

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Environment
Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 9

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In continuation of our estimates for Environment, Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask you several other questions related to several incidents that have happened in our province.

Last year in May, a transport truck, moving electrical transformers on Highway 16 stopped at a highway weigh station near Clavet just east of Saskatoon. The transformers were leaking liquid containing more than twice the legal limit of PCBs and an estimated 45 litres had been spilled. I would like to know, Mr. Minister, what became of the wooden flatbed truck which was soaked in the PCB-containing oil. Is it in storage somewhere, or has it been destroyed safely, or cleaned?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, it was wrapped in plastic and sent back to Ontario.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, what about the spillage along the highway? What was done about that? Were charges laid against anyone, for example Totran trucking of Ontario, as a result of the incident?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, there was so little of it spilt over the length of highway that it could not be traced.

Mr. Yew: — Was there an investigation into that incident? Was the report filed, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Yes.

Mr. Yew: — If in fact there has been an investigation and a report filed, I'd like to have a report of that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — We will undertake to provide the member with a copy, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, in the first week of last year the minister for the Environment, the former minister, issued orders to the Sask Power Corporation not to transport PCBs anywhere in the province without first obtaining government approval. I want to know from you, Mr. Minister, and I didn't - maybe one of my colleagues asked it, I don't know - but I want to know it from you if that order is still in effect, and if so how many times has SPC asked to transport PCBs in the province, and if authorization has been given by your department. Can you provide that information?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the SPC was required to request permission for those, for the transportation, up until such a time as they had filed with Environment a plan and a policy dealing with the transportation of PCBs, which they did. And that policy was approved September of last year. So up until September there's, my officials tells me, a stack of approvals given on the transportation of PCBs/

If you want the actual number, we would have to take some time to count them up, I guess. But the important point is that Sask Power has now filed and has had approved the transportation policy for the movement of PCBs.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, does your department have a list of the locations in this province where toxic wastes are stored, and how many locations are there?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, we have for PCBs, but when you say for all toxic wastes, no, we do not.

And, of course, I get back to the discussion this afternoon when we were talking about the regulations that we were putting together with the co-operation of the municipalities. One of the reasons for those regulations is so that ourselves and municipalities can get a handle on the location of hazardous wastes and how they're being stored, and so we could have a better handle on that. Now that information has never been available in Saskatchewan. We're trying to get a handle on it now.

Mr. Yew: — Why is it, Mr. Minister, that that information or a policy to ensure that you have a handle on this is not in fact sought after and some regulation or other enacted by your department?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well as I had indicated, Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, that information has never been available. And it is something that the department and our government has been trying to put together now for four years.

Step one was of course some cataloguing and identifying all land fills in the province of Saskatchewan, which has now been done. Because quite frankly land fills have been used as dumping sites for any number of substances. So that step has been done.

As we discussed before, the other step that we are now taking is in those regulations that we're working out with the municipalities. So it's an area in which the information has not been available before and we're trying to get a handle on it now. It's something, as I mentioned this afternoon, is an ongoing process.

Mr. Yew: — I was going to ask you, Mr. Minister, how many of these sites were located within cities, towns, villages, etc. I was concerned because some of these chemicals can become very dangerous. And I wanted to know specifically which toxic wastes sites are located close to populated areas. But you haven't got that information.

And the other question I want to ask is: what are you doing to clean up and maintain those hazardous storage sites? But you have no firm policy to deal with that, and I can only conclude that that again is a part of your mixed-up priorities.

When it comes to environmental concerns, etc., some of my colleagues have pointed out some rather unfortunate incidences to concur with some of the points I've raised. And certainly my conclusions are, Mr. Minister, you have no firm commitment towards our environment.

I don't know if you want to dispute that. Fine, Mr. Minister, you can. But the facts will show for themselves.

Mr. Minister, I would like to know what your personal attitude is towards the news that PPM Canada Inc. would set up a PCB detoxifying plant in Regina — especially in the light of the fact that PCBs can cause nerve, liver, and brain disorders, and have also been linked to cancer. Mr. Minister, PCBs would have to be transferred through the city to get to such a plant. Does that bother you in any way?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well a number of comments, Mr. Chairman, on that particular plant. The first comment is that the oil that is being treated is very lightly contaminated. But secondly, and more importantly, is that since its inception in June of 1984, there have been about three-quarters of a million litres of oil treated, which is now back in use with SPC and is not now contaminated. And without this plant in place, there would be three-quarters of a million litres of contaminated oil around in the province of Saskatchewan. So the plant is doing an excellent job, is cleaning up a good quantity of lightly contaminated oil so that it can be reused safely in the province of Saskatchewan. And without this plant, this oil, lightly contaminated, would still be in storage throughout the province.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, as one minister that is in charge of Environment, the cabinet minister responsible for Environment, I'd like to ask you an issue related to the North, an issue that is also of very high concern to southern residents, as well. It involves our northern environment.

I would like to know, personally, Mr. Minister, where you stand on spraying of our forests in northern Saskatchewan with chemicals such as Roundup, 2,4-D, 2,4,5-T, and Velpar. What is your position and what is the position of your government?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, we're only aware of the use, or the requested use of Roundup on the spraying in the forests. As I indicated to the member this afternoon, or yesterday, we have indicated that we will not allow the use of Roundup being sprayed on the forest until we know what components are in Roundup. So I think the short answer to you, and I know it's difficult to hear because of your colleagues speaking from their seats, but the short answer, Mr. Chairman, is that we . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. The minister is having difficulty making himself heard in the House. Will

everybody please be somewhat quieter.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — The short answer is that for the time being and until we know what is in that product, we will not allow it to be sprayed in the forests.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, you have not indicated publicly or otherwise your position on it. To this point in time I have yet . . . The people of Saskatchewan and people in the North who are going to be directly affected have not heard what your official position is, what the government's official position is. You can state to me personally what your position is, but that still leaves the whole, entire question up in the air as far as spraying of hazardous chemicals such as the ones I've mentioned. You know, that policy has got to be cleared up one way or another.

A task force study was completed and done, and recommendations were provided, but to date we have yet to hear from your government on the issue. And so, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you . . . A good many Northerners and as well people from the South, and a lot of organization, think it makes more sense, Mr. Minister, to manually thin our forests rather than use herbicides. And that is the position of the New Democratic Party, by the way. I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, where do you, as the Minister of Environment, stand on the issue?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I just indicated to the member opposite that we weren't allowing the use of Roundup in the forests until we knew from the manufacturer much more about the product.

Mr. Yew: — Well, Mr. Minister, won't you recognize the fact of the high rate of unemployment in the North, the 95 to 99 per cent rates of unemployment, the high welfare dependency rates, etc., the high rates of suicide, alcoholism, family breakdowns, etc.? Won't you recognize that fact and establish a policy whereby you can use . . . establish a policy whereby it's labour intensive rather than gong to selectively, probably, providing an opportunity here for a chemical manufacturing firm that will probably make millions, or thousands at least, in the very near . . . possibly make thousands and thousands of dollars using or selling to this province herbicides that will be required.

You know, on the overall it makes more sense to use labour, local labour, rather than spraying our forests with very harmful herbicides. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, don't you agree that we should have some labour-intensive programs and policies in place to help alleviate the hardships confronted by people up North?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, as I indicated previously to the member our policy vis-a-vis the chemical Roundup, if he wishes to discuss forestry policy I suggest he wait until the next set of estimates.

Mr. Yew: — I'm sorry, Mr. Minister. I didn't hear the response you gave.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — I said, Mr. Chairman, again, that I've made it perfectly clear to the member opposite what our policy is vis-a-vis the use of Roundup. And if he

wishes to discuss the forestry policy, he should wait till the next set of estimates.

Mr. Yew: — You make things very difficult and very hard for the general public of the province to understand what your policy is, Mr. Minister, because you keep shifting, you know, very serious issues. Questions that are coming from the opposition, you have a tendency to shuffle them over to another department. When the going gets tough, Mr. Minister, you seem to shuffle the response to a very serious issue or question to another department.

I can't accept that, Mr. Minister. There's a lot of people viewing the proceedings of the legislature to find information, to get information as to what your policies are. But with regards to the information and the shuffling and the lack of answers that we're getting, Mr. Minister, it's certainly going to have a very drastic effect on you and your government when the Premier gets the nerve to call an election either on the 24th or the 27th of May.

Mr. Minister, I read in the papers the other day of a newly formed organization that's called the Land Users' Association, which is organized for the Rafferty dam project.

This organization is made up, Mr. Minister — and I'm sure you're aware, but for the record I'll state to you who they are — by ranchers, leaseholders, community pasture patrons, Mainprize Regional Park and Lutheran Bible Camp users. All these organizations and all the people involved in the organizations, etc., are living upstream from the proposed Rafferty dam — approximately 50 members at that point in time of the press statement, Mr. Minister.

I wonder, I would like to know, Mr. Minister, from you, what the latest status is with regards to your involvement with that group who are very concerned about the proposal. What is the position, what is the latest status with regards to . . . Have you had any communications with that group?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — No.

Mr. Yew: — Why not?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Because they haven't contacted me.

Mr. Yew: — There is a group there, Mr. Minister, that are genuinely concerned about the possible implications of that project. You're a member that's responsible for Environment. Wouldn't you say, wouldn't you admit, that it's your responsibility to go in there and find out or send some of your officials to find out what is the issue?

I have projects in the North similar to the one in Estevan. I look at the Nipawin dam project, for example, and I can see the people living downstream — the people in Cumberland House, the people in Sturgeon Landing, who live downstream from the major hydro project — who are somewhat left in the dark with regards to the project. There is no one single environmental advisory committee set up which involves the people in that area. Those people are directly affected by that project. Many

of them have lost their means of livelihood because of that project.

But to this point in time, Mr. Minister, they have not been consulted, involved. There has been no participation by the public, by the people directly affected. Mr. Minister, I'm just completely bewildered by your arrogance. Why can't you involve the people at the local level? Why is there no consultation between your government and the people at the local level?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I take it that the member is talking about the Rafferty dam, and the public participation in that project. We have gone over that several times. I suggest he refer to page 1294 in *Hansard* and he'll get the answer I gave him yesterday.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you: have you ever been in the northern administration district personally to meet with the local people directly affected by many of the major projects — the five-year projects that your government has come up with all of a sudden, to discuss with them possible implications? My colleague and I raised a couple of good examples, but I wanted to know from you, Mr. Minister: have you made an attempt to meet with the people yourself?

(1930)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I've been to the North several times in the past number of years. I would like some more specifics from the member opposite; which projects is he referring to?

Mr. Yew: — Well there's major announcements made, Mr. Minister — the Cigar Lake project for example. Then we talked just a while ago about the major spill in Lake Athabasca. We've got the problems related to the Wollaston Lake residents. We've got the project, the major hydro project at Nipawin; the residents I've mentioned to you, which are constituents of mine in Cumberland; and the Sturgeon Landing; the communities affected.

Since you became Minister of the Environment, I want to ask you again: have you been in those areas?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, he's mentioned a number of projects, some of which are completed, some of which are not. I've asked him to be more specific. I think in a general way if you wish a statement from us, we are a government known for our consultation, unlike the previous government. So I see no problem in consultation, because that's our trade mark.

Mr. Yew: — Have you been up North at all, Mr. Minister, since you've become Minister of the Environment?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — No.

Mr. Yew: — That just indicates to me then, Mr. Minister, how much regard you have for environmental issues up North.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the minister a few questions. I listened with interest to the arrogance of the minister in the last half hour since we've been started here. And I can hardly believe the answers that are coming across to the member for Cumberland. Just complete arrogance when it comes to dealing with problems of the North, to the point when he's asked questions about whether or not you've toured the area to understand the people's problems, you just simply refuse to give an answer as if it's none of the concerns of the member in the opposition. And I suppose that's fair to carry on in that manner when you have a massive majority that you people do. I suppose that's fair to carry on in that way.

But, Mr. Chairman, I think it's fair to say that justice in the system is always done, and eventually these people will have to call an election. They're in their fifth year, struggling along, one controversy after another, whether at the federal level with people resigning because of influence . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. The hon. member well knows that he is straying from the topic, getting into federal politics, etc., etc. Please stick to estimates on the environment.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your ruling. But I want to say that the minister's arrogance is indicative of the kind of members we have opposite, who, with their massive majority, refuse to answer questions over and over again.

And I want to ask the minister under subvote 1, can you tell me how many personal staff do you have in your office? How many executive assistants or special advisers do you have employed in your office at the present time? If you have a list of them and their salary, I would appreciate if you would give it to me.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, it's hard to keep up with the members opposite. If they're in or out of the House. That information was supplied to your colleague yesterday from Cumberland. If you look on his desk, he probably has the sheet.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I just indicate, Mr. Minister, that my colleague, if he has the information and if you're indicating he does have it . . . We don't have it over on this side of the House. And I would appreciate if you would send it to us. This may be like other ministers who have indicated they have sent information when in fact they haven't. And if you do have that information, I'd appreciate your copying it and send it over as opposed to being arrogant about the whole issue. Just send it to us, please.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, if you would look on page 1291 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Yew: 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?

Myself:

Mr. Chairman, I have them here. I'll send a copy over to the member.

Which I did at the time.

An Hon. Member: — Where is it?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Your member is right behind you. Ask him.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The question was asked, but there was no answer given. And if you have that information, I would appreciate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, there's nothing in there. There's no answer to the question in there.

He says that he would send it across and we haven't got it. And I would appreciate if you would give us the information at this time.

And while you're at it, I would like a list of your out-of-province trips that you took in the past year and the people who went with you and the cost of those trips.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, just to pursue this question of whether or not they got the information, I would refer the member again to page 1291 and 1292. I'll repeat again what are on those pages:

Mr. Yew: 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?

Myself in reply:

. . . Mr. Chairman, I have them here. I'll send a copy over to the member.

Mr. Yew: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I note, Mr. Minister, that you have . . .

And he goes on to talk about what's on the list. So if you turn around and ask your member over there where the list is, I'm sure he has it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I want to ask the minister again if he would send me the list of his employees who work as executive assistants. I mean, you don't have to sent it, obviously. It's traditional that you would. And while you're at it, I wonder if you would give me the list of your out-of-province trips, the destinations of those trips, and who went with you, and the cost that was involved for each of them.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, there were no trips out of province.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder if the minister could indicate, on your staff, the upper levels of staff in the department, can you indicate the salaries of the top executive officers in your department — the deputy minister, associate deputy, and the people in the upper echelons of the department.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I will provide the member with the copy. I hope I have enough witnesses today.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, can you indicate whether or not you have a Legislative Secretary, or secretaries, who they are, and whether or not they took any out-of-province trips in the past year.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — No, Chairman, I do not have a Legislative Secretary.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Item 9

Mr. Yew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask the minister on item 9 — grants to organizations and persons concerned with environmental matters — why you have earmarked only \$40,000 for that particular area when in fact we keep taking about . . . We have, on the opposition side of the House, pressured for more local involvement in terms of major environmental concerns.

Now \$40,000, in my estimation and in the estimation of many other organizations in this province, \$40,000 does not go very, very far, Mr. Minister. I would like to know why you have not put any, you know, significant amount in that category to make some provision so that we can have public involvement, public input, public consultation, and let the people know, let themselves become involved in issues that relate to possible environmental implications and potential dangers that pose a threat on our environment by major developments.

(1945)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the Department of Environment . . . Well I don't know if speaking up will do much good if members continue to speak from their seats.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order, please. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, and to the member, the department is not funding any more or any less groups than they have. The department has - and we have taken the policy decision to support, and you'd find them in different places in the blue book - more project-specific groups. By that I mean we would . . . To give you a few examples, the ecological reserves advisory committee is funded, but not through this subvote; the Poplar River bilateral committee is funded but not through this subvote; the Water Appeal Board is funded but not through this particular subvote. What is included in this subvote is the Canadian Council of . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, please. Order!

Hon. Mr. Embury: — The Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers is included in this subvote. The environmental advisory council is in this subvote, and as well, some miscellaneous grants, small ones for \$6,000, are in this one.

But generally the department is more project-specific in their funding. The examples I gave you, the toxic chemical management program was funded, for instance, for \$130,000. But those are more specific to a certain project or a certain area in environment, and so they're not included in this particular subvote.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, I'm sure you're aware of the organization referred to as the herbicide moratorium committee which entails a large, a fairly large group of people concerned with environmental issues. I'm sure you're aware of the name George Smith, a community resident of Pinehouse and a member of this organization. Those people are directly involved with the herbicide issue. It's just a local group, you know, concerned with the possible spraying of their forests.

Mr. Minister, have you encouraged any support financially towards that group? It's a local group that have a genuine concern and a legitimate one at that. Have you as the Minister of Environment approached them and provided some support, encouragement — financially or otherwise?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — No, Mr. Chairman, it hasn't been the practice of the department either now or for a good many years, as a matter of fact, to fund those groups. Special interest groups, or lobby groups, and/or protest groups have not been funded through the Department of Environment. And they have not been in the past, and they are not now.

Item 9 agreed to.

Items 10 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 9 agreed to.

Supplementary Estimates 1986 Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Environment Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 9

Item 1 agree to.

Vote 9 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to thank my officials for their work the last couple of days, and throughout the year.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Chairman, I, too, would thank the minister's officials and wish them well.

I will be going through the information that I've managed to get from you, Mr. Minister, in terms of the response, the replies and the answers — some of the answers that you've been able to omit — to us as the official opposition of the legislature.

Thank you.

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Parks and Renewable Resources Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 39

Mr. Chairman: — The item of business before the House are estimates for Parks and Renewable Resources. Before we begin I would ask the minister to please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Seated to my right is John Law, the deputy minister of the department. Immediately behind me is Doug Cressman, assistant deputy minister of programs. Behind Mr. Law is Lyle Lensen, assistant deputy minister, support service. To the right over here is Mae Boa, director of management services. And on my left, to my side here, is Ross MacLennan, executive director of operations.

Mr. Chairman: — Thank you. The item of business now is item 1.

Item 1

Mr. Thompson: — I was only assuming that the minister was going to make an opening statement, but if he's not, then we will get right into the department. If we can get some co-operation here tonight, Mr. Minister, I think that we probably can get through this, with your patience, Mr. Chairman.

I want to start off . . . I have a number of questions, Mr. Minister, that I want to ask you regarding your department. And I want to start off by making a few comments on the budget for Parks and Renewable Resources. I see that there is a cut, not only in the operating budget of Parks and Renewable Resources, but I see that there is what I would consider a fairly massive cut in the Parks and Renewable Resources for capital expenditures. It's not a great cut in operating expenses, but I see there is a lot of positions that have disappeared.

In your capital I see a \$5 million cut in capital expenditures in Parks and Renewable Resources. And, Mr. Minister, I'm just wondering, when I see the news clippings and hear the reports coming out of your announcement yesterday of the creation of five new provincial parks in Saskatchewan — and later on I will get to the parks — but when you make these large announcements and I see under your capital a \$5 million cut in your budget, I just wonder really what your priorities are in Parks and Renewable Resources.

I also see that under staff cuts it would appear to me that there's almost 50 staff cuts in the department in this last year. I'm aware of where some of the cuts are. I know some of them are up in my constituency. But when I take a look at this, it looks to me like there is close to 50 positions that have been eliminated, and a \$5 million drop in capital expenditures. So, Mr. Minister, before you answer that I wonder if you would provide for me, and you can do this in writing, the trips in-province and out-of-province for your department, and your staff; and if you could provide me and do that in writing, I don't need that verbally but in writing, the wages of your personal staff.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, first of all, Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to co-operate by providing a list of my personal staff, the position they occupy and the salary. In light of the line of questioning the member of Shaunavon

directed to my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, I will provide nine copies so that every member of the opposition has a copy, and we don't need to do it nine times. So if the page would like to come forward I'll provide each member with a copy of that information.

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know. I've asked a number of questions to the minister. I asked him to provide me with a copy of the trips in and out of the province, the staff, and their wages. I thought we were going to have some co-operation here tonight, and I didn't really want to get into this kind of start going through estimates. Most certainly if you hand me one copy, I am capable, Mr. Minister — I've been in this legislature since 1975 — of providing my colleagues with a copy. When I ask for a copy I most certainly didn't ask for nine copies. And you know when you get into this childish type of start to your estimates, then when you ask for one copy you give me nine copies, I think that that's the way you operate, and that's why you're \$2 billion in debt. And that's why you're going to lose the next election as soon as you call it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I asked the minister a number of questions about the operating budget and the capital budget and all he did was get up and give me nine copies and sat down. I'm just wondering, Mr. Minister, if you were going to comment on the capital and the rest of it.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry if the member feels slighted. In no way would I impugn on his reputation as a member in this House. He has served with honour and distinction, and I can say that sincerely. And the member knows I mean it from conversations we've had in the past.

But what I would point out, Mr. Chairman, is that not five minutes before I got up I saw the member from Shaunavon complaining that the Minister of the Environment had sent over a copy of his staff and they didn't like it because they said they wanted it over and over again. So I was just making sure everybody had . . .

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

(2000)

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I will continue with the questioning. I only sat down . . . I thought maybe you wanted to comment on the massive cut, what I consider is a massive cut of \$5 million to your capital budget and the staff positions that have disappeared. Before I go into the questioning of the department, I wonder if you would . . . Did you want to comment on that? If not, then I will continue on with my questioning.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Thank you hon. member for the opportunity to comment upon that. I hadn't meant to cut it off and leave it only with personal staff.

But in regards to capital, what has happened is with the

creation of the property management corporation, the portion which we would have spent ordinarily in the department on capital and handled internally has been subscribed to that particular body, and that body will be responsible over all throughout government for handling capital projects. So that portion of my budget which ordinarily would have shown here in our report has gone to the property management corporation.

In terms of reduction in staff there has been reassignment within the department. If you check the regions . . . For example, the hon. member could check the regional staff complements and notice Meadow Lake, for instance, has gone down considerably in complement over last year. What has happened is we have taken positions and moved them elsewhere. There is no reduction overall. There has been a reshuffling of where the positions show up. Those positions that look like they've been cut have in fact been transferred to fire-fighting services which is handled under a different auspice.

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Minister, the staff, the positions that we see that are not here, are you saying they're still within your department but have been transferred over to another agency and do not show up on the estimates? And also, Mr. Minister, of the \$5 million in capital reduction in your budget, is there \$5 million or more that is in the property management corporation now for Parks and Renewable Resources? Could you give me the amount that's in there?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I believe there were two parts to your question. The first one, let's deal with it, the capital projects. We finished some of the projects that had been ongoing. The balance which we are putting into the property management corporation is \$3,974,500 — \$3,974,500 would go into the property management corporation. The other projects we finished up to the \$5 million level.

And in terms of staff, you'll find the difference — if you check the blue book you'll find the difference in staff person-years in dollars, in subvote 05.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay. Mr. Minister, you say that there is \$4 million that has gone into the new corporation. And the way I read it now, and I may be reading this wrong, it looks to me like there's \$1 million reduction in capital expenditures for Parks and Renewable Resources. I haven't got that subvote right in front of me on the staff and the positions.

But I now want to turn to the questioning of your department. And first of all I want to start off with the fisheries branch. And I want to first of all ask you if the fish transportation subsidy that has been in place for a number of years, I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, if that fish transportation subsidy is in place and if it will continue throughout the up-coming commercial fishery.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Yes sir, the subsidy remains in place. It is now administered by the Freshwater Fish Marking Corporation.

Mr. Thompson: — Why do you let the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in Winnipeg handle the fish

transportation subsidy? Could you explain to me, Mr. Minister, why you have chosen to do this?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I am informed that the savings administratively by allowing that procedure to take place through that particular vehicle and mechanism are about \$100,000 a year to the department.

Mr. Thompson: — So it would be the administration costs, the main reason for transfer to Winnipeg?

Mr. Minister . . . And I want to thank you, Mr. Minister, for keeping that transportation subsidy in place. It's always been a concern of the fishermen, as it's always been a yearly program. And fishermen continually are concerned that that transportation subsidy would be taken away. And most certainly, it's an important part of the commercial fishery in Saskatchewan. And I thank you for continuing that program.

I want to now turn to the rearing ponds that you had started. And I just wonder if you could explain how many rearing ponds we have in the province now, and just how successful have they been? I know the Delaronde Lake one, two years ago, proved to be successful. But I also know that there has been some new ones that are in place. I think Craig Lake has a rearing pond. And I was just wondering how many rearing ponds that you have, and how successful they have been?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I'm advised that four this year. The overall total, we can find out. We'll check that information and we'll send it over to you as soon as we have it. But for this year, in terms of the success — yes, they have been very successful. Probably the best example is at Delaronde Lake. It is called Shore Lake — the name of the particular breeding pond. And that's an example of one that's been particularly successful. And we've had good comments on them.

Mr. Thompson: — But, Mr. Minister, I know the rearing ponds, especially the one at Delaronde Lake was successful in the years gone by. I wonder if the department has any more rearing ponds that they are planning to open up, or is there any plans in place to continue with that program and expand it into the northern part of the province?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — The immediate projects are Meadow Lake and Codette. I do have some information on fisheries in general, in front of me. It's in three parts: fish stocking, fish enhancement, and commercial fish conservation strategy. I'll have a copy made of this, and send this across to you for your information. And anything I don't have in specifics at the moment, we're undertaking to find, and you'll have them probably by tomorrow.

Mr. Thompson: — One short question on the rearing ponds before we leave: is there any transferring fish from the rearing ponds to other lakes, or is it just to the adjacent lakes?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — The normal procedure has been that the rearing pond rears for the lake to which it is adjacent and they go into that lake only. The new facility at Meadow Lake will be for other lakes. That's the only

one at the moment.

Mr. Thompson: — Where is this new facility in Meadow Lake, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — The facility you inquired about is adjacent to the town. It's on the east edge of Meadow Lake, and it's adjacent to the existing water system.

Mr. Thompson: — And, Mr. Minister, that hatchery in Meadow Lake will not be supplying fish only to the adjacent lake, but will be supplying fish to other lakes in the region. Is this right?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: That is the intention.

Mr. Thompson: — Could you tell me how much money has been spent on that new hatchery? And I'm assuming we're dealing with the hatchery now, not a rearing pond.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — It is a complex of rearing ponds, and the value is \$250,000.

Mr. Thompson: — And could you tell me what species of fish, what types of fish will be hatched in that hatchery?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: Wall-eye.

Mr. Thompson: — Straight wall-eye? There will be no other species in there?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — That's correct, wall-eye, straight wall-eye.

Mr. Thompson: — Once again, Mr. Minister, here we go. We take a look at estimates for Parks and Renewable Resources. We take a look at . . . I'm just going to get the page here so I don't make any mistakes on this. On the regional offices, up until last year we always had a regional office in Buffalo Narrows. Now we have the regional office from Buffalo Narrows which has moved south to Meadow Lake.

Now all the fish hatcheries that are going to supply wall-eyes . . . and that is the main source of sport fishing and commercial fishing in northern Saskatchewan. And the hatchery — where we have all the lakes up in northern Saskatchewan, so where do you put the hatchery? You put it in Meadow Lake.

Now we've got our regional office gone from Buffalo Narrows, and it's down in Meadow Lake. We've got the staff who . . . the head of the resources in Buffalo Narrows now lives in Meadow Lake. And Buffalo Narrows is the main hub of the fisheries. That's where the main fishery takes place in that area. Or you could take any of them towns. Pinehouse is another major contributor to the commercial fishery and sport fishery.

But yet everything is moving to Meadow Lake. I tell you, if this government gets another four years, they may as well move northern Saskatchewan down to Meadow Lake, because that's exactly what's taking place on the west side. There just seems to be no end to it. You take the money out of the north-west part of the province, north of Meadow Lake, and you bring it all in to Meadow Lake.

Now I just don't see, I don't see the fairness in this, Mr. Minister.

We now have a director of fisheries. And lo and behold, where is the director of fisheries located? He's located in Meadow Lake.

(2015)

And I just say that this is going to come back to haunt this government. You continually take and you put everything into Meadow Lake. You build up their streets, you do everything. They get extra money. The member from Moosomin doesn't get extra money for his community, but Meadow Lake sure gets it. And I tell you, you've just totally left northern Saskatchewan out and everything has gone to Meadow Lake.

The latest move you've done you've attacked the secretaries that were working for Parks and Renewable Resources. We had permanent staff, permanent secretaries at La Loche, at Ile-a-la-Crosse, and Green Lake. And what your department has done now, you have taken them permanent positions out of there, women who have lived, were raised in La Loche and Green lake and Ile-a-la-Crosse - you've taken their positions away and you've made them temporary. It's another move to destroy northern Saskatchewan. And I, just for the life of me, I don't see why that you continually move everything out of the North and the North-west and locate it either in Prince Albert or in Meadow Lake.

And this I tell you, Mr. Minister, is going to come back to haunt this government — the way you're operating. And I just say that when the citizens of Meadow Lake have to make a decision as to whether they want a member in there who's going to represent them fairly or a member that brings everything into Meadow Lake and forgets about the Loon Lakes and the Goodsoils, there's going to be a change in that constituency also.

But I, for the life of me . . . You've got a rearing pond in Big River. Why did you go to Meadow Lake? And I just want to say, Mr. Minister, are you saying that you've got all the fresh water that you need for that hatchery out of Meadow Lake — the lake itself?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member alluded to quite a number of issues in the context of that one short speech which he delivered, so I will endeavour to reply to several of the points he made.

If I may start with a general comment on fish enhancement: the greatest need for fish enhancement as identified by the fish biologists in the department has been in lakes which have been somewhat south of the area to which the hon. member originally referred. Now, as we are catching up on those lakes in the central zone, we are moving further north. For instance, the engineering is being done now on Codette. We do have a plan for another rearing area at Buffalo Narrows, two for La Ronge, and one in McBride Lake.

So I think it's unfair to say that the North is being ignored. In fact, of our budget this year, almost \$22.5 million is being spent on northern programs. So I think it's very

unfair for the member to somehow try and impress upon the House that the North is being ignored. It most certainly is not being ignored. Not only is this department doing its part, but the entire government is cognizant of the problems facing northern Saskatchewan, and we're attempting in four short years to come to grips with those particular problems.

Now I could get partisan or blatantly political and say the member has served that area for a number of years; he served it under an NDP government when they were in power. And, you know, there's not much point in crying to me and saying, well for all kinds of years we haven't had programs and things done in the North, when he sat on the government benches as a representative of a government which should have been looking after the North and looking after his particular seat.

I think this minister and this department has done as much or more for the North in terms of what we're doing through Parks and Renewable Resources as was ever done before by any minister or any other government as regards this department's programs in northern Saskatchewan.

The hon. member referred to the member from Moosomin and he made some comment about his constituency. I would like to point out to you, Mr. Chairman, that the member for Moosomin has identical problems in his seat. He would like to see rearing ponds and fish hatcheries as well to enhance the sports fishing down in his part of the world. But we've not identified his constituency or his area as being of prime concern or the biggest problem that we face. We've said the problems are further north, in the hon. member's own constituency of Athabasca, and in the surrounding areas, and that's where we're spending most of our money.

He also made some comment to cutting clerical positions in the Meadow Lake region and taking people out of the area. Well, you know, Mr. Chairman, what we had was three permanent clerk typist 2 positions in La Loche, Ile-a-la-Crosse, and Green Lake district offices, which really were part-time positions. So we were paying people full-time wages to do a part-time job. There wasn't enough work in these offices to merit keeping the positions there.

It is important to note the positions have not been cut; rather, they have been transferred to other areas where they are necessary. The incumbents had a number of options; they could transfer with the position; they could accept part-time clerical positions, which is what the position was worth in each area, available in the present office; they could apply for other positions in the region as they came up; or they could take a leave of absence and place their names on the re-employment list.

And it is important to note that before any decisions were made, Mr. Chairman, this was all discussed with the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) rep in Prince Albert. And the people involved have elected to resolve the problems themselves, and they've accepted various positions.

Mr. Thompson: — I will try that question again, Mr.

Minister. Are you getting the water for your rearing ponds out of Meadow Lake?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Partially, and partially from the local river system.

Mr. Thompson: — I ask you, Mr. Minister, when you are dealing with the fish hatchery . . . and I want to just . . . I could go into a long speech here when you ask me about when we were in government and what we accomplished in northern Saskatchewan under the NDP government. If you want, I could go on. But I'll tell you, I would start speaking now and I wouldn't be through till 10 o'clock. Because if I was going to . . . I'll tell you, everything that's happened in northern Saskatchewan — right from the schools to the roads, to the hospitals, to the sewer and water, to the telephones, to the power lines — was all done when I was a member under the NDP government. I'm not going to go into that.

But I . . . and the member . . . when I was discussing the fish hatcheries and things that were going to Meadow Lake rather than the member for Moosomin, I just want to say to you, Mr. Minister, that the major fish hatchery in this province is at Fort Qu'Appelle. And I tell you, it's a lot closer to Moosomin and to the member from Moosomin's constituency — the fish hatchery that's been here available to him ever since a fish hatchery's been in this province — but that has not taken place in northern Saskatchewan.

And when you . . . and I just want to get this one down here, Mr. Minister. Is it not true that when you're dealing with a fish hatchery that you need a good supply of clean, fresh water?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I'd just like to remind the hon. member, your government started the fish hatchery at Fort Qu'Appelle. If you don't like it, you should have told them at the time. You know, you're just a wee bit late after the fact, crying to me the fact that we've got a fish hatchery at Fort Qu'Appelle that you guys started up. In any event, hon. member, the fish hatchery serves the entire province, not just the constituency of the member from Moosomin or any of the other southern constituencies, but indeed all of the areas of Saskatchewan. And we're quite happy to say we're providing a high-quality product that we're able to disseminate all over the province.

Mr. Thompson: — Well I'm having trouble, Mr. Chairman, in getting the minister to answer the question. And I tell you, when I ask the minister the question — is it not true that you need an ample supply of fresh water to operate a fish hatchery? — and the answer I get, that I am opposed to the fish hatchery that's been out at Fort Qu'Appelle for all these years . . . I never mentioned that. I support the fish hatchery out there, and under the NDP government, we expanded it. Just before we lost government, we've expanded it. And you ask your officials, and they'll confirm that.

But when I asked you the question about the fresh water, and you get up and start talking about me being opposed to the fish hatchery, Mr. Chairman, at Fort Qu'Appelle, well we built it and we expanded it, so why would I be

opposed to it? You totally misconstrued the question. The question was: is it not true that you need a sufficient supply of fresh water in order to operate a fish hatchery?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Yes, and we have it.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could get from your officials the depth of the water and the type of water that you're getting out of Meadow Lake, the depth of that lake on an average.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I'm advised that these rearing ponds don't take a tremendous amount of water, given the current state-of-the-art technology. And besides, it's taken from the river, not the lake.

Mr. Thompson: — Well now, here we go. First you get up and tell me that you're getting part of it from Meadow Lake. Then you tell me you're getting part of it from the river. And I wonder, I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you know where the river runs into and runs out of. It runs into Meadow Lake or out of Meadow Lake. It's the same chain of water.

And I can tell you, you don't see any beaches on Meadow Lake, and you don't see the member from Meadow Lake taking his family out there to swim in Meadow Lake. And you ask him why he doesn't? You just ask him: have you ever had your family out there swimming? I tell you, you don't have anybody swimming in Meadow Lake. You need good, fresh, clean water.

And why have you got the treatment plant in Meadow Lake? You got it there because that water that's coming out of Meadow Lake needs to be treated.

And I say, I say, Mr. Minister, that that fish hatchery — and I'm going to get off of this — should never have been put in Meadow Lake. It's in the wrong place. It's not even in a region where you need a fish hatchery, because you've got the Delaronde Lake one to supply Meadow Lake, within 40 miles. So why would you want to put it in Meadow Lake?

And I want to now turn . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . but if the member from Meadow Lake wants to get up and get into this debate, whether we're talking about a hatchery or a rearing pond, well fine. A rearing pond to me is where you put the . . . you raise the fish, you let them into an adjacent lake. A fish hatchery is where you raise fish and you take them out and you take them to other lakes.

But I want to say that that is a hatchery; it's a minifish hatchery. You've got one at Delaronde Lake. I don't know why you didn't take one up into the northern area where we have literally thousands of lakes. We have many big lakes where we have both the commercial fishery and a sports fishery. And we need that fish, we need fish to be planted in those lakes.

And I say, Mr. Minister, that that was a wrong decision to put it into Meadow Lake. And I can tell you, it most certainly is a project that I don't think was ever announced because I've never heard of it before. I think it's something new that you didn't really want to make it public because it's not where it should have gone. It's just

too many positions being cut out of north-west Saskatchewan and being transferred into the Meadow Lake area.

And I tell you that the citizens up in my constituency have always supported Meadow Lake. And you can go into Meadow Lake on any day you want, and you're going to see my constituents from northern Saskatchewan who are in there supporting the residents, the business community of Meadow Lake. And that's the kind of thanks that they get, by taking our positions out and transferring them into Meadow Lake. So we're the losers up there.

(2030)

I want to say that when you talk about the three secretarial jobs that you have cancelled, the permanent jobs, the permanent positions have been cancelled. They have been made part-time, and they've been told, well they can transfer to the private sector or wherever they want to go. That's pretty well telling them that you've lost your job. And I tell you, the three families that we're discussing here right now have lost a lot of money and a lot of security that they had. And they thought that they had that security because it was a permanent position. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, to reconsider that decision to take those positions out.

And I also wonder at the remark that you made, that there really wasn't enough work for them, that they weren't pulling their weight, as to say, as you had to take the position out. Mr. Minister, I ask you to reconsider those three positions and leave them as permanent, and then I'll get you to respond to that, then I will move to another area.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, I'm not really sure where you'd like to begin. Let's begin with the positions that you talked about being transferred. In fact, one woman who was involved in this was very happy to transfer to Meadow Lake because her husband was working in Meadow Lake. And that suited her . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, she was happy to go. Her husband was there and she was happy to join her husband. Maybe you don't think that's a good situation and she should have been happy to stay and fight to keep a full-time job where there was only a part-time job warranted many miles away from her husband. The woman in question seemed quite happy to transfer, to be with her husband, to a different position.

Let's get back to this Meadow Lake situation for a second here. We're not talking about a hatchery; we're talking about a rearing pond. And I think there's been some confusion between Meadow Lake, the lake — the body of water — and Meadow Lake, the town. And when I said it was at Meadow Lake, I meant at Meadow Lake adjacent to the town, on the river, where there is an adequate and high-quality supply of water available.

And it is simply fiction to say that we have been ignoring fish enhancement projects in the North, in northern Saskatchewan. Indeed, we're putting 10 million whitefish fry — they're already in; they've been successfully stocked — three north-western Saskatchewan lakes up in your very area. So I'd just like you to remember that,

that we have in fact been stocking that area and we will continue to stock that area.

Mr. Thompson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I can see that you're not prepared to make the positions permanent. And if one woman wanted to transfer to Meadow Lake, I'll tell you, there's a lot of other citizens up in that area that would gladly take the job if you would have left it as a permanent position.

You also talked about Meadow Lake being a rearing pond. Well then I say a rearing pond is, and you indicated before, was where you allow the fish to go out into the adjacent lake. But you said, well, you know, I shouldn't complain because Parks and Renewable Resources have planted 10 million whitefish up in my area.

Well let me tell you, when we were in power, from Fort Qu'Appelle we planted 13 million in one lake at one time. So this is nothing new. We were doing that before; only, we were doing it on a larger scale. You know, and you just go back and your officials know. They can inform you as to when we put the 13 million whitefish in one lake, and they'll tell you what lake it was.

I now want to turn, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, to a study that was carried out . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I'm not going to ask the question twice.

Mr. Minister, I want to now turn to a study that was carried out by your department on the black duck population that we have in Saskatchewan and in northern Saskatchewan especially, a problem that I see and the fishermen see as a major problem. And I wonder if you could indicate what your findings were on that study.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, if I could ask the hon. member for some clarification. Was that a cormorant study that was done at Doré Lake?

Mr. Thompson: — Well wherever you took it in northern Saskatchewan. I don't know how many lakes that you took the study on. But you call them cormorants? But in northern Saskatchewan they're referred to as the black duck.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I do remember this now — it comes back to me — and it was called the black duck study. Actually it refers to cormorants, which, as we know, are very fond of fish. And the study is ongoing and should be complete by the end of the year.

Mr. Thompson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I know that you were taking the study and you indicated to me in writing that the study was complete and you were just compiling the information. It was a study done by, I believe, a biologist out of your department.

But I want to say to you, Mr. Minister, and ask your department officials to expand that study of the black ducks because, not only are they becoming severe in the Buffalo Narrows area, but for the first time last summer fishermen — and I've seen them myself — fishermen told me for the first time ever they have seen them in the Cree Lake country. So they've now migrated as far north as Cree Lake, where fishermen say they have never been

before.

I want to say, as a commercial fisherman — and with my time in this House here and the best season gone by, I don't get a chance to do it much — but the black duck population is increasing. It's just unbelievable. There's literally millions of them on all the lakes up in northern Saskatchewan.

And if one wants to go in to a large flock of black ducks, and you go in there quite fast and they start to fly, you'll see the pelicans and sea gulls will be in there with them, and literally thousands of them in a flock. And there'll be whitefish — and they'll be about four to five inches long these fingerlings — whitefish, pickerel, tullibee, every species of fish.

And I know that in your letter you indicated that they were feeding mainly on mullets. Well I'll just tell you, Mr. Minister, that the commercial fishermen — and I've seen it myself — that they are not feeding on just mullets. And if that black duck population isn't controlled, we're going to end up with the same problem as they have out on the east coast where they have now had to put a bounty on the black ducks there, or the cormorants that you're talking about. And they literally have put a bounty on them, and I believe it's in the province of Nova Scotia.

I think that you'll have to take a serious look at going out and limiting the production of the black duck. This can be done humanely. It's just a matter of taking the eggs away from the hens when they're hatching, because they all have a hatching area.

And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to instruct your officials to hold some meetings with the commercial fishermen up in northern Saskatchewan and just get a true feeling as to just what's happening with the black duck.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — The field work has been completed on that particular study I can advise the hon. member, but the master's thesis has not yet been written. A study by the name of Barbara Handbidge from the University of Saskatchewan had been putting everything together. The thesis, the final piece of work with recommendations, has not yet been received. And, yes, if you wish those meetings to be held and some consultation to take place, once we have that information and once we have the thesis, officials from my department would be more than pleased to meet with the groups that you already indicated.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I now want to turn to other studies that your department has taken, and I particularly want to turn now to the big game studies and the surveys that I know your department has taken every year.

I wonder if you could indicate, of the surveys that you have taken regarding big game, if you could give me some idea as to just what the population is? And number one, I would ask for the moose populations and the white-tail deer and the antelope populations, and any other big game population surveys that have been taken.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, if it's agreeable to

the hon. member, I can provide that information in writing as soon as tomorrow, and then we can give you details. We have ballpark figures, but I'd rather give you specifics than ballparks.

An Hon. Member: — Let's have the ballpark.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — You want the ballparks? You want round numbers?

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Minister, what I would like to know is if there is any fluctuation in the herds that we have in the province, and the populations.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, I'll give the hon. member ballpark figures. I would prefer however, after I've done this, to give you something in writing because this could be fairly rough.

In terms of moose, we're looking at a population of about 40,000. In the Pasqua hill area, that's up; and the rest of the province is fairly constant and the population is holding its own.

White-tail deer, we're looking at approximately 250,000. In the southern part of the province, for a variety of reasons — tough winters, biological reasons, the last couple of years — we're down about 30 per cent. But getting further north we're up 10 per cent.

Antelope, which you'd asked about, the surveys are done during the summer so we don't have that survey complete.

And mule deer, which are primarily south-western part of Saskatchewan, we're looking at a herd of about 105,000.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. And you'll provide me in writing with the surveys.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Yes.

Mr. Thompson: — It's been a major concern with the big game up in northern Saskatchewan, and I have a number of letters that have been written to you. And I'm going to refer to one tonight, an individual who has written to you on a number of occasions asking you to take action on the wolf population, and it is from one Narcisse Mirasty of Sled Lake.

And Mr. Mirasty has indicated to you and indicated to me on many occasions — and I have had the opportunity to go into that area and check out his findings, and he most certainly knows what he's talking about when he says that there have been some major kills. And now we have a situation in that Doré Lake-Emmeline Lake country, and Sled Lake into the La Plonge area, and farther north and west over in the Cummings Lake and to Dillon area, where populations of moose are way down, deer populations are way down, and now this year we see that there is a very little wolf population because the game is gone.

And Mr. Mirasty has indicated on a number of occasions to you that there had to be something done to control the wolf population in northern Saskatchewan. We now have

a cycle up there where the big game, the moose and the deer and the woodland caribou in that area, are way down. And all the fishermen, the trappers, will tell you the same thing. And I think your hunting statistics will show you that hunters that are going into that area are just not bagging any of their limits.

(2045)

You indicate . . . and why I'm bringing this out is the type of responses that I have seen come from yourself, Mr. Minister, to Mr. Mirasty. And I think, when you're talking to an individual or you're writing to him . . . And I say to you, you're dealing with an individual who is 79 years old who has lived in that Sled Lake-Doré Lake country all his life, has been a trapper all his life, and has watched the cycles come and go — a man who knows what he's talking about.

Yet you indicate, and I just want to quote . . . and I think it's something that should not be done and it should not be written or verbally transferred to an individual of Mr. Mirasty's stature. I want to quote from the letter that you wrote to him. And you say to this individual:

If you have not attended one of these seminars (and you're talking about a trapping seminar), I recommend you consider attending if another one is held in your area as I think you may find it interesting and informative.

Well I tell you, if you want to hold a trapping school, then you should get Mr. Mirasty to be the instructor, because he is a trapper. He is an individual who has trapped all his life and he knows what he's talking about. And he has been involved with conservation officers. He has been involved with conservation officers over the years in controlling the numbers of big game population in northern Saskatchewan — a man who knows what he's talking about. And I think that to tell this individual that he should go to a trapping school is an insult from yourself, Mr. Minister, and it should be retracted.

The same thing come from another one of your officials — the same — by a C.G. Scheelhaase. And I don't know, Mr. Minister, I'm sure he's not a conservation officer, but I find it kind of odd because he is telling Mr. Mirasty the same things. And I think here is another case.

Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to co-operate with your side of the House. I'm trying to get the estimates through. And if I'm going to have to re-ask my questions, or if I'm going to have to put up with all the chattering that's going on across there, then I may as well sit down and turn it over to the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, because I tell you I'm trying to ask questions, and he's talking to the minister, the minister that I'm . . . They're continually talking back and forth. And I'm not going to continue to ask questions if this is the way they are. We may as well leave the department when they can pay attention. And a little bit of order would be in order in here.

That's fine.

But I want to say, Mr. Minister, that there has to be some control. I know you don't have the figures of the

populations of the big game in the regions. And I think that once you tabulate that and find out, you'll find out that there is a drastic drop in that population.

Granted that population will come back now because the trappers tell me now that the wolf population has started to disappear and die off because . . . mainly through starvation, or they have moved farther south to where there is game for them to survive on. But that's the kind of a cycle that we don't want to happen because we can control it.

There is a certain part of nature that man can control, and there's a certain part of nature that man should not control. But this is one where we need to have some control of because it is a resource that is used by not only the tourist and the tourist operators in this province, but by the citizens who live in northern Saskatchewan, and who use that game for their daily food.

And I say, Mr. Minister, that I think that Mr. Mirasty . . . And I haven't quoted anything from his letters because you have them on file. What he was telling you makes a lot of sense, and I would ask you, if you have a chance, to drop into Sled Lake and have a talk with Mr. Mirasty, and you'll find that he's a very intelligent individual.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the . . . I'll wait till these fellows are finished their private conversation here.

The hon. member has referred to wolves and wolf population, so I feel somewhat duty bound to address that particular area which came up.

Now, I'm not wishing in any way to defame the reputation of Mr. Mirasty, a 79-year-old gentleman who spent his life trapping and hunting in the North and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The hon. member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg is obviously an expert on wolves. I suppose on his farm he's polluted by wolves.

First of all, Parks and Renewable Resources has no evidence to suggest that wolf populations are indeed too high or in fact that they are causing significant mortality for big game species. I'd like to make that point.

In the far northern forest areas wolf populations are permitted to fluctuate naturally. Increased trapper education programs to which the hon. member referred — and I may say, we use trappers to teach those programs, not officials within the department — these programs have resulted in relatively high harvest rates and have maintained populations at a normal level.

We do not consider the use of toxicants as acceptable control technique nor, Mr. Chairman, in Saskatchewan do we like the search and destroy techniques that have been employed in other provinces, whereby helicopters go up, people with high-powered shotguns with big clips — and I'm talking big clips like 50 shots with S and B's in them — go out there, they track wolves, they throw down flats, they search and destroy. It is totally abhorrent. Nor will we go along with that type of situation as officials in this department, Mr. Chairman. Certainly not as long as I'm minister, we're not going to be doing that. So we're

not going to get into any large-scale, aerial shooting programs at all.

Throughout northern Saskatchewan wolf control consists of two facets. First of all we promote wolf trapping by the NFCA (Northern Fur Conservation Area) trappers through trappers' schools put on by department, utilizing trappers to run the schools. And we also have control effects and selective problem sites which are put in place by department staff.

Mr. Thompson: — But, Mr. Minister, seeing that we're on the moose populations, I want to turn to another experimental program that your department had, and that was with moose, particularly in the Cumberland area where you had problems with the bears consuming young moose. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could indicate if you still have that program in place where you are testing the young moose, and if you are still having problems with the bears who have been consuming, as you indicated, young moose?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: Mr. Chairman, yes we still have a problem with bears. We've got a bear population in Saskatchewan of approximately 40,000. Yes, we acknowledge that they can be a problem for young moose, and we are endeavouring to come to grips with that. That's why we do have a bear hunting season.

Mr. Thompson: — And are you still tagging some of the young calves of the moose population?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — No, we're not carrying that out.

Mr. Thompson: — But that is a program that you did carry out, is that right?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Yes, we did.

Mr. Thompson: — I wonder if you could indicate how many young moose that you caught and put whatever tags, or whatever it is that you put on them.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — We had 14 transmitters on calf moose, and we found 12 of the transmitters, so you can guess what happened to the 12 moose.

Mr. Thompson: — No, I'm not going to guess because this isn't a guessing game. I wonder, is the two transmitters still transmitting, and could you indicate what happened to the 12 young moose that you got the transmitters back from.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — The 12 were eaten, we presume; the other two, the transmitter batteries are short term, and they've since ceased to transmit.

Mr. Thompson: — Well you indicate "you presume," but you did get the 12 transmitters back? You're talking about the 12 transmitters and you assume that they were eaten. Do you assume that they were eaten by bears?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — We did recover the transmitters, and when we found the transmitters, we found the bones scattered around beside them. The indications, the juxtaposition of the bones, would indicate they were

in fact eaten.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you could indicate how you trapped or how you got a hold of these 14 young moose in order to put the transmitters on them.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — They were captured by net from a helicopter.

Mr. Thompson: — I find that quite interesting. We were talking about controlling the wolf population, and I never mentioned anything about a helicopter and going around shooting moose. And I don't suspect that the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources in Saskatchewan at any time used a helicopter to control the wolf population.

But now you stand up in this House and you tell me that you took a helicopter, and you went out on top of a mother moose and her young calf, and you threw a net down and plucked the calf out of the bush right in front of the mother. And let me tell you — you talk about being humane. That, I think, is one of the most cruelest things that could ever happen.

Can you just imagine taking a helicopter and flying over top of a cow moose and plucking her calf out of the bush beside her? There is very little animals in this world that are more vicious and will fight to protect their young as a moose — and capable, because it's a big animal. But you and your own department have taken helicopters and went out, plucked the young moose, took them to a station, and put monitors on them.

And then what did you do? You sent them back out in the forest with a helicopter and dropped them down. And I'll tell you what happened. I'll tell you what happened. The mother moose wasn't there to take that calf because . . . I just wonder how you could take that calf moose, and take it into a holding pen, and get it back to the mother, with a helicopter both times, create that kind of emotion to that mother moose, and you think that that young calf is going to survive.

Well, I'll tell why they didn't survive, and I'll tell you why the bears consumed the 12 young moose that you found the monitors for. They consumed them because them young moose were left after the helicopter dropped them. The mother disbanded them, and they were left there at the mercy of the bears, and that's why they were consumed.

You talk about other provinces use helicopters to shoot timber wolves. Well let me tell you, you may as well have shot them young calf moose, because you don't know where the other two are. You know that 12 were consumed by bears. And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that those 12 young moose that were consumed never had a mother with them when that bear came along and consumed them because they were alone and they were left there by themselves. They were abandoned.

And that's what happened. And I say that you, Mr. Minister, you get up here and you talk about shooting timber wolves from helicopters. I never suggested that.

And I know that your officials in your department have never done that. It's never been done. But let me tell you, for you to start that type of a debate and then go and do this to a young moose, I think that that is something that has to come to an end. I'm assuming that it has proven to be a failure and will never happen again.

(2100)

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, let's get a couple of things straight here. There were no holding pens involved. The nets were dropped from a helicopter. The tagging was done, everything was done within five minutes. The biologists were on site to make sure the cow and calf were reunited.

Now I don't know why you want to get argumentative and spread nonsense around the legislature and try and somehow mislead these people into thinking there was some cruel operation mounted when you were the man — and I have a letter on file from you — advocating massive wolf poisoning program in Saskatchewan. So don't you stand there, supercilious, pious, and sanctimonious, and try to lecture me.

Mr. Thompson: — Well I think we will just continue this debate on the moose population. Yes, I did. I stood up in this House and I said that we had to control the wolf population. And I can tell you that Mr. Narcisse Mirasty and other people have told you that we have to control the wolf.

I want to tell you that your department has done it in years passed. They have done that. So that's right. But you want to start hollering and screaming about the way you handled the young moose and that in five minutes they were all back with their mother and that's why it was an unsuccessful program. All 14 are gone. You put monitors on 14 young moose. Twelve of them you found that were the remains of the 12. You know that they were eaten up. Did you ever ask yourself why they were eaten up, why the 12 young moose were eaten up and you never found the other two monitors? Well I tell you, Mr. Minister, you've got a lot to learn about northern Saskatchewan and you've got a lot to learn about resources in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — You can stand up and holler all you want. I have nothing to worry about. I'm not ashamed of what I have said. And I tell you, I'll say it again: if we don't control the wolf population in this province, we will allow them to go out and to kill the young moose and the young deer, exactly the way you allowed the bears — by picking them up with a helicopter and literally scaring them to death. And the mother . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the minister can laugh. But I tell you, you take a helicopter up in the air and you come down on top of a cow in a farmer's field, and you just see what's going to happen . . . and pick that calf up, and it's quite easy — you've got a field. But you try this out in the bush and in the muskeg where the moose, where the cow-calf is grazing. I'll tell you, it's a lot different than a cow in the field.

But you just try that and see what will happen. The chances are that young calf, when it's picked up in a net and hoisted up by a helicopter, it's going to die of a heart attack because they're so scared. And to say that a young animal hasn't got fear, they're born with fear. And then to have a helicopter swoop down and pick them up . . . now let me tell you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I don't know what they did with that net then. You told me that they dropped down and picked them up with a net. So I just . . . If you want to get into a shouting match, I'll stand my ground and fine, you take your ground.

But let me tell you, the folks in Saskatchewan are going to make a decision on who's right. And I hope they get that chance in the near future. Because next year when estimates come around, if you're lucky enough to get through that election, you'll be on this side and we'll be on the other side.

I just say, Mr. Minister, that I would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order! The member for Athabasca is trying to ask a question and is having difficulty. I would ask the House to please allow him to ask his question.

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Minister, I just asked, then I'll get off that subject, that you discontinue the use of helicopters for the tagging of young moose. And if you think that you have a bear population in that area, I would suggest that you solve that problem with the local trappers. They're quite capable of looking after that problem.

I now want to turn to the water bombers that were ordered by the province. I believe it's four new water bombers. Could you indicate, Mr. Minister, when they will be in the province and in use for fire-fighting?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — We'll have that information for the hon. member. But I just can't let one comment go, that he made about swooping down with helicopters, scooping up calves, taking them up in the air. No, the nets were dropped from the helicopters. The tagging was done on the ground; they were never lifted off the ground. And I just checked — none died of heart attacks.

However, leaving that one aside . . . the question regarding the water bombers. Two aircraft purchased by the federal government will arrive in December '86, and January '87. The two provincially purchased aircraft will arrive in August and September of 1987.

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Minister, I wanted to continue along the line of questioning on the water bombers, but I'm going to make a comment.

You just indicated that the nets were dropped from a helicopter, and that the helicopters really didn't disrupt the cow moose or the calf. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can visualize how a helicopter . . . if you could visualize how a helicopter can move in and drop a net on a cow and a calf, or a calf moose.

I suppose you think that the helicopter shuts off its motor

and it comes in silent and that's it — they drop the net. Well let me tell you — let me tell you — before they get into position to drop that net, I would assume that there would be a chase involved. The moose isn't just standing there waiting for the helicopter to swoop down and let the net drop. They would be chased. And I say to you that that is a cruel disruption of a cow moose and her calf.

Mr. Minister, I didn't get the dates that the new water bombers, the first, ones, will be in operation. Could you just give me the date that the first water bomber will be in operation.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: Certainly I'd be happy to give you that information.

Let's go back to the moose and the helicopters for a minute. We're talking a technique that's used all across North America and Canada and Europe. And for you to get up and try and make some kind of a partisan fight out of something like that that is carefully supervised by wildlife biologists who are very carefully trained — somehow you try to impugn their reputations, denigrate their abilities — I find that totally disgusting.

But, you know, if this is the way you want to play it . . . I'm well aware you've no intentions of letting the estimates go quickly. You want to keep it here as long as you possibly can. And I'm more than willing to oblige you. And if you want to get into these vituperative type of exchanges, you got it.

However, back to your question on aircraft. The two aircraft purchased by the federal government will arrive in December 1986 and January 1987. The two provincially purchased aircraft will arrive in August, September of 1987.

And I find it unfortunate that I'm constantly being berated by these racial comments from the member from Shaunavon, who somehow objects to the fact that my accent is Scottish. I admit, I was not born in Canada. I'm a new Canadian; I'm an immigrant. But I really get somehow disgusted listening to racial comments coming from the Don Juan from Shaunavon.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for giving me the date that you're going to get the new water bomber.

And I find it quite interesting that you would stand up and say that you find this exchange disgusting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now, you said disgusting. When we're talking about dropping nets on live animals — yes, that's done all over. But let me tell you, Mr. Minister, it's done on adults. And if you ever watched a film of how they do it, there is quite a chase that takes place. And there's lots of films that you can view. And they all . . . there's always a chase and the animal is running through the deep snow, and then they get the net on him. But it's usually done with adults. It's not done with a cow and a young calf. So you guys can make as much fund of it as you want. And the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake can joke all he wants from another seat. That's fine. But I think it's serious and I don't find it disgusting.

And to suggest that because we're having an exchange that I've got no intention of letting the estimates to through tonight, I don't know why that would even enter into a discussion like this. I don't even know why you would do that.

Mr. Minister, as I have indicated before in the House, I indicated to you that I thought that we had to change our ways of fighting fires. And I think that we have to go back to the old way where we used more manual labour, fighting when the sun is down, not when the sun is up. And I believe that; and my constituents believe that too, that you don't fight fire with expensive water bombers in the daytime. It has to be done just before the sun goes down. And then you put the manual fire-fighters in there, and just at sunrise — just when the sun rises when it's cool, and that's when fire-fighting should be done.

And I think that the Canso water bombers which plays a major part and can play a major role in fighting our forest fires, and I hear rumours that your department is now negotiating to sell the Canso water bombers. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, is there any truth that there has been negotiations or that there has been any plans to sell the Canso water bombers that the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources have for fighting forest fires?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — You're referring to the Cansos, and disposing of the Canso fleet upon the arrival of the CL-215s?

The three Cansos which we have - which are going - we're going to keep them until the four new ones come in. But the new ones dump twice as much water; they're double the capacity. So we'll have far more significant capacity with the new craft.

The CL-215 is capable of carrying 1,200 gallons of water, and that compares to 800 by a Canso. And the 215 flies approximately 35 miles per hour faster than a Canso, so that translates into delivery of almost twice as much water by a CL-215 per hour as a Canso. So we intend to be able to have double the capacity we currently have.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Minister, does the CL-215 get its load from the lakes or is it done on the airfield?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: This is done on the lakes.

Mr. Thompson: — The CL-215 picks up water like a Canso water bomber?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Yes, it's a water bomber.

Mr. Thompson: — Yes, I know they're all water bombers, but do you use a mixture or do you use straight water in CL-215s?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Straight water.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay. But they won't be in the department's hands until December of this year?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — That would be the earliest one, yes.

Mr. Thompson: — I mean that there is negotiations under way to sell the Canso water bombers.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — The Canso fleet is really controlled by Supply and Services, but that is our understanding, and certainly we will have use of them until such time as we take possession of the new planes.

(2115)

Mr. Thompson: — But you are confirming that negotiations are under way to sell them?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I honestly don't know, hon. member. I would have to assume that's the situation because it's controlled by another department, Supply and Services. I imagine they would make arrangements to dispose of them, but I really don't know. You'd have to talk to my colleague, the Minister of Supply and Services, when he's up for estimates.

Mr. Thompson: — Well I've had concern expressed to me by officials in your department, Mr. Minister, stating that that is something that should not be done, that the Canso water bombers should not be sold. That is a very important part of fighting fires in northern Saskatchewan. And as you know, Mr. Minister, we have many lakes and small lakes in northern Saskatchewan. We have many small fires that take place in the North where we don't need the large water bomber, but the Canso is sufficient to do that, and it's always been an efficient water bomber. It's a water bomber that this government has spent millions of dollars in repairing them water bombers. And they're in good shape, and that is something that should not be sold.

And I just ask you, Mr. Minister, to reconsider with your colleague, the member of Supply and Services, to not sell those water bombers, because if you do, you're selling off an asset that this province has had for many years and has put many millions of dollars in to rebuild them. We now have a good aircraft; they're in good shape, and most certainly should not be sold. It's something that we have; it's an asset that we want to keep. And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to confer with the member from Meadow Lake and cancel any negotiations to sell those water bombers.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well I can point out to the hon. member that the Canso fleet is very old and it is in need of repair. And it's expensive to keep those up. We've done studies on our capacity when we get our new planes and we will be better equipped, we will have a better fire-fighting capacity, than neighbouring provinces. I should remind the hon. member if he would look back to 1980 when you had your Trackers sitting in Calgary waiting to be repaired and they weren't repaired, and we had forest fires burning all around us.

Mr. Thompson: — Well regardless of what problems you had with the other water bombers, I'm just saying to you, Mr. Minister . . . And you talk about the money that's been spent on repairing the Canso water bombers. And I say, that is true; there has been a lot of money. There's been millions of dollars over the years spent to take those aircraft and completely rebuild them. And they are in

good shape now and they're an important part of this department's fire-fighting force. And to say that they're expensive to maintain and that we've got to get rid of them, I say that's not true; and I just ask you not to negotiate the sale of them water bombers.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well last year, as I recall, the hon. member was not very happy because we were talking of the use of water bombers. He was saying, don't use craft; you've got to use more people on the ground and create jobs. Now he's somehow berating the department in the decision to increase our water bomber capacity. I'm really a little mystified by . . . in exactly where you're coming from on this.

Mr. Thompson: — Well what I said last year, I just got through repeating five minutes ago. I said that we have to fight fire with water bombers and men. I said that we have to make sure that we fight fires the right way and not the wrong way; and that men have to be used, and the water bombers are an important part of that. I just got through five minutes ago saying that the water bombers should be used just before sunset and just after the sun rises, and that they men should be in there doing the work and helping them. One complements the other.

Mr. Minister, you're confusing the issue. I never indicated that at all. And I just say that, if you're going to keep confusing the issue, we're going to be here for a long time. But I most certainly maintain what I said; I said it five minutes ago and I still do. But I still maintain, and I ask you, Mr. Minister, not to sell the Canso water bombers. They are an asset that we cannot afford to lose.

I want to now turn, Mr. Minister, to the campsites that you have indicated that you will be closing down. And I wonder if you could indicate to me now if some of the campsites or any of the campsites that are going to be closed down are in the southern part of the province, or are they all in the northern part of the province.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — They are fairly evenly distributed throughout the province.

Mr. Thompson: — I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could indicate the complement of workers that are in the McLean campground just 20 miles east of Regina. Could you tell me how many employees that are employed at that campsite?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — It would be about half a dozen, approximately, who would service that site. They also service other sites.

Mr. Thompson: — Could you tell me how many were servicing that campsite last year? Approximately you say six. Is that how many employees that looked after the McLean campground last year?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I'm advised that figure would be right.

Mr. Thompson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I have been told that that campsite last year had 13 employees working at it; that this year there are three employees working at it. There are many families, as you know . . . That's along a

major highway, 20 miles east of here. I'm also informed that there was a store that was operated at that site last year by your department, and I wonder if you could indicate if that store is now still in operation.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I'm advised that the store there is open at the peak periods of the year.

Mr. Thompson: — Is that the way it's been throughout the years, or is this a new policy?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — It may not always have been that way; that's the way it is this year.

Mr. Thompson: — Yes, that's right. That's how it is this year. Could you indicate how families who are travelling down that road and go into that campsite pay for the stalls that they use at McLean campground?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — During the non-peak season, self-registration. During the peak season there will be the normal gate procedure.

Mr. Thompson: — Could you tell me how you determine the peak season, from what time of the year is the peak season. When does it start, and when does it finish?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — June 27th until Labour Day.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay. So I'm assuming that at the present time out there, it's voluntary payment. Is that right?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Self-registration at the present time.

Mr. Thompson: — Self-registration and voluntary payment. Is that right?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I suppose, hon. member, in essence you're right, that we do trust people using the facility to be honest and when they are involved in self-registration that that is precisely what they do. There is a box present and they put the money in the box, and we do check it periodically.

Mr. Thompson: — I think, Mr. Minister, that's exactly how you are operating Parks and Renewable Resources and Tourism and Small Business in this province. Last year . . . And there were many families from the city of Regina who would drive out for a picnic at the McLean campground. There was 13 employees working out there. There was a store that was operated out there and now it's not operating. And now instead of having people who were employed every year — they know their job, every year they know that they're going to be able to have a job out there, whether it be cleaning up the campsite, replenishing it with wood, or taking the fees as they come in — now what you have done, and it's exactly what you have said in some of your new releases, that you're going to leave them open. But, and I quote you, you're not going to maintain them.

Now last year what took 13 individuals, 13 people who had a job to run and operate the McLean campsite, now

you have three. And families are telling me in Regina that they're concerned and they're worried that there's not going to be enough maintenance out there, and then they're worried about when they take their families out there. Because if you're going to replace 10 employees at one campsite alone — one campsite alone — how do you expect three individuals to operate that campsite when there were 13 before?

And now you have voluntary payments. They have voluntary payments at a lot of the small golf courses around the province, and I suppose that's where you got the idea from.

But let me tell you, I think what you're doing is cutting back on jobs in this province. You're cutting back on services to individuals who are criss-crossing our province and are taking advantage of our resources that we have, our picnic sites, our lakes, and our streams. But you're discouraging that. And you're discouraging that by closing down these sites.

It's no different than closing down the Beaupré Creek campsite. That's a historic site. That's the first site, that's where the first conservation officer had his cabin in that Doré Lake, Stead Lake, Smoothstone area. That's where the first conservation officer had his cabin. And that's a historic site.

And let me tell you, there are senior citizens' groups who use that site every year. They go into Doré Lake, or they go to Smoothstone, or they go to Stead Lake; they stop at the Beaupré campsite. Now you're going to close it down.

And I tell you I've talked to individuals who say that on a yearly basis there are Boy Scout groups from Moose Jaw and all over this province that travel into northern Saskatchewan, and they stop at those campsites. They know they're there. They know that when they arrive at 3 in the afternoon, there's going to be wood for them to start their fire, there's going to be fireplaces. They know that there's going to be garbage disposal. They know that they're there.

But you can imagine the surprise that's going to be on the citizens of Saskatchewan and out of the province who also use these sites, when they come there this year and they see them closed. Still open, as you say, but not manned. There'll be no fire there for them to stop and use. A bus load of senior citizens will move in there. There'll be no garbage disposal. The grass won't be cut. They won't be able to walk around and enjoy the scenery. And that's what you're doing. You're discouraging this.

(2130)

And I think it runs deeper, Mr. Minister. I think it runs deeper. When we see a government that has an accumulated debt of \$9 billion and an operating debt of \$2 billion, I think that's the motive behind cutting back on our services. That's what's happening. The McLean campsite, 20 miles out of Regina, you're cutting the staff. You had an individual hired to take the payments; now it's voluntary. You drive in and put your money in a box, and that's how you're trying to collect your debts.

And you know, when you took over this province, you had \$140 million in the bank. We had 11 years in this province with a balanced budget. And I tell you, Mr. Chairman, the member from Turtleford is hollering and laughing, but we left this province with a 3.3 accumulated billion dollar debt. And now that accumulated debt is 9 billion. So now we see they're cutting back on services. You just have to take a look at your estimates. They're being cut back. You have to take a look at how you handled your capital. You switched it over to another Crown corporation that you created . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, you were against crown corporations; you wanted to get rid of them.

But I tell you, you're taking it out . . . You're taking the mismanagement of this province out on the backs of the senior citizens and the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides in this province by closing down these sites. And you're closing them down all over the province. And that is going to come to an end, Mr. Minister, just as soon as your Premier decides to call an election. And I can assure you that.

And then this is something that Saskatchewan cannot tolerate. We have always been proud of our campsites and our lakes and our rivers and our streams. We're proud of the services that we've provided to our senior citizens and our Boy Scouts and our Girl Guides and the rest of the citizens of this province. We've always been proud of that, and we are expanding services for them.

Now all of a sudden you come in and you want to close them down, and you want to cut back. And I think that that is something that cannot be tolerated, and you are going to have to answer for it - you're going to have to answer for it.

To close down campsites such as the McLean campground, 20 miles east of Regina, literally, that's exactly what you're doing. You had 13 employees that were out there to maintain that site, now you have three. Do you honestly think that three individuals can take the place and do the job properly the same as 13? Well, that's not true, that's just not true, and that's what's happening.

You are closing down the campsite at Shirley Lake. Now Shirley Lake — and if you talk to your colleagues here . . . And then there's your colleague from Shellbrook, I'm sure he's not in favour of shutting down that campsite. He's used it for years. I've used that campsite for years, and citizens all over this province have. And this province has invested a lot of money in Shirley Lake by stocking it with rainbow trout and restocking it and making the campsites. And those campsites were there. There are so many citizens in this province that know that the campsite is at Shirley Lake, and that they can go there, they can put their boat in the water, and they will not be disturbed. They can fish, and they get their trout, camp overnight, make a fire. The wood is there, the garbage disposals are there. Now what's going to happen now when you close them down?

Well I can tell you what's going to happen. You're going to have garbage all over. Nobody's there to maintain it. Somebody goes in there and catches a fish and they want to cook it, where are they going to get their wood? They

are going to go into the forest and chop down the first dry tree they see. And you're actually destroying the system that's been set up, and it's a good system. It's a good system.

But to come out and shut down 75 of those sites, I think is unfair to the citizens of this province. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, to reconsider that. And I ask you to reconsider the McLean campground just out of Regina here and get that back in full operation. Hire the 13 individuals that worked there last year. Don't cut back. Let's expand on our tourism. This is Expo '86 year, and we're going to have a lot of tourists going through this province, and they will want to take advantage of our campsites, and our picnic sites. And we want to do that.

You know, you talk about the forests and protecting this. I want the minister to respond to the closing down of the campsites, and I would ask him to reconsider closing them down and any cut-backs this year in our campsites and in our tourist facilities.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — First of all, I don't know where the hon. member got the figure 13. My officials have been looking around for a number 13. We don't have it. Secondly, McLean is not being shut down. Thirdly, if indeed he's right that there are three staff, and I believe he is, it's running with three staff because we opened it early this year, three weeks earlier than usual with a skeleton staff because of tourist traffic and because of people coming through and going to Expo. So McLean is definitely not closing. I don't know where you get your information from, and I challenge all of your numbers as well.

You mentioned deficits. You forgot to mention you left a \$6 billion deficit behind in 1982. You forgot to mention you had a deficit in 1979, and the Leader of the Opposition looks very doubtful, so let me quote him on a couple of things, seeing as he's shaking his head. I know it's late. But he said . . . What did he say in the past? In 1983 he says, "I share with the Minister of Finance the view there is nothing particularly wrong with deficits in tough years." *Hansard*, February 27, 1983, page 2182.

Back in 1962 when he was the provincial treasurer, he had this to say about his own deficit. And I know you folks are fond of saying you never had one. Well you better turn and talk to your leader because he was the provincial treasurer and he had one. He said, I quote:

I do not apologize for this deficit. I believe that in times of recession governments should be prepared to incur deficits and, indeed, if the situation demands they are duty bound to take the action that only governments can take to assist the economy towards recovery.

Hansard, March 9, 1962, page 11. So you know, if you want to get into another argument, another red herring on deficits, we can run through that one if that's what the hon. member wants to do. But don't stand there and mislead anybody.

In view of the . . . You're talking about cutting campgrounds and shutting them down. We're talking 10

small campsites with a total of 75 spots out of a total of 9,000 in our system. Just today we had second reading of a new Parks Act which will introduce five new provincial parks to this province with many more new campsites. What the people of the province want, and what tourists coming through the province want, and what they're telling us, is they want electrified campsites, they want showers, and they want washrooms. Those are the kinds of facilities they want, and those are the ones we have increased every year since we've been in office. We have not cut back services; we've expanded services. And somehow on a three-stall campsite at Beaupré, if you can get all these Boy Scout troops in there, I'll be amazed; I don't know how you got them in.

You referred to fishing at Shirley Lake. Are you saying that there is no more fishing in Shirley Lake because there are three camp spots not being maintained? They're not being closed; they're not being maintained. Are the fish going to get up and run away and say, my goodness, there aren't going to be three camp spots at Shirley, we all had better die and get out of this lake. That's absurd.

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know how this member is going to go out and campaign. I was not talking about 24 years ago. And he somehow has confused what I said with a budget of 24 years ago, and which did not turn out to be out a deficit. But what is . . . Mr. Chairman, what has 1962 got to do with the statements I just made?

I said that in the last 11 years under our government, we had a balanced budget. Now I didn't talk about 1962; I wasn't talking about that.

An Hon. Member: — We had a surplus.

Mr. Thompson: — We had a surplus.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I think both sides should get back to the estimates for Parks and Renewable Resources and we'll continue . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order. Order. Once more I'm asking both sides to keep their remarks to estimates on Parks and Renewable Resources, and we'll finish this if we can.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I sincerely hope that that applies to the hon. member from Turtleford who also was straying the same as I was straying. But I . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well that's fine if you want me to rephrase the question, I can most certainly keep going. If that's what you guys want. But I tell you I'm prepared to stand here and debate our budget and our spending estimates against your spending estimates, and our deficits against your deficits, if that's what you want.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Chairman, if the members who are talking from their seats want me to debate that, fine. I'll debate it. But this is final.

I want to now congratulate the minister, Mr. Chairman. I want to congratulate the minister and his department for taking the advice of the New Democratic Party in stopping the spraying of our forest in northern

Saskatchewan. I think, Mr. Minister, that that was a smart move for you to put an end to that. We have always indicated that the spraying of our forests in northern Saskatchewan should not take place. If we want to thin out the forests, let me tell you, that can be done by manual labour, and should be done by manual labour. We do not want to put the chemicals in there. And I congratulate you, Mr. Minister, for stopping that program, and not going ahead with the spraying of our northern forests.

I want to turn to the . . . and I know that the Weyerhaeuser deal, Mr. Minister, that you're not directly involved in that. But in the deal where Weyerhaeuser purchased the Prince Albert pulp-mill, he also purchased the cutting rights. Mr. Minister, he also purchased the cutting rights of the Big River mill's forestry agreement.

And, Mr. Minister, I would just like to make a few comments that I think that if you were going to sell the pulp-mill, I don't know for the life of me why you sold the Big River sawmill and all the bush operations and the cutting rights that the Big River sawmill had.

I know that you have indicated that the Big River mill was losing money. I say that the Big River mill is just as efficient as the mill at Hudson Bay or the mill at Carrot River. But somehow it was singled out that Big River was the culprit. And I say that that was the wrong thing to do.

Now we're going to have a giant in the forest industry that's going to come in with the large equipment and start harvesting the Big River sawmill's rights to that forest. And I think, Mr. Minister, that that is something that we should put a stop to.

I would ask you, Mr. Minister, if you would take a look at the forestry policy that you have in your department and go back to some of the cutting habits that we had in years past.

I now see that in Big River last winter that there was an operator, one Bob Dunn in Big River, who started logging with horses this winter. Bob Dunn — and they're constituents of yours — Bobbie Dunn and Ernie Montgrand, who used to be a constituent of mine, and they were harvesting wood this year with horses. They went back to the horses.

And I think, Mr. Minister, that we have to have a new forest policy in this province, one that gets us away from the clear cutting. Because, you know, we're spending millions of dollars on reforestation, yet we're allowing the large companies to go in and clear cut and to literally — literally destroy trees that are already immature and 20 years old.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to continue my remarks regarding the handling of the forests, and I would ask the hon. Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources to take a serious look at the types of operations that your constituent, Bob Dunn, carried out last winter with harvesting back with the horses and Ernie Montgrand, and I think that this is something that we have to do.

(2145)

When you travel around or you fly over our forests now and you take a look at the clear cutting, it's something that we have to put a stop to, and it's something that we have to change around and we have to go back to the selective cutting. And I'm not saying that we have to go completely back to horses. But I think that there is a new method of harvesting that should take place within the department and within Saskatchewan forests. And that could be done in strips. You could take strips and you could take the logs out, the mature timber out of these strips, and not destroy the 20-year-old spruce tree or jackpine or poplar that's already growing and in another 15 to 20 years would mature. But what we do — we take in large equipment and we clear out, or we knock it down with that equipment.

And I think that there has to be a new forest policy in this province and I can assure you — I can assure you that our new forest policy won't be to give \$248 billion to an American firm to come in and clear cut our forests and take our assets. That's not going to be our policy in the forest industry. I'll tell you, we won't be paying any large corporation to take our assets.

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Chairman . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. The member . . . Are you through with your question? Yes, he is. Okay.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, here's an area where . . . I'm sorry, did you wish to continue?

Mr. Thompson: What I was trying to impress upon you, Mr. Minister, is that we need a new forest policy in Saskatchewan. We just cannot continue - we cannot continue to go out and have large equipment clear cutting our forest. There has to be some planning, and that can be done. That can be done. We can still use modern equipment, but we don't have to let them clear cut a large area. It can be done in strips, and they can take the logs out from each side, and the only place that you have to reforest is that strip of land in the middle of that lot, or wood lot, or whatever you want to refer to it as. And then the rest of the bush remains as it is. It worked out perfect in Big River with Bob Dunn and his horses.

Because that's how we used to operate in this province. We used small machinery. We used horses. We used timber cruisers who went in and they cruised the timber, and we had selective cutting. And I think, Mr. Minister, that we have to go back to the days where we selective cut, and we cannot destroy the forest by this massive waste that we have with clear cutting.

Mr. Minister, if you would like to comment on that, I'll take my seat.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, we're into an area now of discussion where actually we can have some common ground. When you mention, hon. member, taking a look at new forest policy for Saskatchewan, I wholeheartedly agree with you.

In fact, later this year, hopefully in summer, we'll be putting out a white paper as a precursor to a new forest

Act which I'd like to see introduced to the legislature as early as the fall, but more realistically next spring, which would more accurately reflect modern techniques of forest management, modern silviculture, and an emphasis on reforestation, and of course, concomitant with that, an emphasis on research.

Now you mention clear cutting as opposed to selective cutting. The current policy is no more than 40 acres can be clear cut at any one time. So we're not talking massive clear cutting.

And we talk selective cutting. And I'm sure the hon. member is aware of this. We have to be careful in that in our Saskatchewan forest we do have some species that do not grow in the shade, so they will be taken out. And we really don't have much choice.

But in terms of clear cuts of massive areas of land, I think we have some room here for agreement.

And may I just mention on the subject of research, this is very significant and important to our Saskatchewan forests because this year is the first year we're putting seedlings in the ground. We're putting in seedlings which we hope will grow 40-year forests, a softwood forest as opposed to the current 70 to 90 years to full harvest maturity.

Mr. Thompson: — I just want to make a short comment, Mr. Minister, and I would ask that you consider the proposals that I have put forward, ask your officials to consider that, because I do think it's important. You can talk about a 40-acre wood lot, but that's still clear cutting. What I'm trying to say is that we've got to get away from clear cutting and get back to the selective cutting, and if we have to promote individuals like Bob Dunn who has got the horse operation . . . Because I think that the big operations that go in and just massively destroy our forests in this clear cutting operation, I think is something that we don't need, and if we take a look at a new policy, I think Saskatchewan can get its forest back to where it was 30 years ago.

When we were harvesting in them days, Mr. Minister, that same area would be harvested every 20 years because it was done selectively, and we weren't destroying trees that would be read in 10, 15 to 20 years. And I just ask that you do that, Mr. Minister. And my colleagues have a few questions to ask, Mr. Minister, and if you want to agree to stop the clock . . .

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Mr. Thompson: — Fine, then. If you want to respond to my remarks and then let somebody else go on here.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — This is an area in which I am particularly interested. I must mention that at the outset. I can agree with the hon. member about some type of selective cutting as long as we're not talking high grading. And eventually we do have to scarify and reforest those areas where we take the wood out. And our softwood won't grow in shade, so we have to be very careful of how that is done. But I think there is some possibility here for common ground on what you are suggesting, and my

officials were just making some notes and passing comments to me, and we're not really very far apart in philosophy on this. I tell you what. We're very anxious to see our forest regenerated and, indeed, so are the companies. Whether it be a Crown corporation or private company, they don't make any money if they don't have trees to harvest, so they have to have an interest in silviculture and reforestation. And so do we and we have a commitment to both of those.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay. I thank you very much, Mr. Minister, and I fully agree — and I've said it before — that we have to have a new policy. and I think that when you take a look at that, you can take a look at strip cutting and only let the machines operate in that certain strip, and that is the only strip that you have to regenerate or reforest. And if one really takes a look at that and then you think it through, it makes a lot of common sense rather than destroying all the forest around you — and bring them out into a common skidway. And that's the only reforestation that you have to do, and we have less reforestation and more forest to work with.

Mr. Minister, you will have your officials look at that policy and you will take a look at the operation that was done in the Big River area? There may be other areas in the province where horses have been used in the last year; I'm not too sure. I know they're starting to use them more in British Columbia now. They see that this is important. And I think it's also important in Saskatchewan — and use some smaller equipment.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman, I see it's getting close to 10 o'clock, and a number of my colleagues have more questions, and I suggest that we report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:57 p.m.