

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Brockelbank: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to introduce a special guest today in the Speaker's gallery. He is a gentleman from the United Kingdom, and he's here in Saskatchewan to attend the marriage of a grandson.

He is a gentleman who is well respected in his own community. He's from Yorkshire, and he was on the Borough Council of Harrogate, and was so well respected in that community that he is an "honorary alderman" for that particular borough council.

I suppose it's fair for me to also tell the Chamber that he's part of the English connection of the Brockelbank family, and I don't want this to colour the warmth of the welcome that I know all members will extend to him when he's introduced today.

And I might say one more word about that. He was a little disappointed in the results of the British election just recently, and I wouldn't want to say where he stands politically, but . . . However, let the members ferret that out for themselves.

It was determined by my father, at some time prior to this, that Jack Brockelbank and he arose from the same place in England, so that they assume they must be cousins. And it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce Mr. Jack Brockelbank from England.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Gasoline Tax Rebate

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance, and it deals with the 7 cents a litre or the \$6 a tank gasoline tax which was announced in the budget. Mr. Minister, from 1982 until 1986 you promised that there would never be a gasoline tax in Saskatchewan. One June 17 you announced a new gasoline tax imposed on Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Along with that, Mr. Minister, you have launched a massive, province-wide advertising campaign designed to try to sell this new tax, with extremely expensive radio and television and newspaper advertisements — even a glossy brochure that has now been sent to every household in Saskatchewan.

Now during a time, Mr. Minister, when you're telling everybody it's necessary to practise restraint, expenditures of these kinds of moneys is bad enough, but your advertisement is misleading, as is shown in the newspaper, Mr. Minister. And I ask you: will you explain

to Saskatchewan drivers how you can call a rebate of a tax, which did not exist until a few days ago, a saving?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I'm interested in the hon. member's question because some time back the opposition were highly critical in that the government was not encouraging to people to save their receipts. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, those that save their receipts will receive a benefit of a tax of 7 cents a litre, and we're encouraging people to keep their receipts. It's that simple, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, let me ask you the question more specifically. And I repeat again; how is a tax, and a rebate on a tax which did not exist prior to June 22, a saving?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, obviously the people will be paying the tax until they get their rebate, in which case they will be getting a saving.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, it seems to me that the only people that are going to be making a saving is going to be you and your treasury, because people are going to be out of money for over a year when they have to apply, assuming that they have got their receipts and haven't lost them.

Mr. Minister, let me ask you a supplementary. At a time when you're cutting, for example \$34,000 in grant from organisations such as the Voice of the Handicapped on the premise that, as you have said, every dollar counts, can you tell the taxpayers of this province how much of their money you're going to use to run this misleading and this massive advertising campaign on the gasoline tax? How much will the production, the placement, and the distribution of all of this advertising material cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the opposition have made it abundantly clear again today, one, that they do not like the rebate system on the gasoline tax. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for maintaining the consistency of the New Democratic Party position, which is, there always would have been a gas tax. The gas tax today in Saskatchewan under the NDP would be 8.9 cents a litre. It would never have come off at all, and there would have been no rebate, Mr. Speaker. They are informational ads encouraging the people to keep their receipts.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the issue here is your dishonesty in the implementation of this gasoline tax.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And also at issue here, Mr. Minister, is the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars

when you're telling people who need the money and need the help that they can't have it. I ask again: how much will this advertising campaign on this dishonest tax cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, the situation is very, very straightforward. One, the government introduced the gasoline tax rebatable in the budget on June 17. I think that was made clear, and the government's position was made clear. Secondly, we are making it abundantly clear, we're encouraging the people of this province to keep their receipts. The member obviously knows that there is the traditional estimates question as to cost and the details of that, and I will have as much information as possible at that time.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it is the government's intention to maintain the informational ad to encourage people to keep their rebates. It's a far superior system, I might advise the hon. member than 8.9 cents a litre for the last five years. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to encourage people to keep their receipts.

An Hon. Member: — How much?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I said I would indicate during estimates.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, this is another example of this minister's atrocious disregard for accountability.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — These advertisements which the government is running started a week ago, and this minister who had to approve the expenditure cannot tell this House today how much it's going to cost.

Now, Mr. Minister, do you mean to tell Saskatchewan taxpayers that, in this period of time of severe restraint which you're imposing on everyone, your government approved this massive advertising without knowing how much it would cost? Because you have refused to answer that question.

And secondly, Mr. Minister, I ask you: how can you justify spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in this way when you're telling everybody else that every dollar counts.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again I thank the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, for putting the opposition party's position firmly on the record. One, they do not want informational advertising which encourages people to keep their receipts. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we should keep in mind when the allegations of dishonesty that one summer, Mr. Speaker, when the session was not in place, that party, when it was government, converted a flat tax on gasoline to an *ad valorem* sliding tax and tried to sneak it in on the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

This is a clear statement of what the government's policy and position is. We will encourage the people of this province to keep their receipts, Mr. Speaker. Whether the

NDP want us to encourage the people or not to keep the receipts, we hope they do keep their receipts and take advantage of the rebate, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, the other day when you brought an interim supply Bill to this House, you didn't know and you couldn't answer the question about how much in special warrants you had spent since April 1, even though it was \$928 million.

Today, Mr. Minister, you don't know how much of taxpayers' money you're spending on advertising, misleading advertising, on this gas tax, Mr. Minister. I ask you: did you not personally approve the expenditure of this money for the placement of those advertisements in the media throughout Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not want the government — and I think this should be clear, that the New Democratic Party does not want the Government of Saskatchewan to tell the people of this province, the average drivers of this province, to keep their receipts so that they get their gas tax rebated to them. Mr. Speaker, I've indicated to the hon. member that the detailed information is given in estimates in the normal course. He can obtain that information at that time. We will, and let me make it abundantly clear, that notwithstanding what the New Democratic Party says, we will encourage the people of this province to keep their gasoline tax receipts so that they can get the rebate, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Red Tape Created by Gas Tax

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. I have a question with respect to the mountain of red tape the gas tax has created. Service station operators and thousands of drivers alike are saying this system is full of holes and wide open to abuse. It gives those who want to abuse the system a wide open field, while those who are claiming the rebate honestly have been hit with a massive mountain of red tape. You've had numerous complaints from both drivers and service station operators. In light of this problem, what steps are you taking to improve your ill-conceived, totally bureaucratic system, and what improvements do you have in mind?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I doubt it there's much red tape if people pay by credit cards. First of all, if we can take an ordinary example of people buying gasoline by credit cards, all they have to do is keep, as they would in the normal course, Mr. Speaker, the credit card receipt. Certainly people are not keep receipts, there is the additional practice of keeping a receipt and asking for it.

My advice from the service station dealers around Regina and in my riding is that they are giving the receipts, and ordinary receipts are acceptable. I've indicated the practice to the hon. member in the past, that next spring

the application forms will go out to the people of this province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we'll be using summer students to process the receipts and the program, process the receipts, process the receipts, program the computers for the record keeping, and process the cheques out, Mr. Speaker. So by using summer students we don't need a permanent bureaucracy to manage the program.

Mr. Solomon: — I would like to ask the minister, Mr. Speaker, whether or not his department officials have done an analysis of how many people in this province use credit cards. Can he tell us unequivocally that it is 100 per cent of all the people that are driving vehicles, using credit cards?

And secondly, does he understand, and do his department officials understand, that Revenue Canada requires original receipts if you are in business, in terms of claiming gas expenditures from your income, as well as this program requires original receipts? And does he not concur and agree that this will create a massive bureaucratic set-up for gas station operators, because they have to now provide two receipts for each gas purchase, to help out Revenue Canada, plus the program?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I'm disappointed to hear the NDP supportive and advocating of fraudulent practices in this province, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly what they are hoping for . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, we should keep in mind that it's a very simple practice to ask for gasoline receipts.

And secondly, we indicated very early in this session that credit card receipts were sufficient, providing they're properly filled out, as they would in a normal course. So I indicate to the hon. member that that's a rather straightforward practice. Certainly people are being asked to keep their receipts.

We should keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, we should keep in mind that until this came in, the New Democratic Party went around this province saying we should be taxing the people out of province, should be taxing big business, should be taxing the interprovincial trucking companies. Now they've changed their mind.

Mr. Solomon: — How can the Minister of Finance stand up in this House and tell us that he is going to be hiring people to process these gas tax receipts when his government, 10 days ago, fired over 411 dental hygienists from our dental program?

I ask the minister, many questions have been raised regarding this gas tax rebate, and questions I hope you can answer, and one I'd like to put to you this afternoon: will the gas tax rebate claimed by drivers be considered taxable income by Revenue Canada for income tax purposes?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I'll answer the first part of the question. There is no bureaucracy required. As I indicated by simply processing it and using summer

students, no permanent bureaucracy is required. I know that that flies in the face of your belief that there should be a big bureaucracy. Sometimes there are other ways of dealing with the problem, rather than instituting the bureaucracy.

My advice is that it won't be taxable unless it becomes a benefit added to their business and they try and send in two receipts, one if they're paid by the business, and then try and claim the receipt or the rebate as well.

Cuts to Youth Employment Program

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is the Minister for Human Resources, Labour and Employment, and it's got to do with his decision to cut and/or terminate summer youth employment programs at a time when there are 16,000 Saskatchewan young people unemployed and when the youth unemployment rate is hovering around 14 per cent.

Mr. Minister, last year your government spent \$13.7 million in total on the Opportunities '86 student employment program and the Access youth employment program. This year, rather than \$13.7 million, the two programs have budgets which total just over \$4 million, and that represents, Mr. Minister, a cut of somewhere in the vicinity of 70 per cent.

Tell me, sir, how do you and your government justify that kind of drastic cut when youth unemployment is higher today, higher today than it was a year ago?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — I'm not certain, Mr. Speaker, whether the member opposite is wrong, intentionally misleading, or just not bright enough to figure it out and understand the figures. But he's mixing together two programs again, the summer employment program with the youth Access program, which are two entirely different programs. The one, youth Access, has absolutely nothing to do with summer employment, has nothing to do with students.

Now I just heard you say to the Minister of Finance that you didn't want students to be hired to process gas receipts, and now here you're telling me we're not spending enough money on students. I explained to you the other day that the priority on students are for grade 12's going on with their education and for students in technical school and university, and that we did not have the option of continuing last year's program which provided jobs for grade 9's, 10's, and 11's.

Mr. Lyons: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Once again we see an example of the kind of double-talk that this minister and this government is responsible for.

Sir, my question was concerning youth unemployment, both student and non-student. Those under 25 can be students and they can be non-students when they're in the work-force. What I'm asking you, sir, is that there's 16,000 people unemployed in this province, 1,000 more than there were in May of last year; the unemployment rate is at 13.8 per cent, up from 12.6 per cent last year;

how can you argue and how can you stand here and say that it's okay to cut money for youth employment programs, student or non-student, at this time of high unemployment?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — I realise the NDP don't know much about agriculture, but surely they don't believe money grows on trees. And in order for us to have money to spend on all of the programs you continuously want to spend money on, it has to be raised somehow. But you're against a refundable gas tax; you're against any kind of taxation. You complain about the deficit, and yet at the same time you say, spend more money. We've had to pick priorities; all of Saskatchewan has to pick their priorities, and they are not the kind of squandering that your party advocates for many, many programs that this province can no longer afford.

Mr. Lyons: — It's very good to see the minister stand on his feet in this House and say that the youth of Saskatchewan are not a priority with this government. Shame on you, shame on you? Your actions, sir, your actions are telling your words even more so.

Mr. Minister, why did you pick this year — this year when youth unemployment is higher than it has been for many, many years in this province — to cut programs and to make non-profit groups and organisations ineligible as employers under the Opportunities '87 student employment program?

Now these non-profit groups, as you should know, have an excellent record of providing creative and socially useful summer work for students. Why did you, sir, decide to cut their eligibility for the Opportunities '87 youth employment program?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — I challenge you, if you can add and subtract as you suggest, I challenge you to add what your government ever spent on youth employment programs. And I doubt very much if you ever spent, in any year, including this year, as much as this government is spending now, even adjusted for inflation. I doubt very much, because last year and the year before our program was so generous that every student who wanted to work was able to find a job somehow.

And there is no way that the government can maintain a subsidy program for grade 9's, 10's, and 11's. There has to be some priorities. And the priority is not in finding jobs for those people who are still in high school. We could not do that because there is a limited amount of money available.

we have, instead, increased the student loan program, improved aid to students, and have picked programs that are necessary. I think you people call it targeting. Are you now against targeting?

Mr. Lyons: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister says that he challenges the money put up. Well let me tell you, Mr. Minister, when the New Democratic Party

formed the government in this province, youth unemployment in this province was only half the rate, half the rate under Devine PC rule, let me tell you.

If you are aware, and if you are serious — if you are serious, and it appears you're not — but if you are, in dealing with the youth unemployment rate, are you aware of the publications called *Selected Labour Force Data*, which is prepared each month by your own department, and are you aware that this report for the month of May shows that the number of young people employed in Saskatchewan to be at the lowest level in 10 years — in 10 years? In fact, there's 6,000 fewer people employed in this province this year, in May, than there was last year in May.

In light of this fact, and in light of these figures, Mr. Minister, how can you back up your claim that your government is doing enough; even to target the limited youth audience that you apparently are saying that you're targeting?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Ever since the member opposite came to this Assembly, I've heard him shout unparliamentary language at people, accusing government members of being liars over and over again. Therefore he must know something about it, and I wouldn't believe anything he told me.

Royalty Tax Rebates to Farmers

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Finance, going back to the earlier discussion about gas rebates. The minister will know that farmers now have four rebate problems or opportunities to deal with, two federally and two provincially.

And one of the changes in the minister's budget was to convert the royalty rebate to an annual basis from a quarterly basis, and the date the minister has selected for the submission of receipts by farmers for that purpose, the royalty purpose, is April 30. Can the minister indicate the particular magic with that date, because I have been advised by many farm accountants that the selection of that date is going to cause severe difficulty in rural farm accounting offices in trying to get all that paper work done to accommodate the government by April 30?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — It was based on when the bulk of the applications were coming in the past. Most of them were coming in after January 1. So we just put that in as a deadline. There was no magic to it other than that's when the bulk of them were coming in the past.

Mr. Goodale: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister be prepared to entertain some flexibility in that date — moving it, perhaps, to the end of May as opposed to the end of April?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — If it presents an undue difficulty, I'd certainly be glad to look at it. It was not . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. I'm having great difficulty hearing. Order, please. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I know that the opposition is not listening to this, but I would certainly be glad to consider it. It was not designed to cause undue difficulties, but it was just based on when the receipts were coming in in the past.

Increase in Student Tuition Fees

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister to Education. And it's a question, very simply, that in light of the fact that job opportunities for young people are at their lowest level in 10 years in Saskatchewan, and in light of the fact that many students need summer employment in order to pay for their education and there's been a dramatic cut in summer employment opportunities funded under your government, how can you justify giving students a double slap in the face by increasing tuition fees at Saskatchewan's technical institutes by 15 per cent; and how can you justify funding cuts which have forced a 10 per cent tuition fee increase at both university campuses?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the issue of tuition fees, certainly at the universities, the board of governors deals with that difficult issue. I think the increases there were something in the order of 10 per cent at both universities.

As it relates to technical institutes, how did we arrive at the number as the hon. member has referred to? I met with the students and I found them to be very commonsensical about this and very realistic, very constructive. They recommended to me that we should increase the fees by 15 per cent and, Mr. Speaker, our government accepted their recommendation, knowing full well that none of us like to see increases, but the students particularly realised that if there have to be increases, then to maintain quality we should look at that number.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, I want to ask a series of questions relating to checking for indoor pollutants. It has to do with recent trends to build tight, what is commonly known as tight homes — homes which are insulated to a greater extent, and as a result, and in addition to the insulation, you have more and more poly put in and less air seeping through the windows and through the doors. In addition, of course, we now have additional increasing amount of synthetic building materials that are being used. The cleaning and personal care products in our homes have been increasing.

I want to know whether your department has established any way of determining whether the problem of indoor pollutants by these synthetic building materials, by

personal cleaning products, whether it's serious enough to warrant any kind of official intervention.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised by my officials that the indoor air quality in homes is not falling in the Environment department, but rather would be dealt with if there is a health problem created by it. It would normally be dealt with by the Department of Health.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, I understand that if there were problems, associated health problems, that would be dealt with under the Department of Health. My question is related to methods of assessing whether or not there are problems.

For example, if I built a home, a new home, a tight home, and I wanted to check to see whether there were any problems regarding synthetic building materials or any of the cleaning material, or whether the air was circulating enough, could I come to your department? Could I come to some deport of your department and ask for a testing?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My department does go out and do checks for radon gas, but that's the only one. Any other pollutant that you might find in the air would come under the Department of Health.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Okay. I understand now that what you're doing is you're saying, you're telling me that it's radon only that you're checking for. I'll come back to the issue of radon in a moment, Mr. Minister.

I have here an article from which I'd like to quote to you. It's from a science magazine. It's a 1983 issue titled "Indoor Air Pollution: A Public Health Perspective." Just a little summary that they give of the entire article. It says here:

It is now apparent that elevated contaminant concentrations are common inside some private and public buildings. Concern about potential public health problems due to indoor air pollution is based on evidence that urban residents typically spend more than 90 per cent of their time indoors. Concentrations of some contaminants are higher indoors than outdoors, and for some pollutants, personal exposures are not characterised adequately by outdoor measurements.

Among the more important indoor contaminants associated with health or irritation effects are tobacco, smoke, radon, carbon monoxide and nitrogen, formaldehyde, asbestos, micro-organisms, and so on. Efforts to assess health risks associated with indoor air pollution are limited by insufficient information about the number of people exposed, the pattern and severity of exposures, and the health consequences of exposures. An overall strategy should be developed to investigate indoor exposures, health effects, control options, and public policy alternatives.

My question is: have you got your department working on any overall strategy to investigate these types of indoor exposure which are now being identified?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that occupational health deals with the inspection of the work place. Now that's not home, it's just the work place. If there are large public buildings where numbers of people worked and there seems to be a health problem, then occupational health and safety will go in and make a check there.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I turn now to the question of radon gas. As you mentioned earlier, you will go in and do some . . . you would, upon request, do any home . . . Is it possible for any home owner to request a check for radon gas?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We did a fairly major study on radon gas within our department in 1975. The conclusion that they arrived at was that there is basically no significant radon gas problem within the province.

If an individual person feels that they have a problem in their home, normally they'd call someone at the university and, for a fee of \$75, they'll come out and do a test to see whether or not it's a problem. We have in very rare cases gone out to check, but it's a very rare thing. We don't make it as a regular thing.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Have you had any in the last year — any inquiries about this in the last year?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We had about a half dozen contacts in the last year.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Can you give me some indication of what the results of the investigations were?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The contacts that we had were referred to the university, so the results would have been from the university people if you want them.

Mr. Kowalsky: — The department, your department then does no testings, is what I'm hearing, and that all the testing is done through the university.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The only testing we did was during the period that we were doing this survey and there are what 10 houses . . . from the survey there were 10 houses that showed some problem, and we have gone back to take a look at those 10, but that's as far as it's gone.

I might also mention to the hon. member that the survey is in a document like that, and it's available through the libraries and available to the public. It's a public document.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I have here in that same article that I quoted from earlier a couple of paragraphs that I'd like to read regarding radon gas. It says here that higher concentrations are typically measured in basements, crawl spaces, and homes with low exchange rates. It goes on to say the typical radon concentration range from .01 to 4 pCi per litre. I am wondering, Mr. Minister, whether levels exceeding 20 pCi per litre are typical? I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you have any knowledge of any studies being done in any energy efficient homes?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that we haven't as a department done any monitoring of the energy efficient homes. I am also advised that the energy efficient homes that are being built today draw air from outside — heat it, use it and expel it — so they likely would have enough circulation to solve a lot of their problems.

Mr. Kowalsky: — You're probably about half right on the last one, Mr. Minister. I think you can purchase an air exchange unit, but that's quite optional. My concern is about people getting into high energy efficient homes where this gas is trapped. The research shows further, Mr. Minister, that, and that the reason I believe it's a concern, is that risk is proportional to exposure, that is, the risk of concern from inhaling radon gas.

Now I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, whether it's something you may give a commitment to putting on as something that your department should be looking at in the next year.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — From the major survey that we did, there would not appear to be a major problem anywhere in this province, and for that reason we wouldn't likely be going ahead with any further survey here.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, I would hope that you might take a look at the more recent research on this in your department and perhaps be prepared to do just that, and that is to research it in more detail.

I want to turn now to a series of questions related to a different topic, and this has to do with our bus lines and the air inside the bus lines. I'm not certain if you've regarded this as something under the purview of your department. But, Mr. Minister, if you have ridden any STC buses lately, you will have noticed that there . . . some of the buses now have routes that are non-smoking. Some of the routes, on the other hand, do have smoking in the back. And I would like to commend whoever it was that set up the regulations so that the buses, the non-smoking units in the buses were implemented, and I would like to commend, also, the bus drivers for enforcing that rule. But my question is: why was there not a complete banning of smoking in the buses, instead of just a partial ban?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That subject would also fall under the Department of Health, not under the Department of Environment.

Mr. Kowalsky: — There is another problem related to the buses, Mr. Minister, and this has to do with the fumes, monitoring of the fumes, and the fumes that seem to get into the buses. Now at the Prince Albert station, at the Saskatoon station, and at the Regina station, if you get into any of the buses, the practice of the bus drivers is to start the buses for some minutes before the buses get going, and I suppose that applies maybe to other buses not just STC.

(1445)

The difficulty is that the circulation system at those bus depots is such that the fumes from the exhaust gets into the inside of the buses, now, whether it's through the air

intake system or whether it's through the door. would there not be some way, Mr. Minister, of setting up regulations so that those bus fumes could be exhausted out of the area where the people are because it causes tremendous discomfort, in some cases actually a sort of a nausea, as well, people who do not feel very good about those fumes?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That matter would not fall under the Department of Environment, rather it would come under the Department of Transportation and the responsibility of the Department of Transportation and as the owners, or the manufacturers of the bus, to produce a vehicle that operates properly. If there is a difficulty like you're staying right at the station itself, then the Department of Transport would be the ones to address and ask for a change there.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have a few questions surrounding the grasslands national park, and I'm hoping that you can provide a few answers today.

I had an opportunity to ask you a question about the park back in December, and you were able to say to me on that day, and I quote from the December 15 *Hansard*: "The department has worked long and hard . . . "in reference to the formation of the grasslands park. And then you said ". . . I think soon we will reach a conclusion."

Mr. Minister, can you report to the House today that a conclusion in these negotiations has been reached?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm sorry, but I must advise the hon. member that grasslands park and the concerns that he had with it that were discussed in the House would come under Sask Water and could not be dealt with under these estimates.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I would assume as Minister of the Environment you have an interest and a concern, if only a personal interest and concern. As Minister of the Department of Environment, could you venture a guess on behalf of your government on when these negotiations might be concluded?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It wouldn't be proper for me to do that in Environment estimates because Environment basically has nothing to do with that subject.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, then perhaps closer to your own department, can you tell the House today if an environmental impact statement has been done by the federal government towards the formation of the park?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The formation of a park would not require an environmental impact study, but there has been no study completed.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, it's come to my attention that at the Cypress Hills Provincial Park there are certain developments taking place around Adams Lake. I wonder, are you aware of these developments?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that there are individual improvements being proposed by Parks for developments

that are already there within the park, and it's being handled by the Parks department up to this point.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, I'm referring to Adams Lake and the developments that are proceeding at Adams Lake, some of which, in fact, are already in progress, in terms of earth-moving equipment and drainage ditches and the installation of drainage equipment and so on.

Adams Lake, as you may be aware, has been designated as a crucial wildlife area in the sense that it forms the basis of the home of the trumpeter swan and one of the largest . . . of my understanding is from the groups who have been informing me, that it's one of the largest trumpeter swan nesting grounds in the province. To my understanding, Adams Lake is now drained. Did the people who drained Adams Lake, did they submit an environmental impact study to you or your department?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that there was no environmental impact studies done there.

Mr. Lyons: — So could the minister please advise us as to precisely what type of development is occurring at Adams Lake?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that that's all being handled by the Parks department. We've had no specific written proposals from Adams Lake or from anybody doing developments there.

Mr. Lyons: — But, Mr. Minister, Adams Lake is drained. It is dry at this point in time. It is dry because it has been drained through works done by certain individuals in that Adams Lake area. Is it not your responsibility, as Minister of the Environment, that certainly the drainage of a crucial wildlife habitat like Adams Lake, would come under the purview of your department, and wouldn't you be on top of these kind of developments?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We have not been contacted by anyone with regards to the drainage of Adams Lake. I would be pleased to look into it, but at this point I have no information on it, so I can't provide more than I have.

Mr. Lyons: — Well I understand that you're taking a form of notice, Mr. Minister, and fine, I'll respect that hopefully you'll get back to us in the next estimates day on this question.

Are your department officials aware of the type of development which is, as you said, being handled by the Parks department? Are they aware of the nature of that development?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The answer would be, no, we haven't been made aware of any particular developments that are going to go ahead. The indication that I gave you earlier was that the proposals that we were told about, were that they are going ahead to improve developments that are already in existence. If there's something different from that, no, we haven't been made aware.

Mr. Lyons: — Okay, Mr. Minister, would you tell us what developments that are already in existence are going to be improved by the developments at Adams Lake?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My staff advise me they're speaking only of the issues that are within the park. And they're really, I don't think, aware of anything on Adams Lake itself. So we'll have to check it. And I don't know how quickly I can get it, but I'll try and get back to you next estimates day.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, I appreciate your co-operation in this matter. There's some concern being raised given that, in fact, it was a nesting ground for the trumpeter in that area, and a major sort of nesting ground for the trumpeter swans.

I'd like to ask, Mr. Minister, if we could get back to some of the questions and some of the answers that you provided to us the other day in regards of the Rafferty dam project. On page 939 of the *Hansard* for July 3, 1987, you said:

The people likely, in the area of the Rafferty project, as the environmental impact statement is made available to them in the (ongoing) public review process, and as the ongoing negotiations occur that will give them a land value for the land that will be flooded, alternative lands that they can use because their present land is flooded . . . When you talk about the Mainprize Park, and it (is) going to be flooded, you know, I can tell you (about) Palliser Park . . .

And so on. You have made the statement, Mr. Minister, when I read this that when you talk about “. . . the Mainprize Park, and it (is) going to be flooded, you know.” Does that indicate to you that in fact a decision has been made around Rafferty and that in fact the Mainprize Park is going to be flooded?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The Mainprize Park would be in the area that would be flooded if Rafferty project goes ahead. That's what I'm referring to. It would be in the designated area.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, you used the terms, “and it will be flooded, you know.” You said, it will be flooded, you know. And you go on to talk about . . . You've talked about certain developments that are occurring in relationship to Rafferty. I wonder if now you will tell us about some of the other events that will occur if Rafferty dam is built.

Any one of these occurrences is the whole question of irrigation and your government's contention, and your contention, that land will be irrigated. Could you tell us how much land is going to be irrigated through the development of the Rafferty dam.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Any land that falls under irrigation from this project will be handled under the water corporation, not under Environment.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, one can make the same argument in regards to Mainprize Park as probably having to do under the Parks department. Yet you said that, in fact, things will happen if Rafferty happens. So I assume, sir, I assume, sir, that you know what those things are. have you . . . has the

Department of the Environment received any reports on the economic viability of irrigation and of the contention of the proponents that irrigation is one of the important aspects of this project? Has your department received any reports regarding the viability of irrigation?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The information that would deal with the number of acres to be irrigated would be covered with the environmental impact statement when it is out for public review. We're not at that stage, yet, but as soon as we can reach that stage that figure will be available to the hon. member.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, as part of the environmental review procedure, in regards to the environmental impact statement that's been presented by the proponents on the question of irrigation of land as part of that study, will the Department of the Environment be doing viability, economical viability assessments as part of the overall assessment procedure?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, that would not fall under the purview of the Department of Environment . It would, rather, fall under the water corporation.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, as part of the environmental impact statement presented to you by the proponent, there is, by your own words and admission, that one of the things proposed is in fact certain land is going to be irrigated. Are there any figures put forward by the proponents as to the economic viability of the irrigation projects which they themselves are proposing?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that the environmental impact assessment speaks of the number of acres and the suitability of the soil, but does not go beyond that.

(1500)

Mr. Lyons: — So it just proposes as part of the statement that in fact irrigation . . . that there is proposed irrigation. Is there a commitment? Does the statement put forward by the proponents on this question tell us, tell you as a Minister, how many farmers are committed to irrigation using the water from the Rafferty dam?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The answer would be simply no.

Mr. Lyons: — Then how can the proponents of the project say X number of acres are going to be irrigated, or will be irrigated, if Rafferty is built, when in fact it doesn't say that there's anybody committed to irrigation?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I believe that the only statement that's being made is that there is capability of irrigating a given number of acres, but I don't think there's any indication of who might irrigate or how many acres they might irrigate. That's not considered in this statement. That's something that would be dealt with by the water corporation in the future.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, does the irrigation capability of the project that is being proposed, is it based on a certain location of the dam?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I believe it only deals with the acreage

involved, and it probably draws that from the quantities of water that are anticipated to be available for irrigation, and it looks at the suitability of the soils in the area. So that's the only area that it covers; it doesn't go into just different acreages because the dam is 3 miles east or 3 miles west. I don't think it deals with that.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I know that now under the Department of Environment and Public Safety you have many people there that were not in Environment before that have the responsibility of either law or regulatory enforcement. I'm thinking of inspectors, those types of people. And I'm wondering if the department has any plans to provide some of these people with uniforms.

It can sometimes be uncomfortable for them to go and conduct an enforcement, and they're dressed either as I am or with a jacket and tie on, but there's nothing to identify them in fact with the enforcement authority that they have. And my question to you is very simply: do you have any plans to provide people who do regulatory enforcement with uniforms?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We've had no requests for that that I'm aware of. All of our inspectors are provided with access cards so that when they come to a job site they can identify themselves as to who they are. It has their picture and their name and what their inspection area of expertise would be. So they produce that card, show it to the owner or the contractor, whoever is on the site, and then have access. But we haven't really had any requests that I'm aware of for uniforms.

Mr. Anguish: — Could the minister enlighten us as to how many different types of people like fire inspectors, and whatever, how many different categories of inspectors or regulatory enforcement people you now have within the Department of Environment?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There's about eight different categories. If the member is anxious for it, maybe the best thing would be to send you a list of them prepared by the staff. I could run down some of them for you. We have the fire inspection division, the boiler and pressure vessels, gas, electrical, elevators . . .

Mr. Anguish: — If you'd provide me with a list, I'd appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think that would be the better way to answer the question. We'll provide you a list.

Mr. Anguish: — I thank the minister for his offer to provide a list for us, and if we could have that for the next time that we are sitting in estimates of Environment, we would appreciate that, Mr. Minister.

I'm wondering on a different topic, Mr. Minister, and it concerns Weyerhaeuser, as to whether or not there have been any applications by Weyerhaeuser to do spraying over the forest releases that they have to have defoliation of the broad-leaf trees that they consider as waste product.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that we have received a request from Weyerhaeuser either Saturday or today.

We just opened it today. And it's for a very small area, but no approvals have been given.

Mr. Anguish: — Is the application for actual spraying for defoliation of the broad-leaf trees in an area? Is that what the application is for?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's for a test. I'm advised it's an area about the size of three football fields. But we have given no approvals.

Mr. Anguish: — Could the minister enlighten us as to where this test plot of spraying will be done?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The request is for an area in the Candle Lake district — not right against the lake or anything. It's in that general area though, in the forest near the Candle Lake district.

Mr. Anguish: — Why do they require . . . why have they made application to do some test spraying? Is this because they're testing a new chemical, or have they told you what the chemical in fact is that they'll be spraying?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We haven't had any of that kind of detail yet. This is just the initial contact saying they're interested in proceeding. And they've been talking with Parks, I believe, to some extent. But we have certainly given no permission for them to do any spraying at this point.

Mr. Anguish: — The application that they've made, does it include whether it's aerial spraying, or be sprayed by sprayers from the ground, or by machine from the ground? How's the spraying to be conducted?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — They indicated hand spraying cone from the ground.

Mr. Anguish: — Is there not a standard application procedure they'd have to go through? I find it surprising that they would want to do test spraying and yet not indicate to you what chemical it is that they're using on the spray plot that they want to test.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that there is no standard application form, but they do go to the Department of Parks and renewable resources, asking for permission. And they would need to have from Parks a permit to allow it. Parks, in turn, would not give that kind of permit without clearing it through the Department of Environment.

Now this has just come in and we don't have . . . at this point we haven't had time really to review it or to have much of the detail yet.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, are you saying to me that they cannot proceed with that type of spraying unless they have permission of the Minister of the Department of Environment? Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I understand it's just a courtesy that Parks has always followed, is to come to Department of Environment, that the permit is actually under the Department of Parks and renewable resources.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, I'd want you to keep a very close eye on what's happening, and I think it should be more than a common courtesy for Parks to check with you. And this is maybe a wild example, but if Weyerhaeuser or any other group wanted to spray agent orange across the forests in northern Saskatchewan. I don't think it should rest solely with Parks, who don't have the mandate to be . . . they don't have the regulatory mandate, at least, to be concerned about the environment.

And I would ask you to be in very close consultation with the Minister of Parks to try and come up with some legislation before this Assembly, so that we're assured that the Department of Environment has to give the approval before there can be any spraying done in Saskatchewan. I think that that's absolutely necessary, especially when it's possible to be done on a very, very large scale over millions of acres of land in Saskatchewan.

Would you give us your undertaking that you will in fact speak to the Minister of Parks and renewable resources . . . or whatever the name of that department is now, and give us your undertaking that you will speak with that individual to try and come up with some legislative Bill before this Assembly?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think the very fact that the request — the first request that has come — comes that route and the minister responsible immediately sends it to Environment is a good sign. But I'm as concerned as you are that this not be done indiscriminately in any way. I'm not even sure that the test would get approval, so we'll have a look at the whole thing. I don't want to see any large acreages sprayed in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, before you come back again before the estimates, and I assume that that's going to carry on for some length of time at least yet, what I'd like to know is before we come back into this Chamber again, would you get in contact with the Department of Parks, and renewable resources to ask them the chemical or chemicals that are being used, because I would assume that Parks and renewable resources must know the chemical or chemicals that Weyerhaeuser want to use.

Would you talk to the department and inform us as to what chemicals Weyerhaeuser wishes to test-spray with, please?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We'll certainly be dealing with the subject in the next day or so, as soon as we have an opportunity. As you appreciate, when we're here in estimates you don't have much time to do other things. This issue isn't going to move forward today or tomorrow, so we'll have time to deal with it specifically and see what all the details are before any decisions are made.

(1515)

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'm assuming it has cleared Parks, which is why it's now at the Department of Environment. If that's not the case, would you please correct me on that.

Secondly, I'd like to know whether you have . . . whether the Department of Environment has the right to veto a decision of Parks? You said the permit came from Parks, but I'm wondering whether the Department of Environment is only acting in a consulting capacity or whether it actually has the right to veto an affirmative decision by Parks to go ahead with the spraying?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that what we have now was referred to us from the director of forestry in the Department of Parks. We will be looking at it very closely. Probably the best method for us to deal with it, if we feel it's a significant enough proposal, is to call for an environmental impact study as to the results that this will have on the forests, and that way we will have direct access and control of what's happening there.

Ms. Simard: — Well I would like to see the Department of Environment . . . If you don't have the power to veto a decision like that, I would like to see your department and you, Mr. Minister, lobby for that sort of control over this kind of a situation. I was just reading something a couple days ago that indicated that something like 90 per cent of our health problems are directly attributable to things such as environment and life-style which tells me, Mr. Minister, that the Department of Environment needs that sort of control and probably needs wider powers with respect to maintaining and preserving, and maintaining adequate standards in our environment.

So if you don't have the right to veto, then I would suggest, sir, that you should be looking at strengthening your legislation to make sure that you have broader powers in that regard.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think if this can be considered a development, and we'd have to look at it very closely to see whether it meets those guide-lines, then we have that kind of control. So I believe that's the route we would have to follow. When the hon. member was speaking about environment and life-styles, you know we have some control over environment, but a lot of life-styles are a little beyond our control. And when it speaks of health-related problems from life-styles, I am sure that the hon. member realizes that we can't control who smokes and who drinks and a lot of the other things that people do these days. So our department isn't taking that one on.

Ms. Simard: — I wasn't suggesting that you had control over life-styles, Mr. Minister. But you know, being that you've raised that the . . . A government does have control over life-styles to the extent that it can engage itself in an education program that educates the public with respect to bad life-styles and good life-styles and so on. But I realise that that's not in the purview of the Department of Environment.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, I would appreciate if you would get us back the information, or more information as we requested on the Weyerhaeuser application to spray over their leased areas as soon as possible, preferably by tomorrow. I'd like to move on for a couple of moments to another item. And the item that I'd like to discuss briefly with you is one of toxic waste disposal. And first off: are there any toxic waste disposal sites in the province of Saskatchewan; and if not, are there any being

contemplated, or do you have an agreement with other provinces that do have toxic waste disposal sites?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — At this time we have a low level PCB decontamination unit, and it's a portable unit that moves around the province and processes the oil with PCBs. So in that respect we do have that kind of capability which is very narrow.

The other toxic wastes at this time are just put into storage, or they're transported out of province, depending on what the waste product is that we're dealing with. And there are quite a broad variety of toxic wastes. But at this time we don't have any actual disposal methods available within our borders. Now it's a subject area that we are looking at, but we haven't made firm decisions on which way we're going yet.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, I'm wondering if whether or not . . . I understand there's just recently been a high-level, toxic waste disposal site that's been opened in Alberta, and I'm sorry the name of the exact location escapes me at the moment — I should have it here; I apologise for not having the name — but are you aware of the new site that has opened up in the province of Alberta that we would have access to?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm aware of the site; it's at Swan Hills. Whether or not we'll have access, that's an entirely different matter. As you realise, that facility has just opened up. It will be operating, I suppose, to process the waste collection that's been gathered within the boundaries of Alberta. We will likely make some contacts with the government again in the near future. But at this time the Alberta government says they are not allowing anybody to bring wastes in, so there's no indication that we have access at this time.

Mr. Anguish: — An application . . . or application I suppose is the wrong word. Has there been any approach made by the province of Saskatchewan, namely through your department, to actually sit down with people from Alberta that have the authority to go into such negotiations to negotiate the use of the facility at Swan Hills.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — For a period of time the four western provinces were involved in a group discussing the methods of disposing of toxic waste. Then the group split off — Alberta went its own direction; Manitoba has now formed a Crown corporation and is looking at something in its own province. So that has narrowed it down that we're going to likely have to do something within our borders. We don't feel that the quantities of toxic waste that we have within Saskatchewan are sufficient to make construction of our own plant a viable operation, but we're still looking to see what other options we have. If you can't dispose of it outside your borders, then eventually you'll have to do something, and that's sort of the stage we're at at this time.

Mr. Anguish: — I know this is a bit of a hypothetical situation, but suppose that the province of Saskatchewan and Manitoba had an agreement with Alberta to use the Swan Hills facility. Does your department have any regulatory authority over the transportation of toxic

wastes across or through the province, or would that fall under the Highway Traffic Board or . . . I'm sorry, Department of Highways and Transportation?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The transportation of dangerous goods falls under the federal jurisdiction, under the federal dangerous goods Act, and so we don't have direct control of that as a province. So we would have to fall under that legislation and operate under it.

Mr. Prebble: — I'd like to come back to the question of forest spraying for a minute and ask the minister whether proposal that is currently being put forward by Weyerhaeuser, asking for permission to spray a test site with chemicals, presumably to eliminate broad-leafed trees, is essentially the same proposal that a couple of years ago was put forward by PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) in a small test site near the Nipawin Provincial Park to do the same thing. Are we talking about the same test site, and are we talking about essentially the same proposal, or is this a different one?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member was not here at the time I answered a similar question. I told the member from The Battlefords that the test site was in the Candle Lake forest, in the general area of Candle Lake, not against the lake, but in that forest area.

Mr. Prebble: — You didn't answer my question, Mr. Minister. Are we essentially talking . . . I heard the answer that you gave to the original question put by the member for The Battlefords. And my question to you is: are we talking about the same test site that was originally put forward by the Prince Albert Pulp Company two or three years ago?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — With the limited knowledge we have of it at this point, I would have to say no. But we will be looking at it in much more detail in the next day or so, as soon as time permits.

Mr. Prebble: — Could we get clarification again on the question of whether this proposal cleared the Department of Parks and renewable resources? Has the Parks department come seeking your advice prior to making a decision, or have they already made a decision and are they now approaching your department asking for support?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We can't really be that definite on whether or not Parks has approved it or not, but I don't believe they have. I think it's just brand-new to them as well, and it was sent through for us to give due consideration to the proposal.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, when did Parks receive the proposal, or do you know?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't know. The minister was here. He was not even aware of it yet, so it's so new that it hasn't had time for any of us really to digest what the proposal really is.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, it's fairly clear that Weyerhaeuser is embarked upon the same kind of a project that the Prince Albert Pulp Company originally

tried to get approved by your department and by the Department of Parks and renewable resources about three years ago.

And the history on that project at the time was that finally as a result of substantial opposition in northern Saskatchewan to any proposals for forest spraying in the north, a task force was set up to examine the question of northern forest spraying, headed, I think, by Dr. Rennie at the time, if my memory serves me correct. And that task force in fact recommended in favour of herbicide spraying in northern Saskatchewan.

My question to you is: in light of the fact that there is very substantial opposition in northern Saskatchewan as demonstrated by the opposition in the last three years to any forest spraying proposal, will you make a commitment to this legislature that you will not permit any widespread spraying of herbicides on our northern forest resource in this province? Will you make that commitment to this legislature?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would just say to the hon. member that this is the first request that has come in for permission to spray. This one deals with a very limited area, as I told you, approximately the area of three football fields. It's not the 100 acres that was proposed before. As the member may be aware, the study that was done on the last proposal was looked upon favourably by the committee. I think Dr. Rennie approved it; our department turned it down. So I think you have to look at each one of these applications individually. We'll take a very serious look at it and look at it with our eyes wide open to protect the environment of Saskatchewan. And I think that's the purpose of the department here.

(1530)

Mr. Prebble: — I'd like to ask the member, Mr. Chairman, if he could give us his assurance that when this review is done, of the proposal that's now come forward from Weyerhaeuser, that there will be consultation and involvement of northern residents in making that decision. Because last time when we had a task force on this issue, there was a noticeable absence of anyone from northern Saskatchewan, either who was going to be affected by spraying or whose livelihood in some way might be impacted by spraying of herbicides in northern Saskatchewan. Will you give us your assurance that before you make a decision you will consult with northern people on the issue of forest spraying?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — As I mentioned to the member from The Battlefords, we'll be looking at this to see whether it can be classified as a development. If it is, then it would fall under the requirements of an environmental impact assessment. In that way the northern people could be directly involved in the whole process. It's probably the right way to go, and one that we were certainly looking at.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, I just want to say, on behalf of members of our caucus, that we're of the view that no northern spraying of herbicides should be permitted in northern Saskatchewan. That's the position of members on this side of the Assembly, that there should be no spraying of herbicides on the northern forest resource.

Instead, Mr. Minister, what your department and the Department of Parks and renewable resources ought to be emphasising is opportunities for employment by manual weeding of unneeded trees in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister. If that's the concern of Weyerhaeuser, and if that's the concern of your department, that there is a . . . that you want to see broad leaf trees that are interfering with the growth of coniferous trees, if you want to see those trees weeded out, in northern Saskatchewan, do it through a program, a manual program, for moving those trees. create some jobs for people in northern Saskatchewan, instead of allowing the forest resource to be polluted.

Will you make a commitment that you will ask Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Minister, to emphasise manual weeding of trees, hiring northern residents, instead of embarking on an attempted herbicide spraying program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I believe that the request that you make of me does not fall, really, under the purview of this department — to instruct Weyerhaeuser whether or not they can. I think you should rather be talking to the minister responsible for the Department of Parks and renewable resources at the time of his estimates, and I'm sure he'll be here in this House in the near future with that department.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, you have a responsibility, as Minister of the Environment, to make sure that environmentally sensitive and environmentally sound means of forest management are implemented in northern Saskatchewan.

Obviously if herbicide spraying, Mr. Minister, is permitted by your department and the Department of Parks and renewable resources that will pose a significant long-term threat to the wildlife habitat in the north and to the forest ecology.

So I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, in your capacity as Minister of the Environment, to encourage environmentally sound methods of forest management. And obviously the most desirable method, as borne out by the examples — for instance, in countries like Sweden and Norway — is to give more emphasis and more attention to manual removal of trees that may be regarded as weeds in the northern forest resource.

And my question to you is: will you start promoting that and start de-emphasising and discouraging the use of herbicides in the northern forest resource?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member draws a rather long bow when he says I've been encouraging the idea of spraying in the northern forests. I've been telling you that we will review it very closely. If it's a development, or can be classified as a development under the assessment Act, then we will have an environmental impact assessment done. We won't be jumping to give clearance for spraying in the northern forest without considerable thought.

So the member can't stand there and say that I am supporting the idea of spraying in the forest. That's not the

case. I think we do have a responsibility, though, to look at what's being proposed, understand what the environmental impacts are, and then to make a reasoned decision after that process has been accomplished.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Minister, I should just clarify. First of all, I wasn't suggesting that your department was directly promoting northern herbicide spraying. What I was suggesting was that many departments in your government were. And a classic example was the Prince Albert Pulp Company that when it was owned by you before your department asking to spray herbicides in northern Saskatchewan. So in fact many aspects of your government have been promoting this policy.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The hon. member can say, many aspects of the government. That's an easy statement, but would be very hard to prove.

I think that the P.A. Pulp Company, as a company, made that proposal. And as I mentioned to you before, the proposal was not approved by the Department of Environment. So the government was not at that point encouraging or authorising anyone to do spraying in the forest.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I would like to move to a different topic, if we may. And if we can move to the operation recycle operations of the department.

I'd like to refer you, Mr. Minister, to an ad inviting tender under the title of "Operation recycle scrap vehicle collection." And I don't have the date that it was posted, but it's some time prior to May 29, 1986 because that was the date in which tenders were required to be submitted.

It called for tenders to deal with work including "... .the gathering of scrap for abandoned vehicles including components part of said vehicles and transporting the components part of said vehicles and transporting the vehicles to designated retention sites in the contract area of R.M. of Redburn, Baildon, Hillsborough, Pense, Moose Jaw, Caron ... " and so on.

And my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: when that invitation to tender was offered, who were the successful bidder for that contract?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I could get that information for the hon. member. We have about 62 contracts for that purpose around the province, and when you identify those communities. I would not really be aware of who the contractor is. But I could look it up and provide the answer to the hon. member.

Mr. Hagel: — I'd appreciate it if ... could that be provided by tomorrow, Mr. Minister? That would seem to be fairly straightforward information.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Tomorrow is private members' day, so probably we won't be in estimates. But likely by Wednesday when we're back, I could bring it.

Mr. Hagel: — Is there any reason why the information couldn't be provided even though it's private members'

day? And I would appreciate it if that were possible.

May I add some additional questions, then, that related to that if I may, Mr. Minister. I would ask to know then, not only who the successful bidder but on what basis was that bid selected? I would appreciate knowing, as well, the price that was tendered, and also the price that was paid prior to that in the year before.

Can I also ask then a related question, Mr. Minister, and you may be able to answer this one. Is the agent who collects those scrap bodies the current, the same firm that successfully won that bid today? I'm talking about as of this date, 1987.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm afraid I don't have that information here. The person who had been director of that division for a considerable length of time was hired by a Toronto firm and left the employ of the department recently. So the person now in charge there doesn't have all of that information quite at his fingertips. We'll have to get it for you.

Mr. Hagel: — I would appreciate it if that question could also be answered. And I suppose a simpler form of asking that same question is to ask you whether there has been a subsequent call for bids since that one in 1986. Have there been any tenders requested since that time? If not, I assume it's the same agent.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised the contracts for this work are traditionally two-year contracts. And so as areas' contracts expire, those would be re-advertised. I'm not certain of all the details of the one you're mentioning.

Mr. Hagel: — I would assume then, Mr. Minister, that those questions will all be answered in the information you provide tomorrow, if possible, and most certainly by Wednesday. Could you tell me for the record, and the members of the House, Mr. Minister, under the operation recycle program, what number of scrap vehicle bodies are collected each year in the province?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — They traditionally use so many tonnes, and they indicate about 12,000 tonnes. Most vehicles weigh in the neighbourhood of two tonnes, so it would be something like 6,000.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. and I assume that that's a predictable average, and that that's a standard number each year? Okay.

It has been reported to me, Mr. Minister, and if I may ask for your clarification, that approximately \$1.50 per licence plate per year has been assessed to licence plates to be assigned for the operation recycle. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that it's about \$1 per licence plate.

Mr. Hagel: — And could you advise me then, Mr. Minister, about what amount of revenues, approximately, if you can't quote it to the dollar, does that generate per year then for the department?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We just don't have that kind of figure.

You'd probably be better to ask it from the minister responsible for SGI, who would likely have the number of licences issued in a year. We just don't have that.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, let me ask the question of you, because the question was not how many licence plates there are in the province. You said it's approximately \$1 per plate that you realise in revenues. My question that I'm specifically concerned about and related to the Department of the environment is the revenue that is realised, and I would appreciate the answer to that question. The question is not the number of plates, the question is the number of dollars that are realised. And would you provide that then tomorrow as well, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We could undertake to get the figure from SGI for the hon. member.

Mr. Hagel: — And by when, Mr. Minister, can you give me that figure for the fiscal year 1986-87?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Likely on Wednesday. My staff will be here this afternoon and again tonight, and they won't really have time to do very much of that gathering until tomorrow sometime. So Wednesday likely would be possible.

(1545)

Mr. Hagel: — Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

In reviewing the annual report of Saskatchewan Environment for 1985-86, Mr. Minister, I note that the expenditure related to operation recycle was \$1,486,156 nearly \$1.5 million. I note then that in this year's estimates, Mr. Minister, it was estimated that in the year 1986-87, \$1,177,000 was budgeted for operation recycle, a reduction of approximately \$300,000. I then note, again with interest, that for the fiscal year '87-88, the year in which we are now, that there is budgeted for operation recycle \$700,000, just about a half a million dollar reduction again.

Mr. Minister, I would appreciate an explanation as to why there has been a reduction of nearly \$800,000 from the 1985-86 fiscal year to the '87-88 fiscal year for operation recycle.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's our intention to discontinue the operation of the recycle program as a department and turn it over to the private sector. Ipsco still wants the steel. They will contact with private contractors to bring the steel to Ipsco.

Mr. Hagel: — I believe that . . . What you're referring to is what the member from Melville refers to as terminating the program. Is there a date at which it is intended that the program will be terminated, or has it already been terminated, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The Act will be repealed and the program phased out over the course of this year.

Mr. Hagel: — Well let me ask again then, Mr. Minister. I would assume that this is occurring according to some

kind of plan. Has the plan already been put in place, or is it evolving, or are you just contemplating this? At what stage are you reviewing operation recycle?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The plan is well in hand. But, as I mentioned to you earlier, we have 62 contractors who gather scrap vehicles. We have some 175 sites in the province that are also under contract, and there are many vehicles on site around the province that need to be gathered. So the program will likely wind down in a period of about four months, depending on the time it takes to clean each of the sites and to come to an end of the cars that we now have gathered.

Mr. Hagel: — Are you saying then, Mr. Minister, that is your intention to honour the contracts for remainder of the duration that have been signed with agents across the province? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — When the legislation is repealed, the contracts come to an end. Then there's a matter of people who have an investment in a certain number of cars that they've gathered, and things like that, that we have to deal with in order to pay our obligation to the people involved. That's the reason for the ongoing four-month period, or thereabouts, to try and finalise and come to a mutual decision on when the program can be wound up.

Mr. Hagel: — Let me ask you then, Mr. Minister. What I understand you to be saying is that in effect operation recycle is to be privatised and to be delivered by Ipsco, in effect. Let me ask you, Mr. Minister, at what date was a decision made then to privatise operation recycle? when was that decision made?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It was part of this year's budget process, so June 17, I guess, is the date that the information was generally public.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, as part of this year's budget process, that could be any time in the last year. As you and I both know, that was the longest deliberation for budgets in the history of Saskatchewan, with questionable results, I may add.

Mr. Minister, let me repeat my question. I understand that today is the first time that it has been said publicly that operation recycle has been privatised — that that announcement has not been made previously. Am I correct, or do you have other information to offer?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The first announcement was given in a news release on June 8.

Mr. Hagel: — One June 8; that was when the announcement was made, you say, by news release. I must admit I didn't see it, but so be it.

Let me ask my original question again, Mr. Minister, because I don't believe that you've answered that. I understand when the announcement was made. My question is: when was the decision made? When did you decide to privatise operation recycle?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — As I told you before, the decision was made during the budget process. I'm not going to give you

any one day that that decision was made, because decisions of that nature, they begin and they are really a kind of evolving thing, that it takes time to come to the decision and to deal with all of the facts involved. So it happened over the course of this year's budget process.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, let me ask another question then: will the provincial government — along with this movement to privatise operation recycle through Ipsco — will the provincial government be inputting any money into that program, or is the provincial government's involvement with operation recycle completely eliminated sometime, approximately four months from today?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The money that's in this year's budget will be used basically to wind the program down, so that's the money that we'll be using until the program comes to an end. Beyond that, the collection will happen through the private enterprise, and I understand there are a number of people that are very anxious to carry on the collection of the steel around the province. I think they can do an excellent job of it and have no need of government participation.

Mr. Hagel: — I respect your point, Mr. Minister, that you say that they will have no need for government participation. My question to you is: will there be government participation? Will the provincial government be putting any money into operation recycle?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's not the intention to put more money in after this year's budget, just to use the funding that we have in place now to wind down the program. It will come to an end, and we don't expect to fund it then.

Mr. Hagel: — Let me then go back to a point we discussed previously, Mr. Minister, related to that fee that is charged related to the plates on vehicles of approximately \$1 per vehicle per year. Will that then be cancelled, and will that amount be returned to vehicle operators or people who licence their vehicles?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I guess you would have to ask SGI that question. I would take an awful lot of paper work too return \$1 to each licence holder. And probably we'd use more in stamps, in paper, and labour than the \$1 would cost. So it's not liable that kind of a refund would . . .

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I would suggest that you're going . . . We heard earlier today that there was going to be a hoard of university students, creating summer employment to return gas tax — charges that have given to Saskatchewan people. And perhaps you could just tack in the \$1 per licence as well. It seems that there is a large bureaucracy of some sort that's been put in place for that, and I'm sure you want to consider that.

Can I ask, Mr. Minister, then in light of this decision to privatise operation recycle, you have obviously made the decision for some reason. Let me ask you then the pressing question, that is, why? On what basis was the decision made to privatise operation recycle?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I guess the main reason that we decided to get out of the business as a government is that it has been costing us significant numbers of dollars over the years to operate the program.

When I talk with the people who used the steel, they indicate to me that they're very interested in continuing to use that steel. They feel that they can contract with the general contractor and with others, making the necessary arrangements to bring the scrap steel to Ipsco. And the government will likely realise a savings of something like \$350,000 annually. To me, that's significant. If they can do the job and do it reasonable well, and the government saves money besides, it has to be a good venture for us.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I would assume the operation recycle, if I am not mistaken, was instituted in 1972. I would assume by the fact that it was continued to be operated under your government from 1982 until 1987, that it was believed that operation recycle served a purpose.

Mr. Minister, could you tell me, for the clarity of my understanding and others, what the mandate or the objective of operation recycle has been? Obviously, this has not been a concern to you, or you would have done something, you know, within the previous five years. What has been the objective of operation recycle, and I ask that question and I would ask that you would answer it in the interest of Saskatchewan people?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The program was put in place because there had been a collection of a number of scrap vehicles around the province. But at one point in history, as the hon. member knows, we didn't have a steel plant in this province to process that kind of steel. We now have a plant here that can do the job and still maintain the clean environment that we are achieving through this program. So we see no need as a government of continuing to pay taxpayers' dollars out to bring in the steel to a steel company that will do the job for themselves, at no cost to us.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, what I'm hearing you saying then, is that in terms of the government's interest, that the objective of operation recycle was to assure that those vehicle bodies were no longer cluttering the landscape, so to speak. And that is the public objective in terms of implementing operation recycle. Am I correct in that paraphrase of what you said, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, that would be about the same statement I made. Everybody will say it differently. Over the years, before there was an opportunity; for people to have anywhere to dispose of the car bodies, they were just left — sometimes by the roadsides, in farmyard, everywhere. And the need to clean it up was very evident.

And when we had a steel plant that could process that type of steel, then the program came into place to do exactly that. I think the job has been done reasonable well over the years. And I'm advised by Interprovincial Steel that they still want that steel and would be willing to enter into agreements with contractors to bring the steel in. So there's really no need of government involvement at this point.

Mr. Hagel: — I ask then, Mr. Minister, in light of your objective and mine . . . We obviously share the same concern — to remove the clutter from the landscape. I ask then, Mr. Minister, what assurance do you have from Ipsco that, in privatising operation recycle, that as a matter of fact that objective will still be continued? I ask specifically, Mr. Minister . . . It would seem to me that it may be more expensive, for example, for Ipsco to collect car bodies that are in the neighbourhood of the member for Meadow Lake than car bodies that would be somewhere around my home riding in the Moose Jaw area, the Regina area.

What assurance do you have from Ipsco that that environmental objective of operation recycle will be honoured when the programs privatised and they are operating it?

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We have nothing that I would call assurances. Those are very hard to come by. But the steel company, when I met with them, indicated that the steel was in demand. They could actually use far more than what they are finding here within Saskatchewan. They're shipping steel in from the United States and steel from Winnipeg. So I would think that the collection of car bodies at Meadow Lake would not be any further away, likely, than to bring them from the United States or from Winnipeg.

They indicated that they could use far more steel that the province is producing and would be willing to undertake the job of collecting the steel. And I believe they are a reliable company and will likely keep their word.

Mr. Hagel: — So what you're saying, Mr. Minister, is that you're committing an act of faith.

My question again then is: if the member from Meadow Lake runs his car to it's death, sticks it in a ditch somewhere near Meadow Lake, and Ipsco doesn't feel that it's economically or fiscally prudent for them to pick up that body, that there's nothing . . . there is no agreement in place that can . . . on behalf of your department, to require that that body will be picked up from the ditch that the member from Meadow Lake hypothetically left there to die?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There is the steel company itself that enters into a contract with the general contractor to deliver a certain tonnage of scrap per year. If that contractor who signs his name to a contract to bring in approximately the same tonnage as he's been bringing in over the last while, then he will have to gather those cars to meet his quota.

So I would expect that is the best guarantee you could have, is that kind of a relationship and contract between the two.

Mr. Hagel: — Is it the intention of your department, Mr. Minister, to continue to monitor this situation, to respond to complaints, for example, from citizens about unsightly landscapes having to do with deserted car bodies? Have you thought about that?

What assurance — I guess I asked the same question — what assurance do Saskatchewan people have that, should good business practice not result in the picking up of these deserted car bodies along the roadside, that as a matter of fact something will be done to correct that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't think that we can give that kind of assurance. When we discontinue the operation recycle program, that's the end of our department's direct involvement in that area. So I think that what we have to do, as a government, is monitor up to a point what's happening. If we're not satisfied, there would be nothing stopping a government at any time in the future of making the decision that the venture was not satisfactory and we may have to go back into it. But I wouldn't see that happening.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, I fully respect your act of faith, Mr. Minister. I do realise, however, sometimes circumstances change and, as you said before, whereas at one point there wasn't a steel plant here in Saskatchewan, circumstances do change, and it may not be as prudent in the interest of Ipsco two years from now as it is today to collect those bodies.

I note with interest, you say that the department would monitor it to a point. And I must admit, Mr. Minister, that that is less than clear to me as to what that point is and how we would know if it was being pointed.

And let me ask you again, Mr. Minister, how does the department intend to monitor the collection of those vehicles in the interest of the objective of operation recycle to clear the landscape of deserted bodies? How do you intend to monitor that, is my question.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I believe I said fairly clearly to the hon. member that the government would monitor, not necessarily this department, but you monitor it the same as it was done before. Prior to 1972 you didn't have to have somebody go around and tell you there were a lot of scrap vehicles around the country; they were everywhere. So the program was put in place to clean them up. I think the program has worked.

The indications I have from the steel corporation is that they still want the product. They're willing to enter into contract with private citizens to do the work, to bring them in. I'd like to see it work that way and to save the government 350-some thousand dollars a year, and so for that reason we're quite pleased to give it a try.

I suppose we always have to be in a position of trusting business up to a reasonable level. You trust everyone, you know. You trust people to pay their income tax; you trust people to license their car and to carry a driver's licence. We generally trust the population of our province. And for that reason I think that we are probably on fairly safe ground to go the route we've gone.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, while we're talking about trust then, I would assume that it's not unreasonable of the people of Saskatchewan to trust that its government will, when it has privatised a program that you say, and I agree, for 15 years has successfully met its

objective — it's cleaned up the landscape; it's made use of those bodies . . .

And so you are saying, Mr. Minister, this is not the people of Saskatchewan who have made this decision. It is the decision of your department to privatise operation recycle. It is placed in your department, I assume, because there was a concern, an initial concern for the environment. That's what got it into the Department of Environment.

And if the people of Saskatchewan, then, are entitled to trust that objective will continue, I don't think it's unreasonable to ask the question of you: when you say we have privatised this operation, we commit this act of faith in the business — and they are a business; I have no reason to mistrust that they will do what they say — I simply ask, Mr. Minister, in terms of your obligation to the people of Saskatchewan who have had an effective operation recycle program for 15 years, how will you monitor that that objective will continue to be met?

And as you pointed out in your answer, prior to 1972 there were scrap bodies sitting all over the landscape, and that's what caused us to decide that something had to be done. What will it be that will trigger for your department or, if not your department, you say the government . . . I assume that when you terminate a program, you have some interest in how that program will still be conducted.

My question . . . I come back to the question: how will you monitor the objective that when those car bodies, or if those car bodies are not collected because of a business decision by Ipsco, that as a matter of fact they will be removed from the landscape?

I think you have that obligation, Mr. Minister, when you say the program has operated well; we are now privatising it because we're going to save \$350,000 — and we'll come to that in a minute. I assume that the same objectives will be continued, and I ask the same question again: how will you monitor that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Let me say to the hon. member: the people in Saskatchewan are used to the operation recycle program, and they know that the bodies of used cars have been picked up. If that ceases to happen, I won't have to be out there is the field to take a look to see whether the cars are being gathered; my phone will never stop ringing. So I suppose that's the method that MLAs traditionally monitor in, is by public opinion. And that opinion would surface very quickly if the job is not done.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I am not for a second suggesting that you should take your vehicle and trip around the province of Saskatchewan picking up every deserted scrap body. I'm not suggesting that for a minute. But as you and I know, what you have suggested may be an effective method of monitoring the pick-up of scrap bodies.

My question to you though, Mr. Minister, then is that if we are getting reports and complaints of deserted scrap bodies, do we have your assurance that the government will take action to pick those up to the same degree we've been used to for the last 15 years?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That type of decision would be made by the government if the circumstance arises. We can't make predictions on just a guess that something may happen, that you're going to do a certain thing. You wait until you see if there is a need, then the government will have to make that decision at that time.

Mr. Hagel: — Well then, as we set this particular point to rest, Mr. Minister, let me just say that I am somewhat disappointed that you have not been more specific in your deliberations, and I would ask that the department would consider that.

Can we turn to the \$350,000, Mr. Minister. You've made reference to that figure several times. On what basis do you justify, do you claim, that there will be a saving of \$350,000 to the people of Saskatchewan by privatising operation recycle?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The figure has varied somewhat over the years — different years, different dollars — but between 300 and 350,000 has been an average cost of that program since its inception.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, you didn't swamp me with detail on that answer, I must admit.

Let me repeat the question, Mr. Minister. When you say the program has cost \$350,000 — 300 to \$350,000 per year — on what are you referring to, on what basis do you draw that conclusion? I simply ask that question because I note that for '85-86, \$1,486,000 was spent; \$1,177,000 last year; and \$700,000 this year has been intended. I must admit that there was a little bit of specificity lacking in your answer, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm sorry, I think I missed part of your question.

Let me assure the member that that's the kind of money that was budgeted to operate the program. But on the other side, the hauling of the scrap vehicles in generated a revenue which went into the general revenue of the government. The net cost was about 300 to 350,000 on average since 1972.

Mr. Hagel: — So what you're telling me in effect the, administration included, as well as the pay-out for hauling, subtracted from that the revenue from Ipsco for the delivery of steel bodies, resulted then in net expenditures of somewhere in the neighbourhood of 300 to \$350,000. Mr. Minister, I would assume that in making the decision to privatise operation recycle that you had done some kind of study to justify that, and I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you would be able to table in this legislature a study that you used to justify in financial terms that particular decision?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We just know from the records of the department how much it costs and what the revenue return was. We didn't go out and do any new study. That wasn't necessary. You could see it in the figures within the department and that's what was used. There's no study to table.

Mr. Hagel: — So what in the . . . if I may summarise, Mr. Minister, and draw this discussion to a close, disappointing as that may be to both of us, what you are saying is that there was no study done. You simply looked at the ledger, you said there is a cost to the province of Saskatchewan of 300 to 350,000. This can be privatised, and we hope that the objectives will be met by privatising and having Ipsco in effect operate operation recycle by itself. And it was on that basis then that the decision was made that we find . . . that has come before the House and that we've discussed today.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We did the internal look within the department. Then we went and met with Ipsco to see that they would take on the responsibility of continuing to operate and gather the scrap vehicles. After that was completed, then the decision was made. We didn't just decide and walk away, but rather we decided that we would walk away if we could have certain things happen. And Ipsco agreed to take on the responsibility, and I look forward to seeing how well they can do it.

Mr. Hagel: — Just finally, Mr. Minister, and I hope that this will be the last question. And I come back — I guess in a sense we're re-discussing an item we referred to earlier. The question is this: do you have then a written contractual agreement between the Government of Saskatchewan or the Department of the Environment and Ipsco assuring that they will undertake the collection of steel bodies in the province?

(1615)

I ask that question in the context, Mr. Minister, as you and I will know people . . . maybe let me . . . as possible who are engaged in good business practice will know that written agreements make for good friends, and they clearly outline the understandings and the responsibilities so that we don't come somewhere down the road and find ourselves at odds because I thought you meant this and you thought I meant that. On behalf of the people of Saskatchewan then, has there been a written agreement, a contractual agreement of some sort between Ipsco and the Government of Saskatchewan or an agent?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There will be no written contract between Ipsco and the Government of Saskatchewan. The written contract will be between Ipsco and the general contractor that they will put in place to do the job.

So we have a general understanding between Ipsco and the government — and they're not working for the government; they're working for themselves — the contract will be between them and the contractors who will collect the vehicles for them.

Mr. Hagel: — Well then, it seems then, Mr. Minister, that the government . . . you have not placed the government in a position where you can assure the people of Saskatchewan — we've had the monitoring discussion and so on already here this afternoon; I don't intend to repeat that — but that as a matter of faith, an act of faith in Ipsco, you have turned over the responsibility for operation recycle to Ipsco, assuming that largely business practice will take care of the collection of those deserted vehicles — bodies, I should say — but without there

being any monitoring or assurance to the people of Saskatchewan in effect to protect the environment from deserted vehicles around the province then.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The agreement that we had was that Ipsco is still anxious to have at least the tonnage that they were getting, and if possible a higher tonnage of scrap, brought to the Ipsco site. And the indication that they gave us at the time of our meeting was that they would indeed pick up the scrap vehicles and, if they can get the proper crusher, they will go on to pick up combines and farm equipment and that sort of thing as well. So it's quite possible that we'll get a better job than what we've been getting in the past.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to go back to a topic we've spent some time on already, and that's the topic of environmental impact assessments. And I'm wondering if the minister is aware that property owners at Greg Lake in the Meadow Lake Provincial Park have been notified in writing that there's a proposed development to take place — quite an extensive development — and I'm wondering whether or not the minister of the department has any knowledge of this development.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I wonder if the member would give us the name of the lake that he's talking about. There was a little noise and it was hard to hear.

Mr. Anguish: — The name of the lake is Greg Lake in the Meadow Lake Provincial Park and I'm informed across the way, by the member from Meadow Lake, that this development is no longer in the works. I'm not sure that the property owners at Greg Lake have been all informed about that. I know that I was given a copy of a letter that was sent to each of them informing that a development would take place and their input would be welcome. Is that development taking place? Is, in fact, the department aware of that development, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that my department is not aware of a development at Greg Lake. Perhaps the Parks department may know something about it, but our department is not aware of it at this time.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, I'm wondering — I go back again then — you'll recall the six or so criteria for having an environmental impact assessment done, if any one of those are in question then the environmental impact assessment will go ahead.

I'm wondering how the procedure as you had determined . . . or in fact, not even be aware of any development at Greg Lake or proposed development at any time, and is it only public outcry that would cause an environmental impact assessment to be done on a development like that? Because I know that poor Paul Meagher certainly had to do an environmental impact assessment on his operation at Redberry Lake.

An Hon. Member: — Poor Paul.

Mr. Anguish: — Poor Paul. Why the department wouldn't be aware of this development, and is it the fact public outcry is the only criteria for doing an impact assessment?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I believe that I was fairly clear to you the other day when we discussed the same issue — not dealing with the same lake — but the issue of how you arrive at those who must do an environmental impact study.

It's not the responsibility of the department to see that each and every person is going to do something that follows the legislation. It's the responsibility of the proponent to follow the legislation, and if they don't, and there's an outcry raised, then we go and enforce. But you know, for you to say that I should be able to see what's happening at Greg Lake, we have no one in the department at Greg Lake on a regular basis. If somebody came in there and built something, we'd have very little way of understanding or knowing that they were doing that.

But if it is a development and required an environmental impact study before the development should go ahead, it's the proponent that really is on the hook to see that the environmental impact study and the requirements of the Act are met.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, you can tell me very clearly on the record here today that, in fact . . . I'll wait until you're done consulting with the member from Meadow Lake there. You can tell me very clearly on the record today that no one or no organisation or corporation or company has ever approached the Department of Environment for ministerial approval to proceed with the development at that location?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I was consulting with the member for Meadow Lake, and he advises me that Greg Lake is within the boundaries of the provincial park, so that anything happening within the boundaries of that park normally would fall within the Parks department. That's likely the reason that we've had no contact.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, I can't believe that you even admit that there's legislation in this province for environmental impact assessments to be done. You've given dozens of reasons in this House since estimates has started as to why you don't have any authority to make sure that environmental impact assessments are conducted, or, in the wisdom of the department and yourself, if there is not an environmental impact assessment required, that you have to issue a permit for a development like that to proceed.

If Redberry Lake then was in a provincial park, are you saying that Paul Meagher and associates would not have had to have an environmental impact assessment done? Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — If Redberry Lake had been within a provincial park, he wouldn't have got to first base as far as a development without a permit and a licence from the park.

The other thing is that that is a federal bird sanctuary. And I think that makes a considerable difference when you have a bird sanctuary operated by the federal government at Redberry. You have to look at the Act and at the specific methods of determining which ones require

environmental impact assessments. You can't just pick on any one thing. You have to look at the whole act and apply the Act, and that's what is done by our department.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, you were saying to me that an environmental impact assessment wouldn't be required at Greg Lake for development because it was within the boundaries of the provincial park. I'm asking you then if exactly the same situation applied at Redberry Lake, if Redberry Lake happened to be within a provincial park, are you saying to us that there would not be an environmental impact assessment required?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The situation at Redberry is very specific because of the endangered species of water-fowl that habitat that area. But within a provincial park, if there were specific issues where we could identify the need for an environmental impact assessment to be done. It would take very specific things, something like the occurrences at Redberry, that would cause that to be triggered. So you have to look at each case, case by case, and all the circumstances to put in place. It's very difficult to relate Greg Lake and Redberry Lake. The only thing they have in common is that they are lakes.

Mr. Anguish: — Do you have authority to conduct environmental impact assessments within provincial park boundaries?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We do have the authority, if it is necessary, to go in ask for environmental impact studies within park boundaries. But it's not customary. Normally the clearance would be given by the Parks department, unless extenuating circumstances were involved.

Mr. Anguish: — Public outcry would be reason enough for you to conduct an environmental impact assessment within the boundaries of a provincial park, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that just a public outcry is not the whole criteria. If they're just an outcry saying we don't want it, and there's no environmental impact involved, then just the outcry would not be sufficient. But if there's an outcry and an environment impact, then it would be necessary.

Mr. Anguish: — Changing your story, Mr. Minister. At least . . . Well, you certainly are. You shake your head in the negative, but you're changing from what you told us originally. You dwelt quite heavily on the fact that one of the reasons there wasn't an environmental impact assessment done on a previous topic we discussed was because there was no public outcry. You're very clearly on the record for that. And now you're saying that it has to meet more than one of the six criteria.

You told me, in these estimates, that any one of those six criteria being violated under the impact assessment Act — your legislation — as long as any one of those are violated, that was grounds for an environmental impact assessment to be looked at by the department. If not conducted by the department, then at least you could waive the requirement for environmental impact assessment and you would have to be responsible for

signing the permission to go ahead with the development.

Now how many of those six criteria, under The Environment Assessment Act, have to be violated before an environmental impact assessment is considered by the department? Is it one? You say no. Is it two only, or is it three, or is it all six, or how many of the criteria have to be violated before you perform an environmental impact assessment?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't think I've changed my story at all, and I've been saying the same thing time after time. If there's public outcry, but the public outcry has no relation to environmental problems, no environmental impacts, that outcry would not be addressed as calling for an environmental impact study. But if there are environmental impacts, and there's an outcry because of it, then the environmental impact study would be required. It's not whether there's one or two or five or six of those items addressed by the Act; it's whether or not the items that are addressed in the Act are dealing with strictly environmental matters.

So we are a Department of Environment. We're here to preserve the environment. So if people just say: I don't like it, I don't want it, and they get up and have a big public outcry, but there's really no impact on the environment, then there isn't a problem as we see it, and not enough need to go ahead with an environmental impact study.

Mr. Anguish: — Well could you tell me, very specifically, how the impact on the federal bird sanctuary in the Redberry Lake development project — how they conflicted with each other to come to the environmental impact assessment? Would you describe that for me, Mr. Minister?

(1630)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Let me read to you point (iv). And when you talk about public concern, it says:

(iv) cause widespread public concern because of potential environmental changes;

And that's what I'm telling you. If the outcry is indicating that there will be an environmental problem, then of course you do an environmental impact study. But if it's just an outcry to hear themselves talk, then it's different.

Mr. Anguish: — Well if we want to go back to quoting the Act, Mr. Minister, we can maybe find some things in there. But before we start getting into a debate about the wording of the Act that you've just cited to me, I'd like you to tell me, very specifically, the relationship between the Redberry development and how it affected the federal bird sanctuary in order for you to order the environmental impact assessment to be done. And until that's done, the project is on hold. Tell me the conflict between the development and the bird sanctuary.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — In the Redberry case, I'm advised that it would be the impact that the development would have on the shore line as it related to the nesting habitat of the endangered species of birds, and the activity on the lake

itself that would be generated by the development, all of which would have a negative effect and disturb the reproductive abilities of the birds in the area. Now these were endangered species, and for that reason they are looked at very seriously.

Mr. Anguish: — I appreciate, Mr. Minister, that it would be looked at very seriously. Let's go to a clear example that I'm sure that you will have some knowledge of, and that's a development proposal for The Battlefords Provincial Park. Now in The Battlefords Provincial Park, your government — not your department, mind you, but your government — has called for tenders for a development proposal at the North Battleford provincial park golf course. I hope that this example, you'd be able to tell me very clearly whether there'd be an environmental impact assessment done there. Because from what we understand, is that already there have been some changes take place.

I am told by people in that area that one Myles Morin — who you'd be very familiar with I'm sure, Mr. Minister; he sat with you in this House — and a prominent business man by the name of Regan Hamilton secured the contract to provide golf carts for the provincial park golf course, Battlefords Provincial Park. And in fact, Mr. Hamilton's spouse, wealthy business family in The Battlefords, Mr. Regan's spouse is working in the pro shop in the golf course. I wonder, not as a side thought, whether that's where some of the student jobs are going to, that business people from The Battlefords have to have their spouses working in the pro shop at the golf course. But anyway, I would suspect that she's likely working there to keep an eye on how the business runs, so that they can have an inside track on the development proposal at the gold course.

Now before such a large development like that would go ahead — swimming pools and possibility of hotels; lots of extra traffic; either they're going to be cutting on services to the park or increasing fees — would something like that qualify for an environmental impact assessment, a major development within a provincial park?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Many of these things are difficult to comment on here unless you have a lot of detail, and we don't have much. Now the fact that somebody's wife is in the pro shop on the golf course is not an environmental problem, I hope.

The development of a major hotel and swimming pools and things like that could easily be considered a development. We haven't been contacted by any developer or any company that's proposing to develop at this point. If it comes forward we'll certainly take a look at the whole proposal and make decision under the Act, depending on what the proposal is, whether or not that would require an environmental impact study. Some cases it would, and others it may not, depending on the location and the circumstance.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I hope you would watch that. I don't think you should have to wait until someone comes forward. And I wasn't suggesting that Mrs. Hamilton was an environmental problem in the pro shop, Mr. Minister. I wouldn't go to that extent at all. But it seems to me there

must be some lack of criteria. When you told me a few days ago in this House that the Gainers bacon plant in North Battleford was not considered a development under the terms of the environmental impact assessment legislation, but a hotel and a swimming pool and possibly some other things could be considered a development, I don't know what your criteria is.

It seems to me that if this was in the private sector, and I know you're all great supporters of the private sector over there, you'd be a fly-by-night operation. What's the criteria that triggers whether or not there's an environmental assessment done? Because it's different for every individual case. And are you telling me, Mr. Minister, that there is no criteria other than every individual case has to be assessed on its own, and many cases you're not aware of the developer has to come to you to get the environmental impact assessment?

Well if the onus is on the developer all the time, why would you ever have to issue a permit? There's no reason for you to issue permits for developments to take place. I think that major developments like that, as long as you're aware of them — and I can understand there could be some developments that you may not be aware of, because there are many developments that take place all over the province, and I don't blame you for not knowing about all of them — but if you're made aware of them, if you're made aware of them either in this House or through public outcry or some reason, then shouldn't there be some initiative on your department to look into these things?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The legislation applies in all cases. This particular project that you're speaking of is within a provincial park. If there's a need, if someone in the park area indicates an environmental impact that is negative, or needs to be looked at because a proposal is coming forward that somebody's going to build something, of course we'll take a look at it. But we haven't had that kind of outcry by anyone at this point.

Now you're the first one to raise it, as far as I know. If the hon. member thinks it's something that's different that's going into that park than what they've traditionally had, and if there's going to be a significant environmental impact, then perhaps you should let us know, or have someone in the area that's going to be affected let us know, what that impact may be, and then our department could take a look at it.

But we haven't been contacted by anyone at this time about a development in that park.

Mr. Anguish: — I'm contacting you now, Mr. Minister. I don't want you to think that I'm the front for a large public outcry. You'll find out on your own what kind of a public outcry there is when you privatise the golf course out there.

If there's a need for an environmental impact assessment, how do we know if there's a need for that? I can't get from you what requires an environmental impact assessment and what does not require an environmental impact assessment in this province.

Does it have to be toxic chemical that comes out of a development before there's an environmental impact assessment done? What is it that requires an environmental impact assessment? You've answered that to me in so many different ways, Mr. Minister. If you could just be very clear and concise to me, we might drop this environmental impact assessment question for the rest of the day.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'll answer it very precisely for the hon. member if that's the case. It's a promise, is it?

An Hon. Member: — Are you going to read to me from the Act? I've got it here.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well that's the way you decide, is to come to section 2(d) and if the development falls under those six guide-lines — I'm not going to read them all out to you — but if the development falls under those guide-lines, if there's any one of those impacted, then it's a development and must do an environmental impact study.

It's very straightforward but the Act is specific. If you're wanting a development, wanting to build something, you would take a look at the Act, or take it to your lawyer and say, do I have to do an environmental impact study under this Act? If he reads it and says, no, that wouldn't apply to what you're doing, you likely are home free and can go ahead.

But you would likely have to follow the guide-lines spelled out within the provincial park, or within a city, or wherever the project's going forward. The Act is the clear-cut method of deciding what needs to have an environmental impact study.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, I promised that I would give up on you for today, so I'm going to turn it over to the member from Regina Rosemont, and let him have a go at you for a while. Thank you.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you. I'd like to thank my colleague from The Battlefords, but I want to pursue this line of questioning, Mr. Minister, because we've got two different answers from you today to exactly the same question. On the one hand you said it's not necessarily any one of the items under section 2(d) of the Act, and on the other hand we just heard you say, yes, it was any one of those items.

You said earlier on that a public outcry would not be a sufficient basis to invoke the sections of the Act in determining what a development was. The section (iv): "cause widespread public concern because of potential environmental changes, " you're now backtracking on that statement as that is any of the one conditions under that. But I want to ask, sir, I want to ask you in regards to that, if any one of these conditions under section 2(d) of the Act are met, how then do you explain section 8(1) of The Environmental Assessment Act? And section 8(1) says:

Notwithstanding the requirements of any other Act, regulation or bylaw relating to any licence, permit, approval, permission or consent, a

proponent shall (a proponent shall) obtain ministerial approval to proceed with a development, and no person shall proceed with a development until he has received ministerial approval?

Would you say, sir, that the Act is as clear as a bell on that, that anybody developing any development in the province of Saskatchewan has to obtain ministerial approval from yourself as the Minister of the Environment? Is that your interpretation of the section 8(1)?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think the member has to realise that the interpretation of different words used within an Act are put in the interpretation section under the Act. And the determination of a development is very clearly outlined under section 2(d). Under section 8(1) it continually speaks of a development, so if something that has been determined to be a development under section 2(d) when you come to development under section 8(1), then it would most definitely apply and they would need ministerial approval.

(1645)

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, one of the conditions under section 2(d), which determines the development, includes a large public outcry — widespread public concern. I believe, subsection (iv), “. . .cause widespread public concern because of potential environmental changes . . .”

The member from North Battleford asked you earlier on this afternoon: would in fact, would in fact an environmental assessment study and ministerial approval, or ministerial approval, be required if any development was to take place in the provincial park, that causes widespread public concern?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — If the hon. member has the Act there, just finish reading that section 2 (d)(iv), and it says, “. . .cause widespread public concern because of potential environmental changes . . .” And that’s what I have said to the member from The Battlefords. Just an outcry isn’t significant, but if it does have that effect because of potential environmental changes, then the outcry would be enough to trigger it.

Mr. Lyons: — Okay, Mr. Minister, could you tell us how one determines whether or not there’s potential environmental changes occurring around any particular development without the Department of the Environment and its environmental assessment branch being involved?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — As soon as a proposal comes forward, our department is involved and they evaluate the proposal and take a look at the situation. and if they see that there is an environmental impact likely, then they would order the proponent to go ahead with an environmental impact study.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister how does the department become involved if you, in your own words, say that first of all it’s up to the proponent to decide whether or not that person should get involved in terms of approaching the

department, and that it’s up to the proponent whether or not to decide whether in fact what they’re developing is a development?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I guess it’s very simple, that he must find out under the law if he’s going to proceed to build a development of any kind — construction, whatever. It’s up to him to refer to the legislation in the province to make that determination. And it’s when he comes forward that we review to see whether or not it’s a development. Now if a group of citizens have an outcry and they tell us that it’s going to do this and this and this to the environment that would all be negative, then that would also trigger us to look. So we have those two opportunities. You know, if you’re going to build a home in Regina, it’s up to you, as the person that’s going to build the home, to get a building permit. This is a very similar process.

Mr. Lyons: — I’m afraid, Mr. Minister, that one can’t draw the parallel, because jut on your line of thinking, is it a similar process if, for example, Hoechst chemicals or May & Baker or Ciba-Geigy, all of which have chemical plants within the city of Regina which produce toxic chemicals or formulate toxic chemicals within the city of Regina — if, for example, say Hoechst Canada Ltd. was going to expand their operation in Regina, building and adding on to their existing operation, would they, in your opinion, need to receive ministerial approval from this Department of the Environment, or whether, in fact, is this just like anybody else building a normal home in the city of Regina?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — In the case of a chemical company, if you read section 2(d)(iii), if any of the emissions of that plant or of the new proposal were going to cause environmental difficulties, they may have to be dealt with by our department, or they may be regulated through other departments of government or through the city itself. So I can’t give you a direct answer on that. what I’m telling you is that they would have to ascertain whether or not the proposal that they’re bringing forward is governed by this legislation, or whether it’s some other legislation. If there were a public outcry that the new addition to Hoechst chemicals was going to cause a problem for the people in the area and they registered that concern, then our department would look at it.

Mr. Lyons: — So, Mr. Minister, you are saying that the fact that there is a widespread public concern can in fact, in and of itself, form the basis for the Department of the Environment to demand an environmental impact statement, and to go through the environmental assessment process. Is that what you’re saying?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I’m saying that the public outcry, if there is potential environmental change possible — that’s the other part of the same section. It’s not just public outcry, but public outcry because of perceived environmental change — negative environmental change. Then you would look at it, not just the outcry by itself.

Mr. Lyons: — I can appreciate that final point that you’re making, Mr. Minister. what I think we’re disputing here is the fact that it’s up to the proponent, it’s up to the

proponents of the development. And I just want to be clear on this.

It's our position that you, as the minister, have the responsibility and have the authority as outlined by the act to in fact make sure that any development, any kind of building which has the potential, which is likely — and I use the word in the Act, in section 2(d) — which is likely to “cause” any of a host of a range of problems, that it is the responsibility of yourself, as minister and as head of the department, to intervene in that process. Would you not agree that, in fact, the act confers that responsibility as well as authority to you?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The legislation is put in place to give guidance to people within the province who are going to engage in construction of new developments, new buildings, new power lines, whatever. It is their responsibility to see that they fall within the guide-lines of the Saskatchewan legislation. If the concern is brought forward to us by individuals that there is going to be environmental impact, then we will get involved, as I indicated to you before. But it is not up to the department to be out and trying to police everybody that's going to build something.

The legislation is there. If they don't follow the legislation and then there is a concern raised, then it is our responsibility to step in. But you can't expect the department to be the watch-dog, to see when somebody is going to lay the first piece of lumber and start to build something. We just don't have that capability.

Mr. Lyons: — Again, Mr. Minister, I think I want to make it clear that in fact your view of the operation of the department and our view of the operation are diametrically opposed. We think, in fact, and I'll say this straight, bluntly, sir, we think that it is the job of the Department of the Environment to police on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan; that it is your job to police the environment and to intervene in any kind of development which would threaten the environment. And you've done it in the past. I mean, what you're saying belies, in fact, your actions.

You've done it in the case of Redberry Lake, for example, prior to the public outcry around Redberry Lake — prior to the public outcry — when, in fact, by your admission, Mr. Meagher and Mr. Mamchur came to you on February 13 of 1984, I believe it was — or was it 1985? — when they first approached your department, there was not the public outcry that there was later on. Yet, in fact, at that point in time you told them that they would need an environmental impact statement.

But in terms of your statement that you're not able to police the province, to look after the environment on behalf of the people of the province, could it be, sir, that . . . could it be in fact the reason that you're not able to do that in 1980 and '81 the Department of the Environment had 106 positions with a budget of six million and seven thousand dollars — this is all related to 1987 as a standard — that in 1982-83, the Department of Environment had 120, and in 1981-82 had 125.2 positions, whereas now, in 1987-88, the Department of the Environment has been reduced by 45 positions in regards to 1981-82, that in fact

the department has lost 45 positions and received less money in real dollars now than they did in 1980 and '81. Is the fact, sir, is the fact that you're not able to police that environment and protect the people of this province, due to the fact that your government has cut 45 positions out of the Department of Environment?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I realise that the hon. member is new in this legislature and may not have some of the background for what he's speaking about. Let me first tell you that the way the Department of Environment operates now under this legislation is exactly the way it operated when you were government. So there's been no change in that role that the department is playing, and many of the staff of the department are the same staff that were here then. And they tell me the process has not changed.

You speak of less people within the Department of Environment. You may or may not be aware that a good number of people who used to deal with the water side of the Department of Environment were transferred to the Saskatchewan Water Corporation. And whether the figure is 45 I don't know. Have you got that exact figure . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

All right, so that accounts for a big change. Now what they dealt with was not strictly environmentally related, so you have to take time to decide whether or not we really do have less people. We have a different function as a department. We have had some go out; we've had some come in. And the numbers of people that we have at this time perhaps are not quite as significant as the member might at first think in looking at it.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's interesting that you mentioned the people that were transferred out of the department into Saskatchewan Water Corporation. What you didn't mention, in fact, was the people that were transferred in, in the public safety branches — the electrical inspectors, and gas inspectors, and so on. You didn't mention those numbers. And the facts of the matter are that the job of policing Saskatchewan's environment remains a much bigger task now than it was in 1980, in 1981, because the government of the 1980-1981 period in fact put a higher priority on the environmental issues of the day.

And I think when you compare the standards and compare the amount of money spent in the department in 1981-82, compared to 1987-88, that there is no way in this world that you, as the Minister of the Environment, can stand up and say that you in government has either enhanced the role of the Department of the Environment or in fact maintained it at the same level. Because when you use 1981-82 standard and apply it to what's happening today in 1987, you will see, in fact, just in terms of dollar funding that your department has suffered a cut in the priority of this government.

And the point that we've been trying to make throughout this estimate period, and I think that we are making, is in fact one of the things that suffered by that is the development of a realistic assessment process; that in fact things which would normally within any kind of common sense or reasonable interpretation of what constitutes a development . . . for example, the Peter

Pocklington plant up in North Battleford. any common and reasonable interpretation of the Act would say that that's a development — any reasonable interpretation. Yet because of the cut-backs, your government has been unable to respond in any kind of reasonable manner to . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. It being 5 o'clock this committee is recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.