

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**First Session — Nineteenth Legislature**

**April 23, 1979.**

**EVENING SESSION**

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE - DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN**  
**VOTE 26**

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order. Tonight we're in Department of Northern Saskatchewan Estimates, page 76 in your estimate book and I will ask the minister, as soon as he is ready, to introduce his support staff and then we're away.

**HON. N.E. BYERS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan):** — Mr. Chairman it is with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to the Assembly our senior officials from the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. On my immediate right, Mr. Jim Stobbs, the acting deputy minister. Behind Mr. Stobbs, Mr. Shakir Alwarid the assistant deputy minister of Economic Development. Seated behind myself, Mr. Ken Rutten, the assistant deputy minister of the social development sector. To the right of Mr. Stobbs, Mr. Jack Morris, the director of administration. To the back, going from left to right, Mr. Lyle Roland, Mr. Lionel Ferguson and the gentleman sitting at the extreme right is Mr. Matt Kaip and Mr. Muhammad Sardar is here as well, Mr. Don McCallum, the Director of Social Services and Mr. Rod McGregor.

**ITEM 1**

**MR. G. McLEOD (Meadow Lake):** — Mr. Minister, I just have a few comments here I'd like to make with regard to your department as an overall and from there I'll have quite a number of questions. Since the creation of your department, certainly many growing pains have been experienced by the former minister, your predecessor and by the other members of your department and by many of the officials that are here with you. I'm aware that many of those have not been overcome. But having said that, certainly there's room for your department and the officials that have been there for some time to be commended on some things, for some of the initiatives they've taken in the North and I'll be the first to do that.

You've correctly identified many of the chronic needs of northerners and of the northern half of the province. It is quite obvious that the thrust toward northern development which is now taking place, I think would be taking place regardless of whether your department had been created at that time or not. I think it's proving now to be valuable that, during the present period of accelerated transition from a traditional northern society to the modern industrial one, your department has been in place, or that some mechanism was in place, to provide programs for that transition.

But, having said that, I would like to point out a major problem which I think is detrimental to northern Saskatchewan in general and to northern residents in particular. This is just somewhat of a philosophical problem but I think it's something that has to be addressed by people in the North. I think that when your government drew that artificial demarcation line across the province in '72 (and, that line I call the jackpine curtain), you drew it across there from east to west and effectively divided the province into two parts. And, by various amendments over a six-year period now giving your department more power, you've effectively created a state within a state here in Saskatchewan.

I would submit to you that your government has really done over this vast area with a

small scattered population is created a type of capsule situation in which you are able to carry on experiments in total socialism.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. McLEOD:** — I notice members opposite saying, 'Hear, hear!' My concern is simply this: certainly, I know this is the case. I know that there's a philosophical difference in opinion between yourself and myself and between members opposite and those of us over here. You may not see my concern because of that philosophical difference, but I submit that your department is responsible for a growing attitude in the remote areas of northern Saskatchewan. The attitude is that big dad government, or as they call it DNS because that's what they see as government, is responsible for all aspects of their lives. And as my colleague from Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) was saying the other night in health estimates, the responsibility of government lies in dealing with people from womb to the tomb, and I think that's what's happening in the North. That attitude is being placed on to these people, who, as I said before, are in this transition stage and I think it's a dangerous type of attitude for them to be to have developed in that area . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Now, just to give you an example of that . . . certainly, I have noticed the former minister over there coming in; I'm certain he'd like to be involved in this. I hate to wake him up, but I will say, and I did say before, and I will say again, certainly the identification of the problems of the North are very important and a good job has been done there. Those problems are obvious and I have had a good number of experiences living in the North. The area that I come from for all of my younger life was considered to be northern. Before that line was drawn and so on everybody was always considered northerners by everybody in Saskatchewan. Now, we are considered southerners or some place in between. Anyway, I know . . . (inaudible interjection). . . so anyway, I think that some of the things you have brought in there would create problems for the people in the North. To be looking to DNS for everything in their lives is a serious thing. I have some questions regarding the construction, just as an example of this. In the construction area, for example, so that we can get some reaction in housing and sewer and water, why would you have created a construction department within your department to do the actual work to hire the people when in fact northern people could very well have been doing the work under the auspices of the private sector rather than under DNS? I'll just leave with those comments and get your reaction.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman I thought in the opening comments of the new critic that the House might be enlightened as to whether he was on-side or off-side with respect to the concept of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. In his first breath he passed out some laudatory and going comments of the achievements but was soon choked up by his real philosophy which is one of skepticism and doubt. However, I am very pleased to see that the member for Meadow Lake (Mr. McLeod) still has a fairly open mind about northern Saskatchewan, and perhaps in his first session in the House we may make him yet a convert of the idea.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. BYERS:** — With respect to the drawing of the line I was somewhat amazed as one who comes from northern Saskatchewan and who I understood to be a history teacher, that somehow the line was drawn in 1972. May I bring to his attention that the Northern Administration District Act which established the line was proclaimed in 1946, not in 1972, so it has been there for some time. He says it is a state within a state, and I don't

know whether that is true or not. I don't know whether the people of northern Saskatchewan know that that is true or not, and I don't think they particularly care. The Department of Northern Saskatchewan was established as a department of the Government of Saskatchewan, of the province of Saskatchewan, with really, three major objectives in mind. that of improving the social, economic and furthering the political development of the people of northern Saskatchewan.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — It works pretty well after the election.

**MR. BYERS:** — I don't know in terms of the social developments that have taken place. I told the House in the course of this budget debate that in the last five to six years, we have invested some \$20 million to improve the social conditions with better schools and teacherages and the like. I don't know; I have not heard any evidence coming from the northern people whose children are attending those schools and many adults who are attending those schools that their freedom has, in any way, been jeopardized or throttled or set back because of the social developments that have occurred there.

With respect to the furthering of the political development, may I say that there were virtually no local governments in existence outside of the incorporated areas prior to 1972. We now have three incorporated centres who observed the operations of DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) for a very short time and it was they who requested to become part of DNS and the government, accordingly, obliged.

The communities of northern Saskatchewan are advancing in their political development. I don't think there is any group of communities where the interest of the public and the interest of the elected officials (within the eight local community authorities, which you might compare to our towns and villages, and even within the local advisory committees, where the citizens are involved to such a great extent in the planning of their future and are people who really believe they have a future that is bright and going to be brighter) is greater than in the communities of northern Saskatchewan. I don't think there has been any loss of political freedom when local governments have been established and in their first year of operation when they were given control over the managing of their own funds, I don't think they could have done any better.

I want to say to the hon. member that in the early days of this province when the rural municipalities were in their infancy, when the towns and villages were in their infancy, it was not uncommon for the provincial government to have a fleet of political healers who regularly inspected the municipal jurisdictions in their infancy. We have not taken the rout of former governments whose do nothing approach was largely responsible for the deplorable conditions that we found in northern Saskatchewan and up to 1972. These local governments are on their feet. They're laying out their own town development plans. They're very much a part of developing the community infrastructure. They're interested in putting in water and sewer and they do not feel oppressed whatsoever by the level of government expenditures that are being made in the community infrastructure to improve the quality of life for them. I refer briefly to the social conditions, the political conditions, economic conditions likewise. I think that through our construction activities that we now have many northerners, not only working as laborers but they are in managerial positions both in government and in private industry in the North. Therefore, I am not quite clear what the hon. member refers to when he talks about a womb-to-tomb type of socialism in northern Saskatchewan or what criticism he makes of it. I can only guess at what he is saying by the interpretation that I have heard Conservatives prior to him refer to as the evils of

socialism as viewed through the eyes of the Conservatives. I don't think the northern people are upset about the kind of development that is occurring there.

Referring, Mr. Chairman to the specific question he raised: why did the government through DNS undertake to set up their own system of delivering water and sewer facilities to the communities of northern Saskatchewan when this might have been done through the private sector? Really the program of supplying water and sewer is very expensive. Many of the communities are situated in the Pre-Cambrian Shield where you have to put in water and sewer lines and the like in bedrock. It's not true entirely across the North but certainly true in the east side, the Pre-Cambrian Shield area. It was to develop training programs for the northern people, and I would be quite glad to provide him with statistics as to how many people are employed and have learned the skills of trenching, plumbing, operating heavy machinery and the like. Certainly I would think that those achievements would be well-known to the hon. member. It was part of the design to deliver the system in this method to provide training programs for the northern people, and I think we have been very successful in that respect.

**MR. McLEOD:** — I wish you would provide those statistics in order so we could do that.

**MR. BYERS:** — My main point there regarding that . . . (inaudible) . . . The number of people who are employed on construction programs? Yes, we'll provide those figures.

**MR. McLEOD:** — O.K. The point I was making there, (and I used the sewer and water delivery of the sewer and water projects and the billing of housing by your own crews as just two small examples of what I was pointing out) what I was saying there before, is what I'm concerned about and what I think a number of people should be concerned about, is the attitude of people in the North. A lot of people in the North and in remote areas will now think (and the attitude, there's no question, is developing there) that the only way they can move in any direction at all out of their isolation and so on is through some program or some job that's provided directly by DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan), directly by the big empire! I think that is an undesirable type of attitude for people to have. That's the case anyway. They may get the attitude that that's the way it is out in the other portions of the province and in the other portions of Canada. I think that's not the case. So, that's a bad attitude to leave with them.

I'll go into this housing thing a little bit, your construction crew and the delivery of housing to the people in the North. Why is it that you saw fit to set up your own crew when in fact you could have gone to the private sector, and by some form of incentives had those people hire northerners as well?

**MR. BYERS:** — With respect to the first question you raised, the suggestion that DNS is the sole or only employer in northern Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection). . . Yes, all right, I will.

During the past year, 1978-1979, approximately 1,320 contracts were competitively awarded at an estimated value of \$33 million. We can hardly be accused of ignoring the private sector. We certainly are working along with the northern Sask contractors. Of the 1,320 contracts awarded during 1978-1979, 540 went to northern firms at an estimated value of \$8.6 million. These were tenders and invited bids.

On the matter of leave it to the private sector to provide the jobs for northerners, that's a nice idea, but first, it assumes that the private sector is, in all cases, willing to undertake the training programs required. We know certainly, from 75 years of experience, that that did not happen.

Secondly, there is the problem (not insoluble, but extremely difficult) of enforcing upon the private sector the employment of northern people. Therefore, it seems more sensible to undertake an approach whereby (and admittedly the government was a major provider of the capital to build the community infrastructure) the government would run, for the most part but not exclusively, the training program so that the Northerners would be equipped to take their place in the work force.

With respect to public housing, I say to the hon. member that there are 110 housing units (not structured identically to those in southern Saskatchewan, but along the same principal) that will be delivered by local housing associations so that the local housing associations are major deliverers of housing, DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) is not the only actor when it comes to providing housing.

**MR. McLEOD:** — O.K., just to go back to what you were saying about the number of people who took advantage of the training, I'd like to know what number took advantage of training in working in housing and in the delivery of sewer and water, in other words, in construction; and of that number, how many are still employed either by your department or still employed in the North?

**MR. BYERS:** — Is your question just for water and sewer alone?

**MR. McLEOD:** — No. It's just that I've pointed these two things out; but let's say the training programs in the construction area all the way across.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order. I just might remind the member when he speaks to rise because your light wasn't on, and it's not going on to the tape.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, a number of the training programs are run through the community college program. I have a list here of 16 or 17 programs. I could provide the hon. member with a copy of this. This is for the fiscal year 1977-78. There were 124 classes, 1,636 people who took the training. If you take the apprenticeship training program, otherwise known as training on the job, in 1977-78 there were 44 apprentices, 28 of whom were northern heavy duty repair, 8; carpentry, 16; electrical, 6; plumbing, 11; sheet metal, 3. In 1978-79, 38 apprentices as of this data, 28 are northern. The breakdown: heavy duty repair, 6; carpentry, 14; electrical, 8; plumbing, 8; sheet metal, 2.

The target for 1979-80 is to have 60 apprentices. Of the 1978-79 crop, working journeymen at this date: heavy duty repair, 21; carpentry, 25; electrical, 8; plumbing, 8; sheet metal, 7. The heavy equipment operator training, all northern, that is the training on the job and the costs were absorbed by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. In 1977-78, there were 20 started, 8 successful; 1978-79, 24 started, 18 successful; 1979-80 the target is for 54 trainees on an 800-hour course.

Perhaps this is the most impressive figure. The total employees on staff up to December 20, 1978 and keep in mind that these will be labor service and casual and all the temporary types: 1,524. Total northerners on staff up to December 20, 1978, 706 or 46.3 per cent.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Would you provide me with a copy of that, what you are reading on your programs? The other part of my question was, is there any way that you have been able to conduct a follow-up to know whether the people who complete their apprenticeship or whatever programs . . . my question was would you provide that information as you have offered to do? Secondly, is there any way that you have been able to conduct a follow-up or to maintain a follow-up to point out how many of these people who have completed programs of your department are still in the employer department or still employed in the North?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, we do not consider it our mandate to go on to train them and to retain them in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. As a matter of fact, we consider DNS's role to be that of training them for the work force and managerial force. It is not uncommon, for example, for a highway project, to train heavy equipment operators, to have them trained and have them all employed by private contractors in northern Saskatchewan or elsewhere. It's not our objective that once trained they will work forever for DNS; that is certainly not the objective of the training program.

**MR. McLEOD:** — That wasn't my question. I realize that and I would hope that wouldn't be right.

My question was do you have any follow-up mechanism to realize just . . . because I think it would be a part of your training programs, part of your evaluation of your own programs to know whether or not these people are, in fact, following it up and working. Whether they're with DNS or with private contractors or working in Alberta, I don't mind. But are they working or are they on assistance in the North, or where are they?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman we can provide the hon. member with that information and we would certainly be glad to do so. I want to bring to his attention that that is going to be a fairly major piece of work and it's going to take a little time; we'll not have the answer for you by Friday night. It's going to take some while to do, but we'll provide it as best we can, as accurate as our statistics branch is.

**MR. McLEOD:** — O.K., a follow-up to one of your other responses some time back. You mentioned the number of contracts that were awarded in the North either by tender or by invited bids. What I would like is a list, if your people could provide us with it, of the invited bids and the amounts involved in the contracts that were awarded on the basis of that method?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I don't want to conceal any information the hon. member seeks. I want to tell him that that is going to take one staff person's time of well over three weeks to compile it. If the hon. member insists then we are willing to provide that. If there is a more simplified information that you would want, that you would be satisfied with, it could be obtained with less work. I'll give you a chance . . .

**MR. McLEOD:** — I believe I would like to have the other information I asked for.

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, all right, we'll provide that but again that will take some time to provide.

**MR. McLEOD:** — While we are still talking about programs, Mr. Minister, I'm looking for it here now, but some of your officials can give you this answer I'm sure. Regarding

some of the programs that you had for training and I knew there are programs also in the Department of Employment and Immigration which used to be Manpower — is there not a duplication? I think in the annual report there was a mention of the fact that last year in DNS you compiled a list of the available work force in the communities and so on, would that not be a duplication of what the Department of Employment and Immigration will be doing in the North? Also in terms of the training programs would there be any cases where, we'll call them students or people taking courses, would be receiving benefits from both your department and the Canada Manpower Department for taking the same course?

**MR. BYERS:** — With respect to your last question, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan delivers the training program. Where the student receives financial assistance that is all through Canada Manpower, so there is no overlap in that sense.

Mr. Chairman this summer the Department of Northern Saskatchewan in conjunction with Canada Manpower will be undertaking a survey to determine the available work force in northern communities. And that will be in all communities. That's a joint federal-provincial undertaking.

**MR. McLEOD:** — O.K. On page 20 of the annual report from last year under the Northern Training Plan of your department, it says students taking a full time day course may be eligible for an allowance to allow them to support themselves and so on, that's from your department, and also just in the next column, the federal government also administers a sponsorship program that assists trainees in full-time day programs with a training allowance. What I am asking is would there be any cases where people would be receiving allowance from both of these, and what would be the criteria for them to get it from the federal or to be under your training program?

**MR. BYERS:** — Initially, DNS may pay the trainee, but the government is reimbursed 100 per cent from Canada Manpower. There's no way they can get duplicate financial assistance.

**MR. McLEOD:** — What you're saying is that this northern training plan is under your auspices but it is being funded by the federal Manpower branch?

**MR. BYERS:** — That's right.

**MR. J. GARNER (Wilkie):** — Mr. Minister, do you have a regular flight between La Ronge and Prince Albert or any other points every day?

**MR. BYERS:** — Not daily flights.

**MR. GARNER:** — How often are those flights?

**MR. BYERS:** — Three times a week.

**MR. GARNER:** — What is your total air fleet in DNS?

**MR. BYERS:** — A Cheyenne, an Aztec, three Cessna 185, two Beechbands, six Packers . . . and half a dozen Lear jets. If you have the list down I want to point out to the hon. member that the Cessna 185's are used for both fire purposes and resource purposes. The Beechbands are used exclusively for fire.

April 23, 1979

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, would you also tell me then what aircraft that you use in DNS is under contract and whom are they contracted from?

**MR. BYERS:** — We have 1,185 on contract to deliver people on the Key Lake road.

**MR. GARNER:** — Is that outside the other 185 that you have?

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes.

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, is that all of the aircraft that you have under contract in DNS?

**MR. BYERS:** — At the present time, yes.

**MR. GARNER:** — Do helicopters not come under contract? Are they not in your DNS service?

**MR. BYERS:** — Only during fire suppression season.

**MR. GARNER:** — Well, I'd ask you, Mr. Minister, for all aircraft that were under contract, whether it was in the fire season or any other time. Could I have that information, please?

**MR. BYERS:** — I thought you said now. We don't count this as the fire season with three feet of snow on the ground.

**MR. GARNER:** — O.K. The year under review then, Mr. Minister.

**MR. BYERS:** — For fire suppression there are three helicopters under contract from Athabasca and two Cansos under contract from Norcanair.

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, you said they were just under contract during fire suppression. My information is that you have one helicopter leased for the full 12 months. Is that correct or not?

**MR. BYERS:** — That is not correct.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Have you ever had a helicopter leased for a full 12-month period, or have you ever had one of these helicopters leased for a full 12-month period?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman the question as I understood it, the question prior to this question, was, do you have any helicopters or other planes under lease, and I gave the answer — three helicopters from Athabasca and two Cansos, and we do not now have any under lease on a 12-month basis. The question the hon. member raised was, have you ever had? I'm in your hands as to whether we need to answer questions in estimates that far back.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — I think my ruling would have to be this, that I think the minister should not be expected by the department to answer questions any further than the two years we have in here. Further back than that, I think that's . . .

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — You haven't had a helicopter lease for the full twelve months then?



**MR. BYERS:** — That's correct.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — You indicated a few minutes ago that your Barons are used for bird dogging. In the last two years, have you used it at all, at any time for an executive aircraft — either one of them?

**MR. BYERS:** — I have never used the Baron as an executive aircraft and I'm told that to the best of knowledge of my officials, it has never been used for that purpose either.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Minister, would you be so kind, if you like, as to give us the photostatic copy or loan us the logbooks of those aircrafts?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm told that federal regulations forbid us from taking them out of the aircraft.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — You mean from the aircraft itself? The pilots cannot take it out of the aircraft — is that what you're telling me? They cannot be taken away from the aircraft at any time?

**MR. BYERS:** — The logbooks, I am told, cannot be removed from the plane for any length of time. They can be taken from the plane to the office and back again but I'm sure that the time allowed for those logbooks to be out of the plane — the length of time that the hon. member may seek to review them would not meet the federal regulations.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I'd be the last person in the world to want to break the law on that. however, you know, I'm sure the law wouldn't stop you from taking it to the office, photocopying it and then take it back to the plane immediately, in the period of an hour or so and then you could give us a photocopy of it.

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, those books are several inches thick, if you've ever checked a logbook. I have seen a logbook of a pilot and I'm not sure about whether the copyright laws permit them to be xeroxed or not.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Well, I'll make it a little easier on you. I don't know how many years a logbook goes back. How would you like to photocopy the last two years for us?

**MR. BYERS:** — We could not meet that request because we haven't had them that long.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Well, I didn't ask you for the full two years back — up until the time you started. Let's not get technical about this problem. The information is there. We would like the information that is in that logbook available to this side of the House so that the people of Saskatchewan can see what is going on with those planes.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I will take the position that we are not going to make logbooks available.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I didn't ask for the logbook, I asked for a photocopy of the logbook. There is a difference now. Why would you not be willing to photocopy the sheets in the logbook and make them available to us? Are you hiding something in it? Is there something that you don't want the people of this province to see? What is the big deal that you can't make it available to this side of the House? What is the big deal there?

April 23, 1979

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I do not have the benefit of a law school education and I do not know whether it is within our jurisdiction to provide logbooks to an hon. member, particularly when the logbooks come under the jurisdiction of a federal regulatory agency. I think we would want to check the legality of the member's request before I respond to it.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I am just looking around. Are there any lawyers around there that can help you out on this problem? Surely, to God, the request that I am making . . . Do we have a lawyer around here that can give him an answer? There is one sitting just behind you. Mr. Minister, I would like an answer on that this evening if possible, whether or not you are prepared to — after you have discussed it with your legal beagles — prepared to make available to us a photocopy of those logbooks? It is very important that we see them.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, we are not going to give the hon. member a legal opinion on that tonight.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Is there any possible reason why you can't seek that legal opinion tonight? Is it such a difficult thing to resolve? Is there a reason why you can't give us an answer on that tonight, Mr. Minister? I have asked you a question.

**MR. BYERS:** — Because I don't think the hon. member would want a five-minute legal opinion.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Well, we've got a couple on this side who might be able to give you a two-minute legal opinion. It will be better than what you'll get.

Mr. Minister, can you indicate to me the cost of operating those aircraft, individually, not on the average, individually. I don't want it on an average of total, but individually.

**MR. BYERS:** — Cost in what unit?

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — The total cost of operation includes your depreciation, your maintenance, your gas, pilots, hangar costs, total costs of operating your aircraft, one by one, each individual aircraft that you have.

**MR. BYERS:** — We cannot provide the information aircraft by aircraft.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Can you tell me how you can provide it or in what way you would provide it?

**MR. BYERS:** — I guess it's his turn.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Who's in charge of the lights here?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — At the same time perhaps we would run into less trouble; but if the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) ( would present his question again and then the minister can reply. Please.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Thank you. That's right. I've forgotten what it was.

Will you provide the cost — you said you could not provide the cost for each aircraft, only the total. Well, do you have the number of flying hours, or miles, or whatever it is

you put on aircraft, by aircraft? Do you have that information? Do you have the information on the cost of gasoline per hour or per mile? Surely you must have some documentation and some calculations on that!

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — He's got to give it to you. He's got to give it to you.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — I'm going to wait.

**MR. BYERS:** — I beg the indulgence of the House here for a minute to see what answer we can provide to the hon. member . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It will never be anything but the truth.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member may not be aware that DNS has only operated a fleet (the list of which I gave earlier tonight) since October of '78.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — '77.

**MR. BYERS:** — Oh, I'm sorry, October, '77. We could give you the gross cost of operating it.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, that's not good enough. You have Barons. You have Cessnas. You have Grumman Trackers, an Aztec, a Cheyenne, a helicopter, Cansos. Surely, you must know what each individual aircraft is costing on depreciation for example. You must know what it's costing you on fuel. You must know the different costs of maintenance, for example. You must know what they are. So I'm asking you . . . if you can't break it down by plane, let's break it down by make at least. What are the Cessnas costing you? What are the Barons costing you? Give it to us in those terms, if you like, on a per mile basis.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, we can provide the hon. member with the gross costs of the DNS air service.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I would suggest to you that if you can't give me the costs that I have asked for, then you had better question the competence of some of your people. There is absolutely no way in the world that you can sit there and tell me that you don't have the cost of operating those different aircraft. Now are you hiding something from us? Is there a reason why you don't want to give it to us?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — There's got to be.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — The answer you've given us is absolute nonsense.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member asked me if we would provide him with the cost on some basis and I have given him an undertaking that we would provide him with the gross operating costs of the fleet for the period of time that it has been under DNS jurisdiction. I think the figures that the hon. member seeks would really be unrealistic and meaningless. Well, I wonder for instance, if this city of Regina could provide mile unit costs of one of its individual fire trucks.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — He can do it at the Department of Revenue. What are you talking about?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Oh, don't be silly.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — What an absolute nonsense answer he's providing me. Now, is it because you don't want to give me the answer or is it because you can't give me the answer? Will you answer that question?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I will check the records as to what question the hon. member posed at the outset of his questioning. The offer of providing the gross costs would seem to meet the information that he is seeking.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — You haven't answered my question. Is it because you can't give me the answer or is it because you don't want to give me the answer? Which is it?

**MR. BYERS:** — The reason is that I just gave it to him. It would be unrealistic and meaningless if we did give it to him.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — I would like to be able to make that decision for myself whether it's realistic or unrealistic. I repeat my question again, is it because you don't want to give the answer or is it because you can't supply the answer?

**MR. BYERS:** — There are many criteria that come into the operating costs on these planes who fly three times as many miles or hours in a year as another and yet you have the overhead cost of maintaining them when they may be standing in the shop.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — I totally agree they're different. That's why I asked you to supply the information based on the models, based on the Cessna 185s, based on the Barons totally, based on the Grumman Trackers and so on. Again, I repeat the question, and you are avoiding and evading it. Do you not want to answer because you can't or do you not want to answer because you don't want to answer it? Are you hiding something?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the answer varies from year to year. It depends on the age of the plane, the amount of the depreciation, the miles or hours travelled and therefore, a unit answer, which he seeks, is really unrealistic and meaningless. We are here considering the estimates of the legislature and we are prepared to provide him with the gross costs of operating the DNS air fleet and that is really what he initially asked.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, this is going to be like pulling teeth from this minister and I am going to stay with the question until I get some answers. What does it cost you to operate your Cessna 185s on a one-year basis or since you have been operating the, October of 1977?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, does the hon. member want the . . . We could give him the average cost per hour for the fleet.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — No. I will repeat the question and I'll try to make it a little more clear. I want the cost of operating your Cessnas — your maintenance costs, your depreciation costs, your total cost — pilots, hangar, maintenance, fuel, everything — on your Cessna 185s. Then I want the number of hours each aircraft has flown and you can add to that the serial number of every Cessna 185, if you like.

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, we do know our gross costs and gross usage. We can provide the hon. member with the average cost per hour to operate the fleet.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, do you have the figures there that I asked for? Do you have them in front of you? The cost of operating, not the average cost, but the total cost of operating the Cessna 185s — do you have that available tonight?

**MR. BYERS:** — No.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Will you get us that information?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, we can provide what I have said before, the average cost per hour for the entire fleet.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm going to insist on this question and we'll be a long time on it — the total cost of operating those aircraft. Your people, your executive, your staff came here tonight to answer questions in this House. Why did they not come prepared with the information they are required to provide us? That is something I can't understand. Those are costs of operating your department; surely your staff should have that information with them.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the cost of operating the fleet is through the advance account and the advance account is not reviewed by this legislature. In these estimates we vote money to the advance account.

**MR. LANE:** — The auditor says that if you push the advance accounts, you can juggle the books . . .

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — That's quite a system of accounting. Again, I'll ask a question that I asked earlier, what are you hiding? How much is the advance account that is provided for the operation of the aircraft. Can you answer that question?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the northern construction advance account provides for all the equipment used in northern Saskatchewan including the air fleet, road building equipment, the operation of the air fields, the cost of fire suppression and the like. The costs are from the advance account.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, the minister hasn't answered my question. How much is that account?

**MR. BYERS:** — Would the hon. member restate his last question, please?

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — The last question I asked the minister was: how much is that account, that advance account, that involves or includes the cost of aircraft operation?

**MR. BYERS:** — For aircraft operation about \$2 million.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — About \$2 million. Exactly \$2 million or is it about? Give me the exact figure. Surely you can give us that.

**MR. BYERS:** — \$2 million is the net value of the aircraft in the advance account, net value of the aircraft.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, are you telling me that is the net value of the cost of the aircraft themselves, nothing to do with the maintenance or operation?

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Unfortunately, that wasn't the question I asked you. The question I asked you . . . Earlier you indicated that the cost of operation is covered in the advance account. I think you said that. If that is the case, what portion of that account is for the maintenance and operation of the aircraft? I am not asking you the cost of the aircraft. I have that information elsewhere.

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, the cost of the aircraft is billed back to each user.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Oh, I thought you'd never say that. What charge are you making to the user departments, then — per mile charge?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member wants to find the cost of operating the air service. The costs of the air service are contained within these estimates. When I say that the cost is charged to the user, for example, the Health Services Branch in DNS pays its portion and share of air travel costs. The project management will pay its share. The total amount of money budgeted in these estimates for air travel service exclusive of fire suppression is \$439,150. That would seem to me to be a figure worthy of interest to the hon. members. Certainly in discussing these estimates, I would think that they would want to know the cost of operating the air service in northern Saskatchewan for the fiscal year 1979-80 and we have estimated the cost of that air service to be \$439,150, exclusive of fire suppression costs.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Does that include all costs of operation? Does that include your maintenance, your depreciation, your fuel, your pilots, your hangar, your whole bit?

**MR. BYERS:** — It covers all costs.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — All costs but not including the firefighters?

**MR. BYERS:** — The \$439,150 excludes fire suppression. Fire suppression would be extra.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Next question. How many miles are you estimating on that \$439,150?

**MR. BYERS:** — We have estimated a dollar expenditure based on the previous flying track record of each branch of the department. What we are considering are estimates and we estimate the cost to be \$439,150.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — All right, I'll ask it in a different manner, then. In the question period in this House some time ago, we asked the Minister of Revenue (Mr. Robbins) the cost of operating his aircraft in his department. He gave us an average cost of 30 cents per mile that he charges user departments. That's the charge made to user departments. Is that the way you're handling it in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan? Is it 30 cents a mile that you're charging your health department and the departments that are using these aircraft?

**MR. BYERS:** — We charge all actual costs.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — What are the actual costs that you would charge the Department of Health if the Department of Health is going to use an aircraft (let me finish my question, Mr. Minister) if the Health Services Branch will rent the aircraft from you, they're going

to put on so many miles, you're going to send them a bill. How much are you going to charge them?

**MR. BYERS:** — The estimated expenditure in this budget for air travel by the Department of Health for the fiscal year 1979-80 is \$29,790. Health, we expect will pay that money.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Are you going to send them a bill at the beginning of the year for \$29,000, or are you going to send them a bill at the end of the year for \$29,000, or are you going to bill them as they use them?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, using the example of health, they will be billed monthly.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — So, in other words, being billed monthly means that they could use it for one hour or they might use it for 1,000 hours, or they might use it for 10,000 hours and you will send them the same bill? It doesn't matter how you break it down; you are not going to break it down, you are going to send them one bill every month for so many dollars?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, in the example I used, the department will be billed monthly on the basis of use and that will apply across the piece for all the user branches within the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Minister, what rate will you use to bill the user departments for the various aircraft that you will lease to them?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the rates are designed to cover all of the costs in the course of the year. In the course of the year, the expenses for repairs and gasoline and pilots' salaries and whatever, may increase. Therefore, the actual costs are in the final analysis calculated at the year end. So there's an interim billing to the department but then at the end of the year, when the actual costs are known, each department has to settle on the basis of its usage and those amounts for the hourly or mileage rates will not be known at this time.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Please listen to the question very carefully, Mr. Minister, because I'm going to try to say it so that it's clear to you. You've had the aircraft since October of 1977. This is April, 1979, so you've had some experience. You've also prepared estimates for '79-80. Surely, you must have had an estimate of the flying hours that you were going to be using the aircraft or that you'd be leasing them out? Surely, in order to arrive at, for example, the \$29,000 for the health department, you had to calculate it on a basis of x number of dollars per mile and so many miles to be used during that year? Are you trying to tell me, Mr. Minister, that your people picked a figure clear out of the air and said that's what we'll use for the department because we don't know what it's costing us to operate our aircraft? Are you trying to tell me that you didn't use a rate per mile to calculate your estimates for '79-80? Are you trying to tell me that you didn't know the miles you put on in one year you operated your aircraft in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan — hours, miles, whatever way you calculate them? Surely, there must be a rate that you have available to your people to calculate what it cost you last year and that's the question I'm going to ask and ask and ask until you give me an answer.

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, these are estimates. I appreciate that this is the hon. member's first session and that is a book of estimates and I will be patient with the new member. But these are estimates. There are also supplementary estimates here where we didn't quite

April 23, 1979

estimate right a year ago and you're asked to approve supplementary estimates. But they are estimates. In developing these estimates, we assumed that each of the planes would fly approximately 600 hours.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — If you assumed each aircraft would fly 600 hours, I'm presuming you're saying that each Cessna, and each Baron, and each Turbo, Cheyenne, and so on, would fly 600 miles. Is that 600 hours, did you say?

**MR. BYERS:** — Hours.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — All right. If you assumed that, then what rate per mile did you use in making your assumption?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Hour!

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Or hour, or whatever rate you used?

**MR. BYERS:** — If you want to do an estimate cost, if the estimates are for \$438,000, at 600 hours, that would be \$7.10 an hour.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — How do you calculate that? 600 hours — 600 hours . . .

**MR. BYERS:** — It works out to about \$1.40 an hour, if you want to divide 5 into 710.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Do you realize what you're telling me, Mr. Minister — \$1.40 an hour, works out to less than a cent a mile. Now, let's do some . . .

**MR. BYERS:** — All right, we've given you the total sum and we've given you the estimated hours, we've given you the number of planes. If the hon. member wants to work it out, I think that's a fairly simple mathematical calculation.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — I am not going to come up with the answers for you, Mr. Minister. I've asked you the question. You've got one, two, three, four, five, six, seven people working around you. If they haven't got a calculator, I'll go out and get one and loan it to you. I'm asking you for some costs per mile and so far you've given me something that is really ridiculous! Let's have some figures and actual costs!

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, may I say again that the actual costs of operating the five planes for 1979 are simply not available.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — You don't have them?

**MR. BYERS:** — No, we don't have them because we don't know what the price of gas is going to be in November, 1979. We haven't established all the salaries; we don't know what the costs for repairing the planes will be in 1979 because this is only the fourth month in 1979; so we've got eleven months to go yet, and there could be a lot of breaks and repairs, so the actual costs of the repairs for this fiscal year are not known. We are estimating that the total cost of operating the fleet will be that, but that is an estimate. If a plane crashes and we have to spend tens of thousands repairing it, that will be a repair cost that will make a dent in the advance account. We will settle the cost with each department at the end of the year.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Minister, that has to be the worst answer you could possibly



have given to anyone! If you are telling us that that's how you calculated your estimates, then I suggest that you need a new department. You need some new people in your department.

The estimates are supposedly based on history and experience. They are supposedly based on known costs. You have known costs. You can estimate the increase in fuel costs. Your Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) is doing it in billions of dollars. We are asking you to tell us how you calculated your different costs for different aircraft and your total cost of \$439,000.

Now, are you also trying to tell me that the same costs applied to the Cessna 185s as to the Cheyenne? I can't buy that and I won't buy that. What were your actual costs last year? You had some experience, so what were they? If you don't know, ask the Minister of Revenue (Mr. Robbins) who has had a lot of experience in the ownership of those aircraft! He turned them over to you in 1977. He must have had some figures. I want to know it costs, and what estimates you are using on a per mile basis for each one of those aircraft and you do the calculation on it! Don't put the onus on us to do it!

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member makes one assumption that is incorrect. He says that we know what the known costs are. We do not know what the known costs are; we are estimating what we think our costs will be. I gave you the criteria which we use to estimate.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Minister, we are getting excuses and not answers. We are getting excuses of incompetence, of hiding and refusing to answer questions that are put directly to you. The question is very simple. I said before, and I will repeat it, I am not assuming anything! I am only repeating what you yourself have said. You've had experience in costs because you've had the aircraft since October, 1977; so you know what some of your costs were. How did you arrive at cost? Don't tell me that with 600 hours in all of the aircraft you come up with a figure of \$439,000, because every aircraft is different! Now, how did you break it down and how did you come up with the figures that totalled up to \$439,000? Your people who calculated this and gave you the information should now be able to give you the information as to how they arrived at those figures. If they can't please get rid of them.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, we estimated that each of the five planes would fly approximately 600 hours each, and based on the previous year's gross costs, we assumed that the gross costs this year would be \$439,150.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — That's your answer.

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — So you also assume then that every aircraft is going to cost the same amount of money in that case.

Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether I'm in order or not but I'm going to take a break for coffee and I'm going to let my colleagues carry on with some of the questioning on this and I want to come back to this because I haven't received an answer yet. Can that be done? Can I come back later on it?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Sure you can.

April 23, 1979

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Yes, you can.

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, we'll go back to our contracts. As you'd stated earlier, you had some aircraft under contract. May I have a copy of those contracts of the aircraft that are under the contract — or tenders?

Mr. Chairman, maybe while the minister is looking that up, I would like a copy of the contracts that have expired in the last two years.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, we are quite prepared to give to the hon. member this information about the contract.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Contract or contracts?

**MR. BYERS:** — There is only one — oh, contracts, two, yes. The information is the firm to whom it was awarded, the minimum flying time as specified in the contract, the period for which the contract applies, that is, the time frame, the number of planes, the published tariff rates and the rates submitted by the competitive companies, the unsuccessful companies. I think that would be the basic information you would want.

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, can I have that information now, if you have it there? May I have it tonight?

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes. Helicopter, the firm the contract was awarded to was Athabasca Airways. Minimum flying time was 600 hours . . . (inaudible interjection). . . No. I'll give you the basic information from the contract. The length of the contract between DNS and Athabasca, May 1, 1976; it was from May 1, 1976 to May 1, 1979 with the option of extending it for two years to April 30, 1981 and that has been done. It has been extended for two years. That's the length of the contract.

The rates for the extension May 1, 1979 to May 1, 1981 are the published tariffs for 106-B helicopter, Athabasca Airways, \$240 an hour; Liftair, \$285; Apex \$250; Okanagan \$270; Shirley helicopters \$305 and Associated \$325. So that Athabasca was the lowest bid.

**MR. GARNER:** — First of all, Mr. Minister, are we comparing the same type of helicopter? Rather than reading this information, it baffles me why we cannot have a copy of that contract, Mr. Minister, rather than having you read it to us, why can we not have a copy of that contract or any other contract?

**MR. BYERS:** — The reason I didn't provide the hon. member with a contract is that the contract specifies the conditions of operation and it doesn't have this information written into the contract. These were by tender.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, on the successful bid which you've indicated, the successful bid was \$240 an hour. What was the price between May 1, 1976 and May 1, 1979? Was that the same price? Are you indicating that there is no increase in the rate?

**MR. BYERS:** — I have quoted you the new rate.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — What is the old rate?

**MR. BYERS:** — \$220 per hour.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, I think, and I am not an aviation expert, but my understanding is the CTC does not allow an increase in rate on an extension of a contract. If the minister will check his contract, in all aviation contracts clauses no. 1 to 28 indicate they are all the same in all contracts and clause 22 of those style of contract indicates when you continue the term of an aircraft you cannot increase the amount that you are paying per hour or the base rate without tendering. You must re-open it if you intend to give an increase, so basically you have broken the rules and the laws of the Canadian Transport Commission by allowing an increase of \$20 per hour.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — No.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Yes. CTC rules say that you can't re-open it with an increase.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the terms of the contract between DNS and Athabasca Airways provided for revision.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, CTC law says you cannot provide for that provision in aircraft re-openers of contracts. It's against the law. You can't write it into a contract even if you want to. It's against the law. That's CTC rules — rule no. 22. So if you are going to re-open and give an increase, you must open it for tenders. If you are going to continue an extension for another two years at the same rate, then that's legal by CTC rules. But what you have done has gone against the rules. What the rule says is you must open it up if you are going to give them an increase or keep it at \$220. Now would the minister reply on that?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I am not arguing the point the hon. member makes if he is referring to a commercial airline. He has not made the point that the CTC or whoever forbids the increasing of the rates where an individual contract is the case and this is an individual contract.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, Athabasca is a contract company, commercial, and therefore it is covered by CTC rules. Yet in the CTC rules it states you can give an extension as long as you don't jack up the price. And you cannot let a contract that allows a jack up in it, so, therefore, your contract of 1976 is illegal from what I understand of the situation. Secondly, if you are going to reopen a contract and you give an increase you must open it for all contenders. That is the rule. That is rule 22 of the CTC rules. If you look at your submission, and the rate books of different helicopter companies, you will discover that the first 28 clauses are identical in every one of the contracts because CTC rules those 28 must be the first 28 in the contract. Therefore, Mr. Minister, I suggest you have two choices: to go back to Athabasca and suggest they continue to get the contract for the next two years at 220, which was the original contract, or you have to reopen it for tender.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I know the hon. member for Rosthern would not want to practise law without a licence. This contract, I assure him, was reviewed by a solicitor.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, the statement I have just quoted is also from a solicitor and was checked today with the CTC for backup, again, to make sure that the ground I stood on was solid.

May I suggest, first of all — let me go back into the rates, the rates that you have quoted,

April 23, 1979

the 285, 250, 270 and 305 and the 240 that you quoted as who you awarded it, you say comes right out of their books, their regular tariffs. Am I correct? you said that came right out of the regular tariff that wasn't tendered?

**MR. BYERS:** — The information was obtained from the tariff book of tariff rates.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — The minister is saying now that all you did to get quotes this year was look at the tariff rates of each of the companies and say, oh, this is what they charge. The lowest one, no matter what the equipment was (we are now comparing apples and oranges for equipment, to start with), no matter what the equipment was, this is the cheapest one; therefore, we're not going to tender, we're going to go with their tariff book. That's what you're telling me now.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I don't have the official here who actually handled this. We could get in touch with him and give you the answer at a later time. We'd be prepared to give you that information.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — I assume by what's happening here this evening and it being 9:00, we'll still be into these estimates the next time we open then up tomorrow or whatever it is. Will you have the official here or the answers available tomorrow, or Wednesday, or whatever day it is, to answer the question that I have just asked?

**MR. BYERS:** — We may be able to get them for you tonight.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — O.K. When you're talking to your individual, will you make sure that we're comparing the same capacity helicopter, the same flying speed, the same crane speed, the same capacity for lifting water, the same travelling distance ability within the same hour, the mobility, or are we just talking rate? I believe we're comparing apples and oranges when we're talking about different kinds of equipment. We're not comparing equipment by what it will perform. Can you also have that kind of answer? I assume your official is upstairs because one of your men is leaving to go get something. Am I correct?

**MR. BYERS:** — We'll try to get that information as soon as we can. We may be able to get it within minutes.

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, I think we can move off of this very fast.

**MR. BYERS:** — Just a second. Mr. Chairman, I will do all I can to expedite the work of the House. We can provide the information you have requested under Items 12 or 13, if you want to move along.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Just one question, Mr. Minister. Are you suggesting that resource branches weren't asked for these things and fire suppression?

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes, either one of those would be appropriate.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — I put my hands in the control of Mr. Chairman. Will you allow me then, when he comes back, and we get to 12 and 13, to be able to talk to the two of them together so that I can let him move as he is suggesting now? I don't know that I can move two votes at the same time otherwise.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order! I think it has been the practice of the House to try to have

questions in generality over Item 1, and there are items under the vote here, and the minister has referred you to items 12 and 13 for the correct place in which he would be prepared to answer them. I am prepared to take that as a proper place to ask them.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — My question, Mr. Chairman, is, as he suggested that I'll have to ask them under both. I am asking then for permission to be able to ask questions that would affect both 12 and 13 simultaneously later, because otherwise I lose my right if I don't do them under item 1.

**MR. GARNER:** — As I've stated before, Mr. Minister, and we've got something else . . . I'll ask him very nicely first of all. I'm just asking for a copy of the contract that you have there. That's all I'm asking for, Mr. Minister. Just give me the copy, please.

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, we haven't made a practice of giving out the contracts. I've given you the basic information. The contract is an operating document and it doesn't have the prices all written into it.

**MR. GARNER:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I asked you nicely. Mr. Minister, there will be some words in that contract. What are you trying to hide from us and from the people of Saskatchewan? I'm only asking for something that we are entitled to have — a copy of the contract, please.

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes, the member has asked a very nice question in a very nice way and I hope he'll like the answer. We'll give him a copy of the contract.

**MR. GARNER:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. When am I going to have this contract, Mr. Minister? You said I was going to have it when? Tonight?

**MR. BYERS:** — Oh, I don't know whether the Xerox equipment . . . yes, we have some staff here who work overtime. We'll get you a copy tonight.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Mr. Minister, I can hardly believe what I've heard in your rather evasive answers tonight, and I wonder if there isn't some degree of continuity amongst the members on the other side.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — There is.

**MR. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — Well, that's very good because one of the ministers, who did a commendable job in his estimates, Mr. Cody, when questioned by the member for Rosetown-Elrose (Mr. Swan) regarding Saskatchewan Housing, said the following, regarding information in 1978-79, and that's all we want from you. This is what he said, quoting from Hansard:

Certainly, we will be willing to give you any and all the information we have, on any particular project, with regard to the amount of money that was estimated, the actual money spent, and all that.

Then Mr. Swan went on in the next statement and said, well, we'd just like to discuss 1978 and your estimates for 1979, and Mr. Cody's reply was, yes, it's a lot of information, but we'll certainly get that for you, no problem at all.

I quote from one of the other ministers in this government and then I listen and hear you come out with the most evasive, vague and feeble answers I've heard since I came into

April 23, 1979

this House.

Now you know as well as I do that you have the information on those airplanes for 1978. You know exactly how much each one of those airplanes cost you in 1978 and if you don't, I would suggest that you take a look at your department! I can't understand what kind of accounting procedures you use. Every other department, such as the Minister of Revenue's (Mr. Robbins), knows to the cent what these things are costing them.

This is all we are asking you. You don't have to give us a talk about not knowing what fuel prices are and there might be a plane crash and there might be goodness knows how many other things!

Let's forget about 1979. These are estimates based on the operation of 1978.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — No.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — They are! How else do you estimate? From the seat of your pants?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, these are estimates for the fiscal year, 1979-80. These are not the estimates for 1978 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You said that these were the estimates for 1978 . . . (inaudible interjections). . .

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order! I think the hon. member fro Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) knows the rules of the House and I ask all members to try to adhere to them because it's only by the application of those rules that we're going to expedite things here. I ask you, on both sides of the House, to kindly refrain from any innuendoes back and forth. Let's get on with the business and expedite the things which you were sent here to do.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, very plainly and bluntly, will you give us the operating expenses of the Cessna airplane for the year 1978-79? You have the information and that will give us a start. That's as plainly as I can ask the question and I think it's the same sort of thing we've expected from other departments and I should say have received.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I'll give him the same offer given before and that is that we will give him the gross cost for each aircraft.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — All right, if that's the case, let's take one aircraft at a time. We'll start with . . .

**MR. BYERS:** — May I ask the hon. member if he will be satisfied with the gross cost for each aircraft?

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — I'll answer the question, Mr. . .

**MR. BYERS:** — First, ask the question.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — What do you mean by the gross cost for each aircraft? Would you explain that to me and then I'll be able to tell you whether I'd be satisfied or not.

**MR. BYERS:** — It's the total gross cost of operating the aircraft for one year.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — And I'd asked you for one Cessna, so we're talking about one Cessna. You're going to tell me the total gross cost of operating that one Cessna for one year?

**MR. BYERS:** — We can give you for one but we're offering to give it to you for five.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — I want to know what it costs to operate an airplane not to have five and then have to divide — I'm asking about one airplane for one year.

**MR. BYERS:** — No, I said we will give you the gross costs for operating each of the five aircraft.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — We are getting the same answer again, gross costs. The member just asked you what the gross cost was — the member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. Taylor). My question to you is this: Do you mean by gross cost, fuel, depreciation, maintenance, pilot, hangar costs, insurance, repairs (that's included in maintenance), and any other cost that you may think of?

**MR. BYERS:** — Of your list, I'm not sure that hangar costs would be counted for each plane. I'm not sure that they're worked in. I don't think a portion of hangar costs is calculated down to each airplane and prorated as to size and all that.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Fine, but, does it include all other?

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — O.K., all right, that's good. What is the cost for the first Cessna on the list?

**MR. BYERS:** — I gave the hon. member an undertaking that we would get those costs and it's going to take us some while to obtain them. But, I'll give you an undertaking that we will get the costs and we will provide you with the information. I'm not certain that we can . . . that is going to take us a little while to do.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — I think we can move on if we have a consensus here on what we were talking about. You're going to give me the costs of the SPN Baron, the gross costs. Then, you are going to give me the gross costs of the SPG Baron and the gross costs of the Cessna. The Barons are in fire suppression.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Minister, the five aircraft that you are referring to are the three Cessnas, the Piper Aztec and the turbo prop Cheyenne. Those are the five aircraft you are referring to, I take it?

**MR. BYERS:** — The Aztec and the three 185s.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — You indicated that the other units or the other aircraft were in fire suppression. Can you supply that information as well on those aircraft?

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes, we can give you that but, please understand, it's going to take some time to do that.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — I'll accept that but I don't understand it. I don't know how your people can come to these Chambers (this Assembly) without that kind of information in

April 23, 1979

their hands. This is the type of information that, surely, is recorded. Surely, it is accounted for; surely, they should have at their fingertips, and I just can't possibly understand why they haven't got it. While you are at it — if that's the case and if we're going to have to wait for that information, hopefully not too long — will you also indicate to us the estimated hours of flying of each of these aircraft as well as the experience since you've taken over in October of 1977? How many hours has each aircraft flown and how many hours are you estimating for each aircraft for the estimated year 1979-80?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, we're dealing with appropriation here, not the advance account. The 1978-79 financial statements have not yet been completed, so the actual costs are not known as of this time.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — The actual costs of your . . .

**MR. BYERS:** — . . . for the portion of the previous fiscal year.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — When does your year end in the department?

**MR. BYERS:** — March 31.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — All right. You had the aircraft unaccounted for from October of 1977 to March of 1978? Where are the figures for that period of time; the hours flown, the costs, everything else? That's the information I asked for and I don't know why that's so difficult? Surely it's there?

**MR. BYERS:** — The advance account could be audited any time from May until September. It's not uncommon for them to be audited in July.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Has that account not been audited yet? Is that what you're telling us?

**MR. BYERS:** — For '78-79 it has not been audited.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — October '77 to March of '78, that has not been audited?

**MR. BYERS:** — The period October '77 to March 31, '78 is not a full year but six months of winter. The hon. member's question as I understood it was — is the advance audited for the fiscal year April 1, '78 to March 31, '79? Is it audited at this time? The answer is, no.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — No, I'm referring to the period that the aircraft were used of October 1977 to March 31 or 1978. That period of time where you had the aircraft, has that fiscal year been audited yet?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has asked for (I am not sure what he asked for) but, it was for the period October 1977 to March 31, 1978, costs. Those are advance accounts costs and we are not considering, at this time, the advance account costs. We are dealing with the appropriation.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — You are contradicting yourself, Mr. Minister. You offered, a few minutes ago, to give us the estimated cost for the coming year, for 1979-80. I am talking about exactly the same thing. Now, why are you saying on one hand that you are



going to provide us with the information on the costs of operation and the estimated miles and so on, then on the other hand you say, well, it is a different account and we are not talking about that account? You are contradicting yourself.

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, we are simply not dealing with advance accounts unless I misunderstand the rules and I am in your hands.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, why then did you offer to give us the information that we asked for, that the member for Indian head-Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) asked for, providing the cost of operation for the 1979-80 estimates based on individual aircraft, based on estimated miles or hours of operation and so on? You just finished, two minutes ago, telling us that you would provide us with that information. Fine, we accept that and we appreciate that. Now I am asking you to give us the cost that you experienced in the 1977-78 estimates, or fiscal year, that has or has not been audited, (and that is the question I asked which you haven't answered.) Why on the one hand are you doing it and on the other hand you are saying, no, it is a different account? It doesn't make sense. Correct me.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I think it is clear that the opposition has been up in the air all night. I offered to undertake a fairly major piece of research that really we are not required to provide in this legislature in the course of discussing appropriations, if I understand the rules. I agreed to provide him with the information, for 1977-78, thinking that might bring them back to earth . . . (inaudible interjection). . . Well do you want 1979-80? Well then we will give that to you next year . . . (inaudible interjection). . . Because we don't know them now. I agreed to give you the costs, the total gross operating costs, for the five planes for the fiscal year 1977-78, because that information is available. It will take some time to dig it out. The audit is not completed for that term as of this time and may not be completed until July. I gave you an undertaking that I would provide you with that information with the full understanding that it's going to take some while to get it. I'm not required to give you that information. The actual gross costs for each plane for '79-'80 will not be know for a full 12 months and therefore, it's not possible to give you that information now. Yet, the hon. member keeps harking back that we'll not give him the actual gross operating costs for '79-'80 when we haven't added up the fuel bills or paid the salaries for that time frame.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm just absolutely amazed at the information and the answers that I'm getting from the minister. The question that the member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) asked you was the information on the gross costs estimated for '79-'80 estimates.

**MR. BYERS:** — That isn't what he asked me.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Yes, it is. That's exactly what he asked you for. I, in turn then, asked you after he sat down, for the estimated flying hours of each aircraft. Then, you said that you didn't have that information because the fiscal year wasn't finished. Well how can you give the answer for the gross costs if that's the case. Then, you turn around and you tell me that your year ended in March 31, 1978. It ended, right? Now there's an ending; granted there is none for the following year. But you estimated it. It's in your estimates! How did you arrive at it? There's no possible reason in the world that I can think of that you can't supply us with the answers. If you want me to list them to you on an A, B, C basis or a 1, 2, 3 basis, I will start all over again and we'll go back, asking the questions the way I want them answered.

**MR. BYERS:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, this is something we go through each year about this time of year when the opposition's stamina starts to break and they wear down and they haven't got the time to stay in the House for the full questioning and they run in and out for rest periods and coffee. While he was out, I said no less than three times to this legislature that the estimates, the dollar estimates here were based on an estimated 6090 hours for each of the five planes and I have given that information no less than five times in the last hour and a half.

I wrote it down; you asked for the estimated flying hours for 1979-80. That's what you asked me and it's 600 hours and that's been given now no less than six times in this House tonight.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — This minister is taking my questions out of context. I am not doubting that you said 600 hours. I'll go back to the original question and incidentally, I was not out of the House when you answered the question, I was right here. I went out for two minutes to get a coffee. You went out because nature called. I am asking you again! The 600 hours I understand is your estimated hours for each flying aircraft. It's not the same cost for every aircraft. Are you trying to tell me that you're basing your cost the same for the Aztec as you are for the Cessna or the same as the Cheyenne? That's what we're trying to arrive at; what is your individual cost? The actual that I asked for, the experience, isn't based on 600 hours. It's based on what you used it for in 1977 to March the 31 of 1978. Please understand the questions and maybe you can give us some proper answers!

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I've told him I've given the gross cost of operating each plane for the fiscal year 1978-1979.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order! There comes a time when the chairman has to make a decision. The Chair has no power (and I say this to all the members of the Assembly) to ensure that a member gives the kind of answer that another member may want to receive. All that I can do is to ensure that both the question and the answer are in order. In this case, both the question and the answer I interpret are within the rules. But, if the questions and the debate become unduly repetitious, then a rule is being breached; a rule within the House, and it is incumbent then upon me to interrupt the members and to ask the hon. members to ask a new question. It has come to that time as far as my ruling is concerned. I ask for a new question. If it's on Item 1, O.K.

**MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):** — I'd like to respond to your ruling, first of all, Mr. Chairman. I think there's ample precedent (and I've heard in other legislatures in this country) . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order! The ruling of the Chair is not debatable. If you challenge my ruling, you challenge my ruling.

**MR. LANE:** — I'm asking you to consider the practice in other jurisdictions, for example, when the former Leader of the Opposition . . . (inaudible interjection). . .

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order! Order! Again, you are still debating my ruling. If you want to challenge my ruling that is the prerogative of any member.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I will accept your ruling as such. I will ask one more question on that particular subject based on the 1977-78 fiscal year in which you operated the five aircraft in question and the question is this: Will you advise us

tomorrow or as soon as possible, the number of flying hours you experienced in that period of time on each of those aircraft? How many hours were they used from October 1977 to March 31, 1978 and I'll wait for your answer on that because I have another question to come back to.

**MR. BYERS:** — The hon. member, Mr. Chairman, has asked if the answer to his question could be provided forthwith or within a matter of hours and it is simply not possible to get that information in that short time frame.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — How long will it take you to get it for me and will you supply it in due course?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, we can provide him with the actual hours of flying time for each of the five planes for '77-'78.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — October 1977.

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes. October 1977 to March 31, 1978. Yes, I will give him an undertaking that we will provide that information but it will be necessary to go back through the books and get that for each of the five planes. So we're not going to have it tomorrow morning.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — I beg your pardon.

**MR. BYERS:** — It is going to take some weeks to get this information.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I fail to understand the attitude taken by the minister in that answer.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, on the point of information, it will take two or three weeks to get that information.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — CPA (Canadian Pacific Airlines) has that available, don't they?

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Just a comment to wind that up. When you made your estimates up for 1979-80, you must have used the hours used in '77-'78 as a guide to arrive at the number of hours and I'm very surprised that your deputy minister and your other associates do not have that information at hand. However, to expedite matters tonight, I will accept that, that you will provide me with that information within the next two or three weeks. Now to get back to the question of the logbook . . .

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, just so there is no misunderstanding about the time . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Make it perfectly clear.

**MR. BYERS:** — I have given the hon. member an undertaking that we will get that information. I have indicated that it may take two to three weeks. I can well remember a question asked in this House, not by any member of the present opposition. I can remember a question asked in this House by a member of the opposition where we had to put one person on the task for three to four months and it cost \$1,500 to \$1,600 to get that answer.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — And that was just the beginning.

**MR. BYERS:** — I say as a minimum it will be two to three weeks, so I don't want the hon. member to be under any illusion. We will get it for him as soon as we can. There are other priorities, and we will give him that information. It will be a minimum of three weeks. I think that is a reasonable estimate of time, and I am not giving you any commitment that it will be in his hands in three weeks. We'll get it as soon as we can. So let's have that clear.

**MR. LANE:** — Let's, just so there's also nothing misleading . . . I understand that there was a time when the government opposite was in opposition that it required over a year to get answers on one particular question and that table in the middle was filled up and it cost \$60 some thousand at that time, which at that time was a significant amount of money and back, I think, in 1968 or 1969, wasn't it, filled that table. Remember that? The hon. member knows that. So let's not give the argument about whether it's a convenience or a cost. The fact is the opposition has a duty to ask questions and has a right to ask questions. Now I think all I want to ask you on this particular matter is why in public accounts two or three years ago, CVA was able to supply the opposition with a print-out of the origin, destination, date of flight, passengers of all the government aircraft and were able to give it to us in a matter of a day, that in fact . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — You're wrong.

**MR. LANE:** — No, I'm not.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Ask the Minister of Revenue (Mr. Robbins).

**MR. LANE:** — Go to public accounts. Go back and check. They had the doggone information right there. They were able to give us the whole print-out. Yes, one year, that's right. Sure, the Minister of Revenue, Supply and Services says one year. They were able to give us the origin, the destination, the aircraft by serial number, the passengers on it and any intermediate stops, whether passengers were dropped off or picked up. I ask you why you can't give us that information and relatively immediately?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to comment first of all on the hon. member's; introductory remarks. We are not denying the information. The first day I sat in this legislature the Attorney General of the day, for whom the hon. member who has just taken his seat was the executive assistant, tabled an answer to a question that stood about that high and the Attorney General of the day informed the House as to the estimated cost of preparing that answer. The answer was delivered nearly one year after the question was asked. I'm saying to the hon. member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau), who is my member of the legislature that we will get the answer and that we will provide it in the shortest time frame possible.

On the question the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) has raised, why do you not have the officials with the answers. Those, may I say, are proper questions to ask in the public accounts. The questions were asked of CVA (Central Vehicle Agency) in public accounts, they were not asked of DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) in public accounts and the opposition had every opportunity to ask those questions when the officials were there with all the documents and all the statistics and all the figures for the year under review and they did not ask those questions. I was in public accounts when you were there. And that's the answer to the hon. member's question.

**MR. LANE:** — Let me just ask you — I'm assuming because you're taking longer to supply that information that you have a different recordkeeping system and I suggest, obviously considerably less efficient than CVA has. Because it's going to take you longer to supply it I'm going to suggest at the outset that if your systems are not similar to CVA, then you better shape up and get them in the same order as CVA, so that you can supply that information and have it relatively handy. Secondly, will you supply for the fiscal year, '78-'79, the origin-destination of all flights of the five aircrafts under discussion, the passenger list, names of the passengers, any intermediate stops and I'm assuming that they will do that for each flight . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — That's a logbook.

**MR. LANE:** — Oh no it's not. The origin-destination, the passengers, whether there were any intermediate stops, passengers dropped off or passengers picked up between the origin and destination.

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, to answer the first part of the hon. member's question, the reason CVA can provide the information, perhaps faster than we can, is that their system is computerized and DNS is not. Secondly, we can provide for 1978-79, the origin, destination, and the number of passengers.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Names of passengers?

**MR. BYERS:** — No, not names. They're not recorded by DOT.

**MR. LANE:** — Why does CPA then keep the names of the passengers?

**MR. BYERS:** — No, they don't. We'll provide the information that DOT requires us to keep.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Minister, I asked you earlier if you would give us a photocopy of each page of your logbook for the year in question, since the origin of your air fleet, 1977, to the present date, preferably. Have you determined to provide us with that information or photostated copies of the logbook?

**MR. BYERS:** — No, we did not give an undertaking to provide the photo, Xerox copies, or whatever, of the logbooks.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm aware that you didn't give me the undertaking. I am asking you if you will.

**MR. BYERS:** — No.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Is there a reason why you won't give us that information, Mr. Minister?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, it seems we're back at about 7 p.m. I explained to one of the hon. members about 7:10 p.m. that the logbooks could not be taken further than from the plane to the pilot's office and returned. We don't have any photostatic equipment out there, I'm told.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Again, Mr. Chairman, he's avoiding and evading the question. I

asked you why? You said because you can't take it out of the aircraft. Earlier in the evening you said that you couldn't take it out for any extended period of time. I asked you then could you take it out for a few minutes to go and photostat it and put it back in the airplane? You said you weren't sure at that time. now you are saying no. I am asking you why not?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, it now seems that we're going full cycle. We're keeping track of the questions. That was the third question asked when we entered these estimates tonight. The answer was no then and it's still no.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Chairman, I am well aware that the answer was no. My question wasn't will you, my question was, why won't you? Mr. Chairman, I am waiting for an answer. The question I asked you was why won't you provide, other than the . . . (inaudible interjection). . . Why won't you photocopy the logbook for every aircraft? Mr. Chairman, could I have some order and attention?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I have just consulted with a competent lawyer, and I am advised there is no problem in giving that information.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Minister, why didn't you ask a competent lawyer that question three hours ago? You would have saved yourself an awful lot of time in this House.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, earlier I was questioning you about a renewal on a contract, and you indicated you may have an answer shortly. I would ask you . . .

**MR. BYERS:** — The official we wanted to contact for this information was not available tonight.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Seeing as you have to contact that official I would ask you to check two more things. You seem to indicate that the prices that you took or he took before you renewed the contract were the prices that are in their book that are advertised, that you did not tender. Am I correct on that statement?

**MR. BYERS:** — He took an option that is in the contract to extend the contract. That option is clearly in the contract, to extend for a period of up to two years.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — I am not arguing on that point. What I am asking is a question. Would you check with your individual, who you say took and looked at the rate book, for a simple explanation? Basically, the published rate books of the companies which you listed, five of them, were certain figures. You said seeing that Athabasca was the lowest in their rate book, you took the clause in the old contract, made on May 1, 1976, and gave them a two-year extension with a new rate. Am I correct on that statement?

**MR. BYERS:** — Mr. Chairman, I gave the hon. member an undertaking that we would get the basis for the rate agreed to under the extension. We'll have that information for you as soon as we can get it. We, unfortunately, were not able to get it tonight. We'll try and have it for you. I presume we'll be dealing with estimates again.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — My question to you, is simply, Mr. Minister: would you ask the question of your man? I assume, and I stand to be corrected, that you did not tender, you only looked at the rate books, said Athabasca's rate book is the lowest, therefore, we will take the option and extend it another two years.

**MR. BYERS:** — I do not have that information. That's the information that I want to obtain for you and give to you.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, you indicated earlier that you lease other aircraft. Sorry! You lease these aircraft. Now do you rent any aircraft on an hourly basis, separate from this, and on what grounds?

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes, occasionally, for short terms.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Do you go with the rate book or is there a special rate that you have billed somewhere? Do you go with the commercial rate, and therefore, do you spread it around to everybody, or how do you do it?

**MR. BYERS:** — Any commercial aircraft that is available because often it is needed on very short notice.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, earlier you said you were going to give my deskmate this evening a copy of the contract. Have you got it available for us yet?

**MR. BYERS:** — Yes, would the page deliver this document to the hon. member for Wilkie, please.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, I am curious about one other portion of your contracts. Earlier, I think it was in municipal affairs, the minister indicated that they used DNS contracted helicopters for (now the minister is shaking his head and I might have the wrong department) — I was questioning about ambulances, and they indicated, the minister who spoke indicated, that the helicopters available to them were on DNS contract. My question is: does that come off the total hours you have in your contract? Are those additional hours? Is it the same rate? How do you use your contract to cover air ambulance, SPC, (I'm told they use your contract) and so forth?

**MR. BYERS:** — The contract for the helicopters specifies the minimum number of hours per year and if any other department, and I would expect, agency, of the government uses the helicopter, then, the hours that that agency or department uses the helicopter is deducted from our commitment of a minimum of 600 hours.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — You have a contract minimum 600 hours with the helicopter company. SPC or highways could use 30 hours, 40 hours, air ambulance could use some and so forth, and you bill them back? Or how is it billed into the system?

**MR. BYERS:** — We charge the cost back to the department that used the service at the contract rate.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — What happens then, if you go over the minimum contract rate? Most contracts, and I haven't had time to read this one yet, have a built-in cost, either a higher rate after so many hours and some contracts have a lower rate after so many hours. Which rate do you charge out at?

**MR. BYERS:** — Ours is the flat, fixed rate.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — So, the more you use the 'copter doesn't change the rate at all. In your department, Mr. Minister, have you checked the different capacities of speed, hauling, lifting strength of each of the different helicopters to know which is really the

best buy so you're not comparing apples and oranges when you compare different types of helicopters?

**MR. BYERS:** — DNS is not running that kind of a testing operation per se but, rather, the judgment is based on experience.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, if you're flying a helicopter for an hour and you have 150 miles to go and one helicopter goes at a rate of 150 miles an hour; it only costs you one hour of flying time. The other helicopter's rate is a little less but it takes him an hour and one-half. The best price is the faster helicopter, obviously, if he can do it for less money and bill for the total distance. I am asking, if you've taken that into consideration?

For example, one aircraft may be able to do the flight for \$100 because of his faster speed and the other aircraft may have to take longer and even though his rate is lower, it may cost you \$120. So, there is no saving. I am asking you when you look at contracts if you take this into consideration?

**MR. BYERS:** — In certain cases you will want a helicopter for speed. In other cases such as fire-fighting, fire suppression, speed is not the major quality and therefore the selection of the vehicle is based on its intended use.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, I ask you, while you're checking with your officials to check one more thing because I assume we'll be back at this as soon as we can. The CTC (Canadian Transport Commission) ruling that I referred to earlier, which indicates by my understanding that the renewal clause in this contract (which we can barely read — it's such a bad copy) says that you cannot increase the rate where you have indicated to me earlier that you have increased the rate by \$20. I suggest that when you check with your official, you make sure that . . . I believe you have broken the CTC laws by allowing an increase. Without an increase I think you are possibly not breaking the law even though the contract written by Athabasca may seem to indicate you have the right. CTC's first 28 rules — rule 22, general rules, indicates that you cannot increase without reopening tenders so you are in one of two things — either against the CTC act or you are just ignoring the law and going your own merry way. I'd like to know why you're doing that and why, if you're going to give an update price, why you don't open it for tenders?

**MR. BYERS:** — I think you're talking about airlines not contracts because 9(3) of the contract we think gives us the authority to do what we did.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, I have before me a copy of a basic agreement with the first 28 rules in it and I have rule 22 which is contained in all contracts because the CTC requires these first 28 rules in the contract and rule 22 does not allow . . .

**MR. BYERS:** — Point of Order. Can the hon. member establish that the proposition he states relates to planes under contract or does he relate exclusively to commercial lines?

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:59 p.m.