

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

June 3, 1985

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

URBAN AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

Item 1 (continued)

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Deputy Chairman. Just prior to the 5 o'clock break, we were discussing community infrastructures. I wondered if at this time you haven't got — if I may ask: whether or not you have a five-year project, or have identified a five-year plan, in terms of public utilities, community facilities, the needs, the requirements etc., for the various communities in northern Saskatchewan.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, as I'd indicated this afternoon to the member, we established the northern capital fund a number of years ago at \$6.5 million. The reason we did that is for two reasons: one's so that communities could plan, over the next five years, their capital projects; and secondly, it allows them to set their own priorities vis-a-vis infrastructure development, or other capital development, that they'd like to do in their communities.

The \$6.5 million will be spent over the next five years. We're three years into the program and we would expect the full 6.5 to be drawn down by the end of the fifth year, when the communities have made their priorities and started their projects.

MR. YEW: — Earlier this spring, Mr. Minister, you met with several of the local government councils in La Ronge, and they indicated to you that they had needs and requirements in the areas of sewer and water, power, roads, community facilities of various kinds, Mr. Minister.

And I wondered if, you know, appropriate funding was being provided, as former governments have indicated — as well as your government when you dismantled DNS (department of northern Saskatchewan) — you also, your government, indicated that you would not place less emphasis but the same emphasis and recognition for the North as you would the southern part of the province.

Can the minister indicate to me whether or not those services and programs enjoyed by southern municipalities are in par with the needs in northern Saskatchewan? Or should I reverse that question; are those needs and requirements in par with the type of services and programs enjoyed by southern municipalities?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to point out to the member opposite that the northern capital fund, of course, is 200 per cent richer than the same capital fund in the South.

The needs of water and sewer, of course — those communities are presently talking with Saskatchewan Water Corporation, who would provide that type of assistance as well as the \$6.5 million from that northern capital fund. I'd like to point out also that I will again be visiting with the northern councils this month. I have five or six days booked for the North, and we will be discussing councils' needs with them when I'm up there. But I think that the northern funding is considerably higher and richer in formula than the southern counterpart.

MR. YEW: — With respect to the \$6.5 million fund that you referred to, Mr. Minister, has any correspondence, in detail, been provided regarding the policy of this \$6.5 million fund that you

referred to? Have there any, from your department or the municipal services branch of your department, provided a detailed memo acknowledging this fund and providing the policy and the regulations whereby this fund will be spent by the northern local governments?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Certainly, Mr. Chairman, the program details, brochures, and regulations were sent to all the communities when the program began a number of years ago.

MR. YEW: — So you're saying to me, Mr. Minister, then, that all the communities are aware of the policy of this fund and that they have received clear and concise information as to how they can take advantage of this program.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well I think, Mr. Chairman, that the numbers of communities who have drawn down and used the funds would indicate that they're aware. There are only eight communities now in the North that have not used that fund, and those eight are aware of it. I presume that over this year and the next that they will also use it. But out of 36 communities in the North, all but eight have to date used the funding.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Minister, how much of this fund has been spent, and what is the balance of it remaining for the course of the next three years?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, to date moneys paid out: \$2.2 million; to be spent, 4.1 million.

MR. YEW: — Can the minister identify or provide information where the funds have gone — to which communities, and which communities are entitled to the balance of that fund?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well again, Mr. Chairman, much like the question prior to 5 o'clock, the list is with your seat-mate. If you want to run down it again: Creighton, 428,000; La Ronge, 521,000; Air Ronge, 119,000; Beauval, 38,000; Cumberland House, 91,000; Denare Beach, 96,000; Green Lake, 26,000; Ile-a-la-Crosse, 283,000; La Loche, 140,000; Pinehouse, 66,000; Sandy Bay, 34,000; Deschambault, 28,000; Dore Lake, 13,500; Jans Bay, 3,500; Michel village, 18,000; Missinipe, 20,000; Pelican Narrows, 44,000; St. George's Hill, 20,000; Southend, 29,000; Stanley Mission, 49,000; Timber Bay, 58,000; Weyakwin, 5,000; Brabant Lake, 17,000; Garson Lake, 1,800; Sled Lake, 13,000; Stony Rapids, 68,000; Wollaston Lake, 16,000.

MR. YEW: — I noted several of your colleagues, particularly the Minister of Finance, whistled at the figures there. Mr. Minister, I just want to indicate to you that many services and programs appreciated by southern municipalities have not been there for the communities in northern Saskatchewan for a good many, many years. Many of our communities in the North are very isolated and remote and when it comes to the services required or appreciated by those in the South, we are somewhat very limited. As well I should indicate to the minister that, you know, I wonder if in fact we are getting our fair emphasis from this government.

I was studying and looking at the *Public Accounts* for 1983 and '84 for the northern administration district. Some of these may not fall into your department respectively, but some definitely do fall under your jurisdiction. I look at the grants for economic development. Funds that were applicable or available for the North for the 1983-84 fiscal year's operations were \$1.4 million and the actual expenditure for that particular period was only \$73,000. And municipal services, which is under your jurisdiction, had a \$2.1 million funding allotment. You actually only spent 1.2 million. The same applies for northern capital grants. There's \$450,000 appropriated for this. The actual expenditure was nil.

And the grants for sewer and water upgrading, the actual amount appropriated was \$845,300. Actual expenditure was \$135,000. Grants for fire protection facilities was 162,500 appropriated. Under your *Public Accounts* statement by your government that actual expenditure indicates that no money were spent.

And then again I go on to construction and improvement of community utilities and facilities for the North. There is \$3.9 million appropriated, and only \$1.4 million was actually spent.

Mr. Minister, I wonder, you know: why are northern communities being short-changed? I get these figures from the actual government public accounts statements. I want to get your response. And why are we being short-changed in those respects in regards to your branch, or your department.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well the one question that comes to mind, Mr. Chairman, is what document he's reading from. We don't know which *Public Accounts* he's talking about. He may be talking about '82-83, which would of course reflect on his past administration.

Generally speaking, when we allocate moneys, the moneys are there, obviously. The communities, if they do not partake of the program . . . Obviously the money isn't spent if the communities don't spend it.

Unlike your administration, we believe that the local authority should set those priorities and spend the money. If the money's not spent, then the local communities did not spend it. And I still don't know which document, Mr. Chairman, he's reading from, although it's probably a little outside of the purview of these estimates. But generally speaking, the money appropriated is there. If the communities wish to spend it, it's there to be spent.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Minister, I'm quite surprised and somewhat puzzled with your reference to the figures I just quoted you. You try to mislead the House and try to get the message across that the figures I'm quoting here are for 1982, the figures that were released or appropriated by the former administration.

(19:15)

I'm referring to your *Public Accounts*, Mr. Minister, regarding the Consolidated Fund's schedule of budgetary expenditures for the year ending March 31st, 1984. That's the figures I'm quoting, and those figures were appropriated by your government. And the public accounts statements that came out indicated to me that those cuts have undermined the services and programs for northern people. And I'd like to get a response from you indicating why they were short-changed in those areas I indicated to you.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, absolutely not. If the member had been listening, the money when it is appropriated is money to be spent in that year. If the communities do not take up the amount that is appropriated, it'd be a local decision not to do that, certainly not ours.

The moneys, if they are in the budget, are there to be used by the communities. If the communities are not in a position in that year to use the funds, then they are not spent. But no doubt they would be spent the year after, depending on where the particular projects are in their array. And it's not the matter of the government spending the money; it's the matter that the communities wouldn't have taken up all the program amounts that were allowed them.

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I go back then to the reason why I questioned the \$6.5 million that you earmarked for capital projects earlier.

My question then was: have you provided clear acknowledgement of this fund and policies related to it to all the communities in northern Saskatchewan? Because as I understand it, there is quite a confusion with the dismantling process of the former branch of the department of northern Saskatchewan.

Prior to your administration, there was close consultation with local government by way of

planning various programs and projects applicable to local governments and local communities in northern Saskatchewan. We sat regularly with project management branch, which was part of municipal services in those days. We met in close consultation to assess the project management branch, and also with various local government authorities in the North. And I don't know if you have this type of policy open for the North. I doubt it very much, Mr. Minister.

And with that respect, I want to ask you with regards to the budget earmarked for the municipal services branch. I go back to your current fiscal year's budget, Mr. Minister. Clearly you have indicated some funds here appropriated for northern municipal services — which is down, cut by at least 7, \$800,000. You have eliminated 12.4 positions. You have indicated here in your appropriation Bill a northern capital grants project for \$450,000; fire protection, \$104,000; northern revenue sharing, \$5.1 million.

And I wondered at this point in time, Mr. Minister, if there is any close consultation with the northern communities in regards to the policy of administration and operation of these particular funds.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, as I had indicated to the member just a number of minutes ago, of the 36 municipalities in the North all but eight have already used the funds, which indicates to me that there is good understanding of the programs.

As far as the estimate book goes, as I have indicated to the member prior to dinner, there has been no loss of manpower nor money. There has been a transfer from one division to the next in the North, from La Ronge to the P.A. planning district, but the same number of people are involved and the same budgetary amount is involved.

It is clear to me when I talk to northern councils that they were quite aware of the programs, and they'll make use of them.

MR. YEW: — Specifically, Mr. Minister, what is your policy, what concrete measures have you taken in terms of that consultation process? What group do you work with? We have various groups out there. We have the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Local Governments, which we refer to as SLANG. And then we have three urban municipalities: Creighton . . . Well there's actually two now. Uranium City is somewhat inferior in terms of status with the closure of the mine up there. But we have La Ronge and Creighton. And then we have approximately 10 unorganized hamlets in the various other communities.

What procedures do you use in terms of close co-operation and consultation with the communities?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, I not only meet with them individually, I meet with the organizations as well. As the member knows, I met with some 20 of the councils individually last year and hope to do so again this year, this month. I have met with the organizations that you have mentioned and we do that on an as-need basis and also on a regular basis, at least once a year. Plus the fact, Mr. Chairman, we have an office in La Ronge and any technical assistance that the communities require, need only pick up the phone.

MR. YEW: — I asked the minister for the formal procedures used, Mr. Minister. Anyone in your capacity or mine, or anyone in the Assembly here, can visit the communities whenever they feel like they want to, but the formal procedures of that working relationship is what I'm questioning him over.

Has your government established a formal procedure whereby you can get feedback and information in regards to the needs and requirements of those particular communities?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well I can only repeat, Mr. Chairman, that we have the office in La Ronge. We have a number of other offices in the North. Most communities I talk to are quite aware of the programs and know how to use them.

They can contact me, which they have on occasion if they have a special need, or they can see me when I'm in the North. We have, as we do in this government, consulted with local governments and with all people of Saskatchewan.

MR. YEW: — In terms of community boundaries, Mr. Minister, I just want to come back for a minute. With regards to community boundaries, what is the status of the community for Sandy Bay, in regards to the community boundary? Have you taken into consideration the Island Falls site being a part of the jurisdiction of the local authority there?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, I met with the council of Sandy Bay last year, discussed the boundaries with them, and took a tour of the area that they were concerned with. There was a number of concerns, as I recollect. One was the power plant.

The other, though, was a stretch down the lake on the east side that was not within the boundary, and around the bottom of the lake that took in the picnic grounds that they thought would be beneficial to them for development in the tourist area. And we took a look at that and broadened, or elongated, their boundary to include that area down the east side and around the bottom for that purpose, and they seemed to be satisfied with that.

MR. YEW: — What is their jurisdiction then, Mr. Minister? Is it a 3-mile radius within the town, within the community of Sandy Bay? Is it a full 3-mile radius or a 5-mile radius that they have jurisdiction upon?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — We don't do boundaries in circles, Mr. Chairman. It is as I described it: the town site itself, and then east down along the lake to the bottom area, if you know where the picnic grounds are. And it's — I don't know how far back from the lake — about a mile back from the lake as you go down the east side and around the bottom.

MR. YEW: — So, Mr. Minister, you have excluded the Island Falls site. I'd like to ask you why you have excluded the Island Falls site. For what purpose, what reasons?

Earlier, in the course of the past couple of years, the community and several other communities — probably the majority of northern communities — have indicated to you that they must have an economic base in order to survive.

With that particular example, Mr. Minister, Sandy Bay was urging to have as part of their jurisdiction the Island Falls project site.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the Island Falls site, of course, is a good distance from the town site, as you have to go around the lake to get there. It was not . . . It's 1 mile across, if you can swim.

In order to get there by road, you go right around the lake, as you know, and the area itself is not close to the town site. They had indicated to me the interest on the east side of the lake for development purposes, for tourism, and we took that into consideration and included it in the boundary.

MR. YEW: — Your comment about having to swim that 1 mile across the lake is really unnecessary, Mr. Minister. I clearly indicated to you that the desire of many of those communities was to try to have a 3-mile or possibly 5-mile jurisdiction within their community boundaries. And one of the reasons why Sandy Bay was interested in the Island Falls project was

to try to develop that site so that it could meet their economic requirements. There's a lot of potential in that site, Mr. Minister, and I ask you clearly: why, what is the purpose, what is the reason for not turning that site over to the community?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, that site is not that close to the town site by road, although by flying it is. It is across the water. In order to transport anything by land you've got to go round the lake.

Not many communities, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Member, requested the 5-mile or a 3-mile radius. Ninety per cent of the communities are quite satisfied with the present boundaries. None requested — outside of two or three — a radius, outside of Ile-a-la-Crosse, and Pinehouse, as I recollect. And I would say that 90 per cent plus are quite satisfied with the boundaries.

MR. YEW: — For your information, Mr. Minister, they transported quite a number of houses from the Island Falls project site just a year ago. The site is only a mile away from the community. Certainly I agree, it's across the channel. But certainly it's only a mile away, and you keep indicating to me that it's quite a distance by road. Certainly I agree it's quite a distance by road, but nevertheless, the community indicated a good number of times that they would like to have that site as part of their economic base.

(19:30)

And I don't think that the distance on the road causes any problems at all for the community. In fact, I just indicated to you that they moved a good number of houses from across that channel as recently as a year ago, and that is quite a chore in itself.

Now I just can't understand why your government . . . The site is currently under your jurisdiction. It's under Sask Power Corporation's jurisdiction. I can't see why you can't settle and turn that site over to the community as part of their economic base.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well as I indicated, Mr. Chairman, yes, they took some houses across on the ice. If you're going to develop an area, you're going to need a road in there to develop it. It's not good enough to just be able to use the ice. If you're going to do any development, you're going to have to go around the lake on the road, and in my view it's not feasible.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Minister, talking about your branch and anything that falls under local government, one of the major and most interesting issues at the local level, when it comes to local government, is trying to establish a sound economic base. And one of the reasons why I keep quizzing you about the Island Falls project is the fact that that has a tremendous amount of potential. I'm not trying to indicate to you that the community wants to transfer that whole site over to the community. What they in fact are hoping to do, and I'm sure that you've got several inquiries about this — or if you haven't, probably some of your colleagues have — but they would like to develop the current Island Falls site into a major tourist industry. And that is why I'm questioning you, Mr. Minister, in regards to that site. It's got a tremendous amount of potential. Why not give the community the opportunity to develop a sound economic base?

We have communities in northern Saskatchewan that have high a unemployment rate — 90, 95 per cent unemployment in many of our northern communities. We have, during estimates of Social Services, some indication that there's a huge increase in welfare reliance, a tremendous increase of people on social assistance. We simply have to do something about the lack of economic development in many of those northern communities. And you know, Mr. Minister, it's only fair and reasonable for us to try to come to grips with the social and economic realities in northern Saskatchewan.

And one of those . . . You always tell us that we preach nothing but doom and gloom, but certainly, Mr. Minister, we also indicate to you several alternatives.

And one of the alternatives I'm talking about for the community of Sandy Bay is to create an economic base by way of transferring that Island Falls project site over to the community so that they can develop it into a major tourist industry.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, I think that if Sandy Bay wishes to develop a tourist facility it would be best done on the east side, close to where the services already are, and not all the way around the lake.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — As far as I'm concerned we can move off item number 1. I will have some questions on other sections, but as far as I'm personally concerned we can move off item number 1.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, there must be some explanation for this. The staff and the funding have been cut to one-third, approximately, of their former size. There must be some explanation for it. What is it?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, that's the rebate staff.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Were any of the employees who handled the rebates ... Were any of their services terminated?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — No permanent employees were terminated. They were all given jobs in the civil service.

Item 2 agreed to.

Items 3 and 4 agreed to.

Item 5

MR. SHILLINGTON: — You have gone from a third of a person, which is obviously must be part-time, to a full person, and the funding has increased accordingly. Perhaps, Mr. Minister, you could give us an explanation of what's afoot with the provincial planning appeals board.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, we had a part-time secretary to the provincial planning appeals board, who retired. We decided to hire a full-time secretary to quicken the turn-around time on appeals, and that's what that represents.

Item 5 agreed to.

Items 6 to 10 inclusive agreed to.

Item 11

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, there is a modest decrease in the funding under this section. Might we have an explanation for this? I'm sure the costs in Saskatoon haven't come down. Why is the funding decreased?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Yes. The only reason for the change is that the estimate is calculated more precisely than it was last year because they clicked into the formula where they get 3 per cent per annum every year, rather than basing it on the old formula that was done

pre-reassessment. As you know, it was your administration that set up the formula that after a new assessment, they would click into a 3 per cent increase per annum. So what this is is a more specific estimate.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well was the amount underexpended? Do you know whether or not the full \$810,690 was expended in the last year?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — 783,000 was expended.

Item 11 agreed to.

Item 12

MR. SHILLINGTON: — The poor folks in Moose Jaw have really caught it in the neck. Funding here is decreased to about 60 per cent of what it was. Mr. Minister, do you have an explanation for this, or is this just cutting costs at the expense of a city which has no effective representation?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, when the Wakamow Valley Authority started up, there was a phase-in of capital funding of \$50,000 over the first four years. Last year was the last year of that initial \$50,000 infusion into their capital fund and so this year represents the ongoing operating.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — And they're getting no money for capital this year, in the Wakamow?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — No, the Wakamow . . . Again, this as the agreement that was set up under the prior administration. And the start-up was \$200,000 in the capital fund over four years and ongoing operating, which can also be put to capital depending on what the Wakamow decides to do with the different partners' shares.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well I am sure, Mr. Minister, that there are capital needs. The Wakamow Valley Authority has capital needs which might have been met had this government been so inclined. You have decided not to give them anything in terms of capital this year. And in effect what you're saying is the development of Wakamow Valley is on ice until the voters in this province chuck you people out.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, this is no different than the Meewasin funding formula or for that matter, the Wascana. These parks are given initial capital start-up and thereafter, they split their shares — that is, the provincial government's, and the city's, and whoever are partners; and they themselves will decide what part of that is capital and what part is operating.

Item 12 agreed to.

Items 13 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

Item 17

MR. SHILLINGTON: — There's a decrease in transit and transit assistance to the disabled. I could read you a resolution which I just read from this year's SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) convention requesting that the funding for transit and transit for the disabled be increased, because it was . . . This is an area in which the municipalities have a need.

Mr. Minister, you've cut it by 7 per cent. I know that I will get some difficult convoluted explanation for this. No doubt you'll have one. I say though that we in the opposition want to register our protest for any program which cuts funding for transit and for the disabled.

This is a labour-intensive . . . As was noted in the resolution, this was a labour-intensive program

which provides a number of jobs. It's also a good investment in that you wind up eventually spending a good deal more on streets and road transportation if you don't spend it on transit.

So we think you're being penny wise and pound foolish. We also think that you are short changing an area where the municipalities badly need more assistance.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, the transit for the disabled increased from '84-85, 1.2 million to 1.3 million this year. Operating assistance for transit has gone up \$1 per capita, from \$3 to \$4 for Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert; and from \$2 to \$3 per capita for Yorkton, Swift Current, North Battleford, Battleford, and Creighton.

The capital assistance for new stock was rolled into the Provincial Capital Fund. Rolling stock purchases is not labour-intensive unless you're talking about Detroit where the buses are made.

Item 17 agreed to.

Item 18

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Chairman, I want to question the minister on this, and I'll want to make sure that we're reading out of the same document. You indicated to my colleague from Cumberland that you were not sure where he was getting his figures from. As he indicated, there was a major cut in northern Saskatchewan in Urban Affairs, and I want to make sure that we are all reading out of the same document, and that's the *Estimates* for 1985-86.

You talk about no cuts, and yet under the municipal services, you went from \$1.69 million to \$893,000, and to me that's a major cut.

(19:45)

But I want to go to the northern capital grants, Mr. Minister. And I see that you allotted 450,000 last year, and 450,000 again this year — absolutely no increase. And I wonder, Mr. Minister: of the 450,000 last year, could you indicate if that was all spent?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Okay. Mr. Chairman, we've been over this several times. This is the appropriation for this year for the program we announced two years ago in total amount of \$6.5 million — \$450,000 this year. Up to October 1st, 29 communities have so far used this program, have drawn down \$2.063 million. That's 129 projects in 29 communities, and there will be 2 million left to go in this program in the next two years.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I'm not really following you that closely with the conversation that's in the background here.

I was talking about the capital grants which you have in your estimates, and the \$450,000. And the question that I asked, Mr. Minister: was that all spent last year?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Yes.

MR. YEW: — Well following up on my colleague from Athabasca's question, Mr. Minister, looking at the schedule of budgetary government expenditures, the question as posed on you by my colleague was: was that money spent? And the public accounts estimates that I have for 1984 indicate to me that that fund was not spent at all. When you look down under the department of northern Saskatchewan's ordinary, I come to that northern capital grants program appropriated by your government 450,000; the actual expenditure, nil. Zero. And you go under the column underexpended, it has \$450,000. Why is that, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that that's under the department of northern

Saskatchewan, I understand, which was not expended up till January 1st. Then after January — between January 1st and March 31st, 1984 — that fund came under not DNS, but came under Urban Affairs, and the \$450,000 was spent. But it wouldn't be under the subvote in that book.

MR. YEW: — Well, I really don't get it, Mr. Minister, because the statement of public accounts states on the cover that this statement is ending March 31st, 1984.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — But wrong department. That is, January 1st, '84, that amount of money was transferred into Urban Affairs. It was not spent under DNS; it was spent under Urban Affairs.

For the year ended March 31st, 1984 — and this is in your *Public Accounts* book — under Urban Affairs, ordinary, if you look down under northern capital grants: estimate, 450,000; total, 450,000; expenditure, 450,000. Now that's under Consolidated Fund, schedule of budgetary expenditure by department, Urban Affairs, ordinary, northern capital grants, under 450,000.

Is that a page number, C38? That'll do it. Yes, page C38.

Item 18 agreed to.

Item 19

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Mr. Minister, on clause 19, grants for the provision of northern fire protection facilities, I see there's a cut of \$50,000. I'm just wondering if you could explain to me what that cut would be.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, that's basically what we estimate will be the draw-down this year. Last year we estimated 154,000, and only 58,000 was used by communities. So our estimate this year is 104, 5, of which we know, so far, Stanley Mission and Wollaston will use the funds this year, but the estimate last year was underexpended by about 100,000. The communities didn't buy the equipment. So it's simply an estimate of what we think will be used this year.

Item 19 agreed to.

Item 20 agreed to.

Item 21

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, in 22, grants to the town of Meadow Lake for infrastructure development . . . Last year, you spent 750,000 in Meadow Lake for infrastructure development. This year, Urban Affairs are now spending another 560,000 for the town of Meadow Lake for infrastructure development.

Mr. Minister, could you explain to the House whether all cities and towns in the province receive this type of an annual grant for infrastructure development, as the one Meadow Lake is getting?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — A number of things, Mr. Chairman. This is the last, I guess, of a payment in a two-year — three years, I guess — three year payment, and this is the third time of the three payments.

Basically, it was in recognition of the town's lack of infrastructure, compared to the standard in the rest of the South. Now you're dealing with the South, south of the line, and it lines up closely to the type of funding that could be available if they were north of the line. However, the infrastructure was such that this type of money was required for their infrastructure. It was arranged two years ago. This represents the third of three payments to Meadow Lake to rebuild their infrastructure.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, you indicate that this is the final payment of a three-year payment for the town of Meadow Lake for infrastructure development. Could you indicate what the first payment was? I see we've got \$750,000 for one year and \$560,000 this year for the town of Meadow Lake. I wonder: could you indicate what the first payment was that went to the town of Meadow Lake for infrastructure development?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — 500,000.

MR. THOMPSON: — So the town of Meadow Lake got \$500,000 in year number one. I wonder if you . . . And you indicate that the town of Meadow lake received that special grant because it was lagging behind other communities in northern Saskatchewan. Well that's what you indicated, Mr. Minister. You have given the town of Meadow Lake in excess of a million three . . . \$750,000 for infrastructure development just because it lies a little bit south of the line separating northern Saskatchewan and southern Saskatchewan.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if the same offer was offered to communities like Loon Lake and St. Walburg and Big River, who lie fairly well in the same vicinity. And I could even go a little bit farther, and let's take it to Prince Albert and Shellbrook and North Battleford, because here you are giving close to \$2 million to the town of Meadow Lake who derives all its revenue from northern Saskatchewan. If it wasn't for northern Saskatchewan coming down and spending the money there, then Meadow Lake would not really exist as it is today. But yet you can give them just about \$200 million — the town of Meadow Lake — for infrastructure development.

Now I ask you, Mr. Minister: was the same offer made to the towns of Shellbrook and Big River and Loon Lake and St. Walburg and North Battleford?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, there have been a number of grants like that in the North. La Ronge received over \$1 million in grants over a period of time. Cumberland House is now receiving over \$1 million from the water Crown for their water which will be . . . That project is to start this year, I understand. So these types of grants are not unusual in the North where you have infrastructure problems.

MR. THOMPSON: — I guess I'm not making myself very clear here, Mr. Minister. I wasn't talking about northern Saskatchewan. And you indicated when you were talking about the development grants that went to Meadow Lake that you were talking about communities south of the line because they didn't have an opportunity to take advantages of special order grants and the DREE Northlands agreement that went into the northern communities. But you want to refer to Cumberland House and La Ronge. And that's not the question I was asking you.

I know that Meadow Lake has received these grants, close to \$2 million. The question I was asking you: was the same offer made to the communities of Big River, Loon Lake, Shellbrook, Prince Albert, North Battleford, and St. Walburg, who are in the same position as Meadow Lake is?

And also while you're on your feet, I would like to know if that was offered to them. And if not, what was the criteria that you used in order to give this huge grant to Meadow Lake?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well as I had indicated previously, Mr. Chairman, other communities receive large sums of money for their infrastructure, and I mentioned a couple. The other communities he mentions — their infrastructure was not in the condition of Meadow Lake's. They were in better condition than Meadow Lake's. The agreement was made some years ago after the infrastructure was studied, and it seemed to be not in as good a shape as the other communities'.

But when those occasions arise, Mr. Chairman, for instance in Cumberland House where they

require large sums of money for water and sewer infrastructure, those moneys are negotiated. I don't know the exact amount; I know it's over \$1 million that Cumberland House will receive for their infrastructure this year. Now every community has a different state of infrastructure, infrastructures in a different state of repair. This one was below standard, so that grant was made to bring it up to standard.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay then, Mr. Minister. You're indicating that large amounts were spent in Cumberland House and in La Ronge and other communities.

Could you indicate, of the amount of money that you have to put into Meadow Lake in the last three years for infrastructure development, was there any cost-shared money in there with the federal government? As you're aware, when the infrastructure was put into Cumberland House and La Ronge, the DREE Northlands agreement was worked in there, and there was a lot of federal money pumped in. Matter of fact, I believe that the provincial government was dealing with 40-cent dollars. Could you indicate, of the close to \$2 million that Meadow Lake received for infrastructure development, was there any federal money in there or was it all provincial?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — No, Mr. Chairman. The town of Meadow Lake obviously shared. Of the 5.6 million spent on infrastructure — and this was a town of some 3,000, 3,500 people without a paved street — the property owners would put in \$3.7 million of that 5.6. So they certainly paid for their infrastructure themselves.

(20:00)

The same can be said of Cumberland House with their million dollars plus in infrastructure. There was no federal money in that, either. It's all from Sask Water.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, are you saying that the infrastructure that was put into Cumberland House was not shared by the federal government?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — The water corporation is putting over \$1 million into Cumberland House this year, and the project hasn't started yet.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, we are going back three years in Meadow Lake, and we are going back to the infrastructure in Cumberland House. And, Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure whether I'm in order here, but you're discussing the development grant that you gave to Meadow Lake for the last three years, and you're also indicating that you did that because Meadow Lake was a community that did not have a paved street. Is that what you're telling this legislature, that they did not have a paved street?

Mr. Chairman, the minister is not even paying attention to the questions I'm asking him. And I think it's quite important, Mr. Chairman, that we discuss this because I'm just wondering if the town of Shellbrook had the same offer — and Prince Albert, and St. Walburg, and Loon Lake, and Big River.

But you have just said now that the town of Meadow Lake got this extra money for infrastructure because it didn't even have a paved street. And you can look at *Hansard* tomorrow and it'll indicate what you just said. Now I want you to confirm, Mr. Minister: are you saying that prior to making this agreement to give all this money to Meadow Lake for infrastructure development, that they did not have a paved street in the community of Meadow Lake?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, the giving of grants to municipalities outside of the general programs is not unusual. It has happened in the past; it will happen in the future. The infrastructure in the town of Meadow Lake was substandard: that is sewer, water and streets. And this grant was necessary to bring that up to standard. It is not unusual, as I indicated to the member, that grants are made for these types of purposes, and I mentioned

Cumberland House. I could mention Regina who got \$5 million from the provincial government for water filtration, which Swift Current doesn't get, although Swift Current got a special grant also for their water and sewer, as did Lloydminster. They are made all the time to meet special needs, and they have been made in the past, and they will be made in the future.

Swift Current, Weyburn is another example. They've got special grants, if you want to put it that way, for water and sewer, as did Lloydminster. They are made in all parts of the province for special needs as the occasion arises and that has happened in the past, and it will happen in the future.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Chairman, I have no problem with that at all, Mr. Minister, and I fully agree with that, but I think the comparison between Regina and Meadow Lake is one that we should not be using here tonight. I would sooner see you use Shellbrook and Meadow Lake because it would equalize itself. But to get off the subject, I just want to ask you two questions. Was it all provincial money? And has there been other grants to other communities of 5,000 and under for infrastructure development, the same as the one that Meadow lake has received this year? Have there been other communities that have received this special grant? And is it totally provincial moneys?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Yes. And I don't have the names off the top of my head, but I happened to remember The Industrial Towns Act which was passed for the very purpose of being able to give special grants to growth areas. Coronach, for one, comes to mind that got special grants. As I had mentioned before, small cities in the recent past have had special grants because there were no grants available to them under normal programming of the amount of money that they required for water and sewer. Cumberland House, as I say, just received over \$1 million for their project. That's, I guess, a similar size community.

So they're made all the time, and they're made for special needs. You can try and come up with broad programs that will fit most of the municipalities' needs, but you're always going to have special cases. And that has been the case in the past and, I suspect, will be in the future.

MR. THOMPSON: — Well I guess I shouldn't ask, Mr. Chairman, two questions at one time. Yes, I agree that there is special grants for resort communities or boom-town communities when this takes place. But I also asked you, Mr. Minister, at the same time, if there was any federal money involved in this. And I guess while you're on your feet, communities such as Big River, and Loon Lake, and Shellbrook, and Battleford, Prince Albert could all apply for the same type of grant. Is that right?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, no, there was not federal money involved in Meadow Lake. And secondly, as I have indicated to the member previously, these types of grants, because of special needs or perceived special needs, after they have been studied and after the community has talked to us, these grants have been made in the past, and I'm sure they'll be made in the future.

Item 21 agreed to.

Items 22 and 23 agreed to.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, not a huge item, but there is no grant to the Community Planning Association of Canada. Five thousand dollars was budgeted last year and nothing this year. I'm just wondering why.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, the association over the last number of years has not been that active, and that grant was simply cut out.

Vote 24 agreed to.

June 3, 1985

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS

URBAN AFFAIRS

Vote 162

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2

MR. SHILLINGTON: — There is no money at all budgeted under item 2 — loans for water supply projects pursuant to the water development agreement. What is the explanation for that, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, that has been transferred to the water corporation.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, it doesn't say so. And the style of these estimates has been that where vote has been transferred to another corporation, that location appears. There's nothing here to suggest that the subvote was transferred to the water development corporation.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well that's where it went, Mr. Chairman.

Item 2 agreed to.

Vote 162 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

URBAN AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

Item 1

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, I wonder: this is municipal winter works projects of \$2.140 million. Is that what you are estimating that you will be spending on winter works? Municipal winter works? I've jumped a subvote ahead of you, have I, Mr. Chairman? Okay. Is this the amount of money that you're expecting to spend in northern Saskatchewan on winter works for the upcoming winter, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Vote 1 and 2 is the winter works for rural municipalities, urban, and northern. Okay? Urban and northern is 2.1 million and rural is 1 million, for a total of 3.2 million. So the northern is in that 2.1 million.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 agreed to.

Vote 24 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

June 3, 1985

URBAN AFFAIRS

Capital Expenditure — Vote 34

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 34 agreed to.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

URBAN AFFAIRS

Provincial Development Expenditure — Vote 24

(20:15)

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 24 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

SASKATCHEWAN ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 44

Item 1 and 2 agreed to.

Item 3

MR. SHILLINGTON: — There is a modest increase in the assessment services. What explanation lies behind that, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, it's a transfer from assessment services of some personnel into administration.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well it takes some Conservative mathematics to work that one out. There's one person more in administration and 7.8 less in the assessment services. So I say, you got to be a Conservative cabinet minister to make those mathematics work.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, there were three positions transferred to administration with 107,000, and there were some transfers from administration of two people who were earning less than the transfer the other way, and that accounted for the change.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Your first explanation is as coherent as the last one. I guess with respect to the assessment services, given the popularity these days, the public would probably say that the fewer services we got here the better.

Mr. Minister, I don't follow your explanation, and I gather you're having a difficult time with it. If you want to reply in writing, I would probably accept that, but your explanation to date is really quite incoherent.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — We'll send that to you.

Item 3 agreed to.

Vote 44 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985
SASKATCHEWAN ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY
CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGET EXPENDITURE

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 44

Item 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 44 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 22

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 22 agreed to.

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

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank my officials, and thank the opposition for their insightful questions.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — We need one minister who's prepared to answer questions just to contrast with the others. I'd like to thank the minister who, I want to point out to his colleagues around the cabinet table, actually answered questions. I know this left me in a state of shock, but he actually did. When you said, can you give me the answer: no. Will have it here by Monday: yes. So I want the ministers to note there is a different way to handle estimates than what the rest of you've been doing. I also intended to thank his officials for their assistance.

CONSOLIDATE FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

LABOUR

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 20

Item 1

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

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce my officials with me this evening. And on my immediate right is Don Rowlatt, the deputy minister; on my extreme right is John Alderman who is the director of the occupational health and safety branch; immediately behind me is Phil Richards, the assistant deputy minister. And both Phil Richards and Don are new with me, and I look forward to working with these two gentlemen in my department in the months ahead. Next to Phil is Pat More, who is the director of administration, and over on the far side is Mr. Bert Sheasby, the director of technical safety services branch.

Mr. Chairman, the estimates we will be discussing tonight represent an expenditure of

approximately \$9.8 million, not very different from estimates of a year ago.

I'm pleased to make public note of the fact that the people in my department have been doing an admirable job of allocating the resources that are available towards the highest priority concerned.

And furthermore, I want to make a note of the fact that there are many people in this province who agree with me and have taken the time to write me or my staff expressing their appreciation for jobs well done. These letters, I know, are well deserved and they allow me as a minister to share in their congratulations.

With regard to our conciliation services, for example, an employer commented recently, and I quote:

More than 30 hours of negotiations were difficult, and I doubt an agreement could have been reached without the help of the provincial conciliator.

Another one quoted:

I wish to extend my personal thanks, which I am sure are shared by my colleagues on both sides of the bargaining table, for their skilful assistance in helping us reach a contract settlement.

These are the kinds of letters, Mr. Chairman, that we receive. They represent some of the many successes at the bargaining tables that are apparently not newsworthy because the issues are resolved.

As a long-term average, out of some 400 collective agreements signed annually in this province, fewer than 7 per cent ever reach or result in work stoppages. Sometimes negotiations get to an impasse where only a skilled neutral mediator can help the parties. That is when conciliators from my department are often invited to take part, and they do an excellent and commendable job.

Before we get into a detailed look at the estimates from my department, I think it may be valuable to review some of the major initiatives we have taken over the last 12 months.

Since I have already mentioned our conciliation services, perhaps I will deal first with our labour relations programs in general. As you know, we amended The Trade Union Act in 1983. The changes made at that time were designed to strengthen the rights of workers and create a more positive and equitable approach to labour relations in the province.

And I guess we can say the proof of the pudding is in the eating, when we look at what has happened since then. One of the amendments we made to The Trade Union Act said that either party to a labour dispute would be required to provide the other, and the Minister of Labour, with at least 48 hours written notice of a possible strike or lock-out.

Of the strike notices that we received in 1984, a substantial number of strikes were avoided by our conciliation officials, who made their services available as soon as strike notice was received. I think that shows there has been some pretty tough bargaining going on. But it also shows that in the final analysis, the system of 48-hour written notice has been working reasonably well.

I also find it worth noting that the number of person-days lost due to those 11 work stoppages in 1984 was just over 12,000 man-days. That compares, Mr. Chairman, with more than 416,000 days lost back in 1982 — a staggering difference; an improvement of about 97 per cent. Pretty good news I would say, as far as I'm concerned.

Right now there is still a lot of hard bargaining going on in this province, Mr. Chairman, and it's a serious process, to say the least. If some work stoppages result, we sincerely regret that.

(20:30)

As I mentioned earlier, my conciliation officers are in place and ready to provide their services wherever they can.

One of my major concerns at this time is the state of negotiations in the construction industry, and as you know I recently appointed a special conciliation board to assist the parties and to tell me what the problems are.

Back in December of 1983, both the contractors and the unions had wanted the old Bill 88, the construction industry labour relations Act, repealed, because, they said, it wasn't helping construction industry bargaining as it was designed to do. So we repealed the Act.

When the old contracts expired in April of 1984, I established a special construction advisory committee, because I felt then, as I feel now, that it is extremely important to have a vehicle which can bring the parties together and keep them talking to one another, and to me, as a Minister of Labour, where that may be appropriate. We have 13 members on that committee — six from each side, plus the chairman.

Further, Mr. Chairman, I am making an effort now to see to it that this troubled industry segment has every opportunity to work out its problems as far as labour negotiations are concerned, so that unions and contractors alike can share in the many projects that are putting new life in Saskatchewan's construction industry. I refer not only to the two heavy oil upgraders, but also to the substantial increases in commercial projects, not to mention the \$1.27 billion worth of construction detail in our own provincial budget for 1985-86.

The new conciliation board is made up of three extremely competent experienced lawyers who understand the industry and who understand the importance as I, Minister of Labour, attach to their tasks.

The chairman of the board is Richard Hornung; the management representative recommended to me is Larry Seiferling of Saskatoon; and the union representative is Nick Sherstobitoff, former chairman of the labour relations board. I chose these people from lists submitted by the parties and I feel confident that they are going to recommend to me practical solutions to the industries problems.

I have asked the board to do all it can to help the parties to conclude agreements. They have a tight deadline because both sides have expressed to us the need to move very quickly to seek a resolution to the problems in this industry.

In the unhappy event that settlements cannot be reached, I expect the board to come back to me with recommendations in what needs to be done. I have given them wide scope in that regard because I have a strong commitment to see that everything possible is done to keep the system running, to keep Saskatchewan's skilled tradesmen busy and prosperous and able to share in this province's economic benefits.

Having said that, I must point out that the role of government is to provide the balanced framework for bargaining. What that means is that in the final analysis the parties themselves must reach their agreements. It's a democratic system, and it works.

Our goal, Mr. Chairman, is to do all we can to develop a labour relations policy in this province which will balance the interests of employees and employers. We need this so that we can continue to stimulate business activity, create jobs, and provide the most favourable working

climate possible for all members of our work force.

Employment in our province is continuing to grow. In April this year there were 16,000 more people working than there were in April one year ago. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country. Our major cities out-performed all other western Canadian cities in job creation last year. Investment spending is growing. We are leaders and I think we can be proud of the accomplishments of our working people.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Labour has a number of programs which promote favourable working conditions in ways other than through the collective bargaining structure. We have been improving our workers' advocate services, for example. Staffing in this area has been increased so as to reduce an unacceptable backlog of cases. And the reorganization has been put in place, designed to ensure better public service or better service to the public.

The position of intake worker has been created to ensure that clients receive attention as soon as they contact us, and furthermore to ensure that the work of the advocates is carefully prioritized.

As in the case of conciliation services, I see letters from clients expressing sincere appreciation for the efforts of these dedicated worker advocates. These thank you letters may not show up in budgets, Mr. Chairman, but they are an important measure of success.

We have also been improving our occupational health and safety services during the past year. The program is designed to provide regular inspection of work places, medical testing, research, and education.

We did a public survey last fall concerning labour issues, and one of the questions dealt with our occupational health and safety services. Some 90 per cent of the respondents, both employers and employees, told us they approved of them. So I think it's fair to say we are answering a need in today's workplaces.

We have carried through with our policy of consultation by making good use of the occupational health and safety council. This was a dormant committee which has been reactivated that represents workers, employers, the medical professions, and the general public.

It has made numerous very useful recommendations to me and my staff, and is responding in practical ways. For example, a newsletter is being published which covers serious accidents, hazard alerts, occupational health committee news, legislation, and educational items. Public response to it has been gratifying.

On the advice of the council, our occupational health and safety branch is resuming its training programs for workplace committees.

The council has also suggested we should work more closely with the Workers' Compensation Board to analyse their accident statistics so as to prioritize areas of greatest concern. We are doing that, and at this time we are looking especially at the forestry and the petroleum industries.

I have invited the council to provide me with some advice about the rapidly growing use of video display terminals. There is a lot of concern evident, and I need their input since they represent professionals and the general public, as well as workers who are directly affected.

We have also developed an ongoing fire prevention and safety program. In June of last year, I announced the new public education program which has been directed at both adults and schoolchildren. During the summer the program took in summer events, such as exhibitions and parades, and since September, presentations designed for public schools have been taken to more than 20,000 students and teachers.

June 3, 1985

You may recall that the 1984 report of the Select Committee on Fire Prevention proposed a new fire college for Saskatchewan. We have since received submissions from several municipalities expressing interest in having the college in their area. I have set up an interdepartmental committee to review the submissions and make recommendations to me on both the creation and the location of the fire college. I will have their report by July of this year.

In the meantime, the position of principal of training will be filled shortly. We have also taken steps to expand our fire-fighter training program by providing two additional instructors. As a result, we expect to be able to hold double the number of training schools in 1985 compared to 1983. Saskatchewan people will be glad to know that this expansion of our fire-fighting training will establish standards that will not be surpassed by any other jurisdiction.

Mr. Chairman, another major achievement was the passage of the Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act in 1984. In very general terms, it provides that the owners of new buildings in Saskatchewan must ensure that their buildings are designed and constructed in accordance with specific standards. It will also ensure that buildings meet specific accessibility standards.

With regard to the new accessibility standards, the Act contains a number of exemptions. Among these are the farm buildings, a residence consisting of not more than four dwelling units, and certain small apartment blocks.

I look forward now to the establishment of the National Building Code as a required set of standards in this province. In this way, our citizens will be assured that new construction in this province will conform to modern, nationally accepted standards. Furthermore, we will soon be able to guarantee to our disabled citizens convenient access to public buildings in this province.

You may recall that I established an advisory committee to provide input from all interested parties with respect to the content of the accessibility regulations. Representatives included members from the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada, The Voice of the Handicapped, the provincial accessibility committee, the human rights commission, the construction industry, and municipal governments in the province.

The regulations establishing accessibility standards will be in place by April 1st, 1986. This will allow municipal authorities, designers and owners sufficient lead time to complete projects already under way and to incorporate the new standards into projects now being initiated. It will also allow time for the recommendations of my committee to be integrated into the regulations with the 1985 National Building Code. In the meantime, we have appointed a chief building standards inspector so that putting this whole program in operation can happen swiftly and smoothly.

With regard to the other technical safety services, the events of the past year make very evident that a full review of the inspection policy and the legislation, both of which have been in place for more than a decade, must be reviewed.

Following the tragic death of Polly Redhot and the examination of the situation by the Ombudsman, my department has undertaken to carry out a full review of our entire inspection policy and of the legislation underlying that policy. We will be doing a full legal study of our responsibilities and our legislation. We will employ an independent consulting firm to review our operations, the information flow, and the evaluation criteria. On the basis of these two co-ordinated activities, we will be able to make any changes necessary in our safety services, to review our legislation and regulations, and to inform the public of Saskatchewan of the nature of the government's obligation and of their own obligations.

This is a complicated and important issue and the work will take some time. In the meantime,

however, there will be continuing measures to improve the quality of our current system. Members will be aware that there are 109.5 person-years in our technical safety services unit for 1985-86, and this is the same as last year. And we are moving very quickly to fill the vacancies in the technical safety services branch, and at the present time we have either filled or have a staffing action on the way for 105.5 of the 109.5 positions.

The four vacancies not yet being dealt with are as follows: (1) one administrative position in the gas safety unit is being reviewed for scope and job description; (2) two positions in the fire commissioner's office will . . . (inaudible) . . . the principal of the fire college, and that position is now just being filled; finally, one position is for a building inspector, and we have just recently hired a chief inspector, and enforcement will not begin until regulations are in place. All other positions are being filled as quickly as possible, and in those locations throughout the province where there was the highest priority.

(20:45)

The Ombudsman also expressed concern that we were intending to prioritize inspections on the basis of the previous experience of contractors. As part of our response to the Ombudsman we have imposed a full moratorium on this so-called "ABC contractor policy." I should note that the Ombudsman has expressed complete satisfaction with our response to his report on these issues. Our policy remains, as it has for more than a decade, to place priority on the inspections where there is the greatest potential for danger. This has been a satisfactory policy for many years, and will remain in place until and only if our legal and policy review suggests any changes. If changes are made, the Saskatchewan public will be fully informed.

One last point relating to our technical services. I would like to note that the backlog of gas inspections is growing smaller. At the end of this past fiscal year it was 17 per cent lower than it was three years ago, when the file was turned over to us by the previous government. That fact alone is evidence that public safety is receiving the attention it requires.

The Department of Labour has taken a number of steps in other areas as well to streamline its operations and ensure better service to the public. We have done a thorough review of all programs and systems, and recommendations are being put into practice as soon as practical. For the public this means, for example, that the workers' advocate service, as I mentioned earlier, has already been expanded and reorganized so as to deal more efficiently with its case-loads.

Industries which have special health and safety concerns are receiving the special attention they deserve through our occupational health officers. Fire-fighters are receiving more and better training. All of these services, Mr. Chairman, are essential parts of work in Saskatchewan today. All of these services are continuing to fulfil the mandate of my department and to fulfil it more efficiently every year. Our mandate is to ensure that people in Saskatchewan have a productive, safe, fair, and stable environment in which to work, and that they have a safe and accessible built-in environment as well.

When I introduced and welcomed both Don Rowlatt, my deputy minister, and Phil Richards, his assistant, I neglected to mention a very important point, and it is this: both of these people are committed to our policy of encouraging consultation with the public, and plan to meet and work with our clients whenever required. I expect they will contribute much to the administration of this very diversified and very important department. I look forward to a most rewarding relationship. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, if indeed you believe in consultation, why did you duck the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I didn't duck the SFL convention. The member well knows that I had another commitment which was out of the province at the time. And at that particular time, Mr. Chairman, I was working on looking at doing the most possible for Saskatchewan workers, to get as many of them guaranteed positions on the upgrader projects. We were meeting with the international reps, people in other provinces, and that was the reason I missed the SFL convention.

And if I get an invitation in time, and I know that the convention is on this fall, and my calendar is clear, I'll be at the SFL convention. I have no qualms of attending. But to say that I skipped the convention purposely this year is absolutely false. In my mind I was working for the Saskatchewan workers of the province.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, you were ducking a speech before a group who have been continually hostile to you, that is the group you were supposed to be representing. Mr. Minister, I had a journalism student from the University of Saskatchewan — whose name I still have if anybody wants to call her a liar — who said that she interviewed the Premier as to the reason for your absence, and was told . . . And the following comment was made to the journalism student, so she said: why should the Minister of Labour attend the conference; they're all a bunch of NDPers anyway.

Mr. Minister, isn't that the reason why you decided to duck the speech?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I told the member opposite why I missed the SFL convention. Personally, I would have enjoyed going to find out what kind of action they would take this year. That is actually true.

The fact that I did not attend was that I was working on our responsibility to ensure the maximum use of Saskatchewan workers on these two major projects. We have been doing that for some months now. We are still doing it, and we intend to carry on doing it till these projects get going, and as I said earlier, to maximize the content of Saskatchewan people and supplies in those projects. And if that isn't doing whatever is possible for the workers of Saskatchewan, I don't know what is.

If I had received that invitation prior to my commitments, I would have been at that convention. As it turned out, that was not the case.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, it would be unparliamentary of me to call you a liar, but let me say that in stating that I believe you, I am the only person, I think, in the province of Saskatchewan who does. Mr. Minister . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — I believe him.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Oh, the member from Maple Creek believes you.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I believe him too.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I've got one more — three, four, five, six. Good heavens, you've got a baker's dozen, Mr. Minister, who believe you.

Mr. Minister, the date of the annual convention is known months in advance. For decades, the Minister of Labour has given a keynote address. Your comment, that you didn't know in time to get there, is just simply not believable. The Premier's purported answer, as inane as it is, at least has the merit of being candid.

Mr. Minister, you say that you would have been interested to see what they do — a fair comment. Your relationship with organized labour has deteriorated to the point where they

must be innovative to think of new ways to express their dissatisfaction with your government's policy. They really have run the gauntlet, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I wanted to ask you about another accolade thrown your way, this time not by a trade union movement, but by one of the people who draw their pay cheque from the provincial government, Mr. Minister, the provincial Ombudsman. The provincial Ombudsman, Mr. Minister, gave your department a "D" rating, the poorest report card of any government department, agency, or board. That, Mr. Minister, coincides with your treatment by the federation of labour who give your department the lowest rating that that department has received in many, many years. You have undoubtedly eclipsed the rather poor showing that that department would have got in the '60s when Ross Thatcher was in office.

Mr. Minister, have you done anything to clean up your act, anything to provide a more responsive and sensitive department? Or is this kind of a rating by the provincial Ombudsman satisfactory to you?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I suppose when you get a "D" that you have to admit that maybe someone thinks that your department isn't doing its job. But all I want to do is to reinforce that there is a strong commitment of all the officials of my department to try to improve that; that in my own mind, when I look at the results of what has been happening in our Department of Labour, when I see 12,000 man-days lost compared to 416,000 a few years ago, I thought well, maybe there are a few positive things that we are doing.

I would sooner do the things that we are doing and get a "D" for it than to listen to your leader, the Leader of the Opposition, saying we should be having more militant labour in our province, we should be doing this and that to stir up the pot some more. That isn't helping the province of Saskatchewan. I know that and you know it, and we will accept the fact that we got a "D," but I don't agree totally that it should be there. But if that's the case that the Ombudsman thinks that it is, we'll do our best to improve that rating come next year.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, have you responded in any fashion to the rating given to you by the provincial Ombudsman? As I say, it accords with my experience in dealing with the comments I receive about your department, and it obviously corresponds with your abysmal relationship with the Department of Labour who think that you are unresponsive and providing a very poor service to the Department of Labour. Have you made any response, or are you just going to blissfully ignore this problem as you have others?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we, over the last several weeks, have met with the Ombudsman several times, and we've come through with very good terms with the Ombudsman. We have acted to his recommendations, and I don't know what more I can say other than I would suggest that he would think that we are and have been very responsive in the last few weeks and months.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, the next issue I want to raise has to do with the workers' compensation board. Mr. Minister, I have no statistics to back this up, but it has been my observation that the volume of complaints about the workers' compensation board has escalated in the last year or two.

Mr. Minister, the workers' compensation board is by far and away the largest single source of complaints for me as an MLA. It has become a very difficult problem for this MLA to deal with and others of our candidates. I am the only — regrettably or happily, I'm not sure which — I am the only urban MLA in our caucus. But other candidates . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Besides the Leader. But other urban candidates whom we have nominated, Mr. Minister, echo the same complaint, they also run into abnormally large number of complaints about the workers' compensation board.

Mr. Minister, the legislation as well which was brought in tilts the balance as against the employees. I made those comments today that the changes which you have made in the legislation further prejudice the employee, since his employer, for whatever reason, is now a party to the matters. And I don't want to repeat what I said there. But you changed the basic nature of the workers' compensation board, and you lose much of the rationale for it when you propose the changes which you are.

Mr. Minister, to that observation and to the changes in the legislation is added your appointments to the workers compensation board. I recognize these may be out of date, because I believe Mr. Grady has made his departure, but, Mr. Minister, in the *Star-Phoenix* of November 30, 1984, the headline was, "WCB make-up claimed favouring the government."

And what had been said by the former chairman, Brian King, was that with the appointments of the former deputy minister, Peter Grady, and defeated Progressive Conservative candidate Richard Moody, plus two other members, the board had lost its equal voice of labour and management.

Mr. Minister, I would ask you to respond in a general way to the problems which are being experienced with the workers' compensation board; with the voluminous complaints which members are getting about the administration; with the changes in the board which destroy the balance which has been maintained over the years; and with the legislation which again seems to be designed with little purpose other than to make the life of injured workmen or workpersons, I guess as one might describe them, more difficult.

So I'd ask you to respond to these problems, Mr. Minister, which fall into at least three broad categories.

(21:00)

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the hon. member's question as far as the changes to The Workers' Compensation Act: first of all, in my wrap-up this afternoon — and I don't know if you were in the House at the time — but when the Bill was tabled, there were members of my compensation board and the trade union movement that were not happy with a couple of the changes we had made to that Act. And in our spirit of consultation and discussing, we did meet with the SFL to discuss these two or three changes.

And we do have House amendments coming which I would suggest will alleviate your concerns. It has alleviated the concerns of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. And in fact, they sat down with us to help draft a better changing of wording in the Act. And at the present time this Act is accepted by . . . Generally speaking, I'd say all parties are saying that it is a big step forward as far as improvements of benefits to the injured workers of Saskatchewan.

And as far as extra problems, our records do not indicate that there is an increase; in fact, my officials say that it's come down, as far as the number of complaints that we have about the workers' compensation board.

The fact that employers — you're concerned about them appealing. They've always had the right to appeal, under section 21. The only thing that was not available to either worker or employer was the fact that files could be opened up. And of course, this is in the new legislation, and restricted as far as some areas are concerned. It's not an open-ended thing, but it is a step forward to make the files available to the injured worker.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, do you have any statistics on the volume of complaints that is reaching your office? Do you have any . . . Do they have any confidence left in your office? Do they still contact your office, or do they simply ignore you?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, our office is in contact with a number of people — not always complaints, but looking for advice as to how to go about re-looking or appealing a decision that was made, and that's an ongoing process. We're getting them all the time. The case-load of the workers' advocates has increased, and that's, as I stated in my remarks, one of the areas that we've looked at to try to speed up the process and to keep the case-load down as much as possible.

As far as the numbers are concerned, no, we do not keep track of that kind of information in my department here in the building.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would give me the names, positions, and salaries of your personal staff.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I have a list. I'll gladly send it over to you if you wish.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would now give me the salary increases of these people.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, of the four people that work for me, two of them received promotions. Brenda Syhlonyk moved to a ministerial assistant D. My previous secretary left and went to Ottawa, and Brenda took her position and also took on extra duties. And Don Spice was the other. The other ones had no increase, as they were new people in the department recently.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, I would like to know what the amount of the increase was. That is most confusing.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of the increases. This happened some time ago, and my officials don't have them here. We'll get it for you and send it over to you, but we don't have it here.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, I am sick and tired of hearing ministers say that they never anticipated being asked about salary increases . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well if this were not a Legislative Assembly, I could do a great deal better, Mr. Minister . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — You didn't ask me.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — No, we didn't know. The Minister of Revenue, Supply and Services said we did not ask him, only because we never once thought that the ministers of this government would be so insensitive as to be increasing their salaries of their personal staff to the extent that they have. We never once thought you would be that insensitive.

I suppose it just goes to show, you should ask all the questions anyway. But you didn't get asked, because we didn't believe you'd be as insensitive and arrogant as you have been.

Mr. Minister, I can't believe that you did not anticipate being asked what the change in salary was. And the problem, Mr. Minister, with sending it to me is I know full well that I won't receive it before the session's over.

Mr. Minister, you plan to do with this as you planned to do with the increased minimum wage: announce it when session's over. And the only fact that we revealed the minimum wage resulted in that announcement being made when the session's on.

Mr. Minister, will you undertake to give me this by noon tomorrow, by 2 o'clock tomorrow?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I'll get it as quickly as we can. I've already promised you

we'd get it for you.

We have had no salary increases, but there are increments the same as there are in many other sectors of government.

People started six, seven, eight months ago at a lower rate, then moved up because they accepted new responsibility. I changed some of my staff. What that was was just following the increments — whatever is set up for everyone else in this Assembly and government.

I'd like to remind the minister opposite, or member, that previously I was responsible for 800 people that used to work for us in our company. And if people moved along in their positions and took on extra responsibilities, we gave them increases covering what those responsibilities are. We looked at merit, and if they were doing the job they were paid accordingly. And this is no different.

And as far as the actual dollars and cents, Brenda moved into assistant D. Whatever that column said was the payment for assistant D, and that's no increase of basic salary. That's covering the extra responsibilities that she took on when she moved over into that position.

And as I said, Don Spice is the other one; and that the other two are new people with us and they're probably near the bottom of the pole, as far as I know.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, I don't know why the members of the cabinet continue to trot out this silly nonsense about taking on additional responsibilities. Nobody believes that, Mr. Minister. The opposition has not accepted that, and neither has the public, Mr. Minister.

What you've been doing is treating people differently. Mr. Minister, the members of this cabinet helped themselves to an increase in travel allowance in January, at about the same time that you announced a freeze. I will get to it; and we'll get to that when we get to Executive Council, but it is true. You helped yourself to an increase in the travel allowance at, I believe, the same cabinet meeting where you determined that wages of the public service should be frozen.

I thought, Mr. Minister, that that had reached some sort of a high-water mark in terms of arrogance and insensitivity, and so did a number of other people, but you've really outdone yourself this time by giving your own staff pay increases at the time you've denied them to the public service.

I just do not understand, Mr. Minister, how you could have been so insensitive to the teachers, to nurses, to public servants, to Crown corporation employees, Mr. Minister. I just do not understand how you could have been so insensitive.

You claim, Mr. Minister, that they have taken on additional duties. That's a broken record. So have other ministers in government. Nobody, Mr. Minister, none of your colleagues, have been able to tell us what additional duties they took on. But I suspect they were nil, and the public suspect that they were nil.

Mr. Minister, you've looked after yourselves with increased travel expenses, and that's no minor item when you look at those travel expenses in *Public Accounts*. You're looking after your own staff, Mr. Minister. You're looking after your friends, Mr. Minister, with these pay increases, and you are implementing a double standard. You're being insensitive, and on behalf of the public service in Saskatchewan I can tell you, Mr. Minister, that this is deeply resented. Your double standard, Mr. Minister, is deeply resented, and I would have hoped that at least the Minister of Labour would have disassociated himself with such an insensitive policy.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I said, I've offered to get the information for the member as soon as I have it — tomorrow, day after — as soon as we can get it.

The other thing I'd like to mention is that my senior official left our department. I have replaced him with one of the fellows here that's been promoted to that position. He's getting considerably less per month than what my senior official was in the first place, and on top of that, we are operating our department with four now instead of five, which it originally had.

So overall . . . We are operating with four instead of five in my office here in the Legislative Buildings. So overall we are spending less money than we were several months ago.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would give me the reasons for Peter Grady's dismissal from office?

(21:15)

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that as far as Mr. Grady is concerned it was the opinion of our board that he wasn't carrying out his duties in the best interest of the board, and I accordingly asked for his resignation.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, were there any irregularities in his expense accounts, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that the legal counsel of the workers' compensation board, dealing with Mr. Grady's departure, referred the matter to the director of public prosecutions of the Department of Justice. And I'm also advised that the director of public prosecutions referred the matter onto the RCMP. And we understand the investigation is ongoing, and that's about all I can comment on at this time.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Okay, that is a candid admission, Mr. Minister, and I don't want to . . . I will only ask you . . . if that's the case, if it has been referred to the RCMP, I don't want to pursue it a great deal further, except to ask you to report back to the House or have the Minister of Justice report back to the House when the RCMP have reported to him if charges are laid. And of course, that's all you need to report. If charges are not laid, we would of course appreciate a report.

So I would ask, Mr. Minister, for you to undertake to report back to the House or have the Minister of Justice do that in lieu thereof.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, we'll certainly take note of your request, but at this point in time, I will make no guarantees. It's out of my hands, and we'll wait and see what transpires.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, I assume there was no severance pay when he left the WCB. Am I correct on that assumption?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Any agreement was a mutual agreement between the board and their solicitor and Mr. Grady. And I won't comment any further.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, Mr. Minister, was there any severance pay paid to him? It's not a dark secret. If there was, it will appear in *Public Accounts* a few months hence. So I would ask you, Mr. Minister, was there any severance pay included in the package.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I said, this is a legal matter now, and I'm not going to discuss what has taken place or not taken place until that investigation is completed. I just can't. I won't comment any more on what has transpired at the legal side of it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'm not sure I'm making myself understood, Mr. Minister. I'm not asking you to comment on the reasons for his dismissal. I'm asking you whether or not there is any claim

by Mr. Grady for severance pay, and if so, has that claim been finalized?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I know what the member opposite is asking, but at this point in time, I just as soon not discuss the matter. As I said, it's in the legal hands, and there will be decisions made. And as far as if there is severance and all, that would be part of any package that would come out of the final talks. We will have to wait and see what happens as far as the investigation is concerned.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Were there any renovations made to the office of the chairman of the workers' compensation board, and if so, would you supply us with the cost of those renovations?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, yes, there was some renovations take place at the workers' compensation board, but this along with the other investigations is part of the overall investigation, and things aren't settled at this time.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Are you saying that among the matters you referred to the RCMP, with respect to Mr. Grady, are the renovations to his office? I don't understand how that could be the subject of a suspicion of fraud, Mr. Minister. I don't know how he would have anything to do with that. That would surely be done by the Department of Government Services.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite is a lawyer, and he knows very well that I can't answer any of these questions that he's asking of me. I understand your desire to know, but it's all a part of the particular talks and investigations that are going on at the present time, and I just can't get into that.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well with respect to matters which are sub judice, it was determined last year of a very considerable embarrassment of the government, I might say, that matters are not sub judice until they're actually before a court. Having said that, I think I'm going to accept . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Who's embarrassed in this?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — It wasn't us that was embarrassed. Having said that, Mr. Minister, I think I'm going to leave the matter of Mr. Grady. We will take up this line of questioning another year, perhaps when the investigation's been completed, if there are no charges before the court at that time.

Mr. Minister, you replaced a public servant for a very long period of time, going back at least to the days of the Thatcher regime — Graham Mitchell. I wonder, Mr. Minister, why that decision was made to terminate the services of someone who had been, I think, I think enjoyed the respect of business and labour alike, and who had been a public servant for a very long period of time.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mitchell, as the member opposite mentioned, was the executive director of the Labour Relations Board. However, with the expansion of and trying to cope with the work-load of the Labour Relations Board, it was felt that we needed a lawyer in that position in the department to assist our chairman to expedite the cases that were before us, and the fact that Mr. Mitchell was not a lawyer caused us to decide that there should be a replacement put in to accommodate that, and no reflection on Mr. Mitchell, but that was the circumstances around that particular case.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, you'll be forgiven. I think I'll be forgiven at least by the public servants and other interested observers, if I describe Mr. Graham's departure as — Mr. Mitchell's departure, sorry, as part of the ongoing witch-hunt of this government. That, Mr. Minister, was distasteful enough, the first few months you were in office, but to continue it in office, as you have perpetually, has done a great deal of damage to the public service. And as I think . . . Mr. Minister, his replacement was a person who is, and I make no personal reflection on

Mr. Hobbs, but Mr. Minister, he admitted he had no inexperience. He admitted that he was inexperienced. I ask you, Mr. Minister, what steps you've found . . . what steps you took to find a replacement, and could you not find anyone who was qualified who did have some experience?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, that particular position was done by a search through the legal community in our province. And as you're probably aware, there's not a large number of lawyers in the province that are . . . got the labour background and would be interested in that particular position. And I would suggest to you that Mr. Hobbs is qualified and never did say that he wasn't qualified for that position, and we're more than happy with the work and the job that Mr. Hobbs is doing as far as our Labour Relations Board is concerned.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Was the position advertised, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — No, it was not formally advertised, but there was a lot of discussion with the legal society of Saskatchewan to find a person with that kind of calibre to take on that kind of job.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you'd be prepared to give me, in writing if you prefer, and now, the salary which is now attached to that position.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, we have that to send over to the member.

(21:30)

MR. SHILLINGTON: — As far as I'm personally concerned, Mr. Chairman, we could move off subvote 1.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2

MR. SHILLINGTON: — One question with respect to this. Mr. Minister, once again we have seen, for what I believe is the third budget in a row, if not the fourth, we have seen a cut in the amount given under policy and planning research. I wonder why, Mr. Minister, you continue to downgrade this very important area of the Department of Labour's work?

With respect to many other endeavours, research and policy planning is done and is available from other sources. With respect to labour, it really isn't. And if it's not done in government, it isn't done anywhere. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, why we must continue to downgrade this vital work in the Department of Labour?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, the department has centralized its research and library functions within the policy, planning, and research branch. And this has resulted in realizing some efficiencies whereby the branch can effectively function with one less management position. We felt this was an area where we could stand one less person. However, we are watching it very closely to see that we don't cut back the output of the branch, but felt that we could utilize the manpower in occupational health and the safety services branch better.

So it's one management function less.

MR. CHAIRMAN — Just for clarification: technically, we're supposed to be voting the exact and total sum. Unless anyone wants me to read the total sum, I will approximate them. We're voting the sums as stated in the book.

Item 2 agreed to.

Items 3 to 5 agreed to.

Item 6

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, there is a great deal of concern by working people and the organizations which represent them, the trade unions, with respect to the state of occupational health and safety. There's a great deal of concern that the department is not administering or enforcing this legislation and that the safety in the work place is not what it was or could have been — or, not what is was, nor what it could be.

I just want to register a protest, Mr. Minister, against your downgrading of this important work of the department. It is vital. Your department is the only place where it can be done, and unless the department does do it, the safety, and the health, and the lives of workmen are at stake. I do want to register a protest, Mr. Minister, against the failure to enforce and administer this occupational health and safety program which we have set up.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well Mr. Chairman, occupational health and safety is a high priority for us; and all I need to do is talk about the advisory committee which was dormant — it wasn't even operational under your administration. We have reactivated it. They are meeting regularly. I'm getting recommendations from that committee. We've got medical people on it which weren't on it before; we've got an occupational health nurse on. And I can assure you we are very concerned about occupational health and safety, and it is a priority of our department.

Item 6 agreed to.

Item 7

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Chairman, on item 7, I believe, is the fire report and the results of that one. Am I correct?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Yes, that is correct.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, as I was chairman of the special committee on the fire report that came to you and your department handled, I have stayed in contact with the firemen of Saskatchewan since that date, and I would like to pass along their compliments and approvals of what you have done to this date.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, all I can say is thank you very much. We have put a lot of effort into bringing the fire-fighter branch and fire departments to the forefront in the province. And all I can do is reiterate what I mentioned in my address — on the schools, and number of letters that we're receiving from students and teachers on the presentations that our staff is doing on fire safety and fire prevention. And we plan to follow through on that, and the training modules, and the increase of training for especially the volunteer fire-fighters of the province is being recognized, and as the member opposite has said that we are getting a lot of comments on doing just that. And we plan to continue that until our fire college is built as well and finish it off with that project.

Item 7 agreed to.

Item 8 agreed to.

Vote 20 agreed to.

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

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to thank my officials, not

only for their attendance and offering information for me this evening, but also for the many, many hours of dedicated work that they're doing in their regular jobs at the department, and I appreciate that very much. And thank you for the member opposite for his questions this evening.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Got one personal clap, Mr. Minister. That's better than you got at the labour convention last year.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister, I did not stand on my feet to hurl one more insult. I was . . . Actually when I got up, I was actually going to say something nice. I was going to thank you and your staff for assisting the opposition in dealing with these estimates.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

PARKS AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 39

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Does the minister want to introduce his officials?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Pleasure to introduce the officials who are with me this evening. Seated to my right is Paul Robinson, a deputy minister; seated immediately behind Mr. Robinson is Mae Boa, director of administrative services; and seated behind me is Ross MacLennan, the executive director of operations.

Item 1

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will have a number of questions to ask, Mr. Minister, and there will be probably a number of questions that you will have to send the answers over to me because of the fact that I realize that you haven't taken over this department just for the last few months. And if that's the case and you would agree, then you can pass some of that information on that you won't provide.

I guess the first item that I'll ask you to pass across, and that would be to send me a list of all the out-of-province trips taken by your staff and your department in 1984-85, and the costs associated with each trip, and you could break that down into air fare and other expenses. And can you tell me what out-of-province trips are planned or provided for in '85-86 estimates, salaries for personal staff, and increases for the personal staff? And if we could just send that across a little later on, that would be fine.

I have a number of concerns with resources in the province, and I will bring forth the concerns here tonight. But I want to start off by the provincial parks, and first of all I would like to ask you about the grasslands park. If you could indicate, Mr. Minister: what is the current timetable for the development of the grasslands park, and are funds being made available to proceed with oil and natural gas exploration within the grasslands park?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, a question relating to grasslands national park. By way of background information, I did meet with the federal minister in charge of that, Madam Suzanne Blais-Grenier, a couple of months ago. We do have some agreement, I think, worked out.

I know that the federal government is very interested in going with a grasslands national park, as indeed is our government. And in fact we hope there will be some announcement because this is Parks Canada's centennial year — forthcoming this summer from the federal government.

And I'm not sure I caught the part about natural gas. If you like, give me that again?

MR. THOMPSON: — Well could you indicate if there are any funds made available to proceed with oil and gas exploration?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The funds to which the hon. member is referring would come under the purview of Energy and Mines.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay. Mr. Minister, I now want to turn to the Clearwater valley. And as you are aware, I have been proposing that the Clearwater valley be turned into a provincial park, or a provincial park created in the Clearwater valley. I know that there has been some of your officials discussing the possibility of going ahead with that park, and I want to say that the proposal that I had presented to your government was that the Clearwater valley be created into an all-weather or a year-round provincial park to provide . . .

(21:45)

AN HON. MEMBER: — Four seasons.

MR. THOMPSON: — Yes, four seasons would be right . . . A legitimate four seasons resort where we have the fishing, and canoeing, and the camping grounds, plus the slopes for skiing. My proposal was that we go ahead and develop the ski resort up there.

Checking it out last summer with government officials, the helicopter pilot, who was in there, indicated that there were slopes in the Clearwater valley that were over a mile long. So if one could just figure, if you were to develop a four seasons resort up there and ski slopes that have a mile in length, and you take a look at the other slopes that — I guess you can just go up to Saskatoon to Blackstrap and probably wouldn't get any more than 400 yards. Not that I have anything against Blackstrap slope, but I would think there probably wouldn't be much more than 400 yards from the top to the bottom, where is over a mile up in the Clearwater valley.

Another thing is, it's close to La Loche where we need this type of development and employment. I also want to say that it's only about 20 miles from a major airport. Where the site would take place would not be any more than 20 miles from a major airport at Fort McMurray.

Putting all that together, Mr. Minister, I think that your department should take a serious look at creating a provincial park and a park that would operate for the four seasons of the year. And I guess my question would be to you, Mr. Minister: could you indicate what planning has been done, if any, and if there has been any allocation of funds towards the planning of a resort?

I don't want to get into a discussion on the heritage waterways. I know the province and your department has designated the Clearwater valley river as a heritage waterway, so I don't want to get into that part of it, only into a provincial park and a resort that would operate in the four seasons.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The hon. member is correct about the designation of the heritage river system. At the same time as the designation took place, a management plan was being put forward or proposed by consultants, and we're looking at that. The idea of a provincial park does have some merit and does have some appeal, but when we're talking about four a season resort development, we'd have to look at that in context of the management plan, and it would have to be consistent with the management plan which was, in fact, funded by Parks Canada.

It's not something we've ruled out. It hasn't been formally discussed. It hasn't got to the stage where we're ready to get to the drawing board and draw plans for a park, but it is not out of the question. It is something we can certainly look at.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, could you indicate if there has been any funds spent, or have

you had any of your department officials checking into the Clearwater valley? Well, it could be for fishing, or skiing, or whatever it may be, but have you had any of your department officials checking into this possibility?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Yes, I can tell the hon. member, we have had officials taking a look at the situation and doing some evaluation. It has, though, been in the context of a heritage river system to this point, and the consideration as to whether or not a park should be put into place in that area has been strictly of a loose discussion. It hasn't been a detailed examination.

MR. THOMPSON: — But you most certainly have your staff looking into the possibility and working with the heritage river committee that has been established?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Yes, I can instruct my officials to work closely with the Parks Canada officials, and we will take a look at that situation.

MR. THOMPSON: — Just assuming that the Clearwater valley river becomes a heritage river, that would not stop the development of a provincial park, would it?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — No, that should not interfere with any future proposed development. Provided, as I said earlier, it fit in with the overall development plan for the area — it would have to be consistent.

MR. THOMPSON: — Well I'm closing on that, Mr. Minister. I would urge your department and your officials to take a serious look at that and at the possibility of establishing that park up there, because I think if we don't get a start on it fairly soon, there's a number of things that would have to take place. And we have large stands of over-mature timber in there that I think have to be selectively taken out of there and should be taken out of there. And if this doesn't take place, one of these times we're going to have a major forest fire, and once that big timber starts on fire in a valley like that, it's going to be hard to contain. And it would be a shame to see such a beautiful place in our province being destroyed by fire, and then taking another 50-60 years to regenerate to its present form.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — This is an issue, Mr. Chairman, to which I'd like to respond. As the hon. member pointed out earlier, I've only had the portfolio for a short period of time — a few months. But in that time, one of the things I have been learning about is forestry, and the fact that we do, in fact, have over-mature stands which should be harvested which have not been harvested.

And the hon. member is perfectly correct that when these stands are ready, they should be harvested so that they don't become forest fire fodder or, in fact, become diseased. So the point is very well taken.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, and most certainly we have many stands of over-mature timber up in my constituency, and by your remarks, I suspect that we will be seeing some sawmill operations operating up there in the short future.

But that is right; not only do they get diseased and forest fires, but the winds knock them over. It's a tremendous loss to the province.

I want to go into the forest protection right now, and I guess I want to start off with the first question. Could you indicate when your department will be receiving the two CL 215's, or have you received them already, or when do you expect to receive them?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, I can tell the hon. member that the total will be four CL 215's. Two will be paid for by the provincial government and two by the federal government under a recently agreed upon deal that we made with the federal, our federal counterparts. The

expected delivery dates are December, 1986; January, '87; August, '87; and September, '87.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, so that's four new water bombers, and it's 50 per cent federal money and 50 per cent provincial. Okay.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could indicate to the Legislature how much money was spent on fire suppression last summer? And I want to first of all break that down. I would like to find out how much money was spent on aircrafts to fight fires in the province?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I'll give you first of all the 1984-85 figure for fire suppression costs, which was \$14.93 million. And for the breakdown on aircraft, we are going to check through the contracts and figure out that information for you separately.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay. At the same time, I wonder — well, once you break that down, then I would like a breakdown of how much we paid on labour for fire fighters to manually go into the bush and light fires?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Perhaps in response to that I could indicate the 1984 figures. In 1984 there were 895 fires in Saskatchewan which, as I'm sure the hon. member is aware, is second only to the worst year we had — 1981 — when there were 965 fires. In 1984, local people were conscripted to assist with the suppression of forest fires, and the total expenditures for conscripted wages was \$1,767,490.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay then, Mr. Minister, it's fair to say that there is a little over \$14 million spent in fighting fires, and there was 1.7 million spent on men to fight these fires.

But I think this is where your department is going to have to take a look at changing the way that they fight forest fires in this province, because one just has to take a look at what was spent on aircraft. And I would like your officials to get for me the amount of money that was spent on an Ontario firm that had Canso water bombers fighting our fires last summer. I would like specifically to know how they, how they acquired the fuel for that aircraft; did they have signing authority to go and pick up fuel and oil for that aircraft or did they not?

But as I was indicating, I think when you take a look at how we are fighting fires today, more and more aircraft are being used and more and more money is being spent by the province of Saskatchewan and really not accomplishing any success. When we go back to the old days, when we used to fight fires, we had men fighting fires, and they would fight fires at night when fires should be fought. There is absolutely no way that you can go in and control a forest fire when it's 80 or 90 above zero outside and hurricane winds that it creates itself when you get that magnitude of a fire. Fires have always been fought in the evenings — that's when the water bombers hit them, just at sunset, and the water bombers used to go out again just at sunrise and hit them, and the men in the evenings would be doing their jobs.

Now we are spending a tremendous amount of money. And I think one just has to take a look at last year when these Canso water bombers were brought in, and I seen for days where them water bombers were sitting on the airstrip and couldn't move because of the smoke in the air. There was just too much smoke. Whereas in the evening after the sun goes down, that smoke settles and experienced fire-fighters that we have in this province can get out and fight that fire. In northern Saskatchewan we have lakes all around and the air gets heavy at night, but yet an aircraft cannot work in them conditions where men can work. And I think it makes a lot of economic sense, it's a lot safer for the men to get out into the forest and work under these conditions, rather than have to fight fire on an 8-hour basis from 8, 9 in the morning till 4 or 5 in the evening.

We just have to change that around, and I think as we proceed tonight we are going to find out

just how much money we are spending on these aircrafts, how much we are not spending on men, and how much forest we are starting to lose because of the way we are fighting fires now. I know they have detections. They have modern equipment if electrical storm goes over, and they can detect where the hits are. But you still cannot beat experienced men going into the bush, fighting at night when the air is heavy, and that's the proper time to backfire and get these big fires under control.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — First of all, Mr. Chairman, yes, we will undertake to break down the figure I gave you earlier, \$14.93 million, and to how it's broken down in fire suppression.

Secondly, I can't tell you. I could have told you a little earlier — perhaps I should have the last time I was up — that the water bombing aircraft which were used from out of the province in the '84-85 fire season were four crafts from Avalon Aviation. And the total expenditure for out-of-province, water bombing, fixed-winged aircraft was \$518,943.

(22:00)

And we feel that the water bombers are an important part in fire suppression. They're used to gain control of fires before they get out of control, and another reason, of course, is to assist the ground crews by cooling down or extinguishing portions of wild fires where they are too hot for people to work safely.

The average cost of a fire now is down to \$16,000 per fire compared to three or four years ago when it was \$21,000 per fire.

MR. THOMPSON: — Well, Mr. Minister, you're talking about a fire season such as 1981, you had 895 fires. But I'm talking about a major fire, and that's where you have to determine your costs. You can't determine it on an average, because there are many spot fires. If you fly over an electrical storm and you follow it, you have so many small, little fires. And you call them a fire, that's how you get your numbers. But when you get into a major fire, that's when we get into the expenses.

And I maintain that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right, you can take a water bomber, and you can dampen it down in the daylight hours so that individuals can get in there and fight them. But in the olden days or a number of years ago, as I indicated, the water bombers did the same job, only they done it in the evening and in the early morning when the air was heavy, and they done a good job, and then the men can go in there.

We take a look at how much money . . . And let me tell you last year, Mr. Minister, had I not intervened, there would have been a lot of individuals up in northern Saskatchewan that would have never have went to work, because I had to write a letter to the Premier, and he instructed the department to get out there and start hiring people, because there was a mix-up. Certain individuals indicated that the fires were being started by local people and that they weren't going to hire them, and that hiring didn't take place until the Premier was contacted.

But you only spent \$1.7 million, and I would assume that that \$1.7 million is not just fire fighters that you picked up off the streets, I would suspect that there's a few of them wages that you put in there go into the RIACT (regional initial attack concept team) crews and such as this, or . . . And I'm wondering if it's straight wages or any food or any grub that's involved in that.

And then you take, you bring in Canso water bombers from Ontario, and you only had them in here for a short period of time, and you spend 500, over a half a million dollars on a firm from Alberta.

So I just say that, you know, you have to fight these fires with the best available means that you have. And I say that you have to go back, and individuals up north who have fought fires, who

have fought fires years and years ago, tell me, why have they changed to aircraft and why are they fighting fires in the heat of the day.

And I see it; I see it right in the North where they're out there fighting fires when it's 80, 90 above zero, and you just can't do that. It's costing the taxpayer too much money. It's not creating jobs.

And I just wonder: out of that \$1.760 million, was that total wages to fire-fighters, or does that include any of the transportation of that fire-fighter from fire A to fire B, and for the commissary, and for the groceries that you buy?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Two or three points I should make, Mr. Chairman. When I gave the 1.7 million figure, that was for conscripted wages, and that's not the total wage bill. So the total wage bill, or if you prefer to use the expression, the manpower bill, would be higher than that, and that's part of the undertaking that I made to the hon. member to break down those figures.

We don't have that particular figure readily available. The only one I had, and it was one I looked up earlier today, was 1.7 million for conscripted wages, and as I understand it from my officials, that 1.7 million is wages. It didn't include anything to RIACT or anybody else.

The other point the hon. member made was on the combination of machines and man — machines on the ground, and I presume machines in the air. And I agree. And in fact we are training fire-fighters. And it has to be a combination. Fires cannot be suppressed by one method alone. But I think it's important to note that some of those small fires, if not contained early — and quite often by means of a water bomber coming in — will become big fires, and then we have major problems.

So part of the suppression programs is to identify early and quickly where the small fires are, and get to them fast and get to them under control before they involve many thousands of acres.

MR. THOMPSON: — Yes, that's right, Mr. Minister, and if that happened in every case, then we wouldn't be fighting too many fires. But that's not the case. We don't always have small fires that you can get under control right away by sending in a water bomber or a helicopter and a RIACT crew. That just doesn't take place, because when an electrical storm goes through, you can have up to 600 or probably 1,000 strikes. So we do get major forest fires.

And what I'm trying to say is, we're talking about an expenditure of 1984-85, and then we go back to '81 when we had the bad year. And we're talking about an expenditure of over \$14 million on aircraft and 1,700 on men.

And I'm just saying that if we were to back into the '70 to '75 year, and we were to pull those figures out and find out how many fires we had, and how much money was spent on aircraft, and how much was spent on individuals, and how the fires were fought in them days; and I think you'll find out that it was more economical to get out there. And you can control the fires, as I indicated before, fighting fires when the air is heavy in the evenings and the early morning.

And I want to ask you about the aircraft that came in from Ontario. Did they provide their own fuel and oil? And if not, how did they get fuel and oil for that aircraft, and who signed the bills for it?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Hon. member, I'm advised that Supply and Services maintained fuel depots, fairly large fuel depots, and those craft would have picked up their fuel from those depots. In turn, Supply and Services would have billed them for the fuel they were using that belonged to the province of Saskatchewan. However, it's really a bookkeeping matter, because it would be figured out into the cost of their total contract.

MR. THOMPSON: — Well yes, that's right. It's come to my attention that the pilots or the

engineers or owners of them aircraft were going to . . . And I don't know what you call a depot. Are you talking about an Imperial Oil agent? Is that a depot?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — No. We would have our own depot with fuel put in there, and they would use that.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay then, Mr. Minister. Are you saying that the aircraft company from Ontario did not purchase any oil or any types of fuel from Imperial Oil and that the department paid for them?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — We do have depots in several different areas across Saskatchewan. I am presuming, because I don't have the figures in front of me, that the fuel would be bought locally from the nearest point, by Supply and Service, to put in those depots.

MR. THOMPSON: — So you're saying that no aircraft company purchased their own fuel or oil and signed for it themselves?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I couldn't say that, hon. member, because I don't have that information. The information I do have is it was supplied by the depots. I'd be loath to say, categorically, that's the only place they got fuel because I just don't know.

MR. THOMPSON: — That's fine then, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you would have your officials check out whether or not that company did purchase oil from an agent and just how they went about doing it. Did they pick it up themselves and sign the bill and take the fuel out themselves, or was it provided by the department? And you can check that out.

I want to turn now, Mr. Minister, to the fire patrols. I wonder if you could indicate, or your departmental officials could indicate, how much money is spent on fire patrols, and by a fire patrol, I'm talking about an aircraft, an aircraft patrol.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — We don't have that broken down to the figures which have been asked for because it's normally dealt with in public accounts. However, because the information has been requested, we will undertake to find it just as soon as possible, which I am advised would be tomorrow morning.

MR. THOMPSON: — That's fine, Mr. Minister, along with the other request that I made regarding the bulk sales . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay.

I want to ask you now, Mr. Minister, just how many towers, the fire towers, that we have under your department in the province.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I believe the number is 80.

MR. THOMPSON: — We have 80 towers in operation in the province, and we have employees on 80 towers in the province?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — All of the observer towers would be staffed.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, we're talking about an observer tower, and that's a fire-fighting tower, and there's 80 of them yet in the province that are manned. Could you indicate how many were taken down in 1984-85 year?

(22:15)

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that we took down three, but put up another three in different locations.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, I wonder if you could indicate — and I'll use the old administration line district, because I believe that there's not too many fire towers used in northern Saskatchewan any more. Are the bulk of the 80 towers that are in operation now during the fire season — and I'm talking about from probably April to October. Of the 80 towers that are in operation, how many of them would be south of the old DNR line?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The best information I have for the moment is: There would be 10 north of the NAD, and the others would be south of that line.

MR. THOMPSON: — I wonder — that's right. There's 10 in the North and 70 in the South. I wonder if you could have your department officials provide me with the information of the amount of money that is spent on fire fighting I the southern part of that line, in the portion where we have the 70 towers? We talk about spending \$14 million last year on aircraft alone to fight fires, and I just wonder what percentage of that \$14 million was spent in the area where we have the 10 towers, and how much of that was spent in the area where we have the 70 towers?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I'm not sure we can break that information down for you. The original figure, I believe it was 14.93 million I gave you, was the total picture — that was not only aircraft, that was the total picture. The bulk of the towers would be in what would be known as the commercial forest zone, which would be the more valuable parts of the forest.

Earlier this year, when I was in Prince Albert and going out with some of the foresters and some of the local operators, we were talking about fire control and looking around the fire control station at Prince Albert. And one of the things I was told was: in the far northern regions where it's — for want of a better expression I guess — scrub bush, the fires have been allowed to go because of the relatively negligible value of the forest. So the bulk of the suppression effort would be where the most value of the forest would be concentrated, which would be the commercial forest zone in the central belt.

MR. THOMPSON: — Well, Mr. Minister, we don't have tower men north of the Clearwater valley, I don't believe. I think that all the towers are from there south, and I wouldn't want to accept that argument, that everything south of the Clearwater valley. And we just got through discussing the over-mature timber that we have in that area and the possibility of an outbreak of fire.

And I would suggest that the tower men that you have in the South, and you say there are 70 of them, and I would suggest that you are probably going to find that the bulk of the money that is spent on fighting fires is probably where you have 10 towers left. Now there used to be a lot of towers up in northern Saskatchewan, and I know that some of them have been taken down and replaced with fire patrols. Now I would suggest that a lot of them fire patrols are carried out in the area where, and the bulk of the money in the area where you have 10 tower men left, not in the area south where you have the 70 tower men.

And I think I would like that information, if possible, from your officials, as to the amount of money that is spent on fire patrols in the area south where you have 70 tower men, and the amount that's spent in the northern area where you have only 10 tower men left.

I have had a concern as to how the towers have been taken down. And I wonder if you could give me an example of one tower, and I would imagine that would apply to them all, the cost of taking down a tower and taking it out to the road system or to one of your fire caches. And just how do you transport that material out?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — From the information I can discern here, it would take approximately three days and five man crew to dismantle a tower, be taken down piece by piece, moved by hand and/or truck and machine from the bush to the nearest road, then by transport to the next

site and reassembled. And some of it is possible to be done by helicopter.

If you need a precise figure on that, we can go back to wreckers to see what it did cost because it would be in the form of wages. We'll break that down, and we'll have that for you as soon as possible.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, this is what concerns me is the fact that the department is tearing down towers that I feel should be in northern Saskatchewan — just as important as the 70 that you have in the south — but the fact is that you take a job away from a family, who every year would go out in that tower, then you tear it down in the summer when it should be torn down in the winter and taken out by Bombardier. But what is happening, and I've seen it myself, Mr. Minister, you're hauling it out piece by piece with a helicopter.

And some of these helicopters are charging \$1,400 an hour. That's right. And some of them charge a lot more than \$1,400 an hour. I tell you. And to take a tower down and then haul it out piece by piece by helicopter seems to me it's just a terrible waste of money.

It could be done in winter. There's lots of local people up north who are commercial fishermen and have snow machines who would gladly go in there after it's torn down — your crews go in and tear it down — pick it up and take it out, and it would cost you not even one per cent of what you're paying. And I have seen helicopters carrying out these small pieces of iron from a tower.

And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, if you would look into that and see that, if you are going to tear them down, that you're not hauling them out with helicopters.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I just asked my officials about that very point, hon. member, cause it sounded like maybe there was more opportunity for men to go in, or women to go in, and do that type of work.

I am advised however, though, that it is specialized work. It's not just a question of taking anybody in and saying climb up that tower and start dismantling it. It would be specialized work.

And the question of where the towers are and moving them around is part of an overall action plan for fire suppression. And what we are trying to do is find the best possible combination of flight patrols, towers manned by people, and also lightning detectors, which we do have across the North, which are wired in by computer centrally to Prince Albert, so we know immediately when we have a lightning strike, so we can take fast action.

But I'll take your suggestion under advisement and explore it further with the officials.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay. I want to now turn to the price that you pay per hour for a helicopter. I know that all different makes of helicopters charge different hourly prices. But they all — and I've been told this — that they all, along with the hourly wage that you pay for the helicopter, all their fuel is paid for them. And I personally have seen Twin Otters flying hundreds and hundreds of barrels of fuel off the docks and taking it out to strategic points in the bush for helicopters.

And Mr. Minister, correct me if I'm wrong, but these helicopters are charging a tremendous amount of money for the hourly wage for the helicopter, plus they get free gas — free gas and oil. And I wonder if that is a fair statement, Mr. Minister, or not.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I can give you the breakdown of the cost for helicopter contracts that are being awarded by hour, how much per hour, because you did indicate that different sizes of machines are different cost. You're correct.

But the contract price, the bid price, includes the fuel. So that's not a separate cost. This is inclusive. And for instance, a 206B would be \$325 an hour; an S55T would be \$630 per hour; an ASTAR is \$440 per hour; an S58 would be \$795 per hour.

MR. THOMPSON: — Could you indicate what the large helicopters charge an hour?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The largest one we have is the S58 which is \$795 per hour.

MR. THOMPSON: — The most money that you pay an hour for a helicopter, the most money that you pay for a helicopter is \$795 an hour? Is that right?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The prices I quoted to you, hon. member, are contract hours. This is the contract that we have given out, based on X hours for that particular machine. If there are more fires in a given season, and we do have to rent other helicopters, other companies, that price would not prevail.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, Mr. Minister, could you give me the hourly rate of a Sikorsky helicopter?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The contract price we have on the Sikorskies — the smaller one, the S55T — the contract price was 630 an hour. The S58 was 795 per hour. That's the contract price.

MR. THOMPSON: — The member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake is speaking from his seat again.

That Sikorsky also includes in the contract . . . could you tell me what the contract would call for, for how many hours a day, plus does that include fuel and oil?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The contract on the Sikorsky — let's take the S58 — is for 250 hours for the season. That was the length of the contract. The bid was \$795 per hour based on a 250-hour season, and that would be inclusive of the fuel costs, yes.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay. Mr. Minister, am I right to say that if that helicopter flew for 200 hours that it would be paid for 250 hours plus fuel and oil?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Yes, but that's always the standard that has been used. We're following the model that has prevailed for some time.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, then. That's right then. Just assuming that that aircraft only flew for 200 hours, it'd be paid for 250. Could you indicate what the hourly cost is to the department for fuel, oil, and if . . . I'm not too sure about the repairs, but could you indicate, and let's just use the Sikorsky S59, what the cost to the department is for fuel and oil.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well, we don't pay for the fuel or the oil in any separate way. This is the price per hour in the contract that we would pay for that particular machine. If the machine was only used for 200 hours in that season, yes, if the contract called for 250, we would be obliged to pay 250 hours. But that has been the situation, I am advised, for a number of years. So it's no different.

(22:30)

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, then. Do you feel that that's a fair way to do it then, to contract a helicopter, pay him a set price, and provide him with the fuel? Do you do the same thing for a Beaver aircraft?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I missed that last part. Do you say: did we do the same thing with fixed-wing aircraft?

MR. THOMPSON: — That's right. I'm just wondering. Athabasca Airways, you can use their Sikorsky. We know what you're paying them, plus free fuel. Wherever . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay. Then what about the transportation of the fuel from the bulk station to 200 miles north or 200 miles to the east where the fire is. Who pays for that?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — We would pay the transportation costs of the fuel to the depot.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay. Then now we're getting down to what it really costs to charter a Sikorsky, because you not only pay them that price, but you also pay a Twin Otter . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You've got officials there that know what I'm talking about. You take 45 gallon barrels in a Twin Otter, and you can fly them up to Maurice Lake, and let's use Maurice Lake or the south end of Cree. Now let me tell you, that has to go on the cost per hour of that helicopter, and you are — the department is paying a lot of money. If I'm going to go out and do custom work for some farmer with a tractor, I'm sure I would be buying my own fuel and taking it along.

But I don't believe that there's a fixed-wing aircraft that's hired by the department that doesn't provide their own fuel regardless of where it is. They have long-range tanks. They can take their fuel up there, and they can pay for it. But is it fair to say that the cost of transporting the fuel from a bulk station to a dock, onto the aircraft, out of that aircraft, and into a deposit in the bush of any place — all them costs have to go towards the hourly rate of that helicopter.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well, hon. member, we count the total cost in our budget for fire suppression. We estimate man-hours. We estimate fixed-wing aircraft. Let's face it, the contract for the helicopters would be an estimate — the best estimate we have of how many hours we think we're going to have contract certain sizes of helicopters for during the coming fire season. And yes, we would have to build in, if indeed there is a cost, transporting fuel to the depot so the machines don't have to keep returning to base. And we look at that as a total cost for fire suppression in the fire year, and that's the way we budgeted it.

MR. THOMPSON: — So it's fair to say then that the helicopters, regardless if the fire was at Patuanak or if the fire was over at Cree Lake, they still get the free fuel, regardless of cost that the department has to incur to get that fuel to either to Patuanak — and they would be able to take that by road — or to Cree Lake where they'd have to take it with a Twin Otter?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well it's not free fuel to the helicopters because they're paying for fuel. The idea, from the departmental viewpoint, is to get that fuel where it's needed so we got the choppers where they're needed, so we can dump water as quickly as possible when a fire comes out and we can contain it expeditiously.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, but I just would ask that the department take a serious look at what they're doing, because it's pretty nice to have a helicopter and have the gas all and fuel all deposited for you. And I'm quite sure if you'll take a look at your department, you'll find that the Beaver aircraft or Otter aircraft, from whoever the air carrier may be, pays for their own fuel.

I want to — I have a few more items that I want to get off, Mr. Minister. And I want to now turn to the program that you had over in Cumberland, Cumberland Delta I believe, with a moose experimental program that you indicate you got into some difficulty with the bears killing the young moose.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I assume the hon. member is referring to the moose preservation program?

MR. THOMPSON: — I think it's — I really don't know if it's moose preservation but there was some problems with . . . As your department had indicated the bears were killing off the young moose and you were trying to move the bear out, so that's right, to preserve the moose.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Yes, I just dug that information out for you. It was on northern game preserves and the moose restoration program — I was on the wrong track there. You're talking about moving the bears from Cumberland Delta to improve the moose-calf survival rate.

Spring of '83 bears were being trapped, food snares that is, and removed from our 35-square mile area and angling river portion of the Delta. A total of 14 bears were taken in the area prior to and during the moose calving season. Fall surveys showed 77 calves per 100 cows within the bear reduction area and only 38 calves per 100 cows outside the control area which is actually a two-fold difference.

MR. THOMPSON: — Could you indicate why you would not continue with a program as successful as you just enunciated?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I'm advised that it's an expensive process to physically snare the bears and then remove them. A couple of other things that have been done is lengthening the bear season and trying to direct hunters in that area.

I may say that we got a phone call from Montana this past winter, asking if we'd a shortage of bears and would we like some of theirs, because they wanted to ship them out. We said, we really don't have a shortage.

MR. THOMPSON: — Well that's right, Mr. Minister. It had come to my attention that apparently some bears were seen eating young moose who had been tagged. And I just want to say to you that you will never, never find a cow moose that will ever allow a bear to eat a young moose. The only time that happens is when the cow has abandoned the calf, and that can happen when young calves are taken out for tagging or experiments and put back, and then the cow leaves them.

And I checked that out closely with trappers in northern Saskatchewan. And when I told them that, they said, well that is absolutely not true; that you just try and go near a calf moose, and I'm sure there's no bear would ever do that.

But I indicated to you that we had a serious problem in Saskatchewan with the wolf population, and you indicated to me that you were a little bit concerned about going back to the wolf bait program. And I want to say now that we have a situation in northern Saskatchewan where we have, in areas, very little moose, and deer, and elk, and woodland caribou, because the wolf has just got out of control.

And I want to quote from your department, from your annual report. And it says:

A major step towards restoring moose populations in the pulp cutting areas of north-central Saskatchewan was implemented this fall. Over 250 small forest haul roads and trails were closed to vehicle traffic . . . game preserves were established for 716 metres on each side of the four major roads . . . one larger core game preserve was proclaimed. These closures to all forms of hunting will greatly increase (the) moose survival.

Now I just want to say, Mr. Minister, that the timber-wolf does not abide by these rules. Most certainly, the timber-wolf . . . It doesn't matter if the road's closed off or if you have a 700 metre area closed off on the side of the highway, that doesn't stop the timber-wolf. He hunts 365 days of the year, and he hunts 24 hours a day.

And I've got trappers, who are coming in on a regular basis, telling me where they have seen kills after kill of moose, young cow moose. I have watched them personally. I've watched them personally. I've watched a deer population just disappear because a pack of timber-wolves . . . And now we have timber-wolves running in packs of up to 30 and 40 timber-wolves. And that, that — and your officials will tell

you — is a sure sign, Mr. Minister, when wolves gang up and get into packs, that the game is scarce. They then get into large packs.

If there's a sufficient amount of game, then the timber-wolf, a lone wolf, or a family of wolves will go out and do their hunting. But when things get really bad, then they get into packs.

I have trappers who have come and told me that they have seen packs this winter of 40 timber-wolves. As far south as Big River, a guy come and told me he had his two dogs tied behind his cabin, and he went out in the morning and all he had was the heads left of the two dogs. The timber-wolves had cleaned up the dogs. And they've cleaned up dogs in La Loche.

And I say to your department, regardless of what Green Peace says, and what regardless of what the guys out in B.C. go around and saying that you have to protect the timber-wolf, that's not what you have to do. You have to get out and control the timber-wolf. Don't have to take them all, but they have to be controlled.

And you're sure not going to control them by closing off roads, because the timber-wolf doesn't bother with that. Sure, you keep the hunters away, but if we don't control that timber-wolf and if we don't go back to a baiting program — and I say, Mr. Minister, that your officials should go and meet with the local trappers and ask them their opinions, and if you're going to use, go back to the old days and the baits, and I believe it's still being used in some of the fringe areas, because they're moving in. When they get hungry, they move in and they start killing the cattle and the pigs of the farmers.

So I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, and your officials to take another look at how we control the timber-wolves. Because in my words, and I will say that to anybody, I think the timber-wolf — from experience. I've seen them kill animals — I think they're the most vicious killer in the world. They eat animals alive, and I kid you not. They cut the cords of the hind leg, and they start eating them. And I have seen it. And I have seen where a mother moose has fought and knocked down timbers like you wouldn't believe to save her two calves, and the end result was the timber-wolf wins and you have a dead mother and her calves.

So, I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, and your officials, and I stand right out in front. I have no fear of what the — what do you call them in Toronto — says about being a friend of the timber-wolves. But I tell you, they are vicious killers, and if we're going to have control of our game, if we're going to have control of our game in the province and provide an annual hunt properly, then I think that we'll have to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Farley Mowatt is the individual that I'm talking about. And I would like to take Farley Mowatt up to northern Saskatchewan, and then I'll take . . . and I'll go with him on some lake where there's a pack of wolves, and I would like to see him go up to that pack of wolves and sleep with them. That's a fallacy. That's a true fallacy.

The timber-wolf is a dangerous animal to the game in this province, and I would ask you and your officials to take a new approach, talk to the trappers and see if we can control them. And if we are going to go to the trapping of timber-wolves, and we talk about the trappers program, Mr. Minister, that's not the way we are going to solve the problem. It's just a proven fact that the timber-wolf is a cunning animal, and the only way it can be controlled is the way it was in the old days when baits were used and baits were used properly. And I think some of your officials will remember an individual by the name of Chick Terry, who used to go around and administer some of these programs, and there's still many guys in the department that can do the same as Chick Terry.

(22:45)

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, I would certainly yield to the hon. member's superior,

firsthand knowledge of timber-wolves. I confess, I have no firsthand knowledge of the animal. From what I'm informed, what I've seen, what I've read, and what I understand to be true, they certainly are among the most viscous animals in the world. However, we don't feel that a widespread poisoning program would, in fact, be good resource management. And we would prefer to concentrate in the areas of training schools for trappers in humane trapping methods, selective, very selective baiting programs, but we think that control would lie more with training trappers and encouraging the NFCA trappers to become more actively involved in this.

MR. THOMPSON: — There's just one short comment, and I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, if you seen a timber-wolf in operation, you wouldn't be worried so much about the humane way that you take it. And I agree that you have to have officials of your department overseeing any baiting program that's done. And that's how it was successfully before, and I fully agree with that. But when it comes to being humane with the timber-wolf, then I get on the other side — I'm not too worried about being any friend of a timber-wolf.

MR. YEW: — Well, Mr. Minister, . . . Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Mr. Minister, I wonder if you might provide me information with regards to your policy in respect to game preserves.

I noticed, and many of the people back home noticed, that after you come into office in '82, there was a lot of game preserve signs and notices throughout the whole northern administration district where the game preserve signs and notices weren't there before. There's a tremendous amount of game preserves enacted throughout the North that people aren't simply . . . haven't been a part of, people at the community level that is. I just wondered what the policy is with respect to this and what type of involvement or consultation was there with regards to the communities, with regards to the native organizations, with regards to the Saskatchewan Trappers' Association, various organizations involved in wildlife or whatever.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well, first of all, in response to the hon. member, Mr. Minister, I can say that any program prior to being embarked upon is checked with the wildlife advisory committee. And we have recently struck the native advisory committee also. And any programs that we're contemplating for the future will certainly be run through that committee before being implemented.

By way of background, Mr. Chairman, in 1983 we did embark upon the moose restoration program, and this was implemented in the central forest region. It was an attempt to rebuild the area's depleted moose population which had declined somewhat seriously over the years.

And the restoration program is composed of three facets, primarily to reduce hunting pressure and facilitate moose population growth. The first thing is access to road closures. We have a proliferation of forestry roads into the forest, which makes it rather easy for hunters to get in on those roads, and we know the moose also like to come out and walk down the roads, rather than pad through the bush, and it made it very easy for hunters to take moose. So we've been looking at those access roads being closed and barricaded to the public, when the road is actually of no further value in the forest industry.

We have road corridor game preserves — that's the second facet, Mr. Chairman — to reduce casual road hunting. And thirdly, the Cub Hills game preserve. This is a large area game preserve which is established in a heavily logged area. Two test areas, Thunder Hills project, which was a road corridor preserve and access road closure, and the Cub Hills game preserve, which is an area game preserve, had moose population increases of 49 per cent and 47 per cent respectively in the two years since the program's inception. So I think the program really does have some good strong points. It's a meritorious program; it has been successful.

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I just want to, for the record, state to you that I'm not against conservation and protection of wildlife or the enhancement of such, Mr. Minister, but it had been brought to my attention and as well the attention of several of my colleagues that

there is a tremendous amount of game preserves signs all over the North where there was none beforehand.

I want to ask the minister, with regards to the migratory game Act as well as The Wildlife Act, how many persons or families have been charged under those two Acts in terms of the North?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, we do have a publication. The latest publication is for 1983-84, and it is called — to the hon. member — *Convictions under Fisheries, Wildlife and Parks*. And I'd be pleased to furnish this to the member so he could take a look through that.

And in doing so, Mr. Chairman, there's a point I'd like to make which the hon. member touched upon was enhancement and conservation. And I agree that that is the primary role of this department. Indeed I see myself as a referee and some degree the balance between people and nature. And when the scales are tipped too far one way or another, I believe that's when my mandate comes into play, and I have to exercise it. And if that means convictions under the Acts, well, Mr. Chairman, that's my mandate.

MR. YEW: — Well, thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm certainly pleased to hear you say that. You know, I agree that there has to be some regulation and policy with regards to conservation of our natural environment, wildlife, fisheries, etc.

No, I was concerned about the number of persons and families being affected or being charged under the migratory game bird Act as well as The Wildlife Act, etc. It's an understanding, I'm sure with everyone, that native people have always traditionally relied on fisheries, game birds, and wildlife, big game, as a source of livelihood to us. Especially nowadays when there is so much unemployment in northern Saskatchewan, there is nothing to turn to but the traditional way of life — is going back to fishing, trapping and hunting. That's our way of life. And that's all we have to sustain our families with. And I certainly feel very upset when I see so many of my neighbours getting affected by the wildlife and migratory game Act, charged under those Acts for having in their possession game birds, or fish, or big game, when they're actually trying to sustain a livelihood for their families.

And I see trophy hunters coming up from up south with wallets bulging in their pockets, just sitting in there, coming to the North, and hunt for trophies. You know, those guys don't really need to sustain a living out of the natural resources that we have in the North, and yet they come in and clean out the big game that we have.

With regards to . . . I noticed, and I want to commend you, Mr. Minister, I noticed the fish and wildlife development fund has increased tremendously. What part of the . . . What type of a program is that? I'm questioning vote 21, subvote 20, the fish and wildlife development fund. What does that program entail?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — It is a fund that was instituted, Mr. Chairman, I can tell the hon. member, largely the instigation of members of the wildlife federation and concerned members of the public who thought that we should be doing more in fish enhancement, and indeed, in conservation.

In terms of wildlife, the major components are land management, land acquisition for habitat. And fisheries, the major components are development of lakeside breeding ponds, construction and operation of fish spawning areas, habitat improvement, lake rehabilitation, aeration to prevent winter kill, development of doorstep angling near urban centres that haven't been heavily used parts, and an expanded stocking program.

And for this year, fish enhancement activity will amount to \$650,000; wildlife development activity will amount to \$650,000.

MR. YEW: — With regards to, Mr. Minister, with regards to funding for third party organizations, have you got anything earmarked in terms of your '85-86 fiscal year's budget for the Saskatchewan Trappers' Association, with respect to their requests in previous years for programs such as trapper training, education programs, conservation, zone meetings, and dog funds, etc.?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — In regards to the welfare industry, I can inform the member that since 1946, as I'm sure we're all aware, Saskatchewan has been involved with a welfare program. In spite of a termination of federal-provincial cost-sharing agreement in 1973, the province has, indeed, continued to support the fur industry.

And we run several programs and I can if you wish just briefly touch on them. We have the northern fur conservation areas. Last winter we provided \$46,855 in grants to assist those northern fur conservation areas.

We also support Canadian industry. Approximately 15,000 to the fur institute of Canada. That's support for humane trap research and development as provided via the FIC and directly to provincial departments.

We also put on trapper education through community colleges. We have humane trapping schools. We're developing a new trapper education manual and a program for trapper instructor training. Once they're available we expect an expansion of training will be possible.

We provide support to the Saskatchewan Trappers' Association for their annual convention in Prince Albert. We're also involved in a fur program evaluation. The former Deputy Minister, Bill Klassen, well known to the Saskatchewan residents, has been contracted to evaluate the Saskatchewan fur programs and their further needs. He's also meeting with northern trappers, meeting with the trappers' association, resource staff, in order to formulate ideas and give us some direction for future programs.

So I think, Mr. Chairman, we are taking action in the direction to which the hon. member has referred.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, a couple of questions here. One regarding taxes. Mr. Minister, in Porcupine Forest Reserve there are a number of cabins up at Elbow Lake. And that's in the Hudson Bay, east of Hudson Bay area. Some people have cabins there and I've got five people here that I've got a letter from and their taxes went up from 1982, which was \$9, which was fairly low. I suppose one can say that that might be rather low. 1983 it was 48. Mr. Minister, in 1984 it was up to \$284.96. Well, Mr. Minister, the roads in that area are terrible. We've been asking for some good roads into there. None are built. You won't even put a sufficient amount of gravel on them and yet the people that have a cabin there, and when it rains have difficulty getting there, are faced with taxes close to \$300 on a cabin. Why, Mr. Minister, have those taxes gone up that high?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, just a point of clarification from the hon. member, it's on taxes, was that lease fees, cottage lease fees?

MR. LUSNEY: — The R.M. of Hudson Bay, apparently, is allowed to levy taxes within the forest reserve. Now Mr. Minister, I don't know why that is the case, but maybe it's something that should be looked at when those taxes are increased that high: why the R.M. would be allowed to go into the forest reserve, increase taxes, when they are not responsible for maintaining or building any of those roads.

(23:00)

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well as I'm sure the hon. member understands, Mr. Chairman, we don't set the R.M. taxes. We're responsible for lease fees, and we administer those, but we really don't have control over the taxes raised by the R.M.s.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, this is Crown land, I believe. And as Crown land, surely you have some power to dictate to the R.M.s whether they're going to be allowed to charge taxes in there and not provide services, or whether they are going to charge the taxes and you, or the taxpayer, has to provide the services at that park.

Now I don't think it can go both ways. And I don't really care which R.M. it might be, Mr. Minister. I am saying that is the R.M. is going to assume the levy of the taxes, then they should be responsible for those roads.

And if you are saying that we've got to get after the R.M.s to build those roads, then fine; I will say that this is what the minister is saying. But if the minister isn't saying that, and if you are going to continue to build those roads and upgrade them as they are required, then maybe we should be talking to the R.M.s to see why the cabin owners have to pay that high a tax when they cannot ask the R.M. to build those roads.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well Mr. Chairman, the R.M.s have the authority to charge taxes for cabins built on Crown land. And I may say to the hon. member in all sincerity: far be it from the philosophy of this government to dictate to the R.M.s what they must charge.

MR. LUSNEY: — Okay, the other question, Mr. Minister — we can be here all night if you like. Are you going to build the roads into there, or are the R.M.s simply to take the money out of the people that have the cabins, and have no responsibility whatsoever?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, this would fall under the purview of the R.M. council. They charge taxes for property. They accumulate the money, and then they decide how they wish to spend it.

MR. LUSNEY: — Who builds the roads within the forest reserve, Mr. Minister, to those cabins?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if the road is being built as a municipal service then it becomes an R.M. responsibility to furnish the road and look after the road. But there are some in forest reserve areas for which we are responsible as a department, and we do assume responsibility for them. There are other roads which were the result of logging operations and access roads into the forest also.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, who then is responsible for the road into the Porcupine forest reserve to Elbow Lake?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The hon. member has got down to one specific road. We are.

MR. LUSNEY: — That's right, Mr. Minister. Why then, Mr. Minister, is the R.M. charging taxes on those cabins when the taxpayer of this province is responsible to construct those roads to the cabins?

If, Mr. Minister, the taxpayer's responsible to construct the roads to those cabins, then I would almost think that it would be reasonable to expect the taxpayer to receive some of the revenue from those cabins. Why is it different in this case?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well, Mr. Chairman, presumably the R.M. provides some of the services for the taxes they collect. They have the right to collect taxes and determine which services will be provided at the request of those people who are paying the taxes.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Mr. Minister, a very pointed and specific question: what services does the R.M. of Hudson Bay provide to any of the cabin owners at Elbow Lake?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, presumably the R.M. provides the services which they deem to be necessary to those taxpayers.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, we continue to keep running around this question and you can't get a clear answer in any case. I guess I'll just have to approach the R.M. of Hudson Bay to find out what they're going to do for the cabin owners of Elbow Lake.

And it seems the member for Kelsey-Tisdale hasn't been interested to look into the problem, nor has the member for Saskatoon which these people have written to also, because some of them are from Saskatoon.

Mr. Minister, are you going to look at upgrading some of those roads to the Elbow Lake area which really needs some upgrading? We've been asking for it. Nothing has been happening. Will you consider doing some work to upgrade that road so that people from the south can get to Elbow Lake, whether it's raining or not, or can get out of there after they're in there?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to inform the hon. member, yes, indeed, we do have provision in budget to do some upgrading on the very road about which you are concerned. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell everybody and make an announcement tonight that we have committed \$95,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Could the minister be a little more specific? What area of that road is he going to be spending that \$95,000 on?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I have it listed as Woody Lake road, which was worked on the last year, and then Wood Lake road.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, those roads aren't necessarily the park entrance or the forest reserve entrance roads. Those are Woody Lake and that's roads going off the main road to the lakes themselves, so actually you're still not going to upgrade the road south of Townsend Lake or of Elbow Lake out of the park or out of the forest reserve, which is the main road into that area.

Mr. Minister, your big announcement then wasn't all as big as I thought it might be.

Mr. Minister, how do you tender your supplies to lakes, say to the park areas? And I'll use Duck Mountain as an example. And I'll use a very specific one, Mr. Minister, so we don't waste too much time of you trying to get an answer for it: providing bakery goods or supplies to a park like Madge Lake. McGavins or Westons or some of those usually seem to get it, other than the local area bakers.

Mr. Minister, how do you arrive at who gets it, what kind of price do you look at, and do you consider the local bakers at all when they are close to a park that way?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, for my clarification, is the hon. member referring specifically to the store in Duck Mountain Lake?

MR. LUSNEY: — Yes.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — We'll just check that. Because of the very specific nature of that case, Mr. Chairman, I don't have a precise answer. By and large, our policy is that we would tender for any of the stores that we, in fact, own and operate within the parks.

MR. LUSNEY: — I believe, Mr. Minister, that's probably true, and the large bakeries — like Westons or McGavins — could very easily underbid any local baker.

But I'm just wondering if it wouldn't be advisable in some case, Mr. Minister, to take a look at using the local bakers, the smaller ones that try to survive, work hard, pay their taxes locally, and yet do not have the opportunity to supply some of these nearby lakes. And it's just something, Mr. Minister, maybe you could consider in the future.

The other question, Mr. Minister, would be on beaver control. And I know that's one that we could spend a lot of time talking on, but would you consider at all putting some money into helping R.M.s control beavers in areas where they are a problem?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well, by ministerial order earlier this spring, Mr. Chairman, we did make some changes to the regulations to make it easier for the R.M.s in fact to deal with their own beaver problems.

And we have been sponsoring trapping schools, we've been encouraging trappers, we've been trying to get them out there, but given the low price of the fur right now, there really isn't an awful lot of activity among the trappers. The amount extended to date by the department on beaver control however is \$341,772.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, I'm afraid I missed the last part of your answer there. When you said something about putting a certain amount of money into it, did you say what you were prepared to put in? I realized that the trappers, because of the price of the pelts, were not that interested in going out there and aggressively trapping the beavers out in some of the areas. But what kind of assistance, specifically did you say, Mr. Minister, you are prepared to put into getting rid of the beavers from the areas where they are flooding a lot of farm land?

(23:15)

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — The figure I gave as the total cost related to everything in beaver control was \$341,772.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, if R.M.s approached you where they have a severe problem with beavers, and asked for some, either a-dollar-for-dollar assistance, or something like that to provide, or to get someone to be able to trap those beavers out in the summer time, or remove them, would you consider going on that kind of a deal with the R.M.s?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, we would prefer to explore other alternatives together with the R.M.s and with the trappers' association to see if there might be some other way to resolve the problem.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 15 agreed to.

Item 16

MR. YEW: — Yes, Mr. Minister, I wonder why the decrease in both person-years from 31.5 down to 28.9. And in terms of funding, I wonder if you may explain item 15, Northern Field Services.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, maybe I'm looking at the wrong piece but the person-years haven't changed there. I'm looking at 16, Northern Field Services, person-years 28.9 and 28.9.

MR. YEW: — My mistake, Mr. Minister, I was looking at the '84-85 budget.

Item 16 agreed to.

Items 17 to 26 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 39 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

PARKS AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Capital Expenditure — Vote 40

Item 1

MR. THOMPSON: — A few questions here, Mr. Minister. If you could provide me in writing the reason for transferring the regional director's position from Buffalo Narrows to Meadow Lake, and you could provide that in writing. Right? It's been transferred out of Buffalo Narrows and into Meadow Lake . . . (inaudible) . . . Yes, I am.

And I would also like to know, Mr. Minister, and you can provide me with this information also in writing, why the director of fisheries for the west side would be transferred to Meadow Lake instead of up into the North where the fisheries are taking place. You can provide me with that.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, I do have an answer for that, but if the hon. member would prefer it in writing, I can undertake to provide him with that.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could tell me, on the recreational facilities, 3.4 million, how much of that will be in the Cypress Hills area?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, \$386,500.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, one other short question on Cypress Hills, and that has to do with the development of the lake where they were putting in a new control gate at the north end of that lake. Can you tell me whether or not that work has been completed?

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Well Mr. Chairman, I'm advised the work has been completed. And one other point I omitted to mention was in the total I gave the hon. member for funds to be expended. That's the share my department will be putting out of the budget which was in question. There will be more coming out of Supply and Services.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 40 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1986

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

PARKS AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Capital Expenditure — Vote 40

Items 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 40 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1986

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

PARKS AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 39

Items 1 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 39 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

PARKS AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 39

Items 1 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 39 agreed to.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my officials for doing a splendid job. We're very proud of them. I think they're delivering just a really fine department to the people of the province. So I take the opportunity to show some of the things we are doing in this department. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also want to, on behalf of the opposition, thank the minister and his officials for the co-operation that we've received tonight, and we appreciate that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 11:27 p.m.