that is that the courts of Canada, particularly the Federal Court of Appeal, found that the provincial government failed in its obligation to have all of these reams of studies that the minister likes to talk about reviewed by objective scientific personnel. They failed utterly to have that take place.

Secondly, they failed to allow the public to hold hearings upon the content of that report. They failed Albertans in their obligation to give us an opportunity to express an informed point of view upon those studies and upon the environmental impact of it. So it means that the federal government was required to step in under federal legislation because of that deficiency in provincial legislation. It's not like the Member for Banff-Cochrane said, that this is something that involves only the federal government; it involves the province.

Now, this environmental impact assessment obviously is taking place at the wrong time. Nobody questions that. It should have been done prior to 1986 when the project began. I don't argue that point for a moment, but it's interesting that the review panel has written to the federal Environment minister – and has made this information public – asking this government to do one thing; that is, to not preclude some of the important recommendations and options that that panel is considering, because when this government comes forward, builds a project with a half-baked plan, with no mitigation plan in place to deal with some of the important downstream fisheries impacts, when it proceeds in a half-cocked fashion, they invite somebody, in this case the

federal government of Canada, to come in and look at the situation.

The review panel has pointed out that the province is in the process of installing a second low-level outlet valve which, once complete, will create a situation in which

the low level outlets will not be able to pass normal peak flows so that partial filling of the reservoir would be inevitable.

In fact, they're concerned that

"certain recommendations which [it] might make . . . related to not completely filling the reservoir in the short term in order to deal with safety or other concerns, would be precluded after the closure of the second diversion tunnel.

Now, that request was made on January 7, 1991.

Today this minister stands up and brags: we've got it built; we've got it complete; we're going to go ahead and flood it – and the rest of it. I think that even at this late date that's a rather shameful disregard for the environmental impact of that project on southern Alberta. In particular it's a complete abuse of a wrinkle in the jurisdiction under which the province proceeds as if the environment didn't matter at all. It's a very serious concern that's put forward, and so far as I know, the minister has not responded to this request at all. In effect, they're thumbing their nose at the request, and I think that's a dangerous thing from the point of view of the provincial jurisdiction. The question of how the environmental jurisdiction will work out is not completely settled in the province of Alberta, and the more you thumb your nose at the environment, the more you invite encroachment by other authority. There are just not any two ways about it.

I would certainly like to know why that particular request, which seems to me to be a sincere and modest one related to the fact that it's only now when the project is nearing completion that the public has any opportunity to review these studies in a public forum, it's only now at this late date that Albertans have been given that opportunity, albeit not by the provincial government – why they would refuse even that modest request to not preclude some of the important recommendations that that panel is considering.

I also have a concern with regard to the talk of imminent flooding of the reservoir that some of the archaeological crews working for the provincial government under contract have been finding some very excellent and very important archaeological sites, some up to 9,600 years old, on territory which is potentially to be flooded. That's a very significant archaeological find, and I understand that some of the archaeologists are looking for an opportunity to excavate on those sites prior to the flooding. I think you don't have to be an expert in either archaeology or dam construction to realize it's pretty difficult to excavate an archaeological site once it's under water, if not impossible. In fact, that would amount to the destruction of an important archaeological site, again an issue that should have been dealt with prior to the construction. I mean, if in the end, after the analysis, this project is as good as the minister says – and he obviously believes that – too bad that he wouldn't put his view to the test like everybody else has to in our society, too bad that he takes the position that he as a minister of the Crown can bully everybody and not allow the opportunity to have these things reviewed. At the very least, if you went through the process and found that, yes, the project should be built, if that was the ultimate finding, steps could have been made to recover the archaeological treasure.

I simply make those two points at this eleventh and a half hour, dealing with the issue of the Oldman River dam.

Yes, I'm pleased to learn of the various environmental initiatives that are under way under the government procurement

fund. Under vote 5 I am pleased that the minister exceeded the extremely modest targets that were brought in a year ago. I'm also pleased that he's moving to even higher targets this year. I think there are a couple of provisos I would like to make. One is that when you talk about recycled paper, that can be any one of a number of things. Some of the so-called recycled papers are as environmentally unfriendly as virgin fibre papers. I think what we have to be looking for is yes, recycled, but try to get out of acid bleaching and chlorine bleaching, which does happen in the recycled paper area as well: nonacid papers wherever possible.

It's interesting that this minister is so proud of the move, the shift he is making in provincial government stores to recycled paper. Perhaps it will dawn on the rest of the government that maybe there is a shift in the marketplace toward recycled products and away from virgin fibre, especially chlorine bleached kraft. Maybe it should make them think about all of the hundreds of millions of dollars that it's pumping into the bleached kraft industry. When I read the annual reports of the pulp and paper companies, Abitibi-Price and Canadian Pacific Forest Products, and look at the situation that Alberta newsprint is in today in the province of Alberta, it's pretty clear that's happening. I think if the other members will think about what the minister of public works is saying, how proud he is of having shifted his procurement into that area, maybe there's a message there for economic development and for environment and for forestry who are behind all of these projects. In fact, I would sincerely like to suggest that the ministers of the environment, economic development, and public works get together on this procurement business so that we can do something more than simply go out in the marketplace and buy all of these so-called green products, to use the term the minister did, so that we can get some of these green products made in the province of Alberta.

11:40

That's my agenda, Mr. Chairman, and I think it's one that's feasible. Right now we have a situation in which if you want to buy recycled paper – and the minister is now boosting the consumption by, according to my quick mathematics, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 20 million kilograms this coming year. He's going to be buying 100 percent of that product outside of the province of Alberta because the minister of economic development and the Minister of the Environment are doing nothing – I say nothing – to get a recycled paper industry going in the province of Alberta. We've got this so-called waste reduction recycling strategy, which has a figure of \$2 million out of economic development, which is the total that's available for industrial investment in the recycling processing industries.

Now, the plain fact is that you're not going to have recycling businesses until, number one, you have a steady supply of recycled material available. We have a limited supply through the city of Edmonton blue box program and through the Paper Chase operation, but it is not sufficient to create a recycling industry in the province of Alberta. So we need to have a provincewide collection system. I'm satisfied that Alberta Newsprint, for example, could reprocess 100 percent of all the waste newsprint in the province of Alberta quite easily. It would take a little additional investment, but their plant is engineered to install that type of deinking line. But the supply of product comes first: the raw material, the collection system.

Secondly, you have to have that business investment, and it's just not happening. Economic development is not doing anything, and the private sector is somewhat unwilling to invest

without knowing where their supply of raw material is going to come from. It's an absolutely critical point, which brings me to the second part of that so-called strategy. There's a total of some \$4 million available from the province to set up that collection network, and it just doesn't add up. It costs on average \$3 to \$4 per household per month to collect recyclables in the household sector, and the province budgets on an overall scale something in the neighbourhood of 15 cents per capita per month. It just doesn't add up; you would have to have households which are very large indeed in order to make those economics work. So we have to try to get it together between the three departments in order to make the processing happen here in the province of Alberta.

A few comments related to government buildings and the planning and implementation of construction projects. I was reviewing some material in preparation for these remarks, and I noted a comment back in 1987 by the predecessor to the current minister, the Hon. Ernie Isley, who stated April 4, 1987, that

the province bought the Federal Building on 106th Avenue "two or three years ago" and will take it over when the current federal occupants move to Canada Place.

He estimated the province would move in 1990, following renovations to the approximately 200,000-square-foot building.

Well, so far as I know, 1990 has come and gone and we haven't moved into that Federal Building. In fact, I can't even see any evidence that any renovation has begun on that project. Meanwhile, the province goes to the Premier's number one bagman and has him assemble some property downtown, cuts a deal with Olympia & York to lease a similar amount of prime-time, triple A, downtown office space without tender, without any type of competition whatsoever, so that we have to presumably move public servants from where they may be now into the downtown prime-time, triple A space for which it seems that the government paid a very pretty penny indeed. Now, it's interesting that the government refuses utterly to reveal details of the lease arrangement that it made under the table and without tender with Olympia & York via the good work of Mr. Les Mabbott, and I think you can talk all you want about tabling reams of information, but that's a very important piece of information. My question really is: what are we doing with that federal building which was purchased by the province from the federal government and which has sat empty in favour of this Olympia & York operation?

I have a concern more generally about how this department operates. Firstly dealing with the budget estimates, there's a remarkable reduction in funds for planning and implementation of construction projects in the budget, which is one of the means by which the Treasurer is able to point to a balanced budget. It looks like about a \$23 million cut in construction of government projects. Now, I think it doesn't make a lot of sense to sort of turn the tap on and off as we go through various political exercises such as provincial election time or such as budget balancing time or what have you. I think the ups and the downs aren't very helpful in terms of the smooth operation of government.

It was pointed out in a document I released earlier this week that the Alberta Forest Service has difficulty maintaining its programs because of the type of office space and equipment that they operate, and I'm certain that may be the case in other departments, but what's the justification for virtually a hundred percent cut in the agriculture construction projects or Recreation and Parks being eliminated altogether or major cuts in Transportation and Utilities? I have to wonder if the fact that the

minister took ill caused the other ministers to have a field day cutting his department. I don't know; I hope not. It's not just in terms of the public works side of things, but all of the Transportation and Utilities spending has been curtailed mightily, and it seems to me the motivation is only to try to balance the budget rather than the smooth planning and operation of government and the machinery of government. I think that deserves an explanation.

I know just dealing in my own area in Edmonton-Jasper Place recently that the social services department had to move facilities because of the demolition of the Centennial Mall where they had been since 1967 or shortly thereafter when that mall opened. Now, in our part of the world buildings have a very short lifespan if in the space between now and 1967 a perfectly serviceable building is deemed obsolete, bashed down by a wrecking ball, and then dumped in a landfill. It's no wonder we have no landfill space in the city of Edmonton, but my concern is that that left the social services department, which deals with disabled people and the elderly and people who have various disadvantages, without a home. Apparently it fell upon public works to find them new office space. Now, I don't know who did this or who they talked to, but they wound up on 124th Street for the west end Edmonton social services office, which I understand may be within their service area or may not; if it is, it's just at the very downtown edge of it. You couldn't find a more inconvenient place for people with disabilities and older people in particular to try to get to, but somehow public works was not able to find any space in a more convenient location. Now, I venture, and I've spoken to a number of people, that we could probably find them a half a dozen decent spaces, but we can't find out who it was they talked to.

Now, if you're going to be supplying office space to government departments, it seems to me that Public Works, Supply and Services should try to work with some of the client groups who are affected so that it's not simply a matter of what's convenient from the point of view of realtors and building owners and people like that but what may be in fact convenient and necessary for the client groups who are served by these departments.

It seems to me that when you see the way these numbers jump around, that in the mid-term hiatus between elections we're not doing much of anything in the public works construction project area but then when it comes time to go to a provincial election we're doing all kinds of things, it's fairly obvious that the position of client groups isn't taken much into account in dealing with decisions of where space goes and when construction projects take place. I think it's wrong. I would hope that this minister would address that and try to get a rational base for some of these decisions, one that's more related to the needs of the people of Alberta than it may be to the political need of the government to balance a budget in a particular year or to try to buy votes when it comes close to election time. So I think we need to do a little work in that area.

11:50

Under vote 7, Lotteries and Financial Assistance to Major Exhibitions and Fairs, I understand what the minister is saying, his concern about the Racing Commission. It's interesting that in that area, when somebody pays taxes their money is considered to be theirs and not in the general revenue like everybody else's. When we pay taxes, we don't have any right to demand that it be spent back on us; no. General revenue is general revenue, and I think we have to understand it that way.

I have a deep concern about what the government is doing with community facility enhancement and the community recreation grants, because CRC and CFEP are both expiring this fall. I know the minister says: well, we haven't made a decision; we want to see. There's an awful lot of work and planning that's kind of on hold. Nobody knows, especially in some of the newer communities that are trying to develop the infrastructure that mature communities have, where the provincial government is. They know where they are – the volunteers are doing the work they have to do and raising the funds that they have to raise – but they don't know where government is; they don't know where the partnership is. Now, I appreciate that this minister is not responsible for the CRC, the community recreation grants, but he is for the community facility program. I would like to know simply how long the government is going to allow this thing to dangle before they come around to making some sort of an announcement, because it really is a situation in which there is a great deal of uncertainty for all of the people who are involved.

The minister made quite a lot of the committee that's studying hospital biomedical waste and his deep commitment that the private sector has to become involved in providing a solution to that problem. It's an interesting approach and one that I wish to assure him we will be watching very, very carefully. I'm aware of situations in which people in the hospital business and the waste business are in very close communication, and there are moves being made by various private-sector operators to get contracts in this area. The primary concern here has to be with public safety. We have to make certain when we dispose of medical waste, some of which may be contaminated with bacteria, virus, and so forth; we cannot afford to put the public at risk. Now, it's all very well for the minister to say that if someone blows their nose in a kleenex that's not a hazardous type of waste, but it may be, depending on who blew their nose in that particular kleenex. I question whether the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services can make decisions about what material needs to be specially treated and what material doesn't need to be specially treated. I would rather trust medical personnel to make those types of decisions.

I tend to agree that having a lot of incinerators on site may not be the most effective way to deal with the problem, but I think the question of whether the work is done in the public sector or in the private sector . . . I thought I heard him talk about the Special Waste Management Corporation as if that were private sector. I rather suspect that the Special Waste Management Corporation, which is the Crown corporation, and its private-sector partner the Bow Valley Resource Services are really itching to get their hands on this material, that it might help their bottom line situation and, of course, help the government's in an indirect way because the provincial government is now on the hook to underwrite all of the losses of the Chem-Security joint venture, or at least those to the private-sector operator. The private-sector operator is guaranteed a very generous rate of return thanks to the provincial government, and that has to come out of provincial coffers. So when we talk about pushing things off to the private sector, that may or may not be a good idea, but we're certainly going to be watching the close connection between some of the people who are working on this project and some of the corporations who are moving in there, to see what happens.

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

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

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The first thing I'd like to do is thank the minister for not leaping up to seize another 30 minutes of the floor to answer other opposition ones, and for keeping quiet. I hope that by giving me the floor, it's another change of heart and that he will look through *Hansard* after this is over and have his department write me a letter on the questions that he didn't answer. I know the minister usually says: never; never; hardly ever – you know, not always – but the point is that all I really want is some answers, not a full chorus basso defence of the government when he gives these. So I'm going to try to be reasonably pleasant to him so that I won't provoke him into 30 minutes of letting off wind. I mean, if they ever built an Oldman dam to capture wind, I'm sure our minister will be one of the first objects that they will put behind the fence there.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, to get into the work fairly soon. He did mention that I was wrong on my car bids. I'd like to assure the minister that it was \$200,000 if they bought the captain's chairs and the air conditioners. The question was quite clear. There were some air conditioners but a lot of captain's chairs, and captain's chairs are \$880 or whatever it is, extra. There were 1,000 vehicles, so it comes pretty close to \$100,000 for that and maybe \$100,000 for the other.

Be that as it may, he also brought up the flying thing. Now, the chairman is very experienced, and I would ask the minister to talk with the chairman in that Ottawa files the passenger manifest, who has been flying on the government planes, month by month with the House. Ottawa has a bigger fleet than the minister has. Ottawa may not have as big a head, but they have a bigger fleet of planes, Mr. Chairman, and if you would take the minister into your confidence and show him how Ottawa reports the passenger manifest of government planes each month, then he wouldn't come in here with a pile so high, as he maintained, which probably covers the last five, six years, and ask us to go through it. To ask us to come to his office to look at things would mean that we would have to displace him from his office, and of course then there would be a loud complaint. So if he could just file it exactly the way Ottawa would, we would be very happy. Why he doesn't use the Ottawa system, I don't know.

Now to others. I'd like to ask the minister whether he has done more work on recycling initiatives. He asked for suggestions in the green field. I was wondering if public works couldn't do more to assist recycling efforts, maybe investigate some sort of a joint marketing system of recycled products, because often in a small municipality some of these recycling schemes can be run by high schools, chambers of commerce, and that, and they don't have the expertise or the management ability – maybe not management ability but depth. Maybe public works could help out in some sort of a joint marketing setup with them. He may be doing something on that idea already, and I'd be interested if he is.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has already mentioned the empty space in the federal building and the fact that we can't find out what we're paying for the space we're renting from Olympia & York downtown. It has to be, Mr. Chairman, one of the crying shames and one of the biggest smirches on the escutcheon of this government that they will not release what kind of a rental contract they have downtown just because one of their bagmen arranged it and had a tidy commission – some reports say over a million dollars for arranging it – and we have another empty office building over here. In any

other place outside of maybe some emerging African republic, that would not be countenanced, but here in Alberta we have an empty office building because some of the party heelers arranged us alternate office space downtown.

12:00

Another area that concerns me a bit is in the community facility enhancement program. The minister here has changed his reporting, too, Mr. Chairman. It used to be by constituency. Now there's a big jumble brought in. In view of the fact that the minister made a statement the other day that those MLAs that qualified for briefcases and that wear blue and orange underwear are asked what the community enhancement plan can do for them – "ask not what you can do for the community enhancement plan; ask only what the community enhancement plan can do for you" is apparently valid for the government MLAs. So in view of that change, in that the government MLAs are making vetoes or comments on community enhancement plans, at least he could file in this Legislature by constituency, Mr. Chairman, those constituencies that he's treating as constituencies.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

The hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew I'm sure is not asked what kind of a recommendation he would have for your constituency, Mr. Chairman, so therefore the minister, although occasionally he has been known to wander around without controls and off the leash, I'm sure must have a list of which community enhancement grants he asked you about and which community enhancement grants he asked Redwater-Andrew about. Therefore, we could have at least that list, and if he wanted to group all the opposition ones into a big lump and let us pick it out, that's fine. But I think there should be some reason, or he should explain, because he said in the House that that's the way he was doing it. At least he could file that.

We roll on a bit, Mr. Chairman. I have a question. I notice this came up the other year, and maybe the Member for Clover Bar has had an answer. I wonder what the plans are for the old correctional institute at Fort Saskatchewan. I notice he's brought it up in question period, acting as a conscientious MLA for his area. Other people have brought it up, but each time we get the Nijinsky of the front bench here skating around and pirouetting but with no particular answer to the subject. If we could get some idea what the plans are for the old correctional institute, it would be kind of nice to know, as it does adjoin my constituency. No doubt some of the members and friends of the minister have probably done some looking around there. I'd better be careful how I skate on that one, Mr. Chairman.

The ownership of lottery kiosks in Alberta Lotteries and how they are handled in these malls would be very, very . . . [interjection] I bet you there are more Tories in there than there are Liberals. Mr. Chairman, Tories always did know how to make licence plates better than Liberals. Nevertheless, I'd be interested in how they are handling the rental of kiosks in the malls. Is that a privilege that the mall owner gets, does Alberta Lotteries have it, is it on bid, or just how is it handed out?

May I roll on a bit? In the green initiatives, is the minister doing anything about requiring that the government cars use ethanol-based fuel? That's not only good from the green point of view, but it is good from the point of view of creating an alternative market for grains out there. I think the government could give the leadership there by requiring the purchase of ethanol gas. We might even go so far as to insist that the MLAs

turn in their credit card and gas charge slips and have to show that they bought ethanol-based gas. If the minister wants to put some heat on in that way, I will support him. But I'm just putting out some suggestions that the government could make go a long way, because I think it is certainly good for the emissions as well as the Alberta agricultural industry. To that extent, I'd be interested in what kind of an aggressive program they're using for natural gas use in their cars. Maybe in the city of Edmonton we could even go so far, Mr. Chairman, as to look at electrically run cars, which speed up to 40, 50 miles an hour now. They're pretty good. You don't have to leave them plugged into the wall. You can drive them for quite a ways, and you can drive them each day. Maybe the minister could look at some areas in that. These are just suggestions.

I also wondered, Mr. Chairman, what the minister may have in place, back to the community enhancement plan, to ensure that the groups that raise the matching funds are actually raising them. In other words, has the minister got a follow-up process, and is he keeping very close track on those that receive the grants, that they indeed do raise the matching funds? I'm sure there have been some failures in that regard, and maybe it would be interesting if he could make a report on what failures they had, what grants he had to pull back or to adjust because the receivers didn't come through with the matching grant, as they had supposedly said they would.

Also, while we're on the lotteries, I was interested if the minister has any fallback position, seeing that only five employees wanted to move to the Stettler area, possibly because a rumour had gone out that they were not going to raise Buffalo Lake five feet; they were going to raise it 15 feet and drown everybody, and they thought they were going to go through a Noah type of event. Whatever the reason was that scared them out of not going there is hard to determine. But will the fact that we can only get five permanent employees to go there bother the efficiency of the marketing division?

Also, with regards to gaming and licensing, I've heard some complaints. Now, the minister may have adjusted that, because he's usually pretty perceptive in this type of thing. There was a regulation out that moneys made from gaming or licensing could only be spent in the province. Having had a fairly large and athletic family that kept me jumping, many of them belonged to track clubs and to different sports organizations. Competing out of the province and busing out of the province to compete was always one of the highlights of these groups. It's unfortunate if they can't, after going through the work of trying to sponsor one of these gaming things, use the funds to take them out of the province for competitive ventures. Some of the kids were in artistic or theatrical things, and there, too, I think it's good for the province and good for the children involved. I was wondering if the minister has reviewed that particular clause that seemed to be holding up. I may be behind on that, and he may have already changed it.

I wanted to just speak in general on the budget, Mr. Chairman. In *Hansard* on April 30 – this is a year ago, April 30, 1990 – the minister said:

One of the things that we've attempted to do . . . is in fact get a transfer or put in another place things that should be maybe more efficient for other departments.

In other words, they're trying to downsize his department a bit. Yet a year later when I look at this budget, the total decrease is only .2 percent. In other words, he has obviously been as big a failure in downsizing his department as he has been in debate in this House. I was just wondering how he could explain this statement a year ago and such poor results. It's like the

elephant that laboured long and hard and produced a mouse, Mr. Chairman.

While we're at it, the minister promised a year ago to review or bring to the Legislature the costs of extra automobiles that chairmen of different committees the government forms have now obtained, or at least a comparison with what the automobiles cost versus the mileage costs. Apparently, here on April 17, just a short while ago – one of those days I might have been thrown out of the Legislature; I don't remember; it was somewhere around there – the minister announced that he had bought an automobile for the use of the chairman of the Forestry, Lands and Wildlife advisory committee. Obviously he is still going about buying cars for chairmen of government committees, and I think at one time he had assured us that he was going to check whether that was a very economical way of spending government funds.

12:10

Now, to get on to the specific votes. Here again I don't expect the minister to answer every question. But one of the problems I had going through here – and of course I'm mixing the Capital Fund budget with his own budget. I thought I could see where the minister could cut \$20 million by postponing a number of elements, a number of things that he was going to do. For instance, he has down \$12.3 million for Tenant Improvements in vote 3, Management of Properties. That's even higher than last year, and in a year where you're trying to cut expenses, it seems to me that the odd leaky tap and the odd wall that isn't painted could have been missed a bit. There doesn't seem to have been much of an effort, in this day and age of trying to balance the budget, of trying to control tenant improvement costs, if indeed they're going up rather than down.

Also, the question of \$90 million for Realty under vote 3. I was interested whether the minister could tie this in somehow or another to the Olympia & York agreement, if part of that is in the Olympia & York agreement. Also in vote 3 we have \$44 million for a southern plant under Property Management and \$42 million for a northern plant. These again are slightly higher than the year before. There again realize that I'm only talking postpone; I'm not talking about replacing and getting out of it. But in times of stress and to help the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East out of his predicament so that he wouldn't have had to put those long, slim fingers into the Lottery Fund pocket to balance the budget, maybe Public Works could have held back on some of the upgrading and planning that they're doing.

The Northern Fish Hatchery at Cold Lake: that's 2 and a half million dollars. I know the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche might have my pelt for doing this, but I wonder just what the rush was to put 2 and a half million dollars in there – this is in vote 4 – if indeed we're having a tight thing. Couldn't that have been postponed or part of it postponed for a year? I wouldn't dare suggest that the Alberta Environmental Centre in Vegreville be postponed, but maybe it could; there's \$400,000 down for there.

Again, vocational training at Desmarais and Wabasca: 1 and a half million dollars. I wonder if the minister is aware of the major realignment of native and provincial responsibilities that is taking place in welfare and training and of talks that are going on here. I hope it isn't a case that the minister is still marching to a tune that quit playing four or five years ago and that the division which was just signed recently between the federal and provincial governments on responsibility to avoid duplication between the governments where natives were concerned has been looked at. I just wonder if the minister is aware of that.

Two million dollars for hopper cars in vote 4, Mr. Chairman. I don't see why they have to be replaced this year. There again, I'm trying to help out the Member for Lethbridge-East, \$2 million there that he could have used quite well by just postponing it another year. Those hopper cars could be bought in an election year just as easily as they could this year.

Surface Water Development and Control in vote 6. This always bothers me when I see it in the minister's itinerary, because this minister is famous for playing around with water. We have the Waskatenau project out here very close to the Member for Redwater-Andrew's constituency, which has to be one of the biggest bollixes that we've ever seen. They started out draining the Waskatenau Creek and straightening it out so that they could get a couple of more acres at maybe \$10,000 to \$20,000 an acre for the farmers. As an old geologist – I don't know how much you know about what they call a meandering river. It goes back and forth, and it looks to the uninitiated: "Well, we'll stop this flooding. The water's catching in the meanders. We will cut across the meanders, speed the water up so it goes right straight through, and we won't have our flooded meadows and farms."

But what happened, Mr. Chairman, out there in the Waskatenau area in the last year or so? Because of a drought in the area, they found out a couple of simple truths. One, that a heavy rain or snow melt in the spring went straight through and accelerated, so we got excessive erosion. Number two, the Oxbow lakes dried up, and we found out suddenly that the farmers' wells were going dry. The towns of Waskatenau and Thorhild were running short of water. They're finding out now that all this swamp that the hon. MLA and the member here wanted to drain – you know, subdue the wilderness and cut down the trees; all that stuff – those Oxbow lakes were charging the subsurface; they were charging the subsurface waters. So the wells are going dry, and we have big problems.

This is what's worrying me about Surface Water Development and Control, \$4 million. I think there's a great possibility that the minister and his department are still marching to a tune of draining water when we're trying to preserve wetlands in this province. I'd like to see him take a very, very close look at it, because drainage projects from now for the next 500 years probably, Mr. Chairman, will be taboo. Yet I know this minister has drainage projects going on around the province. One of the ones I just mentioned was in the Redwater-Andrew constituency.

To move on again, Mr. Chairman, if the minister will allow me a bit. In vote 1, Departmental Support Services, there's an overall increase of 4 percent. But the increase in terms of Communications Administration: is this more useless PR dollars? The minister sometimes feels neglected down in that basement office of his and feels compelled occasionally to explode and paint his name on the sides of grain cars or something else. I'm just wondering why, if we're trying to downsize, the increase in communications. This may be a clever way of seeing Barrhead go whistling by on a truck down through Medicine Hat or Ponoka or wherever it is, or is it really of some use?

A question that makes me a little concerned, too, is in a couple of areas of salaries. Have I misread it, or has the executive director of information and telecommunications' salary been raised by 13.9, nearly 14 percent? The executive director of property management: it looks like a jump in salary of 37.4 percent. I'm very curious, because usually you don't see those kinds of jumps unless it's for a Tory bagman. Usually somebody in the civil service doesn't get that big a jump.

Mr. Chairman, if I may roll on here giving questions, in vote . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Roll on, Macbeth. Roll over.

MR. TAYLOR: Roll on, Oldman River.

It's interesting in vote 6, Land Assembly; again something I think we could be postponing, Mr. Chairman. There is a decrease in the spending, which is the right direction, to \$511 million from \$513 million – maybe not as much as I want – but the Administrative Support for Land Assembly has increased 43 and a half percent. Is it because the landowners are putting up such a fight that you have to call out the police or the regiment to go out there? Why a 43 and a half percent increase in Administrative Support to buy less land than you did last year? Very intriguing indeed. Are we sending out armoured cars, or just what's going on?

Land Conservation in vote 6.4.5 has decreased by 53.8 percent. In an era when we're doing our best to save our land, when we're doing our best to preserve our assets, it's rather intriguing that the amount of money would be cut by 53 and a half percent. It's not a very significant amount anyhow, and it could just mean that the minister is going to travel out to look over a project one less time than he has in other previous times.

12:20

Next, Mr. Chairman, I want to say a bit about horse racing. Now, I do not think that horse racing is paying its fair share of running Alberta, the sport of kings or the king of sport, as it is often called. I was raised with racehorses. I remember until I was about eight years old hoping that I wouldn't grow so that I could be a jockey and ride my father's horses out on the circuit. But I still think that to argue that the pari-mutuel funds and the money raised by horse race bettors should all go back to horse racing is like arguing that all the gasoline tax should go back to automobile users and that all the liquor taxes should go back to boozers. In other words, a tax is a tax is a tax. If we're going to start a system of returning it to those people that pay the tax – and by the way, all the money for smokers should go back to treating TB or whatever it is – we're going to end up with a very peculiar system indeed. But the minister and the Premier both come back with that system time and time again: the money we raise from horse racing has to go back into horse racing.

Now, I would like to close with only one comment. The minister always says in a very loud voice – so loud, in fact, that it blows the wax out of my off ear usually – that he never does this or never does that. Well, in all the years I've been in this Legislature and in all the times I've questioned the minister, I have never, Mr. Chairman, never, never, never received a letter after the budget debates giving an answer to the questions. What he does is take off in rhetoric like the old *Graf Zeppelin*, blinding out everything, making a few wide comments, and then I sit for another year before I get any answers. [interjections] Careful. I'm loaded for bear. I'm not going to monkey with gophers today. Right, Mr. Chairman? All I get is a little bit of rhetoric, or a lot of rhetoric, but nothing in writing. Now, I very expressly put these questions together so his staff could easily answer, and I hope that with those he doesn't answer now, he will promise to write me later.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Redwater-Andrew.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and it's indeed a pleasure to rise and make a few comments and a few questions to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. I just want to thank the minister for the kind co-operation he's given me in the past and, indeed, all the good constituents of

Redwater-Andrew. The minister is always available. I want to also thank the staff that's up in the gallery today. Anytime something is needed, whether from myself or some of my constituents, it's definitely looked after and looked after well, so I can see that the minister is, as we say, running a good show here. So congratulations to him, and on a good budget.

Just a few comments before I go any further. I figured my good neighbour from Westlock-Sturgeon – because naturally when you're neighbours bordering land, you usually get along with each other and can live with them. But in this case, there are a few things that I think the member has kind of touched a nerve on with my good constituents of Redwater-Andrew, and I feel he's just not being a good neighbour in this case.

The first one is community facility enhancement, Mr. Chairman, and the reason I think the hon. member brought up Redwater-Andrew is because the neighbours from Redwater-Andrew naturally go and talk to Westlock-Sturgeon and find out the fine work that this program did. Redwater-Andrew's got something like 40-some projects going and maybe another dozen in the works. You can see that the program worked very well and the people of Redwater-Andrew are pleased. I get some calls sometimes from Westlock-Sturgeon, or people see me when I'm visiting Westlock or other areas in Westlock-Sturgeon. Some of them tell me: "Well, we're working on this project. We went to our MLA, and for some reason nothing is being done." What I suggest to them is: "Well, I guess you're going to have to go see the minister of lotteries, because that's how the program works. He's responsible for it, and his department." So you can see that the MLAs really weren't out there co-ordinating this. It was left to the constituency. Anybody with a little bit of sense in figuring can figure out how far \$100 million is going to go, so I'm sure the hon. member's constituency of Westlock-Sturgeon wasn't left out. As a matter of fact, I had the opportunity to participate in one of the openings of a facility at Clyde, which went across very well. The people of Clyde are extremely pleased with the community facility enhancement program.

MR. TAYLOR: You arrived late. I opened it.

MR. ZARUSKY: Well, regardless, I was there to help them with the festivities as it went on.

Mr. Chairman, another one. I think Waskatenau Creek was mentioned, a very important project in my constituency, the heart of the Redwater-Andrew constituency. What this member fails to indicate is value of land. How do you put a value on somebody's land? Where it was the homestead of the original pioneers, these people were living on the banks of this river. The hon. member and some of his Liberal buddies out there figure that they can buy it for \$200, \$300 an acre. Well, let me tell you, something that's been in the family for a hundred years I think is worth a little more than \$200 or \$300 an acre. You cannot put a value on some of those lands that the farmers have there. I think these farmers are entitled to the same privileges as others on their land.

I think you can't call it a drainage project. It's a water management project. It's managing the water, hon. member. To top it all off, there's a wetlands project in the Athabasca-Lac La Biche constituency with this project. You can see, Mr.

Chairman, that this member doesn't know what he's saying. He's just getting information from a few of his Liberal buddies back home. I think there are two or three of them left out there. You can see I'm glad that this will be recorded in *Hansard* and I can send it to all the people in the Waskatenau area, probably a hundred-plus people that'll benefit out of this. I'll make sure they get it all.

Getting back to the estimates . . .

MR. TAYLOR: How about the thousands that are running out of water?

MR. ZARUSKY: The water is there, hon. member.

Mr. Chairman, I guess the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon and I could maybe walk out after the House adjourns today and we can further discuss this. As a matter of fact, I invite the hon. member to come to Waskatenau. Maybe we should have a meeting with these people and see what they think about it. I will instruct my staff to do that for our next group of town hall meetings.

Anyways, Mr. Chairman, getting back to some of the important issues on the estimates. As I said, the minister is in the right direction. We're on recycling, which I think is very important. We've got too much garbage in this province, and I think it's up to the people of this province to get a handle on it themselves, and the department naturally is going the right way.

The Oldman dam is another one that I know all my constituents support. It's important that all people get equal access to water in this province. I think managed right, the way it is, it's something that's going to benefit people of this whole province.

Getting down to some of the other points that the minister has mentioned: land sales. I know enough about RDAs in this province and other lands. We've been working on some of those areas, and I am glad to see that those settlements are coming along. Hopefully, we can settle some of the claims that are out there. I'm also glad to see that the minister has mentioned that the real estate industry is going to be looking after the sales of some of these public lands, because I think these are the people, the specialists in the area, that can market it to the best of their ability and get the best price for the location or the land and its use. I want to commend the minister on going that route and using our private sector, the people that built this province, to help us market some of these lands.

Also, I just want to touch a bit on privatization. I know that privatization has been going on in this province for many years. The Department of Public Works, Supply and Services has naturally been going in that direction in areas where it does fit in the best. I know that sometimes the private sector can do a better job in running certain programs or certain divisions of a department. I know it's been happening in public works, and I hope there'll be more. I hope to be working very closely with the minister in some other areas of privatization, not only for this province but also his department.

12:30

One thing I omitted here that I would like to ask the minister is how the settlements are going in these restricted development areas. What percent has been settled, say, within the past five years, and has it actually been accelerated or otherwise?

Getting back to the Redwater-Andrew constituency, I guess I've got a few questions there, and that's on construction projects, mainly on health facilities, extended care facilities. One, I know the town of Lamont is in the process of designing

a hospital to their nursing home and auxiliary hospital. I would like to know what stage that is at because I think it's a very important project for the area. In fact, if constructed the way it's designed, it's going to be a complete medical centre right from a hospital to a nursing home to auxiliary, which naturally fits in. I think that's the route we should go, and I can remind the minister that that would save a lot of administration and operation dollars if in fact this project would come on stream much sooner, so I hope he can look at that one as closely as possible.

Another one is the county of Thorhild, the town of Thorhild, the Westlock-Thorhild nursing district. I know we've got a nursing home project on stream there. I hope the minister can help accelerate that. I know we're working in a different way there which will accommodate these people in the very near future. I hope we can get something going as a pilot project with the lodge, putting part of it as a nursing home, but we're still going to need extra extended care beds in this community because of our shifting population. I hope the minister keeps that in mind. It's another project that I would like to see accelerated.

Other than that, Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the minister could answer these few questions on these projects. I want to once again commend you and thank you for allowing me to have my say on a few of these issues with Public Works, Supply and Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Question? Hearing the call for the question and seeing no further speakers, I would ask for the vote on the following, starting with vote 1, irrigation headworks. Vote 1.1, program support, \$1,342,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just a second here.

MR. FOX: You've got to say the number.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I know.

My apologies. I had more information than I needed here for the moment.

Vote 1, Departmental Support Services; vote 1.0.1, Minister's Office, \$320,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Vote 1.0.2, Deputy Minister's Office, \$340,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Point of Order Voting on Estimates

MR. FOX: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. Do we have a chance to express our point of view?

AN HON. MEMBER: You've got to rise.

MR. FOX: No, no, no. Calling for the vote, aye or nay: there are two ways of voting on issues.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Sorry; you're correct.

Debate Continued

Agreed to:

1.0.1 – Minister's Office	\$320,000
1.0.2 – Deputy Minister's Office	\$340,000
1.0.3 – Communications Administration	\$500,000
1.0.4 – Personnel	\$2,260,000
1.0.5 – Administrative Services	\$5,872,000
Total Vote 1 – Departmental Support Services	\$9,292,000

2.1 – Information Services	\$3,800,000
2.2 – Telecommunication Services	\$46,884,000
Total Vote 2 – Information and Telecommunications	\$50,684,000

Vote 3 – Management of Properties

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We were caught somewhat by surprise by the minister, Ken Born-with-a-mouth, not standing up and responding to many of the questions that . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order. No one rose to speak. The question was called. The Chairman put the vote.

MR. FOX: Thank you. I'm rising to speak on vote 3, and I'm beginning my comments by . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please do so. Proceed.

MR. FOX: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm just surprised that the minister, part of a government that likes to pride itself on access to information, indeed part of a government that refused to allow the question to be called on a Bill yesterday regarding access to information – why the minister who brags about the information that he makes available would not stand up and respond in any way or any form to the many questions that were asked him by the members for Edmonton-Jasper Place and Westlock-Sturgeon.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Point of order, Calgary-Millican. [interjections] There is a point of order. Order please. Calgary-Millican has been recognized.

MR. SHRAKE: The hon. Member for Vegreville sat here when he heard Westlock-Sturgeon plead for not having these long answers. You must have heard that.

MR. FOX: That's not a point of order.

Debate Continued

MR. FOX: Anyway, I think the minister would like to have the opportunity to respond to many of the questions. He seems very proud of the projects his department initiates. I think he's

probably got more to tell us. Anyway, he didn't answer any of the questions that were asked, and I'm somewhat disappointed. I have some questions that I'd like to ask, Mr. Chairman, and I think that's my right in spite of the hon. members opposite's inclination.

Under Management of Properties, vote 3, I'd like the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services to tell us to what degree he anticipates implementing the Zarusky initiative in the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services with respect to management of properties. We all know that this government has a privatization agenda, kind of a slavish addiction to privatization in spite of evidence that it often results in increased costs to the taxpayer, in spite of the fact that it often leads to less efficient delivery of service to people. The government has this ideological bent, and they want to privatize everything they can get their hands on, especially if it's something that makes money.

I'd like the minister to tell us with respect to Management of Properties – and there's a considerable amount of money here, \$276,180,000 – if he's done any work within his department with respect to possible privatization of property management. If he has, maybe he could tell us: if there are initiatives that are planned or anticipated, are they based on any rational assessment of the impact of that privatization on the long-term management strategy for these properties, the impact on the people who currently work for the department who may not have jobs if this privatization goes through and to determine whether or not . . . [interjection] These are legitimate questions, Provincial Treasurer, and ones that you may want to think about, too, when it comes to your department.

Maybe he could let us know if these studies that they may or may not have done indicate in any way that the department or the taxpayers of Alberta can save money in the long term through any sort of privatization of management of properties.

12:40

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. FOX: Well, perhaps I'll ask the question again. The minister seems unwilling to respond. I think this is an important issue, because there . . .

MR. MARTIN: You got him up.

MR. FOX: Ah.

MR. KOWALSKI: I was listening to the question from the hon. Member for Vegreville. He kept going on and on and on. He's been here for the last hour and a half and was snoozing. I recall as well, Mr. Chairman, that there was an impassioned plea from the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon to make sure that answers were given in writing, so I don't quite understand. But it's not at all uncommon to see this sort of thing happen. They sit there and they drink coffee and they visit among themselves, and they don't pay much attention to what's really happening.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the interest shown by a variety of colleagues with respect to the estimates of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services today, and I'd be very, very happy to deal with some of the comments made. I think I'll deal first of all with the variety of questions that were raised by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. Yeah, I'll think I'll respond to them irrespective of the fact that the fellow's probably gone back home to Calgary anyway.

Mr. Chairman, one of the statements made by my friend from Westlock-Sturgeon is that horse racing is not paying its fair share. That was very, very loud and clear. He basically said that the equine industry in the province of Alberta does not pay its fair share. I want to . . .

Point of Order

Debate on Estimates

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

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order, Member for Vegreville?

MR. FOX: It's a procedural point of order. We're on vote 3, Management of Properties. It has been our tradition in this House to discuss estimates in a general way. The minister missed his opportunity, because he was daydreaming, to respond to the questions, and we're now on vote 3, and that's what the minister has to address. If he's unwilling to answer my questions, then perhaps he should say that on the record.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the minister wish to respond on the alleged point of order?

In any case, it is not in the Chairman's opinion a point of order at all. It is a complaint. The Chair would observe that the hon. Member for Vegreville did not define what category of questions it was that he was expressing concern to the minister about not answering. Therefore, I gather that the minister is trying to respond to that complaint.

I recognize the minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure how I should be governed here. On the one hand, the NDP are telling me that I can't answer questions. They're denying me the right to respond to questions raised by hon. members and then insisting that if I do answer questions, only theirs. It was the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon who raised questions first. Surely, from a protocol point of view, don't you deal with it? But I understand: the Member for Edmonton-Highlands isn't here, so there is some chaos in the ranks of the Official Opposition. I'm sure she'll be back on Monday, and I'm sure there will be order again.

Debate Continued

MR. KOWALSKI: Vote 3, Mr. Chairman, Management of Properties. I would like to point out that I was very, very pleased that the Member for Redwater-Andrew – the Member for Vegreville referred to it as the "Zarusky initiative" – chaired a committee with a number of individuals from throughout the province of Alberta who have looked at the RDAs and land assembly and land management throughout the province of Alberta. The member along with some other individuals has in my view done just an outstanding job in looking at some of the long-standing concerns that have been raised by individuals who have been impacted by the restricted developed areas in both Edmonton and Calgary. They have met on an ongoing basis and have come up with a variety of initiatives and recommendations with respect to the administration of these public lands. I've very much appreciated the very, very hard work that they've done. It is important that members of this Assembly do participate and do get involved. As I say, we've had two Members of the Legislative Assembly who have been involved in this particular review, and they've come up with a great number of recommendations.

Where we're at in terms of management of these public lands, basically talked about in vote 3, is that we've done a fair degree of work in terms of the management of public facilities throughout the province of Alberta. If you look at vote 3, the questions that were raised by the Member for Vegreville, there is one area in there that the member has asked for some clarification on. I draw all members' attention to Grants in Lieu of Taxes, which is \$44,360,000 this year. This is a whopping increase of 18.7 percent over the estimates of last year, Mr. Chairman. What is important with the grants in lieu of taxes program is that this is an allocation of dollars as provided to various municipalities in the province of Alberta because of the government infrastructure that's in those communities. As an example, the municipality of Vegreville received nearly \$1.1 million a year by way of grants in lieu of taxes because of the government infrastructure in there; the town of Devon, about \$1.1 million per year; the town of Grande Cache, nearly \$1.1 million; the city of Edmonton, nearly \$16 million, \$17 million, \$18 million by way of grants in lieu of taxes. This is a very good program that transfers.

On the other hand, there are other communities that have no government infrastructure at all. One such community, as an example, was Stettler. In terms of all of its grant in lieu of taxes dollars that Stettler receives, it amounts to \$47,000. I repeat: Vegreville, about \$1.1 million a year; Devon, about \$1.1 million; Grande Cache, about \$1.1 million; Stettler got \$47,000. So in response to other questions that were raised in here dealing with lotteries and Stettler and all the rest of that, you bring it back to vote 3 in terms of grants in lieu of taxes, and you now have the basis for the decision to move that very important office to Stettler. It was there because Stettler, for all intents and purposes, has had a dearth of government infrastructure provided to it.

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

I should point out as well, Mr. Chairman, that one very important thing has happened with respect to grants in lieu of taxes. Alberta's always been very, very cognizant of the special relationship that the provincial government would have with the municipal governments. We've always worked on the basis of a partnership between the government of Alberta and those members of the Alberta Association of MDs and Counties, of a partnership with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, a partnership with the Association of Alberta Improvement Districts. The grants in lieu of taxes management of properties is a very, very important program.

One really terrible thing has happened in Canada in recent months, Mr. Chairman. One government in Canada has obliterated, terminated, written off its programming any assistance to its municipal governments by way of a grants in lieu of taxes program. That government is . . .

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

MR. TAYLOR: Point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is rising on a point of order.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. member has said that I had left for Calgary. Actually I was in the washroom, which is the proper place to listen to the minister's speech at any time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. That is not a point of order.

Debate Continued

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, one province in Canada and one provincial government has really devastated its assistance to its local municipalities in the last number of months by way of this grants in lieu of taxes program. I indicated that in Alberta in this fiscal year we provide \$44,360,000, a whopping increase of 18.7 percent. Recently the Liberal government of Quebec canceled a grants in lieu of taxes program to its municipalities. Now, I think it is really important to repeat that it was a Liberal government in the province of Quebec that has decided to cut aside its municipalities. I think this is important on the basis of some questions that were raised earlier in the week in this Legislative Assembly by a Liberal member, who almost suggested that if the Liberals were ever to form the government in the province of Alberta, they would do exactly what their brothers and sisters in Quebec have done; that is, set those very important municipalities in the province of Alberta adrift.

I would really think that would be absolutely terrible, so I want to clearly point out here – and I really want to thank the Member for Vegreville for allowing me the opportunity – the difference between a Progressive Conservative government and a potential Liberal government. A Liberal would cancel the grants in lieu of taxes program, wouldn't provide any assistance at all to their partners. A Progressive Conservative government would provide such assistance and a whopping 18.7 percent increase, as we're doing this year. I guess the NDP would sort of be the bridesmaid, would sort of help the Conservatives get along in making sure that the opportunities that I've explained – and I do want to thank the Member for Vegreville for his puffball question. It's extremely important.

12:50

Mr. Chairman, I think that in looking at vote 3, there's one other thing that is really important as well. That has to do with the amount of leases that we're dealing with. One of the things that this government said it would do is that in essence it would make sure the opportunities were there for the private sector to provide accommodation to the people of Alberta. If you take a look at vote 3.3.2, Leases, \$90,970,000, this is the rent the province of Alberta pays for space that it obtains from the private sector throughout the province of Alberta. In recent years we have decreased the amount of public building we've been doing, and if you look at vote 4, which is the next vote, it shows the decrease in expenditure in capital buildings. We're providing the services that are necessary and required through the property management area of vote 3 by way of renting, obtaining leases from the private sector.

There in a nutshell is an answer to about half a dozen other questions that several members raised this morning as well. They said, "Well, why is this one vote going down and the other one going up?" Well, needless to say, if you're going to provide the service, and when individual departments, ministers, colleagues in the House come to me and say basically you should be dealing with providing the service, we have the option of providing the service . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is rising on a point of order?

MR. McINNIS: Would the minister permit a short question on that very point?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's up to the minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the difficulty I have here is that I've been accused by his colleague from Vegreville saying I'm not answering the question. I'm answering the question, and now they're saying they want to ask some other questions. It seems to me that one of the things I should do is follow through with the courtesy that would be required of a minister to respond to the questions that individual members would have raised, and that's what I'd like to do.

Mr. Chairman, it is of real interest that you look at vote 3. Yes, vote 3. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon looked at vote 3 – and I'm really glad; I really want to thank the Member for Vegreville for asking. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon got up and looked at vote 3.2.2, Tenant Improvements, and he said, "Why are you doing this?" His comment was that some of these tenant improvements could be postponed. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has just really helped me, because in the last couple of months his leader, the leader of the Liberal Party, has been petitioning me on a regular basis to expend more public money renovating and reorganizing the Liberal offices in the Annex. I have received repeated letters, phone calls, petitions. Their staff members that make \$70,000 to \$80,000 or \$90,000 a year have been trying to browbeat my office people, saying: "When? When is this guy going to change our offices? Bring in more halls, bring in more walls, do all these things?"

Well, I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if this isn't a good opportunity for the Assembly to tell me by way of voice vote whether or not the minister should, in fact, accept the recommendation of the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon and not do the tenant improvements for the Liberal offices, as is being demanded by the member. These cases of one guy one day speaking out of one side of their mouth, and the next day one of the other members of that troupe saying the opposite thing is just wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong, from an ethical point of view. These Liberals do that all the time, and I really, really am disappointed in them. I want to thank one more time the Member for Vegreville for giving me the opportunity to really exploit and let the people know.

Oh, sure; the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon says he went to the bathroom. That's where he does his best research; we all know that, Mr. Chairman. We all know that. The point is that they cannot continue to stand in this Assembly and speak out of both sides of their mouth. Do they want tenant improvements, yes or no? Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, do you want tenant improvements, yes or no? Answer the question.

And I will ask the members of the Assembly: do you think, do the members of this Assembly think, that we should do tenant improvements for the Liberal office after we've already done it?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. KOWALSKI: Would there be any member in the Assembly who would say that we should?

Well, Mr. Chairman, it's pretty clear to me what I have to do, pretty clear what I have to do. I must now take back that letter that I just inked the last couple of days to the leader of the Liberal Party, saying that democracy must prevail in this province of Alberta, democracy must prevail in this Assembly. We're listening, and I want to really thank the hon. members for the opportunity today to deal with some of these specifics.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there was a series of other questions that are extremely important that have been in here. I'd just like to

talk about a program, one that was raised here with respect to the vocational training centre at Wabasca-Desmarais. It would seem to me that one of the things this government would want to do is to make sure that our native people do have an opportunity to have their skills upgraded. One of the programs that this government has had is dealing with the vocational training centres in various parts of the province. I'm really very saddened when a member would stand up and say that maybe we shouldn't do that anymore, because I think that our native people play a very important role in our province. Our native people are our heritage, and whatever we can do to work hand in hand with the native community in this province by way of vocational training is something that we must continue doing, and I can't accept that criticism, for an opposition member to say that we shouldn't assist our native people anymore. The government could not do that either. We must go forward in making sure that these activities happen.

Mr. Chairman, it is really important that I say to all members of the Assembly today who have raised questions that I appreciate their comments and questions. I will attempt to make sure that we do in fact respond in the way that is expected of us. We'll attempt to make sure that there is information. Now if, in fact, there's a feeling today that perhaps not all the questions have been responded to, I would just like the Official Opposition to know that if they want to designate the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services some Wednesday, we'd be very happy to come back and deal with all the answers, but that's their choice.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could move that the vote be reported.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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

Resolved that a sum not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, for the department and purposes indicated.

Public Works, Supply and Services: \$9,292,000 for Departmental Support Services, \$50,684,00 for Information and Telecommunications Services.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain other resolutions of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.
Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, by way of information to hon. members, it would be the intent of the government on Monday afternoon to deal with second readings as listed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders, followed by committee study beginning with Bill 4. Then on Monday evening it

would be the intent to call Committee of Supply to deal with the Department of the Environment.

[At 12:59 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]