

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 3, 1983

EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

AGRICULTURE

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 1

Item 1 (continued)

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — The question at 5 o'clock was sales policy for land bank land and land branch land. Okay, there has been no change in the policy from the previous administration except to say that on April 1 the land bank ceases to exist. That's the end of the budgetary year. It's all rolled into the land branch and administered under that body, at which time a dovetailed policy to reflect the new scheme of things will be announced. The only real change to date has been, from my understanding, that land bank tenants no longer have to be tenants for five years before they exercise an option and vacant land bank land is now offered for sale by tender.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I have some concerns with the present government's policy toward crown corporations, and in particular your Legislative Secretary presented a Senate agriculture committee with a brief that was talking basically about Canagrex, that the government is going to cut back. When he was talking about Canagrex, he talked about the government's planned cutbacks to Agdevco.

The agricultural development corporation has done a tremendous thing for Saskatchewan farmers, I think. I'm impressed with the role they've done in developing sales for livestock, the role they played in crop development and funding, but most particularly in their role in the international aid and the international development program and contracts they have.

Is he speaking on behalf of the government, or are you planning cutbacks to Agdevco?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — No planned cutbacks; perhaps a change in thrust, and that's under review now. Agdevco has been criticized in the past for being in competition with private traders and, I think, a legitimate criticism. Agdevco, for the most part, has done an excellent job under rather serious budgetary constraints by the previous administration. We would like to see Agdevco, in fact, develop into broader markets such as the Pacific Rim, and be a market developer as opposed to competing in the private sector. These are just thoughts I'm rolling off my head.

There's no planned cutbacks for Agdevco. Maybe sometime in the future when things unfold, as they will, there will be a change of thrust for Agdevco.

MR. ENGEL: — As far as Agdevco's operation on overseas, basically on contracts they're doing with CIDA, overseas development projects . . . I was personally involved in their negotiations in Zambia, in the Zam-Can wheat project. What is the future of that

project, for example? Are you going to cut some funds there?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I'm going to answer the question, not because I feel any sense of obligation, because it's a crown corporations question, and not an estimates question.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Oh?

AN HON. MEMBER: — There's funding there for Agdevco. There's funding for it. In your estimates, there's funding for Agdevco, so . . .

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Administrative grant. If you want to take it to crown corporations, that's fine; if you want to wait here all night, that's fine, too. I don't care what you do, but I'm going to answer the question only because of the goodness and kindness in my heart.

I think, as a matter of fact, if I were to ask for a ruling on whether I must answer the question or not, the Chair would rule in my favour. But I'm not going to do that unless we get into the fight.

To my knowledge, since I don't have Agdevco officials here tonight, there is currently at least one major contract being negotiated. Now, I'm not prepared . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — I guess you were just saying . . .

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Sorry?

AN HON. MEMBER: — You're saying one additional?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Yes, sir.

MR. ENGEL: — We're getting into a few staffing questions. I have two more areas. Sorry, I think I'll touch on two other topics first.

The hog marketing commission, in hog marketing, have you got some numbers as far as production of hogs in Saskatchewan? Is that on the increase or is that levelled off or are they decreasing in the year under review? Where are we at as far as the production of hogs is concerned?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I don't know if you want absolute precision here, but my officials tell me that it's been fairly level for some time now. At what? Half-a-million, 600,000. Okay. It's running. '79-80-81 is running anywhere from a peak of 640,000 to a valley of 578,000. So, it's fairly close.

MR. ENGEL: — The producers and the size of producers, has there been some change in that? Are some small producers getting out of hogs and some producers growing larger? Is there a trend there or is that staying fairly constant too?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — The trend, although marked, is not marked, is to move intensified operations. Smaller people getting out.

MR. ENGEL: — Do your officials see a reason why this is happening, or is there some problem?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I expect it's economy of scale. You know, just the economics of the situation dictates that the operations have to be big enough to support themselves, and I would expect that's primarily it. The days of everybody having a couple of chickens, and a couple of pigs, and a couple of cows are for the most part history.

MR. ENGEL: — Is this basically why you've made the changes in the hog stabilization plan that opened up the top limit?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, I don't think we've done anything yet. We've been talking about taking a look at support levels and ceilings and floors and all other kinds of things. But I don't think there's been any policy statement on that yet.

MR. ENGEL: — An article in the *Leader-Post* this Tuesday, February 15, this year, they kind of say that proposed changes call for increasing it to 6,000 hogs a year. Is this in the study, part of the proposal?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, you know, I don't intend to even get into this one because if we're still evaluating what change may take place, I don't want to put it on the table here today and then have you come back and say, well, it's too much or it's too little or whatever. So, when the evaluation is completed, I'll be more than pleased to discuss it with you. And, yeah, I think that's reasonable and fair.

MR. ENGEL: — Before you consider some major changes, may I make a suggestion that . . . I think if you look at the size of operations there are more hog operations at 1,500 level than there are at the 6,000. And I think by increasing it . . . I've had several concerns expressed to me in phone calls and in some letters that are very concerned with shifting from helping and stabilizing the small producer — that's 1,500 and less — rather than going to the larger producer, because I think the program was designed to stabilize. That's why I was trying to get those questions from you earlier, Mr. Minister, because I feel that there are some smaller producers dropping out because of the stabilization plan. It needs to be tightened up, if anything, and strengthened for the smaller producer. The general trend that big is better isn't necessarily good. To get to the size where they are going to build and expand and borrow money to go with a 6,000 operation, it's going to take them a long, long time to recover those costs, whereas if they'd stay at a 1,500 operation with a decent subsidized plan in place, they haven't had to put out any money for a number of years and in a little while it has levelled off like you say. The subsidy has been almost nil.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, I'll take the member's concerns as recorded and take them into consideration when we are developing our change, if any.

MR. ENGEL: — If we can just talk a little bit about some of the people and some of the things you have done as far as staffing is concerned. I had one more issue, but I think I'll leave that.

As far as staffing is concerned, do you have any defeated candidates working in your department?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — To my knowledge there are no defeated Conservative candidates working in my department, and now that you have raised it, I may look for others.

MR. ENGEL: — Is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . James Petrychyn not working in the Department of Agriculture?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — No, he is not.

MR. ENGEL: — The department must have thought he's as good as the people in Regina Centre because the last words I've had . . . Possibly, was he transferred from your department recently?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — No, he has never been an employee. He's never been an employee of the department and if I can direct the member's attention to the blues, there is an order some place in here asking for that same information, no. 42 on page 13. He's not, in fact, employed by the Department of Agriculture. I've indicated already to this House that these will be dealt with and any information will be forthcoming at that time, not only for that one, but for the others in all other departments. I guess it's fair to say that if he is there or ever has been there in any capacity, it's probably because of the merit of the guy. I don't do blood tests on the people that we hire in our department.

MR. ENGEL: — That's right. I asked about transfers (some notable people have been making the news like Van Mulligen and all this kind of thing). Have you made any transfers in your department to your knowledge?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We transferred one in and we've transferred some within the department. I can think of two off the top of my head. We transferred in one Jim Webster, to head up our farm purchase and land bank thing, and I might add that he's been doing an excellent job. We transferred the deputy chairman of the land bank commission into my offices as special assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, and I might add that he's doing an excellent job.

As it relates to transfers from one town to another, as you say, there may have been one or two out there in rural Saskatchewan as a result of consolidation in the land bank staffing — you know, the extension side of land bank and that kind of thing. But to my knowledge that's it. That wouldn't be all.

MR. ENGEL: — Would you remember an Allan Voegeli, former executive assistant to Mr. Kramer, and was he involved in a transfer?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, my understanding is that he has been offered a transfer to Regina. He hasn't accepted it, and we certainly haven't forced him in anyway to take it, but I'm pleased now that you've raised that he was, in fact, an executive assistant to the former minister of highways. I thought that we were transferring him by way of promotion and merit, but that may not be the case.

MR. ENGEL: — And, consequently, are you aware of a Mr. Sawatsky, who is apparently three years away from retirement and was he being transferred, and if so, where to?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — There have been no transfers there. It's under discussion, but there have been no transfers made. The transfer, if and when it's made, will probably be worked out as a mutual arrangement. I understand that the workloads are significantly different in the two areas, and for that reason it's being looked at.

MR. ENGEL: — The information that was drawn to my attention was that a North Battleford person was transferred to Regina, a Regina person to Saskatoon, and a Saskatoon person to North Battleford, two of them being dairy technicians. I thought that sounded kind of unique and I was wondering if you are just transferring them — all three were dairy technicians in fact.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — As I have said here, the transfers have not been made. There is some discussion going on currently and it is to assist Mr. Sawatsky in his workload in Saskatoon because he has, you know, a rather burdensome workload there. It's an effort in rationalizing and balancing out some of the workload.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, the minister's answer, I'll take it if that is the consideration. I appreciate that very much. It looked strange from my point of view where one was asked to move to Regina, the Regina person to Saskatoon, and the Saskatoon person to North Battleford. It looked like a little game you were trying to play, Mr. Minister.

We have some basic informational questions, Mr. Minister, that we have been asking all of the departments. Can you tell me the names, positions and salaries of the members of your personal staff?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I could and I might, if it's not been asked for already here, at which time I will provide it. I don't feel strongly about this, but I just want you to understand that I feel no sense of obligation to do this, because it's clearly out of order when you've already asked for it on the blues and we've said we would provide it and all of that. But, having said that, I have nothing to hide so I'll answer it for you. If you'll withdraw the question I'll answer it so it's not out of order . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, I don't have that right.

MR. ENGEL: — If this is information you're trying to hide, what are the names, positions and salaries of all the members of your staff?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I really do want to give you the information. I'm just having a little problem with my conscience here because I would hate . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — That question was put on in June and they still don't have it.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Okay, I'll give you then any of them that may have changed since June, and since we've already got the ones in the mill that you asked in June, we'll provide you with that when we deal with the blues on private members' day. And any changes that have occurred since June in my office, I'll give you them. How's that? Are you talking about . . . I'm through playing with you. I'll give it to you. I just wanted to make that point. Are you talking about my office, right in my office, personal staff? I have one Harley Olsen, former deputy chairman of land bank, now special assistant to the Minister of Agriculture. His current salary is \$4,972.00 a month, which is an increment over his salary at his previous level at deputy chairman of land bank; Marjorie Jermyn, executive assistant, \$3,334.00 a month; Paul Jackson, executive assistant, \$3,084.00 a month. It's a pretty skinny staff when we get talented people in there, boy.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I want to tell you, this is a burning issue in Regina Centre, this business of agriculture.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Just show them your cowboy boots, Ned. Hold them out.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — That's right. I came all prepared for these estimates. I do have a question. I am not averse to asking it in Executive Council. I'll leave it to you as to how you handle it. What I would like is the salary range for the executive assistants you hired. I assume it's the same in all departments, just one salary range for executive assistants . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If the answer is no, then I probably should be asking for it in Executive Council. I just assumed there was one salary range . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No? I just assumed there was one salary range for EAs.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — No, and it's a little difficult to be tied to a salary range. If you're going for a masters economist, you're not going to get the masters economist for the same as you would get someone who would just be handling your media telephone calls and that kind of thing. In our department, we deem agriculture to be the most important department of government in Saskatchewan.

AN HON. MEMBER: — It is in my riding, too.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I believe that, and so we went for talent and we make no apology for it. You'll notice we don't have many of them, but they're top-notch — every one of them.

MR. ENGEL: — Do you have any additional people on contract or contractual arrangements?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — In my office? No, there are not. We have, in addition to the staff already named, a secretary who is my personal secretary and was also to the previous minister. She doesn't show up in agriculture because I'm also the minister for the transportation agency and that's where she shows up.

MR. ENGEL: — Do you have a press officer or press agent as such?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — My press officer or press agent as such is Paul Jackson, already named.

MR. ENGEL: — We'd like the total amount of entertainment expenses incurred since May 8 by you and your deputy minister, each assistant and executive assistant in your office.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — When? You're not getting it tonight.

MR. ENGEL: — I think, listening to health, the minister assured us he can do it in about two weeks time or in that time frame.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, I'll do it as it funnels down through the blues. I'm sure not going to funnel through it tonight. Since it's on the blues, it's already in the mill in the department, so why don't we let it take its course of action? Oh, there's more than that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I've got them marked. I just answered one. Do you want me to answer that, anyway — no. 17? I just answered that one for you.

I suppose your next question is going to be on air lines, and where all have I gone, and what did I do.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I want to enumerate them. I would say that the vast majority of

these are coffee for delegations that come in to visit with the minister or the minister's staff or whatever. You know how you used to do that when you were a Leg Secretary to the previous minister?

AN HON. MEMBER: — I think \$10 or more would be . . .

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, here's one on June 9 for \$10, 20. Here's one on June 14 for 5.25; June 16 for \$17.50. This is on the deputy minister's entertainment expenses, and there are a few. The total of the deputy minister's expenses, rounded off, is \$1,200. That's in 10 months. That's from May 1 to February 28.

Harley Olsen, my special assistant, has a total of \$65, rounded. Marj Jermyn has a total of \$40, rounded. Paul Jackson has a total of \$70, rounded.

I'm glad you raised this because I should maybe be submitting a claim.

MR. ENGEL: — Do any of these persons have benefits in lieu of wages and salaries?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I don't want to treat this lightly at all, but I would say that probably if the staff in my office and the senior staff in the department were paid by the hour they would be very little over minimum wage. That's one of the things that we do allow them to do. We allow them to work as late as they want. They're under the same guidelines and whatever that any other department is under . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . My deputy minister does not use a CVA car and he's therefore allowed \$100 a month on his personal car. Is that the answer to your question?

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I have a couple of short questions to you. One is one seed-cleaning plants. What is your policy on seed-cleaning plants at present?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — It hasn't changed. It's the same policy as existed previously. However the uptake was poor and it may well be revised going into the next budget. There's one plant currently under construction under the old scheme your administration had in.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, have you in the year under review, Mr. Minister, considered going to smaller plants at any time or assisting private plants to build up.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Yes, I remember some time ago, when we were sitting over there, we raised that same question and the argument at that time was that in order to make the unit viable they had to have so many acres in a 50-mile radius, and all of that kind of thing, and a bunch of people signed up to make it work. And the uptake under the old program has not been good. I don't know how many plants were built under the plan, but not very many in the total existence of the plan. So we are currently taking a look, recognizing that there is a need for the seed-cleaning capacity in rural Saskatchewan to be increased. We are currently taking a look at where we might go with it. To this point at least, I'm not prepared to bring it to the House.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, on the FarmLab program. Are you discontinuing the FarmLab program?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Never. As a matter of fact, the only change that I recall to FarmLab was we had some concern that the data coming in from FarmLab was not

going to be sound. So we sent a group of three, I think, on contract around to the FarmLab projects to make sure that all of the data gathered was sound and scientific, so that the project would be worth what we're putting into it. While they were gathering all this data they were visiting with all of the various boards around the province and it was discovered that there was some awkwardness with the boards boundaries not being coterminous with the agricultural district boundaries, so the recommendation was made to make those boundaries coterminous. That's the only real change made to date. We disbanded the committee system and put district boards in their stead, in these new areas that are coterminous with the ag districts.

MR. LUSNEY: — What is the composition of the district boards that you have in place now?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — It's as they were before.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could inform us whether the deep well drilling program the E-Logging, the \$1.50/foot — is that still in place and do you anticipate it staying?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — There's been no change.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I would like to ask a question about the lease policy you mentioned earlier, and I just caught the tail end of it, that it hadn't changed, is that right?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — No change to date, but as a result of the land bank repeal legislation last fall that will cease to exist come April 1. And at that time, the new policy encompassing all crown lands will be announced.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, the reason I asked the minister about that — and I have sent a letter to him — is that I've been getting a number of complaints from the Shaunavon area, and I suppose dealing with leased land it's unusual. But where leases have been granted to individuals without postings taking place — and I don't know whether this is something that's happening as a general rule or whether this is an isolated case — I wonder if, when that letter arrives, if it hasn't already (it was sent a couple of days ago), you'll quickly check it out because it's causing a great deal of concern to the people who had anticipated having an opportunity to bid on that land.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — There certainly will have been no long-term leases given without a posting. You will recall there was a review done by Hugh McLaughlin of Swift Current into the processes of allocation and appeal. And that review was tabled maybe a month ago. You will recall the . . . (inaudible) . . . at the time, I expect. And during the period that that review was going on, there were no postings but there were some one-year leases given out, you know, to keep the land productive or whatever, while the review was under way.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, Mr. Minister, do you anticipate that you'll have your program in place so that those leases that will be coming up for the year 1983 — because we don't have a great deal of time now, especially in the southwest corner — by April 1 or 15, or by the end of April at the latest? The people would like to know whether they have the lease or not and I think the program of giving it out on a one-year basis is a very short-term arrangement, but is something that shouldn't be carried on for a very long time. Farmers have a difficult time in doing long-term planning when they don't know whether they're going to have the land for more than one year. So can

you elaborate on whether or not that will be in place so they can get on with it?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Of course we're targeting — and this is in no way a commitment — for having the new policy in place for April 1 to coincide with the demise of the land bank, as the legislation dictated. Number one and number two, the one-year leases will continue for a full year, so that posting may not come up till fall, if you understand what I'm saying there. And number three, any of the postings that come up that are too late to get through all of the bureaucratic staff that they go through to get out there and post it, may well require another one-year lease. But they will be posted as quickly as possible and I understand the concern the member is facing.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — One final question on another area — and I believe this has been brought up earlier too — and that is a fuel rebate program which I know a number of farmers and farm groups are requesting and looking at. You'll have realized and heard that the price of fuel for all farm fuel is going up 10 cents a gallon or has gone up 10 cents a gallon with farmers facing the cost-price squeeze which we haven't seen the likes of, I think, since the late '60s and maybe 1970 and '71. I can remember back to those days when wheat was selling for \$1.26 and there was no final payment. But is the minister considering at this time any type of a farm fuel rebate program similar to what Alberta has? I believe they are paying about 32 cents a gallon on diesel. Have you got any plans at this time to help out the farmer who is facing what has to be the worst situation that they have faced for probably 15 years?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — There is no question that times are tough. That question was raised before by your colleague from Gravelbourg and I don't mind dealing with it again. The fact is that there was some consideration given to that and it was rejected because we have in fact announced a ten-year program to gasify rural Saskatchewan, so to speak, and natural gas as a source of energy runs about 60 per cent the cost of our conventional fuels. Admittedly, it's not in place right now, but the program is under way and in ten years the bulk of Saskatchewan will have access to that energy source and that will be very significant help as it relates to input costs.

We've brought in a farm purchase program which is a help on the input side. We have argued, myself, the Minister of Finance and the Premier, have argued and argued with the feds to give us some relief on fuels used for primary production. We recognize that there is a cost-price squeeze out there. I don't know how far we can go in Saskatchewan where we are still in better shape than a whole lot of other jurisdictions, and I would hope we can stay in better shape than a whole lot of other jurisdictions.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, you will be well aware that since April 26, the cost of farm fuel on the average has gone up about 33 cents a gallon which means, I suppose, on an average operation like my farm where we use about 4,000 gallons a year, the cost to the farmer would be in the area of \$1,320 — the increase in farm fuel alone since you have come into government. I think the farmers are having a very difficult time, especially now when world prices of oil are going down and they are having to pay, probably by next summer, as much as \$2,000 more than what they did when you came into government. You can say that the farm purchase program will help some, and it may, but very few. By and large the average farmer who is facing a \$2,000 increase in his fuel bill next year is going to have a very difficult time and I believe he is looking at the provincial government to assist him, especially at a time when all other costs are going up as well and the price of grain could very considerably drop if the world prices don't improve.

I just think that as a major producer of oil in Canada, we have an obligation, or you have an obligation as a government to do something to help the farmers with their fuel costs over the next year.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I share the concern raised by the member opposite. I question the sincerity of his argument. When they had their — I'm talking they, as when your administration was sitting over here — you had your 10-cent a gallon rebate program in place, but it had a ceiling, I think, of \$300, if I recall. And \$300 when you are talking about the numbers that you are talking about is a little rough.

The second point I want to make is just as an informational item. There are currently 346 approvals under the farm purchase program, currently 758 enrolments received. Not a shabby performance I think. I think that the program is, indeed, reaching numbers of people that wouldn't have been touched prior to the program with that kind of benefit.

The second or the third point that I want to touch on is the resolution that we brought in here last week on Tuesday, and we all voted in favor of it because it was a good resolution. And it reads that the Pepin proposal does not deal with unacceptable high taxation levels on farm input such as fuel, and we all agree on that. And what you're asking us to do now, because there hasn't been one penny of provincial sales tax put on farm fuel, certainly not since we've been around; I don't think you guys ever had it on either — by saying put on 30 cents or whatever per gallon of farm fuel, is to subsidize the federal treasury. And, quite frankly, we're not prepared to do that. We would sooner come in with a comprehensive solution to the farmers' problems and deal with transportation and input costs all in one ball of wax if we can.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, we can argue about whether an assistance program of 30 or 40 cents a gallon for farmers would actually help the farmer or not, but I think you'd have a hard time explaining to a farmer in any area in Saskatchewan that if the provincial government was to use royalties from oil that they do get — apparently from all the boasting that has been going on about the great increase in oil production — that some of that money could go back to assist the farmers, who are facing what any economist will say is the toughest times they've had in 15 years.

And you can make the case that during the '70s when we were in power, and the early '80s, farming was relatively lucrative by comparison to what it is today, and that you have an obligation, being in government at a time when farming is becoming very tough. I don't lay that at your feet; that's the world economy, but I think that you do have a responsibility to come forward now with a program that will assist in the purchase of fuel by farmers and the 300 and some odd people who are able to use the farm purchase program. I don't know out of how many that would be. I know there are a good number who have come to me who said they applied and couldn't get it.

For those 300, it's a good program. But there are many thousands of farmers who are not able to use it and, I think, are counting on the provincial government and the Minister of Agriculture to come forward with a plan that will assist them and see them through the next couple of years.

I think that a fuel rebate program is not illogical or a bad program. It's been practised in many provinces. It was practised here. I think the provincial government has a responsibility to look closely at it and use some of the resource money to give all the

farmers a break in the tough times.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Yeah, we have an obligation in several areas. And one very significant obligation we have is to be responsible right across the waterfront as it relates to government. And you would have us cut down on health or cut down on social services or cut down on education. And you're dictating our priorities it seems, and we're not prepared to accept that.

We are accepting our obligation to the farming community to the best possible extent that we can. I think in a responsible way. I think that was endorsed in P.A.-Duck Lake.

I think also that we would have a little money in the kitty for such a program had your government, when you were sitting on this side of the House, not signed the agreement that it did with the feds that provided for something like \$76 million in energy tax, petroleum tax or natural gas or whatever — like Sask Power, a crown corporation not normally taxed, but \$76 million went from Sask Power to the feds. Had we had those extra dollars going around in the province some place, perhaps we could have done something like that.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, the minister will talk about the poor record of the provincial government from 1971 to 1982, but I think more and more people are looking back on that era as the good old days in Saskatchewan. I just say that I believe that he has a responsibility. He has been in power for almost a year. I think it's a little tough to try to blame the fact that they don't have money now on the feet of some previous government, whether it was the past NDP government or the past Liberal government, or the Conservative government back in 1929. You are the government; you've been there a year.

I think the farmers will more and more expect you to come forward with a program that will allow them some easing of the burden caused by the ever-escalating cost of fuel in the province of Saskatchewan, because it is a major input in food production. I believe that it would be regained by the government many times over. The dollar given to a farmer, I think the minister will readily admit, is doubled and tripled and quadrupled very quickly. If he were to put \$4 million, \$5 million, \$10 million or \$15 million into the farming economy through a fuel rebate program, then he might be surprised at the impact it would have in terms of sprucing the economy up in rural Saskatchewan at this time.

Mr. Chairman, on another issue, I would just like to find out from the minister . . . One of the first times I had to deal with his department, after he became minister, was in a snowstorm in late May in the southwest corner of the province. I wonder if he could tell me how much money was paid out under that program that he so quickly brought in which covered so few.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — \$144,000, rounded.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — How many head of livestock would that have affected and how many farmers? Do you have that information with you? Will you get it for me? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay.

MR. ENGEL: — I would like the record — and this is different than the question that is listed in the blues — of all the CVA aircraft flights charged to the department since May 8, indicating the date, place, departure and destination, and the names of those people

involved.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I don't know if it's in the blues or not, but how be I do this, because I remember when we were sitting over there asking those same questions: I will give you the commitment that we will answer them in the same form that you did when you were over here.

MR. ENGEL: — Could we also have the number of charter flights charged to the department since May 8, indicating the date, places of departure and destination, persons whose flight this was charged to by the department, and the cost for each such charter?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Okay, I'm doing this not to set a precedent, only out of the goodness and kindness of my heart. There have been two executive aircraft flights: one, Harley Olsen, my special assistant, from Regina to Saskatoon. The other one is Paul Jackson, October 28, from Regina to Carlyle return and the Harley Olsen to Saskatoon one, I believe, was one way.

Can I answer that charter one now as well? Okay, a DNS aircraft was chartered by Al Knudsen of the marketing and economics branch during a study of DNS farm realignments, and that was chartered on more than one occasion. Do you want to know how many times? And the amount of each? Well, I don't know . . . It was a DNS charter. I don't even know if that is charged to us. I'm sure it is somehow. If you insist on it, I'll get it but it's just government dollars and it was seven times. Approximately (will you take that?) approximately \$70 per flight.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Per hour?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Per flight.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Like 15-minute flights?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, you know, there's a farm here and a farm here. You know what it's like in the North, right? DNS?

MR. ENGEL: — Does that include the out-of-province flights as well, Mr. Minister, or is that just in-province? Are there some out-of-province flights that staff have taken?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — No, there is not.

MR. ENGEL: — Can the minister give me a list of the amount of people he's hired under contract to do studies, either contract or seconded, to do studies and consultant work for the department?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I'll take it out of the record and provide it as best I can.

MR. ENGEL: — The first question I just asked: will they also include legal fees and . . . (inaudible) . . .

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We've never had a problem. We never needed a lawyer.

MR. YEW: — Just one question here, Mr. Minister. In view of the realignment up north, am I to understand that the three training farms we have in northern Saskatchewan will

be amalgamated with your department? If so, what are your intentions with those programs for the future?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — One of the reasons for this charter that we talked about in the previous question, that flying around northern Saskatchewan, was to make an assessment on the best way to deal with the farming in northern Saskatchewan. The information-gathering process is not yet complete so the decision hasn't yet been made.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Minister, I have several items. Should I deal with them now, or catch them as we go through the subvotes? Which would you prefer?

The only one that I think I'd like to talk about is: what kind of study has your department done regarding grasshopper infestation, and what do you expect in that line? Is there a serious problem coming up? Are you gearing up for it? Where is that one at?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Okay, my understanding is that the feds do the surveys relative to grasshopper predictions, and it doesn't look good. There are some serious infestations in some areas, and we're treating it the same as we have in the past, carrying the inventory and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right.

MR. ENGEL: — I've been contacted by several R.M.s, more outside of my area, in an area north running up through Craik, Davidson, and that country. It looks like it's worse from there north than it is when they're usually bad down south. We haven't had as much complaint. I'm just wondering if you're aware of some particular areas in the province.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Yes, the maps have been circulated. The R.M.s now have the maps. So everybody is aware of where the potential is.

MR. ENGEL: — One more question. I have a letter that advises me that the president of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association (he said he contacted you, as well) is very concerned that there won't be a cutback in funding in moneys made available for research, particularly into crop sciences, seeds, plants, and that kind of thing.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — The vast, vast majority of research money in agriculture has been through farm land. Our numbers are exactly the same as yours. Naturally, we're not very happy with the recent fed move to move federal research capacity out of the West.

MR. ENGEL: — Are you in consultation with Whelan's department and the people there, pressuring them to maintain some semblance of experimentation work out here?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We've registered our concern on several occasions with the federal people at the officials' level. I may have even sent them a letter.

MR. ENGEL: — Agriculture is a key industry in Saskatchewan and is the backbone of the province. Should the feds withdraw their support, and tighten their belt on that issue, what proposal have you in place then? I don't want to take away from the negotiations that you're doing with them, but surely you are not going to leave us high and dry, and let that deteriorate.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — It's super hypothetical, and I can't imagine the feds being, you know, that nasty to the West. I mean, I can't imagine it. Our displeasure has been

registered. I just can't imagine them moving any further than they already have, and our commitment to research is at the same level as it was when your party was over here. I suppose if the concern that you raise is ever actually realized, we'd have to take a look at some contingency, but certainly we are not now, beyond the discussions, I should say, that are going on between us and the feds on the whole Pepin thing.

MR. ENGEL: — That's just the point that I was going to underline. We tried to tell you all year that the feds are that nasty. They threatened to change the crow rate and they are threatening to go ahead with that change. If they threaten to pull back in another area. I'm quite sure that the ministry should expect the worst from them by now, and realize this is the best we can expect from the federal government in light of the kind of governments we've had in Ottawa for the last 113, 114 years.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Some of the governments in Ottawa have not been great and there is no question about that. But this particular one, you carry on your shoulders, because it was your boys that put them in there.

MR. YEW: — Getting back to the agricultural farms in Cumberland, Green Lake and Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Minister, I wasn't questioning the flights undertaken there just recently; I was wondering about the status. I understand that you are in the process of reviewing those army units, and you're undertaking a study to determine what your options are, I understand. Could you advise me if your departmental officials have met with the people who are involved and employed with the three training farms mentioned here?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I haven't personally, but the staff people in the department have on many, many occasions. It's been an ongoing thing for some months now, I would think, and when everything is finalized and we have everything jelled as to where we're going with it, I would be prepared at that time to share it with the members.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Minister, once your review is complete, will you be meeting with the communities in those three training farms affected to discuss your final report and base your options on what you discussed with the communities? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Once your review process is completed, are you prepared to meet with the communities to discuss what option you may take to set up a new program for the training farms?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We're open and honest and oozing with integrity and, if it's deemed to be necessary, I have no objection to that. If it's not deemed to be necessary, I don't know why we should go through the exercise. But when the final form takes place, I'm more than pleased to share it with you and those affected.

MR. YEW: — I'm raising the issue because those farms serve a very useful purpose for the communities directly affected, Green Lake for an example. A fair number of the people at the community level derive their employment, their income from those farms. The same applies with Ile-a-la-Crosse and with Cumberland House, although those farms, the latter farms I've mentioned have been losing some money in their operations. But I can vouch for the one farm in Green Lake. It's been run very efficiently and has generated a very good source of income for the community. And I'm really concerned what the future status will be . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon? Well, certainly, yes, I would like to have some information with respect to the future status of them, so this can be communicated to the communities involved.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — As I said earlier, when we decide . . . I understand your concern and we intend to make them even more useful and better contributors to the local community and all of those things. And as soon as we get this thing jelled and pulled together, I'm prepared to share it with you.

MR. YEW: — One final comment, Mr. Minister. How soon would you expect the final report or outcome of those reviews to be?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I'm reluctant to be tied down on that one because I just don't know. It has yet to get to cabinet. It's still at the staff level. I personally haven't given it a great deal of attention yet, and I want to do that. I don't know how quickly it will get before cabinet. So I just hate to be tied down at this point. I can tell you that we're working on it, and it will be as quickly as we can pull it all together.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Minister, just one more question. I don't think I have to apologize for such. There's one major concern that involves the people in Cumberland House. A good number of the farmers involved at Cumberland have been pressured by Revenue Canada quite drastically. Their income has been garnisheed up to anywhere from 50 per cent and up — 50 per cent for sure. Fifty per cent of their income has been garnisheed by Revenue Canada, the people directly employed in those farms. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you're aware of this situation and if you are, I wonder what steps the province is determining to take to resolve the problem at the Cumberland House level.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I have no personal knowledge of the problem, and they're still under DNS administration. That administration hasn't moved agriculture. That's my understanding. And on your earlier question, until the jelling process has taken place, it is business as usual. There's no change in the interim on the farms that you raised in the North.

MR. YEW: — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I'm just still concerned, you know, if there is anything that the province and the provincial government can do to try to alleviate the pressures on those individual families at Cumberland House and the problems they are faced with, with the fact that Revenue Canada has been taking whatever little bits of income that they've been able to derive from those farms. You know, further to that, they've been losing stock and farming equipment which has been garnisheed to repay those people from Revenue Canada. I wonder, is there anything that we can do as a government?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I have some sympathy for your friends, because I know something of what those dudes in Revenue Canada can do to a guy. Since I have no personal knowledge of what the situation is, I'm prepared to have officials of our department talk with the officials of DNS to see if they can familiarize themselves with the particular problem, and then see if there is anything that we can do about the particular problem.

MR. YEW: — Just one final comment, then. I appreciate the position that you've taken. I'd certainly provide as much information that I have, you know, on that issue, Mr. Minister. I have met with the people involved in Cumberland and the farming operation there. I've got the full list of grievances in my files, as well as the names of those people (the families that are affected), so if you are going to designate some of your officials to look into the matter I'd be prepared to offer whatever help I can offer. I'd try to assist to the best of my ability.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I don't know if you've got them in confidence or not, but if you're at liberty to share them with my deputy (the documents I'm talking about), that would probably give us a place to start. Obviously, if you've got them in confidence you probably won't want to do that.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Item 5

MR. ENGEL: — You were indicating earlier that Agdevco was all systems the same, and then cut in half here on the administration end alone.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — It's the same as the budgeted figure that was in your blue book.

Item 5 agreed to.

Items 6 and 7 agreed to.

Item 8

MR. ENGEL: — Item 8 on the family farm improvement branch — the minister said he's leaving the technicians in place and then he's going to make grants in lieu of what they're going to have to pay extra for the material. Is this what you said?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I said we're getting rid of the supply side and keeping the engineering capability and the planning capability in place. We're getting rid of the supply side and allowing that to go to the private sector. The supply side has not in any way been subsidized by the public purse. It in fact has had to support itself and it had markups anywhere from 10 to 35 per cent in order to do that. We don't anticipate a great difference in the cost of materials for people putting water and sewer in on their farms.

In addition to that, there's the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It was you that cut off the grants about three or four years ago. You used to have a \$300 grant to help . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm not finished.

You used to have a \$300 grant to help the rural farm community put in water and sewer, but about two or three years ago you cut that off. Obviously, you had some reason for cutting it off. How many . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It's in Sask Housing. How many farms does Sask Housing touch? I'll save that question for the minister responsible . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You save that question for him.

In any event, the supply side is going to planning, and engineering capability will still be there.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, this isn't a real big problem for my colleague from Shaunavon, or yourself, or the members down south. But I think there are a lot of farmers in Saskatchewan whose outlook on life is very pleasant, who have time to visit.

I've visited many of those homes. In a course of three or four days, I was in more than 80 homes that didn't have sewer and water. They didn't even know that there was a program around because they never anticipated spending that kind of money.

If you're saying things are so good, and these people want to get into doing sewer and water, what basically are you doing? Is your government's philosophy such that you're going to beef up the program through Sask Housing's rural development program, or what is your plan?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — What we are doing (and I want you to promise me that we won't go through this again in April when we table the next budget, because that's not in this budget, it's in the next budget, and I'm doing you a great favor by talking about it right now) is we are getting rid of the supply side of family farm improvement branch.

We are keeping the design and planning and engineering function. We are in no way preventing people from putting in water and sewer. They just buy the supplies from a different store. We don't think that it's going to cost them any more money. It may, but we don't think that it will.

We believe in the free competitive market, and it works fairly well.

MR. ENGEL: — It'll work good. Mr. Minister, for some people.

When you have on organization doing a single desk purchase of pumps, for example, they'll save more than \$100. I can assure you I know something about farm sewer and water; in fact, I'm some kind of an expert in that field. A pump alone, I'm sure it's going to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I installed farm sewer and water systems, very, very many of them and I'm sure that a farmer is going to pay more than \$100 a pump more when you're buying it from a person that in his local shop is buying 10, 12 pumps, instead of buying them all through a central agency.

As you said, they were able to save them money, with the low overhead and being able to supply them at that.

The pumps, the plastic pipe, the weeping tile and the sewer material for septic tanks, that whole bit was at a tremendous advantage. Small contractors around, that are installing sewer and water systems are picking the stuff up on behalf of the farmers from that central agency. If they're going to have to go through the regular channels, they're going to pay a lot more money, Mr. Minister.

I think that was a bad move, just to try and help some of your friends in the distribution end — some of your friends that are looking for this market. Under some improved conditions farmers might be able to do it that still haven't been able to.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Yeah, if you get FFIB out of that side of it, your small contractors are going to get bigger. They'll be able to buy in volume and you know, I know you guys are a little sensitive about small contractors having any degree of success. Did you enjoy any degree of success? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well good, now we would like to see some more enjoy some degree of success. We expect ours will enjoy some degree of success too. I hope they do. In addition to that, family farm improvement branch may have been a great thing. It served Saskatchewan well . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And, to a large extent it has, and admittedly not

completely. But, should we keep this thing going to the same magnitude it was? We're still keeping the planning, the design, engineering, and . . . I think we're being quite reasonable about the whole thing. If it's paid for itself, why not? The question is . . . Because we believe in the enhancement of the private sector, and that's where we're going.

MR. ENGEL: — That's basically the answer I was looking for: that the minister is more concerned with the enhancement of the private sector, rather than the individual farmer and the individual contractor . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Just so that his private supply friends make a buck. He doesn't really care about the small farmer.

The programs that you can add to the heap that the Minister of Health said . . . And he was at least open about it. He got through his estimates in reasonably good time. When he talked about a program that he didn't like, he said "We scrapped it." And they have this scrap pile up for public view. And, add it to the pile of scrap that you want to do. You're doing programs that were implemented. You don't seem to understand that there were programs that could be implemented for the benefit of small farmers that really weren't a big strain on the taxpayer. They weren't a strain on the taxpayer. Land bank is a good example of that. And, if you want to take another two hours, I could get into that program. And I can go into the debate between land bank versus your new farm purchase plan that did such a wonderful big deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — I'll raise that, Mr. Chairman, so you don't call me to order and prove that I'm . . . State order. when we get to that I want to stop you again. Okay.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I just want to respond briefly. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If you want to stand up, take some time, heaping all kinds of praise on our farm purchase program, we don't mind. The thing I want to respond to is the family farm improvement branch. It has benefited a lot of people in this province largely because it is situated in this province. It's in Regina.

The people in the North, most of them, went to their little local suppliers in any case, because Regina was a way down here, way down in the South. You know, we're not going to do that. What we're going to do is just get rid of the supply side and go with the engineering and planning side.

Item 8 agreed to.

Items 9 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

Item 15

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Minister, do you recall early in the summer session that I asked you a question and you said you'd get me an answer? I've talked to you since privately on all different occasions. "I have the question and the answer up in my office." I've even gone up there to get it and when you weren't in your officials refused to give it to me. Can you now tell me how many applicants were at land bank the time you took over waiting for the \$40 million that was available for the land bank program? I asked you for the number of applicants that were in the mill at the time. I know about how many there were, but you've refused to tell us all this time. Today I'd like that number.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I apologize to the member because the information was provided to me by the department back when you asked the question, or soon thereafter. The problem I had is that when I was . . . No, I wanted to add to it in the House. I wanted to add to it when the member was in his seat.

AN HON. MEMBER: — He doesn't miss as many times as you do.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — That's exactly the point I was going to make. And when I was out of my seat, I couldn't answer it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — There were in the neighborhood of 700 people who had asked the land bank for an appraisal.

MR. ENGEL: — Less than half of these have gotten through the mill now. Would that be a fair assessment — that the 346 that you processed would be very many of the same people that were waiting in line at that time?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I don't know whether they were the same people or even if we can make that determination, but these 346 approvals to March 1 that we're talking about, that's in three months.

AN HON. MEMBER: — That's not in three months. That's in a year, Mr. Minister. Those people were waiting for land for a whole year.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — My friend, I think it was December 19, December 17 the farm purchase program legislation was passed in this House. January 17 is one month, February 17 is two months, March 17 is three months. Here we are on March 1 with 346 approvals and I don't think that's bad.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Minister, what did you do with the \$40 million?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — If we go at the rate we're going now, as it relates to application approvals, we will have 1,900 application approvals a year which is a long shot over the 151 people that the land bank program started on the road to land ownership.

Item 15 agreed to.

Items 16 to 18 inclusive agreed to.

Item 19

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Minister, my colleagues were asking about leases and temporary leases out of lands branch. Can you tell me approximately how many of these one-year temporary leases are involved?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Okay, this is an approximation, rounded. There were 800 one-year permits in 1981 when your administration was here, and there are approximately 800 one-year permits in 1982 with this administration.

MR. ENGEL: — Is that the second year they are on that; are they the same ones?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — No, no, I don't know if they are the same ones or not.

MR. ENGEL: — Are those the same people that are on for the second year?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — No.

Item 19 agreed to.

Items 20 to 24 inclusive agreed to.

Item 25

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Minister, part of the agreement and the contract with the grain car corporation relates and is tied directly to the crow freight rate. Is your department going to leave those cars in place in spite of what Pepin does, or are you going to honor that contract?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — You have raised this in the House before and . . .

MR. ENGEL: — And I haven't received a straight answer from you yet.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — . . . and I have answered it before, and I don't mind answering it again. I haven't recently studied in detail the contract as it exists, but I fail to see how it would help the farmers of Saskatchewan to pull those grain cars off the road. I think it would only aggravate an already bad situation. I don't say that I won't use the grain car corporation in some way as one of the levers we might use on the feds, but I remain to be convinced that pulling them off the railroad will in any way help our farmers.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Minister, the federal government prepared a document like I referred to earlier, and they knew full well that the former minister of agriculture would have used those grain cars as a big axe, a big axe, in the crow debate and I think that is one of the weapons you have. I think there is a war on. Pepin is trying to . . . and doesn't care how many farmers he destroys in the process. And if we are supposed to pay for hauling our freight, I think the CPR should pay for using those cars. There should be a jolly good source of revenue that you could use to help alleviate the farm costs. That would make a heck of a good contribution toward the price of our fuel, a very good contribution. The question I would like to ask is: does the minister have team around him, or some lawyers, or has he studied the possibility of what other legal actions Saskatchewan could take with the federal government or with the CPR directly?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Under the terms of the contract, as I understand them, there's no legal way we can, even if I agreed to all your arguments, which I don't, but there's no legal way we can take the cars off until such time as the crow changes. Now, if that happens, we'll deal with it when it comes around. We hope that it doesn't happen, and we're working toward preventing it happening.

Item 25 agreed to.

Item 26 agreed to.

Item 27

MR. ENGEL: — Under the FarmLab program, how much of this money was actually spent during the year, because we're close to the end of the year? There's not going to be any more spent between now and April. Where are we at under FarmLab?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We've got about 150,000 surplus, I understand.

Item 27 agreed to.

Items 28 to 31 inclusive agreed to.

Item 32

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, in light of the wonderful things you are going to do in irrigation, how come the reduction even from last year, let alone last year's spring budget?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — It was reduced by 10 per cent last year and 10 per cent the year before and 10 per cent the year before. And it's an operating agreement that the local district entered into with the government that provides for the eventual total operating costs being picked up by the local district, and it's reduced by 10 per cent each year.

MR. ENGEL: — This is an operating grant?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Yes.

Item 32 agreed to.

Items 33 and 34 agreed to.

Item 35

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, item 35 — why were these grants of FarmStart reduced from 2.2 million to 700,000? And you were saying you overspent about 400,000 when we were earlier discussing this. What are the numbers?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — The 400,000 has to do with the pegging of the interest rate. We had to inject an additional 400,000 in net. This item . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, the grants under the program, that side of the program was discontinued.

MR. ENGEL: — So the story you were telling me earlier, if I have to get *Hansard* out to check it . . . You tried to make it sound to me as though you were spending more money in FarmStart. Is that a different item altogether? Are there two FarmStarts involved?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We put the subsidy, the \$400,000, in to correct or to provide for the pegging of an interest rate when the interest increase would have triggered an interest rate.

MR. ENGEL: — That's existing loans.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — That's existing loans. No, no, new loans. New loans, okay. The numbers that I read to you before, there was — ah, they're in *Hansard*. . . Anyway there

was not an uptake, but every application — not a 100 per cent uptake on the budgeted amount — but of everyone that had applied and qualified, no one was turned away. The grant side of the FarmStart program had been discontinued.

MR. ENGEL: — So the original loan was: somebody would make a \$16,000 loan. If he repaid over eight years, he'd get \$8,000 in grants — that part has been discontinued? Is that what you're saying?

If I may say so, that's quite contrary to your pocket policy item on encouraging farmers to diversify and get into farming and this new deal you're going to do, as far as even people that go into planting potatoes in irrigated land, you're going to irrigate land. That's quite a change from what your pocket policy was talking about and the promises you made last April.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, by pegging the interest rate when we did, we saved 3.5 per cent for those people and the total grants as compared to loans only represented in the neighborhood of 4 per cent. So, you know, it's just not . . . And the 3.5 per cent runs for the term of the loan which is 15 years, I understand. And the grant program, it was one shot in the arm and it's gone. The 3.5 per cent goes on for 15 years.

MR. ENGEL: — That might be a lot of words and some people might believe you, but 7 and 4 makes 11 and that's only half of what we were going to spend. So somewhere along the way, the farmers had scrapped onto that heap of your Tory scrap pile another \$1,100,000 program. Do you agree to that?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — What I agree to is that the grant side of the FarmStart program has been discontinued. The remainder has been enhanced by virtue of the fact that there's 3.5 per cent saving on the interest rate as compared to what would have been in place had the regulations your administration had in place been followed.

MR. ENGEL: — Are my assumptions correct that together with the pegging of the interest rate plus the budgeted amount of 700,000, your total expenditure through FarmStart was 1.1 million in the year under review? Is that right? Total.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — You had budgeted 2.2. Actual uptake would have been about 1.1 million if all the applications were processed. So your budget was grossly exaggerated as compared to uptake in any event. So . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — That's not true.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Okay. You may think that it's not true but I happen to believe my officials over you, so there you go.

MR. ENGEL: — May I raise this just one more time? There were 700 young people that had applications to land bank. Those 700 people were told, "Sorry, boys. Land bank is closed — \$40 million in land bank is done, gone." They would have used that base. Those 700 farmers would have used that base. They would have taken up that extra \$1.1 million in FarmStart operation and we would have had an additional 700 farmers. Now what have we got? Three hundred and forty-six applicants — 346 applicants instead of 700 farmers. And you say that isn't scrapping two good programs? Are you really trying to convince me of that?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — You know, we've just touched again on new ground in . . . Well, that's not parliamentary and I know he's going to holler at me. In the 10 years that land bank existed . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — 2,700, not 150. Tell the truth.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — 2,700 . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Farmers driving pick-up trucks . . .

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — 2,700 tenants. Now you're telling me in one year, you would have put another 700 in there? And I say nonsense, you wouldn't have had the budget for it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Mr. Minister, may I just have a word for a minute. The minister is trying to answer the question and when you're interrupting he can't continue to answer and the House is out of order then. Would you please wait until he finishes and then you can get back up and respond.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We're going to invoke rule 92 which says the questions have to make sense . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're going to get into trouble. There's absolutely no way that an additional year of the program, with the amount of dollars that you people were budgeting for that program, could have taken up an additional 700 farms. It's impossible, and even you will admit that. You were budgeting, what, \$20 million and \$40 million dollars? I don't think it was ever more than 40. I don't know, unless it was a rather unusual year. Having said that, how many have we got? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 2,000; we have 2,000 at the gate, waiting for the thing to get through the mill and the applications approved — all of that thing.

The other point I want to make is, since we believe in the right to private ownership, we advanced that program in the last campaign. We told the whole world that land bank was all over when we got into power. A whole lot of them agreed with it. I make no apology to the member opposite for not continuing with the land bank program. I'm very, very pleased with the uptake on our farm purchase program. I'm very, very pleased with the co-operation that has gone on between our department under the management of Jim Webster and the federal farm credit corporation. They've been doing an excellent job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, will the minister permit one more question? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Does your water purifier in your office still work?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — As a matter of fact, the water purifier that was installed in my office is still in that office, but I am not, so I am drinking water just like you. I'm a little disappointed in that because I did want the water purifier to move over to my new office, but that wasn't to be the case. Maybe I'll have to go get one again next year.

Item 35 agreed to.

Items 36 to 38 inclusive agreed to.

Item 39

MR. ENGEL: — One moment, Mr. Chairman. In the March budget there was a subvote 40 — grants for water development of a half-a-million dollars. It doesn't appear to be in here. Could the minister explain that please?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Yes, that went into item 43, subvote 74 — deep well water and that kind of thing under the drought program. It was just transferred into that.

Item 39 agreed to.

Items 40 to 42 inclusive agreed to.

Item 43

MR. ENGEL: — Could the minister explain the items that have been added into this program for the 600 per cent increase?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — There is a half-a-million of that that was transferred; we just talked about that. The bulk of the rest of it was the fodder transportation program under the drought relief.

Item 43 agreed to.

Item 44 agreed to.

Vote 1 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

AGRICULTURE

Capital Expenditure — Vote 2

Item 1

MR. ENGEL: — How much of this money is actually spent?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Overspent by 65,000.

MR. ENGEL: — I wouldn't mind actual expenditures on all seven items, if you can. Then we'll make it a lot faster.

Items 1 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 2 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS

AGRICULTURE

Vote 46

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 — Statutory

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, there is a fairly large increase here of 30 million from the estimated March 1. Is this why you made the changes in the beef stabilization plan because you felt you didn't want to put that kind of money into it?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Yes, that was the cow-calf program that you guys brought in; we didn't cut it up. It's still alive and well, and it's working. It's costing us a lot of money. We scrapped the 50-feeder option, as you recall. In addition to lending itself to abuse, we thought that the 50-feeder option was a poorly-conceived feature of the program, and there are others.

MR. ENGEL: — You suggested in the question period, and now that you have your staff here I'd like to get a little bit into that and see if you can explain that. I'll try and play a Rousseau tonight and pretend we're talking about insurance. Let's talk about the feeder option. Why don't you want a farmer to be able to have 50 feeders and have that option in place? Why just have it if it's a feedlot?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We talked to a lot of farmers and we talked to a lot of producers and we talked to a lot of feedlot people and we talked to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and we've talked to the National Farmers' Union. They all told us they didn't want it, so we took it off.

MR. ENGEL: — I don't think that's the case. How many farmers actually enrolled in and wanted to register under the program of the 50-feeder option? Maybe not maximum 50, but . . . (inaudible) . . .

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I don't know, but probably lots and lots and lots. And that was part of the problem, because there were more doctors and lawyers and dentists than there were farmers enrolling in the 50-feeder option. So, it lent itself to abuse; it was very, very rich and it was recommended by many Saskatchewan farm organizations that we get rid of it, and the board in their wisdom, after serious analysis, recommended to me that we get rid of it, and so we got rid of it.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, I think just the opposite is true. The new program lends itself to doctors and lawyers getting into it and they can set up a feedlot and nicely get in under your plan, but a farmer that's trying to make a little extra buck, a farmer that's trying to make a go on a smaller parcel of land, he thought he could enroll, and it was good because you said the amount that were enrolling in it. Here are these fellows and you tore up their 50-feeder option contract. You actually ripped up their contracts, and I'd like to know how many people were in that category and how many you affected like that. I think that's something we need to know, the number.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Anybody can get into the feeder program and they're not limited to 50 feeders. They can get into, I think we put a 5,000 . . . I'm not sure what the limit is on the feeder program today, but it's either 1,000 or 5,000 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll get it for you; I haven't got it here.

The only ones that we moved out were done on the recommendation of your friend, Ted Strain.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

AGRICULTURE

Provincial Development Expenditure

Nil vote.

MR. ENGEL: — \$757,000 in March; why is it cut down to nil?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We didn't know how to start a flood. No, I'm being facetious. It was the lack of an agreement with the city of Weyburn relative to some changes that were to be made and also not an exciting uptake by farmers in the area.

MR. ENGEL: — Is the minister sure that he hasn't got some additional long-range plan in mind instead of that project? He took me along on a very nice trip a year or more ago and kind of hinted at his interest in another project that sounds something like maybe Rafferty. Is it possible that you'd prefer saving the money and starting at the bottom end, rather than working from the top down, I think were your words?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — The reality of the situation is as I have set out. There was a lack of an agreement with the city of Weyburn and so we didn't want to go out there and force the money on them and force the agreement on them. But since you did raise Rafferty — the member is familiar with it since he toured North Dakota with me when we were down there talking about it — yes, I am leaning toward a development of the Rafferty project. It would lend itself to an irrigation project; it would lend itself to a tourist attraction and a recreation area; it would lend itself to petrochemical development; it would lend itself to added capacity for the Estevan generating station and, as the member knows, I think that it has great potential. However, we are not building it this year.

MR. ENGEL: — This is the point I am making, Mr. Chairman. If you can save \$757,000 this year, are you planning on spending some money on doing some studies and surveys and making some estimates down there? Where does that show up in the budget?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We have a comprehensive water program being designed and input being received from all Saskatchewanians that are interested in providing that input to our travelling cabinet committee on water. If out of that comes the suggestion, in this comprehensive water program, to proceed with Rafferty, we will do that.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

ENERGY SECURITY DIVISION

AGRICULTURE

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 46

Item 1

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, there is a budget of some \$7 million on a very good joint project where we were working together with the Co-ops, where we were fulfilling the dream that you people had when you went out and campaigned and I wish I would have brought your little “pocket politics” along where you are talking about diversifying the income on farms. To make a long speech short, how come you canned the Canora ethanol plant?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I don’t have the figures off the top, with any degree of precision, but the previous government had budgeted, I think, \$7 million for the construction of that plant. When it actually came to build, when the engineering studies, etc., were done, the cost came in in the neighborhood of 16 million — is that right? — in that ball park. It just wasn’t a viable operation. It just wasn’t. I’ve told the people at Canora, I’ve told . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Who?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — You know who; I’ve met with the council from Canora and I’ve explained the whole situation to them. I don’t think anybody is going to be terribly critical of us for not proceeding with a white elephant.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Minister, that is far from the real reason. I think you have another location you prefer and some other friends you’d prefer having to develop instead of doing it through the Co-ops.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I think if you were to . . . Why am I dealing with this? Why am I dealing with this? The fact is it wasn’t viable. If somebody privately wants to go out and build one and make it work, I have no problem with that. But I am under some obligation not to put public money in a white elephant. And it was a white elephant and the engineers told us it was a white elephant. All the calculations said we were going to have to dump millions in to make it work on and on down the road. Tell me why we should do that. Now if you want to go out and build one, that’s fine with me. If you think you can make a buck at it or if somebody else does, that’s fine with me. I’m all for the concept, if it will pay.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 46 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

AGRICULTURE

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 1

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 1 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

AGRICULTURE

Capital Expenditure — Vote 2 (continued)

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I'd like to provide the House with the numbers on those capital projects you asked for earlier. On the subvote 1, it was \$65,000 overspent on number 2, \$460,000 underspent; on 4, \$40,000 underspent; 9 was break even; 5 is break even; 6, \$25,000 under; 7, break even. The reason . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the half-a-million, that's out of what? 3 million or so? 5.3 million. That's the flood control and drainage, and the reason that's under is those projects have to be bubbled up from the local associations, and we don't go out there and say, "Do this." So all that were applied for were looked after.

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS

FARMSTART

Vote 47 — Statutory

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS'

THE SASKATCHEWAN LAND BANK COMMISSION

Vote 50 — Statutory

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 41

Items 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 41

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, when this book was tabled, I wasn't in the House and nobody told me that we are not going to take page 2 of supp 2. Can I ask the minister, by leave of the House, a question on this item?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — It was my understanding that these have already been voted on in the main estimates, and I have no objection to you asking a question subject to the

leave of the House. The only comment I would have is that when I was sitting over there I had a research department that just kept me right informed on all of the things that were tabled in the House. I thought you guys had this terrific research capacity, and since we're such an open government, you should have everything right at your fingertips.

MR. ENGEL: — If the minister will allow me one question. We have eight members that are opposition critics; the House allows us one researcher for eight. The boy was busy doing something else, so I did my own research. I've never handled a department myself, but I thought I was going to get a chance to ask a question at this stage. All I want to know is, is this 14,490,000 that's voted as supplementary here new money, or is that unspent money like the numbers you are giving me here?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — The reason for that is, as I understand it, it was an interim supply and it had to be approved because we were spending the money. But all of those numbers are included in the big book, included in the numbers there in the big book, because this is the final number, so that is part of this.

MR. ENGEL: — You were working on special warrant for the whole year, I realize, and it's tough to do an estimate of what you're going to spend when you come to the end of the year, but what I was wondering, is this 14,409,000 new money additional to what's in here, or is that just taken up by your underspent ones and comes out in the wash somehow?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — It comes out in the wash.

MR. ENGEL: — What about grants for control of pollution from intensive livestock operations, 78,000? Is there another line that has said that?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — The grants for control of pollution of intensive livestock is in this agricultural estimates set out here. It's part of this. It's all-encompassing, this one.

MR. ENGEL: — Well, why do you need this?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We don't. That's what we're trying to tell you. That's why you don't have to ask questions on it.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I would also like to thank my officials for the very forthright and efficient way they handled themselves in providing me with the information I needed to deal with the penetrating questions from the members opposite. And I want to thank the members opposite for the way they conducted themselves in the agriculture estimates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

ENVIRONMENT

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 9

Item 1

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: — Would the minister introduce his officials?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left here, Allan Carr, acting deputy minister; to my right over here, Hugo Maliepaard, director of policy, planning and research; behind me here, Don Fast, director of water pollution control.

MR. YEW: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to start out by addressing subvote 3. The policy, planning and research funding, I notice, is down 21 per cent. I wonder if the minister can explain the decrease in the funding for this branch?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, the reason for most of the reduction of funding is that we've reduced our consulting contracts and are performing a lot more of it within the house.

MR. YEW: — Another area that I note with interest that has been decreased in terms of funding is the mines pollution control branch. That portion is down, as well, by 20 per cent from our original March budget, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you may want to comment on that as well?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, basically the same reason. We didn't have as much consulting services done. Also the Uranium City clean-up was completed, so there wasn't a need for any more.

MR. YEW: — I note a substantial drop in funding for mines pollution control over that provided in the March budget. Can the minister tell us whether this reflects less concern on his part about the pollution effects of mining, or does it mean that the government expects no new mining developments this fiscal year?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Basically, Mr. Chairman, he's asked the same question. The Uranium City clean-up was completed. The contractual services . . . We just used less, did more in house. So, no, it's the same. We anticipate more mining but it certainly hasn't happened this year, and in the year under review here, and I don't foresee . . . Next year we'll let you know.

MR. YEW: — I wonder if the minister can explain the sharp drop in funding for the mines waste research area in more detail.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Basically, Mr. Chairman, we're looking at a new major federal government program. It hasn't been announced. I don't think it would be very wise of us to start spending a lot of money in uranium waste research until we actually come to an agreement with the federal government about who is really going to handle it.

At the present time we're still dealing with the federal government in regard to who is going to be responsible for the waste research. Till then, there's no use spending any money. It would be sort of a foolish move to spend a lot of money when it's not needed.

MR. YEW: — Further, Mr. Minister (I just want to go on with that question), is the minister aware that one of the strong recommendations of the Bayda report concerns the long-term effects of the uranium mine wastes on the environment?

The NDP government accepted that recommendation by first setting aside large sums of money for the study of the long-term effects of low-level radiation on human health and secondly, by establishing the mines waste research secretariat.

The secretariat had the mandate to keep informed on all of the latest research and technology regarding the safe handling of mine wastes, all of this for the purpose of ensuring that Saskatchewan pollution control regulations require the most up-to-date technology for handling of such wastes.

Many Saskatchewan people are concerned about the mines waste pollution. Indeed, some of the members opposite used to pose as supporters of environmental protection. How do you behave in office? You cut the funding for the very activity that would keep Saskatchewan a leader in environmental protection. Can you explain that?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, basically, Mr. Chairman, he says that we're not protecting and not caring about the environment. Really, the same amount of spending has gone on this year as previous years, except where low radio-active wastes are concerned, in which case we're dealing with the federal government now, to see . . . In fact, they would like to take complete control of it. I don't know where it's going.

At the present time we're dealing with them to see who's going to be responsible for the clean-up. I think it's only prudent that we spent our money wisely, and if they're going to be responsible for it, they should be doing the paying. So, until such time as we come to an agreement with them, I think it would be very, very irrational of us to spend any money on it.

MR. YEW: — Under subvote 13, this portion has been reduced, as well, by 26 per cent from the original March budget of '82.

My question is: can the minister tell us what activities of the secretariat have been reduced or eliminated altogether?

HON. MR. HARDY: — I'd be very happy to, Mr. Chairman. If he'd read the footnotes, he'd notice that it's transferred to intergovernmental affairs, and it really isn't in our estimates, sir.

You'll have to ask the intergovernmental affairs minister in regard to the spending of that money.

MR. YEW: — I wonder if the minister can comment under subvote 17, grants to organizations. Can the minister advise the legislature, in terms of organizations, and organizational grants, what amounts of grants will be received by the various organizations and how much each organization will get?

HON. MR. HARDY: — That's quite detailed information. If you want, we'll send it over to you. It would take awhile to get it together, so if you want we'll send it over to you.

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. That would be appreciated very much, if you can forward that information shortly. I don't expect it tonight, but within the next several days.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Within a week we'll have it over to you.

MR. YEW: — Tremendous. Do you feel that energy conservation is important, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I suppose I could answer yes. I feel conservation and energy conservation is important, but at the same time, that's part of the SPC program and really not being administered under these votes as a part in environment.

MR. YEW: — I wonder if the minister can confirm that you have disbanded the office of energy conservation?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I don't know. I couldn't say for sure. It's not in my department; it never was, so I couldn't really answer that one.

MR. YEW: — This whole reorganization by the new administration is . . . (inaudible) . . . got quite puzzled over this portion of the budget.

Can the minister advise the legislature or confirm with the legislature whether or not you have disbanded the environmental advisory council? Is it now obsolete?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, it was 10 years in existence and what we have done is put it in a holding position to see how we can either bring in a new advisory council, or how we could address it. So, at the present time it is in a holding position until we have a further chance to take another look at it.

MR. YEW: — I take it, Mr. Minister, that you haven't made any new appointments or haven't officially terminated anyone's status on the advisory council then?

HON. MR. HARDY: — That's absolutely correct.

MR. YEW: — I understand that it's been the practice for the minister to table the annual report of the environmental advisory council. I wonder if the minister can explain why the report for 1981-82 has not been tabled thus far.

HON. MR. HARDY: — First of all I could tell you it hasn't been presented to me to date yet. So, it's pretty hard for me to table it until I get it presented to me. It hasn't been presented to us to date.

MR. YEW: — Do you have an idea when you may receive the report and when you may be able to table this report?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, I have no idea when I will receive the report. We could probably check it out. As to when we'll table it, I couldn't tell you because it will depend on when we get the report, and at that time we can make a decision.

MR. YEW: — It's interesting to note that the government that so anxiously grabbed on to any concerns listed by the advisory council in the past has decided it does not want any independent body making comments about the shape of the Saskatchewan environment under this Conservative government. I would be quite interested, as well as the general population at large, to know what the status of this environmental advisory council will be. And, that's why I raise the question as to whether or not you anticipate to have the report in your hands fairly soon, and whether or not you will be making new appointments to the advisory council. I will table any further comments on that until the administration has decided to come up with a new policy on it.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, in regard to the advisory council, when we appoint one, probably, as I said, we will be taking a look into it. What we've been doing over the last four or eight days or two weeks has been exactly that — looking into what's going to be needed in the province. I could probably spend another half an hour or an hour going around saying all we've found out and what's been brought to our attention. What we've really done to date is, instead of maybe having the advisory council, we have gone out at a minister level, met the people, and had them have their input into it. When we're done with this and we are finished to date, we're going to put it together. We'll take a look and see what is needed, especially in water management, water resource, probably one of the most major concerns of this province.

We have really brought forward a lot of, had brought forward to us a lot of information, a lot of new ideas, a lot of possible solutions. I'm sure that when we gather all this together, it will advise us or give us a direction of how we would want not only to handle our water and water resources but probably what we're going to need as an advisory council. Certainly water and water management will be a major portion of any advisory council.

MR. YEW: — Under subvote no. 12, you have implementation of the Qu'Appelle agreement. Mr. Minister, I understand that the federal-provincial Qu'Appelle development agreement will end in about approximately 15 months. Can the minister advise this committee, this legislature, whether the following projects provided for in that agreement are complete: (1) the channel improvements to increase conveyance capacity to a minimum of 500 cubic feet per second along the Qu'Appelle system; (2) the pollution control systems for intensive livestock operations; (3) all tourist and recreation developments; and finally (4) the fish hatchery?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, in regard to the channelization of the Qu'Appelle system, I think, again going back to what we have been doing over the last 10 days, that has been a major concern by most residents in the area and certainly down through the Qu'Appelle system, because the blockages — there are some problems down there. We're dealing with it on a direct type of basis with the people that would be involved. No, it's not complete and it may not be complete. We cannot impose upon people. Channelization, especially on some of the Indian reserves, there — the native people have their rights the same as everybody else have. To impose upon them, I don't think they would like it any more that I would like it. So we may not be able to complete the channelization. We're working on it and we're working on it on an open basis. I think that's part of what our whole government is about, that type of open basis.

In regard to the pollution control of livestock, much has been done on it. It's not completed. It probably, gain, will maybe never be completely completed. We talked to some people from the Qu'Appelle area and down through the basin, in the last, again, 10 days. They have said that there's much of that that has been withdrawn from along the river edges or within a radius of the area. They are cleaning it up gradually.

In regard to tourist and recreation, certainly there's some time to go. I'm not sure or familiar with all that was to go on in there; it is certainly not complete and will probably never be complete because I think tourists, tourism and recreation, is a never-ending thing, and could almost be an endless amount that you could do.

In regard to the fish hatchery, I understand it is basically on the way. I don't know if it is complete, but it's certainly basically on the way. I think we're moving fairly well there

and I don't know what is left to do. I couldn't say specifically, but we've gone a long way.

MR. YEW: — Is the minister aware that the original agreement contemplated by the two levels of government, the federal government as well as the provincial government, contemplated that the two would agree to a supplementary tourist and recreation development package? And if so, can the minister advise us if such an agreement is being developed?

HON. MR. HARDY: — My understanding is, Mr. Chairman, that we're still looking at seeing if we want an extension to this agreement or not. We're evaluating it. Again, tourism certainly has a high priority with our government, but we'll have to do an evaluation on it to see if it is a good project and a wise way to spend the money of the province.

MR. YEW: — I wonder if the minister will confirm or comment whether or not a water quality report for Regina and Moose Jaw has been undertaken?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, that's sort of an easy one to answer. Again we've been 10 days out; I think what initiated the 10 days was the Muirhead report. It's been a fairly extensive report. We know there was a phase 1 done previous to that for the city of Regina in conjunction with the province of Saskatchewan, but certainly the Muirhead report is a study done and recommendations made in regards to that.

MR. YEW: — You say that this report has been completed and tabled and the recommendation has been forwarded or made. I wonder if you might want to comment on the recommendation, Mr. Minister.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I suppose again, Mr. Chairman, that's the point of what we're going around the province about. We've been to Moose Jaw; we've been to Regina; we've been all around the province and that is the report that was put out. We're letting the people make the comments on it and we're listening.

MR. YEW: — Will you be holding any further hearings, say to take into account the northern administration district?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, at the present time we haven't considered it. That's always a consideration that could be, but fully remembering that in the North the water supply and the water quality is pretty fair. And I'm not too sure that the residents or the people in the North are concerned about water quality or quantity. I think they have other concerns. I'm not too sure that they would be as interested in that as, certainly, Regina or Moose Jaw.

MR. YEW: — Has the Department of the Environment developed regulations or firm guidelines for the reclamation of strip mining areas in southern Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, basically, Mr. Chairman, we've been working on a set of guidelines. We have a proposed set of guidelines that we've looked at; they haven't been made available yet but we're certainly working on looking at it. We now there's a need down there.

Just to go a little further, some of the areas such as the Bienfait area, we've suggested some reclamation and we've been talking about it and the wildlife federation have come

in and said, "Don't touch that area, it's a wildlife habitat now." So we have to look at all those aspects as we go along. But certainly the new mining that's going on right now, we're looking at reclamation guidelines for that.

MR. YEW: — Once your regulations or guidelines are completed, I wonder if the minister may be able to forward me a copy of such.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well certainly, Mr. Chairman, they'll be made public so everybody can have a copy.

MR. YEW: — In respect to Mr. David Penman, could you tell me who has been replaced to take up his former post?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, the position has not yet been filled.

MR. YEW: — Do you anticipate to fill the vacancy?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, we're reviewing the need to see if the vacancy needs to be filled. As you are fully aware, we just announced the other day a considerable amount of money for a toxicology research centre in the university in Saskatoon. Whether we need it in the Department of Environment or whether it should be in a centralized place like Saskatoon where they have some real expertise that can really bring forward and look after the problems of the province and certainly the people of the province — we are reviewing that to see which would be the best way to spend our money.

MR. YEW: — You mentioned the toxicology centre. What is the level of funding to this centre, Mr. Minister, and what type of work do you foresee the centre to undertake?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, in regard to the member's question, the Department of the Environment has put in \$75,000 for this year and my understanding is that that amount of money that went toward that research centre was about the same as Mr. Penman was drawing in wages. So we felt that as an alternate way of spending our money, we have taken the \$75,000 that we would probably normally pay out and put it into the research centre at the university of Saskatoon for the time being until we see which way we can best spend our money.

MR. YEW: — My next question is in regard to Captan. Is the Government of Saskatchewan prepared to restrict the sale of Captan in the province in light of the conclusions by Health and Welfare Canada that Captan is cancerous and in light of refusals by Agriculture Canada to take any significant steps to reduce the sale of such?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, my understanding is that the Department of Agriculture has control over such licensing of agricultural chemicals. So, really, we don't have any control over it as far as the licensing of it and the usage of it.

MR. YEW: — I understand, Mr. Minister, that tailings containing radio-active materials and heavy metals are leaking into Lake Athabasca. I wonder if the minister may want to confirm this or comment on it.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as far as I know, we have no evidence that this is true. I couldn't make a comment on it because my staff informs me that we haven't had any confirmation of any such thing as this and if there was, if somebody could bring

us some proof of it, we would certainly immediately look into it. But as far as I know, no, it's not true.

MR. YEW: — I understand from some meetings that I have had with environmental groups that there is quite a concern out there and that this problem actually exists. I wonder if the minister may check into the issue.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, there are only two sites close to Lake Athasbasca that I am aware of and they are Gunnar and Laredo. Those are two of the sites that we're negotiating with the federal government right now in regard to involvement and, I guess you would say safeguarding of whatever is necessary there. As far as we know, there is no leakage from them into Lake Athabasca, so at such time, that's about all I can tell you.

MR. YEW: — You mentioned Gunnar and Laredo and I just want to confirm with you that in the discussions I had with various interested groups was the fact that they were concerned that tailings may be coming out of the Laredo mine and into the Athasbasca Basin.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, when the study is complete, with what the federal government is going to do, we will probably have some information on it. But to date we have had no complaints and we've had no prior knowledge of this, so if it's true, we're certainly not aware of it.

MR. YEW: — If this problem could be confirmed via some interested groups or an appeal could be made to you, Mr. Minister, would you take the necessary steps in your negotiations with the federal government to ensure that this problem is checked thoroughly and that your government will ensure that necessary steps will be taken to avoid any further pollution?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, certainly, Mr. Chairman, we'll do our best to avoid any pollution, certainly in any lake or river system. Just to touch a little further on that again. At our hearings over the last eight or 10 days that has been a concern of many, many residents, not in northern Saskatchewan necessarily but in southern Saskatchewan as well, in regard to the dumping or the letting go of effluent into the river systems. Many, many communities are feeling now that there are other ways of doing it, and some of them are doing it. So I think we're looking at cleaning up the environment not only in the North but certainly in the South as well.

MR. YEW: — You mentioned, Mr. Minister, and I haven't got it straight yet, you mentioned this clean-up agreement between yourselves, the province so to speak, and the federal government in terms of the closure of the Eldorado mine. Could you advise me what the status is? Is this clean-up complete, did you say, or is it in the process and to be completed shortly?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Just to clarify that for the member, Mr. Chairman. First I said that we're negotiating with the federal government to do a study to see if there's any leakage or anything up there. There's been no clean-up done, and there's been no study done. We're dealing with the federal government to do a study to see if there is anything there that should be cleaned up.

MR. YEW: — I'm just concerned because in my personal involvement with the question of the uranium development inquiries several years ago, there was a tremendous

amount of concern about the tailings. There were some experts from both sides of the question whether to go ahead with uranium development or not. There was anti-opinion and pro-development stances taken in those days. The experts that were available to the inquiry and to the people in general informed us that radio-active tailings and whatever other major pollutions would last up to 100,000 years. You know, the effect of such would be exceedingly long, and that is a major concern on the part of everybody in general. And I just want to ensure that we don't neglect our duty to see that something is done to look after the environment.

You mentioned water a little while ago. I had an interesting remark there made by one old-timer back home in regard to one of our valuable resources, and that is water. It seemed like a lot of attention, a lot of emphasis, is being placed with regard to water in Regina, Moose Jaw, Esterhazy, and all these southern communities. The old-timer commented to me and said, "What governments ought to do in these days is to preserve the good drinking water that we have, and put a lot of emphasis to ensure that we maintain that good drinking water, put a lot of resource and a lot of effort and a lot of money where the quality and the quantity is still good, and work your way upwards." To me it sounds quite logical, you know, trying to preserve what good quality we have left in this province, and to try to ensure that this good water quality is there for decades ahead, and working your way up in trying to clean up the mess that we have back there. If you have a comment I certainly would like to hear it.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I don't want to go into a long speech. I'm sure I could give you an hour's speech on water and water management, and certainly the quality of water. Certainly, and without a doubt, a concern of ours has been, and certainly will continue to be, the quality of water in the province of Saskatchewan.

Certainly one of the major concerns is quality. Many, many towns and districts have good quality drinking water. We're going to continue to preserve that. At the same time, we have to improve the quality of others. By doing so, we preserve the ones that already have good quality drinking water, so it's sort of a dual role. You preserve what you got and you improve the quality of the others around.

In the North, as you said, you do have good quality drinking water. I don't see anything up there that would really change that — not now and not in the future. We've done some monitoring on acid rain up there. It's very, very negligible. Really, you're very fortunate to be able to live in the North where you have good drinking water. We have to be appreciative.

I come from the northeastern part of the province. We have good drinking water there, too, by the way — probably as good as any place. Our concern will be to maintain the quality of water we've got and to improve the quality of water for those who do not have it.

MR. YEW: — The water quality up North is not too bad I agree, but in some areas it is getting to the point where it's starting to raise a bit of concern. Just as an example, one of those areas happens to be at Keeley Lake and at Canoe Lake where we have drainage coming in from the Primrose bombing range. The fish in those two lakes have diminished — the population of fish has diminished quite extensively. I noted, as well, when I'm talking with the commercial fishermen in the area, that their nets just rot over a period of two or three days. Good nylon nets just happen to rot away. I don't know; that's an area that raises some concern.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, you're into fisheries in that. I'm not sure where it fits into environment. We had a concern when Primrose Lake was sprayed — or the area along Primrose Lake was sprayed — by the Department of National Defence. We expressed our concerns there. I don't know how it's related to the water. We have no soil analysis or water analysis that says it has any effect on the water, or will have any. We are doing monitoring up there. We've been allowed to do monitoring in the area.

I do know, just from experience, that there is some commercial fishing on Primrose Lake. I don't know how that fish is affected, never mind downstream down to Cluff Lake and that. I couldn't tell you about the fishing industry because it certainly isn't in the Department of the Environment.

MR. YEW: — I'm not trying to suggest that the fisheries is in your department, Mr. Minister. I don't intend to be rude in anyway, shape or form, but it just simply ties in with environment. In respect to the lake that I mentioned, I understand from the local residents that chemicals of some sort come in from the Primrose range and into these two lakes I've mentioned. Certainly that is a problem that relates to your cabinet post.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, there was a concern that the chemicals might come into Primrose Lake and could feed down through the system. We're doing the monitoring just in case something like that happens, but to date we have no evidence whatsoever that there has been any type of chemicals into the lake system. We've had no complaints, as far as I know, at all, in regards to that. So, again, I'd have to say that I can't answer the question any further than that because I honestly don't know.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What happens if the moose eats the fish?

MR. YEW: — Moose, I'll tell you, my friend, don't eat fish. You ought to be a better hunter than that.

In respect to the Hanson Lake area, I understand there is an abandoned copper mine, Mr. Minister. I wonder if this poses a health hazard in the area. Could you comment on that?

HON. MR. HARDY: — I couldn't tell you, Mr. Chairman. We're unaware of it. We could look into it if somebody would give us some particulars on the location of that. But as far as I know, as far as the staff knows, we have no information on it at all in regard to a copper mine being there.

MR. YEW: — Okay, I'll take a note of that, Mr. Minister, and may be able to provide you with further information from interested residents on the east side.

I want to go on with respect to uranium development, Mr. Minister. What is your position on that? Is the government's position to expand uranium development in this province?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think with the price of uranium as it is today, I'm not sure that expansion at the present time would be economically feasible to begin with. I'm not an engineer, but the role of the government as far as the Department of the Environment is concerned, we don't make decisions for government, we only protect the environment. So as far as the government's role in whether we would allow or want further uranium development or not, I certainly wouldn't be at liberty to say.

MR. YEW: — So you wouldn't have an idea what your future policy will be on this, I gather.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, if it's in regard to the mining itself, certainly we have a policy that is in effect. If it's in regard to future mining, probably the existing policies will be in effect, it'll be the same. In regards to what the Government of Saskatchewan has and the role that they want in regards to allowing more mining in uranium or oil or anything else, I suppose that's what cabinet and governments are about. And I'm sure that when you were government, you didn't tell us what you were going to do in the future and I'm sure that I don't even know, as far as uranium, what we are going to be doing, so I couldn't answer that anyway.

MR. YEW: — In respect to future developments, supposing the government expands on uranium development, and if not, we still have to deal with present uranium mines in the province and we still have to maintain existing regulations. I wonder if the minister will comment, if the province should decide to expand its uranium development industry, what his position will be with respect to environment public hearings?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, first of all, should the government decide to allow expansion, I would suppose at that time we will assess whether a public hearing is necessary, depending on the area, depends on what's been done on the area. There's some areas that there's been an EIA done on it. I would suppose it depends what area it is, and I don't know what area has uranium in and how it would affect communities, and at that time we'd have to address it. I couldn't say now, because I don't know (I don't know and I'm sure you don't know), what area might, if ever, be expanded in uranium development.

MR. YEW: — With respect to your cabinet post, I wonder if the minister may want to comment whether or not unsettled land claims are associated in any way with your department.

HON. MR. HARDY: — I think again it goes back to governmental affairs.

MR. YEW: — With respect to timber operations up North, Mr. Minister, I have noted and I've also discussed this with various neighbors and interested groups in northern Saskatchewan, travelling through say from anywhere (I'll take Meadow Lake for an example on to La Ronge), or from La Ronge into Pinehouse. I note that timber areas are clear cut right to the ground. Apparently, there is a clear-cutting policy.

The wildlife groups, the groups that have traditional resource uses in the areas, have raised some concerns with respect to this clear-cutting policy. What it does is do away with the wildlife habitat in the area, and it completely diminishes any wildlife habitat that exists for a period of 70 to 90 years. I wonder if the minister would state what his government's position is on this?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I really think it's a Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources question. But, basically, as far as I know that's a way of cutting it. It seems to me (and I'm not going to go into any detail on it) it is done for the reason of fire protection. And, I can go back and think of just one instance in my area, the Hudson Bay area, where if they had clear cut to the road we'd have had another 200,000 acres of good heavy timberland that burnt out a couple or three years ago, because the cutting practices weren't very good. I could continue on and say that the environment became much worse after it burned over than before.

MR. YEW: — I'm sorry, Mr. Minister. I didn't get the full response to my question. There is just too much noise in the House, to be very frank and honest.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, if you get the angry member just to be nice and quiet, I'll tell you one more time.

In regards to cut-over areas, they are basically done (and I'm sure you will ask the Minister of Tourism the same question tomorrow) for fire protection, for ways of cutting, for reforestation. I could go on and on and repeat what I said before, but I don't think that is the rule here tonight. It's getting late, and I'll just say that it's for . . .

In fact, if you want to go into wildlife habitat and you cut over an area some time, clean cut it, it actually becomes a better wildlife area, because as you know — you come from the moose country — the red willow comes back, the small poplar comes back; they're places for the deer to hide. It actually becomes a better wildlife habitat area, and again, I could spend an hour talking about that. Really, that's some of the area, and I just think it's a way of doing it, a way that's been acceptable not only by the province of Saskatchewan, and I assume by your government previous, but by most other governments around the country.

MR. YEW: — I, as a trapper, and I can vouch that many a trapper back there, the traditional resource users, would probably argue with that. I just don't buy that at all. Coming right from the people who maintain their living off trapping and traditional resource uses, that's just a real hazardous policy.

Anyway, with respect to the hazardous waste disposal program, Mr. Minister, I wonder what has happened to this program. You are probably aware of the program I've mentioned. Is this still maintained within your department? Is it going to be cut off, eliminated, or is it going to be maintained?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, we still have hazardous wastes within, as part of our department within a department. We're evaluating all what is hazardous waste. We don't have a great deal in the province of Saskatchewan. We've talked to the province of Alberta and in comparison they have a great deal more. And we're evaluating what is hazardous waste and what is going to be needed in regards to hazardous waste, and I guess we'll continue to do so and monitor it in the future.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Minister, in terms of protection of lakeshore frontage, I understand the regulations for such are that lakeshore frontage regulations exist at present. I wonder if those regulations will be maintained so that we don't overcrowd lakeshores throughout the province and therefore create a hazardous situation.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I think, Mr. Chairman, in answer to the hon. member, that basically that comes under rural affairs and we do not have any legislation that controls anything along lakeshore development in the rural areas. So, about the only one we have any control on is a major lake, such as Lake Diefenbaker.

MR. YEW: — I only have a couple more questions, Mr. Minister. I see we're running out of time or we have run out of time.

I wonder, did you state previously that you have eliminated the office of energy

conservation department or branch?

HON. MR. HARDY: — It was never in my department. It was in energy and mines.

MR. YEW: — It was with whom, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mineral resources. It's called energy and mines now.

MR. YEW: — I wonder if the minister may, to conclude my questioning, provide me with the amount of personal staff that you have, a list of names, their salaries, their positions, etc.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Certainly, we'll do that. We'll send it over with that other information that you asked for previously.

MR. YEW: — Thank you very much. I have no further questions unless my colleagues may have.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much. We continue to encounter the problem of trying to extend co-operation to the government opposite in getting your budget in on time and doing a proper job of estimates.

I have a fair number of questions. I don't think I have the courage to test the patience of the House in asking them all. I do have some that I want to ask you, Mr. Minister.

One concerns the Regina ozone study. I gather the study was commenced, perhaps in 1981, dealing with what were considered inadequate or subnormal ozone levels. And I gathered from your annual report that you expected to receive the results of the study sometime in 1982. I wonder if you have and, if so, what the result of the study is.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Yes we have. The study will be out pretty soon. We're doing an evaluation on it and at that time we'll make a comment on it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I take it from the minister's comment that the study will be made public as soon as you've had a chance to digest it. Is that the substance of that?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Yes.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Another program I have interest in was one called Conservacheck. I gather it was a program in which you were checking emissions from vehicles. I would appreciate knowing, Mr. Minister, how many vehicles you checked and what the results of your studies were. Were most of them in need of repair and clean-ups?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it was not our program to start with. We were only there as observers. It was a federal program in conjunction with Environment Canada. So, we had nothing to do with it. It was a study done by the federal government. We were just there as observers to see what was going on and what may be needed.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, I guess I may have misunderstood it. I thought you were co-participants in the program. Do you have any results of it? What were the results of the program?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, we were there as observers. We don't have a report from

Conservacheck. I'm sure if you contact the federal government they'll give you the report on it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — If I may ask a question with respect to acid rain, Mr. Minister, you did some snow sampling in northern Saskatchewan. If my memory serves me correctly, it was early 1982. I'm wondering if you have the results of that survey of the snow sampling for acid rain.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, that was made public some time ago.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, perhaps the minister could refresh my memory. What was the result of it? Were the levels considered to be abnormally high?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, they were very, very low and very minimal. The report was good. If we'll always be that fortunate in the province of Saskatchewan, I think we'll have no problems.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I have a question as well on the water quality in Moose Jaw and Regina. There is, as the minister will be aware, a good deal of concern about the quality of the water that's being drunk in Moose Jaw and Regina. It is patently unpleasant to drink. What many people in Moose Jaw and Regina wonder is whether or not it's safe to drink. I would appreciate knowing what monitoring your department does of it, and what are the results of that monitoring? Does it meet the generally accepted standards for drinking water in urban environments?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I understand that we license them to do the monitoring, and we specify the monitoring that's to be done. The city would have the results, I'm sure, of the quality of the water. I think it's been made pretty public here in the province of Saskatchewan. It seems to me that if you had attended a few of our hearings you'd have heard everything that was in the water possible, and what wasn't in there was imagined in there, I guess. But, yes, certainly I think it's pretty public knowledge.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — So you do not receive the results of the monitoring of, I gather, Buffalo Pound Lake.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Yes, we do receive the results, and if there are any problems that we see as a monitoring agent, or as the Department of Environment and a monitoring agent, we meet with the city to discuss with them and tell them what has to be done to correct the situation.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I go back then to my original question, Mr. Minister; how healthy or unhealthy is that water?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I'm not a health expert but I understand there was an international advisory committee set up by the city of Regina, or for the city of Regina, and they concluded that the water was fit to drink. Now I suppose you can draw your own conclusions from that. I'm certainly not free to know any more than that because that's what our job is.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Another question, Mr. Minister, with respect to the agricultural chemical containers. I may be in the wrong department, although it was mentioned in your annual report. I seem to recall a study being done with respect to agricultural

chemical containers, with a view to determine some means of disposing of them. I'm wondering if that study has been completed and if so what conclusions have been drawn by the department?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I think again, Mr. Chairman, that we've made it fairly public knowledge. Yes, the study was completed. It was an in-house study done. We have worked with SUMA, SARM, wildlife federation, Ducks Unlimited, safety council, I don't know who else, and anybody else that was interested in formulating a policy I think the policy, as we made it pretty well public knowledge at the wildlife convention in Yorkton a couple of weeks ago, is yes, we're going to have a pilot type project go out to start to clean up some of the containers, the pesticide containers, the biocide containers, if you want to describe it that way, to crush them and to start cleaning up some of the areas.

It will be a voluntary type of a program. We've asked SARM to participate in it. I'm hoping that they will. It appears that they're going to be part of the action. I think it's the first step toward cleaning them up, something that probably should have been done quite a few years ago. It's become quite a major problem now. A million cans come out a year, but we're all working on it. Also, with the Chemical Association of Canada. They'll be doing some extensive advertising on it, assist us along in it. I think it's the first step toward cleaning up these cans.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I may be in error, Mr. Minister. I understood that one of the problems was what you were going to do with all the containers. Has that been resolved, and if so, how?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Certainly, Mr. Chairman, in regard to the member's question, it is a problem. We're looking into how we can get rid of them. We've looked at going to Ipsco (I heard them . . . (inaudible) . . . today) in regards to maybe shredding them or looking at crushing them down very, very tightly into a very small, 10 in a bunch, down to about three or four inches thick. They would be very easy to store, if we had to, till the price of metal comes up or we could get rid of them. We were looking at other alternatives outside the province that we might be able to move them out to. We will, in the period of, I'm sure, the next year or so, be able to find — or maybe even this year — a way of getting rid of these cans. Again, it's a pilot project. We will have a few problems. At the same time, we're going to move forward to clean them up.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'm sorry, I'm not sure I understand the minister. You indicated that you had developed the program to collect the cans, collect the containers, and then you indicated a moment ago that you didn't know what you're going to do with them. Did I misunderstand you somewhere? What are you going to do with the containers that are collected?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I could spend an hour here going over the program. I thought I made it public here quite a while ago. Basically we'll be collecting them, crushing them, and if we can't get rid of them to one of the steel mills or one of the plants such as Ipsco here . . . I don't know if we can or not. We've talked to them; I don't know if they'll be acceptable. We'll be collecting the residue, the residue that's in the cans. We'll be collecting it and shipping it out to be destroyed. Basically that's all; it's a very simple program.

What we've done: we went to Manitoba, we went to Alberta. We pulled the best of what we saw of both programs that are in existence, and to keep our costs probably at a minimal. We also went to the local municipalities, through SARM, to get their

involvement in it.

I think it's the right way to go. It won't cost the government too much money; it won't cost the people of Saskatchewan too much money; and we still should complete the program very nicely.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'm sorry, Mr. Minister. I didn't follow your response. I still don't know what you're going to do with them. I know that you have a number of options. I'm sure you do have a number of options. I just don't know what you're going to do with them.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, first of all, Mr. Chairman, we said it's a pilot project and we're still looking into who we could give the cans to or sell the cans to, or whatever. We haven't had somebody that will take them. We will probably store them on site, wherever they're crushed, until we can move them. We hope that we can shred them up; they're going to do a test run over at Ipsco to see if they can shred them. If they can, and it works, we'll probably get rid of them immediately. If they can't, then we'll have to look at other alternatives. We are looking at two or three other alternatives with other groups outside the province, to see if we can get them to take the cans.

It's a problem, we know. Nobody seems to want them. Alberta has the same problem; Manitoba has the same problem. One problem was they didn't crush the can very tightly. That's certainly a problem with any steel mill. What we're looking at is crushing them much tighter. We have a gentleman, in fact the same gentleman that designed the car crusher for the former government, looking at designing the can crusher now. He did a fair job, I think, on the car crusher. I think he can do a good job, certainly, crushing the cans.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Given the hour of the day, I'm going to leave it. I may say, as a final comment, that the logic of a program to collect cans when you don't know what you're going to do with them escapes me. I'm not sure why we're getting into the pilot project when you've no idea what you're going to do with the cans.

I would appreciate knowing, Mr. Minister, how many environmental impact assessment statements (I think that's correctly phrased) you have received. I noted from your annual report you had received 50 in 1981. I wondered what that number was in 1982.

HON. MR. HARDY: — I'm sure I don't know and my staff say they do not know. We'll get it and send it over to you.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I was anticipating that would be the case, anyway. I'd also appreciate, as well as the raw numbers, a brief description of who filed them and what they were with respect to.

The minister set it out in a format not dissimilar from your last annual report. That's really the information I'm looking for and I'd appreciate your undertaking that that be done.

HON. MR. HARDY: — All the environmental impact assessments that are done are made public anyway. Every one has been made public, so there's no problem there. We can do it for you.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — A last question, with respect to drainage permits. I wondered how many applications you have received and how many you have granted.

HON. MR. HARDY: — That is a detailed information question, and I'll get that for you. Just to comment on that, one of the major concerns as we went around the province, was drainage. The unlimited drainage in this province has created a lot of problems. Draining the headwaters down into the receiver at the end is probably the most major problem this province has to date, and one we're going to have to address. I don't know how many permits have been given out, or how many have been applied for. Certainly they'll all be looked at very seriously from now on, and we'll send it over to you.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I will readily admit to the minister the complexity of the problem. Neither the problem nor its complexity is very new.

Have any watershed commissions been established in the last year? I know the program was set up with a view to try and handle some of these problems? I'm wondering if any commissions or areas have been established.

HON. MR. HARDY: — The answer is no. Again, I could go into a long speech on what we've been doing for the last two weeks, but I'm not going to because it is getting late. Certainly, probably what will come out of what we've been doing over the last two weeks is a decision on what is needed in regard to water management, water resources, and how it can be handled, whether it be through watershed commissions or whatever.

I'm sure there's a deep concern out there, not only by yourself, but by the people of Saskatchewan. We'll be looking at it. Certainly the study will help us make those kind of decisions.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Okay, that's really all the questions I personally have. I can only say that I look forward to your next set of estimates where I presume we will have more time, and we will have more time to explore the question of water management and the drainage and all the related questions. I look forward to exploring that with the minister in your next set of estimates when we have time to do so properly.

MR. YEW: — One final question, Mr. Minister. A few months ago there was some chemical or other sprayed within the Primrose Lake, within the Primrose air weapons range. I understand that it was a very dangerous chemical and I can't recall the name of this chemical. It was a dangerous chemical, whatever, and I want to express my appreciation and commend you and your officials for putting a stop to this chemical spraying of that particular region and for the expedient way that you did. I also want to question the mentality of those people of the government that went ahead and endorsed the spraying of such without letting the province know about it. You know, this is a very dangerous chemical, I understand, and I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, whether or not your department has taken steps to ensure that this type of thing doesn't happen again.

HON. MR. HARDY: — That's a pretty easy question to answer. Certainly we had the same concern you had, but the point is that when it's under national defence, they have priority and superiority over even the Department of the Environment of Saskatchewan. Regardless of whether we want them to spray there or not, they can do it if they so desire. We have sent a strong letter of protest to Mr. Roberts, federal Minister of the Environment, stating that in future we would like to be contacted prior to, and not just a

few days before, any spraying goes on in any area in regard to Saskatchewan, and we asked him to make sure that they co-operated with us. He has sent me a letter assuring me that that would be so. Whether they do it or not, it's out of my hands.

We found out about that very, very late — just a couple of days or one day before they sprayed. We did send a couple of quick letters out and made a few phone calls. We couldn't stop it. It had got sprayed on us, but basically, yes, we have the concern. Yes, we've sent a letter to the Department of National Defence and also the Minister of the Environment, and hopefully we can get some co-operation from the federal government in regard to this.

MR. YEW: — Thank you. You could also include that, I understand, there is a federal-provincial agreement with respect to the Primrose air weapons bombing range in existence now for some 30-odd years. I also understand that there are interim agreements, some two-to five-year agreements, in existence. I would suggest that you include that problem within that sphere of federal-provincial agreements. Thank you.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, just a quick comment. That area of that agreement is just to set that aside as a bombing area, I understand. I'm unaware of it but that's what my department tells me. It's not an agreement in regard to the environmental concerns in the area. So, I will take a look at it and see what it's all about. I was unaware of it until you brought it up.

MR. YEW: — Certainly, Mr. Minister, I don't want to repute you or refute or whatever the word is, but it certainly looks after many natural resources — questions like forestry, minerals, that whole line of the natural environment. I'm almost certain that your department should be made aware of the existing agreement, and get a very positive input by your department to ensure that chemical spraying is included in that agreement to ensure that we don't get dangerous chemicals sprayed in our province.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, what I told you originally was basically exactly right, I think, except that there is an agreement in there that does allow for trapping, for forestry, for mining. But that is not in regard to environmental . . . such as the spraying in there. The national defence has superiority over whether they want to spray or not and there's nothing we can do other than voice a protest, which we did. I think the other solution would be in regard to any spraying of any chemicals in the area. Hopefully, now that we do have a working relationship with the federal government and the Department of National Defence, before anything like that happens we will be very aware of it and have our part or play our part in seeing that there is nothing sprayed in there that would be detrimental to the area.

MR. YEW: — I have no further questions, Mr. Chairman, so with that I guess we will go ahead with the subvotes.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

Item 13

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I imagine that the six staff who were in this area, Indian treaty land entitlements, have been moved to intergovernmental affairs. Is that a correct assumption?

HON. MR. HARDY: — That's correct.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Would you mind getting for me a list of the people who were involved here and their names and titles? You probably won't have that with you, but will you send that to me?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Certainly.

Item 13 agreed to.

Item 14 agreed to.

Vote 9 agreed to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — I would like to thank the minister then for being here with his officials.

HON. MR. HARDY: — I would like to thank my officials for being here with me tonight and supplying me with the information for the members opposite. I would like to thank the members for the dignified way in which the questions were asked, and I'm sure the next time they will be very general, too. When we get to Sask Housing tomorrow, we'll all talk nicely.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:28 p.m.