

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to the members of the legislature this afternoon 10 women who are seated in the Speaker's gallery who are members of the Chinook Group. Plus 40 Club of Regina, which are people . . . or women who are newcomers to the city. And I would wish the members to welcome them here today.

They are here with Henrietta Stemshorn, who, I take it, is the president of the group. I'd like to wish them well and hope that they have a good stay with us this afternoon, and would all members join me in welcoming them to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tusa: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the House, a group of 22 grade 4 and 5 students from Nokomis who are in the Speaker's gallery, along with their teacher, Mr. Keith Hassman, and the chaperons, Mrs. Emmons, Mrs. Ferguson, and Mrs. Braun.

The students and their adult chaperons and teacher will be spending a half hour here in question period. They will then be going on a tour of the Legislative Building, and then I will be meeting with them at 3 o'clock, and I looked forward to that very much.

I trust the guests here from Nokomis will be edified by the calibre of both the questions and the answers this afternoon. I ask all members of the Assembly to please welcome them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to welcome on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Education, the member from Swift Current, a class from Swift Current Fairview School., And Keith Ahrens is their principal there, and Pat Brososky and Mrs. Donna Rezansoff are teachers accompanying them.

They have a number of chaperons there with them, and I want to ask the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Young Offenders' Centre in Saskatoon

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Minister of Justice, I direct my question to the Acting Minister of Justice, and it deals with the concerns raised by residents of a residential neighbourhood in Saskatoon who have learned almost by accident that your government plans to open a young offenders' centre in

the middle of a residential area.

Can the member tell the Assembly when this decision was made, and specifically, what consultation there was with the people in this residential area prior to the decision? And can you also indicate how many young offenders you plan to have in this particular facility?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I will take notice of the question. Of course, the hon. member knows that the New Democratic Party has, of course, supported The Young Offenders Act, and the great extension of the changes to the law, so I'm sure that the hon. members opposite will be supporting any increased facilities which are necessitated by virtue of The Young Offenders Act. But I will take notice of the specific question as to the location of the facilities.

Mr. Koskie: — A supplemental, while you're looking up the other information, which I thought you would have known. But I ask you: how many of these young offenders' facilities do you plan to open around the province, and can you tell the Assembly where, specifically, you plan to open them so that the people in the areas may, in fact, have some say and some consultation?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. members that the Young Offenders Act is putting very intense pressures in the province of Saskatchewan on the need for additional facilities. Those facilities are cost-shared. There are discussions with several organizations and those affected.

The delivery of the various facilities — to date some of them are well know, for example, the Kilburn Hall in Saskatoon. We have announced North Battleford, for example, an extension in North Battleford, with the support of the community— with the support of the community, Mr. Speaker — over the opposition of the New Democratic Party.

And so I again will take notice of the specific question as to the facilities and have the Minister of Justice supply the information . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Would the hon. member please sit down until I'm finished. And, Mr. Speaker, I've undertaken to take notice of the question and get the answers for the hon. member.

Mr. Koskie: — I'll ask you another question, which you should take notice of while you're looking up some of the details, which I thought you would have available to you.

I'd like to ask the minister: is the minister confident that the young offenders' centres located in residential neighbourhoods, such as the Nutana area in Saskatoon, can you guarantee to those people that these pose no threat to the safety of the families in those residential areas? This is what is the concern in the Nutana area, and they're wanting to know because they've apparently had no consultation.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well of course with any correctional facilities I wish we could give absolute assurance, and I know the hon. members that had a practice with

correctional facilities when they were in government of letting people take the canoe trips, the marathon races, the jogging trips, and everything around the city of Prince Albert weren't concerned about public safety.

We certainly are very concerned about public safety, and that's one of the concerns that any correctional facilities, or facilities for young offenders, Mr. Speaker. But again, I've taken notice of the question. I'll have the Minister of Justice reply.

Crude Oil Seepage into Lake Athabasca

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of Environment. Mr. Minister, last summer crude oil began leaking into Lake Athabasca from a large storage tank near Uranium City, which used to be owned by Eldorado Nuclear. It is estimated that anywhere from 8 to 10,000 gallons of heavy crude oil have seeped into the lake from the tanks and the rock crevices, yet your department's clean-up operations have been slow.

Some work was done last summer, but no work has been done on the clean-up this year, and local residents are telling me that more and more crude oil is seeping into the lake every day from underneath the building near the storage tanks and from out of the rock crevices. The crude oil slick is now all around the main bay and around the main dock, and some wildlife, local wildlife, has been killed. The individual claims that muskrats have been found dead, coated in oil.

Mr. Minister, why has your department refused to hire local people from Uranium City to get this crude oil slick cleaned up before it does more damage to the environment and to the local wildlife?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, I'm unaware of the situation that the member is speaking of today. I will take notice of the question. We will check out his allegations and bring back an answer at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. While you're taking notice, Mr. Minister, I ask you this supplementary. Another concern of Uranium City residents is that a strong wind in the wrong direction could take this oil slick out into the lake itself where it could threaten commercial fisheries and water-fowl and could reach as far west as Fort Chipewyan or as far east as Fond-du-Lac and Stony Rapids. In light of this serious threat, can you explain why no work has been done on the clean-up of this spill this year?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, if one thing we've noted from the opposition in the last few months is their ability to exaggerate. I will take notice of the question and bring back the answer. When we find out the facts, Mr. Speaker, I will bring back the answer to this House.

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. And I want to, by way of information, indicate to you, sir, that I am not exaggerating and I'm surprised that the minister is not aware. Mr. Minister, as I understand it, your government has hired a service station operator from La Ronge to do the clean-up when unemployment in and

around Uranium City is so high and the need for quick action on this spill is so obvious. Why not hire the local people and provide them with the environmental expert to supervise the work? They have the equipment at Uranium City and they have the manpower to do the work. Wouldn't this provide local employment and get the job done, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I've indicated to that member twice now, and this will be the third time, once we find out what the true facts are, once we get through the exaggerations and the story line, I'll bring the answer back to you at my earliest opportunity.

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you saying that you are not aware of this spill when your department has already hired a firm to do the clean-up?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, there's been a number of questions asked today by that member. Preceding those questions were a number of statements made. I've told that members that I'm going to take notice. I'm going to take notice. I'll bring back the true story and the answer to him at the earliest opportunity.

Marketing of Saskatchewan Forest Products

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in my capacity as minister responsible for Saskatchewan Forest Products to give a reply to a question which was raised, I believe, two days ago by the member from Cumberland, and yesterday the exact same question by the member from Athabasca. The answer here, Mr. Speaker, is reminiscent of one which was given to their colleague, the member from Quill Lakes, as he reiterated the NDP policy in aggressive marketing for potash. They talked about the aggressive marketing of wood products. And I have this reply, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that the question related to the marketing of chemically treated products from Saskatchewan Forest Products.

In December 1985, Mr. Speaker, a Mr. Ken Wall, who is a marketing representative of Sask Forest Products, made a presentation to the Shan-Wood group on Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation treated wood products. This presentation was made to every wholesaler located in Winnipeg. At the presentation Mr. Wall advised Shan-Wood that they should check all regulations regarding treatment agreements for the U.S. market as Shan-Wood had indicated they wished to sell the total volume purchased into the United States.

Mr. Wall checked with the chemical supplier, Koppers Inc., as to the validity of the warranty given by Koppers to the customer in U.S. markets. Koppers advised Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation that no warranty would be honoured for products sold in the United States. Shan-Wood were advised of this fact in March 1986 by personal visit, prior to receiving the letter of March 3, 1986.

Shan-Wood requested that they be allowed to put their own warranty on the treated wood. However, in response to this request Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation were advised that this did not constitute a release of

liability, and therefore it was not considered prudent to undertake this sale.

Shan-Wood also requested that they receive exclusive rights to market-treated wood in Manitoba. Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation did not accept this proposal due to the fact that we have other wholesalers in Manitoba marketing other lumber and plywood products and who, in turn, had and currently are purchasing treated wood products.

When Mr. Wall visited Shan-Wood as related earlier, Mr. Shannon informed Mr. Wall he had already written a letter declining any further interest. The prime reasons for that letter were: we were not prepared to give Shan-Wood an exclusive market arrangement; and (b) the treated wood product sales in the United States exposed Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation to potential liability. Following that meeting it was then deemed unnecessary to forward further details.

Mr. Speaker, the claim of lack of interest is totally unjustified.

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

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of very short paragraphs to finally clarify this issue for the members.

The claim of lack of interest is . . .

Mr. Speaker: — I've just asked the members for order, and I'm going to ask again. Order.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — The claim of lack of interest is totally unjustified from those members. Mr. Wall had telephone conversations two and three times a day with Mr. Shannon in addition to personally visiting him in Winnipeg. The decision made by Saskatchewan Forest Products to refuse an exclusive market and not expose itself to unnecessary liability is based solely on sound business practice. Mr. Speaker — sound business practice, which will continue to be the policy of Sask Forest Products in aggressive marketing of our products, not only here in Saskatchewan, but around North America.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — A short supplement, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister. Do you deny that this Manitoba wholesaler has been among SFPC's top 10 customers in each of the past six years, since shortly after its incorporation early in 1979? And do you deny that SFPC has regularly made some of the largest sales of wood products to this very wholesaler whose reputation you are now questioning? And also, Mr. Minister, do you deny that the letters that were written by Shan-Wood Lumber Company, and the phone calls, were not returned by your corporation, and as a result the loss of this large sale?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I deny that the phone calls were not returned. I do not deny that Shan-Wood

has been a wholesaler on behalf of Sask Forest Products in the past. I will reiterate once again that that fact in itself is not reason, nor is there any good reason, why a company like Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation who is aggressively marketing products should give an exclusive marketing right to Shan-Wood or any other group when we have other very reputable wholesalers in the province of Manitoba who are doing good work for this corporation.

When they wanted an exclusive marketing contract, we said no — which was a good business proposition on behalf of Sask Forest Products — and we will stand by that, Mr. Speaker.

Impact of Soviet Nuclear Fall-out

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister for the Environment, and it deals with his department's follow-up to the nuclear reactor disaster in the Soviet Union. My question is: are there regular tests being conducted by your department or the federal government to determine the immediate impact of fall-out from this nuclear accident on Saskatchewan's food chain, Mr. Minister? Specifically, are you doing regular tests on milk or livestock being prepared for slaughter? And, Mr. Minister, who is performing these tests, how often, and what are the results to this point in time, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, it has taken that member and the opposition some two weeks to figure out that there's been a nuclear reactor spill in the Soviet Union. Mr. Speaker, it amazes me that this is the first . . .

Mr. Speaker: — I'm going to ask the members to contain themselves a bit. It's impossible to hear in the Chamber.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — It amazes me, Mr. Speaker, this is the first question on this rather significant disaster since it happened, in this House. To answer your question, the Department of National Health and Welfare monitors both the food and the rain-water. In Saskatchewan, those are the . . . The rain-water is checked in Regina and in Saskatoon. They are checked here daily. They are sent to Ottawa, and we are kept informed, as well as my colleague, the Minister of Health. And I would like to state to you and to the public that, while there is an advisory on rain-water which has been issued, Mr. Speaker . . . I wish the opposition would quiet down a little bit. At least the public may be interested. While the national advisory is still in place for rain-water, tests to date have indicated that our drinking water is safe, and so is the food and the milk.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say for the record, Mr. Speaker, that it has also taken two weeks for this government to make a public statement to the effect of this national disaster in the city of Chernobyl. My question to you, Mr. Minister, as a supplementary: what plans does your department or the federal government have to do long-term testing on the impact of this nuclear accident?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I might point out to the member opposite that my colleague, the

Minister of Health, did make a statement in regards to the rainfall some days ago. Now whether you heard it or not I don't know, but there has been a statement made. We do monitor the situation daily. I think that there is no need to try on behalf of the opposition to create any panic in the public. I think that we are on top of the situation. There's no need for concern at the moment, and if there is, the public will be notified.

Mr. Sveinson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask the minister if his government concurs with Mr. Getty's statement in Alberta that these disasters in the Ukraine are good for western oil prices, and whether that's an official policy of your government.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, I am, and this government is, primarily concerned with public safety, both the safety of our citizens and the safety of citizens of Canada and around the world.

I am not aware of Mr. Getty's remarks, nor am I in a position to say whether I agree with him or not. We are concerned with public safety, the safety of the citizens of Saskatchewan. We monitor the environment daily to ensure that that safety is kept up. And if anything happens, Mr. Speaker, we will notify the public immediately.

Investigation of SGI Claims

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, in the absence of most of your cabinet, the majority of your cabinet. This one, however, is not unfair since it involves a member of your staff. I first ask, Mr. Premier, if you will confirm that Saskatchewan Government Insurance maintains a special investigation unit whose job it is to check into the circumstances surrounding questionable claims against SGI policies.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the leader of the NDP, who hasn't been in the House for several days, I will respond to the hon. member that yes, SGI has - as far as I know, and I will find out - special units that will do investigation on particular circumstances.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Premier, will you tell this Assembly whether it's the policy of SGI's special investigation unit to keep its files and its work confidential, particularly when these investigations involve allegations of arson?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me that they would depend on whether the particular investigation is. At some point in time they may turn it over to the police or the RCMP, and at that point it's out of their hands into somebody else's hands.

Mr. Shillington: — Supplementary. New question, I suppose I should say. Mr. Premier, most people would assume it's SGI's policy to keep the files confidential. And in light of that, I think, obvious assumption, I ask if there's been an internal investigation launched at SGI with respect to a court judgement they did January 30th of this year. In this court judgement, a copy of which I have here, Mr. Justice MacLean of the Court of Queen's Bench states clearly that this policy was breached in an investigation

by a claim by one Tom Townsend.

I asked the Premier, if he'd been listening, if an internal investigation had been launched at SGI with respect to the comments made by Mr. Justice MacLean in this judgement.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I have no idea. I'm not the minister of SGI. Maybe the minister of SGI could respond on specific comments.

I can remind the member opposite, if he wants to go back and look at the record quite easily, that the former member of Saskatoon Nutana, the NDP member, would take our colleague's driving record and talk about it on the radio. I mean, it was highly questionable whether a member of the NDP cabinet should take confidential records of a driving individual and be talking about them.

So I mean, again it's a little bit of another witch-hunt that the opposition are on. The Leader of the NDP is not here, he's not in control of his caucus. You can just go on one witch-hunt to another. First it's on public employees, then it's on somebody else. I mean, it's the same old thing day after day . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — In the absence of the minister of SGI, I put this to the Premier, and I refer to the January 30, 1986, judgement by Justice MacLean in a civil action between Thomas Townsend and the Saskatchewan Government Insurance.

In this judgement the justice states that one Ron Ryan, at that time executive assistant to SGI president Don Black, removed the file concerning an investigation of Mr. Townsend's claim against SGI and reviewed it with one Dave Tkachuk, the Premier's chief political adviser. And further, the judge states that after this review Mr. Ryan reported to Mr. Black that he and Mr. Tkachuk didn't think any further investigation of Mr. Townsend's claim were required by SGI's special investigation unit.

Now my question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is: is this the kind of conduct that you would find acceptable under SGI policy, and are all claims investigations at SGI subject to that kind of review from your political people in your department?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — The answer is no, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplement to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the Premier will know that Mr. Ryan is still very much in evidence around the province — we've referred to this — collecting a series of government contracts without tender. And Mr. Tkachuk is now heading up your party's election campaign preparations.

My question to you, Mr. Premier, is: did their actions breach SGI's policy with respect to confidentiality of files of the special investigation or not? Can you inform the Assembly whether there was a breach of SGI policy?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as I understand it as raised by the opposition — I'll certainly confirm it and I

won't take it at face value — but they're saying this has been dealt with in the courts. Now he's asking me about more of it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right. Well you just raised it and said that it was. Well, Mr. Speaker, I mean, I don't run SGI on a daily basis. And I will certainly go back and examine any details with respect to a court decision, or public documents made by the member of the court. So I said that I would, and I will, but beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I mean they're asking me to deal with something that was dealt with some time ago.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a question . . . My supplement is again to the Premier, and I wonder if you can indicate, when Mr. Tkachuk was serving as your principle secretary and political adviser, did his duties and responsibilities include the review of confidential files of SGI's special investigation unit? Was he doing that under your instructions, because obviously the judge who was involved indicates that that's what he was doing? And if not, do you condone Mr. Tkachuk's conduct as outlined by Justice MacLean in his court document, and most important of all, what action will you take to send a clear message to everyone in Saskatchewan that such conduct is not condoned?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, the matter has been dealt with, and I haven't read the court document, so if I haven't read the court document, how am I supposed to respond to it. So, Mr. Speaker, until I do read it, I'm not going to take anything that they say at face value because half the time when they're saying something or alleging something, it's not true - it's not true.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 39 - An Act to amend The Livestock Investment Tax Credit Act

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I move first reading of a Bill, An Act to amend The Livestock Investment Tax Credit Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 40 - An Act respecting the Establishment, Maintenance and Use of Park Land and Park Land Reserve

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources, I move first reading of a Bill, An Act respecting the Establishment, Maintenance and Use of Park Land and Park Land Reserve.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ROYAL ASSENT TO BILLS

At 2:35 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

Bill No. 1 — An Act respecting the Establishment and Operation of the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre for the

Provision of Rehabilitation and Extended Care Services in Saskatchewan

Bill No. 15 — An Act respecting the Application in Saskatchewan of the United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards

Bill No. 27 — An Act respecting The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan and to repeal The Chartered Accounts Act and The Certified Public Accountants Act

Bill No. 03 — An Act to incorporate Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:37 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

MOTIONS

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speakers, just prior to going on to government orders, I wonder if I might have leave of the Assembly to move the following motion:

That when this Assembly adjourns on Friday, May 16, 1986 it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, May 20, 1986.

I ask leave and so move, seconded by my seat-mate, the member for Kindersley.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Environment Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 9

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Items of business before the House is estimates for the Department of the Environment. Before we begin, I would like to ask the minister to introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Peter van Es, the deputy minister; Bill Howard, the assistant deputy minister; Rick Knoll, director of administration branch, directly behind me; and Dave Clark, the director of the land protection branch, back there.

Item 1

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to participate in the debate of estimates, Mr. Chairman, to begin proceedings of the estimates before us dealing with our environment. I would like to get into specifics, Mr. Minister. I'd welcome your officials as well.

My first question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: can you tell me how many personal staff you have as Minister of the Environment and their names and their salaries at present?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I have them here. I'll send a copy over to the member . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Send a copy over to the other member.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I note, Mr. Minister, that you have Bruce Evans, ministerial assistant 4; Pat Murphy, ministerial assistant 4; Ken Syrnyk, ministerial assistant 1; Vonda Croissant — I believe that's how it's pronounced; and a Margaret Marsden, with salaries of a minimum of 25,000 annually, and up to 44,000 annually with wage increases of, I believe, 4 per cent. I note as well that you have . . . Pardon me; this is an explanation here below. I want to go on, Mr. Minister. I just read that for the record here for *Hansard*.

I want to go on and ask you, Mr. Minister: of the assistants you have in your office, what are their scientific and academic qualifications to equip them to deal with environmental matters?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have their resumes with me. We will get those and provide them to you.

Mr. Yew: — I will get that information, Mr. Minister. I will anticipate receiving that information then.

Of all the personal staff you have, Mr. Minister, when were their last increases of salary, and what was the dollar amount and the percentage of the increase? Is that the information that you passed on, or is it not? Have there been recent changes to the information you sent?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, as indicated in the information that I provided you with a note too, would indicate that two of my staff received a 4 per cent increase effective January 1st. The dollar amount is also on the right-hand column. I presume you have the same piece of paper that I have.

Mr. Yew: — What, Mr. Minister, was their wage increase for 1985?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have that information with me either, for 1985. I recollect, however, these people were with me last year in my other portfolio, and I had furnished the opposition with that information last year in estimates. So you should be able to go and get back into the information I gave you last year to get that information.

Mr. Yew: — I believe that we're dealing with the '86-87 estimates, Mr. Minister. But going back to 1985 like you suggest I should do, you're responsible for a very different portfolio. And I'm not certain as to whether or not you had the very same people working with you under Environment estimates as we do now today. So I would again ask for that information. If you can provide it later, fine; I'll take that later. But I certainly hope that you can provide that information to me.

My next question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: how many employees did the Department of the Environment have when your government, the PC government, took office in the spring of 1982? And how many employees does the department have today?

(1445)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Okay, Mr. Chairman, we have, in answer to the previous question regarding my staff's increases a year ago, you will find that answer given on page 2821 of *Hansard* from last year.

Bruce Evans, I'll give it to you. Bruce Evans was 8.8 per cent, which represented two years' increments. In other words, he had not had an increment for two years previous to last year.

Pat Murphy was zero. Vonda Renwick was zero. That was her name then. Now it's . . . In your books it's Vonda Croissant. Margaret Marsden, zero.

As for the numbers of employees in 1982, was 170; '82-83. Since that time, 59 . . . No, 60 positions have gone to the water corporation; 16 positions have gone to the Parks department, habitat enhancement, leaving 92 in Environment.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Following that question I want to ask you: what was the budget for the Department of the Environment when the PC government took office in the spring of 1982, and what is the budget for the coming year?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, in answer to that question, in 1982-83 estimates the Department of Environment's estimates were 10.1 million. In 1986-87 the estimates, which are in front of us obviously, are 7.4 million. Again, between that time and now, between 1982 and now, the water Crown has, as I indicated in the previous answer, received 60 of our employees. They are now over in the water Crown, who now have some of our programs that were delivered under Environment at that time. And about \$3.7 million of budget is now at the water Crown, which would have been included this year as well if the water Crown had not been created and these people and that part of the budget taken over to that vote.

Mr. Yew: — I can't take the explanation as the gospel policy. Mr. Minister, you know, it is interesting to note that, when I look at the figures I have on your estimates before me and the figures that I have of the 1982 estimates, they indicate to me — and for the record I want to tell you — that the budget for Environment for 1982-83 was actually \$11,050,220, the budget, the environmental budget. And in terms of the budget today, like you quoted, it's 7,440,940. That has been cut in half, Mr. Minister. And in terms of employees, in 1982-83 they tell me that there were 172 position, and today that has been cut to 92 positions.

Mr. Minister, that indicates to me the concern and the commitment you have for environment. Both areas have been effectively discouraged, cut in half, and very little commitment has been shown with regards to our natural environment. I take it, Mr. Minister, that you and your

government simply don't have any sound regard to our environment.

I want to go on with my questioning, Mr. Minister. With regards to another item I have that is of concern to people of the province: Mr. Minister, has an environmental impact study of any kind been done into the effects of the proposed thermal electric power station near Estevan?

Hon. Mr. Embury: Mr. Chairman, it is presently under way and is expected to be done some time this summer, probably about midsummer that that study would be complete. But to comment briefly on the member's remarks on this government's commitment to environment. I would point out, based on the figures in the blue book '82-83 and blue book '86-87, he ignores the fact which is in the record and has been stated to him several times over the last half hour: the establishment of the water Crown happened to take some of those positions that were previously in Environment and they were put into the water Crown, and as well some 16 positions over into the Parks. So I don't think that you can construe from blue book to blue book that either the positions nor the money have been reduced for environment. They are simply in the blue book in a different subvote.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, I won't dispute the fact that I have with your blue book. I just wanted to state the information that I have came from the *Estimates* for 1982-83, and also the *Estimates* before us for 1986-87, and those are actual figures that I'm sure that the minister cannot dispute, but no doubt you will try to cover up.

Mr. Minister, I didn't get your . . . There was so much noise on that side of the House I couldn't get the answer to the question I raised regarding the environmental impact study re the thermal electric power station near Estevan. What was your answer to that?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — My answer, Mr. Chairman, was that it is presently under way and should be completed about midsummer.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, if the environmental studies indicate that the proposed thermal electric power station that we're talking about near Estevan will have a damaging effect to the environment, can you assure the people of Saskatchewan that this project will not proceed?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously this government has great concern with the environmental impact of any of these developments. I mean, we have many, many developments going on in this province, thanks to our government. And we will ensure that these developments will not have adverse effects on the environment.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. My next question deals with yet another environmental concern. Mr. Minister, on Thursday, February 1st, *The Estevan Mercury* reported that an environmental study would be done before the Rafferty dam is built on the Souris river, and the Alameda dam is built on Moose Creek. Have those studies started, Mr. Minister? And also can you

assure the people of Saskatchewan that the environmental impact studies on Rafferty and Alameda dams will be completed prior to work commencing on the construction of both dams?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I think that there is no doubt that there will be no work done on those projects until the studies have been complete.

(1500)

Mr. Yew: — Thank you for the response to that. I feel a little confident then that your commitment is that no work will be done until those studies are completed.

I want to ask you then, Mr. Minister, how extensive . . . my question to you is: how extensive will these environmental impact studies be, Mr. Minister, and who will be doing those studies, which consulting firms, and just how much local involvement and consultation is being done with respect to the people directly affected?

Mr. Weiman: — I'm wondering if, with leave, Mr. Chairman, before the minister replies to his question, whether I may have leave to introduce some guests?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Weiman: — Mr. Chairman, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce, again, more guests from Fairview, and being the member from Fairview constituency in Saskatoon, it doubles that pleasure.

As the House knows, in the past we've had many guests from Fairview, and Fairview has always sent their very best. In keeping with our policy of truth in government, though, I have to be a little bit more candid, Mr. Chairman. My guests from Fairview this time are a little bit south of Fairview in Saskatoon; 12 grade 8 students from the East Fairview elementary school. They are here with their chaperons, and I would lilac to read into the record the chaperons that are with them this afternoon.

They are accompanied by their teacher Arlene Karst, Mr. and Mrs. Terry Cayko, Mr. and Mrs. Allan Lassey, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Youngquist, and the bus driver, Alvin Miller.

It is, as I indicated earlier, a privilege to be able to introduce you. You can be assured that the people of Saskatchewan not only have an admiration for our neighbours to the South, we have a great deal of admiration for people from the United States of America. And I have very many fond memories of driving through Montana.

I apologize for not having stopped in Fairview as I was down in the United States two years ago, but I took the road that went from Glendive to Sidney up to Plentywood and back to Saskatchewan. And I realize if I'd have just made a right-hand turn, I could have gotten to Fairview.

I would like the members of the Assembly, along with myself, to not only welcome you here but wish you a safe journey back to the United States. And if I may add, I will be meeting with you at 4 o'clock for pictures and

refreshments and to answer any questions that you may have about the parliamentary system in Canada.

So with that, I ask the members to please join with me in greeting our American friends.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Department of Environment Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 9

Item 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the question of the member from Cumberland, the SPC is presently holding a series of open houses in the area, gathering views of the local residents. Then, of course, there will be an EIS (environmental impact study) done. The types of things that will be looked in the EIS, the kinds of things that will be studied and examined, either by Sask Power or by Sask Power's consultant if they hire one, are such things as wildlife, fish and habitat, agriculture and land use, water quality and quantity, air quality, archaeology, socioeconomic concerns. And of course then they have to produce development and operational details and that type of thing. So it will be a complete EIS. After which, of course, it is published, there is a public review period. After these concerns have been addressed and that study has been produced, obviously there is then a public review period after this which the public can again have their input into the things that the study has highlighted and commented on.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, Mr. Minister, I understand that the Rafferty dam, if the Rafferty dam is built, it will flood 172 acres — the 172-acre Mainprize Regional Park, the Lutheran Bible camp and as much as 72 kilometres of one of the most beautiful valleys in southern Saskatchewan. And I want to include that into the record, Mr. Minister. And I noted that from a letter coming from the mayor of the town of Coronach, that this dam was referred to as a political give-away, Mr. Minister.

The announcement of the Rafferty dam project by Premier Devine goes on to say:

... is in my view one of the government's biggest political give-away since gaining power in 1982.

And there's a lot to this, and what has been brought up to the public, Mr. Minister. As you may know, there is an agreement dating back to 1909 which requires Saskatchewan to pass on 50 per cent of the water collected in the Souris River system to North Dakota, U.S.A. That being the case, how many years of average run off will it take to flood all of the Souris valley and fill the reservoir to be formed by the Rafferty dam?

Is it not true, Mr. Minister, that because we must pass on 50 per cent of the water in the Souris River, that for many years there will be only a large, shallow, stagnant slough behind the Rafferty dam, and the same situation will

develop over and over again in dry years.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, what arrangements have you made on planning, or planning to make, and what have you done to handle problems that may arise with all your growth and other environmental implications?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, of course the member opposite asked in a previous question what kind of public review would be done in regards to this development. I went to some length to outline to him, not only what steps were taken in the public review, including an environmental impact study which included — and I read him the different types of things that that study would cover — included the public review of the projects prior to and after the study. And I went on to tell the member that part of the study and part of the review would be on water quality and water quantity; then he gets up and asks me about water quality and water quantity.

I think the answer to his question is that the EIS, one of the objects of the study, is water quality and quantity, among others, but it would be fruitless ... (inaudible interjection) ... The member from Regina North East is speaking from his chair again. It would be rather fruitless, in my view, to prejudge what that review is going to do, and what the ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well now the member from Assiniboia is speaking from his chair. It would also be, I think, prejudging what the results of that study will say. I have already indicated to the member that this review is going to take place, that this review will be complete prior to the development taking place. I might also point out, however, that there has been for 50, 60, or 70 years promises of this project in the province. This government is proceeding to develop this long-awaited promise.

I might also point out that, unlike any other project, member from Assiniboia, unlike any other project done in Saskatchewan — any other project in Saskatchewan — we actually have the Americans who are going to pay for some of it. We're going to get the Americans to pay. Mind you, you wouldn't like that. As a party who officially burns flags, of course, you wouldn't like the Americans to participate in this type of a project ... (inaudible interjection) ...

We see the member from Quill Lakes has arrived. You can hear him for miles, Mr. Chairman. You can hear him for miles, speaking from his chair. But I think that the member ...

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, the minister has made unfounded accusations, and I want to say that it's casting an aspersion and a slander on members of this caucus, and I demand that he retract that statement.

Mr. Chairman: — I find that there's debate going on between two members, and I am not able to rule on that. Would you carry on with the ... (inaudible interjection) ... I have stated my case; I am correct, and I would ask the House to come to order.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

Mr. Chairman: — What's your point?

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, the minister blatantly accused this caucus in an aspersion and cast false accusations against us that are . . . indicated that we burn flags and that we officially take that position. And I demand he apologize and retract that statement now, before this debate proceeds any further.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — In speaking to the point of order that's obviously . . . that has been raised by the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, who has a very short fuse today, it seems - a very short fuse; he must have. And, Mr. Speaker, but anyway, as you have said, there has been and there will continue to be for a good long time debate back and forth in the House on various issues.

The member clearly did not say that the members of that caucus have in fact burned flags, or whatever the member is suggesting there. What he had said is that some members of the NDP faith in this country have, and that's an indisputable fact. It's an indisputable fact that people affiliated with the NDP in Canada have been known to be involved in that type of activity. That's an indisputable fact.

But the point of order is that the point of debate in any case, Mr. Chairman . . .

An Hon. Member: — He is getting into the debate. Order. He is getting into the debate.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order, order.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Deputy House Leader is erroneous in his comments. The record will show, Mr. Chairman, that the minister opposite made no reference to anybody being affiliated with anybody. He made no reference to others in the NDP. He made a direct and specific reference to the members of this caucus who are members of the New Democratic Party, and he called it the official position, Mr. Chairman.

Now I bring to your attention that in previous rulings by yourself, sir, and your other colleagues who have sat in that Chair, that in similar situations you have called "order" to members on both sides of the House.

I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to reconsider your ruling.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I am sticking to my ruling that it is a subject for debate between two members. I would now ask that we get on to the subject of debate that has to do with the environment.

(1515)

Mr. Engel: — I challenge your ruling, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: — Call in the Speaker.

Mr. Glauser: — Mr. Speaker, during consideration of estimates for the Department of the Environment, the member for Shaunavon raised a point of order to . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I wasn't in the House at

the time. How in the world I could have possibly raised a point of order, but this guy is totally confused - totally confused.

Mr. Glauser: — Mr. Speaker, pardon me, it was . . .

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

Mr. Glauser: — Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. I'll make a correction to that. And it was the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg raised a point of order to the fact that the Minister of the Environment cast aspersions on the opposition, to which I ruled that this was a dispute between two members . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's impossible for me to hear what the member is reporting, and I would ask for order.

Mr. Glauser: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I ruled that there was no point of order. And the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg of course challenged, and that is the reason for calling you in, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? Those in favour say, aye. Those opposed say, no. I believe the ayes have it.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Environment Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 9

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order! I don't think anybody can hear anything that is going on in here. Order!

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, as I was saying before the interruption, the only reason that we were talking about flags at all was of course because of the environmental impact on the air when they burn.

In any case, Mr. Chairman, to get back to the original question: the original question, of course, was what studies will be done prior to the Rafferty project taking place down at Estevan. I had indicated to the member opposite that SPC were holding public meetings, that an EIS statement would be done, and that part of that EIS would be highlighting water quality and quantity. And therefore . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. I think the member for Cumberland has asked a question. I'm sure he will be pleased to hear the answer. And I think, if the members of the opposition would be a little more quiet, he will perhaps hear it. Order, order! Order. Can we now proceed with the answer.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, and that it would be, in referencing to the question from the member opposite, who was asking particular questions on the quality of water that would be going through Saskatchewan into the United States. The quality and quantity of that water obviously is subject of EIS, and I think that a debate on

that subject in this House at this time would be a little pre-emptive of what may come out in the study by midsummer. I'm not sure when the study is complete, midsummer, end-summer, when this study would be published, and then of course the public review would take place, and we would have a lot more information upon which to base a debate in this House.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Chairman, before we got those rude remarks made by the Minister of the Environment and trying to put official words into the mouth of the opposition here, I want to say that that was unwarranted. That is not the official position of the officials of the opposition, and I just want to state that for the record.

You were way out of your league, way out of line, Mr. Minister. And the same applies here, Mr. Minister. It seems that you guys are very desperate over there. You're slugging all kind of insults on the small caucus of the official opposition. We are obligated to perform our jobs, to provide an official opposition that can get some answers from this government. You're continuously hiding information from the public. You're dictated, Mr. Minister, by politics. And there's papers and papers to document that. I look at the *Star-Phoenix* dated March 29, 1986, just recently, Mr. Minister, where it states in big black headlines, "The Rafferty dam location determined by politics." And it's also . . . I just happen to note the first paragraph, Mr. Minister, where it is acknowledged by one of your officials, "politics dictated . . . and I'll read that article out, the first paragraph:

Politics dictated that Saskatchewan Power consider an Estevan location for its proposed new \$500 million power plant, a high ranking Conservative officials admits.

Mr. Minister, just for the record I want to state to you that you guys are desperate, clinging to power. You're now on your fifth year of office — the longest-term government ever in history in this province.

An Hon. Member: — Not true.

Mr. Yew: — That's right; that's true. The member for Meadow Lake disputes that. Look at the records. History speaks for itself. You can't deny history, Mr. Minister.

Getting back to the estimates, Mr. Minister. We're on discussion regarding the proposed power projects. I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, are you aware that the Souris River valley which will be flooded by the Rafferty dam is a unique wildlife area? In addition to . . . If the minister will listen and quit getting dictated by the member for Meadow Lake . . . If I could get your attention, I'd certainly appreciate it, Mr. Minister. If you've got any comments to make about the environment, Mr. Minister, you'll have your opportunity.

Mr. Minister, in addition to the fact that the Rafferty dam will flood a unique wildlife area, and in addition to the 1,200 white-tailed deer that will be forced out or forced up into the surrounding prairie and likely not fare too well without wildlife habitat, there are very rare species in the Souris River valley as well, Mr. Minister.

There are, I noted, Mr. Minister, burrowing owls, western painted turtles, hogs, prairie long-tailed weasels in that valley, and their population will likely be wiped out, or pretty near becoming extinct. This is happening in northern Saskatchewan where we have huge forestry, where we have a clear-cut policy whereby we lost a lot of natural habitat . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's true. You drive into the North with me — the member for Prince Albert wants to dispute that now — but you drive with me in the northern administration district and you talk to people like Albert Ross, a local trapper, that has made his living out of traditional pursuits like trapping, fishing and hunting. You talk to Albert Ross or Noah Bird or George Bird or any one of those people that supplement their seasonal incomes, and they'll tell you otherwise, Mr. Member for Prince Albert. They'll tell you otherwise. You go there.

You don't derive your living from traditional pursuits, do you? It hurts us. It hurts the native people. And I want to impress on the Minister for Environment, it's hurting the traditional pursuits of Indian and native people. And I concur that a lot of people in the southern area are genuinely as concerned, Mr. Minister. We're losing our natural environment.

Aren't you concerned about all the issues that have been raised re the natural environment? On one hand the Department of Tourism promotes tourism, putting out a tremendous amount of ads, publicity, trying to attract people on one hand, saying that we have a unique province; and on the other proposing, and governed by politics, proposing to build major hydro projects in areas that are not required.

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the NDP would have you believe that the Rafferty dam somehow is going to go into a Conservative constituency. Well there's two things I want to point out to the NDP opposition. One is that there are very, very few NDP constituencies in the first place; and secondly, none where this river runs through.

In other words, in order to put the dam on the Souris River you have to put it on the Souris River. And the Souris River happens to be in this constituency, and this constituency happens to be Conservative, like many others. But this one happens to have the Souris River in it, and that is why the dam is going to be built there.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Chairman, I have never witnessed such arrogance coming out from members on that side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yew: — As I've stated to you, Mr. Minister, and I've pointed out, the Rafferty dam will be built only at a considerable price for our natural environment. Now I noticed in yet another story published by *The Estevan Mercury*, dated March 26th, that \$23 million will be paid by the Saskatchewan treasury to oil companies such as PanCanadian and Canadian Roxy Petroleum for 32 oil wells affected by the rising water.

At the same time, Mr. Minister, only \$500,000 is being offered to the city of Weyburn to make substantial improvements to its sewage treatment plant so as to avoid pollution in the reservoir. Is this another indication, Mr. Minister, of your priorities? How much money, I ask you, Mr. Minister, will be spent moving wildlife and protecting the wildlife habitat of the flooding valley that we're in discussion about?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Speaker, now that we've established that we will build the dam on the river and you will built it on top of a hill somewhere, we'll go back to the first question and the first answer, because we've never really strayed too far from that.

Once the EIS has been complete, the public review has been complete, we will then be able to establish some cost. We have not yet established the cost of doing anything with the habitat because we have not yet established and we have not yet received the EIS, the environmental impact study. So this discussion, as I had indicated I guess now about 45 minutes ago, somewhat precludes what we may find out when this EIS is finished. It's a little premature, so it's very hard to discuss these things until we have that study and we know what we are discussing.

The answer to your question is: we don't know that cost yet.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, in this study that you referred to that you described 45 minutes ago, am I correct that I heard you say that the study will talk about the quantity of water that's available as well as the quality? I missed it when you were talking about that, and I just wanted to clarify it.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I just checked my officials because perhaps this member, unlike his colleague, once I've given him the answer once or twice or three times, may get the answer. I'll read it to you. Saskatchewan . . . Well they don't want me to read it to them; they want to talk from their seats . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well he still wants to speak from his seat.

All right. I'll read it to him. Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now the member from Assiniboia wants to speak to his seat. Maybe, Mr. Chairman, at some stage, they'll want to hear it.

Saskatchewan Power Corporation should predict future water quality, including (I don't know what that is) eutrication effects at the U.S. border. Predicated effects should be compared to present conditions. Seasonal effects and the effects of unusual conditions such as drought and floods and water quality should be predicted in relationship to changes caused by the projects.

Soils in the potential reservoir area should be sampled for nutrients and mercury before the project goes ahead. The effects of the project and the concentrations and dispersion of these parameters should be estimated.

Ground water quality, quantity, and movements in the potentially affected area should be delineated. Existing and historic situations with regard to water quality, quantity, flow rates and régimes in relation to the seasonality and municipal and agricultural uses and discharges should be described in detail.

And I could go on. The point is that until we have the study completed, until we have the study completed, it's a little premature to be trying to debate the pros and cons of the thing until we know what we're talking about.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — In other words . . . Thank you, Mr. Minister. That's what I was looking for, and I appreciate the answer. In other words, what you are saying, and will you confirm to the committee, Mr. Minister, that your government and your department in particular, and that's only fair, does not yet know whether there is enough quantity of water to be able to sustain such a project?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, no, that's not what we're saying at all. We're not talking about the feasibility of generating power or any other engineering question in this discussion. We're talking about the environmental effects of this project. Now obviously Sask Power has already decided that there is sufficient water to go ahead with this project.

As far as the Department of the Environment is concerned, however, we want to make sure that it does not adversely affect the environment when it does go ahead.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's the point, Mr. Minister, that I'm trying to make here. When my colleague, the member from Cumberland, asked you an earlier question some 45 minutes ago about the quantity of water available to sustain the project, Mr. Minister, you said to him that will be determined — I remind you what you said 45 minutes ago — that will be determined when your department has completed its studies which include the quantity of water.

Forty-five minutes later, Mr. Minister, you are changing your story. Now you are saying you are not considering the question of quantity of water. I ask you now, and I repeat the question of my colleague: is it assured — can your department assure this committee, because it is the Department of the Environment who deals with these kinds of question — can you assure this committee that there will be a sufficient quantity of water to supply this dam; that it will not take five years to fill the dam; that all questions related to whether there is certain amounts of rainfall in different seasons of the year and so on, whether that will be adequate in order to sustain the dam? That was the question my colleague answered.

You said at that time you didn't know, because your department was studying the question. Now you're saying to me your department isn't studying that question at all. Now which is it?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure which member speaks in code. The quantity of water has been determined by Sask Power. They've obviously determined that commercially there's enough quantity of

water for the project. The quantity of water we're talking about is simply from an environmental view, not whether it's viable for Sask Power. I mean, obviously that's up to Sask Power. They are much more adept at determining that than the Department of the Environment, and that's their job.

Our job, when we talk about quantities of water, is to talk about the environmental aspect of whether there's enough water agriculturally, or for wildlife, or for whatever, or ground water. That obviously is the aspect that we look at as the Department of the Environment. I mean, whether there is the raw quantity of water for the SPC project is determined by engineers in Sask Power.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I wish you would get the members on the government side of the House to stop pounding their desks when we're trying to ask a question. But I shall proceed.

Mr. Minister, let me ask you a very direct question: did the Saskatchewan Power Corporation consult your department about the quantity of water that's available for this project? And if so, Mr. Minister, what was the response of your department.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — No.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I think we have the wrong mike here. Thank you. I'm even having the lady up there cut me off, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, why . . . Let me ask you another question on the same subject. Has your department, or have you as the minister responsible for the Environment, undertaken to provide to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation your views, which is your responsibility, on the quantity of water that's available for this project?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we went through, I suppose, indirectly some of this some time ago when I indicated to the member, your colleague from Cumberland, that some years ago some of our responsibilities and some of our staff and some of our budget went to the water corporation. Now Sask Power would have consulted with the water corporation, which is the corporation that we created to manage our whole water resource - this may have gone by the members opposite, but this was created a couple of years ago — and they would have gone to the water corporation to talk about that supply.

Now the Department of the Environment, of course, being the regulatory body, would be concerned with the environmental aspects of the project. But the quantities and the history of the quantities of water and what they could project into the future, that is, the whole management issue of the quantity of water, would have been dealt with between the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and the water corporation.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — That is a rather peculiar line of reasoning, Mr. Minister. You know full well that the supply and the quantity of water is going to have a very, very significant impact on environmental considerations. And yet you stand in this House and say two things now:

the Saskatchewan Power Corporation did not consult the Department of the Environment on quantity; the Department of Environment — and I say, you, Mr. Minister, not your officials, because they can only act under your authority — the Department of the Environment has not undertaken to talk to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation about quantity of water.

Now, Mr. Minister, do you not consider that to be highly irresponsible on your part and on the part of your department which you speak for?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, as has been the practice in these estimates for some weeks now, we will now debate this question back and forth and repeat the question and the answer for some time. The member opposite obviously either missed that small news that there was a water corporation around and what its function was, which is the whole management question of our water supply in Saskatchewan. And obviously, economically, commercially, the quantity of water and the information required to see if there's enough water now and in the future — that question would be discussed with the water corporation who has that information, and whose job it is to manage that water resource in Saskatchewan.

As far as the environmental aspect, which also includes quantity, but has an environmental impact on a whole lot of other things, not particularly the project itself — Okay? — not particularly the project itself, but everything in the environment that would be affected by that project would be our concern. And that, of course, yes, we have discussed with Sask Power.

(1545)

And as I've indicated to you and your colleague, there are a series of steps being taken now for the public's input into that for the EIS study to be done, so that we can discuss those findings with the public and with the proponent, Sask Power, of the proponent of the project, and that process will be followed through. And it's a process that is not new to Saskatchewan. In fact, I believe the process was there when you were government, and the process is there now. It has worked very successfully in the past; I suspect it will work fairly successfully for this project as well.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, I remind you that that question you just responded to I only asked once. I'm fully aware of what the water corporation is and what its mandate is, and I don't need you to indicate to me what it does.

I simply ask you another question. Does your government not know about the existence of water quantities available in any part of the province? Does your department not know that information, as a Department of the Environment?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, obviously the member opposite does not know the mandate of the water corporation, or you would not have asked the question. The mandate of the water corporation is to manage that

resource, the water resource in Saskatchewan.

And yes, if you wanted to know about quantities of water somewhere in Saskatchewan, we would go to the water corporation to get that information. They would have that information; we would not have that information. If we wanted to get it, we know where to get it, and the public knows where to get it. As a matter of fact, all of the public knows where to get it, except the member from North East. You go to the water corporation.

Now the mandate of the water corporation, which the members seems to say he knows but doesn't know, is to manage that resource. One of the pieces of information they need to manage it, obviously, is to have background information on quantities in Saskatchewan and other pieces of information dealing with our water resource. And yes, they would have it; the Department of the Environment would not have it.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well I don't know if more needs to be said on this. I think it has become very clear what has been happening here, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Chairman. What the committee has, I think, established here this afternoon, is that the Sask Power Corporation, at the behest of the minister in charge, at the request of the Premier, decided that they needed to make a political announcement — a cabinet political announcement.

The Sask Power Corporation did not approach the Department of the Environment, which it should have, to establish the question of quantity of water as it applies to the environment, and I appreciate that there will be studies that are going to be completed which are undertaken now. That's not a reflection on the politicians, Mr. Chairman, who have spent all of this time dealing with the politics of this Rafferty dam and no time dealing with quantity of water available; no time dealing with environmental implications, and simply made an announcement without even as much as speaking to the appropriate departments who ought to have been consulted.

I do not question that probably the Saskatchewan Power Corporation spoke to the water corporation. I hope it did. And I hope that maybe in this session the government will decide to allow the water corporation to come to the Crown Corporations Committee so we can ask those questions. And that's kind of doubtful because the government has not been calling forward corporations which they don't want the opposition to ask questions of.

So what we have here, Mr. Chairman, is the Premier and his minister in charge of the power corporation signing an agreement with all the parties that are involved here, United States and others, an agreement before they even knew whether there was going to be sufficient water quantity to supply this project. And I can only assume that, because the Department of Environment, in the minister's own words, was not consulted.

Now the minister may want to stand up . . . Oh, but the water corporation was consulted, and I will accept that, and so they should have been. But they are not the only agency of this government that deals with the question,

Mr. Minister. The Department of Environment also deals with the question. It was not consulted, because I expect if it had been, the Department of Environment would have said to the power corporation there is not sufficient water quantity there to do what you are saying in your proposed press release it's going to do. You're misleading the public, Mr. Minister, and I'm not surprised of that. You have developed the art of misleading the public on this project as you have on so many others.

It's really hard to believe that your Department of Environment was not consulted, and it's even harder to believe, Mr. Minister, that you, as the Minister of the Environment, would not have taken it upon yourself to initiate a discussion with the power corporation on this question.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it's an interesting discussion. It's interesting in this aspect, Mr. Chairman; it's interesting in this aspect that the member for north-east Regina who now does not agree with this project — okay — he has now issued the statement that they don't want this project — okay — his leader has been in parts of Saskatchewan saying he does favour it. The public . . . If you talk about misleading, Mr. Chairman, the public is becoming very confused with the NDP. They're becoming very confused with their stance on these projects. One day they're for them, and one day they're not for them. I mean we've heard it on the bacon plant; we've heard it with the paper plant; we've heard it with the upgrader, and today we've had another example of it.

We've had a dissertation from the member from Regina North East on why we should not build this project, the Rafferty dam. And I hesitate to say that we have the American co-operation, because the last time we had to call the Speaker in. They don't like those Americans. But we have, and we've got that co-operation from them — the first project in Saskatchewan history that will be partially financed by the United States, because they agree with the project as well.

So the only people, or maybe the only person — I don't know how many of the NDP don't agree with the project. Because, I mean, what day is it? Is it Wednesday or is it Thursday? Tomorrow they will agree with it; today they don't. Today they don't. Well that's fine. As long as that position is clear, that they don't agree with it and we do, at least the public will know, and the public in Estevan will know.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that there's not much more that we can accomplish by us stating that we agree with the project, and it will go ahead as soon as the environmental impact study is done and that review is finished. And the NDP say they do not like . . . do not want that project to proceed. So be it.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, for the record, want to state that the minister should not be putting words into our mouths. Mr. Minister, our official position is well-known. And the exchange that you had with my colleague from Regina North East certainly indicates to

me that, again, we have a very arrogant government, and it simply wants to continuously get argumental and does not want to disclose the pertinent information that we're after.

My question to you, Mr. Minister: in view of the fact that \$23 million will be paid by the Saskatchewan treasury to oil companies — that I've mentioned before and I'll mention again; you haven't answered the question — to oil companies such as PanCanadian and Canadian Roxy Petroleum for 32 oil wells that will be affected by the rising water; in light of the fact that this amount of money will be spent to compensate those oil companies, I want to ask you, in terms of the fact that you have such misplaced priorities, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you: how much money will be spent towards moving wildlife out of the flooding valley and to enhance wildlife habitat?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, about an hour and a half ago I recollect that question was asked for the first time. The first time I remember it because we got into the environmental aspects about burning nylon at the time. And I said at the time, and I will say it again, that when we started this afternoon off we were talking about this project. We talked about the environmental impact study and how it would be premature to try and debate the project until that study was done, because we really wouldn't know the costs, and we wouldn't know what the impacts were going to be on the wildlife and the other aspects of the environment that you mentioned in your question.

And that is still true. Mind you, if we keep debating this long enough, the study may be finished. But today it won't be, and so I can't answer your question with any solid figures, because we don't know. The study is not finished. The public review has not been done. Those things will be fleshed out when that process is finished.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, I certainly can't buy that argument at all. How did you arrive then, Mr. Minister, at supplying the oil companies with \$23 million for the rising water that will affect the oil industry? How did you arrive at that \$23 million figure if the environmental impact studies have not been completed?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, the figures that the member uses, in fact the whole proposition that the member is proposing, did not come from this department. If he would like to furnish us with that piece of information that he has, we may be able to discuss this more reasonably.

But it was certainly not my department or myself that either proposed the payment to those companies, or company, for those oil wells, nor the amount. So if he would like to furnish me with the information he has in front of him, we'll see what kind of debate we can get into after that.

Mr. Yew: — Well it has been noted by *The Estevan Mercury*, in a story dated March 26, 1986, Mr. Minister — not too long ago — that this money was earmarked to go to these oil companies.

Now I ask you. Maybe it didn't come from your

department, Mr. Minister, but it certainly came from your government. I ask you: which department is offering this money to compensate for losses perhaps, or compensate for the rising waters that may damage the industries that we're discussing here? I don't know. But it certainly came from your government.

Now I ask you, Mr. Minister. You know, it's coming from your government. Surely you must know what is happening within your caucus. And I ask you again, Mr. Minister: how did you arrive at that figure?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite is reading something partially out of a newspaper that is some weeks old. I have no idea what he is . . . I don't know where the information comes from.

As I've indicated before, if he would like to furnish me with all the information he has — which I suspect isn't much so it shouldn't take much of a wheelbarrow to get it over here — so I can take a look at it, perhaps then maybe we could debate the subject.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to, Mr. Chairman, before we go any further in this review of the Department of Environment's estimates for '86-87, I would like to make some brief and general comments evolving out of the exchange we've had thus far with the minister responsible for Environment.

(1600)

Mr. Chairman, there is a fundamental policy difference in Saskatchewan in basic environmental issues. On the one hand, we have those who respect our natural environment, who understand the need to preserve and protect our environment.

An Hon. Member: — Who are they?

Mr. Yew: — The people of Saskatchewan, that's who. The people of Saskatchewan who know that our natural environment is a precious, precious treasure we have inherited from the past but which we only borrow from our children. The people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, who want our society and our provincial government to ensure that we protect our natural environment as a healthy place to live for ourselves, for our children, and for future generations.

On one side, Mr. Chairman, we have the people of Saskatchewan, my New Democratic colleagues. And I share their view and share their concerns about the need to protect and enhance our environment. But on the other side, Mr. Chairman, we have this narrow-minded Devine government; this huge PC government with a different set of priorities; misplaced priorities; this PC government with its own narrow set of special interest priorities. That's what we have, Mr. Chairman.

The PC members opposite may not want to hear this, but their record speaks for itself, Mr. Chairman. Now let's look at the record. Number one, since the Devine government took office, Mr. Chairman, more than four years ago, going on five years, they have effectively cut the Department of Environment in half. That's the facts,

Mr. Chairman. That shows their priorities. That shows where their priorities are.

Number two, the Devine government has not held a single major environment impact assessment since taking office. They have not completed anything.

Number three, the Devine government badly mishandled the biggest environmental accidental in Saskatchewan's history, and I'm referring to the serious spill at Key Lake.

Number four, the Devine government has failed to respect the safety standards regarding the storage of highly toxic chemicals in our cities.

And therefore, Mr. Chairman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, there has. There has been. You people authorized spraying, didn't you — 1982, '83? The member of Meadow Lake dispute that fact. But again, the records are there, Mr. Minister.

And therefore, Mr. Chairman, when we judge them by their words and by their deeds, by what they say and, more importantly, by what they do, the Devine government's record and commitment to environmental protection has been a major disappointment to the people of Saskatchewan.

The PC government has been a major disappointment to men and women all across Saskatchewan. The Devine government has failed to create jobs and opportunities for Saskatchewan people. It has failed to provide fair taxation for the people of this province. They burdened us with the flat tax, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman.

It has failed to stand up for the Saskatchewan interests in Ottawa, Mr. Chairman. It has abandoned and betrayed the people of northern Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Chairman, this Devine government's record and commitment regarding our environment and environmental issues and environmental policy has been a major disappointment to concerned residents all across our province. That is why, Mr. Chairman, Saskatchewan people are saying that we just can't afford four more years of PC government. Saskatchewan can't afford four more years of Devine.

But there is a better alternative, Mr. Speaker, and that alternative is a commitment to environmental issues — a commitment — a government that shares the environmental concerns of Saskatchewan people and will act on those commitments. And that alternative, Mr. Chairman, is Saskatchewan's New Democrats, committed to work together with the people of Saskatchewan for a better, healthier, safer, natural environment for today and for future generations to come.

Mr. Chairman, that commitment is based on several fundamental principles, including the following: number one, that it is our natural environment, the land, the water, the air, and the life they support; that life in our

province and life in our own plant depends on it; all Saskatchewan people should have the right to an environment of productive lands, pure water, and clean air; that our economic activities should be environmentally sound, energy efficient, and enhance the overall quality of life and not detract from it; and that the physical and mental and social health of our people depends so greatly on a safe and sound natural environment.

Mr. Chairman, a New Democratic government would respect those principles. A New Democratic government would be guided by them. A New Democratic government would act on them.

Mr. Chairman, a New Democratic government would preserve critical wildlife habitat areas throughout Saskatchewan. It would build new provincial parks and designate additional heritage waterways and ecological reserves. A New Democratic government would stop the plans to use aerial spray of chemicals in our northern forests, Mr. Chairman — chemicals that are dangerous, unnecessary, and do not create jobs for local people and for people throughout this province.

A New Democratic government would provide funding for environmental research and expand work on alternatives to dangerous farm chemicals. It would extend soil conservation research and promote shelter-belt planting. Mr. Chairman, a New Democratic government would participate fully and actively to prevent acid rain in our province. A New Democratic government would develop a hazardous waste disposal system for Saskatchewan.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, a New Democratic government in Saskatchewan would establish an environmental development and protection agency. We would establish an environmental development and protection agency independent, Mr. Speaker, independent of the government of the day, with the opportunity to report directly to the legislature on environmental issues.

Those are some of the positive environmental commitments the people of Saskatchewan have told us they want. Well, Mr. Chairman, New Democrats are listening, and those are some of the positive commitments New Democrats make for the people of our province, to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, I have a number of questions I wish to put to the minister. Before getting to those, however, I wish to address one further general point. That is the issue of jobs and the environment. Note, Mr. Chairman, I say jobs and the environment — not jobs or the environment, for this is not an either/or situation.

The Devine government has been a disappointment with respect to both jobs and the environment. Mr. Chairman, New Democrats are committed to both, committed to energy conservation, for example, in ways that will protect our environment and create more jobs. New Democrats are committed to sound forestry policies, Mr. Chairman, that will ensure the long-term future of our forests and ensure jobs today. We are committed to

resource development as well, Mr. Chairman, but in ways that will create jobs, opportunities and economic activity, and are environmentally sound.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the Devine government may try to hide its head in the sand like an ostrich. Is that the word? Is that the right pronunciation? The members opposite continuously love to laugh at my English. But that's fine. That's okay. I don't take any offence. That's fine. At least I can raise a few points, a few issues in this House that are of genuine concern to my constituents, and I'll continue to do so until the last hour, Mr. Chairman.

As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, finally, the Devine government may try to hide its head in the sand. They may try to pretend that environmental issues are somehow not important - issues are somehow not important to Saskatchewan people. Well, Mr. Chairman, the PCs are wrong. The PC government is wrong. And I only cite the recent nuclear accident in the Soviet Union as an example.

We raised a point of question in the House today during question period, but has that government on that side of the House raised, or made a policy statement with regard to that? Certainly nothing has come out from the Department of Environment. That was your responsibility, but we hadn't heard after two weeks from the Department of Environment — nothing; not a word.

Mr. Chairman, the last 20th century, the nuclear age, clearly poses grave environmental dangers to all of us — to our children, to our environment, the future generations, wherever in this planet we may live.

Now we here in Saskatchewan can perhaps do little to combat the potential danger of nuclear accidents in Russia, but we can concentrate on Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman. Here, close to home, we can act. We have that opportunity, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, we have that opportunity. We clearly have the obligation to our children and to future generations. What is required, Mr. Chairman, is a sound commitment and the political will to do it.

An Hon. Member: — What is it?

Mr. Yew: — Leadership, Mr. Chairman. The member for Meadow Lake asks, what is it? And I say: leadership, Mr. Chairman — not the type we were getting from that government on that side of the House. Certainly not. And as I said before, we have a better alternative, and that is the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan.

(1615)

Mr. Chairman, I submit that those are precisely the reasons that the next general election, whenever the Premier gets the nerve to call it, the Devine government will be defeated soundly in this province, and a New Democratic government will act on concerns and the commitments that I have just presented to you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman, the member for Meadow Lake and the member for Prince Albert continuously try to confuse

matters here in the House by their tactics, by trying to distract me and trying to get me riled up in terms of past involvements in the North. That's fine; it doesn't bother me. It doesn't distract me at all. They're just making complete, idiotic fools of themselves over there. They won't listen to serious concerns and commitments that this small opposition on this side of the House have announced and have committed in terms of environmental concerns.

I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, there'll be a different response coming from the members on that side of the House once the Premier of this government of the day, a Premier with cold feet, a Premier that does not have the nerve to call an election — whenever he finds the socks and the mukluks to call a general election to warm up his feet, whenever he finds courage enough, they'll be uttering a different tune, I can assure you that.

Now I'll get back to the question, Mr. Speaker, but before I do that, I'd like to maybe hear a little response of what form of commitments they have with regard to environmental commitments for the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite is an environmental hazard. I want to make it quite clear to the members opposite I have five points here; I have noted them down, as the member opposite made them, and they are all untrue. And now, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to read to you some of the answers to the questions.

The first was: since 1982, this government has not done one major environmental impact study. I'm going to read to the member some of the environmental impact studies that are under way and have been completed in the last four months, not the dozens and dozens and dozens that have been done since 1982. Note them please.

The city of Regina waste management study; the R.M. of Hoodo, Wakaw Lake Weir; the Cigar Lake Mining Corporation, Waterbury uranium development; the SPC, the Uranium City to Collins Bay transmission line; the SPC Shand/Rafferty study, which we've gone over for an hour; the Mahogany Resources, Mallard Lake gold development; and the Northern Landfill incorporation, commercial landfill; the Prairie Coal Ltd., Poplar River mine expansion. The Redberry Development Corporation — you must remember that one. McNeill Northern Services Ltd., Cluff Lake to Fond-du-Lac haul road; the SPC Alberta-Saskatchewan interconnection; SPC Boundary dam; Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation, Highway 47 reconstruction, phase one; the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, all-season road, Highway 102 to Grandmother's Bay; Erskine Resources Ltd., shale oil recovery, Pasqua Hills; Simplot Chemical Company Ltd., fertilizer facility.

These are the assessments that have just been completed. The Husky Oil, Aberfeldy commercial, EOR; the PCS potassium sulphate plant at Big Quill Lake; Red Deer Silica Inc., silica sand deposit development; SRC, processing of high-grade ore in multi-purpose pilot plant; Interprovincial Pipe Line Ltd., pipeline facilities expansion program; Ducks Unlimited,

Makaroff-Boulanoff complex; Ducks Unlimited, Tesch's marsh project; Ducks Unlimited, Wallace project; Ducks Unlimited, Long Lake project; Ducks Unlimited, Gomersall project; the P.A. Silica Sand Company Ltd., silica sand quarrying operation in La Ronge area. Not one done since 1982, he said.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we have learned over the months and over the years from this opposition that what they say should be taken with a grain of salt. I think I'm allowed to say that. It's probably an environmental matter. A grain of salt, Mr. Chairman, because we know that they tend to exaggerate, and they tend to misconstrue facts, to put it politely.

The point number two, Mr. Chairman, was that for some reason that we had tried to hide or tried to do something with what the member opposite called the biggest environmental spill in the province's history. Well I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, about a bigger environmental spill in this province that the members opposite, when they were in government, neglected to tell the city of Regina about for two years. For two years they decided not to tell the city of Regina — I happened to be on council at the time — about the Federal Pioneer PCB spill which was about 100 yards from the city of Regina's water supply. Now I want the members opposite and I want the public to know that what the members opposite say and what they do are two different things — two completely different things.

I think my colleague — and his third point, Mr. Chairman was about spraying the forests. I think my colleague from Meadow Lake, through that discussion, was trying to point out to the member opposite that there is no spraying of the forests and, in fact, there'll be no spraying this year either. You may have missed that announcement some months ago, as well.

And you know, I think, Mr. Chairman — they're speaking from their chairs again — but I think, Mr. Chairman, that these three points alone would indicate to the public, and obviously indicate to the members on this side of the House, that the members opposite may speak for hours if they wish. They may cover the spectrum on any speech that they wish to make. But the grain of fact in those speeches is hard to find.

I took the first three points that the member opposite made in his remarks and found them all to be wanting in fact. And I think that the rest of his remarks — and we could go through them once we have the *Hansard* tomorrow — and we could go point after point after point in those comments and find that in actual fact, in actual fact, that those things that he says are facts are not.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that if the member opposite has some other specific questions on these estimates, he could get at them.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find the minister's presentation very amusing. Just a while ago he said, when I was questioning him about the environmental impact studies pertaining to the proposed thermal electric power station near Estevan, the Rafferty dam project, and the Alameda dam project at Moose Creek, he said to me

some half hour ago or so, or 45 minutes ago, he keeps saying that the environmental impact studies weren't completed. That's what he said.

And all of a sudden he says, well we've got a whole bunch of environmental impact assessment studies completed some four months ago. That's what he said. And just a while ago he said, pertaining to the questions I put to him about the three major projects that I raised in the House, he said that they didn't have the reports and the recommendations.

And when I asked him about the moneys that were allotted to the oil companies, pardon me, 2,300 million . . . or pardon me, \$23 million allotted to the oil companies to, I presume, compensate for the damages and whatever affected by the rising waters. I asked him about how much money they would be prepared to spend on moving wildlife out of the flooded areas and how much money they're prepared to spend on preserving our wildlife habitat, he said, how can we provide that information, because we haven't completed those environmental assessment projects.

I ask the minister again: how much money have you set aside to preserve our natural wildlife habitat in those three major projects that I am questioning you about in estimates before us?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — I think the member opposite could find the answer several times in *Hansard* now. I suggest he read them.

Mr. Yew: — Well I'll certainly look into the information that you refer to, Mr. Minister. But anyway, I'd like to go on. I don't believe that I've had the information and the answers that I can feel at ease with at all, Mr. Minister.

I want to go on then with regards to another area. And I want to ask the minister: I would like to know what you think of the recent proposal to locate an ammonia plant very close to the city of Moose Jaw? Did you or did your department get involved in the discussions which went on some weeks back?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — No, Mr. Chairman, we were not involved in that project. No project proposal was forwarded to Environment. It was within the city of Moose Jaw's boundaries. We know from the news reports that they've talked to the city of Moose Jaw.

As far as the storage question, that was under the regulations of the Department of Labour which requires that to be stored outside of city boundaries and a certain length from residential areas. And that's a Department of Labour regulation.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, given some of the properties of ammonia which make it a very dangerous substance, why did you or your department not take a more serious interest in the chemical plant proposal that we're referring to?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the proposal for the storage of ammonia is not a new proposal in the province of Saskatchewan. As a matter of fact, there are

80 or 90 of these sites in Saskatchewan, and they were established, of course, when you were in power.

(1630)

But the Department of the Environment, of course, was involved in the making up of the regulations that are now in place, and now under the Department of Labour, regarding the storage of ammonia. And those, as I'd indicated to you in a previous answer, those deal with the distance that the storage has to be away from built-up areas, and that they have to be outside of city limits. And those regulations are under the Department of Labour. And Environment — when those regulations were made up, and are now in place — Environment, of course, had input into the regulations. But they are under the Department of Labour.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to ask you a number of questions regarding the oil spill that we have up in Uranium City that I brought to your attention earlier today in question period. And, Mr. Minister, I didn't quite get the answers you got today. But I see that you have your officials here now, and I want to get to the bottom of this, at what I consider, and what the citizens up in that area consider, a very serious oil spill.

I want to first indicate to you, Mr. Minister, that when you have the magnitude of 8 to 10,000 gallons of crude oil seeping into Lake Athabasca, that becomes a very serious situation — not only just for the residents of that immediate area, in the Uranium City area, but also it becomes very serious for the environmental structure of that whole area.

One has to remember that when you're dealing with Lake Athabasca you're dealing with a lake that is very cold. The ice on the main lake does not go out until, sometimes, in early July, and as a result that water up there never really warms up. And also as a result, the crude oil that is going into the water will . . . very little of it will evaporate.

And you know that the flow of Lake Athabasca goes north-west. To the north-west of where the spill is taking place, approximately 15 miles down the shore, there is a small inlet with the community of Camsell Portage, which is going to be the first community that will be affected, other than the community of Uranium City, at the present time.

As I indicated to you today, they are starting to find animals that are corroded with oil and that are dead already. And some of the birds that migrate up into that area have not reached Uranium City yet, as that is close to the Northwest Territories border. But they tell me that some of the water-fowl is now moving in; that bay is now starting to open up. And the water-fowl that migrates north and who nest in that area will now be using that bay, because that is the first bay and the first open water to open up. So naturally that's the first place they're going to go into.

This spill took place last summer, and there was some work done, Mr. Minister. And as indicated to me from a member of the town council in Uranium City, a

contractor from La Ronge has been contracted to come up there this summer and do the clean-up.

Now I'm sure, Mr. Minister, that you and your officials will be aware that if they're going to wait to get the equipment in from La Ronge, that's not going to happen until July, early July, when the first barges start coming in. And as a result, the 10,000 gallons of crude oil is going to be dispersed all over Lake Athabasca, and most certainly is going to get down into the Fort Chipewyan area on the west side of the lake.

And providing what types of winds we get, and if that oil gets into the ice now and the ice floes, with the wrong wind direction that oil could possibly end up in the Fond-du-Lac area and even go farther east into the Stony Rapids area. And I know that's against the flow and you're going to say that the water is flowing north-west and that can't happen. But I tell you that it can happen because ice moves for hundreds of miles. And we're talking about hundreds of miles on that lake. I think it's a serious situation and if it's not handled immediately, it's going to get out of control. As I indicated, it's in the bay right now — the main lake is full of ice yet — but now is the time to take action on that.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, why you would hire a firm from La Ronge to go in there and clean it up this summer when you could hire the local people of Uranium City. As the town councillor indicated to me, they have the equipment; they have the manpower; and they could go in there and do the job right now. That oil is seeping out of one spot on the bay; it's not seeping out all around the bay; and if action was taken properly right now, it can be under control in no time. But if it's left until the water goes out or till equipment or men can be moved in on the barge from La Ronge, then I say to you, Mr. Minister, that this is going to become an environmental hazard the magnitude of which you just did not expect. When you've got crude oil floating around on a cold lake such as Athabasca, it's just not going to evaporate. It's crude and it's going to continue, and it'll continue to move back and forth along the shores of Lake Athabasca as the winds shift. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, why you do not hire local contractors from La Ronge and get this here massive oil spill that we have up there under control right now and nip it in the bud while it's small.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, when I took notice of this question in question period today, I premised my remarks saying that I was going to take notice so that I could get all the facts, because from time to time the opposition have been known to miscue the facts, and they have again.

First of all, just in your question, just in your question, Mr. Member, you indicated to this House, first of all, the spill took place last summer. The spill took place October 20, 1985 — not last summer.

You intimated . . . You stated in your question that the Department of Environment had hired a contractor to try and clean this spill up this summer. The Department of Environment did not hire the contractor to clean anything up this summer; the person whose spill this is hires the contractor.

And I would like to note for the House the chronology of events as it took place in this event. On October 20th — which apparently, according to the member opposite, is last summer, but I don't take it to be last summer — October 20, 1985, the Saskatchewan spill response centre received a call regarding an oil spill in Bushell Bay from the local resource officer.

The spill report centre, on October 20, 1985, contacted the mines pollution control branch and requested that they inspect Bushell Bay and report to the spill centre regarding possible damage and possible methods of clean-up.

On October 21st, the day after the spill, the mines pollution control branch inspected the bay and observations were made.

On October 22 and 23, 1985, arrangements for air transportation were made; equipment and contracting spill clean-up personnel were made by spill section personnel.

And on October 24, 1985, Saskatchewan Environment staff arrived at the spill site at 1300 hours. And it was determined that the bunker C oil, which was being stored in a 100,000-gallon tank, had spilled and had run over a bank, cooled behind a metal building, and then seeped under the metal building and was seeping into the bay along the shore line.

The spill appeared to have been caused by vandalism or carelessness, as a section of line had been disconnected, and this was where the spill occurred. The local resource officer had successfully deployed approximately 200 feet of boom and much oil had accumulated behind the boom. A black oil slick had accumulated along and under the main dock. The decision was made to boom as much of the dock area as possible, as this was where the oil was the heaviest. An additional 325 feet of boom was deployed by Saskatchewan Environment around the dock area. Oil staining was evident several hundred feet in both directions of where the oil was seeping into the bay. The 525 feet of boom deployed contained the worst of the oil. And from there on, Mr. Speaker, the oil was cleaned up, as much as they could, before freeze-up.

Now it's quite evident, Mr. Speaker — or Mr. Chairman, I should say — that Lee's Construction, which I believe is the company from La Ronge, was the contractor who did that for Environment.

This spring, of course, it was realized that more clean-up had to be done — this spring, not this summer. I am told that the owner, who is Burksen Transport — who is the owner, and who has to pay for the clean-up — Burksen Transport has hired Lee's. Okay? Burksen Transport has hired Lee's. Not the Department of the Environment but Burksen Transport has hired them. And I also understand that they have this week flown up the absorbents to Uranium City and that they expect work to be under way on further clean-up of this oil spill either later this week or early next week.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find this

quite interesting that the minister would take such a massive spill and make such a mockery of it in the legislature. I asked a question today in this House. Mr. Chairman, I asked the minister in the House about a spill that took place last year, and he got up and said — just got up after sitting down and said it twice — that there was no spill last year; that it happened on October the 20th of 1985. Well I wonder, Mr. Minister, when was October 20, 1985 if it wasn't last year? That's the kind of a minister that's going around knocking on doors in Regina trying to get re-elected.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that when I brought that to your attention, I was serious, and the folks up in Uranium City, who are finding dead rats and birds who are coated with oil, are very serious too. Regardless whether it happened on October 20, 1985 or if it happened in April of this spring, it's a massive spill. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that you don't know how many gallons are spilt because it's a 100,000-gallon tank and the estimated loss is between 8 and 10,000 gallons, and it could be a lot more.

But right now I was told by a city councillor in Uranium City yesterday that when they pull their boats into the dock right now, it's corroded with oil. So you can imagine what's happening to the wildlife, and what's going to happen. I indicated later on, as it disperses and gets out into the environment, it's going to cover that whole lake because of the cold water.

But to get up and joke about whether October the 20th was last year or not, I think that shows the depth of the Minister of the Environment. I could ask you the question, if October 20, 1985 was last year. I don't know if you could answer that, the remarks that I'm getting from you.

But I say to you, Mr. Minister, that this is a serious matter that we're dealing with. And what I'm asking you to do — and you say that the transport company that owned the oil are the ones that have to hire the firm to clean it up — but I want to indicate to you, Mr. Minister, in your duties as Minister of the Environment, it's your responsibility, and your officials, to oversee that that is done. Not if it's not done, then I think that it's up to your department to say, look here, sit down with the community, the town council of Uranium City, and say, look — they're not satisfied; they indicated that yesterday; and I'm sure your officials are not satisfied because they are now starting to pick up dead animals and birds — you as the Minister of the Environment are not satisfied with the clean-up. And you then have the authority to say to that community who indicate they have the equipment and the manpower, to send one of your experts in out of your department, or your department hire an expert in the recovery of that oil and let the community do it. They have the equipment; they have the manpower; and you have the authority.

(1645)

And I think that when you take a look at the seriousness of that spill and just how serious it could get in the next six weeks when the ice goes out and it disperses itself over a massive lake that's over 200 miles long, that you can just see that things are moving too slow.

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, as the Minister of the Environment and the powers that you have, if you will send your officials or your deputy minister up to Uranium City and meet with that town council and come to some agreement, because they're worried up there.

And you guys can sit in your seat and laugh all you want. But I think it's a serious matter. I think it's a serious matter . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Moosomin, if he wants to get into this debate . . . And I think that he should get up. He should get up.

And if he thinks that I'm misleading the House, then you get up and say that. Don't say it from your seat. You just stand up and ask me the question. Why don't you stand up, the member from Moosomin? Stand up where you are and make that statement. If not, fine. Then just let me continue with the estimates, if that's fine with you, Mr. Chairman.

But I say to the minister who was just making a mockery of when the spill took place . . . And I think that's wrong. And all I'm asking you to do, Mr. Minister, is to use your authority to go in and meet with the community of Uranium City. And that could be done tomorrow. You have the aircraft to do it.

I ask you to go in there and meet with them and listen to their concerns, and maybe through the concerns expressed to your officials that you can get this problem solved — solved before the ice goes out and before that oil disperses over a massive area and then it's just not going to be recoverable.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite has a convenient hearing impairment. The member opposite got up in this House and tried to indicate to this House that the spill took place last summer. Not last year — last summer. Now I wouldn't mind that, except that what he was trying to imply was that the Department of Environment sat around for six months and did nothing. And that is the reason I commented on it, because the member opposite said last summer so that he could imply that. I wanted to read into the record that it was in fact October 20th and not last summer, so that we could, in the record — in the record — call another miscue, as I put it, of fact, from the opposition. All right? That is exactly why I commented on it. It had nothing to do with 1985.

Now you seem to think . . . And I say you have a convenient hearing impairment because I just indicated to you that the company had hired this contracting firm out of La Ronge and that they had already, this week, flown some of the material up to Uranium City to continue the clean-up, and that we expect that clean-up to proceed this week or early next week. This week or early next week. I want to repeat that because again the member wants to imply in the record that again the Department of the Environment is somehow sitting around and is not worried about this lake. And that's not true, and that's why I want to underline the fact that this is under way now. Because again the member, in his remarks, implied in this House that we were not going to do anything about this spill till this July. And tomorrow you can read the *Hansard*, and that's what you said in this

House. And that's why I'd like to point out to the member again, that some of this material has already been flown up to Uranium City and that we expect this clean-up to be under way this week and not in July. You have trouble with facts. Your members opposite have trouble with facts. But I want to point out in the record what the facts are. So that clean-up will be under way in the immediate future.

Mr. Thompson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I do not have a hearing impairment. I can assure you of that.

I find it quite interesting that you would get up here the second time and say that last October . . . that there was a difference between last October and last summer, and that seems to be a big item with the minister. The spill of 10,000 gallons of crude oil took place in October, and just because I used the word "last summer", which I guess I should have used "last fall", and I'm assuming that's what the minister means — that I should have said last fall instead of last summer. I really don't understand you. I suspect that the citizens who you are knocking on their doors don't understand neither.

But regardless if the spill took place last summer or if it took place last fall, it took place last October. And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, last October there was no snow on the ground and the lake was open and summer conditions were prevailing all over this province, if you can understand that. I'm not too sure if you can understand that.

But you think that's a great joke because we've got a major spill. You also make light of the fact that the city council in Uranium City are concerned. And you say, well that's fine, the company has hired a firm and they are flying in the equipment. And that goes to show you why you're \$2 billion in debt in this province, because you could have hired the local people at Uranium City with the local equipment and you could have got that spill under control. But instead you leave it and you let somebody look after it from the South who have to fly their equipment in, when equipment is sitting there not being used. Now the bays are opened up and we have animals who are lying along the shore dead and corroded with oil. We know that the birds are going to land there and they're going to be corroded with oil. And you stand up in the House and you say that well — to the opposition — it's not true; they're not listening properly; and that the spill wasn't last summer, it was last October. And you make a mockery of this.

No wonder this government is \$2 billion in debt because we have ministers like yourself who are arrogant and who do not realize the facts of life. Unemployment is running high up North; it's running high in this province. But yet what do you do? You say . . . You get your officials and you give authorization to make a major clean-up of a major oil spill by an outfit who has to fly the equipment in. And that is being flown in the month of May in 1986, and we had the major oil spill in October of 1985.

Now, Mr. Minister, it would seem to me that you, as the Minister of the Environment, knowing full well that we had at least 10,000 gallons of crude oil spilt in October — in the fall of 1985 — that you should have had your

officials act immediately, not wait until May, almost June of 1986.

Now you say that they're starting to fly equipment in, when that equipment and the men to operate that equipment and you and your officials were aware of the seriousness of that spill.

I think, Mr. Minister, that when you stand in this House and you question the credibility of the town council of Uranium City, who expressed to me yesterday their concerns over this spill . . . And I know that you were aware of the spill in October of 1985, and you know that you were aware of it. Why on earth did you not take on the responsibility as the Minister of the Environment and use your powers to see that that spill was cleaned up?

Not only did that spill take place, Mr. Chairman, in October of 1985, but at that time there was still a month of open water on that lake, or two months of open water, because that lake, Lake Athabasca, doesn't freeze up until almost Christmas sometimes. That's a big lake. And that oil spill took place on October 20th. Now that crude oil could be floating all over Lake Athabasca before the ice came. And I think that your officials and yourself should have took action in October — not in April of 1986, but in October of 1985, in the fall. Not in the summer, as you indicated. It wasn't summer, but it was fall. It was October.

And I think that to leave a massive oil spill of this magnitude lay there all winter and lay in the ice . . . And that's why some of the muskrats now are starting to come to the surface because the muskrats up in the north country do not have push-ups. They're bank rats. They go into the banks and they go under docks and that's where they build their houses, under docks. And you just stood up in this House a little while ago and said that you were putting new oil into the docks and then the muskrats, they go in under the docks, into their houses, and then they swim under the water into the bays and into the runs up into the banks. And this is how it spreads.

And this is how serious it is. And that's why they're finding muskrats all along the shore now. And the town council of Uranium City has these muskrats and they're there for your viewing. They want you to go up there and to view them and they would appreciate that. And they would appreciate getting that problem solved.

But to stand up in this House and make light of it and say that it's not serious, that it didn't happen last summer but it happened in October . . . Mr. Chairman, if the House Leader . . . I have a number of other questions that I want to ask, Mr. Chairman, but if the House Leader wants to take my place now and adjourn the House, that's fine. But if it's not him, then I want to keep going.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.