

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
July 8, 1987

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — Yesterday I received two petitions which I now lay on the Table for reading and receiving. I've examined the petitions under rule 11(7) and find them to be in order.

The first petition was:

Of certain citizens of the province of Saskatchewan praying that the assembly may be pleased to urge the Government of Saskatchewan not to limit the universal accessibility of Saskatchewan people to insured chiropractic services.

The second petition was:

Of certain citizens of the province of Saskatchewan praying that the Assembly may be pleased to recommend for the consideration of the Government of Saskatchewan the re-implementation of the drug plan and of the school dental plan as it has been during the past few years.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to introduce through you, and to the members of this Assembly, people seated in the west gallery — five members of the northern development advisory council, namely, Chairman, Mr. Bill Klassen; members, Mr. Tony Durocher of the Ile a la Crosse; John Carriere of Cumberland House; Joe Roberts of Stanley Mission, and Ben Siemens of Stony Rapids.

Accompanying them are 11 members of the Saskatchewan Indian agricultural program, board members, namely; Chairman Gerry Starr from the Starblanket band; Lyle Acoose from Sakimay; Merv Arcan from Muskeg Lake; Ernest Mike from Beardy's; Lance Ahenakew from Sandy Lake; Bobby Bird from Montreal Lake; Clarence Fineday from Wetckhekan Lake; Harold Kingfisher from Sturgeon Lake; Rick Walker from Regina; Garry Albert from Sweet Grass; and Percy Durocher from Flying Dust.

I look forward to meeting with the various members later today, and I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them here to see the proceedings in our legislature this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — I would also, Mr. Speaker, like to extend the welcome to the agriculture program people from all over the province, and I must say . . . (The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Free Trade Negotiations With United States

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, and it deals with the discussions that have been carried on in Ottawa with respect to the negotiations of a free trade agreement with the United States. And I think we would all agree that markets for Saskatchewan producers in the United States have been little affected by regular tariffs covered by treaties between Canada and the United States, or multinational treaties — multilateral treaties like GATT — and greatly affected in recent times by unilateral levies outside the boundaries of treaties imposed as a result of action by the United States Congress or United States administrative agencies, and one thinks of anti-dumping levies and countervailing levies and the like.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier this: what assurance was given to you that the United States will agree to a dispute resolution mechanism which would bind all arms of the United States government, including the Congress and the administrative agencies like the ITC (International Trade Commission), in their ability to impose such non-tariff barriers as anti-dumping or countervailing levies?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the first ministers were advised that there is no way to forecast what Congress will do with a proposal that goes from the President to Congress. I can say that I don't believe there's anybody at the Table or was at the Table last night that would do a deal if we don't get a new dispute settlement mechanism, one that it would remove the unilateral nature of the current mechanism that exists today. If you left them with the unilateral mechanism, it would really vitiate a deal that you could put together.

We just don't have an ability to forecast what Congress will do. In theory we'll put together a package that, say, that the negotiators could agree on, on the removal of tariffs completely and set up a negotiating mechanism, a dispute settlement mechanism, that would be between Canada and the United States. We could agree on the mechanism, agree on the people, agree on the chairman, agree on how it would work. And then we'd take it to Congress and see what they say and take it to parliament.

So we just can't forecast that, and it is not a good mood in Congress from what I was advised last night and from what I'm reading in the newspaper today. I understand Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Lougheed and others are down there talking to senators, for example, and they're not getting the warmest response.

So a dispute settlement mechanism is absolutely necessary. If we don't get it, then I would highly

suspect we wouldn't have a deal at all.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could you advise me whether you have any indication that the United States negotiators, Mr. Murphy and others, and those to whom he reports, will recommend to Congress that there be such an independent dispute resolution mechanism which will be binding on Congress and the administrative agencies like ITC.?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well I can say that in terms of the verbiage that is used in Ottawa, the United States is now engaged in all of the aspects. They have responded into the conversation on things that have been put forward, including a dispute settlement mechanism.

I'm not sure what they will recommend. We are obviously saying that we have the big deal with respect to the dispute settlement mechanism, and we hope that the trade ambassador, negotiator, will provide that to the President, and the President will take that to Congress.

The President of the United States wants to see that happen. He has told the Prime Minister that. His cabinet ministers want to see it happen. Whether there are sufficient number of people in Congress to see it happen is the key question.

So my best information, and I suppose my best guess, is I would think that Mr. Murphy, when it's said and done, will take that proposal, have it initialed by the President, and he will take it to Congress. Now there's some probability that it might not even get that far, if they couldn't get there. I think the President will take it that far, and it will be put in the lap of Congress.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you may have answered this earlier but I'll put it in again. I'm asking whether you can advise us what the minimum Canadian position is now. And can you advise that there is no disposition on the part of you and, if you can speak for the Canadian government, the Canadian government to enter into any freer trade agreement involving significant lowering of tariffs and dismantling of other structures which we now have, inhibiting trade — no disposition to enter into any such agreements unless there is a firm dispute resolution mechanism which does bind the American government in all its arms.

Some. Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — As I believe I answered it earlier, that most — I would think every — participant at the table would have to see a new dispute settlement mechanism that bound us both. And there may be some minor modifications how that might work. It's never really been done in trade before where you'd have a completely brand-new dispute settlement mechanism, within the rules of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), separate just for the two countries.

That's the position the negotiator's taken; that's the position the Prime Minister is taking — and they can speak for themselves — but it's the position that I'm taking that it has to be a brand-new dispute settlement mechanism, to remove the United States from its unilateral capacity to break it, as we have it day after day now.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. I think I understood the Premier. Are you

saying, sir, that not only does it have to be a new dispute resolution mechanism, but one which is sufficiently effective so that we will not be subject to, what I can only term, arbitrary action in the levying of countervailing or anti-dumping duties? And you can comment on whether it would be more effective than the one currently in GATT, but which was effectively ignored by both the United States and Canada in the lumber dispute because, to put it bluntly, Canada didn't think we could make it stick, even though it was in the treaty.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I would think that would be an appropriate word, “effective” dispute settlement mechanism, that in fact did bind both sides. That's precisely what we're looking at, and I'll make it very clear — without it, I don't think that there would be any first minister that would do the trade deal, not one.

Free Trade Concessions from the Provinces

Mr. Romanow — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a new question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, according to the press reports, much of yesterday's or last night's meeting, at the Langevin Block, on the question of free trade, dealt with concessions from the provinces. We are told that there are going to be losers and that there are going to be winners from free trade; both Prime Minister Mulroney has said that and other premiers have said the same.

My question to you, sir, pertains to who the losers are going to be as far as Saskatchewan is concerned. My specific question to you is this: what did you agree to last night with respect to concessions as far as the province and the people of Saskatchewan are concerned and, more specifically, as it relates to agriculture in the areas of egg and poultry, Canadian Wheat Board, and the like? What did you agree to by way of provincial concessions?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, in general terms, when we ask another country like the United States to reduce their tariffs or drop their tariffs, we're going to have to do the same. If they subsidize on goods that impose harm on any of our commodities that we export, and we have subsidies, then we're going to have to agree to reduce some of those subsidies.

I think the best example that I could think of would be in the red meat area, in terms of ... we want the market to the United States. Right now We're looking at importing up to 150,000 feeder head, feeder cattle, into Canada from the United States. They're concerned about the blue tongue testing at the border; we're obviously concerned about access to that meat in the United States.

To have access, I believe that we're going to have to have a national stabilization mechanism that prevents an awful lot of what you would call the top loading and the bottom loading and the side loading and whatever, so that we can say to a trading partner that this is the stabilization mechanism we have in place. It's actuarially sound; it works; farmers contribute; the public sector contributes; and in the good times there's a kitty there, and in the bad times they draw out of it. But it's not an ongoing subsidy. In fact, the ministers of Agriculture will be discussing that for probably the entire

week starting on Sunday or next Monday. That would be an example.

Another example would be the dairy industry, where you have marketing orders in the United States with some supply management, and you have marketing quotas here with supply management. We've agreed that we will continue to have the supply management. But you run into the problem when you hit processing because the processors want to have some sort of comparable price when they're making ice cream, when they're making yogurt, and so forth.

So some resolve will have to take place to more balance the price of the product going to the processor. That combination of things is being examined and certainly I believe it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that we've had 16 different groups, and they've had that many meetings in the private sector, involving processing, involving industry, involving others, bringing recommendations to the negotiators, saying: how could we have resolved some of these sensitive issues? So, I would say in the meat business, in the feather business, and in the dairy business you have some of those kinds of discussions going on.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. If the Premier is trying to convince me that the discussions are complicated, I concede that. I believe they're complicated. That's not my question.

You, sir, represent the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And you're being asked in, what I might obviously underline to be the case, secret discussions or negotiations, you are being asked, as the Premier of this province, to make certain concessions in order to get an overall deal in the interest of Canada, or so you would have us believe, the free trade negotiations are all about.

And my question to you, therefore, is very specific. What concessions have agreed to make as far as Saskatchewan people are concerned — farmers and others? What concessions have you agreed to make as part of the discussions last night with Mr. Mulroney?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that there are several Premiers, that were quoted on television last night, or again this morning, that were saying that there's nothing that has been agreed until everything is agreed in terms of the negotiations.

We looked at other objectives. The objectives of the negotiations are to reduce tariffs between the two countries. That means both sides will have to do that. To reduce subsidies on both sides will be all right — say for regional economic development.

You could take ... Northern Saskatchewan, for example, might be categorized as an area where we could have economic development, and we could have special financial incentives and it would not bother a trading relationship with the United States.

Now we will carve those out and say, these are special economic arrangements for development for specific areas, for specific reasons. And we can, Mr. Speaker, put those in an agreement. Now we didn't sign anything. We said, we're going to have economic development. There will not be a culture on the table. We will have to deal with the supply management. The Canadian Wheat Board

is intact. I could go through the list.

So the hon. member knows that there's been nothing signed, and there has been nothing given away. It's conceptual in design to reduce the tariffs on both sides.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary to the Premier. On the one hand the Premier would have this House to believe that nothing has been agreed to and nothing has been signed. And on the other hand he would this House believe that such things as the Canadian Wheat Board are still intact. I ask you, sir, how can that be consistent? If everything is on the table and everything is being negotiated how can you assure the house that assure the House that the questions pertaining to the Canadian Wheat Board or the egg and poultry or the dairy industry are sacrosanct?

You, yourself, are saying that everything is there. That's what the Americans want on the table — everything on the table. The Prime Minister wants to wring concessions from you. You're the biggest advocate of the free trade initiative by the Prime Minister in all of Canada. You tell this House, if you will please, what it is that you've agreed to, because you can't tell us that, just 12 weeks before these negotiations end, there is nothing specifically agreed to.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll say a couple of things to the hon. member. I am, and he's absolutely right, a strong proponent of this trade agreement — absolutely unequivocally. And I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I said one thing to the Prime Minister. I said one thing: I won't be nationalizing the Potash industry so the United States will be taking anti-dumping against that industry and other industries like it in this province. Because that's what's costing us, and you know a great deal about that. You know a great deal about that!

As a result of some unilateral actions in this province and other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, we're in some trouble with the United States. Mr. Speaker...

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, please. Order, order, please.

Now before we move to the next question, I'd just like to make this comment. And I'm sure that members have been listening carefully, and the questioners have been asking in good faith. I'm certainly not questioning that. And the person answering it was answering in good faith, I think, here today. But I think what's happening in this: some of the questions are bringing in different issues into the same question, and some of the answers are trying to get a little too long because they want to try to answer the question. So I'd just like both sides to keep that in mind.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have one final supplementary question for the Premier. Mr. Premier, we have 12 weeks left before the so-called "fast track negotiations" run out. We have no

full cost-benefit analysis of the free trade negotiations. I want to ask the Premier this question: is it your intention to negotiate continually in secret — probably the most important set of negotiations which are going to affect the independence and the integrity of this country and this province — to negotiate those talks in secret and then spring on to the people of Saskatchewan and Canada the terms and conditions of a free trade deal which might affect everything from the Canadian Wheat Board and the farmers, or will you start now telling the people of this country and this province in detail the cost benefits and the specifics of what you're giving up on behalf of the Saskatchewan . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can say, I can say unequivocally, that we won't be doing the deal in the kitchen, and we won't leave out Quebec. And he can count on that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I'll also say, Mr. Speaker, we have no end of studies that are available, and the hon. member can, if he wants, I'll send them to him.

With respect to all the jobs and all the benefits as a result of a tariff-free arrangement between the United States and Canada, we could be very big winners, Mr. Speaker. And if the hon. member doesn't realize it, the United States has hit our industry on potash; it's hit steel; it's hit softwood lumber; it's hit pork; it's going to hit uranium, or a high probability of that. And the hon. member standing here saying, and the back-benchers of the NDP saying, we'll nationalize that one, we'll nationalize this one, we'll nationalize this one. And they're sitting there nodding their heads, Mr. Speaker. That's the reason we're in trouble today; that's why I support a trade deal with the United States.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you. I note with pleasure, and I welcome the Premier's commitment that he will forward to me all of the internal studies that the government has prepared. I want to ask the Premier how soon it is that I can expect, and this caucus can expect, the detailed studies that you have prepared internally with respect the cost-benefit analysis pertaining to free trade. When will he got those studies?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — We have, and our negotiators have now, a stack of research from universities from universities from the academic community, from businesses. And all those that we have, Mr. Speaker, we'll turn over to the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — When?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — As soon as I can get my hands on them.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. Order.

Resignation of Board of Prince Albert Regional College

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, my question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Education. Last night the entire board of Prince Albert Regional Community College resigned, Mr. Minister, to protect your government's decision to take over control in Regina of Saskatchewan's four urban community colleges.

The board members told the public meeting in Prince Albert last night that these changes will destroy a 20-year tradition of local control of community education in Prince Albert — not only in Prince Albert, but also in the constituencies which they serve, which are Prince Albert-Duck Lake, Shellbrook-Torch, Kinistino, Redberry, and Rosthern.

My question, Mr. Minister, relates to why. In this case four of the seven members were democratically elected representatives, and your take-over, Mr. Minister, of the community colleges has destroyed true local economy in post-secondary education in Prince Albert and throughout the province. Why did you choose to destroy a local government control? Why did you force the undemocratic take-over?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, I did not force nor ask for their resignations. I'm aware of the press reports indicating that they have resigned. And I would say this: that it's unfortunate that the board members have taken that course, if in fact they have.

I would also say that the process of forming the new institute, the amalgamation of the four community colleges and the four institutes, the process has gone satisfactorily in the other three centers. It's unfortunate that it hasn't worked out to the satisfaction of everyone in Prince Albert.

And I know that change is always difficult, Mr. Speaker, but if we're to position ourselves for the 21st century, these changes are necessary. And it's not as though somehow the board there have failed in the past, for they have not. It's not a case that somehow they have not served the community well, because they have. But the issue, Mr. Speaker, is how do we position ourselves, and what structures do we need, as we approach the 21st century?

Mr. Kowalsky: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister, I want to know what the real reason is for the take-over. Is it now true, Mr. Minister, that because you fear that the federal government is proposing to fund post-secondary education by directing grants directly to those who provide the service, and not through the Department of Education, and that because you don't trust locally elected officials, you want this super board of yours to grab the federal money for post-secondary education? Is that not the real reason for this undemocratic take-over?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, no. None of those reasons are at all relevant.

And I would just reiterate again, the process of amalgamation has gone satisfactorily in Moose Jaw, in Regina, Saskatoon, for the most part, and it's unfortunate that it hasn't processed in the same fashion in Prince Albert. And it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because there are staff there who we want to look after the new institute. There are students, Mr. Speaker, who we must have the programming up for, for this fall. And it's unfortunate that we have this glitch, but it's one that we'll be dealing with, certainly.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister. One of the PC appointments — your own appointment who resigned — said he felt betrayed by a government which preaches decentralization and practices centralized control. He said they have been stepping on this college, on the community, and the principles they have been fighting for.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please! The member is aware that we made a ruling relatively recently that we won't have any quotes of any kind in supplementary questions. I would ask him to please adhere to that rule and to put his question.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I would adhere by your ruling, Mr. Minister, my question is: in light of the clear opposition to your take-over, even from your own PC appointments and from your own party representatives, will you now sit down and discuss ways to preserve local autonomy for our community colleges?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I could advise the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that in fact that is what I and my officials have been doing over the past several weeks. In fact with this board we have, I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, tried to walk the extra mile.

I have met with them individually. I have met with some individuals of the board separately. We looked at several options, not only ones that Prince Albert presented to us but, as well, the community college trustees' association. The Moose Jaw board had an option. We, Mr. Speaker, have tried to work with them in every which possible way to deal with their concerns, and so that we can go ahead, look after their staff and the programming. Unfortunately, it hasn't been to their satisfaction, Mr. Speaker, but in terms of dealing with the jobs and the opportunities of Prince Albert people and the people around there, the new institute will serve them well into the future, Mr. Speaker. The opportunities will be there for them.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, I want to clear the air on a comment you've just made about consulting, because if what I heard correctly, what you said and I heard correctly, then you are misleading this Assembly. Because you had one meeting, not one meeting with the board prior to your press conference — not one public meeting.

I have here a letter from the Prince Albert Regional Community College which clearly states the first board of directors . . . in Prince Albert the first they heard of it was to . . . when you decided to grab control was at the press conference, Mr. Minister. Now will you admit that your statement about consultation applies only to after that press statement was made, or are you saying that this letter that I have from the board is a lie?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I know not of which letter the hon. member refers to, but I can tell him this, that over this past winter I held something in the order of 20 meetings across this province with some 550 groups, associations, and individuals to determine what the best course was, and to put together a blueprint for the future. The consultations do not somehow end with that round of meetings. We have yet to examine with other groups, as which we're in the process of doing now, the whole area of literacy, the Distance Education Council, and just to show you that in fact . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order please. Order please. Would the hon. member please allow the minister to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, just to show, so the hon. member knows that we have worked with this board in good faith, some several weeks ago I proposed to the board there, this: that they remain in place for period of up to 18 months to provide for continuity of programming in Prince Albert and region while the new institute becomes operational, further proposed that the regional advisory board for Prince Albert and region could be put in place if they so wish. And if they . . .

Mr. speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Not only, Mr. Speaker, did I say that . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. I'd like to ask the members to please quiet down and let the minister finish his answer.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I propose, Mr. Speaker, that the regional advisory board for Prince Albert and region, the membership there include the present members of the college board, plus regional representatives, and they in fact have the power to advise the board of directors of the new institute on the appropriate array of programs and services for the region.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, that if they wish to continue that unique tradition, that Prince Albert tradition of having elected community representatives, that they could still so do, Mr. Speaker.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, that we would make every possible effort to find jobs for their staff that might be located in the new ...

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, before we begin orders of the day, you have made the ruling here in this House and have referred to it numerous times in regards to questions that are asked during question periods and the ability of members to quote from documents during that period.

I wonder, sir, would you be able to provide us here, at least on this side of the House, and hopefully to all members of the House, precedents introduced in other Houses of Assembly in which the use of quotations during supplementary question period is prohibited.

Mr. Speaker: — Well first of all, I would just like to say this in reply to the hon. member: if the hon. member recalls the reason that the ruling was made, is to try to keep some order within supplementary questions.

The reason enunciated at the time was: if quotes are allowed, often they tend to make the supplementary too long, or sometimes it occurs that by the time the quote is finished, it winds up being a new question rather than a supplementary. Those were the reasons. And I still say they are good reasons, very good reasons.

However, if the member is interested if there are any other precedents, perhaps, in this Assembly or anywhere else, I'll communicate with him personally and inform him of the same.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Environment and Public Safety
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 9

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, on Monday we spoke about the operation recycle and you had promised that you would submit some materials in response to some questions I asked. And I simply ask if you have that here, and if I could have that now, please.

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to raise with the minister and his officials some more questions with respect to rail line relocation that we started out on last Monday night. And I'd like to just refresh your memory as to what happened.

Monday night we established about four or five things. One, we established in estimates that your department received an opinion from the Department of Justice that you may not have jurisdiction as a government or as a department to deal with environmental impacts as it relates to the rail line relocation project in north Regina.

Secondly, we established that no decision was rendered by your department on the environmental impact statement. And thirdly, we established that you identified concerns about the environmental impact statement which you have relayed privately to the principals — namely the CTC and the city of Regina — with respect to noise, drainage problems, and potential disastrous problems about the Regina aquifer.

You also established ... we established that evening you privately and quietly informed the city, and neglected to inform the public about these concerns which will impact very heavily on the water supply of this city, and which will impact very heavily on families living near the corridors of the rail line relocation.

Mr. Minister, when you received your ... my question is: when you received your legal opinion from your sister department, the Department of Justice, did you then request the federal Department of Environment to make a judgment on the environmental impact statement?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — In the member's opening comments, you indicate that we privately and quietly passed our opinions across to the city. We did send a letter to the city. But then, following that, in the public review period, the public had access to the same information. So it was never kept quiet. It was put out for the public, which is the normal process in dealing with environmental impact assessments.

Now on the other side you asked, did we pass the information on to the federal Department of Environment to deal with. We did make that offer, and we contacted the federal Department of Environment. At that point they asked us to continue with the process so that there was not a duplication of work. And that's what has happened up to this point.

Mr. Solomon: — So you made a request of the federal Department of the Environment, and they advised you to proceed so that there was some continuity with respect to the project.

Considering your legal opinion, did you ask the Department of Environment federally to provide you with a legal opinion on whether you had the jurisdiction to render some opinion on the EIS (environmental impact statement)?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think that would have been an unusual process for us to follow. We were dealing with the issue. We asked the federal Department of Environment if they wanted to take over, and they asked us to continue. So that's the process that was used. And no, we didn't ask for any other opinion.

Mr. Solomon: — What you've told us this afternoon is that there will be no level of government, in your Justice Department's opinion, of liability in the event of some hazardous thing to happen if the plan was to proceed as proposed. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that that information has been put before the CTC (Canadian Transport Commission) during the hearings. The outcome of the decision on that has not been rendered as yet, but when the CTC brings down its decision, the matter of dealing with the concern you raise will likely be dealt with in that decision.

Mr. Solomon: — Would the minister be prepared to table (a) the legal opinion offered by ... rendered by the Justice Department for my information, or provide it to me in some fashion; and (b) provide me in this House with a copy of the concerns that you conveyed to the city and the CTC with respect to the environmental impact statement.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't believe that it's customary to give interdepartmental memo kind of decisions in this forum. I think they come to us as advice and guidance, but I don't think it would be the normal process for me to give you that decision.

The comments that we made in reference to the environmental impact assessment are included in the recommendations that are filed with the legislative library, along with the environmental impact assessment. So they're readily accessible there if the member just asks the librarian.

(1445)

Mr. Solomon: — The comments that we've been discussing, that you have made to the city and to the CTC, will be on file in the library — is that what you're saying? The minister agrees in affirmative with that.

Could you provide us with some documentation, or a copy of your communications that you have with the federal Department of the Environment on this matter? Is that possible to do? And if not, I would sure like to know why.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't think that's normal type of information to communicate across the floor during estimates. We have advised you that we did make that contact. That information was presented as evidence before the CTC. I don't really think that we can provide that information to the member.

Mr. Solomon: — Okay, what about Mr. Minister, the jurisdictional responsibility with respect to the EIS (environmental impact statement)? If you have an opinion which says that you are not in a position to render any decision on it, and you've communicated this to the federal Department of the Environment, and they have said, well you proceed because we want to ensure continuity, who, in your opinion, has jurisdiction to make a decision on the environmental impact statement, and under which act?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that my department has entered into an agreement with the city whereby we will review any proposals that come forward for the placement of the new rail line, whenever it happens.

We don't have the jurisdictional authority, or at least it appears we don't, from the advice we received from the justice department. But the agreement we have with the city will give us enough authority to provide them with the information and the direction that they would need to make the proper decisions. So we do have that kind of decision making authority through the agreement with the city.

Mr. Solomon: — Is this a normal course of action with respect to environmental impact statements, or studies, that the department follows? If you undertake to fulfill your responsibilities — your perceived responsibilities under the act — and you get a legal opinion — for whatever reason you would get that legal opinion I don't know, but you would obtain a legal rendering of an opinion from your Justice Department — are you doing this on every project that requires that requires an

EIS, or are you doing it because there is ... for some other reason? I would like to know that reason.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — This is not a normal kind of environmental impact assessment because it's not a normal circumstance that we are dealing with.

We're dealing with a major decision affecting the city, the railways, and the jurisdiction of the railways traditionally has been under the federal government. For that reason we went to the Justice Department to get a decision. But no, it's not a normal process on every environmental impact assessment. Many of them, the jurisdictional authority is clear and you just proceed to do the job. In this one, because of the involvement of the railways, the city, and the federal government, it was felt to be important that we get the right decision, and I think rightly so. As the scene unfolds it looks like we've made the right choice.

Mr. Solomon: — Does this mean then that the EIS was performed as a matter of course to meet the basic minimum requirements of the act, but it really doesn't have any particular relationship to the project? Because the rail lines have been moved and altered from the original proposal when the EIS was done; as well, there are other possibilities for location. Could you explain that please.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that there have been some adjustments to where the rail line would be placed — not long distances, a couple hundred yards in some places. The decision for them not to cut into the soil, but rather to build up, that's another change since the environmental impact assessment was done.

So these changes would be brought back before any permission to go ahead would be given, and they would require approval. But there are no major shifts at this point. Now we aren't final yet with the CTC hearings, and if it shows that there is a major change, that would have to be addressed before any approvals could be given.

Mr. Solomon — For example, what you're saying then is, or if I can draw an example with the information you've provided, the change, one of the changes that were made in the midst of the CTC hearings was that a 3,000-meter stretch between Pasqua and Winnipeg Street, a cut of 25 feet deep into the Condie ridge to provide a basis for the rail bed, that has changed from being 25 feet deep to being 10 to 15 feet — I'm not certain specifically what the number is. With that change in mind, can you explain an example for this purpose.

Will the environmental impact statement that was done, was obviously done on the basis of a 25 foot deep cut which would provide less hazards in terms of air pollution, less hazards in terms of noise and vibration pollution because of the deep cut ... Now that it's raised higher, will the environmental impact statement have to be redone, or will that have to be looked at and be approved by your department once again?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that some of the changes that the hon. member is mentioning, like the change of not cutting so deeply into the soil, that was one of the recommendations that was made when the first EIS was reviewed. So they're basically then following what was required of them. Any other major changes would likely require an EIS, like if they were to decide to move that trackage from where it is now to go out by 3,000 meters, I think was the figure the member was

mentioning the other day. If something like should come up, then it's almost a completely new location and would likely require a complete review of what's being proposed and a new statement filed.

Mr. Solomon: — The 3,000 meters I was referring to was the east-west direction, not the buffer zone. The buffer zone is 300 meters which is far, far less shorter in distance. The question I want to ask right now is in regards to the *Emergency Response Guide for Dangerous Goods* that I referred to Monday night. This guide clearly outlines that the 300-meter buffer zone is totally inadequate in the case of any dangerous goods being spilled, or any railway car being damaged along that line.

Has the Department of the Environment made a recommendation on the basis of your sister government in Ottawa's recommendations in this manual to the city and the railways that the 300 meters is inadequate?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that my department was not even aware of the manual that you were waving there. It's possible that the emergency measures side may have been. I would expect that that information that you're carrying was brought forward at the CTC hearings and it is a federal document, so quite likely they will take it into consideration. We did not at this point.

Mr. Solomon: — If the CTC (Canadian Transport Commission) do not take into consideration that document, can I have the minister's assurance that your department will ensure the minimum requirements in this book are met for the relocation plan of the railway?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My department would be pleased to review the recommendations in that document, and perhaps if the member would read the name of the document into the record so we can look it up. And I can't give you assurances because we haven't had a chance to review it. We would like to do that, and certainly if there are things that we should be looking at in consideration of where the final place for the rail relocation will occur, at that time we will do what we can to see the pertinent guide-lines would be followed.

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The book .. this is an earlier edition. There is a more recent edition. I think it's '85 or '86 it was published. This was published in 1983; it's the second edition, entitled *Emergency Response Guide for Dangerous Goods*, published by Transport Emergency, CANUTEC for short, and it's available in the library here in the legislature.

There is a more recent one which is provided to all firefighters in all centers of major proportions. And they use this as the basis for helping to fight emergency spills, and so on. So it's a very important document. There is a 24-hour phone number in Ottawa: area code 613, phone number 996-6666. So I please refer your officials to that and to at least have the rail relocation project, if it is proposed in it's current location, that those concerns and that book are followed as closely as possible.

The other questions I have — we keep talking about the rail being moved to the north end of the city, and I would like to know, having discussed with many ... I'll stop there, Mr. Minister. But I have spoken to many people, many organizations, and they tell me, including some of the railroad officials that it makes more sense economically, it makes far more sense environmentally, to have

the rail relocation not running through the north part of the city, but in fact running it south of the city.

In terms of Geography, in terms of the water aquifer, they maintain that it is a far wiser route when it comes to environmental protection, when it comes indeed even to the cost of producing the yards, because they do not have to take the trains up the grades on the Condie ridge and down again, and that costs a lot of power throughout the trains, the oil consumption, and so on.

(1500)

I'd like to ask the minister and his officials whether they have done, or they are aware of, any environmental impact statements that have been done on any other location other than the yard that is proposed on this map on the north-east part of the city?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that the only environmental impact assessment that has been done was done on the current proposal on the northern line. The city, in its decisions and discussions with the railways, prior to the time that they made the decision to go in the current route in the north end was that the costs would be prohibitive to have gone to the south, and so they had ruled that out.

Now those aren't decisions that we would make as a department. They would file an environmental impact assessment where they see it feasible to do the project. We review the environmental impact statement on that basis. If there are significant areas of concern raised that would say that, no, you can't go there, then they would have to look at other alternatives. And then they may have the choice that the south is the best. But at the time that they came to us, that one was ruled out because of cost.

Mr. Solomon: — Has the department or any of the principals involved, raised the matter of an environmental impact study on the east or the west end of the city as an alternative to the south and the north?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — At the time we reviewed the first environmental impact statement, the department asked the city if they would consider other alternatives. And at that time they advised that they would not because the costs were prohibitive, and they didn't think that if they had to go a different route that they could afford to build. So they have never really addressed that as an issue that would have generated an environmental impact statement.

Mr. Solomon: — Could you please inform me, or your officials, could you please inform me as to what were the geographic parameters of the EIS? Can you precisely tell me which area was studied in the environmental impact statement?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that it would be most difficult in terms here to spell out exactly where that line is. But it is spelled out in significant detail in the environmental impact statement. So rather than me trying to guess at it and my staff trying to guess at it, I would ask the member to read the exact locations. It's hard; it's the same basic location that is being reviewed at this time by the CTC. But it's all delineated in the environmental impact statement in fairly clear terms, so you

could pick it out fairly easily.

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The concern I have, the reason I asked the question, is very simply because the comments we received from you on Monday night indicated that the EIS was done primarily on phase 1. And the point I was trying to make on Monday night, and I'll reiterate this afternoon, is that phase 1 impacts enormously on phase 2. If phase 1 is approved, phase 2, if it goes ahead, will have to go along the same corridor.

And what my concern is, as an MLA for the city of Regina, is that the corridor is only 300 meters away from a heavily populated district. And not only that, but it's on a hill overlooking the district. When you consider the line running north on the west side, and then running east and west on the north end of the city, with prevailing winds of north, north-wests, and wests, three out of the six winds that blow in this city, the majority of them, the three of them are prevailing. If any spill occurs in that distance, you're going to have a terrific problem on your hands — a major disaster.

On top of that, if you've got 20 to 40 trains a day traveling this route, that close with those winds, you're going to have tons of waste diesel fuel blowing into the homes and neighborhoods and into the families and the communities that these lines coincide with. And that concentration, I maintain and suggest to you, is a concentration that no city should have, in particular if it's a cost sharing arrangement.

So I would like to know why an EIS was not done, or why you did not ask the city or request the city to do this, in view of those very real concerns of those people that live in that neighborhood.

Hon. Mr. Swan — It's not really the choice of the department to say, now's the time to do another EIS. When the proposal comes forward for phase 2, that's the time that the EIS must be done. At the time that we were discussing, the only proposal was for phase 1.

I might suggest to the hon. member, though, the diesel trains going by, 20 a day or 40 a day, may have some diesel smoke associated.

If you were to consider the number of trucks that go by on the highway between here and Saskatoon, it's probably far more serious in contamination from diesel smoke than you would find in that number of trains. You can probably find 40 or more trucks per hour going through, each way, and that would be far more significantly impacting the city of Regina and the residents here than the trains would, which would be naturally out further.

Mr. Solomon: — I might add, Mr. Minister, that the highway between here and Saskatoon has not been built where there is an existing neighborhood, and has not been built that close. And I think that's a point we should make. If we're going to be spending \$ 120 million-plus in moving rail lines, then we should do it properly. I don't differ with the member's contention that there is pollution provided from trucks traveling the highways.

What I'm getting a sense of, Mr. Minister, is that we have, rather than an environmental impact study process that has to be followed by the principals, we are having more of a quasi-environmental impact study process, where things are kind of loosey-goosey and there's no real

parameters that they must follow, because they can go ahead and make their decisions, and then, when the decisions are made, the provincial government can either disapprove them, approve them, or make recommendations to change them. And then the principals will have to go through the whole process again of spending money to have hearings and doing EISs and so on.

It seems to me that it makes much more sense to either have an environmental impact study system that is a system, as opposed to a quasi-system, that provides clear parameters and clear objectives to the principals involved, so they can get on with the business that has to be done, or we don't. And I ... You say we do. And all of the reports I get from the CTC hearings and from the individuals and principals involved, there doesn't seem to be a major system, a standard EIS system in place; it's more of a quasi-system.

Just as an example, the CNR commissioned another environmental impact study to be done, the same as the city, and they had the same group of people do it. But they had different answers. And the reason they have different answers is because the questions they asked were different questions. The city didn't ask the questions which had to be done. And the Deputy Minister, I think, would recognize that those things happen.

And I'd like to know if the department, in view of these major differences in this quasi-system, do you, Mr. Minister, believe that the department should grasp this problem and resolve it so that we've got a standard system that is set out for everybody? Will you give us your commitment and conviction that you will do that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'd like to advise the hon. member that the process that the environmental impact assessment was done, and the process that was used when it went through the Department of Environment and the response back to the city and the recommendation for adjustments to the environmental impact study — all of those things are the same process that would be done for any other environmental impact study. The only basic difference is that if we were to say no, you can't do this or you can't do that, then we don't have any clear indication that we could take them to court and win in court. That's the only major difference.

However, the province does have the money side of it — our contribution towards the relocation. And I think that is a major tool that's at the disposal of this government. If we're not seeing the response the Department of Environment requests, and the government and the city request, the withdrawal of funding is likely a fairly significant tool to use, and likely would be used if that came to pass.

Mr. Solomon: — If the environmental impact study process is standard, it seems to me the government and the Department of Environment have a legal foot to stand on. If it's not standard, if there's a quasi-system out there and you can't provide clear and concise guide-lines for an environmental impact study to be undertaken, I can't understand why you're saying that there is, with a quasi-system, a legitimate foot for the government to stand on when it comes to court action.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I want to assure the honorable member that the process that we're using is not a quasi-system. It's a full fledged environmental impact assessment process that we're using. The only part that we difficulty with is the legal process — if it were challenged at the end. And that's

what I'm advising you that there is some uncertainty as to who has the authority. We're going to exercise the authority until somebody says, you don't have it. I think that's as plain as I can put it.

Mr. Solomon: — Just maybe a final question or two then, Mr. Minister, on this issue. If the Justice Department has rendered an opinion to the Department of Environment that you have no jurisdiction to make a decision on this — and you tell us that they have — and if the federal Department of Environment says to you: proceed so we can maintain continuity, who is going to be responsible if a major catastrophe ends up happening? Who is going to be liable? Is it going to be the provincial Department of Environment; is it going to be the Department of Justice for rendering its opinion; or is it going to be the federal Department of Environment; or is it going to be someone else? Could you please tell me that? And this is an hypothetical question, I suppose.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — When I advised the hon. member that we had a ruling from the provincial Justice department, what they said was that the position was unclear as to whether we had authority. They didn't say we didn't have it; they said the position was unclear. That's what I have told you prior to this, two or three times.

As well, I mentioned to you that the Canadian Transport Commission, in its hearings, had the question of legal responsibility before it for decision. I would expect that at the time that the final ruling is given by that body, that the responsibility, the legal responsibility, should be outlined by the CTC as to who is responsible if a major decision occurs.

I think in many circumstances — using the disaster that occurred west of Edmonton last year — that the railways themselves took that responsibility; and indirectly then, the government would, the federal government. So I think we use some previous cases that do give some guidance in that area.

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would like to now ... I would just like to thank you and your officials for the frank answers. I appreciate them, and I will dig up that information from the library. My colleague from Regina North wishes to ask some questions as well.

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, my colleague from North West has asked a number of questions that are of keen interest to me. The jurisdiction one ... I guess I'm rather stating a concern that I have. As I understand it, the provincial department, your Department of Environment, started doing an environmental assessment, and did it, in fact; then got an opinion from the Department of Justice that maybe you don't have jurisdiction.

So you approached the federal government who said, well in the interest of continuity, you go ahead. I think I'm right so far. Then where I start to get very concerned is when you did not render an opinion to the city, because clearly the federal government had abrogated its responsibility and said, here, you take it; you're going with it; you should be rendering a decision.

My question is: why, in light of the way the sequence of events unfolded, why did you choke at the very important juncture and not render a decision to the city?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that, because of the ruling of the provincial Department of Justice, we were not certain that we could render a decision and have it stand up in a court of law. So rather

than do that, we entered into an agreement with the city which indirectly does the same thing, and it binds them to basically live with the recommendation of the Department.

And I think I gave that to the member for Regina North so that he would also — Regina North West, I guess — so that he would also have that same answer. The agreement with the city really gives us the necessary authority for them to be required to follow the guide-lines that we lay down. So I think that it really, in effect, provides the same thing.

Mr. Trew: — And yet I think I heard you say yesterday that you did not render a written report or written decision to the city, and yet you're saying the city has agreed to abide by your ruling. I'm just puzzled as to that whole sequence of . . . If you didn't give them a ruling, how can they abide by it? I guess my question is: what did you give the city in writing? what have they got to go by?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Basically the agreement is what they have to go by, and all of the comments that were made and the recommendations that were made by the department are attached to the environmental impact statement that's filed here with the Legislative Library and in other places during the public review. So they have the exact direction that my department gave. The city has that, the public had that, and it's available to you through the library if you pick up the statement and go through it.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The ditch that is proposed to be built along that new rail line, that was at one time supposed to be about 25 or 27 feet deep and is now 10 to 15 feet deep . . . It's because of the changes; it's really not much wonder that the people in north Regina are a little bit cynical. Nobody can keep up without a daily program as to the changes that are talking place in this rail relocation.

And then my question today, or my question now is to do with the phase 1 and phase 2 argument that I thought I understood you giving here when we last discussed this two days ago. And what I heard you say was that if phase 1 is agreed and goes ahead — it proceeds and is built — that phase 2 of the rail relocation does not automatically follow. Is that what I heard? And if so, I've got some follow-up questions.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think that anybody going to rail relocation around this city would be unwise to proceed with phase 1 without first doing the environmental impact study for phase 2. Phase 2 has not had that environmental impact study. and when they propose to do it, it will require an environmental impact study.

So I think the city or the railway, both, would be very unwise to proceed with one area without the other. So as the CTC clarifies its position, then I would expect that the environmental impact assessments will come forward to deal with the whole program before it goes ahead with change.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you. So the onus is on the city and the railroads to approach your department and say, we want to do an environmental impact study on phase 2 before we even start building phase 1. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's not exactly correct. They have done the environmental impact study on

phase 1. What I said was that it would be very unwise for them to proceed to do phase 1 if phase 2 is going to really be a part of the overall project in the end. I think they would be wise to get clarification. They could do phase 1, if they want to, but then if there's difficulty with phase 2, they may never get beyond phase 1. That's sort of the question I raise.

Mr. Trew: — I'm sorry. Maybe I said phase 1 when I meant phase 2. My question was, really: it's up to the city and the railroads to come to you, before they build phase 1, if they intend to build phase 1 and 2. They should come to you with the phase 2 proposal and say, is it going to get approval as well? Regardless of the timetable, we all realize that phase 1 is being built now, and phase 2 is a few years hence. They're not being built at the same time.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well I think we're saying the same thing, maybe saying it somewhat differently. They could build phase 1 with only the environmental impact study that they have done, providing they meet the requirements that were outlined. So if we give them clearance to go ahead, give them the ministerial order to proceed, they could do that. But I indicated to you that if the two are going to be needed in the future, they would be very unwise to do one without having approval for both.

But the city and the railways are the ones that must make the decision if they're going ahead with phase 2. And if they are, they must do the environmental impact study.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. That was the answer I was seeking. I thought that's what you were saying, and I was just getting the clarification.

Another concern I have. You say, in regards to another location, that indeed the rail relocation might be moved if there were, and I believe your words were "significant concerns raised." By that I'm sure you mean significant environmental concerns.

What would that be? Would it be contamination of the water? Just what is, in your opinion significant concerns raised?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Any time that you're doing a major project like a rail relocation around a city, there are many environmental impacts that occur. Noise is one, of course; danger to people crossing roadways and things is another; the diesel smoke is definitely one; the contamination of water would be another; hazardous goods, of course, is another. So there are many, many areas.

When I said if there was a relocation, you know, if it's a significant change of direction or location to what was first proposed . . . you know, I don't mean if you move it 10 feet north or south. That would make very little difference. But if you moved it 1,000 yards, it would make a big difference. so that's the kind of thing that you really would trigger a new environmental impact study, is if they make major changes.

And at this point they are adjusting what was first proposed. Much of the adjustment that they are now suggesting that they will do are areas that were raised as requirements when the environmental impact study went through the department and through the public hearing process.

Mr. Trew: — It seems to me like this whole rail relocation process has kind of been a case of

people building a foundation and then expecting us to believe that they're not going to build a house on it. And I think that's a little bit of what's been happening with this phase 1 and phase 2. And that's part of the problem that the general public is having, is are we talking about phase 1, or are we talking about phase 2?

There was some consideration to leaving the rail lines where they were, some consideration to moving it to the north, some moving it to the south. And it's just a very confusing thing for most people. But the residents of north Regina know that the proposal is not a great one as it presently stands.

The problem now that we're faced, is that when this rail relocation was first proposed some 20 years ago, it was going to move the rail line well out of the city. The problem that my colleague from Regina North west has raised is that there is now housing within 1,000 feet of this proposed rail relocation. So what we're doing in effect, Mr. Minister, is changing one rail residential conflict for another new rail residential conflict. And indeed, it's causing us all a fair amount of concern.

Does your department consider that, in that the residences are part of the now environment and the new rail relocation is going to significantly change that environment, does your department consider that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think the member raises a very valid concern. Any time that you have a project like this that has been on the drawing board for many years, the first environmental impact statement that was filed with the government was in 1982. So again we've had another five years. And the city of Regina has grown considerable in that time period. And I suppose from the time it was first proposed 20 years, you say, or approximately 20 years ago, the city has probably more than doubled in size. So you have significant changes and all of these, I believe, need to be addressed.

(1530)

Now in the Canadian transport Commission hearings, I believe that the fact that the housing is now much closer to the proposed location than it had been prior, was raised. And hopefully that's one of the things that they are addressing. Our department, of course, is concerned with the proximity of houses to any major development like this.

So as time progresses, these items will be watched. Whether or not we could redirect the rail line, that's a question that I don't think we have enough information on to really give you an answer.

Mr. Trew: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister. I just had a few supplementary questions that I wanted to ask, following up on my colleague from Regina North West. I will have some questions on another issue when that comes up, but I thank you for your answers here. I believe one of my Saskatoon colleagues has some questions.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister. I wanted to direct some questions to you with regard to the city of Saskatoon, and sewage treatment and the effluent therefrom to the South Saskatchewan River. And the first question, Mr. Minister, is: when and what was the nature of the

most recent formal notice sent to city of Saskatoon regarding required improvement to the sewage treatment system?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — For me to give the member an answer is somewhat difficult. I'm advised by my staff that the first indication to the city of Saskatoon that they must put in secondary treatment in their sewage system goes back to 1968. It's been an ongoing correspondence from that time to this, and there's been much correspondence within this year. And the city itself has undertaken a fairly major study in the last year. I have met with the city on two occasions since I've been minister. So there has been ongoing discussions.

I don't think that we have arrived at a firm method of solution even yet. So if the member could be more specific on what he's asking, we may be able to get it. But the overall question is that it's been ongoing for a long time. There have been communications by telephone, by letter, and actual meetings held a number of times even over the last few months.

Mr. Brockelbank: — I'm aware, Mr. Minister, that it is ongoing and has been going on for a number of years. However, I worded my request to you very carefully. I said, when and what was the nature of the most recent formal notice or request sent to the city of Saskatoon regarding improvements to the sewage treatment system?

Now I think the Minister should be able to come up with something of an answer to that, Mr. Chairman, because I recall sitting on Saskatoon city council and receiving requests from the Department of the Environment with regard to improvements that are necessitated in the city's sewage treatment in order to meet the standards that your department, I believe, establishes.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't have the exact date of the letter here. It was within the last two weeks. The basic context of that letter was that the department would reluctantly agree to allow them to proceed with the plans that were recommended by the study that they had done, providing the city would give assurance that they would proceed towards complete secondary sewage treatment — work towards it steadily until they achieve complete secondary sewage treatment.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, you say within the last two weeks the department has been in touch with the city of Saskatoon. Would it be possible to obtain a copy of the transmission that occurred between the department and the city urging them onward?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't think it's normal practice for a department to release its correspondence with a client, even in the legislature. If the hon. member needs more information than I'm providing to him, I would suggest to him that he come to my office, and I'll have the appropriate staff meet with him to brief him on the position up to this point in time. But I don't think the passing of the actual correspondence to a client would be in order.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I will be satisfied with a briefing on the subject and an extract which will contain the essence of the request of the city of Saskatoon with regard to improvements to the sewage treatment system.

Now I want to know, Mr. Minister, in addition, what are the standards that the department is

requesting of the city of Saskatoon to meet, aside from the fact that you grudgingly permit them to proceed with their plan which evolved from the study they did towards the secondary sewage treatment system? What are the elements of the standards?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The regulations require that 85 per cent of the . . . Let me get the exact interpretation here. They use a bunch of technical terms that aren't that meaningful to me. But basically it says that cities of the size of the city of Saskatoon must have secondary treatment process for its sewage and that they must meet. We have to have 85 per cent of biochemical oxygen demand — b.o.d. is the abbreviation that they use — and the suspended solids have to be removed.

The city of Saskatoon is probably one of the very few cities of its size in Canada that doesn't have secondary sewage treatment. And it's been a long, ongoing negotiation as long as we've had a Department of Environment that the city proceed to move in that direction and to indeed accomplish it. We've had considerable difficulty, as the member likely knows, of getting the city to move far enough to meet that requirement.

Today we have the Meewasin Valley Authority in Saskatoon wanting to make use of the river downstream from the city of Saskatoon for recreation and a number of things. And I think because of the requirements that are now being requested of the government to see that the water is usable to other communities downstream, makes it even more urgent that we proceed to complete secondary sewage treatment in the city of Saskatoon at the earliest possible time.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I agree whole-heartedly with the urgency of the issue which the minister puts before us at this time. I was of the same position when I was on Saskatoon city council, interestingly enough, Saskatoon city council, being a child of the province of Saskatchewan, has to curb their expenditures to meet the financial revenue that they have flowing into the city of Saskatoon.

While on council I kept fairly close attention to the provincial grants to the city of Saskatoon, and I did some graphing of those grants. This is urban assistance and traffic safety. And it shows, under a New Democratic government, Mr. Minister, the graph rising sharply, and under a Conservative government, falling rapidly. Now for the members that can't understand that, I'll be glad to send over pictures.

I followed closely the comprehensive financing of the city of Saskatoon. This is only a couple of the components of the financing. The comprehensive financing from the province of Saskatchewan to the city of Saskatoon covering the whole gamut of revenue sources — urban assistance; transit; capital operating; community capital fund, which is now the PC fund; health; library; other items. And I see in the period of '83 to '85, the urban assistance being pegged at 7 per cent, dropping to 5 per cent, and dropping to zero.

And I see the actual figures, the drop, year over year in the city of Saskatoon to be quite severe. In 1982 to '83 it dropped \$649,000. The following year it dropped over \$2 million. And the following year it dropped another \$2 million.

Interestingly enough, it went up in 1986 by just under half a million dollars.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't know what the hon. member is trying to arrive at by his comments, but I can assure the hon. member that the Department of Environment is not in a position to give grants to anyone. So for any of the failures that you're listing, this department would not be responsible.

Mr. Brockelbank: — I appreciate the information of the minister, Mr. Chairman, but the point of what I intended to establish at this time, to bring us right up to date, and this is the most recent financial statement of the city of Saskatoon . . . While the city of Saskatoon was awaiting the provincial budget being brought down in this Chamber, which caused a fair bit of stress in the financing of the city of Saskatoon, shows the provincial capital fund deleted. And it shows drops in revenue of substantial amounts — another drop of about \$4 million in these main components of revenue to the city of Saskatoon. And just recently the city of Saskatoon, at its council meeting, discussed a number of projects that would be deferred.

(1545)

Now I know the minister is serious when he says the sewage treatment in the city of Saskatoon is important, not only for the city of Saskatoon, but for the constituency of Rosthern, for example, communities in the constituency of Rosthern, and other communities further downstream. And I see by the news, that the city of Saskatoon has deleted the water pollution control . . . or the province of Saskatchewan has deleted the water pollution control grant which would have provided the city of Saskatoon in the neighborhood of \$1.8 million.

Now we're not talking about small change, here, Mr. Minister; \$1.8 million canceled on June 24, 1987, after the budget came down. And within two days the city of Saskatoon was notified of that particular cut in that grant. This particular grant affects directly the implementation of that which you say is so important, Mr. Minister, and which I agree with you. And I'm sure all my compatriots from the city of Saskatoon, on either side of the House, will agree that it is very important.

And I want to know what resistance, Mr. Minister, you provided within the government when these grants, this cut of this grant was announced or decided by the province of Saskatchewan. I want to know what kind of a fight you put up, and why this grant was cut by the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I advise the hon. member that grants are not made from the Department of Environment. If you want to ask that question at the time when the water corporation is before the Assembly, I'd be glad to deal with it.

There is no grant guaranteed for eternity by anyone. And the city of Saskatoon, had they moved at any time between 1968 and now, could have accessed the same grants as anybody else. And in the future they'll access the same grants as anyone else. But you can't sit and cry if you wait for 20 years before you move. and basically that's what's happened, is that the grant program has changed; it applies to not just one city, but it applies to everyone.

I might tell you that when you're making decisions to cut in a budget, we all have to get involved -- you have to, I have to, if we're going to provide the method for our province to continue. So if the hon. member would like to ask questions of that type at the time that the water corporation is up, I'd

be glad to deal with it under that budget.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, I take the minister at his word. He says we all have to get involved. And I asked the minister specifically: what was his involvement when his government was cutting out this grant to anybody in Saskatchewan, but specifically to the city of Saskatoon. I said, what was his involvement in our arguing against that? Why was this grant cut out?

I want to say to the hon. minister, and I'm sure he's acquainted with the facts, in 1980 the city of Regina received a 10 per cent grant from this pollution control program and other funds from the federal government. And I know the grant's been cut off. But I asked the minister specifically: what kind of fight did you put up when your government was cutting off a grant which would have assisted the city of Saskatoon in a most important endeavor — improving the quality of effluent put into the South Saskatchewan River by the sewage treatment plant. The minister has evaded that question. I want to have an answer for that, and not from the member from Weyburn who sits in his seat and cackles away but provides no information.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member has asked what my involvement was. I was at the cabinet table. The decisions that are made at that cabinet table, I'm not allowed to come out and say to the general public what input I had on either side of any question. I was part of the decision, because I am a member of that cabinet, and I made no bones about it.

I would tell the hon. member that if the city of Saskatoon had moved at the same time that the city of Regina did — and I might tell you that the city of Regina is not now at the secondary sewage treatment stage, they're at the tertiary treatment stage, which is one further yet — if the city of Saskatoon had moved at that time, they would have been eligible for the same kind of grant.

But you know, grants have never stayed the same in any department over history. They have changed; they have continually changed. The grants that are in the budget at the time that you do a given project are the grants that apply. And I think that's what the cities must realize.

Maybe in the future, before Saskatoon is finished, there'll be more than a 10 per cent grant down the road. Who knows? I couldn't guarantee it, but I couldn't guarantee that it would not be the case either.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I realize, for one, that grants don't remain in place forever, and grants change from time to time. They go from CC fund to PC fund, and then they go into limbo. When the angel of darkness presented his budget on the 17th, obviously in that budget this particular grant was cut out. and what I'm saying is that I wanted to hear how the minister advocated on behalf of his department for the retention of this grant.

The city of Saskatoon and all cities in Saskatchewan have been faced with declining revenue by this government ever since it got into office, except just before the election they gave it a little boost — but essentially declining revenue. And that's one of the reasons the city of Saskatoon was not moving ahead with improvements. Some improvements have been made — the minister will be aware of that — over the last few years. But the city of Saskatoon has been faced with this consistent problem, by the minister, successive ministers of Finance from this government, of cut,

cut, cut, cut.

Urban areas are suffering, and the minister in charge of the environment cannot stand on his feet and say why this grant was cut. All he can give me is excuses, Mr. Chairman. I want to know what kind of advocacy he presented. And he need not disclose the secrets of the cabinet room. He needn't say how the Minister of Finance wanted to cut the guts out of the cities of Saskatchewan as he has done successively over a number of years. He needn't tell me that, because I know that; it's there in the facts and figures, year after year. This Minister of Finance, and the previous minister of Finance, have cut and hacked and chopped at the urban areas of Saskatchewan. I want to know, how did you defend your program when your angel of darkness was cutting and slashing away? I want to know where you stood.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well when the hon. member asked me what my position was, my position was made very clear at the cabinet table. Cabinet is confidential. I'm not allowed to give you that position, and I don't intend to give you that position because it wouldn't be proper. But I did tell you that I was part of the decision. And when the decision is made, the whole cabinet is held responsible — not just the Minister of Finance, not just some other minister, but the whole cabinet. So I take as much responsibility as anyone else, and I have no problem with that.

What I would like the hon. member to recall, and he was a member of the council in the city of Saskatoon for a number of years — I think four years. During that time, the city of Saskatoon has consistently maintained the lowest sewer and water rates in the province. If the city of Saskatoon wanted to do something to improve its sewer and water and its sewer treatment in particular, if they brought their rates in line with what people in Regina are paying, they could quite likely have provided sufficient capital to go ahead. So I think to cry and say it's strictly because of this grant, is probably not right.

I might tell the hon. member that in the last year the total expenditure under that particular grant was under \$200,000. So that wouldn't have built much for the city of Saskatoon in the last year either.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Well I think, Mr. Chairman, that I shall not rise again on this particular question, because clearly, clearly the minister is attempting to shift the discussion into some other area. He wants to shift the discussion over to why the city of Saskatoon doesn't change its rates. Well that's a question for another arena. The question for this arena is: why the hell did you cut that grant out? That's what I want to know? What's your reason?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I gave you all the reasons that I can give you. The decision was made at the cabinet table that that grant was not necessary today. We had to make cuts in the budget. That was one of the areas that was cut. It's a very simple answer, sir.

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to pursue, Mr. Minister, this line of questioning in a bit, although it touches on Saskatoon, to consider some of the larger ramifications of sewage treatment with respect to your responsibility for the environment downstream.

You undoubtedly know, and officials of your department undoubtedly know, that in the last several

years there have been a number of instances where there have been discharges of sewage from the Saskatoon municipal system by accident.

In one case, in June of 1985, a broken shaft on a pump at a lift station in Saskatoon allowed untreated sewage to pour into the South Saskatchewan River from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., discharging some 2.5 million liters which flowed directly into the river. And on another occasion we had another example in Saskatoon, in May of '85, of 81,000 gallons of raw sewage, untreated, also pouring into the river because of temporary blockage of a sewage system. There are other examples, minor examples, caused by heavy rain.

I'm wondering, however, if you can tell me what steps your department has taken to ensure that these kinds of accidents don't occur in the future.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member raises a very significant concern that we have had with the city of Saskatoon, and there have been a number of spills — one as recently as last week. What we have done is to require the city of Saskatoon to have a portable chlorinating machine purchased so that they can go and chlorinate the spill immediately after it occurs.

I suppose there's no way of protecting any large operation like that large sewage pumping station from having equipment failure. That can happen. But the number of spills have been significant. Our department has worked with them and asked them to come up with contingency plans to try and prevent spills. The success rate hasn't been great up to this point in time.

Mr. Koenker: — When were discussions initiated on the portable chlorinating unit?

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My staff member is not certain of the exact date. It would have been more than a year ago. He doesn't have the exact date in mind. It could be looked up. If that's important to the member, we could do that. But it would have been more than a year ago.

Mr. Koenker: — But the fact is that that the chlorinating unit is now in Saskatoon and is operative. Well that's really commendable. And I ... if your department is in fact responsible for that sort of thing, I think that's precisely the kind of role that your department should be playing. And I commend you for that.

I'd be curious also to know what kind of monitoring is done to the river water downstream, particularly in light of the fact that communities like St. Louis take their drinking water from the river.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that in order to obtain licensing, the city has to agree to have sampling done in certain locations along the river downstream. As well, our department does sampling on a monthly basis.

When a spill occurs, then the city is instructed which locations are required to be sampled immediately, which ones within a week — that sort of thing — so that we have monitoring all

down the river until the spill is diluted enough to not cause a major problem. So our department would be on a monthly basis; the city is on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Koenker: — You department does the monitoring for the downstream tests; and the city does the testing within the city limits? Is that the way it works?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The city of Saskatoon is required to do some testing downstream from the city. Because of the effluent disposal, they are required to monitor on a regular basis downstream. But our department also monitors on a monthly basis, just to be sure what we're hearing from the city is correct. I think it's important that we monitor at all times, and the city, because of its licensing, is required to do that monitoring.

Mr. Koenker: — Does the monitoring of your own department reflect a reduction in either the frequency of monitoring or in the number of locations in which the monitoring is done downstream, during the course of the last 12 or 16 months?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There is a schedule of monitoring requirements that are written and attached right to the permit that the city of Saskatoon would get. There's basically been no change in the requirement for monitoring for the city over the past 16 months. It's the same. It's been an ongoing kind of monitoring that's been required.

Mr. Koenker: — Has there been any change in the monitoring that's been taking place by the department downstream?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Our monitoring would also be very similar, except at the time when there's a spill; then there would be extra monitoring done. But on an ongoing, regular basis, our monitoring would be very similar from year to year, except immediately following a spill.

Mr. Koenker: — I guess I'd like to ask specifically, though, if there's been a reduction in your departmental monitoring, either in the number of sights in which testing is done or in the frequency with which that is done, during the course of the last of the last 12 or 16 months? Has there been any reduction in the monitoring of you department?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My staff member advised me that there have always been adjustments. They take samples in one place, and in a different place at different times. But there has been no diminution of the amount of monitoring that has been done over the past 12 to 18 months.

Mr. Koenker: — If that's the case, again I commend you. I think it reflects a pro-active role, as we might say, toward our environmental stewardship, rather than just a reactive role to deal with things after they happen.

I'd just like to conclude with a couple more very brief questions. Do members of your department ever sit down and consult not only with the officials in Saskatoon responsible for sewage treatment, but do they consult with communities downstream and share the results of your monitoring — maybe your own monitoring and the city of Saskatoon's monitoring?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We of course had a number of meetings with the sewage treatment people in the city of Saskatoon. That's been ongoing because we're trying to improve the method of treatment that's being used there.

When a spill occurs, we immediately notify the communities downstream of that spill, of the amount of the spill, problems likely to follow because of it, and the kinds of treatments that would be required to prevent any disease spread or that sort of thing in that community.

St. Louis was notified again of the spill that occurred just now. So yes, we do have that. I wouldn't say that they tell them what the Saskatoon tests are showing or the tests that we take are shown on a regular basis. I suppose during the spill period, yes, they do advise them when the water is back to a state where the water is normal again. But on an ongoing basis, when they meet with the city of Saskatoon, they don't tell St. Louis the results of the discussions or anything of that nature.

Mr. Koenker: — Is there any problem in the council of St. Louis, for example, contacting the department to secure that kind of information if they desire it?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that we have the data on computer and if there was a concern raised by St. Louis and they contacted us, we could provide that data.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have a few questions that I would like to direct to you also in the sewage treatment facilities in Saskatoon.

First of all, Mr. Minister, as Minister of Environment, I assume that you have some goals and objectives, you know, that you would like to pursue and see accomplished in your particular department. I think every minister has that when they take over a particular department.

And because you have that, I believe you must have some priorities, you know, things that you priorities and you take before Executive Council and you say hey, look it; as Minister of the Environment here are some things that I think are of high importance to the Province of Saskatchewan, and as the Minister for the Environment, these are things that I simply must have or must accomplish.

I have a high regard for your integrity, sir, as you probably know. But I find it a little bit difficult this afternoon to accept your stand when you spoke to the minister from Westmount in telling him that you were very concerned about the slow progress the city of Saskatoon has made over the years. And I agree with you, it's very slow progress. At that, we can agree.

But when you come before us here and say that you have the ultimate concern that the city of Saskatoon is not moving fast enough in improving its sewage treatment facility, and then on the other hand say to that same member that it is a decision by cabinet and therefore I have to abide by it, I'd like to have the minister show a little more indignation of the cutting of those grants that prevented the city of Saskatoon to move more rapidly in meeting the objectives and goals of your department. I'd like you to comment on that first and then I have a few other questions that I would like to ask of you, sir.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The hon. member sat in cabinet for some years, and you realize that I'm not at liberty to come to you and tell you how I voted or what comments I made. And I think that's fair ball. We make decisions as a cabinet; we have to all abide by those decisions, as you know. I have been concerned because the work with the city of Saskatoon by my department has been ongoing for a long period of time.

The requirement for them to move to secondary sewage treatment has also been there for a long time. And for the city now to use a cop-out that says that because a certain grant was abolished, we can't go ahead, I think that's all it is, is a cop-out. Let me tell you that the water corporation at this time has had no request for funding from the city of Saskatoon. So you know, they used the grant but we haven't had a request. So for to use that is really not very reliable information.

No was it relates to the Department of Environment, we've had ongoing discussions with the city. We have asked them to give us a time frame that they would work towards to achieve complete secondary sewage treatment.. To this day we haven't been able to get that commitment from the city of Saskatoon. Even though it's been worked on and asked for and letters have gone back and forth and meetings have taken place, right to this day we haven't been able to get that commitment. That bothers me considerable.

You say, do I have goals? Yes I do; of course I do. And that is to protect the environment and to wherever possible, improve it. This is one of those areas where I think it should be and could be improved, is by moving to bring that city to complete secondary sewage treatment.

Another area that I have had a major concern with and I think that it shows in the Speech from the Throne and the proposal that we will, in this session, bring forth a clean air Act. That's an area that I have had a lot of concern about and I think it impacts on you and me and on almost everybody in society.

So I think the overall goal I have is to protect, where possible, the environment that we live in, and wherever possible, to improve it to make a better place to live in for this generation and generations to come.

(1645)

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister let me say that I as an individual — and I'm speaking for myself — was very pleased when you were appointed to Minister of the Environment ...

An Hon. Member: — You didn't say so to the press.

Mr. Rolfes: — If the angel of darkness would just attend to his budget, Mr. Chairman, we'll get along fine here.

I intend to give the Minister of the Environment praise when praise is due, but I also want to tell the minister that you can't put your department in isolation. You have a responsibility.

The city of Saskatoon has suffered in the last number of years in grants that have been cut by your

government. And since you are a member of the executive, you must bear responsibility in that regard as well. And I know you do. But you cannot have it both ways. You can't ask the city of Saskatoon to move along with a secondary sewage plant and then at the same time, your government is cutting in all the other areas. And adding insult to injury, you cut the ten percent grant.

Even if you hadn't done that, Mr. Minister, you could have at least said to the city, look, we're cutting in other areas, but I hold this up as high priority and so does my government and we want you to proceed. You can't on the one hand say to the people of Saskatoon, improve your sewage treatment facilities; but on the other hand, we will not give you the finances to do this. I think that's a hypocritical stand on the part of your government and the part of you, to take that stand with the citizens of Saskatoon.

And I want to say to the member from Mayfair, because the member from Mayfair as a member of that cabinet should have been there also defending the citizens of Saskatoon and making sure that the grant was not cut ... And I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, that the people of the city of Saskatoon will find it very difficult to move ahead if you people ... all you do is show the rhetoric, but you won't back it up with any finances.

And I'm very disappointed that we cannot move ahead. We need to move ahead in the city of Saskatoon. It's the fastest growing city, I'm told, in all of Canada, and yet we have a fourth- and fifth-rate sewage treatment plant in the city.

Our government wasn't successful, when we were the government, in moving ahead. You aren't at all successful. In fact, I think you've put a complete stop to it. I'm glad that consultations are still taking place.

But I want to ask the minister ... You said that no proposals have come forth to the water corporation. Would you answer for me and for the people of Saskatoon: if such a proposal were to come forward, is there any money forthcoming from the water corporation if Saskatoon should proceed? Would there be any money forthcoming?

I know you're going to answer: well, I'm not the minister responsible for the water corporation. But you are the one that brought in the water corporation. Now I also want to ask you: can you tell me with some assurance that the city of Saskatoon would have at least some finances coming forth from the water corporation should they proceed?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think the hon. member realizes that it is a question beyond the jurisdiction of the estimates. But since I did say that there was no request, you know, it's pretty hard to guarantee somebody some money if they never asked for any. So they did not come to the water corporation.

And I see by the newspapers that they're claiming that an agreement was broken. There's been no agreement because there's been no request. So that statement is absolutely wrong. And we will be dealing with the city to try to correct that.

I can't tell you what would be available if the city comes forward. It depends on what proposal they

bring. And we talk to all groups that come forward, as you can appreciate. The city of Saskatoon I hope is soon going to come to some firm commitment within its own mind, of a time frame to arrive at a given goal. If you never arrive at that time frame, you're never going to achieve it.

I think they must make some decisions. The sewage treatment plant in that city hasn't really experienced much improvement from the time that it was a city of about 75,000. Now it's 176 or 7. So, you know, we basically have 100,000 more people, with no improvement.

When you have the number of people and the population growth, the city is not without the capability of generating some funds itself. I understand they have generated some and have some reserves to apply this kind of project. So I think it's time that they set some parameters of when they're going to achieve it, and move in that direction.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the minister's remarks. But, Mr. Minister, you must also realize that there is no way that the city, with all the cuts that it has endured ... and you must admit that they were substantial over the last number of years, particularly this year. I mean, those people are politicians also. And what you are simply doing is you're saying to those people, yes, we're going to reduce our budget dramatically by cutting your grants. And on the other hand, you're saying, but we want you to proceed. As the Minister of Environment, I've got to see to it that you proceed with improving your sewage treatment facilities.

I think that is really taking a ... Well that's the real cop-out, I think .. (inaudible interjection) ... Yes. You're saying the city is copping out. What I'm saying to you is, you as the Minister of the Environment are copping out of your responsibility. If you think, as the Minister responsible for the Environment, that the treatment improvement for Saskatoon, the sewage treatment for Saskatoon, is a high priority for you, then you should have seen to it to convince your colleagues that that grant was not cut to the city of Saskatoon.

I think if there was a cop-out, it was a cop-out by your government. That's where the cop-out came. And how can you expect the people of Saskatoon and the city of Saskatoon to come forth with any time frame at all if they don't know what the finances are going to be? There's no way that they can commit themselves to a tertiary plant, which would cost probably 40 to \$50 million, with no assistance from the province. I think that is asking the impossible for the city of Saskatoon.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that had the city of Saskatoon elected four or five more PC members to this House, that grant would never have been cut. That grant would never have been cut. I say it with all honesty. And I believe that what you people have done, and what your ... not what you maybe have done, but what your cabinet colleagues have done, is said to the city of Saskatoon: we're going to teach you people a lesson; you didn't elect enough PC members in Saskatoon, and consequently we're going to make you suffer for it, not only in that 10 per cent grant, but in all other grants that your government has cut.

I think that's unfair, and I think that you should do the honorable thing — go back to your cabinet colleagues and convince them to re-establish that 10 per cent grant, so that we can move on with the improvement of sewage treatment facilities for the city of Saskatoon. Go back. Tell your cabinet colleagues they made a mistake. And let's review the situation and see to it that we can improve the

sewage treatment facilities for the City of Saskatoon. Will you do that?

Some Hon. Members: — I indicated to the hon. member that the grants program is not under this department. But I can tell you this much, sir, that the grant change does not affect the city of Saskatoon, period. It affects the province. It's not any one group, it's the whole of the province.

For you to make a wild statement that if we'd elected three or four more PC members in Saskatoon or 10 more, it wouldn't have changed anything. And I can guarantee that to the hon. member. If he wants this to break down into just political rhetoric, he's starting in the right direction. And that's all it would be, because he has absolutely no fact anywhere. The member is day-dreaming if that's what he thinks. And I'll say quite openly to you — that had nothing to do with the decision. The decision was made; it doesn't affect any one group; it affects the whole of the society within the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I will believe that maybe in your own mind that did not enter your decision. But don't tell me that didn't enter the decision of the Executive Council. I will not believe you on that, and I know that we beg to differ on that particular topic.

Let me ask the minister ... you're saying it affects the whole of the province. Do you mean to tell me that Regina did not get the 10 per cent grant? If Regina got the 10 per cent grant, why do you not think that Saskatoon is deserving of the 10 per cent as well? My understanding is that Regina did take advantage of it, and Saskatoon was anticipating taking advantage of it and the grant was cut.

Secondly, let me ask you the other question. Why, Mr. Minister, was it not in the budget? Why was the grant not ... why would the Minister of Finance not announce that the grant was cut? Why was it announced after the budget was presented? Why?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member says, why did Regina get a grant and Saskatoon did not? Regina moved to do their sewage treatment about 10 years ago, or eight years ago, or whatever it was.

Grants don't stay the same forever. If Regina goes ahead to do something in the year 1987, they would be eligible for the exact same grants as the city of Saskatoon would be eligible for. That's very plain and simple. That would apply to cities like Swift Current or Yorkton or Prince Albert or North Battleford or wherever. So it's the same across the country, everybody has the same privilege.

The city of Saskatoon did not choose to move forward. The grant was in place over the past number of years, and they did not choose to move forward. So I can't really account as to why the city of Saskatoon didn't move; I wish they had. We encourage them .. I should say the department encourages them and has been encouraging long before this change.

Now you ask me why the grant was not in announced in the budget. The funding to the water corporation was announced and the estimates were laid on the table. That's the way it's announced in the budget; you don't read every figure of any budget. And two days later, I believe, is the statement that the city of Saskatoon used. They got a letter. I think that's fairly quick, considering

Saskatchewan's mail service at this point in history. I think two-day turn-around from the time of the budget until they got the information was very quick.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, would you agree with me that ...As a minister, you say that's a high priority for you to get improvement in the sewage treatment in Saskatoon. If it's such a high priority, do you not agree that you could accomplish one of your goals at least, and go down in history as the minister that got this thing off the ground, if you still had that grant available?

If that is such a high priority for you, why then were you not able to convince your cabinet colleagues that if we're going to improve the facilities in Saskatoon, and I believe — I'm speaking now for the minister — and I believe it's a high priority, why were you not able to convince your cabinet colleagues then to help you along in your objectives to get this off the ground?

Why weren't you able to convince them? Did they not feel it was a high priority? Did they not think that your department of Environment was important? Why weren't you able to convince your cabinet colleagues? Would you mind just giving me your opinion on that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I indicate to the hon. member that the discussions that occur in the cabinet are confidential discussions.

An Hon. Member: — I don't want that.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I know the member doesn't want that. I don't want to go down in history. I want to live for awhile, and you don't get into history until afterwards. So I'm not in a hurry at all to get in history.

I would like to see some improvements in the Saskatoon sewage treatment plant. I think if we continue to work together and try to arrive at the same goal, perhaps we will. We've had ongoing discussions with that city. We will continue to have discussions, and I hope we'll have more than discussions, but some action.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, two further questions. Would you mind telling me what ... obviously you must have done some estimates as to what the cost would be for a secondary treatment plant in Saskatoon and a tertiary treatment plant in Saskatoon. What would be the approximate cost? I don't want it within a few dollars. What would be the approximate cost of a secondary and a tertiary treatment plant be for the city of Saskatoon?

(1630)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's a difficult figure to pin down because, as the member knows, inflation keeps changing a figure. I think that at the time the city of Saskatoon did it's estimates of the cost, it was in the neighborhood of 40 million.

An Hon. Member: — Is that for secondary?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes. The tertiary treatment, I don't think they've even dreamed about yet.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, could you tell me, in your departments own time frame, when would you hope that this secondary treatment plant would come about?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The city of Saskatoon has proposed that they would be willing to go ahead with what they called digesters, which are, in my mind at least, are just glorified sewage lagoons with some chemicals added. We would like to see them move with that immediately. The time frame to come into complete secondary sewage treatment hasn't yet been arrived at. We would like it to have been in place by now. It's not, evidently, so we have to sit down and negotiate a time frame. The sooner it can be achieved, the better it will be for the people downstream and the ecology within the river system itself. So I don't think we can allow just the digesters that they're suggesting to be in place for a long period of time — I think three years, four years, something of that range should be a reasonable goal — that they should move forward and try to achieve complete secondary sewage treatment. Those are just figures in my mind. They're not written anywhere. There's no agreement with the city of Saskatoon, but I think we should be working in that parameter somewhere.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I just want to ... you mentioned that you were going to bring in a clean air Act. Could I ask you several questions? First of all, when do you anticipate bringing it in — is it in this session? Secondly, what are the two or three main objectives of that clean air act? I don't want the whole listing, just two or three of the main ones. And thirdly, is there going to be any finances ... are there going to be any finances available for the cities, in working with you, in accomplishing the objectives of the clean air act?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — As the member knows, we've had an Air Pollution Control Act in place for a number of years, since about 1975 or '76. The new clean air act will use many of the original outlines of that particular piece of legislation, except that legislation excluded any industry that was in place prior to the implementation of the legislation. The intent is that we will go back and pick up the industries that were excluded by this piece of legislation because it seems that they've had 10 years or 11 years to correct many of their problems.

It has been discussed at length with most of the industries that would be involved. And for that reason we think that we can move forward now, and it should improve the emissions at most of the major plants inside the boundaries of Saskatchewan. That's the main purpose of the act.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I had asked the minister to also indicate to me whether or not there will be any financial assistance available to the cities and to other urban centers in order to accomplish the objectives of the clean air Act.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There will be no grant program going along with the legislation.

There will be a phase-in period allowed and negotiated with the industries that need to change. Many of the industries have adjusted over the period that we're speaking of and now would come well within the guide-lines. So it won't impact every industry to large sums of money. It will impact some.

Mr. Rolfes: — My last comment, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I just want to say that I — and I want to repeat — that I, as you know, have a lot of respect for you as an individual. But let me say this, that I am terribly disappointed that you are not able to convince your cabinet colleagues of the importance of giving financial assistance to the financially-strapped city of Saskatoon. It's the largest city in the province, and we are financially strapped. And this has come about because of the cut-back of grants, and they are in the millions. We can add them up for you. They are in the millions, of cut-backs for the city of Saskatoon over the last four or five years. And I think it's a little unfair of your department and your government to put the pressure on the city of Saskatoon and say that they're copping out because they are not moving ahead with the improvement of the sewage treatment plant.

I think the biggest cop-out is by you people. If you wanted the city to move ahead, then you should have provided the financial incentive for them to do so, and said to the city of Saskatoon: look, we're doing our fair share, we want you to proceed, and even though there are cuts in other areas, there will be no cuts in this area because we believe it is important that you proceed. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, you must bear that responsibility, and so must your cabinet colleagues. And I am disappointed that you will not go back, will not go back to your cabinet colleagues and convince the minister who had the grants to reinstate those grants so that we can pursue this matter of improving the sewage treatment facilities in Saskatoon.

I will be back to you on this in this session and if you are still the minister next year. But more than likely be moved to somewhere else, and that's why I said before: what is your time frame? What is your time frame for this? Because next year we may be talking to another minister, and you have only a short period of time within to work as a cabinet minister in any particular department. And during that time you must set your priorities; you must stick by them; and you must say this is what I want to accomplish, and I'm going to do it. One of the highest priorities should have been for you, for the city of Saskatoon, to make sure they had financial wherewith to pursue and proceed with the improvement of sewage treatment in the city of Saskatoon. Mr. Minister, I don't have any further questions. I will turn it over to my colleagues.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I just want to indicate to the hon. member that I do say it's a cop-out for the city of Saskatoon to use the deletion of the 10 per cent grant now as the reason that they haven't moved to secondary sewage treatment, because the grant was in place all the years that we tried to get that accomplished; they never moved. And now to say that because the grant isn't there, that's the whole reason why we haven't moved, that's not fair.

For me to go to cabinet and argue strictly for a grant for the city of Saskatoon would not be fair either. I have to deal with grants that affect all of these cities and towns and villages equally. And I assure you that I will do what I can to try and achieve that goal. Sometimes you're successful, sometimes you're not. But I at least will work towards it.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'm very pleased to hear that in fact you did have goals and objectives for your department. We spent somewhat close to a week and a half so far in trying to get you to define what those goals and objectives were. And it's good to see that in fact we can both agree that we want a better quality of life and quality of the environment for ourselves, for our children, and for our children's children. We are, as they say,

custodians of the future when it comes to the environment. And we have not ... we are not the guardians of the environment today. We don't own it, but we've just borrowed it from future generations.

Which brings me, Mr. Minister, to something that's been bothering myself, and bothering a great many people in Saskatchewan in regards to the environment. And that's the question of, as I said earlier on in these estimates, the degradation of the environment — in fact, a going backers when it comes to environmental quality, as opposed to going ahead and doing the kind of things that we want to do.

And I'd like to just read to you, Mr. Minister, some sources other than myself to back up what I'm saying in this regard. And we have here a story in the March 19 issue of the *Star Phoenix*, and a comment in the column written by Tom Loran who's the well known writer in environmental matters in Saskatoon. And the headline of this article is "Environmental quality concerns federation." And it starts off:

A depressing list of set-backs for environmental quality was released recently by the National Wildlife Federation.

While it involved the United States, some of it's findings doubtlessly would apply to Canada, and we'll get on to that in a minute. We'll get on to that particularly as it regards to Saskatchewan.

Other findings give us a taste of what's to come unless we begin to act far more responsibly in respect to the environment than is indicated to date.

It goes on to say, Mr. Minister, that:

In general, 1985 was a bleak year for wildlife, the federation reports. Wetlands loss was put at 350,000 acres, and water at 25 per cent to the wildlife refuges was polluted.

And it goes on to say:

While carbon monoxide and lead emissions have been cut by two thirds in the last decade, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide, key factors in the formation of acid rain, threaten the health of thousands of lakes and streams. Major portions of the country are threatened by acid rain (it says) and at least half of America's population live in areas below the clean air Act's ozone standard.

You've mentioned the clean air Act earlier on this afternoon, and we'll get into that, no doubt, a little later, as estimates go on. And no doubt when you introduce the act, we're going to have to take a look at some of the standards as they apply to the clean air Act in the United States, and whether or not they worked; also the Air Pollution Control Act here in Saskatchewan, and whether the fact it has worked in cutting down on acid rain, and in fact cutting down on the degradation of the environment, and those kind of things.

I'm glad to hear that in fact you are going to introduce this clean air Act, which will remove the "grandfather clause," as they call it, from polluting industries such as the power dams and the

power generating stations in this province, and other industries, such as Ipsco, that impact directly on the area that I and my children, or my wife and my child, live in, and the constituency that I represent.

Now we have a sort of intense personal interest in this kind of thing. But the story goes on and, as it says, it's a bleak, bleak picture of what's happening with the environment in the United States. And like I say, that's a little bit like looking into the future, into our own future, unless we take responsible action — I guess the words that Mr. Loran uses on that regard.

Because if we don't look at that kind of responsible actions, we'll see more headlines like this: this is from the *Star Phoenix*, May 13, 1986 — not very long ago. And the headline says: Saskatchewan's lack of prairie blamed for extinctions.

Saskatchewan has a reputation of environmental circles, and that's nothing to be proud of.

And this story is by Dan Zakreski of the *Star Phoenix*.

Saskatchewan has a reputation of environmental circles, and that's nothing to be proud of.

The province has the dubious distinction of being the home, or the former home, of the greatest number of extinct or endangered animals in Canada, Stan Shadick said Monday at a special meeting of the Saskatoon Natural Historical Society.

(1645)

Whooping cranes made their nests in the province until the 1920's, as did the Greater prairie chicken. The Black footed ferret and the Swift fox, once both found in the province, are extinct, he said.

Saskatchewan consider itself to be one of three Canadian prairie provinces, yet most people would have a difficult time finding any prairie left. Because of the continuing loss of native prairie, several species of wildlife in this province have become extinct.

Establishing a Grasslands National Park would reverse this trend...

And it goes on to say that:

While publicly supporting our concerns, governments at both the federal and provincial level have displayed a shocking lack of action in establishing the park. Petty squabbles and bureaucratic red tape have continued to delay plans to obtain land for the park.

Now I know that the question of the grasslands park will have to be left when we deal with the estimates from the Saskatchewan Water Corporation, given the fact that it's the Saskatchewan Water Corporation from which your minister is responsible, that in fact is stalling the park, and is stalling the implementation of the park, and is throwing road-blocks into the development of a national park in Canada.

But surely, sir, if your words were to be believed, and if you're sincere in what you say is your plan for the environment, then you, putting on your hat as the Minister of Environment, either you can put your action and your concern over the long-term environment for this province, you can put it together. And in dealing with the whole question of Grasslands on that basis, or in fact, you should resign your portfolio as Minister of the Environment and stick strictly with the water corporation, if in fact you want to keep throwing road-blocks in the way of the formation of the grasslands park.

Now that's the view, by the way, of the Saskatoon chairman of the Natural History Society for Saskatchewan. He says that, in fact, you, as Environment Minister, and acting also under the rubric of Sask Water Corporation, are putting the way in the formation of a grasslands park and hindering, in fact, hindering the preservation of prairie land and species like the burrowing owls, and so on, and so forth. But, Mr. Minister, if your words are to be believed, I want to quote from a November 5, 1986 story in the *Leader-Post*. And that story says, "Wildlife Foundation Views Saskatchewan." It's a report by the Wildlife Habitat, Canada, a conservation group, says that:

... the province has a tremendous problem with agriculture....(He says, in fact) ... 40 per cent of the province's wildlife co-habitates with agriculture ... (And the report says that) ... Over time, 1.2 million hectares of wetland on the prairies have been converted to agricultural use, more in Saskatchewan than anywhere else.

In other words, the wetland areas which form the refuge for the wildfowl, that forms, in fact, the little pockets that we see in the prairies that protect the wildfowl in Saskatchewan, and also forms the habitat for the other species like deer, and so on and so forth, that that, in fact that wetland is being drained at an appalling rate.

This is part of a long-term trend that we're viewing in Saskatchewan. It's also part of a long term problem that we're seeing throughout North America as, in fact, agricultural land comes into being and natural areas are put under the plough. And it's a problem. And you've got to admit that there is a problem in that regard. What I'd like to ask you in regards to that problem is this: what has your department done in the last year to conserve wetlands

Secondly, how many acres of wetlands have been lost to the province over the last year? And can you also tell us how many acres of wetlands have been lost to the province over the ten years?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would ask the hon. member to direct that question to the Minister of Parks and renewable resources who is the minister responsible for the wildlife and the preservation of wetlands and things of that nature. It doesn't fall under the Department of Environment at all.

Mr. Lyons: — Well surely, Mr. Minister, as the Minister of Environment, you're concerned with the question of the conservation of our land, and surely you're concerned with the whole question of the conservation and the development of wetlands. And I noticed that you in fact have made several statements in the past concerning wetlands. I'm just wondering maybe, have you got any information as to the wetlands that have been lost in the province, and also what has your department done in regards to convincing the Minister of Parks, or any of the other ministers, in the importance of conserving wetlands in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I really don't have an authority to answer questions on wetlands — that's not part of this department. We are here in the Department of Environment, dealing with environmental subject matter. If the member has questions on environment, I would appreciate if he would return to those. The questions that you're asking now would more properly be asked of the Minister of Parks and renewable resources. At that time, you would likely get the answers that you're seeking. But I really don't expect that I should answer them here, and I would just leave it at that.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, the question I asked you was simple and direct; what have you done as a Minister of Environment to encourage, to encourage the Minister of Parks and renewable resources to take major action in protecting the wetlands and the use of wetlands and the preservation of wetlands in Saskatchewan? Have you done anything in that area?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — When the subject comes up for discussion in cabinet, I have an opportunity to speak, and I do speak — I'm extremely interested in the subject. But it has nothing to do with the Department of Environment.

Mr. Lyons: — I beg to differ. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that we're dealing with the environment of the province, and somehow the Minister of the Environment should have something to do.

I raised earlier on a question regarding the drainage of Adams Lake. You promised at that time, earlier on in these estimates, that you would have your department officials look into the matter and report back. I wonder, are you able now to report back as to the situation at Adams Lake?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The hon. member is asking for information with regard to Adams Lake, and I would read into the record the report that we have on that project.

The development at Adams Lake in June of 1986, Saskatchewan Environment received from Ducks Unlimited a proposal to take over and upgrade an existing PFRA impoundment on Adams creek in Cypress Hills Provincial Park.

Ducks Unlimited's proposed project would involve construction of a cross-dike to create two basins; a level ditch to connect the two basins, and replacement of the existing embankment, including the addition of a control structure therein.

The purpose is to stabilize wetland conditions and therefore improve water-fowl habitat, including that for trumpeter swans. After careful review of the proposal, Saskatchewan environment indicated to Ducks Unlimited that the project was not a development, as defined in The Environmental Assessment act, and therefore ministerial approval under that legislation would not be required.

We have confirmed the members report a drainage of Adams Lake. It is associated with the construction of the proposed structures by Ducks Unlimited.

And I might just add that I was advised by the Minister of Parks just a moment ago that the trumpeter swans are nesting, and indeed there are some young that have hatched this year. So it's a good indication that the project is working.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, in that regard, will Adams Lake be recharged by, is it the . . . to your knowledge that the lake itself will be recharged with waters, one way or the other, either as a result of the development or by natural occurrence?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that yes, it will be recharged with water.

Mr. Lyons: — Does the department have any idea of when in fact that may take place? Is it short or long term?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We really don't have the answer for that question. Perhaps the Minister of Parks will have that as well. But it will be recharged, I'm advised, but we don't have the time frame.

Mr. Lyons; — Okay. Just one more question on that and it's a technical question: when the assessment branch of your department was looking into the subjects of the Adams Creek and Adams Lake development down there for Ducks Unlimited, did that assessment branch look at the effect it would have on Adams Lake and sort of have some kind of notion of what would happen to the lake itself?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — When the department reviewed the proposal for Adams Lake, they found the lake in the condition it was in not to be really valuable for wildlife or for water-fowl, and so they looked at this project as really an enhancement of the overall value to the environment of the lake and the surrounding wetlands. It would be controlled under that project.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.