

April 27/90

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure this morning to introduce to you, and through you to other members of the legislature, a group of 16 grade 11 students who are seated in your gallery from all across the province. And this group of students, Mr. Speaker, will be leaving shortly for Victoria where they will be attending an interchange on Canadian studies conference. The topic of this conference is dealing with the Pacific Rim.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that all members would join with me in welcoming this group of students this morning, and also wishing them a successful trip to Victoria to attend this conference, and I look forward to meeting with the students a little bit later this morning.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Morse, I would like to introduce a group of students this morning from Wymark School in Wymark, Saskatchewan. These are grade 8 students, 21 in number. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and they are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Knelsen, Sharon Saunders, Marg Neustaeter, Wanda Olfert, Mr. and Mrs. Howlett, and John Neustaeter.

I would be very pleased to meet with the students about 11 o'clock for pictures and refreshments, and I look forward to a good time of questions and answers in room 218 a little later this morning. Would you please welcome this group of students to the legislature.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Agricultural Exemptions to GST

Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture and his associate minister, I wish to direct a question to the former minister of Finance. And, Mr. Speaker, it has to do with the GST (goods and services tax), which we say on this side of the House is a very bad blow for all Canadians, and especially is going to be a bad blow for the farming community at this particular time.

Mr. Minister, the Mulroney government has promised that it would produce publicly a list of exempted agricultural goods and services, exemptions from the GST. Undoubtedly your government must have access to this list

and input into its preparation. Would the minister be kind enough to indicate to the House whether or not he has received such an exemptions list, what input the government has had into it, and whether he'd be prepared to table a copy of it today.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I'm not aware of whether Finance or Agriculture and Food has received such a list. I'll take notice of the question.

Mr. Romanow: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a new question which I direct to the former minister of Finance. It makes it a little bit difficult in the light of the fact that he, quite properly I guess, took notice of this question.

Mr. Speaker, I have in front of me here a document which purports to be a preliminary list of tax-free items for farmers and fishermen. And some of the exemptions on this list, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, such as tractors and rock pickers are properly, one would say, on the list for farmers as being tax exempt. But surprisingly, others are not.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this. While you're taking notice will you be able to also take notice, or perhaps you can give an answer now, to explain to us why such other matters such as granaries, other farm buildings, chemicals, spraying equipment, harrows, vet supplies are not on the preliminary list of exemptions for the GST? How can the government say that farmers will be exempt, yet farmers are asked to pay so many of the items not exempted?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Again, as I've indicated, I'm not aware of whether the Agriculture and Food and Finance has any such list. I do know that all provinces have been negotiating with the government in terms of what is going to apply to their provinces to try and get exemption lists. Whether that's a current one or not, I can't tell you. But I have taken notice and the appropriate minister will respond.

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the responsible minister in this instance this morning, or anybody else who cares to answer. May I say, Mr. Speaker, as a preliminary observation, as a preliminary comment to the question, that I find it a little bit surprising that the members of the Executive Council, namely the cabinet, would not have on their agenda at some point up to now a consideration of the proposed exemptions list for agricultural goods and services when the GST comes into play on January 1, 1991, given its importance to the agricultural community.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is, especially in the light of the fact that you've taken notice of the two previous questions: is the government not monitoring this situation on an almost daily basis? Are the officials not monitoring the exemptions list with respect to farmers? Is it possible for us to believe that cabinet does not have a direct input into what is

going to be taxable under GST and what is not, as far as the farming community is concerned?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Well again I've indicated to the hon. member, I don't know whether that's a current list, an early list, or whatever, and that the Department of Finance quite appropriately has been trying to take the position with the federal government of scrapping the tax.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, the specifics of what is going on any list or how the tax will be collected, what compensation will be paid, all of those details of course are being discussed by Finance ministers, and I'm sure, in the case of agriculture, the officials in the Department of Agriculture. So I have taken notice.

I just caution the hon. member as to taking a list to ensure that . . . because there are discussions going on, whether it's a current one or what the most recent one would be.

Mr. Romanow: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a new question, sir, to the minister, and I take to heart his words of caution. But that's exactly why I'm up in question period, to try to figure out whether or not the list is accurate and what the government's position is. And unfortunately I am not meeting much success here this morning.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the government's position on the GST is either overladen by what can only be described as incredible sloppiness or, in the alternative, indifference, or both. And that's simply not good enough -- not good enough for this House and not good enough for the farmers.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: even at this late date, can you tell us what steps you will undertake, apart from taking notice of these series of questions, what steps you will take today, immediately, to ensure that the exemptions list for farmers is expanded? Or putting it more correctly, exactly what the exemptions list is, and to ensure that the exemptions list is expanded to cover all of the farmers' items. And putting it more bluntly, perhaps even to expand it so that the entire GST position should be scrapped. What steps will you take?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- We've stated for some considerable period of time what our preference is, and that is that the tax be scrapped. And the Minister of Finance and others have given some of the disadvantages to a value added tax, particularly when there are two levels of taxation.

An Hon. Member: -- You supported it.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- No, that's not true. As a matter of fact, the hon. member sitting in his seat from Regina is the one who stood up in this House and urged this government to make sure that we joined the GST, Mr. Speaker. It's in Hansard. It's on record. The New Democratic position

was that we were . . .

An Hon. Member: -- He got fired.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Yes, he got fired . . . (inaudible) . . . right. He got fired.

On record, Mr. Speaker, that the government should support the GST. That's the NDP position in the legislature.

Having said that, having said that, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, what our position is: if the federal government insists on pursuing and proceeding with the GST, there have been discussions by governments across the country how to minimize the impact on all sectors within their province, including agriculture, including our resource industries, including the average person in this province, Mr. Speaker. So we're trying to minimize the impact as much as possible if the tax, as much as we oppose it, proceeds.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the minister, and this will be the final question that I have on this topic this morning, given the fact that I've -- the word I have to use is the one that comes to mind -- been stonewalled on the questions, although I understand the minister may not have the direct knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, a few days ago this side of the House attempted to introduce a motion by leave of the Assembly, urging the Assembly to pass the motion condemning the proposed GST tax in principle, and we were, as you will recall, Mr. Speaker, denied leave to introduce that motion by the government members opposite, the government saying that there would be a new motion, and still no new motion in sight.

Mr. Speaker, the question that I have for the senior minister on the front bench this morning: will you give consent today to a new motion opposing the GST and the farming issue that I've raised, a copy of which we're going to send over to you right away, in fact as soon as we can get one of the pages to do it? Will you give leave and consent today to introduce this motion so that we can debate it and pass it unanimously and to concretely show our displeasure to the federal government about the GST. I wouldn't even say displeasure, I would say our opposition to the GST and our opposition to this preliminary list of exemptions for agricultural products, something clearly which the government is caught unawares of. Will you give consent?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I certainly would support a common message from this Assembly to the federal government opposing the GST. The difficulty on a cursory look at the motion, is you do make reference to exempt agriculture equipment.

One of the difficulties with the GST is it has negative implications for other sectors of the Saskatchewan economy. It's going to hurt some of the small businesses, Mr. Speaker. We would like the motion, and I believe the proper course is the House leaders should get together, design one that both sides, small businesses, whether, Mr. Speaker, if the GST is imposed, whether the tax credits are adequate for various sectors.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on and on of the difficulties with the GST which in my view would be a much stronger message to be put forward. And I would certainly encourage and make the commitment, on behalf of the government side of the House, that the House leaders should get together so that next Monday or Tuesday or whenever we've got a common motion that would deliver a message that would deal with the real problems of the GST much more broad than agriculture, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry; I'm prompted to ask one new question as a result of the minister's response, Mr. Speaker. The motion that I have forwarded over to the former minister of Finance is two-part.

First of all, it expresses its united opposition to the implementation of the goods and services tax. Period.

The second part expresses its opposition to the partial list of exemption. Period.

The minister is open to amendment to this resolution. It covers off all the points of his concern. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is simply this: in view of the fact that the House Leader has thus far failed to initiate these talks or to introduce this resolution; notwithstanding the fact that he has indicated the government would do so; in view of the fact that somebody in Ottawa is working up an exemptions list for farming which is going to catch our farmers at a hard time; in view of the fact that the GST is right around the corner, why not accept unanimously and give us consent unanimously to express this opposition to the GST today? Propose your amendments in the course of the debate, and if they make sense we'll adopt them, and let's get on with the business of telling the people in Ottawa that the legislature in the province of Saskatchewan unanimously opposes the GST, full stop, period.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I do think it would be appropriate that if we are going to have a joint expression of opposition to the GST that it would be appropriate that we identify those other sectors in the economy as well that will be impacted in a negative way by the imposition of the tax. I think it only fair that small business, for example, be represented in our motion; that lower income people, if it is the view that the tax credit is not adequate; the ability to adjust to the collection of the GST; the cost that some of the small businesses will have in terms of computerization or programming. And, Mr. Speaker, those have been identified generally by officials across the country.

I believe that we could certainly come up with a motion which shows that Saskatchewan not only opposes the tax, but also why, Mr. Speaker. And I think that that would be a more powerful message on behalf of the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Goods and Services Tax

Mr. Shillington: -- Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the former Minister of Finance, perhaps gratuitously in this case, Mr. Minister. My question concerns an issue which . . . a policy which was formulated when you were minister and which I think probably eventually led to your removal as minister. It was your support of the GST.

Mr. Minister, earlier in this session the Minister of Finance said, the present law would dictate that the provincial tax, the existing provincial tax go on top of the new federal tax. I recall you confirming that when you were Minister of Finance.

The goods and services tax, Mr. Minister, as you know, has been overwhelmingly rejected by the public of Saskatchewan. Your government, Mr. Minister, seeks to profit from this unpopular tax with a tax on that tax.

I ask you, Mr. Minister: have you looked at other options? have you looked at amending the law such that you're not profiting from this unpopular tax?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I can assure the hon. member that I was removed from Finance because of old age, Mr. Speaker. I know why the hon. member was taken away as finance critic -- because he stood up in this House and said, the reason that we're opposed to the GST was first of all we were going to lose money on it, and that's what he said in Hansard. Didn't understand it then, doesn't understand it today, and that's why he was fired as Finance critic.

Having said that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He was. Is he still? Oh boy, you're really in trouble then. You're really in trouble. I had some hopes for the hon. Leader of the Opposition that when he knew he had a big problem in front of it, he would deal with it. You're going to have to deal with that very serious problem you had of the hon. member opposite, the Finance critic, who on the one hand says we're going to lose money and that's why we're opposed to it, and on the second situation said that we should make sure that there's only one tax and we should join the GST. And that's in Hansard; that's the New Democratic Party position.

Let me reiterate to the hon. member that the provinces have power of direct taxation under the constitution. That is why the sales tax has been imposed on the top of federal taxes since the time that an E&H (education and health) tax was imposed, Mr. Speaker, some many, many years ago. That

policy, Mr. Speaker, has been consistent through government since the imposition of the E&H tax in this province.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: -- New question, Mr. Speaker. One thing the minister said had some credibility. When he's confused about who the Finance critic is, it's easy to believe that he was removed from the post due to old age.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: -- Mr. Minister, not all governments seek to hide in inane excuses. Some governments in this country, Mr. Minister, are taking action. The Finance minister in British Columbia said, and I quote:

I am announcing today that when the goods and services tax is implemented, the provincial social service tax will not apply on top of the federal tax. The provincial tax will not apply to prices excluding the federal tax.

Mr. Minister, as loath as I am to refer to the government of Bill Vander Zalm as an authority, the grim truth is that any government in this country shines in comparison to yours, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: -- Mr. Minister, will you take a lead from the second most unpopular government in the country and take this tax off the tax?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Well I won't talk about the popularity of the Government of British Columbia. My understanding, Mr. Speaker, that they've had a dramatic upsurge in popularity, one of the reasons being that the NDP had no policy in British Columbia. And it's become evident and the same thing is happening here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So having said that, the policy in Saskatchewan has been since the imposition of an E&H tax, and I believe that that was a CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) government in this province, that it would be a direct tax under the constitution.

Mr. Speaker, that would be Saskatchewan's position at least at this stage. I'm sure that there will be further discussions over time on implementation, assuming that a GST is going to be imposed.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. New question. It must be of some concern to the members opposite when interest rates in this country are higher than their rating in the polls. That may have something to do with their unpopularity.

Mr. Minister, one of the reasons perhaps why the Government of British Columbia is not in as sad a shape as it once was is that they have been speaking on behalf of the people of British Columbia. I want to quote again from the Minister of Finance in British Columbia. He said:

In 1987, British Columbia said no. In 1988, British Columbia said no. In 1989, British Columbia said no. And (Mr. Speaker) in 1990, British Columbia says no again.

You might have used that with some alterations. But in Saskatchewan it would have had to read: in 1987 Saskatchewan said yes; in 1988 the then Minister of Finance said yes; in 1989 they said nothing; in 1990, maybe.

Mr. Minister, the province of British Columbia has said a tax on a tax is unfair, and it won't be a party to it. Mr. Minister, can we assume from the fact that your government hasn't removed the tax, that you believe a tax on a tax is fair?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- One of the difficulties that the hon. member has as the spokesperson for the New Democratic Party, that in 1987 Saskatchewan Conservatives said no; in '88 they said no; in '89 they said no and in 1990 they said no. But in 1987, Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats said maybe, and in 1988 the New Democrats in Saskatchewan said join the GST so that there is only one tax to be collected. That is on the record of this House, Mr. Speaker.

I say to the hon. member there is only one political party in this province that has said on the record and publicly that they only want one tax, the GST, and they wanted the province to join the GST. And that is from the member who was just on his feet, the New Democratic member from Regina. And they are the only party, I believe, in Canada, Mr. Speaker, that have said publicly that they want only one tax. And, Mr. Speaker, they are the exception, not this government.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: -- A supplementary to the minister. Isn't it a fact, Mr. Minister, that the reason why you haven't taken the tax off the tax is that it'll bring in an extra \$31 million? And isn't it fair to say, Mr. Minister, that the interests of the public of Saskatchewan are not worth \$31 million to this government? Isn't that a fact?

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I think, Mr. Speaker, the press are going to have a lot of fun doing a little homework and going back through Hansard, because in Hansard, Mr. Speaker, we have two rather interesting statements from the New Democratic Party.

One, that the government should join the GST, Saskatchewan should join the GST so that there only would be one tax. That's the New Democratic Party policy. And that secondly, Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party said, I believe in 1988 in this House in Hansard, that the reason the government

was against the GST is because we would lose money, Mr. Speaker. That's what the NDP said two years ago.

So obviously, Mr. Speaker, their information has no merit or validity whatsoever.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Workers' Compensation Review Committee

Mr. Hagel: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Speaker, as the minister will know, April 28 is officially a day of mourning for workers killed and injured on the job here in Saskatchewan, as a consequence of a private members' Bill I introduced in 1988 and making us the first jurisdiction in Canada to do so.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: -- In light of that, Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, that being the case, if you can explain just why it is that our government, that your government is still failing to live up to its statutory obligation, its statutory obligation to injured workers to set up a workers' compensation review committee. Can you explain that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Mr. Speaker, yes, today is the official day of mourning for injured workers and workers who have been deceased on the job in Saskatchewan. And we are pleased to say, but not happy, that in the last five years the average number of workers deceased on the job has been reduced to 30 per year from the previous five years of about 50 per year. Even the 30 is much too many people.

With respect to the question about the committee of review, we have worked long and hard to put together the committee of review. As the members will know, the workers' comp legislation is reviewed every five years by a competent committee. And the main problem we have now is appointing the chairman. We wish to have His Honour Judge Muir as the chairman, as he has been on the past four committees of review. And he is acknowledged by all political parties and virtually all employers and employees in Saskatchewan as being a world-wide expert in this field.

The difficulty is that recent developments in the judiciary are suggesting that judges, Canada-wide, should not sit on these kinds of reviews. And we are trying to resolve the issue so that we could somehow accommodate the situation and have Judge Muir sit on this committee for the fifth straight time. And I will, Mr. Speaker, discuss this matter further with the member from Fairview at the earliest opportunity, as the member from Fairview understands this situation and he and I will try to work something out.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Construction Schedule at Rafferty-Alameda Dams

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity to inform the members of the Assembly of the 1990 construction schedule for the Rafferty-Alameda project.

As the members will recall, the only work that has been stopped is that which is specifically referred to in the January 26, 1990 agreement between Sask Water and the federal Minister of the Environment. The construction work that has been halted is as follows: all work on the Rafferty dam except that work specified by the independent Rafferty-Alameda engineering review board as being required to stabilize the structure and to ensure the safety of the public; the Rafferty boundary diversion channel, and all land acquisition and construction activities at the Alameda dam.

I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to inform the Assembly that the engineering review board has completed its analysis of work required to stabilize the structure of the Rafferty dam and to ensure the safety of the public. The engineering review board has directed that work be carried out on the spillway, the embankment, the embankment chimney drain, the instrumentation system, and surface grading of boro areas and other areas within close proximity of the Rafferty dam. The Rafferty dam, currently 65 per cent complete, will be approximately 80 per cent complete after this work has been finished in mid to late summer. I'm pleased to be able to table the two reports of the engineering review board from which I just quoted, and I have them here and I'll table them at the conclusion of my remarks.

Other work on the Rafferty-Alameda project will continue. It is important for everyone to remember that we have a valid licence under the International River Improvements Act, and we have the ability and the legal right to handle the flood of record on the Souris River.

In the case of the ongoing construction activities on the project, some of the work such as causeways and downstream channelization must begin this year as it will require at least two years to complete. These areas could be affected by flooding in 1991 or 1992. With a valid licence and the need to store water for the Shand power station, it is essential that construction of these facilities begin this year. Other work, such as mitigation of wildlife and community pastures, we are legally obligated to complete. We have always acted within the law in this project and will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm only going to comment briefly on the minister's statement until I've had a chance to review the engineering report which the minister has promised to table here in the House today.

But let me say this, Mr. Speaker. The comments of the minister in regards

to the completion schedule of the Rafferty-Alameda project once again shows the nature of the hypocritical stance that this government has taken in regards to environmental assessment.

We have heard today in this House, the minister stand in his place and say, we are going to go ahead and complete all works associated with the Rafferty dam, Rafferty and Alameda dam project, regardless of the activities of the independent review process which is presently under place here in Saskatchewan.

It is no wonder, Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that the environmental assessment panel and the people who are in the process of dealing with the environmental assessment panel, including their own supporters of the Rafferty-Alameda project like the Souris Basin-Goodwater guys and that type of front group, it is no wonder that even they are upset at the nature of this government's actions in regards to Rafferty-Alameda and the nature of the statement which was signed between the federal government and the provincial government; a statement which this government has used as nothing more than a sham and a cover-up to go ahead and complete the Rafferty-Alameda project under the guise -- under a disguise and a guise of engaging in an independent environmental review process.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to seeing the contents of the engineering report, but it is clear to the people of this province that this government had no intention when it signed the statement with the federal government of halting work on that project.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

BEFORE ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure whether it's a matter of privilege or not, but I'd like to correct the information that I gave to an answer yesterday from the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

I indicated yesterday on the spending by PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Inc.), allegedly on a golf course dues that the hon. member raised, that in fact PCS did not make the payments, Mr. Speaker, that they were made by IMC (International Minerals and Chemical Corporation (Canada) Ltd.), and that the policy of paying the dues of golf memberships is exactly that as when the NDP owned the corporation.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

The Speaker: -- The issue the member has raised is not a question of privilege and I rule it out of order.

MOTION UNDER RULE 39

Opposition to the Goods and Services Tax

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day, I would beg leave of the Assembly to introduce the following motion, and it's seconded

by my colleague, the House Leader on this side.

By leave, I would ask the Assembly that the following motion be introduced and debated:

That this Assembly expresses its strong, united opposition to the Government of Canada's implementation of the goods and services tax, and further calls on the Parliament of Canada to revise the partial list of GST-exempt agricultural equipment to include all farm equipment and supplies, if such tax is implemented.

Thank you.

Leave not granted.

Mr. Hagel: -- Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day I seek leave of the Assembly to make a brief statement on the day of commemoration, which is of interest to all members.

Leave granted.

STATEMENTS

Day of Commemoration

Mr. Hagel: -- I thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in 1988 passed a private member's Bill which recognizes tomorrow, April 28, as a day of mourning for workers killed or injured in the work place. We became the first jurisdiction in Canada to make such a declaration, so far the only jurisdiction to do so by statute. And I am proud of this Assembly for that. I also note that since that time other governing bodies across Canada, including the federal government, have given consideration to following our lead.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 there were 36 Saskatchewan workers killed in job related accidents, which is an increase from the 23 of the previous year. In the past decade in this province almost 400 workers have lost their lives in job related accidents, and this, Mr. Speaker, does not even include the many who were killed or injured in farm related accidents.

Mr. Speaker, I think it entirely proper that the province set aside a special day to honour these workers and that we order the flags to be flown at half-mast in their memory. But if we are truly to honour their memory, Mr. Speaker, then there is one way and one way only to do that, and that is for each and every one of us in this province to recommit ourselves to doing all we can to improve occupational health and safety in the work place.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that I speak for every member of this Assembly when I say that when April 28 comes around next year, nothing would make me happier than commemorating this day with the news that there have been no work place related deaths reported in the preceding year. That is truly something for all of us to work for. That should be our legacy to those who have suffered death or infirmity in a work place accident.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the Assembly to join in a moment of silence in memory of Saskatchewan workers killed or injured in job related accidents.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of Environment and Public Safety, and on behalf of the government, I would like to acknowledge the statement made by the member opposite and the appropriateness of having a day of mourning for those people killed on the job in Saskatchewan.

You will know, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan we have, I think, very much of a work ethic. We have many tens of thousands of very hard working men and women. We all know as well, Mr. Speaker, that some of the work that is conducted in Saskatchewan has a hazardous component to it. Many of the jobs, whether it's in the oil patch or whether it's on the farm or whether it's in the industrialized sector in the fabricating shops around DSaskatchewan or even in clerical duties, Mr. Speaker, there are hazards on the job.

And I think it is very appropriate and very worthy of taking some time to recognize these hard working men and women, and those in particular who pass on in the line of duty, and just as importantly, Mr. Speaker, to those mourning families that . . . the tragic losses associated with a death, I think have effects that last years and years and years.

I just commend the member opposite and I want to acknowledge the government's commitment to, as well, recognizing that day.

The Speaker: -- The members of the House agree that the legislature should have a moment of silence in the memory of those who, on carrying out their work, have gone before us. I think to do that appropriately, I would like to ask all members to rise.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 46

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, last evening you agreed to send over some information, one being the franchise agreements with agents, a list of all the appointed agents; and the other was the

principles involved in the consulting firm that screened the agents for you.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- Mr. Chairman, I have the list of all the agents and where they've been filled at and their post office and phone numbers and everything else here. I have a copy of the contracts the agent signs. I don't have it . . . I'll read out the names of the . . . I have the names of the associates. I'll read them into the records because it's just in writing here, it's not typed. And if one of the pages would take this over. Thank you.

The names, there's one principal . . . there's principals and associates. There's six of them altogether: Stephen Burkholder, Peter Chow, Fred Bates, Aldo Valerio, Mike Schonfield, and Walter Basler.

(1045)

Mr. Upshall: -- Well thank you, Mr. Minister, for that information. Mr. Minister, a few other questions I'd like to ask you. Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, how many crop insurance employees do not live in Melville but commute to that city to work?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- We were just trying to figure out. Nobody knows exactly for sure. There's about 10 or 15 that don't live in Melville. Some stay all week and go home to wherever they are on the weekend. Some commute; they're very close; they're from Grayson and around the area; they come in. So there's a variance there. About 15, I guess, total that would live around the edge of the city or as far away as Yorkton that would come in and out. And there's a couple that still have their basic home here in Regina but spend the week out at Melville. So it's a combination of different people from different places, but about 15 total that wouldn't have a home directly in Melville, a full-time residence in Melville.

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Minister. Minister, I see that from your news release of April 6 that there is a new president of the corporation. I was just wondering, Mr. Minister, how you decided to . . . what was the criteria you used in selecting the new president? And, Mr. Minister, if you could just give me a bit of his background.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- First, so how you know we went looking for a president. We run ads in all the major western papers for a couple months, and we had quite a few applicants but not, just not what we were looking for because it's a very, very major insurance company, as you know, and it's a very . . . and it deals with a lot of people. We looked for people management skills; we looked for capabilities of financial management; we looked at capabilities for the type of insurance coverage that you have to deal with; we looked for people with agricultural knowledge.

It was tough to find. We advertised all over. We advertised also down East in some of the major papers. Then we went actually looking for people, asking people that we thought might be available. We come up with a gentleman called Mr. Bill Dent. He has been with Alberta Agriculture since 1958. He graduated with a degree in agrology. He worked all the way

up from an ag rep all the way up to assistant deputy minister of Agriculture in Alberta. He has a master's in agriculture. He's lived in small town Saskatchewan. He's worked for Alberta crop insurance. He had a really vast knowledge; we were very much impressed with the gentleman. He begins his work on May 7.

I think it's fair to say we went through a large number of people who come in for interviews, but it was very, very hard to find a person with that wide range of skills that we needed to manage an insurance corporation dealing with 60,000 farmers at over \$2 billion in liability coverage. And to manage that with all the offices out there, we needed that kind of skills. We are very, very fortunate, I think, and everybody, I think, will be very much impressed with the gentleman that's coming.

Mr. Chairman: -- Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Mr. Chairman, with leave, I would like to introduce international guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to introduce to this Assembly, and through you, Mr. Chairman, to this committee, some distinguished guests from Taiwan and some people accompanying them. They are all seated in the Speaker's gallery, directly in front of us here. I'll ask them to rise so we can see them, and then I'll give their formal introduction. Thank you.

As you can see, there's a large delegation, and I will ask them to be seated while I introduce them. Thank you. You can see now, there's a rather large delegation, and they are so important that I'm going to introduce them all individually by name.

First of all, we have in the gallery the group present are the guests of the Taiwan-Saskatchewan Trade Association, and with them is Mr. Jeff Hu, the corporate secretary, and I'll ask Mr. Hu to rise. Thank you Mr. Hu. And also with him is the mayor of Weyburn, Mr. Ron Barber. And they have been . . . this delegation is comprised primarily of media, as we say in this country, journalists in television and print from Taiwan. They are on a tour of Canada, touring British Columbia, Vancouver, Saskatchewan. They've been here for three days now and they're on their way to Toronto. And they will be reporting back on Canada, our life, our economy, our people. And this is part of their tour. They are attending here in our Legislative Assembly to get an understanding of the system of government in Canada and in the province of Saskatchewan.

I know the members opposite . . . and I can thank them for paying close attention, but I know they are paying attention because these are media people as you see. The people are from the United Daily News, Ms. Chang-Hwa Chen; from the Min-Sheng Daily News, Ms. Chin-Chin Liou; from the Economic Daily News, Ms. Chang-Yu Cheng; from the Commercial Times, Ms.

Rong-Lin Chao. And I am trying my best Chinese. Being of a German origin I say everything with a German accent, so I'll try my best Chinese in these names. From the Independence Morning Post, Ms. Mei-Li Chow; and some of them may not be available at this moment . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I understand she's ill, and I wish her a speedy recovery. From the China Television Company, Ms. Lin Chiang; from the China Television Company, Mr. Chung-Shi Lai -- he is a cameraman; yes, he's here with his camera. From the Excellence Publications Co., Mr. Jih-Kuen Lin. From the Taiwan Shin-Wen Daily News, Mr. Chih-Hsien Chang. From the China Daily News, Ms. Chun-Ching Yang.

We also have the president of King Interior Design Company and the Hai-Shan Recreational Development Company in travel, Mr. Chung-Lin Han; the general manager of Best Real Estate Co., Mr. Ta-Sung Chang; the vice-general manager of Taiwan Delight Travel Service Co., Mr. Keh-Teh Su; and the vice-general manager of Best Real Estate Co. and the Taiwan Delight Tour Service Co., an individual who has an MBA (Master of Business Administration) from Syracuse University in New York and has concentrated on international business, Mr. Terry D.T. Nieh.

I hope we have everyone included, and if we have missed anyone from this honoured delegation, I would apologize in advance. But the information I have is that these are the members present here.

As you can see, members of the Assembly, these individuals are guests in this country, are here to learn, and are here to report back to their country, which has 20 million people. So I would ask you all to welcome these individuals. I would ask them to rise again as we welcome them, and I wish them a pleasant visit to Saskatchewan and Canada. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 46

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, not to drag out this point, but I just noticed that Mr. Dent has spent most of his life in British Columbia and Alberta. And I just found it a little bit surprising that you had to go so far afield and that you couldn't find someone from within the province to fill that position. However, we'll just leave that as it may be.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you about an action that was launched against crop insurance company by a number of farmers in the south-western part of the province who sued the crop insurance for a forage insurance pay-out. Mr. Minister, can you tell us what the settlement cost the corporation?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- Mr. Chairman, we don't have it with us, the agreement. It was agreed to be confidential. I am prepared -- only because the member is a member of this Legislative Assembly, and because that confidentiality is recognized in here -- I'm prepared to have it put together and submit to him within a week, first of next week. We'll bring it in; I'll submit it to him personally, confidentially, for his review or for his knowledge of it, because he is a member of this Legislative Assembly. And until such time that removal of the confidentiality Act or part of the clause is there, we're committed to that.

But I'll send it to him under the closure of this Assembly and he can make his own judgement call on it.

(1100)

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Minister. That would be satisfactory.

Mr. Minister, I'm wondering, though, about the out-of-court settlement. Now I see by the newspaper clipping of March 27 that there are other farmers who are taking the corporation to court on a similar basis. Can you tell me what the status of that is?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- To the knowledge of all the staff here, nobody has in any way filed a claim or suggested they were going to file a claim to us or against us so far. Now they may do it through the legal system, which is what you do, but to our best of knowledge we've had nobody tell us or submit to us any claims.

Mr. Upshall: -- Mr. Minister, according to the clipping of the Leader-Post of March 27, it says there are three other farmers with suits pending against the corporation. Now if you're not familiar with that, I'm not sure why you wouldn't be. But the point that I want to make here is this, Mr. Minister. I think the reason that you decided to settle out of court is because it would be a precedent. And I think the problem that you've run into is this Simfoy method of calculating. And I don't know . . . I understand that it comes out of Ontario originally, or something like that. But it is not akin to Saskatchewan by any stretch of the imagination, and I think there are probably better models that you could use to rate the loss.

Mr. Minister, is that why you settled out of court, to ensure that there wasn't a precedent for other farmers . . . set for other farmers to sue the corporation?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- Mr. Chairman, the first part of his comment was in regards to he was surprised we hadn't saw it in the papers. And we do read it in the papers but I want to make it clear, I said we haven't had to the corporation any submission of claim in regards to a lawsuit or pending suit. And I read it in the papers too, what was said in there.

The second part was in regards to Simfoy calculations, and certainly nothing's perfect, and that isn't perfect and nothing is. We know that. We have moved to individual coverage with your own production. We've changed your also individual claim coverage under forage now so you don't

go by just an area claim, you have to individually claim using the best knowledge we got for both the farmer yield and for the area yield. It's based on as close as we can get it to real, average yields now.

We've been using our agrologists in lands branch and through the Department of Rural Development to look at and help us put together the yields of the area. We also have information from the farmers we've been gathering for the last couple of years, so we're getting somewhat of a data bank there. It's not a perfect one, but this year for forage you'll be individually . . . your area coverage with individual claims based on the best we can on the actual yield comparisons. So it's much closer. It's not perfect yet. It'll probably never be perfect.

So those are the areas that we made some changes in to make sure that the farmer, the producer, has at least realistic coverage related directly to his farm and not just necessarily the whole area, as it has been in the past.

Mr. Upshall: -- Mr. Minister, is it fair to say that the Simfoy computer model caused the lawsuit that you had against you?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- I think the Simfoy is one of the way that we calculated. I think the suit was basically, although it was Simfoy was talked about, was basically disputing amount of yields that we felt or it was felt that should have been there that was or wasn't there. And that was what the dispute was about. So you can calculate that in there however you want. But it's, you know, the Simfoy was part of the system we used to calculate it. The dispute was with the producers out there, the amount of yields that we thought they should have received and what they thought they did receive.

Mr. Upshall: -- Well then that would be due to the Simfoy computer model that you used to determine the yield. Mr. Minister, now that you've paid these farmers out, had an out of court settlement with these farmers, I'm sure and I know that there will be many other farmers who are in a similar situation. Because, you know, basically what you said was the Simfoy computer model caused the fact that they disputed the yields and you paid them out; therefore will you be compensating other farmers or will you be adjusting the method you use? Or indeed, Mr. Minister, one more question, have you abandoned the Simfoy computer model?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- In 1989, we started looking at production yields and we had done some calculations on individual farmers back in '88. We've used a lot of different stats, Stats Canada and a whole bunch of things, trying to put it together. As you know, well-known in 1989, we paid out most of the producers one way or another in forage payments because of drought and other things.

We have went to an individual. We took it one step further because every time you do it on an area base it had created us some problem because some who got a really good deal still got paid on the area base and some who had a very poor yield in there only got the same amount. And it seemed to be some unfairness there, so we went to an area base averaging for the

coverage but an individual application. So if you . . . you could be in an area and if you could have a loss and your neighbour could have a good crop, and yet then you'd be the one that would be covered, as you have been for grains for years. So we moved to that type of model.

And therefore the Simfoy is no longer needed because we're not using any outside calculations to work on it. I did not say that the Simfoy worked or didn't work. I said it was part of a calculations that was there that we used to calculate it.

We used other things. We used production yields we had in the data bank. We used some farmers where we done the estimation. We had test plots out. We had a lot of things that we put into that whole package. The amount of rainfall was part into there. So those are the kind of things, and then of course the yield that was estimated taken on the area. So there were a lot of things in that package.

The dispute, particularly down in the south-west, was, as I said a minute ago, it wasn't whether one thing worked or another, although that was part of the discussion. It was the amount of production that they thought they got compared to what the corporation had estimated they got.

Mr. Upshall: -- Yes, but, Mr. Minister, in order to determine that production the Simfoy computer model was used. And I will quote from Mr. Murray Walter, the lawyer, and it says in this article:

The case was based on two separate things, Walter said. One was that Simfoy really didn't work,
D particularly in 1986, because it didn't take into account climatic factors that were necessary to do the proper estimate.

And what I'm saying here, Mr. Minister, is you made an out of court settlement with 11 farmers from a case based on the fact that Simfoy did not work. That was one of the pillars of their case. Now what I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, is you, by making out of court settlement, admit that there was some fault there on your part, or the computer model was at fault.

So, Mr. Minister, my question is, what about the other producers who were covered under forage insurance, who had their analysis done with the Simfoy computer model, what about them? If it was faulty in one case, Mr. Minister, I ask you, have you done a review of all the other clients who have the forage coverage, and will you be considering restructuring of any pay-out they got to comply with the rules that was laid down in this out of court settlement?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- Mr. Chairman, I'll make it clear that we neither accepted whether it was right or wrong, and the Simfoy was part of the argument made by, I believe he quoted a Mr. Walter from Swift Current. That was Mr. Walter's argument he used, and that's fair. Our agreement was a settlement out of court in regards to that. The reason, like I've said earlier, the debate was not over whether necessarily the Simfoy worked or didn't work, whether all the other calculations we add in along there

worked or didn't work. The argument was based on production. They thought they had less production than we thought they had. So therefore it was based on that.

And I'll be sending the entire details over to the member, as I promised, within seven days, and you'll have them, confidentially.

I will say this in regards to any other ones. If there's any complaint that comes in to us, informal or through a lawsuit, we'll deal on it on an individual basis on its own merit. And that's the way it must be. When you're dealing with any corporation, you must deal with it that way.

So that would be the position that we would hold as a corporation with regard to any further areas, in regards to that of concern, or raised by the farmer or producer informally or through a lawsuit.

Mr. Upshall: -- Well, Mr. Minister, you say it was a discrepancy with yield. Exactly. What you used to determine that was the Simfoyc computer model. And all I'm saying is that I think you have a responsibility to go to review all those forage contracts. Because by out of court settlement, you have admitted fault, that the Simfoyc computer model did not work as well, because, as stated in the article, that it didn't take into account climatic factors that were necessary to do a proper estimate.

So all I'm saying, Mr. Minister . . . I don't want excuses. I don't want to have this corporation run on an individual basis -- if somebody has trouble with production records and they go in on their own. It's incumbent upon you, Mr. Minister, to run the corporation in a proper manner to allow farmers to get the benefits they receive from the premiums they pay to the corporation.

So what I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, is: have you undertaken a review of all the forage contracts to make adjustments for the error, which you admitted through the out of court settlement, in the Simfoyc computer program? And if you have not done that, Mr. Minister, will you do that?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- In regards to have we went back and did everyone again, review every individual contract that was issued in '86, no, we haven't. We have went back and reviewed it on the area basis as it was paid, by the area base. It wasn't paid by individual; you had to be in the area before you qualified at all.

We have dealt with about 30 to 40 farmers or producers who've come in, and then went back and reviewed that, based on the area basis. But we haven't just went and did every individual contract holder separately. We've reviewed the area when we did in '87 when . . . went back over it all again to double check it, and we have about 30 to 40 individuals who have come to us or wrote to us or phoned us in regards to their individual contract, in regards to how much they got paid. So those have been looked at on an individual basis and been responded to.

Mr. Upshall: -- Well, Mr. Minister, I'm not sure that that's the right way to run things because I think it's your responsibility to look at each individual producer to make sure that they get fair treatment.

In light of time, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you just a couple more short questions. I see by the agency agreement that you have with crop insurance agents, that in article 11 on page 6, it says:

This agreement may be terminated by either party giving notice to the other party via registered mail or certified mail. Written notice to the corporation shall be delivered to the the crop insurance address.

Mr. Minister, is that all that's necessary for you to terminate an agent, and also for the agent in credit, just a simple letter to the corporation or from the corporation to the individual announcing that he has been terminated?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- Mr. Chairman, that is the way it can be terminated by either one party, but in all cases it has to be reasonable grounds. Not for the agent, he or she can decide they want to give it up. As any major corporation or any individual you have to have reasonable grounds. So it's there; it's part of the clause, but certainly that would be the process that they could go through if they wanted to give up their contract or if it wanted to be terminated.

But for the corporation, as a corporation responsible to the farmer and to the people of Saskatchewan, you have to have reasonable grounds.

Mr. Upshall: -- Mr. Minister, I was wondering, upon termination -- and we touched on this briefly yesterday, but I just want to know -- if there's any compensation other than a \$20 buy-back clause, and I also want to know if it's guaranteed that you will buy back at \$20?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- There is no additional compensation other than number of contracts you purchase and we'll purchase back at that amount, at \$20, either way. But there's a guarantee we will buy it back if they so wish to terminate their agreement with us. We will buy it back from them.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2

Mr. Upshall: -- Just one question, Mr. Minister. The difference between the estimated 1989-90 of \$9.572 million in the Estimates book and the \$23.139 million in 1990-91 -- is that difference the result of you taking over the 25 per cent of the federal portion of the crop insurance?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- The answer to your question is no, it's not to do with that.

Mr. Upshall: -- Mr. Minister, two questions. Can you explain, in item 2, payment to Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation for financing costs and increasing of some \$13 million, and can you also tell me if there's any

item in this budget that relates to the change in financing the crop insurance corporation between your agreement between you and the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- A good part of the cost is based on, as a government, the reinsurance fund for carrying \$180 million that we are carrying on the reinsurance premium program, and the interest on that is much greater than it was the previous year when it was only \$100 million; so that there's an increase in there in interest and the interest rates have gone up, so our costs are even higher.

In regards, I'll just make mention that under the new proposed agreement with the federal government, they will be reimbursing us within 30 days, any reinsurance money, their shares of it. And that would help us somewhat if we get the agreement signed and start getting our reinsurance money back instead of carrying it, as I mentioned, for probably a year in some cases.

Mr. Upshall: -- And the other question about is there any item in the budget that relates to the funding arrangement?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- No there isn't. No.

Item 2 agreed to.

Item 3 agreed to.

Item 4 -- Statutory.

Vote 46 agreed to.

Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Vote 161

Item 1 -- Statutory.

Supplementary Estimates 1990
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation
Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 46

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 46 agreed to.

Supplementary Estimates 1990
Consolidated Fund Loans, Advances and Investments
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Vote 161

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 161 agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: -- That concludes Saskatchewan Crop Insurance. I'd like to thank the minister and his officials.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: -- Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my critic, the member from Humboldt, for his questions. There was some very, very, good questions this morning. I think they're relevant to our farming operations and he did a very fine job. I want to say thank you to my officials for doing a good job year round, and to all the people who work for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance. Many of them are out in the field who take a lot . . . they're front-line people who take a lot of . . . and have to deal with a lot of different problems. They do it well. We've faced a lot of droughts, Mr. Chairman, and things over the years and I think I want to say to all of them, you do a very fine job.

I want to make mention, just while I'm up here, Mr. Chairman, of two things that I think are important. I have two gentlemen here with me today, the vice-president, Jim Walters, who chaired the Saskatchewan Winter Games at Melville. I think he done a very fine job there. And directly behind me is Geoff Bartlam. Yesterday he celebrated a birthday, 17 years with the crop insurance corporation. I think those kinds of people deserve both our acknowledgement and certainly our thank you for both doing a good job and being with the corporation so long. So to everyone I want to say thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the minister for the information he supplied in crop insurance. It's a very, very important corporation to Saskatchewan farmers, and I think the points that we were getting to was to ensure that the corporation serves farmers well. I would like to thank the minister's officials for supplying the good information. Thank you.

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Parks and Renewable Resources
Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 26

Mr. Chairman: -- I'd ask the minister, as soon as he is ready, to introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start these proceedings this morning, start by introducing my officials for the benefit of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Sitting beside me is Doug Cressman who is the deputy minister of Parks and Renewable Resources. Just to the back of him is Dick Bailey an ADM (assistant deputy minister) within the department, and in back of me is Alan Appleby another ADM. As well I would like to inform the hon. members that we have a few directors who are here and are available as resource people.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I will start off with the regular questions for information with your department and your officials. But I want to indicate to you, Mr. Minister, that

being a new minister, and this is your first year of going through estimates, there probably will be some areas that you're not as familiar with as you should be or would be eight, 10 months down the road. So if there's any information that you can't have and it's going to take a lot of time to compile that, if you would just agree to pass that over in the next few days in writing, then we can move right along.

But first, Mr. Minister, I would ask if you would agree to send over, if your officials have that information available, would be that the staff that you have in your office. If you could send me a list of the staff that you have in your office, your assistants, the wages, the names, the wages that they are paid. If you could send over also the amount of trips that were made out of the province by yourself and your staff. If you would provide me with that, and the destination. And I would also like to have in writing, if you could send that over, the amount of moneys that your department paid out in advertising in this last year and the name of the advertising firm that did the advertising for you. If you could do that, Mr. Minister, and send that over, then we could start working from there.

(1130)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, Mr. Chairman, in just a very few moments I will be sending over the information to the hon. member.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

I want to start off with the Parks, and I want to first of all, Mr. Minister, turn to the Grasslands National Park. And I wonder if you could give us an update on the Grasslands National Park as just what has taken place there in the last year as far as your department and the provincial government is concerned.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I'd like to answer that question in two parts, if I may. The first, I would just like to give you a brief report on what the federal government is doing at the park within the last year. They've opened an office in Val Marie. They have five people employed there at this time, and the information we have is that it will be expanded to nine in the very near future. And as well, they are in the midst of some land acquisitions.

Now as it pertains to Parks and Renewable Resources, our department sits on the Grasslands advisory committee. We are helping establish proper identification for water courses within that park area so that they could be named properly within the agreement.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. It's fair to say then that the park itself has not been completed yet; the size of the Grasslands National Park has not been completed. There is still some land that will be taken in to that park. Is this right?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, basically that is true.

Mr. Thompson: -- How much more land, Mr. Minister, is going to be taken in by the federal government and put into the federal park?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- To the best of our information, they have now put together 84 square miles of that park.

I think also I can give you just an additional fact that may be of interest to you. The maximum area for that park, if it's all acquired, will be 300 square miles. Pardon me, I'll correct that figure, 350 square miles.

Mr. Thompson: -- Right now it's 84 square miles?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- That is correct.

Mr. Thompson: -- That park is not even a third completed. There's still a lot of land acquisition to be brought into that Grasslands National Park.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, in our conversations with them they feel they need about 150 square miles for the park to be a park.

Mr. Thompson: -- What is slowing down the process of land acquisition and completing that Grasslands National Park? It would seem to me that this has been going on for a number of years now and there's got to be something that's holding them back. Could you explain why the delay in acquiring this land?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Actually they are quite pleased with the negotiations so far. They've dealt with 12 farmers and have, we're aware of -- that they've made agreements with nine. And even that figure could have improved since we received our information. So in our conversations, they feel really quite pleased with the progress.

Mr. Thompson: -- Is there any date set for completion of that Grasslands National Park? Do they have any dates in mind when it would be completed, any goal that they're working towards?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Not that we've been informed about, an exact target date, no.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, in the last year I believe there has been some exploration taking place within that Grasslands National Park and in that area, regarding diamond deposits. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you are aware of this, or is it actually taking place? And if so, I wonder if you could bring us up to date on what has taken place regarding diamond deposits within the Grasslands National Park.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I would like to inform the hon. member that we're not aware of any projects of that sort at this time. But now that you've brought it to our attention, I feel honour bound to have my department check into that, just to be sure that no diamond drilling or anything of that sort is taking place. We could possibly brief you when we get some information.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, you indicate that your officials say that there's been no investigations in the last year regarding diamond deposits within that Grasslands National Park, absolutely none?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- No, we're not aware of any, and nothing has been brought to our attention. But I once again want to repeat that certainly we would feel honour bound to double-check this for you.

Mr. Thompson: -- Yes. I would assume then, Mr. Minister, if there was exploration or any type of investigation into diamonds, that you would not be involved. This would be with the federal Parks department. Is this right?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I guess the answer to that is if the land is already within the park acquisition area, it is a federal responsibility. But if the land is still at this time part of provincial Crown land, then it would still be our responsibility.

Mr. Thompson: -- I now want to turn to the Athabasca Sand Dunes, Mr. Minister. In July of last year your department designated the sand dunes as a parkland reserve. And for that reason, so that your department and your department officials could consider, you know, what to really do with that area or to make it a provincial wilderness park or a provincial park, Mr. Minister, could you indicate what steps have been taken, or if there's been any other progress taken in the Athabasca Sand Dunes on the south shore of Lake Athabasca?

(1145)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- What will happen in August of this year . . . there'll be some public consultation start. It will start in August in Fond-du-Lac, in Stony Rapids and Uranium City. As well this fall there will be consultations held in Prince Albert and La Ronge; it will be held with the local people as well as special interest groups. As an example of a special interest group I could name you the parks advisory committee, would be part of the consultation.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you, Mr. Minister. I fully agree that there has to be some consultation because you designated that park and you set it aside as a reserve and already it has disrupted some of the individuals in the Fond-du-Lac and that northern area regarding fishing. And I've indicated to you in writing that some of the traditional users who have trapped in that local area around the sand dunes and fished some of those smaller lakes, have now had the limits taken off the lakes or they have been restricted in that area.

And I think it's important that before you make any moves on the sand dunes, that you do go in and discuss with the individuals who are most certainly the ones closely concerned and that would be the Fond-du-Lac and Stony Rapids, Uranium City, Camsell Portage area.

They traditionally have used that area for many years surrounding the south, the west side, the south side, and the east side of the sand dunes;

and of course the commercial fishery which takes place on the north end of the sand dunes.

And as I've indicated to you, and I've indicated to you in writing, there has been some of the local users, traditional users, who have had their lives disrupted because of this, and I would just ask that that be worked out and especially in Fond-du-Lac. I think it applies more to the Fond-du-Lac area. As you know, the letter I wrote you concerned an individual who has trapped for many, many years, and his family is growing up and won't be using that area.

Has Parks planning done any work on making the sand dunes accessible from the south? If you're going to protect such a mass of sand dunes, I would think that you are going to have to do some planning. And if there's going to be access put in there, then Parks planning, I think, are going to have to get in there and make sure that where the road is and how it's going to be accessed is planned properly. And I just wonder, Mr. Minister, has there been any work done through your department to this effect?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- As we said after the designation, we felt that the public consultation would be step number two, and we are very, very committed to raising that issue as part of those public consultations -- the southern access to that area.

Mr. Thompson: -- So there's been no plans from your department to access that area by land?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- No, we felt that it would be much more beneficial to do it after some consultations.

Mr. Thompson: -- Yes, I fully agree with that, Mr. Minister.

Could you indicate, Mr. Minister, when you plan that . . . for the public hearings? Specifically, let's just do one specific area. When is the plans to go into Fond-du-Lac?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- As I stated earlier, during the month of August we thought we would be into . . . or we would be into three areas -- Fond-du-Lac, Stony Rapids, and Uranium City. During the month of August.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you, Mr. Minister. And your department officials will make the individuals in that area aware that the hearings are going to take place and what the hearings are going to be about. And I speak specifically of the councils at Camsell and Stony and Uranium City, plus the band council members, the chief and council at Fond-du-Lac and Black Lake.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Very much we will endeavour to do that. In fact we will go so far as to make sure that you are very aware of those dates as well.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Has there been any discussions in the last year on the interprovincial park, or any more

discussions on an interprovincial park between Alberta and north-western Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I could inform the hon. member that a committee has been formed between the two provinces. They've held approximately three meetings, and as part of those meetings they are now in the process of developing proposals for specific actions on that project.

Mr. Thompson: -- Your department is still looking at a joint venture with Alberta to create that interprovincial park. Is this right, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I'm going to apologize to the member for giving him some wrong information. The information was correct but for the wrong location. That was the Cypress Hills Park area. You asked, I believe, about the north-west, not . . . the north-west Alberta one. That is still only a project. What's the word?

An Hon. Member: -- Concept.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- It's only a project concept at this time, in the north-west. That information I gave you was for the south-west, not the north-west.

Mr. Thompson: -- That's what we have Hansard for, Mr. Minister, and that straightens that out.

On the Cypress Hills, you're going ahead. You've had meetings with the Cypress Hills, and that's the Manitoba portion . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon?

An Hon. Member: -- Alberta.

Mr. Thompson: -- The Cypress Hills, is that in . . . You say that's an interprovincial park with Alberta too, is it? Okay. Then the the Cold Lake area, there's nothing has been done on that.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- No, that is correct. Your statement is correct.

Mr. Thompson: -- I want to turn to the provincial park at La Ronge, Mr. Minister, and some of the headlines are coming out that there's a major gold deposit in that provincial park. Could you bring us up to date on what has taken place, what negotiations has taken place between the operators of that gold deposit in the provincial park at La Ronge?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We did announce a policy in provincial parks prohibiting any mineral development, with the exception of a few small areas within the La Ronge provincial park, and the only areas that are exempt from this policy are existing mineral claims in an area where some mineral development occurred before the Lac La Ronge Provincial Park was established in 1939. Other than that, and the mineral exploration zone, there will be no mineral development in provincial parks.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, you've changed the policy for Cameco and the

group that's developing the deposit in the La Ronge Provincial Park. You indicate you've changed the policy. The policy was to prohibit any mining development to take place in the provincial parks. You indicate that because there has been mining that has taken place in that area, could you not use that same criteria on any provincial park in the province and just use the province as an area? If you were . . . just assume in the Grasslands National Park which is federal, but there's diamond deposits in there so the operators there would have to go through the federal department.

The same would apply to any provincial park that we have in this province. You indicate that the policy is to prohibit, but yet the policy has been changed up there. And you also indicate that you want to continue to go along with the old policy that no development take place.

Mr. Minister, it would seem to me that if you can change the policy for La Ronge . . . and I'm not opposed to that development. I think that any time that you want to develop within a provincial park, if the environmental impact studies are carried out properly and everything is done according to the rules and regulations of the province, I see nothing wrong with that.

However, you have to go through all those steps first. But I'm just saying that if you've given an exemption up there, why can you not do that any other place in the province?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We feel that the only reason that there is mining allowed in that certain area is because it existed there. We don't feel that's a change in policy. I mean, it was just there before; it's that simple.

And to answer your more direct question, I would give you a direct answer and say no, we're just not entertaining any; we just won't entertain any projects in any other provincial park.

Mr. Thompson: -- I don't want to belabour this, but could you just indicate to me what you mean by, it was there before?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- The mine was there before the park was created.

Mr. Thompson: -- There is no mine there, Mr. Minister. There's just exploration that's taken place, and there's a possibility of developing an ore body. Somebody may have went in there and staked claims. I'm not saying that there wasn't claims staked there, but most certainly there's no mine there.

(1200)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I didn't mean to leave the impression that there was an operating mine at this time there. What we were referring to is the Anglo-Rouyn mine site that was there before.

Mr. Thompson: -- Yes, the Anglo-Rouyn mine site was there and that's mined out, just like many other mines around the world -- they get mined out. So

most certainly there's no mine there.

Mr. Minister, has there been any other developments in any other provincial parks in the province, any major developments that have taken place, major expenditures in any of the other provincial parks in the province?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Could you give me an example what specific type of development that you are referring to?

Mr. Thompson: -- Well has there been any major developments opening up, any new subdivisions, or has there been any campsites, major ones, that have been developed in the last year in a provincial park?

If I could speed things up a little bit, Mr. Minister, for your officials, I asked you about any of the major developments in the provincial parks. I do want to follow up with public campsites. I want to know, you know, the number of provincial campsites that have been either leased out or taken back into the department or, you know, if there's been any change in that. And I just give you that to forewarn your officials that that's probably the next question that I will be asking is on the public campsites.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Thank you for bearing with us until we got a detailed list for you.

The construction highlights for '89-90 were a water system upgrade to supply potable water to the golf course and marina at Elbow harbour rec site; complete renovations to the Chitek Lake headquarters; construction of a new lab and freezer building at Condie nature refuge; completion of the Rowan's Ravine administration building; construction of a new maintenance building at Greenwater Provincial Park; marina development at Greenwater Provincial Park; completion of the integrated sewer and water system at Duck Mountain Provincial Park; potable and irrigation water exploration and development at Moose Mountain Provincial Park; camp ground office completion at Cypress Hills Provincial Park; construction of a new visitor information centre at Fort Carlton historic park; construction of a new repair complex and renovations to the -- well this is with the fire control centre, but I can give it to you anyway -- construction of a new repair complex and renovations to the fire control centre at Nesbitt fire control, an operations complex in Prince Albert.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could provide me with this information in writing, those projects that you indicated and the amount of funds that you have spent on the projects that you just announced -- if you could provide me in writing the amount of dollars that were spent on all those projects that you have just indicated.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We would be very extremely happy and proud to do that, to advise the hon. member.

Mr. Thompson: -- You should be more co-operative, George. Take a page out of Lorne's book.

Mr. Minister, as I indicated, I wanted to know, have you leased out any

public campsites in the last year to any individuals in this province?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We are in the process of dealing with leasing five camp grounds. They are the Maple Creek site, the Moosomin site -- four, I'm sorry, not five -- Borden bridge and Ramsay Bay. Those are being . . . there's proposals, calls on those four.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, what happened at the Borden bridge? Did you have some problems there in the last year?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- The lessee is not returning, so therefore we are advertising it for a one-year lease.

Mr. Thompson: -- What amount of money did they pay to lease that site at the Borden bridge?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- It is not our policy to release that information after the tender has been opened and awarded. I would, though, for your information, give you a bench-mark; we do not accept any tender for less than \$100.

Mr. Thompson: -- That's not the question I asked you, Mr. Minister. The lessee that operated there last year, a group from Saskatoon, what did they pay the department in lease fees for that Borden bridge site? I'm not asking you the question of what you're asking for in this tender; it's an open tender.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We normally just do not release that information.

Mr. Thompson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, I've got that information from other . . . Besnard Lake, you indicate . . . your department and the former minister indicated in estimates what that individual at Besnard Lake paid in lease fees -- that's public knowledge; at Little Amyot Lake, that's public knowledge. We're dealing with public funds here right now, so I would assume that that should be public knowledge as to what the individual paid last year.

We're not dealing with something that's up for tender or any secrecy there. This is moneys that were paid to the taxpayers of this province in . . . they paid that because they used a site, a facility that was owned by the taxpayers. So I don't see how that cannot be public knowledge.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- As a solution to this problem, may I offer the proposal of going to the person who had the lease, and if he's in agreement to release that information, we would be very willing to provide that information in writing to you.

Mr. Thompson: -- Well, yes, you can provide to me in writing what they paid, and I don't think that the lessee should have any say into that matter. We're here dealing with the taxpayers' moneys of this province. And I say to you in all fairness, Mr. Minister, that when you have an expenditure of moneys that come in from a facility that's owned by the taxpayers of this province, then I say that we in this legislature have a

right to know how much funds were returned to this province for the use of that facility.

And I just ask you to provide me with that information in writing, and that's fine, but absolutely no way should there be any secrecy around the amount of money that they paid to use a public facility in this province, owned by the province of Saskatchewan, owned by the taxpayers. And I say to you in all fairness that there most certainly should be nothing secret about that.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Well in principle what we do is, which provides a lot of the information, is that we provide a global total of all these leases for you. It is just not the policy to divulge the individual transaction or agreement between the government and an individual. That is the only difference, but the total figure is provided for your use.

Mr. Thompson: -- Well I'm not going to continue on this, but a global figure means nothing, you know. We want to know the specifics when we're dealing with estimates in this House.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could indicate to me what negotiations has taken place in the last year and up to date at Anglin Lake regarding the public campsite that the department owns in Anglin Lake.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- There was a proposal in that area which the department received. The department will now facilitate whatever is necessary with some public meetings in June of this year so that their proposal can be publicly made, and at the same time, the consultations with other people take place. So to answer your question more directly, no, at this time nothing has taken place.

(1215)

Mr. Thompson: -- But you do have a proposal before you to privatize the fairly large and substantial amount of land up there -- I believe that campsite encompasses about 11 acres -- and turning it over to a group from Saskatoon. And you have that proposal before you, is this right, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, I once again will acknowledge that there is a proposal, and I also emphasize that nothing has taken place at this time regarding any sort of an agreement. The next step is public consultation, directly involved with the people most concerned about the project in that area.

Mr. Thompson: -- So you're indicating that nothing will take place before there is public hearings held into the proposal. Is this right?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- That is correct. The public meetings or hearings, whatever term you use to it, will take place in June of this year.

Mr. Thompson: -- Could you indicate who the proposal was from, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- For the benefit of not only this party but any other party that may want to make proposals, we have to treat it with confidence until it does go public. They're just all treated that way.

Mr. Thompson: -- Well I'm not going to belabour that one either, but I just want to make a comment. You indicate that the proposal's there. You're going to hold public hearings.

How are you going to hold public hearings without indicating where the proposal comes from? My gosh, if you can't make that public, I don't know what we're dealing with here. If you're going to hold public hearings into the proposal that was put forward by the individual group, are you going to hold public hearings by a proposal from a group and not even indicate at the public hearings as to who is proposing to develop that 11 acres on Anglin Lake which is just 27 miles from Waskesiu?

I think that to indicate that you can't make that name public is just not fair to this committee. It's because you've indicated already that you're going to hold public hearings on his specific proposal. And I'm just going to leave it at that.

I now want to turn, Mr. Minister -- has any public campsites been taken back into the system in the last year, except, other than the one at Borden? Have you taken any other ones in?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Just now my department is getting that information for you. I wanted to comment just very briefly on your previous statement, because you make some good points there. At the time of the public hearings the people that will be involved in this proposal will be made public. In fact they will have to make their proposal. So I think it's just a case of a little confidentiality until it formally happens. But certainly there's no question that at the time of the public meetings, I don't think there'll be much left for the imagination.

There were two sites that came back and became maintenance contracts that were . . . and those maintenance contracts were tendered out.

Mr. Thompson: -- Could you indicate the two sites that were brought back in.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Peck Lake and Little Fishing Lake.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I now want to turn to the provincial golf courses. And I wonder if you could indicate if there's been any change in the status of the golf course on the provincial park at Cochin, on Jackfish Lake, I believe it is.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We have entered into an agreement with the Cochin conference centre to lease the golf course. They are also, of course, going ahead with a proposal for a further expansion to the facilities there. At this time they are operating the golf course.

Mr. Thompson: -- You indicate that you are entering into Dan agreement with the Cochin conference board to lease that golf course. You also indicate that there are plans for more development. Who is going to . . . whose plans are you talking about, and what type of development are we talking about here?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, the Cochin conference centre are going to do two things. They're going to put in a conference centre, as the title would suggest, and as well, an accommodations project.

Mr. Thompson: -- And that . . . there will be no provincial money involved in this. They are going to be putting up the 100 per cent of the funds. Is this right?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- This department is not putting up any money at all. There are details to the financial breakdown which were made public. And if you really require that information, it would take us a few minutes but we could get it for you.

Mr. Thompson: -- Okay, let me rephrase the question. Are you indicating that there's no provincial money being put into this operation?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- No, I meant no money from my department, is what I meant.

Mr. Thompson: -- Then you indicate that there is provincial funds going into this proposed project. Is this right?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- There may be some through the tourism subagreement that could be provincial funding. As well, there is certainly some federal funding being provided.

Mr. Thompson: -- Could you indicate who the principals are in this consortium, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, we'll provide that information, but it's going to take us a minute or two to find it.

Mr. Thompson: -- You indicate that the project that's going to go ahead at Cochin in that provincial park, is that they are going to take over the golf course which is now operated by your department. And they are in turn going to build a conference centre and accommodations, and I'm presuming that you're talking about a motel type accommodations. Are they going to build that right within the provincial park there at Cochin?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, it is being built within the park boundaries. We feel it's simply an excellent joint venture with the Sauteaux Indian Band who are the principals in this agreement.

Mr. Thompson: -- So you're indicating then that the Cochin conference group is a group of natives from the Sauteaux Reserve just adjacent to the park. Is this right -- solely that one reserve?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- The Saulteaux development corporation and the other principal shareholder, or the other shareholder, is Ray Ahenekiw.

Mr. Thompson: -- And you're not sure . . . Could you indicate how much the proposal is. Do you know what the proposal that's been put before you, what the total cost of that facility is?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We'll give you an approximate figure. These things can change as projects are designed, but tentative the proposed figure was \$2.35 million.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, is your department going to be running that golf course for the duration of this summer? Or has that now been turned over to this group?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- It has now been turned over to that group. We've had nothing to do with the running of the golf course at all this year.

Mr. Thompson: -- Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Are there any other golf courses in the province that you are negotiating to lease out?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- No, we are not negotiating on any others at this time at all.

Mr. Thompson: -- And has there been any taken back into the system in this last year.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- No.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, I now want to turn to the ski hills that you have within the park system in Saskatchewan. And I wonder if you could indicate if you have negotiated for, or have leased out, any provincial ski hills in the province, or have you taken any of them that you have negotiated before back into the system?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We have three. They are all leased, and Cypress completely for the first time this year.

Mr. Thompson: -- Could you elaborate on that? Being completely, was that a joint venture last year?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I guess what I meant to say was that it was really leased for the first time this year on a formal lease.

Mr. Thompson: -- So there's been no other golf courses or ski hills that have been brought in or negotiated out this last year?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- No, that is correct.

(1230)

Mr. Thompson: -- What is the lease at . . . just out of Saskatoon there, Blackstrap, is that a five-year lease?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- It was leased in 1986 for five years and there is a 10-year renewal option.

An Hon. Member: -- 1986?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- 1986.

Mr. Thompson: -- And there was no other ski hills that were involved in the department this year?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, within the provincial park system those are the only three.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, I now want to turn to another item and that's regarding your participation with Ducks Unlimited. And I'm just wondering, Mr. Minister, what work has been done in the province and how much money that your department has put out into Ducks Unlimited? I believe it's your department is responsible for the provincial Ducks Unlimited. Is this right?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- No, that's not quite correct. Though we work very closely with them and do a lot of joint ventures, we're just not responsible in any direct way to them. They are very much an individual group.

Mr. Thompson: -- So Parks and . . . your department have no financial responsibilities to Ducks Unlimited. What department does that fall under, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- They are a private, non-profit organization that is, well, for instance very well-known throughout North America.

Mr. Thompson: -- Yes, I know that. I'm aware that Mexico, the United States and Canada are involved. I'm also aware that there's projects within the province that are also involved. And there's Landis taken place; there's the Ross Lake project up in Green Lake and areas like this. Does your department not have any responsibilities, financial responsibilities for the provincial portion of Ducks Unlimited?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Well I think our relationship is limited to joint ventures.

Mr. Thompson: -- Okay then, Mr. Minister, before I get into some of the forestry in the department, I want to turn to another item and get that out of the way, and this is the game farms that we have in the province. I wonder if you could indicate if there has been any new licences issued this year for game farming in the province; and also could you indicate if there has been any game farms that have closed their doors, closed down in this last year.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Mr. Chairman, I've informed the member that that type of information would be better acquired from Agriculture and Food

because it is under their jurisdiction, the game farms.

Mr. Thompson: -- You're indicating that your department has nothing to do with licensing or how these game farms work in the province?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Our department really is only concerned with interprovincial movement of animals.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, I thank you for that information.

I want to, Mr. Chairman, now turn to some forestry. And the nurseries are under your jurisdiction?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- That's right.

Mr. Thompson: -- I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could indicate how many trees that were planted last year by your department in the province.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- In the past year there's been a total of 12 million seedlings planted, and I'll take it one step further and give you the breakdown. It was 4.8 by government, 6.5 by industry, and .7 by miscellaneous -- that's things like Arbor Day and Boy Scouts, Girl Guides type of thing.

Mr. Thompson: -- There was 12 million trees planted last year in the province. Mr. Minister, could you indicate where those 12 million seedlings came from? Did they all come from facilities that belonged to the province, or were any of those seedlings brought in out of the province in the last year?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- All those seedlings were Saskatchewan produced.

Mr. Thompson: -- Could you indicate how many contracts that your department let out for tree planting in the last year?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- There was a total of nine contracts given out.

Mr. Thompson: -- And how many of those contracts were awarded to Saskatchewan firms?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- All of them.

Mr. Thompson: -- Okay. Mr. Minister, there was a firm up at Jans Bay who were bidding on a contract to plant trees, which they were unsuccessful in. Could you indicate who received that contract that they were bidding on?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- There was the contract at Hawryluk Creek and Roots Reforestation received the tender.

Mr. Thompson: -- Where are they from, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- To the best of our information, we think they are located at Big River.

Mr. Thompson: -- You're not sure where they're located?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- We just don't have that exact information. I'm going on what the staff think is the location.

Mr. Thompson: -- And you will provide me with that information then, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Absolutely no problem in providing that location.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could indicate, you say there was 12 billion seedlings planted in the province last year, and I know you'd have to give me this in approximate figures. Could you indicate how many trees are being extracted in a year out of the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- There's a total of approximately 14 million that were harvested.

Mr. Thompson: -- Are you indicating that there was only 14 million trees taken out of the forest in Saskatchewan last year? That's the total amount taken out of this province?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- That's our best estimate on what was harvested.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, how would you determine that? Are you taking . . . when you use the figure of 14 million trees, are you using the figure of 14 million trees that were harvested for commercial use? Or are you talking about all the smaller trees and everything? When you clear-cut a forest, are you taking into account all those trees that would be in a square block that is clear-cut in this province and come up with a figure of 14 million trees?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, we feel that's a very close estimate on what we consider trees of commercial value.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, if I could rephrase the question then for your officials. I wonder if you could indicate how many trees that they feel, in approximate, that are extracted from the forest in Saskatchewan from all purposes, whether it be firewood or Christmas trees, whatever it may be. I wonder if you could give me, in round figures, the number of trees that were taken out of the forest in Saskatchewan in one year.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- That figure that we gave you earlier, the 14 million, was included. Anything that was permanent on the small scale -- the Christmas trees you refer to -- we feel that's our best estimate on total commercial use.

Mr. Thompson: -- Okay. Mr. Minister, then you indicate that we're extracting approximately 12 million trees out of the forests in Saskatchewan . . .

An Hon. Member: -- 14 million.

Mr. Thompson: -- . . . 14 million. Last year, you indicate that the department seeded 12 million, or they're going to seed this year the same amount. Is this right, approximately?

Could you indicate to me what the recovery rate is or what the success rate is? When you plant 12 million trees, what percentage of those trees grow to maturity?

(1245)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Our best guess is that 70 per cent of the seedlings survive and that 50 per cent reach full maturity to the point where, well, they're done.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, how many inspectors do you have within your department that go out in the field and inspect the trees that are planted, to make sure that when a tree is planted, that it's planted properly; and not only when they're planting, but to see what happens a year later, you know, a year after?

How many inspectors do you have on your staff so that they can go around and make sure that those trees . . . and you indicate that 70 per cent of them are successful and 30 per cent of them are dying. That seems to me that that's quite a high rate of loss there, especially when you're dealing in 12 million trees.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- To answer your question, I'd kind of like to do it in two parts. We have an assessment crew of people who do one-year and five-year inspections, who are, you could say, at it on a sort of more or less a reasonably full-time basis. But besides that, we have all our forestry people at different times of the year involved in an evaluation. Our regional forestry people, for example, are quite involved.

So to give you a specific number would be extremely hard, but . . . if you were loose and free with the figures, you know, I could give you a large number. But that wouldn't be fair because it wouldn't be full time. So I would rather just say that it's an ongoing evaluation by many, many people within the department.

Mr. Thompson: -- Yes, that's fine, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you could indicate what type of a project you have going just north of Green Lake there, where we had the major fire approximately 20 years ago. And I see that there's a major project going on there of clearing out the rows again for replanting or . . . I'm not too sure what's going on there. There's a lot of work been done there this year.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Rather than give you some information that may not be correct, with your co-operation we would like to take notice of that question and obligate ourselves to a written answer to you on that one.

Mr. Thompson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, that's a pretty major project and I

would think that that has to be in the hands of your foresters and your department officials. That project went on, there was a lot of money spent there this year. A contractor was in there with crawler tractors clearing all that land. All the wind-rows are cleaned out. And I would indicate to you, Mr. Minister, that that is the type of information that if you can't bring it to me today, then most certainly on Monday I would like to have that information brought back. To me that is a major project.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Certainly. There'd be absolutely no problem in providing that for you by Monday.

Mr. Thompson: -- You indicate that of the 12 million trees, 70 per cent survive and 50 per cent survive to maturity. I wonder if you could indicate if that 50 per cent to maturity is 50 per cent of the 70 per cent, or is that 50 per cent of the 100 per cent or of the 12 million trees?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Those percentages we gave you were based on the original seeding totals. So it would be 50 per cent of the 12 million.

Mr. Thompson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, when you take a look at the program, we know that we planted 12 million trees last year. We're extracting 14 million through the forest industry. We're not counting the losses in forest fires that we have in this province where we lose millions and millions of trees. And you indicate that only 50 per cent of the trees that are planted reach maturity.

Now if we are going to develop a sustainable forest industry in this province, I just don't see how you're going to do this if you're going to clear cut the land. You're going to replant that area and only 50 per cent survive to maturity. It just stands to reason. You're going to have a hundred acres and you replant it, only 50 acres are going to have forest on it. The other 50 acres are going to be desert.

And if we're going to keep clear cutting in the province and extracting the forest the way we're going right now and putting back the way that we're going, at 50 per cent, and if you take a look at how long it takes for a tree to mature in the province of Saskatchewan, with the climatic conditions the way they are in this province, the chances are that those trees will never reach maturity for 70, 80 years.

So the chances of a sustainable forest industry in this province get dimmer and dimmer all the time. We end up with a situation like we have over in Hudson Bay, where Simpson Timber, who had contracts there and have logged for 25 years and have clear cut, now are moving out because they've depleted all the forest in that area, in their forest management lease.

And I think that, Mr. Minister, if we're going to continue clear cutting in this province and exposing that land to the type of climatic conditions that we get in this province, and the rains come and they wash that fragile topsoil off that land, the 50 per cent maturity right now, I would say down the road -- 10, 20 years from now -- you'd be lucky if you get 10 per cent of those trees that you plant to maturity.

Because we're going to . . . through these climatic conditions we are going to lose all that topsoil, and those trees are never going to reproduce, and we're never going to have a sustainable forest in this province. It's the same thing that's happened in British Columbia and Alberta, any place that they're clear cutting on the mountains.

It took millions of years to create that fragile topsoil so that they could grow a tree on those mountains. Now they clear cut them and the rains come down and they wash all that fragile soil which took millions of years to build up. They close off creeks, they disrupt the animals in the area, they disrupt the spawning grounds for the fish.

And I think that if we're going to continue down this trail, then we're going to see a complete disaster in the forest industry in this province. And you're going to see federal regulations, or global regulations are going to come in and start regulating how we operate in this province because of the situation with the greenhouse effect where we have to have greenery on this planet or we just won't have a planet.

And we most certainly are not going to have a green planet, and especially we're not going to have a green Saskatchewan and in our forested areas if we're going to continue to take out our trees at the rate that you indicate we're taking them out, and the rate that we're putting them back and the rate of success that we're getting. Because if we're getting 50 per cent success right now, as I indicated, all that clear cut land and rain coming in and washing that off and the climatic conditions that we have, within 10, 15, 20 years you'll be able to grow nothing on that soil.

And I say we have to look ahead for generations to come. We just cannot continue to operate the way that we're operating in this province, albeit Saskatchewan may be a small province, but I'll tell you we've been leaders in many fields in this small province and we should continue to be leaders. And this is one way that we can continue to be a leader, and that is to go back and to use the timber cruisers and go out and selectively take our forest. You can plant all the trees you want and you're never going to replenish that forest.

I just tell you, Mr. Minister, it's going to be the same thing as happened in Hudson Bay and is starting to come back to haunt us in this province. And that's only a small, small development. If you have a major forest fire, that's all regenerated because of that fire. Don't have to worry so much about that because that is all replanted and that comes up very fast.

And most of that is done in jack pine stands. But if we're going to continue to log and we're going to continue to take everything out of that tree, we're not going to leave a nursery crop like we've done for years. We've had successful logging operations in this province ever since the province began. And they selectively cut. You go in with smaller equipment; you have your timber cruisers go through there. They cruise that timber, they cut out the mature timber, and they leave the other ones. If there's a tree that's 20 years from maturity or 30 years from maturity, you leave it and it's there. And it becomes a nursery and it protects the fragile topsoil that we have.

But if you're going to take those trees that are 10 and 20 years away from maturity and you're going to destroy all that soil through clear-cutting . . . and one just has to go up there now. The winds are getting hold of it, it's starting to whip the sands up, and I suspect you're going to find out in Green Lake where you're spending a bunch of money again to reforestate a burn that took place over 20 years ago, that you're going to run into the same problem.

And if we are going to develop a sustainable forest in this province, then I say to you, Mr. Minister, we have to change the policies. We have to change policies that will protect your children and my children and our grandchildren for centuries to come.

But the way we're doing it right now, we're talking about centuries being lost. And it's fine if you want to take a look at the economics right now. The large corporations will come in -- MacMillan Bloedel in British Columbia. They don't mind going in and extracting all that forest and clear cutting those beautiful mountains. But never, never again in our time and in any of our relations' times will we ever see a mature forest on those mountainsides. That area has been destroyed for life.

And we are doing the same thing on a smaller scale in Saskatchewan. We are literally destroying this province with the type of harvesting operations that we are involved in, in this province.

And I say, Mr. Minister, that this is a policy that has to be changed. And I know you as a minister, and I know you're responsible and that you're the type of an individual that believes in this province. And these are the policies that you, sir, are going to have to address and are going to have to make some major decisions, and they're tough decisions to make. You're going to have to make those decisions. Somebody has to if we're going to have a green province.

We can expand our nurseries in this province; we can take more seedlings. And we should be promoting more reforestation in the southern part of this province and get the trees growing around these farms again. I say that the nurseries in this province, if it's handled right, are too small. We can produce a lot more trees in those nurseries, but we should make sure that we're bringing those trees down to the southern part, into these farming areas, and encouraging these farmers to replant, and the communities and the cities and the towns.

The forest that we have up there right now, I say we have to maintain that. And that can only be done by selective cutting and keeping those healthy young trees that are there as a nursery crop, same as the farmers would do in the South. If they want to plant alfalfa, they'll maybe the first year they'll put a nursery crop in with oats or barley, whatever farmers raise as a nursery crop.

Mr. Chairman: -- Order, please. It now being past 1 o'clock, we'll rise and report progress.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:03 p.m.