

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, April 22, 1991**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 91/04/22

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please. The Chair regrets that it allowed a minute to elapse since 8 p.m., but it is now past time for the Committee of Supply to come to order for the consideration of the estimates of the Department of the Environment.

head: **Main Estimates 1991-92**

Environment

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. the Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm delighted, I think, for the third time to present to this committee the estimates for the Ministry of the Environment. Certainly I would like to thank all Members of the Legislative Assembly for being with me on this very, very important evening, especially for Edmontonians as they head into the third game of the quarter final series in the Stanley Cup. I know how important that is to you all, and I would like to acknowledge my staff, all from Edmonton, who have to be here and bear with my presentation this evening.

MR. MITCHELL: You should get some staff from Calgary.

MR. KLEIN: I have some staff from Calgary. As a matter of fact, I have a very good, competent staff in Calgary, who are doing a tremendous job in the city of Calgary to protect and enhance the environment for the future of all Albertans.

Mr. Chairman, the ministry's estimates are increasing by 4 percent this year to some \$137 million. As well, an additional \$8.6 million from the Capital Fund has been earmarked for a proposed expansion of facilities at the Swan Hills Special Waste Treatment Centre. I say "proposed," because this is contingent on a full public consultation process relative to this particular project. If indeed it's found that the project is not environmentally worthy, if it can't be justified from an environmental point of view, then it will not go ahead, and the \$8.6 million, of course, will be returned to the general revenues. This 4 percent increase is a significant increase. As a matter of fact, considering that this is a period of strict fiscal discipline, this is indeed a very significant increase, and this demonstrates quite clearly how serious this government is when it comes to protecting our environment.

The major emphasis in the 1991-1992 fiscal year will be placed on environmental protection and enhancement. Special funding of half a million dollars is being proposed to ensure a thorough public consultation process for the regulations associated with the Alberta environmental protection and enhancement Act, which will soon be before this Legislature.

MR. McINNIS: How much?

MR. KLEIN: "How much?", the hon. member asks. I'll repeat it: a half a million dollars so there can be public input into the regulations, just as there was tremendous public input, unprecedented public input, into the legislation itself. So we're going to make sure that this process has had the benefit of absolute, full

public consultation. In addition, the revitalization of the Environment Council of Alberta will mean an additional \$250,000 in expenditures for this year.

We are also embarking on a major review of the Water Resources Act to ensure that water, our most precious resource, is managed for the benefit of all Albertans, now and into the next century. Mr. Chairman, this is especially important, and it needs a few words. The Water Resources Act was first brought into place in 1885, long before Alberta was a province. It was updated in 1931 and revised slightly again in 1971, mostly to reflect the ownership of water, riparian rights. We plan to take this very important Act out to the public to reflect today's realities and expectations relative to water resource management. We want to take this Act out to find out what people think about the quality of water and the quantity of water and the management of water, considering this province and the people of this province are the stewards and the guardians of all water that flows either to the Arctic Ocean, to Hudson Bay, or into the Mississippi River system. So it's tremendously important that we have full public consultation on this matter, that there is a full public debate, and we're asking this year that funds be allocated to accommodate that very significant and meaningful public consultation process.

In conjunction with Economic Development and Trade's proposed additional expenditure of \$2 million – and my friend the Minister of Economic Development and Trade alluded to it in his comments a few nights ago – Environment will also spend an additional \$4 million on a new waste minimization and recycling development program. This program is to be called Action on Waste, and this new program will assist municipalities and industries to implement effective waste management measures so we can contribute significantly and meaningfully to the national objective of reducing the amount of waste that now goes into our landfills by 50 percent by the year 2000.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to this program the hon. Member for Smoky River attempted, although he was rudely interrupted this afternoon in question period, to ask me a question about this program. To elaborate, we have started to significantly implement this program in the Peace River country, where the communities are far apart, where it's very, very difficult for well-meaning towns to establish community-based recycling programs because the shipping costs are so great. So what we have attempted to do in that region is set up a regional system. The municipalities can feed to a regional base where these recyclables will be safely stored, where they can be baled, where they can be compressed, and where they can be transported cost efficiently to larger recycling centres and produced into new products. I'm very, very happy to have participated with the hon. Member for Smoky River in the initiation of this project. We're going to start our modeling in that part of the country and hopefully establish something that is successful and will apply to other regions of the province where they are having difficulties establishing and maintaining community-based recycling and waste minimization programs.

Alberta remains at the forefront of new programs and new environmental technology to ensure that safe, sustainable development is achieved in this province. Following recommendations by the Alberta-Pacific environmental review panel, the departments of Environment and Forestry, Lands and Wildlife will implement a four-year program of technical studies at a cost of \$12.3 million to determine the cumulative effect of development on the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave river systems. This major initiative will be funded jointly by the federal government, and it will consider pollution and the impact of that pollution

from all sources: from municipal sources, from agricultural sources, from northern forestry development pulp mills and saw mills. If indeed those studies determine that further measures are needed to mitigate that pollution, those measures, Mr. Chairman, will have to be undertaken. Otherwise, those projects that contribute to the pollution will be shut down. They will be made to improve their procedures and their technology to meet our requirements, which, I have stated before and I'll state again, are the best achievable in the world.

In addition, Alberta has entered into a \$23.2 million cost-sharing agreement with the federal government to clean up abandoned industrial sites throughout the province. This initiative, together with our commitment to the Natural Resources Conservation Board, the Environment Council of Alberta, and the Alberta Round Table on Environment and Economy, adds up to an environmental protection strategy that includes public review, public input, and public participation. Mr. Chairman, our record in this province is second to none.

8:10

As mentioned earlier, the 1991-1992 budget includes an \$8.6 million expenditure for a proposed expansion of facilities at the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre at Swan Hills. I would like to mention also and remind all the members of the Legislature that this is the only province and one of two jurisdictions in this country that has the capability of safely handling hazardous waste. This very necessary expansion, at an estimated total cost of \$60 million cost shared 60 percent by the private sector, will increase the capacity of the centre to dispose of the inventory of solid hazardous waste products being held for processing.

Mr. Chairman, I've said before that we boast of being the only province, as a matter of fact, that is rat free, although some might question that. [interjections] No; I'm sorry. This is the only province that is rat free. Well, I can say, because of the Swan Hills facility, that I believe we are the only province that is now completely free of liquid PCBs. I think that is a tremendous achievement and speaks well for the foresight and the commitment of this government in the past to the decontamination of the land in this province.

In any event, the expenditure will increase the capacity of the centre to dispose of the inventory of solid hazardous waste products being held for processing. However, as I mentioned before, any major construction commitment will await the current public consultation process now under way. That may involve further public hearings. We'll see what the public consultation results in and how the deficiencies are addressed, and we'll take it from there.

Protecting the environment is a challenge shared by all parts of our government. As a matter of fact, it's a challenge shared by all people of this province. For example, as a government, we worked closely with both Alberta Health and Alberta Education this year on new initiatives for the disposal of waste materials. Hospitals, for instance, will receive \$2.1 million to improve handling of biomedical waste, and the Alberta Lottery Fund will provide \$1 million to help schools clean up science laboratories and other waste. By the way, these wastes from the schools will be destroyed at the Swan Hills facility. No other jurisdiction in this country can conduct such a campaign. No other jurisdiction in this country can conduct a campaign such as Toxic Roundup, where citizens from throughout this province can take all the toxic materials in their garages and their medicine chests and so on and bring them to central locations and have them gathered up and destroyed properly. I think that speaks well of our environmental achievements in the past and

certainly enables us as a province to conduct programs and projects that simply can't be carried on anywhere else in Canada.

Mr. Chairman, these are my opening remarks. At this time I'd be happy to hear any comments and respond to any questions that the members may have. I would only ask that I be given time near the end of the evening to respond to as many of the questions that may be asked that I might possibly be able to respond to.

Thank you very much.

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

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say that I'm genuinely pleased to see the minister here and in such fine rhetorical form this evening. We were all a little concerned about his health around Christmas time, when he suffered a collapsed lung and a bout with pneumonia. I know that he's well on his way to health, because he's back to some of the same old clichés as he was before, and he's saying them with conviction and repeating them as if he means them. So as he works his way back to good health, and we see him out on the trails jogging from time to time, I hope he'll see and recognize the importance of working our planet back to good health and renew and rededicate his commitment to doing that in the balance of his term as Minister of the Environment, which shall, I hope, be mercifully short.

In the minister's comments, he referred many times to action on this, action on that, Action on Waste, action on environmental issues. It called to mind the government's communication strategy on environment of September of 1989, appropriately entitled Action on Environment. Many of the phrases that the minister repeated this evening echoed and resonated deeply in my mind as I thumbed through this program: talking about how it's not necessary to have a new policy but merely to assemble the existing programs under a new umbrella, give it a name, and add a few wrinkles the way President Reagan did under the Star Wars program; the idea of promoting the environment as a shared responsibility – how many times did we hear the term "shared responsibility" this evening? – and encouraging Albertans to buy in to government policies. Buy in: a very interesting phrase.

Perhaps I could just quote very briefly from the conclusion of the government public relations strategy secretly developed in September of 1989 and so aptly followed by the eager pupil the Minister of the Environment. I quote:

The Government of Alberta has an opportunity to seize control of the agenda of public discussion before environmental issues become as prominent in this province as they have in the rest of Canada. With a coordinated communications strategy and plan, the Government can position itself as a leader in environmental protection and preservation and encourage Albertans to "buy in" to policies and aspirations.

Well, that's exactly the type of leadership that we've got from this minister: leadership of a public relations strategy which encourages people to buy in to objectives and to buy in to a discussion process but which produces precious little in the way of concrete results, precious little you can get your hands on and say: this is what this minister has done. There is not one piece of legislation that this minister has brought before this House to this date in time and no significant shifts in budgetary expenditures: a couple of million here, a couple of million there. Instead, we get the mission statement, which is a broad statement of objectives that Albertans are expected to buy in to.

It's an interesting document, the so-called mission statement. I recall asking for some specifics in the Legislature about one particular area: polluter pay. I wanted to know why the polluters don't pay the \$11 million, \$12 million costs of standards and approvals and compliance regulation of their own permits, which they received from the government. I put a written question in, and the answer came back and said that that isn't part of the mission statement; the mission statement is these few words at the top, the same as it's always been:

Alberta Environment's Mission Is To Achieve The Protection,
Improvement And Wise Use Of Our Environment, Now And In
The Future.

Well, what's the rest of this document? It's not the mission statement, even though it says mission statement in bold letters across the whole thing. The rest of it is aims and aspirations, things that the government wants the public to buy in to and to put their blood and sweat and energy in in the way of public hearings and processes.

You know, on this so-called environmental legislation, we've had the mission statement, we've had the Visions postcards, we've had the Thanks from Alberta's Environment, we've had the public hearings, we've had the report on the public hearings, and now we don't know what we have, because the minister says: don't hold your breath; there's not likely to be legislation this year. Next year, I guess, is another year. Well, I'm not going to hold my breath, because I think the forecast is for continued promises of action on this, action on that, continued buying in, continued public input on policy, and continued achievement of very little. I think we have to speak to the reality of where things are today and the reality of what's going to be funded out of this budget, because we can't live for pie in the sky in environmental policy. We can't live for long-term objectives; we have to live for action on a day-to-day basis.

We continue to have about the weakest environmental laws in Canada and, I say, elsewhere around the world, weak in the sense that they are unenforceable as judged by the task force on environmental law enforcement appointed two or three ministers ago, which reported in January of 1988 with a list of 150 recommendations on how the laws need to be fixed up so that they could be enforced. We have secrecy about the enforcement actions of Alberta Environment. We know, for example, that they routinely overlook violations of pollution permits and take no enforcement action whatsoever. We know that they occasionally issue letters of permission, certificates of variance, and other such things, which allow industries to exceed their permitted levels with impunity and also in secrecy. We know that they don't issue a list of those who don't comply with their permits.

8:20

You know, well over a year ago, July 13, 1990, the Minister of the Environment in British Columbia issued a list of 116 industrial operations and municipalities which were not complying with their waste management permits and which were deemed by the minister to be a potential pollution concern. I congratulate the Hon. John Reynolds for having the foresight in his portfolio to recognize that it's his responsibility to put the heat on people who routinely violate their permits and who constitute a hazard to the public. I congratulate him for making that information available. Where's Alberta's list? I asked for it in the Legislative Assembly one day, and the minister said that I'm on a witch hunt. He says that he doesn't want to contribute to any kind of a witch hunt. Well, I think when people ask for this information about what's going on in their environment,

they have an absolute right to know, and I think that you have no moral right – I don't care what the legality is – to withhold this information from the public, but you do. You don't make it available. There's no such list of noncompliance published in the province of Alberta.

MR. KLEIN: Nonsense.

MR. McINNIS: Well, if there is, then you table it in the Legislative Assembly. We're sitting here absolutely spellbound. The minister says that it's nonsense that he hasn't got a list. If he does, then let's have him table it in the Legislative Assembly.

In fact, I asked him a question not long ago about groundwater monitoring data. Some people who live near a wood preservative plant, where they're not allowed to spill wood preservative on the ground because of the problems we've had in the past, have a concern. They think some is getting into the water that they drink. They asked Environment, "Can we have the information on what's happening in our groundwater?" and they came back with a ruling from the Attorney General's department saying that Alberta Environment will not make this information available. Why? Well, the rationale – and this is a good one – is that this material is collected for us by the company, so we have no right to make it public, as if the rights of a company collecting information were more important than the public health of people drinking groundwater in the area. It's an important point. Now, I know the minister is aware of this, because I know of people who have talked to him face-to-face about it. Because so much of the monitoring is done in Alberta by companies – it's a form of privatization; they do monitoring data and provide it to the government – that cuts out a very large area of significant information which is not presently available to Albertans.

When people try to find out why, for example, the residents in the Crowsnest Pass area, who complained to me in Coleman about the Saratoga gas plant, are choking half the time and have respiratory problems, they're told the same thing that I was told by the minister, which is that you should phone the 800 number that the department has for this purpose and somebody will look into it. In fact, the response that the people who talked to me got from Alberta Environment is: you'd better stop phoning the company. They don't want people bothering the company with the fact that they're choking and can't sleep at night.

There is a lack of information that's available about what's in the air, what's in the water, what's in the land, and there's a lack of clear enforcement mechanisms in the law. That's the reality today. I know the minister hopes to fix this up in legislation somewhere down the road, but sooner or later we have to ask: well, where is it? You know, you've been in the job for a couple of years. That's more than enough time to plug some obvious and simple loopholes. I don't think you have to consult endlessly about whether people have the right to know what's in their environment, what's possibly affecting their public health. I don't think you have to consult endlessly about whether there should be clear enforcement consequences when standards, such as they are, are violated. I think those are principles that the public clearly accepts. They're things that were bought into a long time ago, but there is absolutely no action from this minister and this government.

I'd like to deal with the question of environmental reviews. We still don't have a new policy on environmental impact assessments in the province of Alberta. We had the Al-Pac double-step – or I suppose double-talk would be a better way to look at it – where the minister crashed in, bold as brass,

reforming the system, setting up an environmental impact assessment review board, which was set up in a co-operative model with the federal government. They came back and said: we have a project here that should not be licensed because the case has not been made; it's not been proven. What did Alberta Environment do? It stood on its head to come to the exact opposite conclusion as was reached by the environmental review panel. So that has to be considered a blind alley in terms of reform of the system. It has not been repeated anything like that. Instead we have a major list of projects which are in limbo at the moment. I put it that they're inching their way through the system.

Swan Hills was mentioned. There is a traveling road show going on in Swan Hills, but it's not a properly constituted environmental impact assessment. It's nothing like the Al-Pac EIA Review Board. They're holding meetings which are not well attended because people who are involved know very well that the meetings being held are PR sessions and have no impact on the ultimate decision. The government has rather underhandedly removed the important underlying issue of import of toxic waste from the table in those discussions, even though we all know that's intimately tied into it.

So instead of doing a proper environmental impact assessment, what does the government do? Well, they send a newsletter out to every household in the province giving the government's side of the story on this particular case: another PR initiative costing some \$230,000 to send to every household in the province of Alberta. As a member of the Assembly and a taxpayer I have to ask why there was almost no information in that newsletter about the actual expansion proposal, the nature of the expansion, the costs of the expansion, who's paying for it. It totally skirted the issue of import of hazardous waste. Yet this minister is prepared to spend \$230,000 to shove this propaganda in every household mailbox in the province. You know, it's the minister of junk mail, and junk mail is really an environmental problem that we face today.

MR. KLEIN: The NDP should talk. They're the greatest producers of junk mail of any party in the country.

MR. McINNIS: We certainly don't run a 25,000-member mailing list, sending people things that they don't want, and we certainly don't send people \$230,000 worth of pamphlets that are all but beside the point in terms of a significant issue.

Buffalo Lake: again we have an ad hoc panel. You know, for decades Alberta Environment felt that Buffalo Lake was not only not cost-effective, but it could create serious environmental problems because of additional nutrient feed and algae bloom in the lake. Now, we have another ad hoc panel of political appointees who are going to run around and hold more public hearings without the context of an environmental impact assessment to make an ad hoc decision on that.

On the Kan-Alta project in the mountains, on a critical wildlife range where the Department of the Environment and the Department of Recreation and Parks set aside an area as a mitigation measure for wildlife protection, now they want to build a golf course: public meetings, no clear environmental impact assessment. You've got Elbow Valley Developments upstream from Calgary, where the minister writes to me that it's not necessary to have an environmental impact assessment because this is going to be a local zoning issue, and ministerial consent is being offered without the benefit of an environmental impact assessment. We've got the possibility of expansion at Daishowa. All of these major projects which are on-line, on

stream, but still there is no new environmental impact assessment policy. Again that's locked up in this never ending public input process.

We had public input into whether we should have an environmental impact assessment process. We had a task force report. The task force report went into the draft legislation and went to another task force, and there's nothing more than the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act, which says two things. It says that the minister can do whatever he wants; he can have an environmental impact assessment or not have one. Secondly, whatever he puts forward can be considered an environmental impact assessment. That term has no legal meaning in Alberta today, and it's very difficult to see when we're going to get to the point that it does.

Now, I see that we're inching a little forward on the Natural Resources Conservation Board. In addition to a temporary, part-time chairman in the form of Gerry DeSorcy, we have the appointment of two leading people in the engineering and environmental consulting business, which I think gives them a certain amount of expertise. They're not appointments that I object to, but I'm waiting for the day when somebody who has some demonstrated record of advocacy on behalf of the environment is appointed to that particular body and the body does something, takes shape, gets to work. Presumably, some of these projects that I've mentioned plus the very important question of whether herbicides should be used as a reforestation tool in the forest industry, the question of importation of hazardous waste: these are all important issues that need to go to a body which has demonstrated independence but also the expertise to deal with those particular projects.

8:30

In addition, we have to look at the question of licence renewals. That's every bit as important as licensing of new projects; in some cases, more so, because you're dealing with older plants, older technology, in many cases a greater, more negative impact on the environment. I'm informed that a great number of these slide through the process at Alberta Environment with no review whatsoever - I'm not talking about public review; I'm talking about a technical review by the staff - not even an in-house review. What this amounts to is a rubber stamp saying: we have insufficient time to review an application. I was given a list that said in 1989 there were 13 licences issued by the department for continued operation without any review because of insufficient time to review the application under the Clean Water Act, and another 13 were issued under the Clean Air Act. Now, that's very poor performance.

It could well be that there aren't sufficient staff to do this job. I recognize that there have been some increases in the budget in those areas, and I know the minister will say, "Well, I have to compete with the ministers of Health, housing, and everybody else in order to get funding for these things." But I say: why should you? Why should you have to go to Treasury Board and compete with the other departments? Why should the taxpayers be paying the costs of these reviews in the first place? It's a licence that's applied for and asked for by a private-sector or a public-sector operator. Everybody else pays for their permits, whether it's a driver's licence or a building permit or even a marriage licence. Why should these permits be available free of charge?

I wish to mention the site C project, because recently former Premier Bill Vander Zalm said that B.C. Hydro is interested in getting this project under way this decade. I would like to know where we are in terms of looking at the downstream effects of

that project in Alberta. It's a case where the shoe is on the other foot. You now, we've had downstream users in the Northwest Territories complaining about our pulp mills, and I know of a case where the Northwest Territories government was browbeaten by this government for having participated in a lawsuit on the Daishowa case. You don't like it when people take you to court. They were made to promise not to do that in the future as a condition for the funding of the studies that the minister referred to here today. Here's a case in site C where the shoe is on the other foot, and we're looking at the other end of the project. I'd like to know where we are in terms of an intergovernmental agreement on that. When I looked at the environmental impact assessments on site C, they were all upstream and not downstream. I hope, surely to goodness, that we have our environmental impact assessment process in place before we look at any more pulp mills, whether that's Daishowa's expansion or whatever comes up next down the pipe. We have to get that in order.

In the area of waste management, the minister spoke with some pride about the waste reduction and recycling program two years in the making. You know, I don't think that a more modest initiative would have been possible under any circumstances. It seems to me that the amount of money that's involved is not going to fund the Peace River recycling program that the Member for Smoky River asked about today or others that other members are trying to get off the ground, because you don't have the funds in this budget to finance even a collection system let alone the development of an industry in the province of Alberta. You don't get very far in processing until you have the collection system in place. It's just so fundamentally obvious that you'd think even the government would be able to get it. Until there's a reliable source of raw material, you're not going to get major private-sector investment in recycling industries in the province.

Take the example of Superwood products in Edmonton, which opened recently. It reprocesses plastic, makes lumber-style products that you can make all kinds of things out of. It's waterproof. It has a lot of interesting uses. Well, that company didn't come because of government grants and loan guarantees and that kind of thing; it came because there is a reliable source of the material they use in order to make the product. I don't think they would locate anywhere if they didn't have a safe and reliable source of product. The minister is indicating that perhaps he knows something about grants and loans to Superwood, and I'll be interested in hearing that.

Let's look at newsprint, for example. The Alberta Newsprint factory at Whitecourt, the pulp mill and paper mill, is all set up to produce recycled paper. They're engineered to install a deinking line. Now, I'm aware that they are looking for some financial assistance in that regard. I'm also aware that they have the capacity to reprocess all the waste newsprint in Alberta, but they have no hope of doing that until we have a collection system in place. We have a collection system in the city of Edmonton that costs on average about \$3 per household per month. Now, the total amount of funding that Environment has for recycling works out to about 15 cents per person per month. You would have to have 20 people in a household in order to be able to run a collection system on that basis. Of course, Albertans don't live, on average, 20 per household; I would say very few do. So what can the government finance for the amount of money that's in this budget? I think more demonstration projects, more pilot projects, more media opportunities, more chances to cite the slogan – and what's the slogan, hon.

members? – Action on Waste. So we've got more action that amounts to not very much action at all.

How many times have we heard the speech about what a great province we live in because of the beverage container system? I've often heard this minister talk about that as if it were a recycling initiative. I asked a simple question on the Order Paper: how much of this material is actually recycled? I'd like to quote from the answer, because I think it's quite interesting:

In Alberta the beverage manufacturers are responsible for collection of their containers from depots and disposal of the material. Alberta Environment has no information on amounts of material shipped for recycling.

That's the same answer I got on plastic bottles, on aluminum cans, and on glass. So they have absolutely no idea what happens to that material. This is not a recycling program; it's a litter control program only. In fact, I suggest that if they did bother to find out, they would find out that a tremendous amount of the material from the beverage container system finds its way directly into landfills. That's not a recycling program. So we have this very rudimentary program which is a public relations program which allows for some press releases to be issued but which will not result in the creation of a viable, job-creating industry, which is what we need.

When you look at where other provinces and other U.S. states are, they're so many miles ahead. In fact, Bill Vander Zalm's Newstech project in Port Coquitlam is now taking steps to set up a paper collection system in the province of Alberta, so they can ship our paper to British Columbia, process it into recycling paper, and sell it back to us.

MR. KLEIN: I was there.

MR. McINNIS: The minister says he was there. Well, what's he doing about it? Why aren't we processing that stuff here in the province of Alberta? I'll tell you why. Because we don't have a collection system, and we don't have any type of an industrial development initiative that comes anywhere near close to what LeRoy Fjordbotten is putting into the forest industry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. McINNIS: I'm sorry. The minister of forests and the minister of economic development are right there, both of them. They've got \$1.1 billion of taxpayers' money to put into the pulp industry. What have you got to put into recycling? Four million dollars by your count; \$4 million compared to \$1.1 billion. That's why we don't have a recycling industry in the province of Alberta. It's because it's a joke. It's a PR program. We've got the communications strategy, and we don't have the industrial strategy. [interjections]

8:40

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please. [interjections] Order.

MR. McINNIS: And we don't have the results to show for it. In the United States recycling is mandatory in a majority of U.S. states. [some applause] It's mandatory that a majority of . . . That's the first time I've had applause from that quarter. I see there's a stranger over there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please. Could the conversations tone down a little bit, please.

MR. McINNIS: The newspapers are required to use recycled paper, and that's the kind of thing that makes the industry viable. In fact, that's the kind of thing that makes for jobs, and that's what we need here in the province of Alberta. We don't want to have to spend our money to buy materials that are reprocessed elsewhere.

Also what it means is that the market is shifting away from these dinosaur projects that the government is funding to the tune of billions, and it's switching in favour of recycling industries, which you're funding to the tune of \$4 million in a year. It's a distortion of priorities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's comments should be through the Chair.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What's the reality in terms of waste management? Well, the province jumped in with both feet on the Aurum dump issue and became, I guess, the eleventh hour heroes: we're from Alberta Environment, and we're here to tell you that this is not an environmentally sound site. End of issue; Aurum is done for. You know, the money that the former mayor spent on options on that property to Prince T and T, the \$8 million or whatever it is, is lost, down the tubes, because Alberta Environment is here on a white horse to tell us all: this is not an environmentally sound site.

Well, I'd like to know where the heck Alberta Environment is on the Pine Lake site, because I have information where they indicate that this site is definitely going to leach into Pine Lake. They have consultants' reports left, right, and centre saying that. Alberta Environment didn't even show up at the public health appeal board to make a presentation. A decision was made denying the appeal of local residents. They're stuck with a landfill that's dead sure going to pollute Pine Lake. Where is Alberta Environment on that? Well, I tell you: it's all over the media about Aurum dump, so they're all over it, but when it comes to Pine Lake, which is near the small community of Red Deer, they're nowhere to be found. The citizens there have documented their case extremely well. They looked for help from Alberta Environment, but they couldn't find it because it was not to be found.

I don't know how you can sit back and allow a situation like this to go when you're quite rightly going to jump in on the Aurum dump. I don't quarrel with your right to do that; I'm just saying: do it when the cameras aren't there as well. The people from Pine Lake have a right to an answer from Alberta Environment. Don't you look at their consultant's report? Can't you tell . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Through the Chair, hon. member, please.

MR. McINNIS: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

Can't the minister tell that there's a problem here that has to be dealt with?

Where was Alberta Environment when it came to dumping 40,000 tonnes of toxic and hazardous material in the Foothills landfill? I'll tell you where they were. They were approving it. They issued a letter saying: you can put it in this landfill, this landfill, and this one. Well, it ends up in the poor Member for Highwood's district, and he's got nothing to say about it.

MR. KLEIN: It's not hazardous.

MR. McINNIS: It's not hazardous? Baloney, it's not hazardous. [interjection] Well, what do you say about lead for hazard, for a start? What do you say about mercury?

MR. KLEIN: Read the report, if you're capable. It's not hazardous.

MR. McINNIS: It's absolutely hazardous: 160 parts per million lead and the minister says that it's not hazardous. That's the same guy who wants to wash his hands in PCBs. I think he must have drunk some of them. That's where the problem is.

My point is simply this: let's have a little more than . . .

MR. KLEIN: Read the report, John; read the report. Do a little research.

MR. McINNIS: Oh, he wants me to read the report. Is that the one I've been trying to get from your department for a year and a half without success? The O'Connor report?

So what have we got here? We've got a phony-baloney recycling program that isn't going to fund anything. We've got Alberta Environment on a white horse with a white hat saving us all from the Aurum dump. We've got him sitting there approving all this stuff in the Foothills landfill . . . [interjections]

[Mr. McInnis' speaking time expired]

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

Order please. Order in the committee. Let's start off with a little semblance of order on this. We can build up to a crescendo at the end.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start by clarifying a heckle that I made earlier in the minister's comments so that his staff from Edmonton won't take it as a lack of respect for their efforts. I have a great deal of respect for the efforts of the staff in that department. To the extent that the minister was concerned that his Edmonton staff could be at home watching a hockey game tonight, I was simply suggesting that he hire Calgary staff, because certainly they wouldn't have to watch their home team this late in the playoff season. [interjection] In any event, I have enjoyed that.

In the past, Mr. Chairman, I have been, as many people have, at times critical of the efforts of the Minister of the Environment. I have on occasion reassessed that criticism, because I do see from time to time what I believe to be a genuine effort on the part of this minister to be aggressive about environmental issues, to attack those environmental issues with good intentions, to make a concerted and honest effort to make a difference in environmental policy in this province. Of late I have seen two events in this minister's political life that I believe underline that he must be experiencing a great deal of frustration in attempting to convince his caucus colleagues of the value of proper and aggressive leadership in the area of environmental policy in this province.

I noted reports of a public spat, if you will, between the Minister of the Environment and the minister of forestry over whether or not there would be an NRCB review of the Three Sisters golf course. His counterpart in the Ministry of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife said that he didn't think there needed to be one. The Minister of the Environment, to his credit, was quick to grab the microphone at the Conservative convention and directly and publicly contradict his colleague in the ministry of

forestry. What that says to me is that there is a fundamental difference within that cabinet at the very least and that it is extremely difficult for this Minister of the Environment to do what he would think is right to do and that each step of the way must be a very frustrating fight for him.

More recently I observed something that I would say must be considered to be shocking in this Legislature and that revealed to me a very, very backward view of environmental policy and of consideration for other people's views on the environment of members of this minister's own caucus. Late last week I attempted to have a Standing Order 40 motion passed that would see the Legislature congratulate Dr. David Schindler on a tremendous achievement in being awarded an international award for water conservation, an award that is presented by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the same body that determines Nobel prizes. We could not receive in this Legislature the unanimous consent required to debate and pass that, because backbenchers in this minister's own caucus refused to allow that unanimous consent. Here is a Legislature, a back-bench Conservative caucus, that allows the Kurt Browning motion to be debated, that allows motions about the Calgary Flames and the Edmonton Oilers to be debated and congratulations sent along to them, but when it comes to congratulating Dr. David Schindler, who is internationally renowned, who has achieved an enormous environmental award, this minister is mired with a caucus that could not see its way clear to the decency, the common courtesy of extending congratulations to that particular individual.

Point of Order Relevance

MR. GOGO: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader on a point of order.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, we're all, I'm sure, enthralled at the eloquence of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. We're not dealing with public relations statements; we're dealing with the estimates of the Minister of the Environment. So under 23(i) I would ask the hon. member to please deal with the subject at hand.

MR. MITCHELL: First, Mr. Chairman, I didn't see a notation cited, and secondly, I'd like to say . . .

HON. MEMBERS: Yes, you did.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, if I did, then I'm sorry.

Debate Continued

MR. MITCHELL: I'd like to say that the first person in this Legislature who should have gotten up to congratulate David Schindler on his contribution to the University of Alberta is this particular minister. This is very relevant, Mr. Chairman, because what I am saying is that I believe that the Minister of the Environment is making an effort, does have some good intentions, and he is mired and prohibited and anchored by a back bench that is in about 1962 when it comes to environmental policy.

8:50

So what we have is no real sense of direction on environmental policy, no real sense of leadership on environmental policy,

and the results are that we have more pulp mills in a shorter period of time, built faster with less environmental control and less environmental review than anywhere else in the world, probably, on average. We have an NRCB that came almost, tantalizingly close to being proper, but he couldn't quite do it. He had to gut it in its effectiveness, so now we have an NRCB that can't determine what projects it should review, that is hampered by political oversight and by political supervision, and now will be hampered further because, and I'm going to talk about this later, we're getting some very questionable appointments to that particular board.

We have environmental protection and enhancement legislation that we've been waiting for and waiting for and waiting for that we may see this particular session – we probably won't with the minister's track record in trying to overcome the inertia in his own caucus – that, in fact, is a bureaucratic nightmare because he's trying to throw around more committees: review committees, control committees, consideration committees, who knows what kind of committees. He has to somehow, through a backdoor perhaps, compensate for the failure of his ability to bring in an NRCB that has some teeth.

We see a tires recycling deposit policy that we've been waiting for for months and months only to see that reversed on the last day, the eleventh hour. He's not going to charge the tax which he's been promising to charge and which every Albertan would happily pay if it would do something about tires and avoid the problem that we saw in Ontario with the Hagersville fire.

We see a department that he claims spends \$137 million. Somehow that is a tremendous achievement in and of itself. He says \$137 million on environmental policy when fully 34 percent of that is on dams and water management, which has got nothing to do with the needs and the demands of today's environmental policy; 21 percent of it goes entirely to the Swan Hills waste management plant which, while it has something to merit it, is really in effect yesterday's environmental news and not today's environmental news. In total 55 percent of that department's budget has got nothing to do with the kind of environmental policy, the kinds of insights and creativity and aggressive environmental leadership that is required in this province today.

We see increases in assessment, in monitoring: yes, significant increases but on an almost minuscule base. That means that those people that have important responsibilities will not have the resources with which to fulfill those responsibilities. We see, Mr. Chairman, a throne speech where the major initiative – get this – is to go and do seminars for students and for teachers to teach them how to contend with the environment properly when students in this province probably are the people who should be teaching this back bench something about what to do for the environment. What we have in addition to these kinds of results or lack of results is little more than public relations. We have a minister who yes, wants to listen, and he tries to do that. He sets up task forces into this and task forces into that. He has an Al-Pac review panel, a Jaakko Pöyry scientific review group, somehow behind closed doors admittedly, yet he has a scientific review panel. He listens, but nobody in his government will hear.

Mr. Chairman, we see that on the one hand we have increases in the Environment Council of Alberta budget; yes, public relations so he can say he's doing something. On the other hand, he turns around and sees a good portion of what that group does through its PACs gutted. We see a minister who stands up and claims that he's doing something for waste reduction and recycling: \$6 million, of which \$2 million is for

economic development in light of an environmental recycling policy demand that we require a minimum of \$15 million to do a basic blue box program across this province.

Mr. Chairman, we do not have leadership; we do not have vision. What we've got is public relations. There was promise. There are times when we see this minister struggling to do what is right. Promise but no substance, very little meat, no guts, no vision about what this province could be environmentally, about how it could literally provide leadership in the world on certain features of environmental policy. We see a vision, if you will, a reverse vision of the environment that is rooted somehow in the context of the environment's relationship to economic development and cannot extract itself from that limited view to see that there must be an ability to find the environment in relationship to our culture, our ability to appreciate values that go beyond just basic materialistic values, a different sense of quality of life, our health today, our children's health tomorrow, literally the survival of future generations.

There has been no creative and no aggressive leadership on issues, so we don't see a recycling policy across this province. We don't see home composting programs. We don't see commercial composting programs. We don't see any strength to say that major industrial projects are wrong until they are proven to be right, so we get a liquid effluent CTMP mill in Alberta built by Millar Western when Millar Western turns around and produces a zero effluent mill in Saskatchewan. We don't see initiatives to reduce carbon dioxide. We don't see initiatives to reduce waste, real waste reduction. We don't see initiatives to have toxic pickup sites across this province, which could be implemented relatively easily. Mr. Chairman, what we have is a Minister of the Environment driven by a backward back bench in his caucus, a backward government caucus which sees this minister becoming an apologist for environmental policies which I believe are jammed down his throat rather than a leader on environmental policy that will make a difference in this province.

Mr. Chairman, there are specific issues that need to be addressed. The NRCB. Are we going to get an NRCB review of the Seven Sisters golf course and of each of the golf courses that are proposed throughout that region as well as in the Kananaskis golf course area? Are we going to get an NRCB review of the Swan Hills waste management plant expansion? Yes or no? Are we going to see an NRCB review or at least some basic environmental impact assessment and public hearings process of the Pine Lake landfill? Are we going to see an NRCB review of the proposed Sunpine plant in the Rocky Mountain House area? These are just some of the projects that require an NRCB review, which many of us fear are going to slip by while this minister slowly structures the NRCB.

When it comes to structuring that NRCB, what are the criteria for the selection of the people who are being appointed to it? Is it education? Is it experience in the area? Is it a track record in the area? Is it stature in the area? Is it a Conservative membership? Is it that I applied? Is there an application form? Is there some kind of objective review board? One can only question these things. We look at one of the appointees, a member of the board announced last week, who's the very same person whose company did an environmental impact assessment that said it was just fine to build a road through Lily Lake in this province. I mean, what is this person's particular expertise, particular orientation that he would be justified to sit on this board? Can we see the objective criteria that were used for selection so we can have some sense of confidence in the process that was undertaken to select the people who will sit on what could be a very important board?

The special waste management project: an expansion, \$60 million; \$24 million of those are ours. Are we going to see an NRCB review of that process? Is it not the minister's judgment that that would be necessary in this case? Much has changed since the plant had originally been proposed. One important question that needs to be addressed in a public review process so that people can be convinced once and for all, one way or another is this: is the capacity of that plant after the expansion required by the demands of toxic waste in the province of Alberta, or is this minister's premise in that expansion to import toxic waste from across western Canada and from across this country? Mr. Chairman, there are some very suspicious telltale signs that this government's intention is, in fact, one day to import from across this country. The president of Bovar has said that we only need three special waste management plants in Canada: one for western Canada, one for central Canada, one for the maritimes. Well, if he's putting \$36 million into this expansion and that's his idea, it would seem to me that maybe, just maybe we have another agenda for that plant. It is true that the scrubbers in that expansion will only work at maximum efficiency if they are allowed to work at maximum capacity, and they will only be allowed to work at maximum capacity, once this backlog is done, from the year 1996 to the year 2006 if we import toxic wastes from elsewhere in western Canada at the every minimum. Well, let's hear it. Yes or no, are we importing?

9:00

We need an NRCB review, Mr. Chairman, to determine once and for all those questions on importing; to determine whether there are alternative means now, years after the original plant was conceived and built; whether there are alternative technologies to burn and to handle toxic wastes; to see whether the chemical industry's new plan in this province called Responsible Care to reduce and recycle chemicals will in fact reduce the demand for the kind of service that will be provided by an expanded Swan Hills waste management plant.

Recycling and waste reduction, \$6 million. Mr. Chairman, yes, maybe it's a step in the right direction, and I suppose it is, but it is miniscule. The first thing that comes to one's mind is that the Treasurer or the caucus said, "Okay, okay, Ralph; we'll give you \$6 million so you can go out and say that you're doing something on waste management." It is not a significant commitment. Where is this minister's and this government's leadership on commercial and home composting programs across this province? Where are concrete, defined initiatives to reduce packaging? Where are user-pay garbage collection schemes like those that are being used with success elsewhere in North America to reduce the amount of garbage that goes to landfill in this province? Where are commercial and residential waste audit programs which would direct people's attention to the reduction of wastes? Where are programs and requirements to recycle CFCs and to reduce their use in this province? Why would this minister sit idly by and allow any minister of public works to buy automobiles, vehicles for the fleet of this province that have air conditioning? Why do we not begin to provide some leadership in those kinds of ways?

Where is the initiative for a blue box program across this province, not just in Edmonton? Where is the initiative for a toxic waste pickup scheme across this province, not just one or two times a year? I had a call today from a constituent who lives in an apartment in my riding who said, "When are we going to get a blue box program for apartments?" Where is the

initiative to support selection processes that will allow blue box programs to be implemented in places like apartment buildings?

Global warming. Carbon dioxide is perhaps one of the most significant environmental issues facing the environmental ministers around the world today. Alberta is in a special place in that particular issue. We contribute a lot of carbon dioxide. We have a huge economic stake in the fossil fuels industry. Well, Mr. Chairman, where are the initiatives? Where's the objective that should be embraced by this government that says that we are going to achieve some meaningful reductions in carbon dioxide by, let's say, the year 2000? We haven't seen such an objective. We finally got an objective on the Action on Waste management plan, although we don't have a time-scheduled, organized plan to achieve that particular objective. Why don't we have a similar objective with respect to reducing auto emissions, carbon dioxide from other industrial uses, residential uses as well, and other air emissions, gas emissions that contribute to global warming? What about programs for taxing those who drive larger, gas-guzzling cars? What about phasing in a program to reduce the use of those kinds of automobiles? Where are the disincentives in this minister's program for attacking carbon dioxide and global warming that would reduce the unnecessary use of fossil fuels and streamline and enhance the efficiency with which we use those fuels in this province? When we can claim that we are efficient and have reduced the use of such fuels and energy to the lowest possible extent, then we can provide leadership around the world. We can take those ideas and do something significant not just here but everywhere.

Mr. Chairman, why is it that this Minister of the Environment sits by and allows the Treasurer to put a 1.5 cent tax increase on propane, which in fact is a larger percentage increase than the tax increase that went on gasoline, when propane is at least a cleaner burning fuel than gasoline?

MR. KLEIN: I'll give you another ride in my natural gas car, Grant.

MR. MITCHELL: What about natural gas conversions?

MR. KLEIN: What about it? You rode in my car.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm just coming to that.

MR. KLEIN: Where's the natural gas in your car? He's got natural gas right there, but no natural gas in his car.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm impressed, Mr. Chairman, that this minister would have a natural gas conversion in his car. What I want to ask is: why doesn't every single car in the fleet in his government have a similar natural gas conversion? I wonder if the Premier's car, whose conversion could be paid for by the government just like the minister's was, has natural gas. Or maybe the Treasurer or maybe the forestry minister or maybe the minister of economic development or, for that matter, how many of them, Ralph, and are you advertising it? Why the trepidation? Where is the action? Where are some concrete – difficult, yes, aggressive, yes, but necessary – environmental policies in an area like the question of global warming and carbon dioxide?

Buffalo Lake. Here's a clear-cut case of where the minister simply does not exercise what power he should to make that stop. It seems that he inches along. He'll recommend. He'll say, "Please don't do it" or "Perhaps we shouldn't do it" or

"Let's do another study" or "Let's listen to somebody else." Buffalo Lake, Mr. Chairman, is a clear-cut case where we should not allow that lake to be manipulated the way the Premier wants to manipulate it, in his own riding. The fact is that that will cost \$13 million, and the government's own study demonstrates that that is a negative cost/benefit of \$2 million. The only people who are going to benefit are about 400 cottage owners in that area. They will get 87 percent of the benefit, and in fact that works out to about \$24,000 of free and clear benefit to every cottage owner. What does it take for this minister to step in and say no and make it stick?

Lily Lake. He recommends – he recommends – not to put that road through Lily Lake. Why is it that he doesn't exercise his power to decide not to put that road through Lily Lake?

Mr. Chairman, there are many issues that are not being adequately addressed in this budget. There is overall, I believe, a tremendous emphasis in this budget – over half of it, 55 percent – on things that are not really contemporary requirements of environmental policy today, new initiatives that are required of environmental policy today, or in fact have got nothing at all to do with environmental policy. In fact, I'm speaking of dams. What we would like to see is some aggressive, creative environmental policy on areas that are simply being neglected and have been neglected far too long by this government and by this minister.

Mr. Chairman, I leave those questions and those comments for the minister's consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is indeed my pleasure. Mr. Minister, you've been doing a good job, in my view and all our caucus' view, and so have the members of your department. They've been excellent. I've been pleased to serve on a committee that chose awards and recognized people in this province for the fine work that they've been doing in the area of environment.

I'd like to just focus most of my comments on waste management objectives. Years ago, probably a decade ago, people's attitude was: out of sight and out of mind. For most of this century landfills have been the chief repositories for garbage, and a number of factors such as increasing urban population and reduced landfill capacities and a growing public concern over the environment have led to a great change of attitude towards waste management. This government has recognized that, I believe very strongly, and has left the old ways of handling solids and waste produce and is doing a great job in disposing of waste guided by the four Rs of waste management: reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover. All levels of government are now into this and recognize the approach in dealing with waste.

9:10

The 1991-92 estimates that we are here to discuss are targeted for the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, and I think these are bold, proud statements of the government's approach to hazardous wastes. Eighty-five percent of Alberta's hazardous wastes originate with large industry, and of the hundreds of tonnes generated by industry every year, an estimated three-quarters is properly treated on the site where it is produced. But there is a lot of hazardous waste that is not managed properly by the producers. In 1984 this was addressed, and the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation was established by this government to plan, develop, oversee, and manage a system of hazardous waste treatment and disposal

for industries, business, and households which were not managing their own wastes.

This system, primarily operated at the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre near Swan Hills, is and will continue to be a model for other jurisdictions and governments around the world. Mr. Chairman, other countries and provinces are very envious of us for this particular treatment centre. As this corporation goes into the fifth year of operation, Albertans take pride in some of its remarkable achievements such as the virtual elimination of liquid PCBs in this province. This government's financial commitment to this corporation will enable the centre to expand its facilities to respond to the growing different types of hazardous wastes which continue to be generated. I have to allude to members in my community and corporate sponsors who have had quite a bit to do with this hazardous waste treatment centre, and I am very proud and talk to people throughout the rest of the country as well as other countries about the fine job of the Special Waste Treatment Centre. I am pleased by the minister's reassurance that Alberta's treatment centre will continue to be superior to many other jurisdictions'.

Many people have the misconception that the waste stream is composed of vast amounts of plastics that are causing severe problems for landfills. We have learned that plastics are not the problem everyone thinks they are. The real problem is paper, especially phone books. The average composition of the total waste stream is 33 percent inerts, 28 percent paper products, 26 percent organics, 6 percent plastics, 4 percent metals, 2 percent textiles, and 1 percent glass. Paper does not biodegrade as quickly as people think. Modern landfills prevent air and water from reaching paper materials inside the landfill. Scientists have found newspapers as old as 20 or 30 years that are still intact, dry, and readable buried in landfills, yet it's our very newspapers that criticize the recycling problem and issues of paper. Given this reality, the more we do to reduce, recycle, and recover paper products the better, because that is where the real problems lies.

There are obvious environmental reasons for reducing, reusing, recycling, and recovering our waste solids, but there are also economical reasons. Garbage is becoming too valuable to waste. There is money to be made out of garbage when viewed as a raw resource that can be made into something useful and solid for a profit. With today's technology and enough political will the only thing which absolutely needs to be landfilled in this province is the notion of one-time use of materials.

One component of the waste management industry which has grown substantially over the past several years is recycling. As of 1987 the recycling industry in Alberta comprised over 650 firms directly employing approximately 5,000 individuals. Those are jobs and important jobs. The total value of products produced is estimated at \$425 million. Recycling is a proven waste reduction technology. Curbside collection and recycling depots remove reusable material from the waste at its source. Curbside collection is in my constituency currently. It's a blue box initiative that actually was initiated by the communities. Every month the communities in my constituency have their own recycling project, and they bring in paper, glass, and metals. These people want to create the initiatives. They don't depend on government funding for everything; they have done this on their own. Yes, there's blue box more than just in Edmonton, and they did not wait for the government to fund it. The community did it themselves and has done a remarkable job and very proud of it. Therefore, I'm particularly pleased with the minister's commitment to the recycling projects to minimize waste.

I'd like to also allude to a constituent of mine who's just putting together recycling of tires: building railway ties out of recycled tires. I hope something will come of that with the Economic Development and Trade minister and the Minister of the Environment. People in Calgary are very excited about the initiatives and the help this government is giving them to produce plants that do such things. This includes also the new program Action on Waste that the minister recently announced; my constituents are really proud of this new initiative. Again in conjunction with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade there are a lot of jobs to be had in this area. Programs such as these will help realize this government's goal to reduce solid waste by 50 percent by the year 2000. By working with municipalities and industries this government is clearly prepared, obviously, to take on the waste problems, and the government program initiatives are really very well accepted, particularly in the constituency of Calgary-Glenmore.

I am pleased with the minister's past and present efforts in the area of solid waste management. Alberta has been and will continue to be the leader in the area of waste management in Canada, and we can be very, very proud of this. Our environmental standards and assistance programs surpass the majority of other provinces'. Other examples I haven't mentioned of this are in the waste management assistance program, resource recovery grant program, beverage container recovery program, Alberta waste materials exchange program, pesticide container disposal program, and the Alberta oil drop program. Even within our own government Public Works, Supply and Services and the Public Affairs Bureau have taken special steps to recycle goods and paper goods here in the Legislature Building. As I mentioned, the government is negotiating with manufacturers and importers of tires, and I commend the minister for this excellent work.

Mr. Chairman, I've had the opportunity on many occasions in my own constituency to have environmental town hall meetings, and recently I have had workshops where only a small number of people came to look at what the government was doing. I understand there was supposed to be an environmental expo '90 in Calgary that was similar to the one in Vancouver and that only eight people showed up and five of them were guest speakers. It seems to me that the only people who are upset with the government program initiatives are the members opposite, the NDP and the Liberals, because it shows you that if people really were angry, they'd come to these meetings and take part. When you only have eight people coming to a cross-country environmental meeting, it really is disheartening.

Mr. Chairman, to the minister, the community does applaud you and your work and also the chairman, who is the Member for Banff-Cochrane, for the work he did in public participation regarding the environmental enhancement and protection Act. It was very well received throughout Alberta. People have had great input into this Act, and we're looking forward to it coming to the Legislative Assembly. I'd like to also applaud the minister for the initiatives of the NRCB. People in Calgary are looking forward to the initiatives that the NRCB has made.

9:20

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to direct some specific questions to the minister regarding vote 1, Departmental Support Services, in showing an increase of 14.2 percent. Could the minister please explain why there has been this substantial increase? Also, if the minister could elaborate on the process to be used for developing Alberta environmental protection and enhancement regulations.

The minister made reference to waste minimization and recycling programs. I would hope that the minister could provide the scope of these, because people in Alberta are certainly looking forward to your programs.

With regards to the cost-sharing agreement with the federal government to clean up abandoned industrial sites, what is the funding commitment from Alberta and the federal government? Just a supplementary to that: how many sites will be cleaned up under this program?

What does the minister mean when he's referring to an orphaned high-risk contaminated site? If the minister could elaborate on that. I think that is vote 3.2; I'm not sure.

With reference to vote 2.2, Environmental Assessment, which increased its budget by \$1.5 million or 30 percent, can the minister provide this committee with some detail as to the nature of this increase?

One last question: what is the status of the management for underground storage tank programs?

With that, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to complete some remarks and questions I wanted to put to the minister. When we talk about public relation initiatives, environmental laws, the environmental review processes, and all the projects, we sometimes get caught up in these things and forget that all of these things are intended to one purpose and one only, which is that Albertans might enjoy clean air, pure water, and clean soils for many generations to come.

The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche pretends that he's the only one who's interested in jobs around this place. The fact is that if you don't have a pure environment, jobs aren't going to be worth a great deal. That's why I'm particularly interested in the levels of pollution that exist in the province of Alberta at the present time and the fact that all of our water, all of our major river systems suffer a fairly major degree of industrial and municipal pollution at the present time, that we have major sections of the Peace and Athabasca river systems which are polluted to the extent that the public have been warned about the health hazard that comes from eating the fish in that area. In fact, I quote from the 1991 Fishing Guidelines:

Fish consumption guidelines apply to the Athabasca River and all its tributaries upstream of Whitecourt, including the McLeod River drainage and the Berland River. Consumption guidelines also apply to the Wapiti and Smoky Rivers and their tributaries.

Which is another way of saying that the fish are poisoned along those areas.

Now, it's interesting to me that in the questions and answers that Fish and Wildlife offer up to the public about why this situation arose, they identify Alberta Environment as being the culprit. It says: "Who is responsible for water management in Alberta?" Answer:

Alberta Environment is responsible for water management.

Alberta Environment is responsible for assuring water quality in Alberta through monitoring, licensing and regulating water use. Industries, including the forest products industry, are responsible for meeting all of the water quality requirements of their operating licenses from Alberta Environment.

So it seems clear to me that within the government that Alberta Environment has the responsibility for the fact that there is pollution in our rivers and that it's causing, at least at this point in time, a potential health hazard.

Now, you know, Procter & Gamble is clearly one of the perpetrators, because in the area referred to in the Wapiti River, the only industry that could possibly have caused pollution on this scale is Procter & Gamble. I've been interested in the

statement that the Minister of the Environment repeats everywhere in the province about how the highest standards are met in the province of Alberta, that every pulp mill in Alberta meets the standard of 1.5 kilograms per air-dried tonne. In reality, as I understand it, effective this year Procter & Gamble has to meet a level of 3.0 on a monthly average and 6.0 on a daily average, so it does seem to me that he's still allowing an enormous amount of AOX, organic chlorides, to be put in the river from Procter & Gamble.

We also understand that the problems may be more serious than we had thought in terms of the situation there at Procter & Gamble. We have in that instance a tremendous problem with pollution, and we also have one downstream from Weldwood. Now, obviously that's already happened. What Albertans really want to know is what assurance can possibly be given that we're not going to have the same problems downstream from Daishowa and Al-Pac in the future as we move to greater and greater bleached kraft development. Who's ultimately responsible in the government? Fish and Wildlife says it's Alberta Environment, and in Alberta Environment it has to be the Minister of the Environment.

This is really my question: why does Alberta Environment not develop very clear water quality standards, not objectives or action on water quality programs, not more PR announcements but actual standards that we can live with in terms of the cleanliness of each of our river systems? I understand that a lot of money's been spent. A lot of work is being done to study the various river systems, study the sources of pollution, study this, and study that, but when are we going to come up with basin-by-basin water quality standards that cannot be exceeded? Because it seems to me that's the only way we're going to avoid a situation of having poisoned fish in the future and poisoned whatever else comes out of there. We need to have those standards laid out on a river-by-river system and then work back from there to trace the sources of pollution so that we have an action program that we know is going to work. I think now is the time to address this question. We have serious evidence of pollution in all of our major river systems. It's not to the point that we're hopeless; if it was, we wouldn't be having this debate today. I think that's something the minister could actually make as a lasting contribution and legacy: development of those standards on a river-by-river system.

On the question of air pollution I'd like to read briefly from a document given me by a farmer north of Edmonton. It's by Tami Kobel*, January 1991, Alberta and Air Pollution: Are We at Risk?

Many people have begun to notice problems with the vegetation in Alberta. They're seeing multiple species decline, which cannot be attributed to any one pest or disease such as tent caterpillar defoliation. It shouldn't be affecting birch trees. The most striking symptoms are mottled leaves, branch/tree die back, and pest and disease infestations. Upon investigation it was discovered that these symptoms are similar to those which result from air pollution impacts, most notably ground level ozone damage and acid deposition. While some monitoring is being done, the data is inadequate to positively rule out harmful effects to Alberta forests and soils, especially in the acid-sensitive areas. Indeed, there have been numerous studies done which did find damage to our soils and forests from present emissions.*

This is dealing with the issues of nitrous oxides, sulphur oxides: the volatile oxides which are not officially recognized as being a serious problem in the province of Alberta, but I think indeed that they are. I'll be pleased to pass the document over so that you can see it.

*This information could not be verified at the time of publication.

What I'm hearing, not from people of a scientific bent but trappers and native people, especially those who live in northern Alberta, is that they are seeing a change in the type of vegetation. They are seeing evidence of airborne environmental damage.

Again, I believe that these problems are not hopeless, that the problems of air pollution probably deserve more attention than they've gotten. We hear a lot more about water pollution because the water is a little more contained and doesn't spread in the way that airborne contaminants do. We know that in the Edmonton area recently Refinery Row failed to meet provincial objectives for air quality for at least 60 percent of the month of March 1991. Now, I know various people in Alberta Environment are saying: "Don't get alarmed. This is not something that's going to kill you." Nonetheless, when you see persistent high levels of hydrogen sulphide, for example, ozone levels, these are problems that I think the government has to address before it's too late rather than after. When people come forward and say, "I feel like I'm suffering respiration problems," and I observe in my area that there are fewer berries than there used to be, that there's damage to the vegetation, and particularly in the vicinity of sour gas plants, of which we have a lot in the province of Alberta, I would urge this minister and the department to take those quite seriously, because I think people are being exposed to particularly high levels of sulphur. The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark likes to talk about carbon dioxide, and certainly that's a very important long-term problem. I think the air quality issues in the province of Alberta should be addressed before it's too late.

9:30

I would like to close by dealing with the overall question of accountability because I think that's the issue that sort of underlies all of this. It's not enough anymore for Albertans to know that the government has broad policy objectives that relate to cleanliness in the environment, wise use, sustainable development, or whatever the buzzwords of the day happen to be. All of these verbal concepts are subject to use and misuse. It's a question in this day and age of understanding some very, very basic principles.

The great French scientist Jacques Cousteau wrote in his almanac recently about an old man that he ran across in the Caribbean who was fishing with a very small net and catching fish that were smaller than the usual type of catch. He said: "Why do you use such a small-mesh net? You know that by doing that you are eliminating the young, and are compromising the future of fishing." The old man looked at him and said, "I know this is not good, but I have to eat." Now, it's very difficult to persuade people who are in a situation where they have to eat that they shouldn't be doing the things that are harming themselves and their future on the Earth. That's why I understand when the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche talks about the importance of jobs. He comes from a local economy where people have had to do without many of the things that most of us like to take for granted. I understand completely what he's saying, but what can you do on a persuasion basis with people who have no options? If in your lifetime the only thing that came by that looked like a solid economic opportunity was Al-Pac, you can't persuade a person like that that Al-Pac isn't the best way to go, because they have no choice; they have to eat. I'm not being unkind in saying that at all. Persuasion only goes so far.

In quoting again from Jacques Cousteau:

It seems to me that each of us can make sound judgments personally by referring to two basic criteria that are grounded in common sense. In the first place, no risk at all should be taken when the survival of the human species is at stake or when the quality of life of future generations may be threatened (we have no moral right to make our children pay dearly for our selfish remissness). Secondly, no chance should be taken on issues that could bring about irreversible damage to the environment in which we live.

End of quote from Jacques Cousteau's almanac.

Those are the types of principles that we have to enshrine very deeply in our public policy, and we have to make the decision-makers accountable to those. It's very difficult when decision-makers think they're accountable to people who feel that they have no choice, who feel that they're trapped into support for a particular decision because that's an economic necessity to them. If decision-makers are accountable in that way, then we're going to have decisions that we have no moral right to make. We have no moral right to override the judgment of scientific expertise in terms of what will work and what won't work for our planet.

That's why Jacques Cousteau has prepared a Bill of Rights for Future Generations, which he and the Cousteau Society are trying to work through the United Nations. It's very similar in principle to the idea of an environmental Bill of rights, which is before this Assembly, and similar concepts which are being talked about in constitutional terms. It boils down to a sense in the environmental area of who are we accountable to, what are we accountable for. Clearly, we must be accountable for the future of our planet. We must be accountable to ensure that the economic system is made compatible with the life support that exists within our planet.

At Earth Day yesterday there was a group at the table next to mine distributing a poem called *Be There Constant Mother*. The poem closes:

And we who take stock of our life treasures
Should cherish her as our greatest fortune.
And we who take for granted the gift she gives,
Should know the punishment of her quiet tears.
For to us, she is all that we are, and more.

Well, "all that we are, and more" is certainly worth fighting for, and I look forward to the minister's response.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, may I take this opportunity of commending and complimenting the minister and his staff for the work that they have done. I've had the opportunity of living in the north, being born in the north, raised in the north, and spending my whole life in the north, and I have a full appreciation for some of the work that the minister and his staff have done. We come from an area that's rural and depopulated, an area that doesn't have the capabilities to deal with issues that are environmental. Environmental issues are expensive issues. Environmental issues are items that by and large the local municipalities can't afford.

Mr. Chairman, I've lived in the area and seen the area before the advancement of some of the pulp mill development. I've seen the opportunities that have come forward with the building of the pulp mills. I think it's important that we note that this afternoon the member from Jasper and Hinton was panning, bad-mouthing, foul-mouthing the pulp mill developments in his constituency. I think that's rather interesting, because in our area, much similar to the oil and petroleum business, we've had the good fortune to have developments come forward that have

fed the hungry mouths that live in the area, that have provided diversification for the people in the area. There is a strong appreciation by the people in the area of that type of development. It's true that environment has to play a key role and development has to take place only in conjunction with proper environment, but in the last two years we've had tremendous strides.

I've just had the opportunity of being in British Columbia for a while, which one of our outstanding self-imposed critics seems to feel he's an authority on. I've seen what their regulations are, and I've measured our regulations that the minister has put forward in the province of Alberta. It's with great pride that I was able to say, "Our standards are twice as good as yours are," and this is true. I had the opportunity some years ago of traveling through the Scandinavian countries and seeing their forestry operations. At that time I thought I was really wasting time, because I thought I was involved in agricultural projects. In the Scandinavian countries agriculture and forestry are one. I spent quite a bit of time – and this wasn't taxpayers' money, Mr. Chairman. This was at my expense. I don't believe in the socialist philosophy, as the socialists do, where they take all the money for anything that they want to do out of the taxpayers' pockets. I did it out of my own. I had the opportunity of seeing what the Scandinavian countries are doing, and it's with real pleasure that I can say that we are very, very proud in Alberta because we have the best standards in all the world, not just in Canada. It's sad that we have people sitting to our left here who don't recognize it, who hammer away at our industry and our potential and try and chase it out of our country before it has the opportunity of even developing. This is something to be proud of? They should hold their heads in shame.

9:40

Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, we are doing well, and the numbers in the House show that. We have people from Cardston to the Northwest Territories border representing us and representing our views. I don't see too many of the others, other than a few out of Edmonton. There are not too many forestry projects in downtown Edmonton, and perhaps these people should leave the city limits and have a look at what the needs of the people are in rural Alberta. Perhaps they'd learn a little bit along the way.

I want to encourage the minister for the work he's doing in regional recycling in rural depopulated areas as he mentioned in question period today, when I was having a great deal of difficulty trying to get an answer for people in the constituency. The people to our left again were a little afraid of the answer. They didn't want that type of news to get out. [interjections] Yes, it was with some delight that they were trying to stop that answer from coming forward to the poor people in rural Alberta. Then they stand and they defend themselves as being proponents of rural Alberta. It's very difficult to be on both sides of the fence. You almost sound like Liberals, for heaven's sakes, talking out of both sides of your mouth.

MR. FOX: Them's fighting words, Mr. Chairman. He can call me anything, but he'd better not call me a Liberal.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Chairman, I made the statement that they "almost" sounded like Liberals, so I hope the hon. Member for Vegreville will take that statement as it was made.

Nevertheless, I hope that the minister has the willingness and the will to carry forward with this type of a project, the regional recycling for the rural depopulated areas. I think this

is something that's very necessary and very needed, and talking to the municipalities after, they indicated they were totally, totally enthused with the concept. The one point they made, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman, was: "We do not feel that government should do this. We want to be part of it. We want to cost share. We want to be involved in this type of a process." It is indeed important that it be recognized that even the municipalities want to be able to be part of the process in all aspects. That's important.

I plan to be brief, Mr. Minister. I have two or three other items that I want to deal with. One of them is the groundwater situation with oil field injection. I would hope that that issue will be addressed. Water is a precious resource. Groundwater, particularly, is a very precious resource. That's something we have to be very conscious of, something we have to protect. In areas where groundwater has limitations, perhaps we should be looking at regionalizing our legislation to provide opportunities for the areas where groundwater is a precious resource.

I'd also ask that a larger portion of our time and our efforts be spent in dealing with drainage projects. Now, it's my understanding that the minister had an opportunity of flying over some flooded farmland, an area where it's very, very flat and doesn't drain properly. I represent an area that's very similar to that, in the Smoky River area and in the Valleyview area particularly, where water doesn't have anywhere to run, doesn't have anywhere to flow off. Consequently, we have to be prepared to spend some resources in allowing for this land to be as productive as the land in other parts of the province where we actually supply water.

I would ask that the minister perhaps put together a long-range program so that municipalities can plan in advance, plan years ahead, so that they can stage their projects on an ongoing basis. I think that would be something that would be very, very acceptable to the people in our area. The item of dealing with the municipalities on an ongoing basis is a very commendable process. It's one that the local municipalities have encouraged, and they're very pleased to have the opportunity of sitting down and laying out their programs and their projects. I would encourage that type of participation as well in the long term.

With that, I encourage the minister to keep up the good work, I encourage his staff, and I'd like to thank you for this opportunity.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I would like to attempt to answer some of the questions that have been put to me and perhaps respond to some of the comments that have been made.

I would respond to the first comment made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place by suggesting that it is he and not me who should resign, because, Mr. Chairman, first of all, one would expect this member to come out with a rude and a crude remark. This member has demonstrated time and time again that he's not an environmental critic; he's an environmental complainer. The more I listen to this hon. member, I'm convinced he's more committed to environmental and political rhetoric than he is to protection of the environment, and there's evidence of this.

You see this member at every rally, at every place where there's a stage and a platform to spout off his environmental rhetoric and his political rhetoric. But, Mr. Chairman, you never see this member at the launching of community-based recycling programs. I didn't see this member or any of his cohorts at

Springbank on Saturday, where 300 or 400 people turned out, people who want to get their hands dirty, people who want to do something for the environment other than talk about the environment like this hon. member, people who are in there doing something to protect and enhance our environment. I didn't see this hon. member there. I didn't see this hon. member up in Falher on Friday, where there were about 50 or 60 municipal legislators from planning commissions, from municipal districts, from counties, from towns and villages, all interested in getting in there and digging in and doing something about the environment.

The only time I see this hon. member is on television, and the only time I read about this hon. member is when there's a platform or a stage where he can get up and talk about the environment, talk about all the things that he would like other people to do, about all the money that they don't have that they would like to spend on airy-fairy ideas that this member likes to espouse in this House from day to day. You never see him out there with the people. You never see him out there with the real people. You see him in front of crowds, all his friends, all my friends: the Friends of the North, the friends of the south, the friends of the Peace, and the friends of the Oldman. That's where he makes his political hay; that's where he does best with his political rhetoric. You don't see him doing anything positive or physical for the environment. It is this member, Mr. Chairman, who should resign and not this minister.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let's vote on it.

MR. KLEIN: I think we should have a vote on it, as a matter of fact.

Mr. Chairman, I propose a motion: that this member immediately tender his resignation and do us all a favour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member attempted – attempted – to ask some questions. At least he commented about some situations, one in the Crowsnest Pass relating to the Saratoga gas plant. No information has been brought specifically to us. We don't know of any new information of concern about air emissions. There is a concern that exists relative to spray irrigation in that particular area from their wastewater lagoon. We're investigating that particular situation, and we're working with the community involved to enhance their wastewater disposal system.

With respect to groundwater information, again this hon. member tries to lead one to believe that information simply is not available. Well, if this member would pay attention for once in his life, Mr. Chairman, especially as it relates to the Okotoks landfill situation, he will find that a tremendous amount of information – as a matter of fact, all the information we had available to us – was released to the people in that area.

9:50

With respect to his allegations that hazardous waste is being dumped into that site, that is absolute poppycock, and the hon. member knows it, because the report that was done by the Department of the Environment after a detailed investigation, after a commitment to revisit that site, determined that in fact the waste is not hazardous and can be accommodated at that landfill site. Now, some people might not want to accept that, but that indeed is the finding of the department, and it was an honest, detailed investigation conducted under all the recognized

and required protocols. That information is available to the hon. member if he would only take the time to ask for it, and ask for it in a reasonable manner. The information that the Department of the Environment compiles relative to situations that affect people is made available and readily available to the people affected.

Now, we don't go out of our way to give it to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. You know why we don't go out of our way to make it available to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place? Because it's this member's job to use that information to the best of his ability to get us fired. He doesn't want to use it for good, honest purposes; he wants to use it to conduct a witch-hunt. That's what he wants it for. He wants it to conduct witch-hunts. He wants to use it so he can get on another platform. That's what he wants it for.

You know, Mr. Chairman, when this member talks about pulp mills, it really amazes me to hear him talk about pulp mills and to criticize the highest achievable environmental standards in the world, environmental standards that have been set by this government. But you know the strange thing about it? This member has yet to go to the town of Hinton with his NDP buddy, stand up at a town hall meeting in the town of Hinton, and say, "Close this mill." Now, there's an election coming on in maybe two or three years. I challenge this member, who likes to talk about pulp mills and all the things that are wrong with them, to go to Whitecourt and say, "Close these mills down." I challenge this member to go to Lac La Biche or Athabasca and say, "Close this project down." I challenge this member to go to Grande Prairie or to Peace River and say, "Close it down." He wouldn't do that. He knows that that soapbox up there simply wouldn't work for him. He will find out that up there he doesn't have as many friends as he thinks he has. What's more, I don't think the hon. member has the guts to do it.

Mr. Chairman, there were very few questions asked of me. Certainly, when we were talking about recycling, waste minimization, and garbage, we got a lot of it from that side of the House, particularly the middle side of the House over there. But there's a question that was asked relative to this whole question of the Swan Hills expansion. I think it's important to set the record straight. First of all, the amount of money that's being asked for in the estimates is an amount required to expand the plant to accommodate contaminants trapped in solid waste, to deal with contaminated solids. The whole environmental impact assessment process will not deal with the question of importation because it is not at this particular time a question. I have said time and time again, and I'll repeat it just for the record, Mr. Chairman: if importation of hazardous waste is to become a question, if the fundamental policy of this government is to change, it will not happen until there is full consultation with Albertans – full consultation with Albertans.

I've said it time and time again, but this member simply cannot, I have come to the conclusion – not will not, but cannot – understand that it will not happen until there is full and complete public consultation. The strange thing about it is that when they get all hot and bothered about importation of hazardous waste, they seem to ignore the fact that hazardous waste almost on a daily basis is coming from the Northwest Territories right through this province to a hazardous waste dump in Oregon. They seem to think that that's okay. I just can't understand their reasoning. They don't complain at all about the live materials – the toxics, the gasolines, and the high explosives – that go through this city every day, that go through the city of Calgary every day. No; nothing is said about that. But they really, really get upset and all hot and bothered when

you talk about the importation of dead waste. The safest kind of hazardous waste to ship: dead waste. Anyway, before we even address that question, it will be the subject of full consultation with Albertans. I've said that time and time again.

Now, to answer the only legitimate questions that were put to me this evening. These are questions that deal with the vote, and I'll answer them very quickly. The first question dealt with Departmental Support Services showing an increase of 14.2 percent. The question was: can the minister explain those increases? Quite basically, that increase is for the public consultation process on regulations, about a half a million dollars. It's to accommodate increased costs for the Round Table on Environment and Economy and increased costs relative to our contribution to the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment.

Another question was passed on to me relative to the minister elaborating on the process to be used for developing environmental protection and enhancement regulations. Well, just like the legislation itself, we plan to take those regulations out for public consultation to get full input on the regulations, much the same as we did with respect to the legislation. We will use basically the same mailing lists, and we will recontact the people that we contacted and who participated in the environmental protection and enhancement Act development under the capable chairmanship of the Member for Banff-Cochrane.

The question was asked relative to the waste minimization and recycling program, Action on Waste. The question was: could the minister provide more particulars as to the scope of the program? Well, very basically the principle – and I've stated this principle before in conjunction with my friend and colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade – is a three-pronged approach. That is, enhanced collection and separation of recyclables, incentives and encouragement of industry to establish in this province to add value to those recyclables, and the creation of markets for recycled material, starting with procurement policies within the government of the province of Alberta.

With regards to the cost-sharing agreement with the federal government to clean up abandoned industrial sites, well, this is actually a program that Alberta's had in place for some time. It's called HELP, Help End Landfill Pollution. The feds have just bought into the program in recent years. Again, we've demonstrated leadership in this regard. The federal government, under a recently signed arrangement, will now pay 50 percent of the costs of cleaning up so-called orphaned sites. In this particular case, 13 sites have been identified as high-risk, contaminated sites. An example of a contaminated or high-risk site would be the Canada Creosoting site on the banks of the Bow River. Through the carelessness of operators 50 or 60 years ago, the creosote was allowed to go into the ground. It

has created a serious environmental problem. It's a problem that is probably going to cost between \$30 million and \$50 million to clean up. The feds will pay, hopefully, half of the cost of that cleanup, but we have to address the situation. That contamination cannot be allowed to linger.

10:00

Finally, with respect to the final question by the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore with respect to vote 2.2, Environmental Assessment and the increase in the budget by \$1.5 million. The question was: can the minister provide this committee with some details as to the nature of this increase? Well, Mr. Chairman, this increase simply is required to accommodate more stringent environmental impact assessment guidelines, which will be enacted into legislation, will allow for more public consultation on environmental impact assessments, and basically bring our environmental impact assessment guidelines into law. Moreover, it will reflect today's environmental realities and expectations, those expectations and realities, of course, that are today being demanded by the public and we as the government, a responsible government, are willing to deliver to the public.

Thank you very much.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. So ordered.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the business of the House tomorrow will be in accordance with Standing Order 8(2). It is the intent of government to sit tomorrow evening in estimates, calling for the Department of Education.

[At 10:04 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

