

Legislative Assembly of AlbertaTitle: **Thursday, May 23, 1991**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 91/05/23

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: It's so nice of you to come dressed, hon. member. It applies to all parts of the House. Thank you.

head: **Committee of Supply**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

head: **Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund**
head: **Estimates 1991-92****Recreation and Parks**

MR. CHAIRMAN: The last items under this part of our Committee of Supply proceedings are votes 1 and 2 under Recreation and Parks, commencing at page 21 of the book.

The hon. minister.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased tonight to present the estimates of the Recreation and Park's budget for the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Before I start, as minister of recreation I should announce that in the hockey game tonight Pittsburgh is winning 5 to 2.

The trust fund represents a tremendous asset to Alberta and Albertans and is one of a kind in this country. The purpose of the fund is to capitalize on the investment potential of this province and to provide a legacy to the people who have made a commitment to its future quality and prosperity. While we cannot and will not diminish the accomplishments of this province in providing a standard of excellence in the areas of basic social needs and expectations, we can take a certain pride in the quality of life opportunities which we offer in Alberta through this department.

Recreational opportunity, fitness participation, protection of our historical and natural resources, and an appreciation of the need for maintaining a balance in our lives: these are the important things that Alberta Recreation and Parks provides to the people of Alberta. The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund gives us the latitude to respond to unique investment opportunities and special needs which enhance Alberta's competitive edge nationally and internationally. This includes supporting positive lifestyle choices for Albertans.

Now, in that introduction, I wanted to indicate that there is more to life, I guess, as we progress through a highly technical and stressful world than perhaps the basics of social services, health care, and education. It's important that people have an opportunity in this province during their spare time to enjoy the vastness and greatness of this province and to get outdoor experiences in their off times.

In these estimates tonight I'm going at two votes. Vote 1, the first, is asking for \$930,000 through what we call the municipal recreation/tourism areas program. A little history would explain this one. The municipal recreation areas program in the early 1980s led to the creation of this program, the municipal recreation/tourism areas program. Both of these programs have supported some 266 outdoor recreation projects throughout 41

rural constituencies in Alberta. I will stress that that's 41 rural constituencies, because last year there was some confusion in these estimates, and some of the questions coming from the urban centres indicated that they didn't understand that it's just in 41 rural constituencies.

The first phase of this was funded through the GRF, but the municipal recreation/tourism areas were done through the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. To March of 1991, \$13.8 million have been committed to this program; \$13,185,000 was disbursed, and in this year we will disburse the remaining \$615,000. I'd like to clarify that before we go to questions. We're asking for \$930,000, but there were more allocations towards the end of the last 12 remaining projects last year, and therefore we will only be using \$615,000 of the allocation this year.

These areas throughout the province, of course, created over 9,000 camping sites and other recreational opportunities, as we say, in some 266 sites. They are located through each of the municipalities and spread evenly throughout the province and create a tremendous asset to this province for future generations.

The last phase of it, of course, put \$300,000 per constituency throughout the province. Each \$100,000 carried a \$20,000, 25-year operating fund to go with these dollars from the heritage fund in order to protect the investment. We will continue to deliver those operating funds through the GRF. One of the concerns that we have, of course, with the MRTAs is to maintain them over the years and to ensure that those operating dollars are targeted towards the upkeep of the specific municipal recreation/tourism area. Our department will continue to monitor the way the operational funds go out to the municipalities or to the different organizations that are running these.

Vote 2 is the second request tonight. Of course, we consider these some of the fine jewels in the province of Alberta: these are the urban parks. The urban parks program was started back in the early '80s again. I'll give you a little background on the urban parks program in the province of Alberta. Phase 1 of this program actually started in 1979 with a budget of \$86.6 million. It was delivered to five Alberta cities: Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, and Lloydminster. It was decided that there were other cities that had grown in recognition throughout the province. We use as the definition of a city those that are over 10,000 in population.

It was a decision to extend these fine urban parks opportunities to other cities in the province, so phase 2 was brought through two years ago. We'll see \$82.2 million expended over the next 10 years. It will go to 11 cities, nine new ones. These cities are Airdrie, Camrose, Fort McMurray, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Strathcona county, Wetaskiwin, and again additional moneys will go to Calgary and Edmonton. Of course, we all know the fine park here in the city of Edmonton, Capital City park, which will continue to be expanded. We also know that we have tremendous parks in Calgary. We have a provincial park which is really an urban park called Fish Creek provincial park. Those cities of Calgary and Edmonton will expand on their parks systems.

This year we are asking for \$8,665,000 for capital improvements that will be distributed throughout the province, as well as \$150,000 for continued administration. We do have a degree of manpower, as you'll notice, to go with this in order to facilitate the consultation process that goes with each municipality or each city. We have three and a half full-time equivalents in employment. I think that's a fair request seeing that they

have to travel this province in its greatness and do consultative work with that many municipalities. I might say that many of them now have completed their master plans or those plans that they have projected into the future, and we will be working with each of the urban centres to try to evenly distribute this \$8 million and the requests that we go for in years ahead to make sure that it's fair and equitable to those individual cities that have their plans completed or advanced over others. No doubt by the end, we will expand these \$86 million and have throughout this province one of the finest infrastructures of urban parks – and I'll say this – in North America.

Not long ago I read a *National Geographic* that indicated the value of the urban parks system and the greenbelts in Europe. I was thinking then, when I was looking at the first phase of this – and there's a booklet out – how great those parks are and how appreciated in Red Deer and Lloydminster and Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie and Lethbridge. I was just saying that I want to give credit to those before me as ministers in the government who had the foresight to see these types of critical needs within our densely populated areas. It will stand the test of time, I'm sure, for the heritage of this province.

I'll finish there and accept questions and see if I can answer them to the fullest.

8:10

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I listened with interest to the minister. I don't believe he could have delivered it any better if I had done it myself. He's listened closely, I think, to the Official Opposition on the wise spending of dollars, especially for Recreation and Parks. I appreciate the ministers shaking their heads in the direction they are, but in the future they'll see that they should have shaken them that way in the first place.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the minister explaining in detail the funding for such positive things as the municipal recreation/tourism areas. Indeed, the total province has benefited greatly through these programs, especially by the supplying of operating funds. Very many times in the past the programs were put in place without any operating funds. Municipalities kind of bit on that little shoestring that was out there and applied for that money and got it in many ways, built facilities and did many things like parks and recreation and stuff like that. Then a few years down the road they had to find out: where do we get the funds now to keep it operating? Indeed, the minister has done well in the municipal recreation/tourism areas, because by supplying the operating funds, of course, municipalities, councils of improvement districts, MDs, and small towns or cities can look well into the future. I believe the minister's program supplies operating funds for 25 years. Once a facility is done or a park is established, there is normally a little expansion which they contribute to, but the operating funds indeed look after the initial long-term plans that they've put in there for the future.

The municipal recreation/tourism areas program has been a great benefit to the province of Alberta, but I was just wondering if there's an error or something in vote 1 where it says that the total investment to March 31, 1990, was \$10,815,000. This year it's \$930,000 under the MRTA grant. I was just wondering, Mr. Chairman through to the minister, if that perhaps was a wrong figure. When you look at some of the urban facilities – for instance, Muskoseepi park in Grande Prairie in 1987 was

\$10,782,091, and it says that the total amount spent in municipal recreation/tourism areas is \$10,815,000. I was just wondering if that was a wrong figure, or if that figure where it says total investment under vote 1 – is that all that's been spent in rural Alberta when, in fact, one fine community like Grande Prairie has had \$10 million just in one park, or is there some misunderstanding in that? In fact, Fish Creek park in Calgary, which is a very attractive park that I'm sure the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek well knows, must have some more funds to correct some of those old buildings that are there and some of those trails and protect the bit of wildlife that's there, and hopefully we can build some more there. It has some \$45,096,000. I just hope that we're fair to all of rural Alberta the same as these great big figures that we have in the Alberta urban parks development.

Indeed more people stop in small communities if they have nice parks, nice trails to walk on, nice places to visit where they can relax, take them away from city life with heavy traffic and people following you up and down the street, where you don't know people. In small rural communities in Alberta, Mr. Chairman, I find they are much friendlier and anybody will stop and visit with you. Those of us from rural Alberta all know that although the cities are beautiful and everything's at hand 24 hours a day, when we go back to rural Alberta, there we are: everybody's friends; they say hello. If you say hello to somebody in an elevator in the cities of Edmonton or Calgary or some other cities, occasionally they look at you as though you're something from outer space: "Why would you say good morning to me?" So there is some difference there. When people from the city go to rural Alberta and you say hello, right away they say: "Hi there. How come you're saying hello to me?" It's different when people get away from a whole compact of society.

Mr. Chairman, if it's possible, could you have these five people that are sitting around here to my right – because I have a sore eye and my ear still bothers me because of the noise over here, perhaps they could have their meeting outside. Is that possible, Mr. Chairman? [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think there should be a little more order in the committee. [interjections]

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, would you call this Assembly to order, please? I know they had a good time at the ATA function tonight, perhaps tipped it up too often before they left there, but we should have some order in this House.

Mr. Chairman, they've quieted down now, so I'll continue.

Indeed, the Minister of Recreation and Parks has distributed funds very fairly in many areas for parks and recreation, but I just want to point out to him that rural Alberta is just as important as the urban centres and the population is quite close to the same. So I was just wondering if there was an error in that particular final figure there, because it says last year \$2.82 million – I believe the minister said that it's been in effect since back in the early '80s – and \$930,000 this year, and the total is only \$10,815,000. It could be right, but perhaps there were less dollars put in prior to that.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, the urban parks facilities for sure have been a great benefit to the cities in this province, and I'm pleased that the minister has explained well the need for the protection of historic and natural resources, but nothing, I can say, is more

important than operating funds once you establish facilities by provincial tax dollars. Sometimes, at least in the past, municipalities wanted to get facilities developed and were always striving to keep them operating in the future. I'm sure every member of this Legislature knows that when municipalities run swimming pools and hockey arenas, the price of electricity goes up, the facility sometimes gets a bad door, or the roof leaks. It costs a lot of money to operate these. That very same thing can happen in provincial parks, and the minister has done a fine job on that.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that the Official Opposition New Democrats support the efforts of the minister to keep spending in line where people enjoy it and understand that the dollars are not wasted. The need for good outdoor living, good exercise, and good public health in the future is something that of course children are building on now and seniors are building on, and some of us who are middle-aged are starting to tighten our tummies up, so we go out there and exercise and walk around a little bit. I'm pleased that the minister has noticed that the values of Europe have now come to rest in Alberta. After he studied the democratic socialism of Europe and how they protected their parks, their fish and wildlife, and all their recreation facilities, now at least he agrees that it was the right thing to do, and we certainly agree that it's the right thing to do. They were leaders in that field years ago, although they did make errors. Now the Minister of Recreation and Parks in Alberta has picked up on that and agreed that that was one of the very positive things, and he is following behind the democratic socialists of Europe and other countries to build a better province and a better place for the livelihood of Albertans.

The minister talked about the \$150,000 for people from the department to look at these facilities. I clearly understand as a former mayor and municipal politician that it costs money for people no matter where they go, especially if they're looking after the assets and the investment of the municipality or the province. We certainly have to say that this is why that money is there, this is where it's going to be spent, and stick within those guidelines.

8:20

I want to say to the minister that I really support the three people from his department upstairs who work hand in hand to assist him in some of his ideas, and I'm sure, Mr. Chairman, that he accepts theirs and those of some of us in the opposition who agree with good public health, with good parks and recreation throughout this province, and the fact that the money will be available for municipalities to help them continue with the operating funds.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to offer the minister any help we can give in the future, especially in the development and expansion of such places as William Switzer park, within the beautiful riding of West Yellowhead. I'm sure as the forest people start creeping closer to it, the minister will realize that there is a need for expansion in William Switzer park. Indeed, the municipal recreation/tourism grants have helped the riding of West Yellowhead in Edson, Hinton, Grande Cache, Jasper, and in fact in the ID of Yellowhead No. 14, where great planning has gone on in the past. All you have to do is look at an area where there hasn't been that much development. All you have to do is look toward cities and the open plains to see what you can do now that the population is coming upon you and forestry has been torn down.

Those municipalities that have planned very well, with the assistance of the present minister and his staff, I'm sure will be happy with the funding that they are getting this year from Recreation and Parks. I wish the minister and his staff a very successful year this year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first question I'd like to ask the hon. minister is under vote 2, Urban Park Development. It says in our budget book that the total investment to March 31, 1990, is \$925,000. It has to be misprint. I don't understand why it says only \$925,000 because the comparable 1990-91 estimate was over \$3 million. I wonder if the minister could simply confirm that on page 22 the total investment to March 31, 1990, is a misprint. Perhaps he'd use the opportunity to just explain that particular figure if it's not a misprint, because it doesn't seem to be in any way reconciled with the dollar amounts that we find on the rest of the page.

DR. WEST: It's the year before.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Chairman, the comparable figure in the 1990-91 estimates was \$3,150,000, unless it's a whole new program that was established after March 31, 1987.

DR. WEST: March '89-90. It's to March 31, 1990.

MR. McEACHERN: You have to go back one year farther.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Okay. Well, I'll just leave that for the moment. It appeared to me to be a misprint, but if the minister could explain that, I'd appreciate it, because it looks to me as if a whole new program must have started on April 1, 1988.

I was just curious. I know that the urban parks capital grants program is very popular and a worthwhile investment in that it provides much needed open space for people who live in a number of municipalities, 11 of them in the province. I notice that this year there is almost a 200 percent increase over the previous year. I'm just wondering if the minister would make a point of identifying why this particular vote is increasing in such a dramatic way compared to the municipal recreation/tourism areas program, which has dropped by two-thirds.

If we look at the vote of Public Works, Supply and Services regarding the Capital City recreation park, we see that there's no expenditure whatsoever in that particular vote. So as far as spending under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital projects division on parks and open space development, basically the trend seems to be quite dramatically on the downward slope with the exception of vote 2, Urban Park Development. I'm just wondering if the minister would give us a rationale as to why this particular program, this particular vote, is being increased so dramatically while the other ones are decreasing quite dramatically, or in the case of the Capital City recreation project, there's no expenditure whatsoever.

As well, I'd like to ask the minister, and I've asked other ministers throughout the votes on this particular capital projects division this question. That is: what is the rationale of the government for continuing to finance these expenditures through

the Heritage Savings Trust Fund? As we know, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund has been capped. There's no resource revenue any longer being directed into the fund. In addition to that, all the income from the fund is being redirected into the General Revenue Fund, which means that the capital assets of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund have effectively been capped, which then means that every dollar that's spent under the capital projects division has to be taken out of a revenue-generating portion of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and redirected into these expenditures under the capital projects division, which has the effect of eroding the revenue-earning base, the revenue-earning capital of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. What it means is that the ability of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund to generate income for the General Revenue Fund for this year and years to come is deteriorating with every dollar that's spent under the capital projects division.

So given this trend, what is the rationale that the government and this particular minister have for continuing to fund these programs out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital projects division? Why have they not been transferred to the General Revenue Fund and those expenditures made under that fund, thereby halting the deteriorating condition of the revenue-generating portion of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund?

At one point in our past history I could, I suppose, understand the rationale as to why the capital projects division was financed under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. There was lots of resource revenue flowing into the fund; it was generating lots of income. It might have made sense to some extent at one time, but those conditions have changed dramatically over the years. We're relying on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund revenue to subsidize the operations of the General Revenue Fund. Given these current conditions, which, it looks to me, will be continuing for some time, why are we continuing to have any expenditures at all under the capital projects division? It would seem to me more appropriate to rationalize this expenditure with the general capital expenditures, the general capital investments that a government department does under its General Revenue Fund supported operations or under the Capital Fund itself. So I'm wondering if the minister would care to venture some comments for us whether they're considering moving these expenditures at some time into the general operations or the Capital Fund of the general operations of the government. That would be another policy question that I'd ask the minister to respond to.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Westlock-Sturgeon.

8:30

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to compliment the minister on being very efficient in processing the recommendations I had from my constituency, making constructive suggestions. All in all, he's been most co-operative and most helpful, and I pay him a compliment for it.

That's why, because he seems to be a rather fair going Joe, I find it hard to understand why he caters to – it must be an order from the Premier's office. That's the only way I can think of someone who shows such a good side to him to have such a bad side. There is in the regulations of the MRTA grants a clause that says that a sign shall be put up to show that this is an MRTA project, and on it shall be the minister's name and the MLA for the area. In my constituency the sign he put up had

the name Taylor chiseled out. There's nothing on there at all. When I asked about it, they said that it's a government grant.

Now, I don't see anything wrong with the government deciding that they want to take credit for everything, because Russians and many other people have done that in the past, but when the bylaws and the regulations say that the local MLA's name shall be on it, I wonder what authority he has. I found him a very sporting, nice chap, and I'd like to know who ordered him to take my name off, or chisel it off. By the way, this happened before it was unveiled, so you can't argue that it was some Tory who had too much elderberry juice on the way home that did it. It was installed that way. Whether it was somebody in his department that would have – I find it hard to believe that a minister would be that small. So I'd like to know just what's happening or why this was taken off.

While I'm at it that I'd like to ask the minister a second thing. The minister did tell me early in the spring that the moneys had to be spent and budgeted very quickly. I believe he wanted everything out of the way by February or March. I noticed last week that three or four government constituencies announced MRTA grants. Now, my understanding is that the rural constituencies are limited to \$300,000 each. I would like the minister to let me know whether or not there have been any constituencies that received more than \$300,000 – and I expect it's within 10 percent; let's say more than \$330,000 – and if he would be able to name them if there have been any that received more than that.

The next issue I wanted to touch on was the whole issue of the game farm out at Lily Lake, Mr. Chairman, which is one of the top municipal tourism projects selected by the MD and the committee that advises Recreation and Parks and Tourism, a top tourist attraction. Yet, as you know, the thing was closed down, and poor old Freddie is sitting out there getting lots of food but no human companionship; nobody is allowed to go through the place. It's the high season. It could be bringing in \$50,000 to \$60,000 a month, maybe \$100,000. With the added notoriety that the minister and Aunt Helen have given it to save the taxpayers that much money, who knows? Yet it lies there closed. Animals eat whether the farm is closed or not. The expenses are ongoing, so there's no real reason why the gate couldn't be open and we couldn't be charging tourists to go through and look at it while the minister makes up his mind.

I wonder: the minister is disposing of the farm in some way, shape, or form, but it looks as if he's left all the disposing of the farm to the present foundation, which has dribbled down to only about a half a dozen people. It seems peculiar to leave the disposal of a project . . .

Point of Order

Relevance

DR. WEST: Point of order.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Point of order?

DR. WEST: Yes. In Standing Orders it's called relevancy. I appreciate the member's attempt to draw another issue into the capital estimates of urban parks and MRTA. What I would like your judgment on is the line of debate that he's taking at the present time, because I think it's off base.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, it was taxing my imagination a little bit too, so would you get a little closer to the estimates, please?

Debate Continued

MR. TAYLOR: I will come to a focus quickly. I was just wondering how he can expect the farm to be disposed of properly by a foundation that got it into trouble in the first place. If the minister could answer what other people are going to have input into this decision besides the foundation, I would appreciate it, and I think many others would appreciate it, because right now it looks like somebody who made a mess out of things is being left the job of deciding who else is going to take it over.

I realize I'm sneaking one in, but he didn't leap to his feet, Mr. Chairman, when I said what a swell minister he was and how co-operative he was. It might have been just as irrelevant to the debate as the game farm. The point is: it was a compliment and he stayed there happily taking it.

This is something that I'd be interested in hearing his opinion on. I know I'm not allowed to ask opinions in question period, but I think I'm allowed to ask opinions here. The second vote, Urban Park Development, is for towns over 10,000 in size. I feel that's much too restrictive, particularly around Edmonton here, where we have bedroom communities that are maybe only 3,000 in size. I don't think they are getting the value of parks. Somehow or another they fall through the crack. A town of 3,000, 4,000, or 5,000 in size falls through the crack. It doesn't get the type of grants that an MD does to develop a park, which is, by the way, largely visited by city people anyhow. After they've been cooped up for five days working and living in a high rise, the first thing they do is jump in their cars and come out to Westlock-Sturgeon, because it does have the double attraction of being one of the nicest scenic areas in the country, Mr. Chairman, plus being the only rural area represented by a Liberal. Those combine to make it a very attractive place to visit.

To go on a bit further, these communities with 3,000 to 5,000 people and under 10,000 seem to me to be missed in the whole Recreation and Park's granting system. We have an urban parks program for 10,000 and more. We have this MRTA program, and I compliment the minister on it, but the small towns I don't think get that big a share. It's usually out on the edge of a town or area. I'm wondering whether or not some thought shouldn't be given to taking the 10,000 limit and bringing it down to about 3,000 to handle the many small towns out there. Now, far be it from me, Mr. Chairman, to suggest a motive that would help them gain more votes rurally. Nevertheless, in the altruistic mood that I'm feeling this evening, I'm suggesting something that would help the government, would help small towns, and maybe even me.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to also commend the minister on part of his portfolio being very well done.

I listened with great interest to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, who was asking about whether or not the MRTA grants were in fact finished. I seem to recall that about a year or perhaps 16 months ago I pointed out an error in distribution,

and I think it was a legitimate error. A large sum of money from the Stony Plain constituency – namely, \$100,000, or one-third of the MRTA grant – was allocated to a development close to the boundary with another constituency in the area called Chickakoo Lake. As a matter of fact, it's going to open up this Saturday. At the time the minister assured me that the previous member had in fact directed the money there, and I do recognize that was true, because the forms were of that nature. However, now it appears to me that the Stony Plain constituency is held to \$200,000 and Barrhead benefits by \$400,000. I could live with that. I think we all have to be benevolent and make sure that things go well for the province overall. The minister assured me that Chickakoo Lake was close enough to the boundary that people from Stony Plain would benefit from it, so I went along with it, not that I had an awful lot of choice not to go along with it.

8:40

Then we had an opening. I was very dismayed at this opening at the Multicultural Centre. Fifty-thousand dollars went there, this nice plaque was unveiled, and lo and behold they inadvertently forgot to put the MLA's name on it. I get the regulations, and I speak to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, and I came off better: at least they didn't chisel my name off; they didn't put it on in the first instance. I would think that this is, quite frankly, a rather juvenile approach to doing the government's business, because as MLAs we represent our constituents equally, whether we be on this side of the House, on that side of the House, or in the cabinet. I would suggest very strongly that the minister has a very strong obligation to correct what could be an error, an oversight, and hopefully not a vindictive action, because that behaviour is totally inappropriate and certainly does not bode well for the people in this province.

I also find it very interesting that there is extra money involved. In fact, if constituencies are being allocated over their \$300,000 limit, so be it, but I would like to be on record at this point that before any constituencies go much over their \$300,000 limit, I think it's only appropriate that Stony Plain be brought up to its baseline of the original \$300,000.

I'm also very pleased that the minister has announced that the urban parks grant will be expanded into other cities. I think that's extremely appropriate. These are places that were found in between the cracks. I can assure the minister that at least in Stony Plain constituency the MRTA funds have been, with the exception of an error made, quite equitably distributed. There is one substantial grant that went into the village of Wabamun, the day park there, and another one to the town of Stony Plain. Spruce Grove did not receive any of that money, obviously, because they are a city and they qualify for the urban parks grant.

In closing, I'd just like to point out that if the minister would take the time to reconsider the allocations to Stony Plain constituency, it would be greatly appreciated. Also, I think if he took the trouble to follow the policies of the signage in all constituencies, that would bode well both for his portfolio and the government as a whole.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to make a few comments on these votes. To vote 1, as already has been

expressed, I have some disappointment as to what appears to be a substantial decrease in funding to municipal rural tourist areas. These facilities, I think, are a great advantage to rural centres in the development of tourism in their areas, in establishing a sort of economic development for them. I'm particularly conscious of the fact that in northeastern Alberta, where I think there is a great potential for tourism to be developed, moneys may well not be found to assist those centres and volunteer groups in those communities to establish recreational facilities which would help them both in the economic development area and also simply in the improvement and esthetics of their communities.

In vote 2, of course, I'm pleased to see that the minister was able to find a fair amount of money for this vote, Urban Park Development. I think urban parks are necessary. Many people who either can't afford to or choose not to travel outside the city I think utilize either the ornamental parks or whatever green areas are available within large urban centres. I think they are used quite substantially, and I think certainly they add to the quality of life of people in the cities who otherwise may not have any opportunity to participate in some functions outside the cities. So I think in that respect I certainly commend the minister for being able to find the amount of funds he has to be able to do that.

I think the development of green areas in urban centres, as I said, is important. There are too many folks who cannot escape the city during the summer period and require those facilities to use. I think the development of green areas in the city also adds in attracting the development of new subdivisions. Providing green areas in those subdivisions makes the developments grow quicker and better, and overall I think it's a good process for large urban centres.

Basically, I just did, as I say, want to make those two comments on those two votes. First of all, I think we should find more funding for rural recreation areas, but at the same time I commend the minister for the funding that's being made available for urban centres. I think they are useful projects and make the quality of life for citizens better and make Edmonton a better place.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just a little concerned again to raise the question: why are we doing these projects out of the heritage trust fund instead of out of the general budget? It does seem to me that the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund has no reason for its existence any more. In fact, since we capped the amount of money going into the fund back in 1987, it doesn't make any sense to erode that capital base by spending money out of here. I suppose it's a nice comfortable feeling for the government or something, or they can convince the people of Alberta that it's okay because it's not out of the general budget, but these projects should have to compete within the general budget the same as all the other projects.

In fact, I can't help wondering if the cut in municipal recreation/tourism grants in this vote 1, on page 21 – perhaps the minister could relate it to the program that the government announced a couple of years back. It was a bit of a watered-down version of something that the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche proposed when he was a New Democrat. Before the last election he and I proposed in the heritage trust fund

hearings the development of rural recreation/tourism areas, and the government did pick up on the idea. They didn't put as much money in as we were suggesting for northern Alberta. We suggested \$75 million over five years for the northern half of Alberta, and the government put in a program of \$30 million for the whole province. I believe it was over five years, so we should be somewhere into the third year, I believe, of that program, some \$30 million spaced throughout the province, which would be, I think, somewhat similar to the kind of thing you're doing here under vote 1 of Recreation and Parks under the heritage trust fund. I wonder if the cutback here is because the minister is shifting the emphasis over to that other program, how it's going, and whether or not that is why these votes are cut back.

8:50

In terms of Urban Park Development I know they named specifically the cities that are getting funding in this, but it makes me wonder: why isn't there some funding in this or under the Capital City Recreation Park allocation for finishing the Capital City park here in Edmonton? The government did a great job, put up some \$40 million to build the Capital City park as far as they got. The park system in the river valley in the east end of the city is extremely well developed, but that has not been extended into the west end to the degree that it might. It does seem to me that the job is not finished yet, and I wonder if anywhere in these votes or in the regular budget there is any money to put into Capital City park to finish that project, if there are any intentions of putting in any money, and if so, how much? Those are the main points that I wanted to raise.

I guess there is another point sort of following up on some of the comments by my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly: the need for urban and rural parks as well. In the urban areas if you get into the bigger cities, particularly like Edmonton and Calgary, you can have nice parks along the river valley, but it's really important for each community to have little open areas and little park areas. Edmonton has been able to develop a few. I'm wondering what the minister's view is on that kind of development and if there's any money in this budget. I notice in terms of the urban parks that the amount has gone up from just over \$3 million last year to \$8.8 million, which is a big jump. I'm wondering if some of those extra dollars wouldn't be to help develop park areas in all residential areas so you don't have any too big a residential area. Little toddlers of three and five years old can't necessarily make their way down to the river valley, for instance, in Edmonton, and they need a little neighbourhood park right across the road or near the school grounds or that sort of thing. You need to have some open areas, some space for kids and for people to walk their dogs and that sort of thing in dense urban areas, so I'm hoping that the money isn't just for major park developments. I mean, certainly those are important, and it's important to have big parks, but we must also remember that we need little parks in residential areas so that neighbourhoods have a place for kids to throw a ball or a frisbee and for people to walk and find a little grass and get off the cement for a while.

With those thoughts, Mr. Chairman, I would let it go. Let's see what the minister has to say about some of the questions and points raised.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One thing that repeated itself here tonight from many of the members was: why is the MRTA funding decreasing this year? This was a specific program that would take some \$13.8 million into 41 constituencies, \$300,000 per constituency, and it sunsets. It's not a backing out of a commitment. The absolute moneys will be spent and delivered, and then the operational funds will come out of the General Revenue Fund for the next 25 years. So the decrease is the final phase of those moneys that were spent in each constituency. There were a few of the MRTA selections, but they were signed by the MLA in concert with the municipalities. The Member for Stony Plain alluded to the fact that one of the \$100,000 MRTAs happened to be over the boundary, and the MLAs along with the municipality put that MRTA there. The hon. member knows that he signed those forms himself on the rest of them and that he was an MLA at the time. Therefore, Stony Plain gets \$300,000, just as Westlock-Sturgeon or Vermilion-Viking do. So there is no inconsistency, just maybe a bent view of what went on.

I think a lot of the comments were based on the positiveness of this program. There were some frustrations, I think, by individuals that would hope they were in the government but that aren't government members. I sympathize with those thoughts, but still this is a government program brought forward to the people of Alberta, and it is certainly consistent with the policies of this government.

The urban park program. The dollar increases that have come along, of course, are due to the fact that as we go through the planning stages and the master plans come forward, with 11 communities involved, we then have to increase the amounts each year. We started off with a million dollars, we went up to \$3.1 million, and now we're up to \$8.2 million. The demand by 11 communities all wanting to get started on their projects means that we have to have consistently rising dollars in each year in order to satiate the appetite of the building plans. That's \$82 million over 10 years, but you'll find that there'll be more money needed in the middle years than at the beginning or as we phase down for the final cleanup of these programs.

The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway brought out that he had hoped some of these moneys would drift over into municipal parks in Edmonton. I have to say that this is a specific urban park program. Edmonton city itself has a huge recreation department, and I think the member should approach city council. In that regard I think Don Ausman could help you on how they allocate tax dollars that are directed towards local parks and local recreational projects.

I'll go over the Blues or *Hansard*, and I'll have the department respond directly to any questions that I have missed.

I thank you for your fine comments.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I think the minister is missing a very gaping question, and I'm sure it may be because he read fast. It is a small and niggardly thing for his department to do. The minister by not answering the question of whether or not he has ordered the names of opposition MLAs not to be put on signs in spite of the regulations saying to casts aspersions on his department. By refusing to answer or forgetting to answer, he's in effect saying that maybe some of the Tory appointments in his department wearing blue and orange underwear are taking it upon themselves to break the regulations by not having opposition MLAs on the MRTA plaque dedicating the area. I'd like the minister right now to stand up and say whether he takes

responsibility for that or whether somebody else did it without his knowledge.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, that's a specific problem that you can address with the minister, but I don't see where it enters into these estimates. When you're asking him to . . .

DR. WEST: Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased to answer the question directly.

As minister directing programs in the Department of Recreation and Parks for this government, yes, I take responsibility for the plaques that we put out on our projects.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Stony Plain raised the same question. Of course, in a large riding like West Yellowhead I don't stop at every sign and take a look at it. With my past experience in municipal politics, I don't go around and see if my name is established on every particular sign, but I think it's only fair that if a minister's name is going to be on it, if the Premier's name is going to be on it, then the MLA's name should be on it, regardless of what party he belongs to. He was selected by the people of Alberta to represent that riding, and it's a total misuse of public funds to go out and promote party politics on signs paid for by the taxpayers of Alberta. The minister should be responsible and respond to that question. Why is every MLA's name not put clearly on every sign if the government member's name or the minister's name or the Premier's name is on that sign? All ridings and all programs should always be the very same, and there should be no disparity between one city, one town, one riding, or anything else.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question has been called.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 1 – Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas	\$930,000
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2.1 – Program Support	\$150,000
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2.2 – Urban Parks – Capital Grants	\$8,665,000
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Total Vote 2 – Urban Park Development	\$8,815,000
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9:00

DR. WEST: Mr. Chairman, I move that the votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HORSMAN: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. I think since we are in Committee of Supply, the Capital Fund, we can just move to that as the next item and then report the votes at the end of the proceedings.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

head: **Capital Fund Estimates 1991-92**

**Public Works, Supply and Services and
Transportation and Utilities**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to deal with the Capital Fund estimates, specifically and initially dealing with votes 4, 5, 6, and 7. Just a few brief comments with respect to it. The dollar figures are located in the document dealing with the 1991-92 Capital Fund, and the elements book as well gives you a greater breakdown with respect to the Capital Fund items, on pages 154, 155, and 156, with respect to Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes.

I would point out at the outset, Mr. Chairman, that under vote 4.1, Capital Upgrading, there's an item in there for some \$22 million. All members will recall that when I discussed the Capital Fund a year or so ago, there was a request made of me for a description of basically what was entailed under the Capital Fund. I basically gave it at that time. We anticipate in this fiscal year that we'll probably be dealing with about 120 projects of rather small or emergency sizes that will crop up during the fiscal year to be dealt with. Some examples to this point in time: we've allocated some \$72,000 to the Colonel Belcher hospital in Calgary; there's a connection control that had to go into the physical infrastructure. I'll just give a few examples to provide by way of the whole system in Calgary. The Rockyview general hospital: we're providing them with assistance of \$295,000 for the repair and the upgrading of a compressed air system. Consort: \$18,000 for the replacement of a variable speed fan drive. Daysland: to replace condensate lines to the Daysland general hospital, \$14,000. You have then a continuous list of emergency kind, of minor kind of expenditure things that would crop up under 4.1.

To members of the committee, then, you would find listed under the remainder of the votes – in vote 4, of course, the total budget for hospitals and nursing homes. That would include funding for some 60 major projects at various hospital facilities throughout the province of Alberta. Of this total, 24 projects are scheduled to be under construction during the 1991-92 fiscal year, with the balance of the projects in various stages of programming or design. Of course, I'd also be very pleased to provide any specific responses that individual members would have with respect to particular items under vote 4, but in a nutshell, essentially it's a continuation of what we talked about earlier.

Mr. Chairman, vote 5 deals with the Construction of Water Development Projects. Of course, there are four items with respect to that category. The Little Bow River Project at Champion: we're continuing the necessary mitigation work with respect to that project. It's one that has been identified as a possible project that we would want to deal with, and we have the environmental impact assessment process under review now. It would deal with a fair number of components, of course, in the Little Bow River area, and a dam and a reservoir is the primary component of the whole thing. Information has gone out to the public at large with respect to this project. I repeat that basically what we're talking about in the 1991-92 fiscal budget is an environmental impact study that currently is under way, with the final design to commence in 1991-92.

This is a project that has attracted a considerable amount of positive attention from individuals within the area, Mr. Chair-

man. Just in the last few days I received very strong letters of endorsement from a number of municipal leaders in that part of Alberta. I recently received strong letters of support from Mayor John Berns of the town of Stavely; Mayor Stan Haydu, the village of Cayley; Mayor Ernie Patterson, the town of Claresholm; Mayor Henry Braun, the village of Carmangay; Mayor Mike Connors, the town of Nanton; Mayor Terry Penney, the village of Champion; Mayor William Yee of the town of Vulcan; Mayor John Zoeteman, the MD of Willow Creek; Mayor Eldon Couey, the town of High River; Mayor Norman Podesky, the MD of Foothills. This has just arrived in the last few days, and I appreciate the interest of the citizens in that area. This is a project that has been under review for some period of time, and citizens who live in that part of Alberta know the difficulty with water and the conservation and preservation of water there as well.

The Milk River project. Essentially we're just continuing the process that we discussed a year ago with respect to the Capital Fund. It's the ongoing one in terms of the overall evaluation.

The Oldman River dam. The \$37.5 million, in essence, will be the last year for a magnitude of expenditure anywhere near this level. We will complete the Oldman River dam during this fiscal year, other than some minor cleanups in the next fiscal year. I would point out, Mr. Chairman, that as we stand here today on the 23rd day of May in 1991 the water level in the reservoir in the Oldman River is now up above 185-plus feet, and it's rising. It should peak in the next number of days. In fact, the water in the reservoir is now almost at the spillway level, and it would be a good game for everyone to bet as to when that water will crest in the next number of days. It has been rather warm, and we anticipate that the water will fill the reservoir to the tune of about 200 feet. Ten days to two weeks ago the water level was at 75 feet; it's now over 180-plus feet. Construction is now in its final stages, and the Oldman River dam for all intents and purposes is a fait accompli. The spillway still has to be completed. Some work that has to be completed with respect to it on one vessel was being put in place several weeks ago. It was several weeks ago that I walked underneath the dam and the infrastructure with it and stood on the banks of the Oldman that have now been covered with 100 feet of water. That's what it was just a few days ago.

There will continue to be a number of discussions with federal representatives with respect to this project. In fact, a federal EARP hearing has been scheduled for June 5 and June 6 in Lethbridge dealing with safety aspects. We've provided all necessary information at the request of the panel with respect to this, as we've said repeatedly that we would do. As I understand, in the fall of 1991 there will continue to be socioeconomic development hearings. Of course, individuals who are interested in the intensity of emotion with respect to a project like this, and the anger that's sometimes expressed to certain individuals, will note that in recent days various threats have been issued by an individual on the Peigan reserve and totally disclaimed by the democratically elected chief with respect to the whole project. Mr. Chairman, these things are not always easy and sometimes very difficult.

The Pine Coulee project. Stavely again is more advanced in the research work that's been done on the Little Bow River project, and there's very significant support as well in that part of the province.

Vote 6, Construction of Government Facilities. This will be the last major expenditure of dollars under the Capital Fund for

these two major international tourism destination projects. The Remington Alberta Carriage Centre in Cardston and the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin are in their final days of construction. Construction will be concluded very, very shortly during this fiscal year, and program planning with respect to how these facilities will be dealt with in the public will be resolved by the two MLAs for the area, working hand in hand with the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. In fact, the infrastructure, filling of the displays and everything else, is ongoing as well, but it's not covered under funding in this one.

9:10

Vote 7 I'll do as the interim Minister of Transportation and Utilities. The \$30.675 million deals with the transportation infrastructure. The items that are identified in vote 7: construction that of course, in essence is under way. Of that \$30,675,000 the plan basically has us dealing with the construction of resource roads in the area, in a map that's clearly been identified to this point in time, about \$11,452,000; the bridge, of course, about \$6,723,000; and the rail lines to the resources, about 12 and a half million dollars. Of course, that's just within the total figure of \$30,675,000. We anticipate that this work will be under way very, very shortly, all parts of the work that will be done in this fiscal year. If individual members want to know of the basic infrastructure, I'd be very happy to provide it to them. It's all been worked out with the local municipality in terms of where the roads would go and the quality and the standard of the road and the like.

Mr. Chairman, that in an overview would give you some very general statements with respect to the Capital Fund. I would point out and perhaps just make a comment or two with respect to construction activity in the province of Alberta in 1991, because the Capital Fund of the province of Alberta is always built on the basis of the assessment that we would receive in talking to the construction industry on all aspects of the industry in the province of Alberta. Earlier this year, in February, the Alberta Construction Association, which is one of those groups that the government would consult with, basically indicated to us that they were looking at activity in the province of Alberta of about 10 and a half billion dollars in 1991. That essentially was in the commercial, institutional, industrial, and residential construction aspects of life, and then added to that was about 3 and a half billion dollars worth of heavy engineering for oil and gas drilling.

So in essence you're looking at ballpark figures in the construction level in the province of Alberta of upwards of \$14 billion. I would point out, Mr. Chairman, that there is a lot of contractor capacity in the province of Alberta, and recent bids that we've received in the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services have seen very, very intense bidding. In fact, on average, seven general contractors are bidding on Public Works, Supply and Service's projects, compared to four general contractors in the past several years. In other words, the intensity of what is happening in the marketplace sees that there are more contractors going after the present jobs than there were just several years ago.

It's my understanding as well that labour agreements in most trades are close to being settled and that in essence the indications are that for the most part we'll be looking at two-year contracts that will be resolved between the various trades within the province and the various contractors. My understanding is that there's very little chance of labour unrest in the construction

industry in the province of Alberta in the upcoming year. However, Mr. Chairman, with the changing demographics in this country and looking at the employment/unemployment statistics that are issued on a monthly basis by the Minister of Career Development and Employment, one would seem to indicate that there seems to continue to be a rather higher level of unemployment in the construction sector than perhaps in other sectors of the province of Alberta. That in all likelihood is a result of a lot of in-migration of people coming from other parts of the country who basically believe that Alberta is much, much hotter than it is. We've got a very strong economy, a very good economy, and the construction side of it remains healthy, but it seems that there are a lot of people coming from other parts of the country continuously in search of this.

The province, through the processes that we do have, looks very carefully at what the Capital Fund commitments will be in a particular fiscal year, and we're governed to a very large degree by the best estimates that we have in terms of the total construction industry in a given year.

Mr. Chairman, those are overview comments with these votes, and I'd be very happy to receive questions with respect to them. Hopefully we'll be in a position to either provide the specific responses to the individual questions tonight, and if not, then I will certainly get back.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before recognizing the next speaker – I'm sorry, hon. members – there's something that the Chair should draw to the attention of members of the committee, and that is that related to votes 5 and 6 are two items under the supplementary estimates dealing with special warrants for this particular area. They're located on page 23 of our Capital Fund estimates book.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to confine my comments to two areas. I see that the overall tendency from the Capital Fund Public Works, Supply and Services section relating to vote 4, Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes, indicates a trend towards long-term care facilities which are not acute care facilities, which is a very wise direction considering the inevitable aging of the population.

On the other hand, I looked carefully through the facilities proposed, the facilities that are ongoing, and I see nothing for the area of Fort McMurray. I understand that the government has a mind-set that Fort McMurray is a young community, it doesn't have any older people, and therefore no facility needs to exist. It may well be the case that no stand-alone facility needs to exist, but I would argue strenuously that the senior citizens in Fort McMurray are faced with one of two choices, neither of which are palatable. One is that when they are no longer able to look after themselves and need long-term care, they can, if the beds are available, go into the general hospital and occupy acute care beds. The government knows full well that this has been a problem for many years in many hospitals.

Their alternative is to leave the community. I think that this is a shame, and I do not understand why, when I know the minister has been asked and I know the Health minister has been asked: if not money for a stand-alone auxiliary hospital or nursing home or combination, as we move into the innovative age of combined care facilities, why on earth has the fifth floor of that hospital, which is currently not being used, been turned down by the government for renovation? I can't understand it.

It's not being used. They need a facility. The cheapest way to do this is to make the empty floor of the hospital into a facility for the aged so that they don't have to leave the community or, at much greater expense to the taxpayer, occupy acute care beds. Now, I know that the formula for funding is changing; nonetheless, we are talking about an environment that should not be a hospital environment. Aging people should not have to make that choice. They should not have to be side by side with people with acute care health problems. They need a facility. Surely this is a very cheap way to do it. I know city council has proposed it. I don't understand why it's not there, and I'd love to hear from the minister on the subject.

The only other area on which I'd like to make comments, Mr. Chairman, relates to vote 7, Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure. Every year I scratch my head about subjects like this. We see loans and loan guarantees to these companies, low stumpage rates being offered to them; in fact, so low that they'd be shooting themselves in the head if they didn't locate in Alberta. Then, on top of that, the taxpayers have to foot the bill for the road infrastructure to accommodate the Al-Pac plant. Now, I just don't see that that's fair. The position that the New Democrats have taken time and again is that if you're going to invest money in a project on the justification that it constitutes economic development and stabilization for the long term, then you either take an equity position or find a way to secure the funding through the company, such as through personal notes, which has not been observed in the past, as we've found out in recent weeks, Mr. Chairman. I don't understand why it is that \$30 million is being allocated to build roads for a private company that expects to make a lot of money off of Alberta's resources, the requirements of which are minimal when it comes to reforestation, the requirements of which are minimal when it comes to environmental standards for production, the requirements of which are minimal when it comes to effluent control and air quality control. When a fair amount of money, hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, is also put at risk through loan guarantees and loans, I don't understand why we have to put another \$30 million in cash to help this company. Why are we doing this? I can't understand.

Those would be my comments, Mr. Chairman.

9:20

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll confine my comments and questions to vote 4, Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the minister for giving us the overview, and I acknowledge the original \$22 million in Capital Upgrading is in small projects that are going to happen through the year. Perhaps at some point we can have some updates as to how we're going along in that; it would be useful. However, I wonder if the minister would comment on whether or not public works has an overall plan for the rationalization of underutilized institutions in our communities and for the capital investment that's needed to convert them to extended care or to other uses such as adult day care, day hospitals, and so on. If there is a long-range plan, I would be grateful to hear what it is, and if there isn't, perhaps the minister will explain why at this point in our health care facility development we don't have one.

Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to see in 4.2 the construction will proceed at the Royal Alex, and I want to thank the minister for ensuring that this very necessary project is finally going ahead.

In vote 4.3, Mr. Chairman, there's an increase here – it looks very large – to the Alberta Hospital. It's \$680,000. It's also welcome. Perhaps the minister will tell us what the extent of the construction is going to be out at Alberta Hospital. Having visited the institution fairly recently, I recognize that there are a number of units on the campus that should probably be put out of use, that they are not fit, and I think they're inappropriate for an acute mental health facility in our modern health care world. I'm astonished in visiting that institution at the difference in the comfort level in the capital facility between those who are sentenced to be there for treatment and those who are there voluntarily for treatment for mental illness. The minister, I'm sure, has seen that facility and will recognize my concern about the difference in the quality of the environment for people who are, in effect, prisoners and for people who are there because they are ill.

A further question, about the \$200,000 for the Northern Alberta Children's hospital. The minister didn't tell us what that's for, and I would like the details on that. We all know the current plans to have the task force review and develop two major children's units in the city. Does this relate to that expenditure? Does it relate to a temporary wing at the Royal Alex? What are we talking about there?

Mr. Chairman, in 4.4, Community-Based Hospital Facilities, can the minister explain to us what plans and what stage the Slave Lake hospital is at? This is one that is still desperately needed, and it was promised, as I recall, during the last election. Perhaps we can have an update on where that is in the planning.

The \$1.6 million for health facilities waste management is a puzzle to me, Mr. Chairman. Is this to purchase the refrigerated trailers to store waste? Perhaps the minister would comment on the current plan that I have, the Policy Framework for Hospital Waste Management, which indicates that an amount of \$2.1 million for capital upgrading will be in the 1991-92 budget. There's a detail on page 3 of that particular document that states that amount, and it doesn't quite coincide with the one that's in our capital program here.

Mr. Chairman, further in hospital waste management, is the Beiseker plant part of the minister's construction schedule? I gather it's a private operation, but I'm not clear as to whether or not the government has some equity in that particular plant and how that fits into the whole program of health care waste management.

In 4.5, Mr. Chairman, the only projects that seem to be going through are the Daysland general and the completion of dealing with the construction problems at Black Diamond. Will the minister tell us what the results are in the construction problems, what happened as a result of the difficulties that were plaguing the prototype hospitals that we were building? Have all of those been repaired and completed, and has the government recouped any of the additional expenses that were incurred in that operation?

Auxiliary Hospitals is up to \$10.6 million. How many additional beds, if any, have been created by this expenditure, or was it simply renovations? Will the minister's new policy of allowing auxiliary facilities to reduce occupancy levels to 96 percent – will the minister comment whether or not there will be any further commitment to create additional beds to make up for that difference?

In nursing homes, how many, if any, additional beds have been created by the 4.7 vote? Finally, Mr. Chairman, I just have one last question. I'm aware, as many members are, that there's a great deal of inventory of hospital equipment throughout our province both in use and in storage. Has the minister a plan for total inventory and a plan for future use or disposal of the inventory of equipment that is in existence in the province that is not in use now and is not anticipated to be in use?

Those are my questions, Mr. Chairman.

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

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, I have a few questions, I think mostly pertaining to vote 4.

The first one really is a question as a result of all this expenditure. I wonder whether he is actually fulfilling a promise of the New Democratic Party in the last provincial election. It seems to me we were the only party that went to the electorate, the people of Alberta back in 1989, Mr. Chairman, if you remember, and said: "Listen, people of Alberta. We want you to vote for us because we will promise that there will be no new, additional acute care beds built in this province if you vote for us." In other words, there'll be a freeze on capital construction of acute care beds. No net increase of beds in the acute care hospital section. Now, I know other members across the way said, "Oh, that means the NDP wants to close down hospitals." Liberals: I don't know if they had a position or said, "Well, we'll build some hospitals here, some hospitals there, depending on how many votes we can get." We were the only party that consistently got up for the voters and said, "Listen; we've got, I think, about five acute care beds per thousand in this province, which is more than enough, which is higher than the national average, and we've got enough."

We came to the conclusion long ago, at a New Democrat provincial convention, that when you build beds, you know what? You've got to pay money to operate those beds. You've got to pay money for nurses. You've got to pay money for dietary, for laundry, for all the rest. You can't just build a bed, cut the ribbon, walk away, and say, "Okay; vote for us." That's the legacy of the Lougheed government. That's the legacy of this government and the Getty government for years, for decades. We said let's bring a halt to it. Let's bring a freeze to any new additional acute care beds. Now, you can replace beds. You can upgrade beds. You can build long-term care beds, all the rest. But when it comes to operating those expensive \$400 or \$500 a day acute care beds, no more. We've had enough.

Well, I see before us that there are in votes 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5, as the minister knows, hospitals which need some capital dollars here before us tonight. My first question to him is: is it true that by virtue of the expenditure of these funds, we are adding new and additional beds to the system overall? For instance, in the town of St. Albert, where the Solicitor General is from, we have a case where I think the existing hospital was less than 100 beds. In the last provincial election they said: oh, no, forget those NDP; forget that local NDP candidate; we're going to build a brand-new hospital with 120 beds or 180 beds; we're going to build a new hospital with a net increase in the total number of beds in that community. I remember a reporter calling me who said, "What do you think about this, Mr. Roberts?" I said: "I think it's folly. I think it's foolishness for

the community of St. Albert to build a brand-new hospital with a net increase of acute care beds which would in fact double the existing capacity of the hospital that is currently there." Now, I don't mind if you want to replace the 60-bed hospital with another 60-bed hospital, but for heaven's sake don't go and replace a 60-bed hospital with a 120-bed hospital. That's nonsense. It's folly, and it will only come to haunt the operating dollars of this and every succeeding government.

9:30

Well, I see that in hindsight the administration of St. Albert said – guess what? – we can build this new hospital, and it's going to cost us a lot of money, but we're not going to be able to open all those new beds we promised in the last election; in fact, we had an overguesstimate of what we were going to need in this community. Now they're going to put pressure on the Camsell and other existing hospitals to consolidate there and make some rationalization of the entire beds.

My question to the minister, and in consultation with the Minister of Health, is: is it not true that by virtue of expenditure of all these dollars and sums before us tonight, there are in fact no new additional beds added to the system? In fact, from what I've heard from the Minister of Health, I think that the number of beds per thousand have gone down in the province. We were at about 6.5 per thousand, and we're now down to five or perhaps even four and a half. This can only be through a closure or a freeze, obviously, on any new capacity being built.

I want an explanation from the minister as to why the Tories would go ahead and misrepresent our position, why the Liberals would misrepresent our position. We were trying to be honest, up front with the electorate with respect to that position: no new additional beds. [interjection] I know the member from Calgary would agree with me, because I know he wanted a hospital on the northeast side of town there that would add additional beds to the city of Calgary and now there's great difficulty with keeping it open. It's a fundamental point, and I hate to belabour it.

Mr. Chairman, three years ago when this vote was up, I remember at least a dozen hands of Tory backbenchers going up. With each hand going up, you could tell it was another Tory backbencher wanting more beds in their hospital in their community so they could cut more ribbons and try to get more votes from that. That was only three years ago. I don't know how many want to get into this debate tonight and advocate for additional beds for their hospital in their community, but it seems to me that a major tide has been turned. I would like the minister of public works to say, yes, it was the New Democratic caucus that led the way on this point. We took a bold stand on this and a lot of heat for it, because people said, "Oh, no, you can't win votes by not promising to build new hospitals." In fact, the electorate was on our side, and the votes before us tonight I think prove that.

What I do want to get into are a couple of difficult issues. I haven't the expertise myself to understand how decisions by government are made with respect to when you decide that you're going to upgrade existing facilities or when you decide that a certain facility has reached such a level of depreciation that it is no longer valuable in the economic or medical/health care sense. I think I remember that I posed this question to the minister last year. Certain administrators in certain hospitals have this similar question. They don't know, after a government builds a building, builds a hospital – I don't know all the

accounting measures, but in most private businesses it seems to me that you build a building and then you write down the depreciation on that building over a 10- to 20-year period. You write it down in terms of asset depletion on that building. I don't know.

It seems to me that my only clue is on the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre. That's still on the books for \$300 million. To the government that's still a \$300 million asset even though it's been open and operating for at least three to four years. I don't know from this minister. Now, he might want to say he's only responsible for building these things and to come to the Legislative Assembly and beg us for the money to build them, but he doesn't have a clue what the value is, what the asset is worth after he builds them. Maybe it's the Provincial Treasurer's or somebody else's responsibility to look at the depreciation of these very expensive buildings that we spend millions and millions of dollars on each year. I don't want to know just from an economic sense or an accounting sense, though that would be interesting, I think. As I said, people in the administration want to know what formula, what depreciation allowance or rate is being used by government. I'd like to also know at what point we decide, "Okay, we'll kick in with a new upgrade."

Now, I remember the Minister of Advanced Education just last Friday was saying that he was kind of disappointed that we in the province of Alberta build universities which in his view last only 20, 30 years and then we have to build new ones, when in fact universities have been built in Europe and throughout the world that last for centuries. I don't know whether building codes or construction standards or whatever have diminished, if that's the reason for it, or whether we just think, "Oh, let's build these buildings in a hurry and try to get some votes," and then we don't upgrade them or what.

Certainly when you build a hospital, it seems to me that you want to ensure that this is going to be valuable, viable, and is going to be an asset to the community and to the province for at least 30 years. Is that too much to ask in this day and age, that we build a hospital that once the ribbon is cut and the building is open, it's in use for 30 years? Now, maybe they would say, "No, no, we're just going to build it for a 15-year period," and then we'd have to replace it or we'd have to upgrade it after 20 years.

If we're going to do any long-range planning, if we're going to be stewards of the taxpayers, of the Capital Fund of this province, we need to have a plan. We need to have some sense of what it is that we're doing now to ensure that we don't have to just turn around five years or 10 years from now and do it again. Let's say that with our planners, with our engineers, with our architects, and with the builders, we will build hospitals that we know in fact are going to be state of the art hospitals that will be in full function 30 years from now. What is that? The year 2020. Now, I know it's hard to crystal-gaze and to look, particularly with the health care field changing as rapidly as it is, but at the same time we need to be that kind of future-oriented, visioning kind of people in a government that is going to have investments here that are sound and are going to be enduring.

I would ask the minister what plans he has to make sure that these dollars are going to ensure that they're going to be viable 30 years from now, or to tell us, when we build something, what the depreciation allowance is going to be. Is it going to be written off next year, and say, "Well, we built it; that's it; the money's gone," or are we going to say as they do, dare I say, in

the U.S. hospitals, which are privately owned? They have a very elaborate depreciation allowance in terms of what that means for their total flow of dollars over a 10-, 20-year period. It's a very important accounting mechanism. I'd like to see it here more operative and more debated in the Assembly.

9:40

Moving away from the acute care side into long-term care, there have been questions asked already, and I'd like to repeat them. I remember Marvin Moore saying in a throne speech – or at least it was in a throne speech and then it was reiterated – that we have a plan in government that acute care beds can now be converted to long-term care use. I never really got figures to know what the uptake was on that, whether in fact there were 100, 200, 300 beds that were originally designated as acute care, that there was some funding from this minister and some planning from Health where they would be converted to long-term care use. It's not an easy conversion. Some people say, "Well, just do it on paper." Again I'd argue that's not easily the case. Acute care beds were meant for a length of stay of not more than 10 days, where you're in and out, and there's lots of oxygen and IVs and monitors and the rest. It's a very intensive kind of bed. But for someone to be a patient in a long-term care bed setting – there's a lot more involved with someone being in there not just 10 days but maybe 10 years. You don't just put somebody in. It's just not an easy conversion. There's a lot more involved in terms of access to various amenities and various facilities, and it might cost some money. I applauded the minister at the time. I think it was a good move. I've yet to hear among these votes in auxiliary hospitals – I mean, it looks as though they're all designated as auxiliary hospitals in the first instance. In this prior question: how many beds have been converted from acute care to long-term care use, and if in fact we can't move even more aggressively and creatively in that direction?

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

Now, another question I have is, I know, the very political one that has to do with the Northern Alberta Children's hospital. Again, I'd just point out for the record, for *Hansard*, for everyone here tonight, and the rest, that we campaigned on not building a Northern Alberta Children's hospital, not building a new freestanding building with new beds to it, that it was going to take some consolidation. I argued that we could have 15, 20 beds at three hospitals in town with converting some of the acute care pediatric use in the existing Walter C. Mackenzie or the Royal Alex. I was sort of up for that. It looks like that's now the direction in which we're moving, saying, "Well, you can have it on two sites: there'll be 80 beds there, 80 beds here, and the rest." With the expenditure of a 440 percent increase to \$125,000, I would like to ask what that will really mean in terms of the consolidation of pediatric services in Edmonton and northern Alberta. I take it that will not mean the Don Getty memorial children's hospital that will sit somewhere with 200 beds which was originally envisioned; that it will rather be a consolidation of some beds and some of this money and some of this planning going into saying: "Listen. Okay, we've got a capacity of pediatric services. How can we best network them? How can we best integrate them? Maybe shut some here, open some there, but really use the strengths and weaknesses which we can evaluate openly and publicly to say what's going to be

the best value for dollar for children's services in this part of the province."

Now, I know the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services might not at this point be able to get to the full – whether it's drawings or the final details of the current proposal, but I think there are many of us who need to know where government is moving on this question. Someone has said to me, and he's a pediatrician in town, that there's a momentous paralysis with this issue, that people are going nowhere fast, and it's largely because of the inertia within this government and the decision-making on this issue. The sooner we get to some resolution of it, the sooner we get to what I would like to see, the better, but there are still lots of questions and lots of unanswered questions, and I don't feel comfortable allocating the \$200,000 here tonight unless we know what direction the government is moving in with respect to this question of consolidation, new beds, closed beds, consolidated beds for children, and outpatient. I mean, anybody knows that kids are not being admitted to hospital today at anywhere near the rate that they were five or 10 years ago. The whole emphasis is on outpatient, on rehab, on keeping them in their homes and schools, and the rest. The last thing you want to do is put a kid in a hospital anywhere, so why do we spend money building a hospital? We need to spend money to build health centres that keep kids where they belong: in the community, with their families, and in their schools. I will not support this unless we have some clear answers to those kinds of questions.

Again with respect to the long-awaited Royal Alexandra hospital expansion: the emergency and diagnostic centre at the Royal Alex. I want to congratulate the minister, whether it was by virtue of his arguments or the Minister of Health or the Member for Edmonton-Parkland or whoever it was that said: "Hey, listen. You know, we're getting politically driven to the wall on this issue. There's no money in it, there's no votes in it, there's no political advantage in us keeping the Royal Alexandra languishing in having their real needs not being met. For whatever reasons, let's do what we need to do, which is to advance them the moneys." It used to be \$70 million. Then it got to be a hundred million because of the delay of this government, then \$120 million. I believe if they'd made the decision three or four years ago, we could have saved the taxpayers a whole lot of money. But with the foot-dragging, with whatever reasons this government had to delay the Royal Alexandra hospital project, we're now at a stage where we're going ahead with it and \$13 million is being advanced for this year.

I'd like to know from the minister what the time line is this year, next year, and the following year, until the completion, and what the date is for opening. I know it will not involve any new acute care beds, but it will involve a new emergency and diagnostic centre, which are badly needed. Basically, I congratulate the minister and the government for seeing that finally there is a need here and advancing the moneys, as late as they are, but again I think it shows that people in the city of Edmonton and those who have used the Royal Alex, those who work in the Royal Alex, have realized that even on their emergency admissions – for heaven's sake, it was built for 30,000 emergency admissions a year. They were treating 70,000 to 80,000, almost triple their stated capacity in emergency. People were coming in ambulances, and the walking wounded, and they were dealing with three times as many as they could. So finally we have common sense and an advancement of the moneys to begin it.

Now that we're at it, good for you. Let's get on and know what the timetable is for its completion and its opening to serve the health needs of the people of Edmonton and northern Alberta.

Just a few other interesting issues I've talked to the minister about before but I'd like a kind of update with respect to. One is to do with fire codes. It must be tough. I mean, being government, being responsible for so many public buildings throughout the province, so many public buildings and square footage which would stagger any corporate entity. But here we have a government building even more hospitals, being responsible for all these hospitals where people are very vulnerable, and the Fire Code, needing, from what I'm told, to be continually upgraded. A number of fire marshals are going into local nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals, acute care hospitals and saying, "Listen, we've got to have a wheelchair ramp here; we have to improve the elevator system there; we have to have some sprinkler systems involved." There's a whole issue, and I don't want to go into all the details tonight, but I want to know from the minister just to sort of prick his conscience again and those of us in the Assembly here tonight to know that when we're allocating these moneys, that one of the first things, a high priority, is to ensure that the Building Code and the Fire Code particularly are up to full grade in all of the hospitals throughout the province, whether he's checked into that.

A related one is the issue of biomedical waste and the incinerators and the scrubbers and the whole issue to do with hospitals and how they deal with biomedical wastes. Again there are a number of issues that have been raised, and I appreciate some of the work that's been done by the Alberta Medical Association, the Alberta Hospital Association, and this government to get to how we can have regional centres, how we can have state of the art centres to deal with the very important issue of disposal of biomedical wastes through the hospitals in the province. Again, just an update on that issue in terms of these capital dollars would be appreciated here tonight.

Another very difficult issue – and we never seem to get enough time for these ones – has to do with medical equipment. I am not sure when we allocate funds to these various hospitals – I mean, I get the press releases, and I must say I do appreciate the press releases, the news releases that come from the minister announcing what hospitals get what moneys and what those moneys are intended to do for that facility, whether it's for an upgrade here or a parking lot there or a roof or whatever. I think it's very important, and we monitor it closely. The issue of medical equipment: whether they're lithotripters or catheters or CAT scanners or medical resonance imagers or whatever, the field is exploding with respect to what available medical technology there is and the pace of government to keep up with that. It might be too much to ask the minister to get on the record again by saying no; that to leave this all to a medical lottery is not the best way to go; that just to use lottery moneys to put a lithotripter in the Misericordia may be okay in 1989, but what sort of precedent does that set for using lottery moneys or charitable moneys or whatever to put whatever fancy medical equipment in a hospital that sort of lobbies particularly strenuously for it? How's that going to be funded over the long term?

9:50

There has to be a much closer integration between the purchase of medical equipment and the dollars for operating it. If we don't get a handle on this, then it's going to continue to

explode. In fact, there are those who argue that it's the cost of medical equipment more than anything else which is driving health care up so much. So if we use lottery moneys or public works' moneys or whatever just to give the system more and more toys and more and more equipment, it's not going to help it. Some would say it's like, you know, giving an alcoholic another drink. We need to get a better handle on the outcomes, on the utility, on the long-term financing issues around so much of these medical equipment issues.

Another one just to raise as a thorny issue has to do with laundry services. A couple of hospitals sort of just jumped out at me here, but whether individual ones or in a general sense, I know there's an issue to say: okay, let's take laundry services off campus, off site; we can have K-Bro or whatever other private laundry service do all of the laundry for all of these hospitals in a separate, for-profit centre. Whatever that does to the employees at the hospital, well, we don't know. What that does to quality assurance, well, we don't know, but it's going to help cut the bottom line. I've heard this minister before say that some hospitals that move in this direction are doing so foolishly, both in an economic sense and in a quality assurance sense, not to mention the jobs. If some hospitals need to upgrade their laundry facilities, is it the view of government that yes, we'll put money into that publicly-funded, publicly-run institution, because we know there's going to be value for dollar, there's going to be good preservation of jobs, good quality assurance in those hospitals, because they're going to have the laundry on site? Or is it the view of government: let's privatize these things; let's take laundry, let's take lab, let's take dietary off campus, have somebody who has a particular entrepreneurial bent do these things, and lose a lot of control and a lot of, in a sense, economic control in the process?

It's a big issue. I know the Minister of Health has said no, she won't allow that for medical services and for some nursing services, but everything else is up for grabs. I'd like to know, since they do pertain to capital dollars and the capital equipment costs or the capital upgrading of these hospitals. It's a salient issue, and I'd like some response.

Just another couple of things to throw out. I've been doing some very interesting reading lately which talks about building hospitals of the future. There are some mind-boggling kinds of things out there. There's the Pine Tree hospital in the U.S. which has, in fact, no beds in it. It's a hospital with no beds. People go to this hospital; they never stay overnight, but they're treated in a number of diagnostic and treatment ways. There are all kinds of amenities: music therapy and massage therapy and counseling, all kinds of holistic and integrated health kinds of things which have, in fact, huge health outcomes and benefits and improvement in health status as a result of it, but in fact not a traditional way of spending money to build a hospital bed. It might be beyond the purview of this minister, but if he's the one responsible for building new hospitals or upgrading them, let's take a look – again, I've asked the Minister of Health this – at how the expenditure of these funds is actually improving the health of the people of Alberta.

I know the argument was made with the Walter C. Mackenzie. They said: "Listen, let's have this wonderfully uplifting building to which people can come as a hospital to be healed, to be treated, and they're going to feel better. The staff is going to feel better by working here." It's a very important argument. Whether it's true or not with that particular facility, I'm not sure. I don't know how we've evaluated that. I think there are some

ways to evaluate that that I'd like to get at. If we want to just build these ones in the province that have the sort of regular plan – the three wings, the traditional model – and just plop them every place in the province because they're easy to build and the rest, fine. But what does that do for the health status, the health outcome of people who go into those buildings, who come out of them?

I was trying to make that link, that connection between the building, its amenities, its structure, its look, its feel, and the healing process. Now again, the minister might say, "Well, I don't care; I just build these things after we're told what to do." But I think before you're told what to do, you should say: well, is this really going to improve health? Is it going to really help the variety of things that we know might be a potentially healing and health-improving consequence to people? This is the way to proceed and not other ways.

I had a couple of other points, Mr. Chairman, but these are the ones I think are most important just for now. There might be others as the minister responds, and I thank the committee for the time to have expressed them.

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

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My questions are to the minister. I'll try to keep them to the point. It's getting a little late, but he's always very alert; the later the hour the better.

The first was: is there anything in vote 4 that would indicate Westlock's Immaculata hospital would be progressing? I guess that breaks down into two areas, hon. minister. One is: will the Immaculata be getting back some of their money that they've laid out for land acquisition the last few years? It would certainly help their operating budget if they did. They've held onto the land for quite a while. The second part of the question would be: is there any money here to advance the planning and design stage at the hospital?

The next area is on vote 5. It concerns me a bit. I might have a later question. Maybe instead of spending too much time on it, Mr. Chairman, I'd be better off to ask whether there's anything in these estimates on the proposed dam and water storages along the Milk River. I'm rather skeptical of what I see the provincial government doing there. I think they are oriented towards a large dam on the Milk River, whereas because the arable land is scattered in such small pockets all the way up and down the Milk River, that might be better with a number of off-stream storage sites. I know the Premier is asking for the water level to be raised near his home; I'm hoping the hon. Member for Taber-Warner doesn't want the water level raised around his house. If he does, it would cost a lot. I would be interested in knowing what the plans are on the Milk River and whether we will get a chance to debate it in the Legislature if it's going ahead, because I'm certainly not happy with the Milk River plan that I've seen going ahead. I think many other people aren't too. Also, because it is close to the 49th parallel – the Milk River crosses it twice in Alberta – maybe the minister could say whether or not the province has that much to say with it anyhow. It might be a federal matter almost entirely and we have little input, in which case I would like to know what we're doing to organize input, because I don't think I'd trust a federal Tory, Mr. Chairman, any more than I would a provincial one; as a matter of fact, maybe less.

Next, we roll on to 6, Construction of Government Facilities. As you know, Mr. Chairman, there is some talk of the federal building here being leveled by our minister here. He does like large holes in the ground, preferably filled with water, but in this case I think all he wants to do is take down the federal building, which looks pretty solid in my opinion. It may be 1929 design, built in the 1940s, but it is a very stable looking building. I wonder if, in the construction of government facilities, he is following the previous minister willy-nilly into renting expensive downtown office space when we have reasonable office space here that now appears empty. Not only that building; I notice another building empty over on 112 Street. I think it used to be the wildlife and forestry department. So we have quite a little empty office space. I'm a little intrigued by his \$1 million estimate. It doesn't sound like he can do too much damage with \$1 million; nevertheless, I'd be kind of curious just what's going on there.

10:00

The other thing was transportation, vote 7. I believe this is probably part of the Alberta Resources Railway roads to resources program, and I'm a little concerned when I look at the vote, the 12 and a half million dollar grant. I just wonder how that is to work. Is this another method of giving the Al-Pac people a grant through the back door to do something else, or just where does that grant go? I don't quite understand it.

Also under roads to resources, is any of this money being budgeted to help improve our hazardous waste routes that will be used for hazardous waste from the burgeoning petrochemical complexes east and northeast of Edmonton to get over to the plant in Swan Hills? Roads to resources could well be a broad enough title, Mr. Chairman, to cover hazardous waste routes. I know up till now the minister has a tendency to feel that hazardous waste is over here, the disposal is over there, and you just hope and pray that somehow or another the trucks will make their way through all the different road systems and towns without causing a bit of an accident. I do think that if we're thinking about railways to resources, we should be thinking about certain highways maybe being dedicated as a resource road and, in particular, the hazardous waste routes. I'm just wondering if the minister has any comment he might care to make on the hazardous waste routes in general and, specifically, whether there's anything more to the story that the developing Redwater petrochemical area will be connected up to the Swan Hills hazardous waste area by putting a road through the middle of Lily Lake.

Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll make my comments relatively brief. I was curious in terms of vote 7, Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure. The narrative indicates that this \$30 million-plus amount capital grant will be provided directly "to Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. for the design and construction of a rail spur to the mill site," whereas in the case of the rail spur to the Daishowa Canada Ltd. pulp mill, that design and that construction were provided with a capital grant to the Alberta Resources Railway. My question to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services is: why is it that the Alberta Resources Railway

was responsible for the previous work, and they've decided to go directly with the Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries themselves for the construction of a rail spur to the mill site? Presumably the Alberta Resources Railway would have the expertise and experience under their belt, given that they'd already been involved with the Daishowa project. Was there any compelling reason why Alberta Resources Railway was not asked by the government or provided with the money by the government to do this work for the Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries project?

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

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few comments and questions on several different votes actually.

I'll start with vote 6 just very briefly and say that I wholeheartedly support the expenditures of those moneys for the Remington Alberta Carriage Centre in Cardston. I have not seen it yet, but I'm sure those people I know that are going down to it in the near future will get a good look at it and report back. One day I would like to see it. I have heard good things about the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin and intend to get down and have a look at that as well. I know one of the people that worked on the project and have held him in high esteem, and I'm sure that the government has done a good job on that site. Those are the kinds of things I think the government should do, and I think it is good that they did it. I look forward to seeing the actual results in the near future.

I do, however, want to speak to a number of the other votes as well. I'm going to go to vote 4 and talk a little bit about or ask a few questions about hospitals and auxiliary hospitals and that sort of thing. The first thing I'd like to ask about is on page 154 of the element details, which helps because it gives a little more detail, a little more information than vote 4 in the Capital Fund book. Vote 4.2.7: the Charles Camsell provincial general hospital in Edmonton is in my riding, and I note that it's only getting \$5,000 for, I assume, upgrading and fixing up the hospital. Now, that hospital has quite a number of beds that are shut down. The hospital, I believe, has had a recent expansion of its emergency section and has been fixed up, but I can't help but wondering why such a small amount. It's not a new hospital. It's been there for some years.

In fact, that raises a question in my mind. Why isn't the minister of hospitals here to help answer some of our questions? Our critic for hospitals was here and asked a lot of detailed questions that I do not expect the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services to know the answers to. The minister of health care should darn well be here to answer questions when that much money is being allocated to various aspects of the health care system. I'm sure that the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services will do the best he can, but some of the nuances of some of the questions that have been asked previously and that I intend to ask are probably ones that need the minister.

Also, the Member for Edmonton-Centre asked some questions about how the writing off or the writing down of the depreciation, if you like, of these buildings is taken into account and how that works. Again the Treasurer could be here to explain some of that. What we're doing is okaying the expenditures for this year, but we could have more and better information to work from. It would seem to me that in terms of the Capital Fund estimates themselves, in the small booklet that we're working from for these various votes there is a page on the left of each

of these votes that gives the authority of the department and the basic information about what authority and what the projects are for, but it's very, very terse and rather short on information. If you compare it, for example, to the heritage trust fund votes, at least in the heritage trust fund votes they give you the previously spent amounts on the project. The previous year is given here but not the same kind of summary of the previous year's expenditures. There's no reason why you couldn't go a step further and indicate the intentions at this stage for the next two or three years of a project if it is to go over several years, as many of these are.

So we certainly could have better information to work from in terms of analyzing and asking questions and debating the pros and cons of these various votes. I'm not much impressed that we don't have the minister of hospitals and the Treasurer here to help answer these questions.

10:10

Also under vote 4 there is a large section here on auxiliary hospitals. Our Member for Edmonton-Centre talked a lot about hospitals, so I don't need to repeat a lot of the stuff he said, but I do just want to get onto a slightly different angle. Although he talked about it briefly, I think he sort of bypassed it for some other things that he wanted to say. One of the things that we're doing in our care facilities – and by care facilities I mean right from lodges for seniors, for example, through to nursing homes for seniors to auxiliary hospitals for seniors right through to acute care hospitals. We have a jam-up on both sides of people wanting to get into the auxiliary hospitals, so we don't have enough auxiliary hospitals in this province.

Now, I know that we need to do more preventative medicine, have more health care facilities and more home care to try to keep people out of hospitals. Nonetheless, we do know that we have people waiting in acute care hospital beds trying to get back into an auxiliary hospital bed, and we have people in nursing beds who are being upgraded to needing auxiliary care and can't get in from that side, so we constantly have these waiting lists to get into auxiliary beds. You would think that after being in power for 20 years, somehow the government would have got the balance right, but we're still keeping people in acute care beds at anywhere from \$400 to \$900 a day when what they really need is long-term care that they would get in an auxiliary hospital at a much lower cost per day. So the government is spending quite an incredible amount of money every year that is, you know, cents just down the tube or just wasted money because we have not got the right balance or the right mix of auxiliary hospitals.

I remember talking at some length with the former minister of medical care before the last election, Mr. Marv Moore. He seemed to have caught on to the idea, and the Member for Edmonton-Centre alluded to that, about the need for some of the acute care beds, which we have an oversupply of, being changed into long-term beds. He also started to build mixed facilities, where people could have nursing care and also auxiliary care right in the same facility. You just upgrade them and give them more assistance. That makes a lot of sense rather than moving people. But after all this recognition and all this talk we're still in the same situation, where we've got people in acute care beds when they should really be in auxiliary beds, and the government still hasn't got the balance right. I just can't

believe they can be such slow learners. They've built so many buildings. Why didn't they build the right kind of buildings?

Then besides just building buildings, you've also got to put up some operating dollars and run programs that are appropriate in those buildings, instead of building acute care hospitals and then shutting down a number of the beds in all those acute care hospitals. The Misericordia the other day: we phoned there, and I found out – they said something like 10 beds are closed in every ward, I believe it was. Well, that's quite ridiculous, to build a lot of hospitals and then turn around and shut down a lot of the wings of the hospitals. So I wanted to talk a little bit about the auxiliary thing, and I hope that the minister intends to answer some of these questions or at least jog the Minister of Health to come back and answer these questions another time.

I wanted to turn to vote 5. I noticed when the minister was introducing vote 5, he mentioned two things. He mentioned the Little Bow project and the Oldman dam project, and he didn't mention, at least not that I noticed – perhaps I wasn't listening carefully enough or something, but the Milk River project went right by. I don't remember him mentioning that, and there is a million dollars in there, and like the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, I have some concerns about his intentions. Why didn't he describe a little bit what's going on with the Milk River project? Also, the Pine Coulee project at Stavelly: why wasn't there some explanation of that \$8 million that's being put into that project? It's up from \$1.8 million last year, yet the minister just passed it over as if, "Oh, well, it's all right; nobody needs to know about this." The Little Bow River project he talked about, and he named some of the mayors around the area that have suggested that they really like the project. Perhaps he could tell us a little bit more about what the project is, what it's going to accomplish, what he's trying to do, and why they like it, rather than just make the political brag that they've sent him a letter of support. What we need, Mr. Chairman, if we're to approve these estimates, is more and better information, and there's no reason in the world why it shouldn't be built right into the books that we have. Certainly you've got to say it's a paucity of information that we're given in this document.

Now, the other project in this vote is the Oldman River dam at Pincher Creek, and I don't intend to go back over all those arguments again. The Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest and I and a number of other people in this House have been around and around the Oldman dam debate many times, so we don't need to go back through all of that again. But I just want to put on the record one last time that we on this side of the House feel that that project did not have the kind of care in its planning stages and the kind of public input it should have had. We do not feel that the government was up front and dealt with it in a way that would give everybody a fair hearing. We do not feel that the government should have broken the law when the feds told them that they didn't have a licence to proceed and they just kept proceeding anyway. We don't like what was done with the Oldman dam. We think that you've wrecked a lot of wildlife habitat; you've wrecked the river system. The benefits will probably not in the long run outweigh the damage that's been done, and certainly the natives of the area do not appreciate what has been done with that project.

The other vote I wanted to talk a little bit about is vote 7, the vote that's under Transportation and Utilities. In this case I understand why the minister isn't here and appreciate the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services standing in for

him. I don't understand why we've got to do these things for Al-Pac. Why do we have to put up over \$30 million to help Al-Pac? I think we gave them a \$400 million loan guarantee. I guess why not, eh? I do think that the information in the booklet again could give us some idea of how much was spent last year. Sorry; it does that. There was nothing last year. But they should give what the overall project is going to cost next year or the year after, that sort of thing. How long is this going to take? How much more money is going to be needed? Is this the only expenditure? If so, then it should say so, so we know exactly what we're getting into there.

The two of them together, the Al-Pac project along with the Daishowa mill at Peace River, I think are the clearest examples of what's wrong with the government's approach to the pulp industry in this province. Inviting foreign capital to come in on a massive basis, putting up taxpayers' dollars to help them develop the project, and then letting them mow down our trees and sell off raw pulp is a rather stupid economic way to build a forestry industry in this province. I warned of this a couple of years ago when you started talking about all these massive projects. I said sure, the Japanese will come in with their big corporations, build pulp mills for us, take our pulp off to Japan, turn it into paper, and sell it back to us or to the Americans or whoever else they can sell it to. So we're still selling raw materials, more or less, is really what it amounts to. It's not an economic way to go. The first thing you know, the industry is going to be overcrowded with pulp mills, and the price of pulp is going to start going down.

Already last year, 1990, the amount of money that we got out of selling pulp to Japan went down – already. We haven't even built the Al-Pac mill yet, and already the amount of pulp we're selling to Japan is worth less than it was the year before last. Now, what the heck kind of economics is that? Why doesn't the government stop and think ahead and plan a little more moderately? Why do we have to have these megaprojects with huge corporations? If you go to Japan, they've got lots of forests, but the companies of Japan wouldn't dare cut down a tree in Japan. I mean, they've got an environmental movement there. They've got some concerns about a small island with 100 million people on it, and they know they're going to have to take care of their forests. But they don't mind walking into Indonesia or Canada when you've got a buccaneer government like this that says, "Here, come and rape our forests." They do. They come in, and that's what they're doing. I think it's ridiculous of this government to invite them in on those terms. I don't really blame the Japanese companies, but really they behave better at home, and they should know better here too. They would know better and do better if we insisted that they do better, but they're prepared to pollute our rivers.

10:20

The con game that we've been given about no pollution in this new technique that Al-Pac claims to have discovered is sheer nonsense, and everybody knows it. I mean, the government did finally get pressed into a public hearing and handpicked nine people that were all in favour of the project, but the evidence in that public hearing was so overwhelming that those people had enough integrity to reverse themselves and say: "Gee, we better not do this project until we've done some more studies. We better find out what the effect is on the rivers. We better find out what the effect is on the watershed. We better find out what the effect is on the fish. We better do some studies first

before we proceed." The government said: "Oh, we can't have it held up. No, no; we've got to go ahead." So they tried to discredit that hearing process and set up a separate hearing process where they only handpicked three people that were going to do better. Of course they had to bring in Jaakko Pöyry, the people that suggested the project in the first place, one of the few Scandinavian-based companies that doesn't seem to have much conscience about ripping off forests and polluting rivers.

So they found a way to get around, if you like, the findings of the first hearings. They basically did so by having the company say: "Oh, well, we've discovered this new process. We're not going to use any chlorine in a way that will pollute rivers. There won't be any chlorine from this new process." Well, we now know that's total nonsense, yet the government used that excuse to give them their licence and tell them that they can go ahead.

While we're talking about Al-Pac, I might just also mention that I asked in this House how it was that the government could put out a prospectus last fall to sell Northern Steel and in it state that Northern Steel had a contract with Al-Pac to build much of the steel structures for the mill when the mill hadn't even been approved yet.

AN HON. MEMBER: What has this got to do with these estimates?

MR. McEACHERN: Well, this vote is money to help this Al-Pac project; make no mistake. Of course, Northern Steel's got a contract to help build the mill.

What I'm just saying is that the whole Al-Pac thing has been a con job from the first, and it's not an economic way to use our forestry resources. So, really, I don't see why we should support this particular vote. I find it most offensive.

The minister might also like to try to answer the question asked by my colleague about why the money is given to Al-Pac to build the rail line. The government's going to build the rail line. Isn't the rail line going to belong to Albertans like the rail line built at Daishowa, or are we just going to let them run it? Again, you know, we're short on explanations around here. We get some numbers thrown at us and terse little explanations, the minimum possible, and then they say, "Here, vote for this." Then the government wonders why the people of Alberta think this is a secretive government that doesn't give out much information.

Mr. Chairman, those are my comments, and I would like to hear some answers from the minister or the ministers if some of the others would care to come in to the Assembly to answer the ones that the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services might feel more comfortable leaving to his colleagues.

MR. MAIN: I'll provide some answers briefly. The work that public works is doing on the two museums in Wetaskiwin and in Cardston is outstanding. They've built a couple of other museums. It's excellent. The buildings have been handed over to us, or virtually handed over, and now the displays are about to go in. That'll take about another year, year and a half. I must compliment the minister. He builds an excellent box into which our department puts excellent contents.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's certainly been an interesting evening thus far. There have been some interesting questions that have been raised, some interesting statements. The night is young, and I'm sure that we'll have an opportunity

to elucidate on a few of these items. I think, Mr. Chairman, that I'll attempt to answer virtually all of the questions that have been raised, because I would not want it to be said by anyone that the government would want to avoid answering any questions. The government is very, very pleased. It's difficult to follow in order because there are so many questions. I have just pages and pages and pages of questions here, and I sincerely hope that I don't miss any questions. Should there be the unfortunate situation that I do miss a question, then I will dutifully go through *Hansard* to make sure that in fact there is an appropriate response provided in writing. This is something that I said I would do the other day with other estimates, and I think that I've already answered most of the individuals' questions.

Mr. Chairman, where to begin with this interest that's been shown tonight? I think I'll begin with answering some questions that really had no business being raised in these estimates tonight, although there was a connection that was associated with it. I really want to relax my friend from Westlock-Sturgeon who raised questions with respect to Lily Lake road again. We've now heard this time and time again, and there's absolutely nothing in these capital estimates dealing with Lily Lake road. I want to assure the hon. member that secondary road 651, which cuts through that countryside almost from 33 just south of Barrhead and goes all the way over to Busby and continues on through Legal, a beautiful Francophone community, and all the way up to where the Red Barn and the Alberta Wildlife Park are located . . . There is nothing in here that is devoted to the construction of Lily Lake road. There's no plan, no plan. I just want to emphasize that for the third time: there's absolutely no plan that says that Lily Lake road is or will ever become a hazardous waste route. Somehow the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has it etched in his mind that this Lily Lake road is going to deliver goods from the Redwater area or the Fort Saskatchewan area to Swan Hills and that's the reason it is.

I really admired the tenacity of the argument a couple of years ago when the member said that he wanted some widening done on secondary road 794. He became convinced in his mind that this was going to become a hazardous waste route and that if he made this argument enough, the government would in fact buy into the argument somehow. It's almost as imaginative as the arguments put forward by the Member for West Yellowhead in recent estimates that I stood in the Assembly with. He said that the Alaska Highway route was Highway 40, from north of Hinton to Grande Prairie, and said, you know: get some money in there for the Alaska Highway 50th anniversary in 1992. No such way. I appreciate the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon using this imagination one more time.

I also should make a comment with respect to vote 2, because the members did raise questions with respect to special waste. Vote 2, of course, is a request by the government for additional dollars to deal with the plan that has already been announced and made public with respect to the construction of special waste facilities in Swan Hills. All members will know that there are hearings that are going on throughout the province of Alberta with respect to this very matter. Hardly anybody's attended these meetings despite all the onslaught of saying that we had to have all these public meetings. Attendance is very, very low. Vote 2 follows in this whole category.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon asked some questions with respect to the federal building. Once again, there's nothing in these estimates that deals with the federal

building, which is located just a few feet away from where this historic building is. The member said: well, are there any dollars in vote 6 dealing with that? Of course, there are not.

I appreciated the input of the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism with respect to the million dollars in these buildings. They deal with the two major historic tourism development projects that we have in the province of Alberta that will be completed in this fiscal year: the Remington Alberta Carriage Centre in Cardston and the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin. I do thank the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism for acknowledging that the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services in fact has done an admirable job with respect to this. I'm sure all Albertans will be very proud of this.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon also asked questions with respect to vote 5 and questions with respect to Milk River. Once again there is no devious plan. I really admire the imagination of the gentleman. He could have written some great stuff in fiction. The fact of the matter is: relax, hon. member; there's no massive plan here to divert water from the northern reaches in the province of Alberta and into the Milk River basin and down the old Mississippi into the Gulf of Mexico and all the rest of that. That just isn't the case. It's an ongoing review. The member does hail from that part of Alberta. He recognizes, though, the importance of water, water management, and water conservation, and I appreciate his input with respect to that.

10:30

Questions were also raised with respect to the Immaculata hospital in Westlock, valid questions because this is a hospital that very honestly, from my perspective, needs major renewal work done on it. In fact, it was a few days ago that I had discussions with several individuals on the hospital board with respect to this matter, and I did indicate that one of the things that I would do in the next several months is a tour of the hospital. It may very well be that if the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon happens to be in town that day, then maybe we'll get together and go hand in hand and show great harmony with respect to this and visit the Immaculata hospital, because it is an important centre for the well-being and the health care of the people who live in that part of Alberta. Very determined concerns.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View and the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway and the Member for Edmonton-Highlands: all three members raised questions with respect to vote 7. The Member for Edmonton-Highlands wanted to know why Al-Pac wasn't paying for all the roads, which was one side of the debate, I guess. Why wasn't Al-Pac paying for all the roads? The members for Calgary-Mountain View and Edmonton-Kingsway then wanted to know why the province was providing any dollars at all for bridge and rail line infrastructure. So they're questions on similar subjects but come from two different angles. I mean, these are hon. members from the same philosophic bent, so it's a bit difficult for me to wind through that maze, that trap. I'll attempt to deal with the questions directly.

First of all, all roads in the province of Alberta are public highways, and the road infrastructure dealing with Al-Pac, which I've indicated and outlined earlier, is there for the people as well as for Al-Pac. If we're going to be dealing with private highways in the province of Alberta, then those private highways obviously would restrict who would come and who would not come. All

of the road infrastructure that will be built in that part of Alberta will provide for dual purposes. It's not only for Al-Pac, but they will allow people to travel to work; they'll provide ease of access. We've heard the passionate arguments put forward by the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche indicating the need for employment, the need for individuals to access that employment, and therein lies the reasons for roadways in the province of Alberta. Roadways serve two purposes: they're trade links for people, and they're also trade links for goods. I just want to repeat that again.

Now, that deals with the road question. In dealing with the bridges and the rail lines, both the members for Calgary-Mountain View and Edmonton-Kingsway wanted to know why the province was involved in those two matters as well. The province is certainly not paying for the full cost of these two projects, but in the negotiation that dealt with this, partial funding and partial assistance is being provided for the infrastructure of the bridge and the rail line infrastructure. These would be payments made directly to Al-Pac, partial funding for the overall project. Of course, there was a choice of basically saying that the province could have entered into the negotiation and the agreement and could have taken over full authority and responsibility for that. We concluded that it would be cheaper for the public purse to have it dealt with on that basis and in essence have the responsibility for the construction of both of these projects dealt with by Al-Pac and the consultants that they would hire with respect to it. That's the position that was taken, and that was the position that was arrived at. It may not be a palatable position for certain individuals, but that's the reason why it was done. I think the question was: why was it done?

MR. McEACHERN: Why not the Alberta Resources Railway?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, that was an alternative as well. There didn't seem to be much interest in that area with respect to the Alberta Resources Railway.

Now, I think those cover most of the questions dealing with votes 2 and 5 and 6 and 7. So the remaining questions deal with vote 4, and there were certainly a number of those questions. I very much appreciate the interest of hon. members with respect to this area, and I appreciate as well comments made by several individuals that the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services essentially is the builder. Of course, the priority decisions in certain of these health care facilities is a direct responsibility of the Minister of Health. I have no doubt at all that if the Minister of Health could have been here this evening, she would have been here this evening and would have assisted in the amplification of the reasons that were given for these items.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands raised a question which is essentially a petition with respect to the Fort McMurray area and the need, in her perception, of facilities for the aged. I'll certainly accept that as a petition provided to the province with respect to that.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar then raised a series of questions with respect to vote 4. I did provide a few examples of some of those projects that would be identified under vote 4.1, which is Capital Upgrading, various of them. I want the member to know that all of those projects are identified when they are released, and information is provided on a regular, ongoing basis. The approach that I've taken is that we would have an individual news release made available for each of these

individual projects, and then monthly we'll put them all together in one package. So there might be 10 or 12 or 14 or 16 because of the magnitude of them, but they certainly are all identified. They are as a result of the partnership arrangement that the province has with the various hospital boards, for the hospital boards to identify, because most of these facilities are owned by hospital boards, although the people of Alberta essentially pay for the complete cost of them.

A philosophic question was also raised by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, and I guess I think in all honesty it's a policy question with respect to the rationalization of underutilized facilities. Perhaps the Minister of Health is the more appropriate person to deal with that one, but I certainly recognize the petition made.

A number of members – the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, the Member for Edmonton-Centre, the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway – made some comments with respect to the Royal Alexandra hospital, and I thank the members for the positive comments, although I do know that a comment was also made that well, if you'd done it two or three years ago, the costs would have been lower. Well, I think that argument would certainly apply to all of the projects that we have, but we are confined by the resources that we have and the resources that we're able to allocate for particular projects at a given time. There's absolutely no doubt that if we'd built something five or 10 years ago, it in all likelihood would have been cheaper than building it today or tomorrow, but it's a matter of the prioritization and, I guess, part of the decision-making process that we all have to live with.

The Alberta Hospital, vote 4.3.2, is essentially dollars for design.

The children's hospital, 4.3.5. I believe the Minister of Health has already talked about the \$200,000 allocation this year, has issued a public statement with respect to that as a result of the consultation that has gone on with not only the board looking after the Northern Alberta Children's hospital in Edmonton but other hospitals in the greater Edmonton area. Essentially, I think we've now arrived at a philosophy that we're not really talking about a so-called one, singular, box, but we're talking about an opportunity for everybody working together and recognizing the need to work in that area rather than saying that we're going to simply build something. I think it was the Member for Edmonton-Centre who used the phraseology: how can we best network? That perhaps is the answer to the question as to what these dollars are all about.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar raised a question with respect to Slave Lake hospital, and I want to assure the member that no one is more attuned to or on top of that issue than the current MLA from Lesser Slave Lake. I had an opportunity a number of months ago to meet with the Slave Lake hospital board. I had an opportunity, as well, to visit Slave Lake, and I know that the Minister of Health has also had that opportunity. We have and will have through the Department of Health and in concert with Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services an ongoing review made. This was a strange situation. If all members recall, in 1988 I believe it was, a new hospital in Slave Lake was essentially ready to go to tender. A terrible flood occurred. The hospital was flooded, and it postponed everything that had to happen. Then the question was really made in terms of the changing demographics in the Slave Lake area, as to what should happen. I think that in retrospect the government may have wanted to have been more aggressive several years ago, but

then the economy changed. So it's a matter that is right there in front of us, and I want to assure the member of that. The Member for Lesser Slave Lake comes visiting almost on a daily basis with respect to this, so the matter is very, very acute and very, very much dealt with.

10:40

A valid and interesting question was raised by the member on 4.4.57, waste management. The member said that in the budget a statement was made that it was \$2.1 million allocated for it, yet these estimates say \$1.6 million. Well, the other \$500,000 comes under the operational side of Alberta Health. If you add the \$500,000 in the estimates of Alberta Health and the \$1.6 million in these estimates, you get the \$2.1 million, and that really relates to it. We believe very strongly that the private sector has a very dramatic role to play in this, and there are no dollars with respect to 4.4.57 dealing with Beiseker or anything like that. We're essentially dealing with some rationalization of cold storage facilities. Just last Thursday a major meeting was held with 13, 14, 15 private-sector groups that want to look at the private-sector opportunities, and they're areas that in essence we would want to deal with.

I think in a nutshell that covers most of the questions from the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, but as I repeat, I'll go through this again.

I very much welcome the comments from the Member for Edmonton-Centre, who retained an interest in this health area. It's a partnership the member talked about that we want to continue doing. We look forward to innovative ideas with respect to hospital construction.

I think, Mr. Chairman, in a nutshell that sort of quickly wraps up the answers to the questions. Should there be support or approval from the members, I would really ask for the question to be called.

Thank you very much.

MR. TAYLOR: This will only take about 90 seconds. The minister's answers bring up two questions. Mr. Minister, if you could answer quickly, you mention that there is not – you said not, not, not – going to be a hazardous waste route through Lily Lake. Can you answer whether there's going to be a road through Lily Lake? First question.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I can make it very clear. There's not one penny of these capital estimates devoted to the construction of Lily Lake road. I make it very clear: not one penny.

MR. TAYLOR: Secondly, if the railroad is going to be built, \$12.8 million – the money has been given to Al-Pac to build the railroad – does that change whether or not it'll be a common carrier? In other words, if the money is given to Al-Pac and they build the railroad, does that then mean that they have the exclusive right as to what can roll over that railroad? If we had built the railroad, as you know, then it is a common carrier and it can be used by anybody in the near vicinity. Will Al-Pac have the right to keep anyone off that railroad?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I know the answer to that; my mind has gone blank, and I'll have to confirm it in writing to the hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question on these votes?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Environment

Total Vote 2 – Construction of Special Waste Facilities	\$8,600,000
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Public Works, Supply and Services

4.1 – Capital Upgrading	\$22,000,000
4.2 – Medical Referral Centres	\$27,030,000
4.3 – Specialized Active Care Facilities	\$35,780,000
4.4 – Community-Based Hospital Facilities	\$18,750,000
4.5 – Rural Community-Based Hospital Facilities	\$15,560,000
4.6 – Auxiliary Hospitals	\$10,665,000
4.7 – Nursing Homes	\$20,000
Total Vote 4 – Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes	\$129,805,000

Total Vote 5 – Construction of Water Development Projects	\$50,000,000
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Vote 6.1 – Culture and Multiculturalism	\$1,000,000
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Total Vote 6 – Construction of Government Facilities	\$1,000,000
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Transportation and Utilities

Total Vote 7 – Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure	\$30,675,000
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Public Works, Supply and Services

Supplementary Estimates

Total Vote 5 – Construction of Water Development Projects	\$5,000,000
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Total Vote 6 – Construction of Government Facilities	\$625,000
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Total Supplementary Estimates	\$5,625,000
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MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, report please.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'd ask that the votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased, since this concludes the estimates in Committee of Supply, to move that the Committee of Supply rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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

Resolved that from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund sums not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, for the purposes of making investments in the following projects to be administered by Recreation and Parks: \$930,000, Municipal Recreation/Tourism Areas; \$8,815,000, Urban Park Development.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1991, a sum from the Alberta Capital Fund not exceeding the following for the departments and purposes indicated.

Environment: \$8,600,000, Construction of Special Waste Facilities.

Public Works, Supply and Services: \$129,805,000, Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes; \$50,000,000, Construction

of Water Development Projects; \$1,000,000, Construction of Government Facilities.

Transportation and Utilities: \$30,675,000, Construction of Economic Development Infrastructure.

Public Works, Supply and Services: \$5,000,000, Construction of Water Development Projects; \$625,000, Construction of Government Facilities.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, business tomorrow morning would consist of second readings of certain Bills on the Order Paper.

[At 10:50 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

