

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Tusa: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to the House, to you and through you, a group of 23 grade 7 students from Southey School who are in the Speaker's gallery. They will be touring the Legislative Assembly, and I will be meeting with them at 2:30 for drinks and to have a little chat about today's proceedings. I trust that they'll be thoroughly impressed by the question period this afternoon, and I would ask all hon. members to please welcome them in the usual way.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tusa: — Mr. Speaker, I've just received a note I have another group in here. This is the second group from my constituency, and I'm very, very pleased that they're here. I was told, Mr. Speaker, that this group might have to leave early and miss question period, but fortunately they were able to come in for a few minutes.

This is a group of grade 5 students from Strasbourg, 25 students. They have already had their tour, and I trust that it was a most enjoyable tour. They're here with their teacher, Gary Krivoshein, and their chaperons, Mrs. Sterling and Mrs. Gritzfeldt. Unfortunately they will have to leave before question period is over, but I trust that they will enjoy the portion that they will be able to view. And once more, I ask hon. members to please welcome these students from Strasbourg.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Investigation of SGI Claims

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to Mr. Premier. Yesterday you confirmed to this Assembly that it's the policy of Saskatchewan Government Insurance to keep confidential all files under its special investigation unit for questionable claims being reviewed. That view was confirmed recently in sworn testimony before a court of law by the former president, Donald Black. Under oath, Mr. Black said:

Standard policy inside SGI is that no one outside the organization has access to our files without a subpoena.

In light of that statement, Mr. Premier, can you explain how your top political aide, Dave Tkachuk, was allowed to review the entire SGI file on the case of his long-time personal friend, Tom Townsend, at his home in January of 1984 on a Sunday evening?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe, as we pointed out yesterday and as the hon. member pointed out that the files were asked for by Mr. Tkachuk and received from Mr. Ryan, and Mr. Ryan did not get permission to give the files out. And so he was

correspondingly fired and said that they shouldn't have done that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

All right, Mr. Speaker, I make the point that people come to my office for help all the time, whether it's Father Larré or whether it's farmers or other people and, Mr. Speaker, we try our best to make sure that they do get help. So, Mr. Speaker, I will look at people's cases, whether it's Les Hainstock or whether it's the Bryces or whether it's Father Larré or whether it's consumers or whether it's anybody else, Mr. Speaker, and I do. And, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition NDP doesn't want to hear what my office does because it's wide open and it's not like theirs was. I'm saying that people come to my office and they want to have help. Mr. Speaker, we will try to provide them that kind of assistance.

All right. Mr. Speaker, I have had people come to my office, and I have helped them with respect to crop insurance; I have looked at cases that go back in compensation. My staff, for example, Mr. Speaker, has gone back 20 years in compensation cases to get information from the bureaucracy to see if we could help. All right, that's the case. In this case, a member of my staff believed that the SGI should make the payment to the individual and said so. And, Mr. Speaker, the fire commissioner said the payment should be made because the case is there. And, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order! I'm going to ask the member for Regina North West to contain himself. When I'm on my feet there's to be no talking in this Chamber.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, if I can continue. The judge, Judge MacLean, said that there should be payment to the farmer for his hog barn. The fire commissioner agreed; Mr. Tkachuk agreed. Mr. Tkachuk said to the president of SGI, you should pay this man. At the end of his judgement he says that he didn't even think the thing should have come to court; he should have made the payment — on page 25:

I am not satisfied that, in the circumstances, the defendant was justified in requiring a trial of the issue. In my opinion, the defendant failed to pay the plaintiffs that to which they were legally entitled, and as a result, the plaintiffs suffered damage for which they are entitled to be compensated by an award of interest.

Well, Mr. Speaker, all I'm saying is: people come to my office when they believe that they need to have some help. If I can, I provide that assistance, whether it's a farmer, whether it's a home owner, whether it's a consumer, or whatever. This hog producer felt that he should have been paid. It was raised — the issue was raised.

Now the only question, as the judge says, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Ryan shouldn't have taken the files out of SGI

without getting permission from the president. I agree with that.

An Hon. Member: — But the president told him not to take it.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Right, and he was fired, Mr. Speaker. And as result of that, Mr. Speaker, he was fired . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. I will caution the member for Quill Lakes that if I'm on my feet, you're to be quiet as well.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to make the point that people in my office will help individuals whether they are farmers or consumers or interest groups or natives or whatever. And they will go back through compensation cases, they will go back through agriculture cases, they will be back through crop insurance cases of all kinds. In this case they said the man should be paid, and he was, and the judge agreed, and the fire commissioner agreed.

Mr. Shillington: — Supplementary. Is it the Premier's position that it is appropriate for your chief political aide to provide the same, to provide assistance to Mr. Townsend in an investigation into an insurance claim with SGI, and that that is to be placed from the same claim as assisting a farmer resolve a crop insurance case, or Father Larré solve a problem he has with the homes? Is that your position, that a man of Mr. Tkachuk's supposed salary should not be able to distinguish between Mr. Townsend's request, which I suggest was a request for influence peddling, and a legitimate request by a constituent? Is it your position that he can't and shouldn't be able to distinguish between those two very different cases?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that my hon. colleague knows that the investigation was over, and the question as whether SGI's going to pay the farmer or not . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes it was. The question is whether they're gong to pay the farmer, all right? And the fire people or the chief fireman . . . fire commissioner says that there's no reason that farmer shouldn't be paid. So it goes to court and the judge says the farmer should be paid, and it shouldn't even be in here.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have people who come to my office for help and say, I think the bureaucracy is doing this, doing that; I want some help. Whether it's a farmer, a consumer, or whoever, they come to me by the hundreds. We will investigate a compensation case that's 20 years old, and we've dug up information 20 years ago, and we have actually had things for . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order! This Chamber cannot operate with this amount of yelling, and I'm going to ask for order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that when people come to me for help, and if I can help, I will provide that assistance. Now my doors are always open. There's people in there all the time, and I get requests day

after day after day, and scores of them by the day. In this case, the individual farmer believed he should be paid. The hog producer who had the problem felt he should have been paid. The fire commissioner said so as well, and the judge said so. And a member of my staff said to the president of SGI, I believe he should be paid.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you can't come to the Premier's office and say, I believe that I need some help, I don't know what . . . I mean, that's the way the NDP would operate. All right. They would build a data bank on individuals but not help farmers or consumers or anybody else.

Mr. Shillington: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Mr. Premier, I want to know . . . I want to be clear about what you are condoning. Not only did Mr. Tkachuk review a confidential file on the Townsend investigation, which he should not have had, but he reviewed it with Tom Townsend, who had no right to have it. Under oath of law he said that.

Mr. Premier, the testimony under oath is, "I told him what I had seen in the file, that there was nothing, and that he should be paid." Mr. Premier, that's the testimony given under oath by your top political aide and the man who now heads up your election campaign preparations. Is that the conduct that you are condoning and defending here today?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I have had members of . . . my deputy minister, to other people who will take a hold of compensation files, take a hold of information on crop insurance, take a hold of information that goes back with respect to consumers, or rodeos, or whatever else it may be. And they look at the files and they will say, I believe this is fair and this is a case. Mr. Tkachuk said that this is the case with respect to SGI; you should pay the farmer.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if he should pay the farmer; and he believed he should pay the farmer, and the judge says he should pay the farmer, well I don't see what's wrong with a farmer coming to me and say, I think SGI should pay me. And, Mr. Speaker, his hog barn burned down and he said — the fire commissioner says, look it, the individual has no reason not to be paid.

So when I look at all the information and what the judge said and the fire commissioner says, people can come to my office and say, yes, we'll see if we can provide you some assistance. We will do whatever we can to help you. If it's right, we'll back you up.

I mean, Mr. Speaker, they come to me by the hundreds for assistance, and I do what I can to provide help and assistance to them, whether they're farmers, consumers, whether they're workmen compensation, or whether they're school boards.

Mr. Sveinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister, with respect to the situation just raised by the member from Regina Centre: on January 24, 1984, in the judgement placed before the courts by Mr. Justice MacLean, he indicates that Corporal Beselt and Sergeant Baker met with representatives of the defendant and at

least one Crown solicitor employed by the Justice department to review the file.

For some time prior to this meeting, it was common knowledge among the participants that Mr. Townsend might be charged with arson. Following this meeting all thought of proceeding — all thought of proceeding — with such a charge was abandoned, and yet the defence by SGI was a defence of arson on behalf of my constituent, Mr. Townsend.

I suggest to you that we have to be thankful . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Does the member have a question? Will you get directly to it.

Mr. Sveinson: — And the question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier of the province: was he not aware that this meeting with the co-respondents in SGI was held prior to the file being looked at by his principal secretary, Mr. Dave Tkachuk?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I was not aware of the details of the case, and I'm not aware of the details except of those that I've reviewed just recently. But in a case, in my judgement, where there is no question with respect to a legal charge, and it's finished and the investigation is over, then there's a question of whether or not you're going to pay the individual.

And if that's the case, there was nothing there . . . As the judge said — I mean, I can only go by the judge, who said the thing should have never come to trial. Well if he said it shouldn't have come to trial, I'll take his word for it — it shouldn't have come to trial, and the farmer should have been paid. So if the farmer should have been paid, I'll agree with the judge that it should have been done. I have no choice but to . . . I'm not going to question the judgement of Justice MacLean. So I rest my case.

I mean, the only other thing that I can add, Mr. Speaker, is the way that we receive people into my office. I mean, my door is always open, and people come in from constituencies, they come in from all across the province, and they ask for help. That's a big contrast, Mr. Speaker, and an awful lot different than the political data bank built up by the NDP, when they would take on, for example, the minister from Regina South, Mr. Rousseau, and they would take it all over the province and in the radio and everything else . . .

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

Mr. Sveinson: — Mr. Premier, I ask you: on behalf of SGI, is it their policy to continue to attack an individual as they attack Mr. Townsend with allegations of arson after their own people have indicated, after their own people have decided, there is no such substance for such a charge?

Hon. Mr. Devine: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't comment on the case. I can't comment on what SGI is doing or with respect to what Mr. Townsend is doing now. I understand it's before the courts; there may be an appeal. I can make no comment on that. I can only comment on the questions that have been raised here with respect to me or my office trying to help people who come in and say, I

believe that we're being treated unfairly; is there something that can be done? And we will look at all those cases.

Mr. Sveinson: — The question, Mr. Premier, was not relating to Mr. Townsend. It was relating to the policy of SGI to investigate rather than to compensate. That came right out of the fire commissioner's mouth when I was looking into the background in this particular case. And is that the policy of the department? And after they decide that there is no further reason to investigate, why do they not compensate, based on the contractual agreement with their client? SGI.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe that's a fair question. I don't know the answer to it. I will take notice and I will go back and look at the policy and be glad to respond to the hon. member.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. We now have the Premier of the province defending the individual in his department, now the campaign chairman, Dave Tkachuk, influencing a member of SGI, Ron Ryan, to take out of the SGI investigation unit documents that the president has stated should only have been taken out with a subpoena.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could have order in this Assembly, or whether we only have order when the government members are on their feet. I'll tell you that this issue . . . I'll tell you that the members opposite with their yelling and hollering the way they've done for the past four years every time they're embarrassed, of being allowed today - I think raises certain questions. But I want to get back, because you're not going to stop questions like this from being asked.

We now have you defending a member of your staff, the chief political adviser of the day, Dave Tkachuk, who influenced a member of the staff of SGI, Ron Ryan, to take out confidential documents out of the special investigation unit. You're now defending him. Was he acting under your instructions when we met with Ron Ryan to review the file? Was he working under your instructions?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, two responses: one, I didn't tell him to go ask for any files. I didn't give him any direction with respect to this case at all.

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out, is that Justice MacLean said, "The only conduct at all deserving of censure is that of Mr. Ryan for abusing his position of trust." He didn't mention Mr. Tkachuk had to be reprimanded. He knows that Mr. Tkachuk or other members of my staff will pull compensation files or ask for information, get information. They do it all the time. He just said that Mr. Ryan should have had permission from the president to share the information. And that's what he says.

I mean, if the Justice MacLean says the only body that needs to have their wrists slapped is Mr. Ryan, well then what are you all upset about? I mean, the thing is, people come into my office and they ask for help. And my staff, from the deputy minister down, will review crop

insurance matters, review compensation matters, will review all kinds of things from forestry to consumers to whatever. And we do it all the time, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that in fact we can help people who we believe deserve some assistance.

In this case the judge said they should have been paid; the fire commissioner said he should have been paid; Dave Tkachuk believed they should have been paid, and said so. So, I mean . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplement to the Premier. I want to refer you to page 9 of the judgement, which does refer to Mr. Tkachuk. And in the judgement it clearly indicates, and I want to quote from the document:

He so instructed Mr. Ryan, his executive assistant.

This is referring to Mr. Black's instruction urging him not to get involved in the investigation. He says:

Despite this, at the urging of Mr. Tkachuk, and without the knowledge or consent of Mr. Black, Ryan removed the defendant's file and reviewed it with Mr. Tkachuk (your political adviser).

Now I say to you that, if the judge is coming down hard on Mr. Ryan on the next page, saying the only conduct at all deserving of censure is that of Mr. Ryan for abusing his position of trust, what about your staff who urged Mr. Ryan to remove the file at your advice as you have indicated here today? - that you agree that this is the attitude and the actions that should be taken by your political staff. That's what you're saying. And I say to you: do you condone that kind of action?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, there is nothing wrong with a member of a staff or a minister to ask for a file. The question was that he didn't receive the file from the individual with the permission of the president of SGI. So maybe Mr. Tkachuk doesn't know whether the president gave him the information or not, or let him have it.

I mean, he asked for the information. The judge says here that the only body that should have any deserving censure is Mr. Ryan, not Mr. Tkachuk. He just finished talking about: Mr. Tkachuk demands the file, or asks to see it; Mr. Ryan gives it to him. And the judge says the only guy that deserves any sort of censure is Mr. Ryan for not getting the permission. All right, if you want to laugh, you laugh at the judgement. You laugh at the judgement.

People in my office will help people whether it's in crop insurance or compensation cases or anything else. And they'll come through the door and ask for it. And wherever possible I will give them assistance, and I believe the premier's office should do that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. I want to ask you, Mr. Premier: are you aware that not only did your top political aide, Mr. Tkachuk, review the confidential file at his home, and not only did he then inform Mr. Townsend of what the file contained, but he also contacted the Attorney General's office about this investigation? Mr. Premier, did Mr. Tkachuk contact

the Attorney General's office at your request, or was he doing this on his own?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, he did not share the information in the file with the farmer, Townsend. He said to Mr. Townsend, there's nothing in the file as far as I know that would jeopardize your case, and I believe that you should be paid. That's what he said, something to those lines.

Secondly, whether he took it up with the Attorney General's office, I have no idea, but I take notice of it.

And a third, Mr. Speaker, it was not on my direction. Third, Mr. Speaker, it was not on my direction, and I never said that it was. I said that when people come into my office and they need help then I will . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, are you aware that your political aide and campaign adviser, Mr. Tkachuk, met with the former president of SGI, Mr. Donald Black, on at least two occasions to pressure Mr. Black to drop the SGI investigation of Tom Townsend's insurance claim?

By way of background, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from this sworn testimony at a court of law. Mr. Black is now describing one of those meetings. And I quote:

During the course of that discussion the Townsend matter was discussed, and it was only discussed to the extent that, and in the context that, I was wrong. The corporation was wrong, in Mr. Tkachuk's view, and that he was personally acquainted with Mr. Townsend. And it was his strongly held view, as expressed to me, that Mr. MacLean and one of our directors who was present at the meeting, that Mr. Townsend was not capable of doing anything like this.

I want to ask you, Mr. Premier: When Tkachuk went to the president of SGI to influence him and convince him to drop the investigation of Mr. Townsend, was he doing that on your orders?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well I've said at the outset that he wasn't doing any of this on my orders. But let me also correct the member. I don't believe that he's accurate in saying that he went to him to say that we're going to stop investigation. After the investigation, and there wasn't going to be paid, then he said, I think it's fairer you pay the farmer. And if you go back and check the record, then that's the case. Well, Mr. Speaker, if it's all over . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well, Mr. Speaker, if the judge said it shouldn't have even been in court, if the fire commissioner believes that it should have been paid, and people believe that it should have been paid and it was paid, Mr. Speaker, I believe it's fair if somebody can come to my office and say, it's fair, and the judge agrees that it's fair, and the opposition.

I mean, they can stand there and complain about this, Mr. Speaker. They took a case in SGI that involved Paul

Rousseau and took it all over the radio all over the province. They build political data all the time. I take people in my office who are farmers and consumers and others that need help, and I'll help them. The members opposite, the NDP would take personal files and make them public all over the radio. The former member, Wes Robbins, would read Paul Rousseau's driving record all over the place, Mr. Speaker. Well there's a clear difference between that party, the NDP, and how they operated and how this government operates, because it's wide open to the public.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask also a question to the Premier. As the Premier is aware that the former president of SGI, Mr. Donald Black, fired his special assistant, a man by the name of Ron Ryan as soon as he discovered that Mr. Ryan had been, indeed he had pilfered the file, a confidential file, which he knew or ought to have known should not have been taken from the office . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Can I have the floor, Mr. Speaker, or has the member from North West got the floor?

Mr. Speaker: — I've cautioned the member from Regina North West several times, and I would ask him now just to let the hon. member from Quill Lakes have his time to question.

Mr. Koskie: — I will start again, hoping that order is once again restored.

As I was saying, Mr. Premier, as you know, the executive assistant to Mr. Black, the president of the SGI was released or fired as soon as Mr. Black determined that he had pilfered this file from the SGI. What I want to ask you: do you not consider that in law, and morally, that anyone who is an accessory to an act which is contrary to the regulations of a corporation is not, in fact, a party to that illegal act?

And secondly, do you not agree that a man in the position of chief adviser or a senior officer of your office should not, in fact, have taken steps to determine whether he could have access to that, file, and wouldn't, in fact, going to the general manager been the course on behalf of your staff member?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. member is asking whether the Leader of the Opposition is responsible for all the member's actions from Quill Lakes. Well I'm sure that he isn't asking that. I mean if he wants to make that kind of a connection, I don't believe that it's fair. I can say in law, Mr. Speaker, the only conduct at all deserving . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. If the members don't want to hear the answer, we'll move on to the next subject.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In law, Justice MacLean says the only conduct at all deserving of censure is that of Mr. Ryan for abusing his position of trust. Now that's all that . . . I mean this is the court speaking. So you ask the question of law. Well I can only agree with Justice MacLean that that's the case.

So my staff, Mr. Speaker, my deputy and other people, will go get information on compensation, on agriculture, and crop insurance. Now if they get the information and somebody picked it up and didn't have permission to deliver it, you're saying, well are they going to be responsible. Well I hardly think so. They get information on hundreds of people all the time to help them. Every bit of information . . . Are they going then to take it and say, well did you get permission from this person and that person and this person to receive the information?

Well in this case, Justice MacLean said the conduct of Mr. Ryan is deserving of censure. All right. I agree with that. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I never told him to do it; I never advised him to do it; and he wasn't under any direction of mine.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 30 - An Act respecting a Livestock Facilities Tax Credit

Hon. Mr. Devine: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak to an Act which will create Saskatchewan's livestock facilities tax credit. This idea was announced by the Hon. Minister of Finance a few short weeks ago in his budget. Since that time the idea of a tax credit on livestock facilities has caught the interest and imagination of many livestock producers all across the province — and, I might add, Mr. Speaker, not only in this province but across Canada, and now being watched very closely by the United States.

In that budget address, the Minister of Finance stated that hog production in this province must increase by some 200,000 animals per year in each of the next five years if the full potential of that industry is to be realized. This facilities tax credit, when combined with other initiatives such as the \$25 per hog interest-free cash advance, the livestock investment tax credit of \$3 a hog, the 8 per cent loans from the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan — all these will help us achieve this potential, Mr. Speaker.

While the livestock facilities tax credit will encourage the hog industry to expand, it also is available to other sectors of the livestock industry. Under this tax credit, livestock producers will receive a 15 per cent tax credit on any new livestock facilities and additions or renovations to existing facilities. The tax credit is applied against provincial income tax. Any tax credit which is not used can be carried forward for seven years. The eligible facilities must be used exclusively in the livestock businesses.

To receive the full tax credit, the facility must be owned and used for at least three years by the producers. Assets which are or may be eligible for the tax credit include bee equipment, brooders, buildings, casing and cribbing for water wells, milk coolers, cream separators, dug-outs, electric motors, stationary engines, fences, grain storage

buildings, feed grinders, milking machines, feed mixers, pumps, and well equipment. Expenditures for these assets are only eligible if they become an integral part of the livestock facility.

From this partial list it is clear, Mr. Speaker, that the tax credit will have a great impact on many livestock operations in this province. As our records show, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to improving the province's livestock industry. This Act to create the livestock facilities tax credit is another example of that commitment to the entire livestock industry.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Livestock Facilities Tax Credit Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill needs to be looked at and I beg leave to adjourn debate on this one. I'd like to look at the minister's remarks and explanatory notes.

Debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Mr. Devine: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak on the Act to extend the province's livestock investment tax credit for an additional three years.

When the livestock investment tax credit was introduced and first discussed in this Assembly just two year ago, many members of the opposition scoffed at the idea of a tax credit. They said the tax credit would only flow to wealthy investors, people whom these members say didn't need another tax break. Well I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite were wrong.

Since the tax credit was introduced in March of 1984, approximately 9.3 million in credits — \$9.3 million in credits — have been issued to some 9,500 Saskatchewan resident producers. Virtually all those tax credits have been earned by livestock producers themselves, not by doctors, lawyers, accountants, or anybody else in search of another tax break.

For the 1985 tax year, the actual livestock producers received \$4.1 million in tax credits while non-farm investors, Mr. Speaker, received 123,000. Clearly the vast majority of the tax credits and their benefit is going to Saskatchewan livestock producers.

The livestock investment tax credit has had a positive impact on the Saskatchewan livestock industry, and extending the program will ensure this trend continues into the years ahead. Under the program, Saskatchewan taxpayers receive tax credit for eligible cattle, hogs, and lambs which are fed in the province and marketed for slaughter. The tax credit is \$25 a head for steers, heifers, and virgin bulls; \$3 for hogs; and \$2 for lamb.

The legislation which we are discussing now will extend the livestock investment tax credit December 31, 1989. Without this legislation, the tax credit will expire

December 31st of this year, 1986. And this would put an ultimate end to a program which is returning enormous benefits to the province as well as to the livestock industry and producers.

Livestock is an important ingredient in our provincial agricultural economy, Mr. Speaker, and it's getting more important. Through policies such as the livestock investment tax credit, the livestock cash advance, the feeder association loan guarantee program, the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan, and the many disaster assistance programs which have been brought in to help them in difficult times, our government is continually demonstrating its interest in and support of the Saskatchewan livestock producers.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act which extends the livestock investment tax credit. It is further evidence of our government's ongoing commitment to the livestock industry in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We watched this Bill in operation over the last couple of years. As the Premier pointed out, I had very strong reservations when this Bill was first introduced. And, Mr. Premier, like the other programs that you have introduced to date in your government, these programs are designed to help the wealthy people — those that are paying a lot of tax.

I would like to challenge the Premier, and we'll be discussing this is third reading, to show me where this livestock tax credit has been of any benefit to a young producer starting out — any benefit at all. I would just like to know where he thinks that by not targeting programs to the people that we want to get into agriculture . . .

As a government, we have some responsibility. You have some very serious responsibility. But I want to assure you that this Bill wasn't necessary. Your term of office has expired; there'll be an election before the old Bill ran out. There'll be an election before that time, before the old Bill runs out.

So all we see here today is some politicking to try and get the ranchers back onside that they're losing with some of their ineffective programs and their non-targeted programs. Because the next minister of Agriculture will be dealing with the time frame that this Bill covers, not this minister here. This isn't a Bill that deals with the situation that we needed to deal with today. The old Bill doesn't run out till the end of this year, till December. The effects are still there. And by that time we'll have a brand-new government in here, Mr. Speaker. We'll have a government that will be fair to all the people of Saskatchewan, not just the friends who work in various ministers' offices.

We're going to have a full-time minister of Agriculture. We're going to have a program that will be designed to help young farmers, and the programs will be targeted. They won't be slap-happy programs that give tax breaks to the wealthy who are paying taxes. They will be programs that are designed and targeted to help the industry and to keep it alive.

And how do you keep an industry live like cattle, like the

beef industry? How do you keep it alive? By fattening up the rich? Is that how you make that industry survive? Is that how you get the cattle business alive? Well I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, the way to have a healthy beef industry is to ensure that there's new people coming into it — to ensure that there's new people coming into it. This Bill doesn't do that. This Bill doesn't do that.

This Bill ensures that those that are paying the tax can get tax credits, and they'll get a relief from their tax. That's what this Bill does. It doesn't do anything — nothing at all — for the young person wanting to get into the livestock business. It doesn't help them. And I think that because they are targeting and doing a Bill that's taking effect up to 1989, for the years 1987, '88, and '89 . . . Those are the three years we're talking about - the years that this government doesn't have a mandate to serve.

If the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture doesn't screw up his courage to call an election, the Queen will before this Bill is in effect and before this Bill comes off. The Queen will call the next election. Somebody's going to call it. But you people aren't going to be . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. The question before us is second reading of a Bill and not when we're going to have the next election.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Speaker, the Bill expressly dates, 1987, 1988, and 1989. Now if those three years, that are beyond the mandate of this government, have nothing to do with an election. Mr. Speaker, then you're on a different wavelength . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. You can debate the Bill but you can't debate whether or not we should be calling an election. That is not before you at this time.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Speaker, we should be having an election and not this Bill.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. I just ruled on that and I would ask the member to get on with his topic if he has something to say.

Mr. Engel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if I can't talk about the Bill, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my brief remarks I shall be moving second reading of Bill 40, An Act respecting the Establishment, Maintenance and Use of Park Land and Park Land Reserve.

The Bill will establish a classification system which will categorize each provincial park as a historic, natural environment, recreation, or wilderness park. And for the benefit of my friend opposite, Mr. Speaker, I am delivering it in English.

The Bill will also establish five new provincial parks: one, the Clearwater River Provincial Park, Saskatchewan's first wilderness park. This is 50 kilometres north of La Loche. The establishment of this park will protect a nationally significant natural, cultural and recreational heritage resource. Secondly, Mach Lake, near the village of Loon Lake, classified as a natural environment park.

The following three are currently recreation sites, and they will be classified as provincial recreation parks: (1) Candle Lake, north-east of Prince Albert; (2) Crooked Lake, in the Qu'Appelle Valley, south of Melville; (3) Blackstrap, south-east of Saskatoon.

(1445)

These five new parks, along with our existing parks, will provide the people of Saskatchewan and visitors to our province with additional, high-quality recreational experiences and protect examples of our natural environment. Nine historic sites will be officially upgraded to provincial parks status.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides the authority for the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources to establish park land reserves, setting aside and protecting lands for future park status. Seven new protected areas will be established to guarantee the protection and preservation of significant cultural, natural, and prehistoric/historic resources in this province.

The Parks Act will give Saskatchewan a means to better manage our current park resources and a framework to build an improved parks system for the future. The establishment of the new park lands will provide a more diversified park system, increase recreation opportunities, and protect and preserve significant natural and cultural areas of our province for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 40, An Act respecting the Establishment, Maintenance and Use of Park Land and Park Land Reserve.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I only have a few words to say right now on this Bill, and when I'm through with my short remarks I will be asking leave to adjourn the debate. But I see that the minister, under this Bill — and we are studying the Bill at the present time — is creating five new parks. But I find it quite odd that he would be talking about creating two new parks, and on the same hand is closing down 75 campsites in the province. This doesn't really seem to me that it's promoting our parks system in the province.

I see he has also opened, Mr. Speaker, a wilderness park up in . . . north of La Loche in my constituency. And I find it quite interesting that the minister would not even have the courtesy to invite me to that announcement that he was making in my constituency. I know it's a long way for me to drive, but I most certainly would have made an attempt, Mr. Minister, to be there. I had to hear it on the radio yesterday morning at 8 o'clock on the news.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, I have a number of other remarks that I want to make, and we want to go over the remarks that the minister has made here today, and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 2 - An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right, John Meldrum, general corporate counsel of SaskTel; behind Mr. Meldrum is George Spencer, who is executive assistant to the president of the corporation.

Clause 1

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, a few questions that I have on that, and maybe I can start off by dealing with most of it under clause 1, or item 1.

You're saying that you're going to . . . And I'll just deal with a part of one of the clauses and it says that:

. . . where the right to install the first line is not evidenced in writing.

Does that say that you are going to have the right to go into a farmer's land, if he has not given you the easement at this point and you don't have anything in writing from him allowing you to go across his property, that this Act is then going to allow you or SaskTel to go through that property without having to get an easement from that farmer?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — This simply covers the old rural telephone company easements. Many of those are not in writing, but 95 per cent are.

Mr. Lusney: — Well Mr. Minister, could you just clarify: do you have easements from everyone at this point where lines have gone across? Because I'm aware of some where you did not get easements, where you do go through, and there was some fight about it. Are you saying now that this is going to cover off some of those problems that might be out there?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — My officials aren't aware of any without the easements now. If you've got a specific example, then we'd be prepared to take a look at it. They're not admitting perfection, but they indicate that they are quite confident that at least 99.9. So there's no change in policy in any of this. It's just to clarify that the new individual line service will go through the easements that are already there and can be used for the new facilities.

Mr. Lusney: — In a situation, then, where there may be no easement to this point, what do you propose to do in that situation?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well if the facilities are all ready and the lines have already gone through, then there's probably an implied easement anyway, and we would simply use that, the same lines. We're not trying to cause more problems. We just want to make sure that legally clarified the individual lines can go through the existing easements. But if we do have a situation — and my officials aren't aware of any — where there was no easement sign and the lines have gone through, there's probably an implied easement anyway.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, maybe your officials aren't aware, and maybe that is covered off. Maybe there may be an implied easement on some of that. I know of one case where there was such a case where the easement was not received at the time when the line went through. It did go through. And I know there was a fight with SaskTel. I don't know what the outcome of that one was, but there may be some similar situations throughout the province where you may have put that line in and maybe there was some settlement made with the farmer involved, but you still may not necessarily have an easement on it.

What are you going to do in a situation where you may have to do that, or where you may have to change the course of that line? Would you be requiring new easements from that farmer if you have to go out of the existing right of way that you may have there?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well if there was a settlement, you can rest assured there was an easement, because there wouldn't be a settlement without an easement subsequently granted.

Mr. Lusney: — Well there could be a settlement for damage, not necessarily receiving the easement on there. You would have a settlement for the damage, and the farmer may still not give you the easement. So that would mean you've got a line there where you may not have an easement to that property.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well there may have been the occasional expropriation historically as well where there was none granted, but again, that's in the normal course. My officials advise they are 99.9 per cent satisfied that all of the easements are granted, and the historic practice of SaskTel of getting the easements is just being continued.

If you do have a specific matter that hasn't been resolved, then certainly we're prepared to take a look at it. But let me assure you that they are very few and far between, and we continue the practice of the compensation for crop damage, that sort of thing. That will be continued under this.

Mr. Lusney: — Yes. My concern was about that last clause that you had in there where you do not appear to need anything in writing. And I can just read what my concern is here:

within the boundaries of the right (of way) granted to the corporation in writing to install the line or within five metres of the line that was first installed where the right to install the first line is not evidenced in writing.

Now you may have a line in there that you may not have something in writing on it. You're saying that this will allow you to go in there, and the farmer then has no reason to complain because this Act is going to make it legal.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — But if there is a line already in there and the service is being supplied, then there's probably an implied easement anyway. And like I say, the number of these . . . You know, if you're aware of any, let us know. But as I'm assured by the officials that these would be very, very few and far between — and certainly if the line is already in there we would follow as much as closely the same easement rules we would anywhere else.

Mr. Lusney: — Well if things are not going to be any different than they were in the past, if this won't make any changes, Mr. Minister, why would you require this specific clause in the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Lane — Because the word "line" in the past may just be narrowly defined and interpreted as to the existing line that's already in. And of course we want to put new lines in. And so we're just clarifying the legal position of the corporation. Keep in mind, as well, that whenever it's a condition of service in SaskTel, that an easement be granted for the hook-up of the service. So again, if there are any that are not in writing, they would be very, very few.

Mr. Lusney: — If you however have to go off the existing right of way then, would you require new easements after you passed this legislation, or not?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Oh yes. Like I advised very carefully so we're not misinterpreted, that if there are any that were not in writing . . . There may be some in the rural telephone companies, but SaskTel itself, it's very much a term of service that the easement be granted.

Mr. Lusney: — I think, Mr. Minister, that's probably where the problem did begin, where rural telephone companies buried some cables that didn't acquire the easement to that area or that land that they went through. How does this deal with those situations?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well again, this is fairly clear that it again is just covering SaskTel. If there was a line in there, and supposing a rural telephone did not get in, then they could use exactly the implied easement that's there, so I really don't foresee any problems.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 2 - An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I move the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to, Bill read a third and passed under its title.

(1500)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Environment

Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 9

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to welcome the minister and his officials again. For starters, I'd like to continue on with estimates on Environment here. Mr. Minister, you have spent a lot of time living and working in the city of Regina, I understand. You are also the Minister of Environment, and so you should know several of the questions I'm going to put before you without asking your officials.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, how many pesticide formulating plants — or shall we say, hazardous material plants — are there in Regina?

Hon. Mr. Embury: Mr. Chairman, the number of chemical formulating plants in Regina that we're aware of is three.

Mr. Yew: — Well, Mr. Minister, can you name the plants themselves? I was of the understanding, Mr. Minister, that being a resident and a former alderman of the city, and being the Minister of Environment, you ought to know the number of chemical plants located here in the city. As well, you should know the names by heart. And as well, Mr. Minister, I indicated initially, deliberately, you didn't have to . . . Could you name those plants without having to consult your officials?

There's a point to be made there, Mr. Minister, and the point is: you, like members of the government are certainly . . . There's a fundamental difference in terms of the concerns, the policy pertaining to environment, pertaining to jobs, for the province — pertaining to management. When it comes to your department, you know, you ought to have a good feel for what there is in terms of environmental issues and concerns.

I don't have a staff like you have, Mr. Minister. You've got all the technical staff over and beyond what is required. I have no staff. The legislature does not provide me with full-time staff - not one full-time staff, Mr. Minister. And I'm responsible . . . as critic for Environment I get correspondence from all over the province. I just want to make that point as well, you know; the imbalance here. You've got a deputy minister, assistant deputy ministers, legal advisers, professional people behind you.

Anyway getting back to the question now, Mr. Minister. I was asking you: what are the names of the plants? And also I ask you how many plants there were and you said three. My information tells me there is four.

Hon. Mr. Embury: Mr. Chairman, a couple of

comments on the diatribe that has just been delivered by the member opposite.

Of course it is quite true that I was an alderman in the city of Regina. Mind you it was sometimes difficult in those days to get that type of information even from the provincial government at the time. As I brought up yesterday, the provincial government at the time, the NDP, of course on many occasions decided not to tell the city of Regina about PCB spills and other matters . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now the member from Quill Lakes may want to yell, but I mean the question was, the implied question was that I was on the city of Regina and should know these things, and I'm trying to tell the members opposite that although they are yelling from their seats again - yelling from their seats again, that the members opposite, when they were government, refused to tell the city of Regina many things dealing with the environment until years after the fact.

Secondly, of course, that I personally should know all the plants in the city of Regina. There are thousands and thousands of businesses in the city of Regina, thanks to this government, and quite frankly I don't know them all. I do know where my house is, however.

Now the three plants that we can think of offhand are May and Baker, Hoechst and Shell.

Mr. Yew: — Did I get it straight, Mr. Minister, did you say May and Baker, Hoechst, I think I believe you — if I heard you correctly — and Ciba-Geigy plant. What about, Mr. Minister, the PPM plant of Canada? Where is that situated as well?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, that plant is not a chemical formulating plant.

Mr. Yew: — But you acknowledge that there are three plants, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I just gave him the name of the three plants. The plant that he just said was a chemical formulating plant is not.

Mr. Yew: I just wanted to get that for the record, Mr. Minister. And again, I want to raise this with you, Mr. Minister. Do you know, Mr. Minister, and again I want to ask you personally, not your officials but you personally, do you know if any of the pesticide formulating plants in Regina have expanded or rebuilt their plants in the last two years?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, one.

Mr. Yew: — Which one, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — May & Baker.

Mr. Yew: — May & Baker was expanded or rebuilt. What about the other one, the Hoechst plant? Was it not expanded as well?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — In the past year, Mr. Chairman, we believe not. There may have been some exchange of equipment in the plant, but we don't believe in the last

year there has been an expansion of the plant.

Mr. Yew: — My information, Mr. Minister, is that the May & Baker plant was rebuilt and the Hoechst plant was expanded. However, go on with the orders of business here.

Mr. Minister, the Hoechst chemical plant is in the Ross Industrial area, and I just happened to tour those areas, the plants in question, personally. And I find that that plant is still too close to the city, as far as I'm concerned. But I want to go on, Mr. Minister.

The Ciba-Geigy plant and the May & Baker plant are very close to the residential neighbourhoods. And also, Mr. Minister, the one plant is three blocks away from the Haultain School. And also, the other plant is also approximately just four blocks away from the St. Paul School.

Mr. Minister, I ask you, do you not think that this is a situation that should be allowed, you know, in this time and age . . . Don't you not think that it's a dangerous situation, that something ought not be done about it?

(1515)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — The answer, Mr. Chairman, is no.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, as you know, the pesticide producing plants located right within the city of Regina store raw products in large tanks on their properties. Do you know what chemicals are stored in each of the plants, Mr. Minister? And also, while you're on that question, what is the most dangerous chemical to humans used as a feedstock at the chemical plants under discussion?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not clear which plant is under discussion.

Mr. Yew: — May & Baker, the Hoechst, and the Ciba-Geigy plant.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the question that the member raises is one of some importance to the city of Regina and to all urban centres. We won't know from day to day, and neither will the municipality from day to day, what toxic substances would be on site at those plants. If the member would recollect, in dealing with this question, last year we amended The Environmental Management Protection Act so that we could allow the municipality to enforce the regulations dealing with the storage of toxic substances on site at these plants and in other plants.

We are presently working with the city of Regina in that regard; and that is that we're working with the city of Regina in finalizing the regulations that they will enforce themselves. And those regulations will allow the city to have a better monitoring ability and capability to monitor the toxic chemicals that those plants would have on hand and in storage from time to time, depending on the time of year and what those plants were doing. So in this area we are making strides forward.

We think that when these regulations are completed the

city will have the power necessary, and the power that they've been seeking for some time, to be able to monitor and have a hands-on knowledge of the toxic materials, not only at these three plants in particular but in any other plant in the city of Regina that might have toxic materials involved in that business.

And as I say, we are presently co-operating with the city in putting these regulations together. Hopefully we can finalize them soon, and this will give the city a tool that they have not had to date but one that they will soon acquire.

Mr. Yew: — It's interesting to note, Mr. Minister, that every question that I've asked you thus far, you have had to ask your officials into the status of those questions. And I'm very amused about that because I don't have officials to deal with in terms of advisement. I simply have to go by what I have learned personally.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, when do you anticipate those new regulations to come into effect. You referred to new regulations that are being reviewed and possibly, presumably will be adopted by the cities or the municipalities.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman . . . And I must apologize to the member opposite; I had to talk to my officials again to get the information. Mind you, I do that, Mr. Chairman, for one reason and that is so that the information given to the committee is as up to date as possible.

The regulations that we're discussing now were finalized with the city last month. Those regulations now, in their form, are being sent to other cities and to SUMA for their reaction to them, for their input into the suggested regulations. Once we have that complete, we'll be able to carry on and carry forward with those regulations so that municipalities will be given that tool with which to monitor the toxic materials within their boundaries.

Mr. Yew: — Well, Mr. Minister, I understand that environment is under your jurisdiction, your portfolio, your responsibility, etc., and the regulations in discussion at the moment have not been adopted. But irregardless of the fact that if and when those regulations are adopted, environment is still under your portfolio.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: are insecticides produced at the Regina pesticide plants, and also, Mr. Minister, which insecticide is the most dangerous to human beings?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, perhaps we should clarify what in fact goes on in the city of Regina. In the city of Regina, in the plants under discussion, those pesticides are formulated. That is, those pesticides are mixed here in whatever quantities they're sold, but they are not manufactured here. And of course, the difference is that one operation creates a much bigger problem than the other. We have the lesser of the problems in that they formulate them here; they are mixed here into whatever quantities are required for sale.

We couldn't tell you offhand the most lethal, I suppose if

that's the way you wanted to put it — to mankind — pesticide. It's not available in Saskatchewan, I'm told, or we haven't found it. But from time to time one wouldn't know what's on those sites at any given time. That's really the point of why we are putting these regulations into place, so that the municipalities, whose power it will be to administer those regulations, will know what is in their boundaries because after all they will be the first to be affected if something goes wrong with them.

Mr. Yew: — I am told, Mr. Minister, that of the two chemicals we're talking about, herbicides and insecticides, that insecticides are the most dangerous to human beings. Given that fact, Mr. Minister, are you concerned that the Ciba-Geigy pesticide plant is located within only a half a dozen blocks of a senior citizens' high-rise apartment? And also are you concerned that the May & Baker pesticide plant is also located a couple of blocks from occupied residential areas?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — I am not sure, Mr. Chairman, if the member opposite has a good knowledge of the city of Regina. But the plants he speaks of are in Ross Industrial Park, which is an industrial park built in the city of Regina in which these types of things are to go and into which they have gone.

But it does highlight what I am trying to get across to the member opposite: that given that the city has zoned and has put into place the industrial park into which these plants are now situated, we feel and they feel that there should be further powers given to the municipalities so that they can have a more hands-on knowledge of the types of toxic materials that are within the city. And that is exactly why we are co-operating and working with the city and other municipalities in putting into place these regulations, so that they have that tool available to them.

Mr. Yew: — I was quite concerned, Mr. Minister, just the other day when I toured those areas with regards to the plants that we're talking about. They are situated relatively . . . Even if they are located at the Ross Industrial Park, they are still closely adjacent to schools, senior citizens' high-rise apartments, and residential areas. And that is of some concern, Mr. Minister.

I want to ask you: can you tell me, Mr. Minister, of the pesticide plants located in the city of Regina and the chemical plants in Saskatoon, are these plants permitted to vent chemical gases into the air over the plants and residential areas?

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, where gases would be emitted from any of those plants, they would have to follow our air pollution control regulations which would require them to do any number of things to the emissions, of course. And of course all those plants follow those regulations, and have for years.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, I should have probably asked this along with the previous question. I wanted to ask you - and I'll raise it now - what chemical gases are exhausted into the air by those chemical plants in question, Mr. Minister. And well, I'll ask that for now. You

must have that information, I'm sure.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well basically, Mr. Chairman, the regulations of course are such that they're put into place so that nothing is emitted outside of the plant, that those chemicals are . . . or the vapours from the chemicals would be captured, so to speak, and that's why those regulations are there.

Now if you want to talk about the different plants and the different types of chemicals used, we could provide you, I suppose, with a copy of the regulations — which are quite thick — which would describe in technical terms all of the regulations pertaining to those emissions. But in a general statement I would tell you that the reason these regulations are in place is to ensure that those emissions do not occur.

Mr. Yew: — I am somewhat confused here, Mr. Minister. You say nothing is being emitted. That is not the information I'm getting at all.

I want to know from you, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: then how do you know the chemical plants and the pesticide plants we are talking about are not exceeding the limits of what they can legally release into the air in terms of gases and what have you? Certainly there is some emission coming out from the plants in question.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well as far, Mr. Chairman, as the herbicides are concerned, as I indicated to the member previously, they are to be captured within the plant. Now from time to time if there are vapours or smells that get through the charcoal filters or what have you — whatever is in place to capture that - we have no monitoring device to measure that, I am advised, but these regulations and controls are in place to capture that before they are emitted into the air.

Mr. Yew: — Now, Mr. Minister, how often do officials of your department, environmental officials, inspect those chemical plants and the pesticide plants in question?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the province of Saskatchewan has an annual permit cycle in which we then have the opportunity to sit down with the industry in question, annually, to discuss any problems that they may or may not be having with the plant. We don't have another cycle of inspections, so to speak, unless, of course, there's a problem with the plant. But we do have an annual permit system.

But having said that, as I had indicated to the member previously, the cities and municipalities would like to have more hands-on inspection, if you would, themselves, and that's one of the reasons why we are formulating the regulations that we spoke of a few minutes ago, so that they could be given that tool so they could have on-site inspections as they wish. And as I've indicated, the stage we're at now with those regulations is that they've been sent to the other municipalities and SUMA for their input, and when that's finished, we'll put them into place.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, with the terrible tragedy in

Bhopal, India, where a gas leak killed thousands and injured tens of thousands, blinding some and destroying the lungs of others, do you think that you are taking all the necessary precautions to protect residents of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan cities of Saskatchewan living downwind and in the areas from the pesticide and chemical plants we're talking about?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well as I had indicated, yes, I'm satisfied that there are adequate safeguards and precautions in place in Saskatchewan so that that would not happen here. I think that, obviously, you can always strive for better regulations and better systems, and that we are trying to do, in co-operation with the municipalities who are as concerned about these things as we ourselves are, and we are constantly working with them to better the systems that are now in place.

I think it would be a misservice to the public, however, to raise the question or to, in your questioning, try and put into the minds of the public that there is a disaster lurking on their doorstep . . . And I know that the member is not trying to do that, but I don't think we would do a service to the public to leave that impression.

But as I understand the member's questioning, he is concerned on what systems are in place, and we are as well. We are working with the municipalities constantly to try and improve those systems. I suppose it's a type of thing that is always ongoing. I mean, you can never reach the perfect system, I don't think, in this type of endeavour when you're talking about public safety. I think that we are continuing to strive for better and better systems as time goes on.

Mr. Yew: — I'm quite concerned, Mr. Minister. I just maybe, first of all, want to concur with your sentiments or what you stated a moment ago. I certainly don't want to throw a scare into the minds of the people of Saskatchewan, but the questions I'm putting to you, Mr. Minister, are certainly valid questions that ought to be considered. You know, there is potential dangers in some areas. And certainly, as the Minister for the Environment, I am sure that you're just as concerned as residents living adjacent to some of those plants.

I take exception, Mr. Minister, with some of the questions that I've been placing to you. You seem to be sloughing off as not your responsibility and that those are the responsibilities of the municipality. It's somewhat bothering me, you know, to look at it from one perspective where a municipality has been delegated that responsibility.

You know, it's fine. They themselves, as elected officials, have a responsibility to their electorate. Fine. But in terms of providing them with the expertise and the necessary funding, the appropriate funds to appropriately look into the . . . and protect their electorate, there is something amiss here, Mr. Minister.

(1545)

I look at your department. You've effectively cut your department staff by half - from a total of 172 employees, 1982 and '83, down to 92 in '86 and '87; and from a

budget of 11 million down to 4 million, or is it 7, pardon me. You've effectively cut the Department of Environment's functions. You know, you haven't got the staff that is required to look into environmental dangers — potential dangers, should we say.

You talk about officials of your department meeting with certain other officials on an annual basis, Mr. Minister. You know, is that enough; is that how much concern you have for the environment? I certainly dispute it if you think that is enough, one meeting per year to assess environmental concerns, address environmental potential dangers, etc., just to meet once a year. I dispute that statement that, you know, that you think your department is doing a sufficient job.

I question, you know, just what form of support are you giving to the municipalities if they, in fact, are going to take over responsibilities of the Department of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we were getting along so well for a while. I think that the member opposite, of course — and we've gone through this yesterday — is misconstruing the figures in the blue book. He must remember that from the time of 1982 to the time of 1986 there have been 60 positions transferred to the water Crown and another 16 positions to Parks. Those positions and the jobs that they fulfil are still being fulfilled by government. They simply do not show up in the blue book.

As a matter of fact, if one takes into account what was in the blue book for the total environment in 1982, and what's in the blue book for the total environment in 1986, including a much expanded emphasis on water and the water Crown, and a much expanded emphasis in Parks, in fact there are much more than 170 people now in the Government of Saskatchewan whose job it is to look after the Saskatchewan environment.

But I think that the point that I'm trying to get across to the member opposite: when we talk about regulations and the co-operation with the municipalities, there's a very good reason for that. And perhaps I might just explain for a moment what that reason is.

It is my belief, and my experience, that both in terms of response to an emergency, or administration — I'm talking about inspections and that type of thing — these things can be done better at the local level because (a) the people at the local level know where the problems are better than a central body, which would be the Government of Saskatchewan, and obviously in terms of response would be much closer to any problems that might arise than some central body, being the Government of Saskatchewan; so that the reason why we are proceeding with the regulations and with the co-operation with municipalities in regulating environmental matters at the local level is because we have a belief that the local people can do a better job than we can do than by building a larger, central type of organization. Now that's not to say, Mr. Chairman, that I do not agree with the member opposite that we, as a Department of Environment, must lend the expertise to this function, and we do.

The member opposite asked whether I think my department is doing a good job. I think they're doing a very good job. I can tell the member opposite that I have in my department a body of people who are very dedicated to the job, who have the expertise to carry out the job, and have shown dedication to that job over the years. And I think that they're doing a fine job, and they have, and I have every confidence that they will continue to do the job that's ahead of us.

But to put it . . . To give you the general direction of how we would approach the protection in the administration of environment as far as the city of Regina or urban Saskatchewan, it would be to co-operate with those local groups because they are closer to, not only closer to where the action is, so to speak, but they also have the responsibility — they also have the responsibility in the first place of allowing those plants to be built in their cities. In other words, it's their responsibility to zone for them, to try and place them in their communities where they feel they should be, keeping in mind the regulations set out provincially, and that clearly is the municipalities' — clearly the municipalities' role. So it only makes sense that they have a greater say in the day-to-day monitoring of those activities after they're put into place. And we will proceed with the co-operation and furnish them with those tools as soon as we can.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, I'm not really sure what my reaction would be if I was an alderman or a chairman of a municipality. You know, I like the concept of decentralization — don't get me wrong — but the transfer of a major responsibility of this nature without transferring any appropriate funds and expertise is another question. That is quite a burden on the shoulders of local government, wouldn't you say? If they, in fact, have a responsibility to carry out the functions of part of your department when it relates to, say . . . For an example, my colleague, the member for Athabasca, yesterday raised the very serious issue of the crude oil spill over Lake Athabasca. And that is an example I use to demonstrate the burden that the local municipality will have, on one hand. On the other hand, if that municipality hasn't got the expertise, the necessary funding, the appropriate funding and expertise to handle such a situation, you know, it's going to be an impossible task. Wouldn't you agree?

You know, I take some exception to the fact that you try to maintain that you're providing all the necessary financing in your department with regards to the appropriation on estimates, the funding appropriation on your estimates. And also you're trying to maintain that you have sufficient people on staff. You know, we've had major problems. I could even go to the major spill in Key Lake which I mentioned briefly yesterday. Those are tremendous tasks, Mr. Minister.

I want to ask you then . . . As I said before, I don't dispute with you any initiative taken by you to decentralize some autonomy and responsibility to local government, but in doing so you must also provide the necessary funding and the necessary support and expertise. Don't you agree?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — A number of comments, Mr.

Chairman. I think first of all that I would disagree with the member opposite on the word "transfer" of responsibility. I think that the more appropriate word would be "share" the responsibility, and I'm speaking of the regulations that are now being reviewed with municipalities.

The impetus for these regulations, that is those who wanted them the most, were the municipalities. We are co-operating with them. They have identified, that is the municipalities have identified, that they wish this tool to be there for them. In other words, it is not a case of the provincial government imposing these responsibilities on the municipalities, rather that the municipalities have asked for this tool to be in place so that they can better carry out their job. And it is a shared responsibility because we do not intend to give up the responsibility of monitoring or, if need be, cleaning up spills, if that's necessary.

I think that if you use the example that you did, which was the example in Uranium City, the initial response to that spill, to use your example, after it had been identified to us, was the Department of Environment. In other words, it was the department who initially responded to the first notification of the spill and who organized the initial clean-up in Uranium City.

And I am advised that, for instance, of the 10,000 estimated gallons of oil that had spilled, they feel that about 7,000 of them were cleaned up last fall and hopefully the rest this week or next — starting this week or next.

But the point I'm trying to make . . . And the point that you made, that you can't transfer the total responsibility to municipalities and expect somehow all municipalities to have the capability to respond to environmental spills, is true. And I don't disagree with your point at all. In fact, I use your example to show you that we are not transferring that responsibility. In your example it was our department that did respond last fall and get the clean-up under way, and not the municipality.

But it's more of a . . . I think the concept would be a shared responsibility firstly, and I've given the reasons why the local people could do it, I think, very effectively. And secondly, it was the municipalities themselves that had asked for this tool, these regulations, and we are co-operating with them and hope to be able to deliver that tool to them in the near future.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'm not going to take a long time today on your estimates, but I do want to go back to the spill that we were discussing at Uranium City. And I just listened to you indicating that last summer when that spill took place, your department was the ones that had organized the clean-up of the oil spill on Lake Athabasca or in Bushell Bay.

I wonder, Mr. Minister: could you indicate when you first organized, first were aware and you did the first organizational portion of getting the clean-up started, could you indicate what group of individuals you used, or was it the equipment from the community of Uranium City, or how did you first start to get the clean-up under

way?

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I believe yesterday in questions I had read the chronology to the member opposite, but if he missed it - I can't find it in *Hansard*, but it's there - but I'll read you the chronology of events as I have them here.

On October 20th of last year, the Saskatchewan spill response centre received a call regarding the oil spill in the bay. On that same date, October 20th, we contacted the mines pollution control branch - that is, I guess, the spill response centre contacted the mines pollution control branch - and they requested that they inspect the bay and report back to the spill report centre regarding the damage and the possible methods of clean-up. Now this was on October 20th when the spill had been reported.

On October 21st, the day after it was reported, the mines pollution control branch actually and physically inspected the bay. Okay? So we had our employees of the department inspecting the bay, and the following observations were made. This was on October 21st. The observation was that the oil ran down the bank and under the metal building, and the oil was seeping through the bank into the bay. The other observation was that there was a slight sheen on the entire bay. And the third observation was that there was a heavy oil slick all along the bank and under the dock, and, should the wind change, the oil would be carried out into the bay and eventually into Lake Athabasca, which I think the member opposite has mentioned in his remarks as well yesterday.

Now we're still talking about the one day after the spill was reported. Based on the mines pollution control branch inspection, it was decided to respond to the spill site and attempt to contain the oil along the shore line and any additional oil seeping from the bank. This is October 21st.

On October 22nd, which is two days after the spill response centre received the call, arrangements for air transportation, equipment, and contracting the spill clean-up personnel were made. Now they were made by the Department of the Environment - not the municipality, in this case, but the Department of the Environment made those arrangements on October 22nd.

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

The local resource officer deployed approximately 200 feet of boom and much oil had accumulated behind that boom. A black oil slick had accumulated along and under the main dock. The decision was made to boom as much of the

dock area as possible, as this was where the oil was the heaviest . . . 325 feet of boom was deployed by Saskatchewan Environment around the dock area. Oil staining was evident several hundred feet in both directions of where the oil was seeping into (Bushell) Bay.

Saskatchewan Environment skimmed 100 gallons of oil from behind the boom area.

Now this is October 25th. Lee's Construction from La Ronge arrived at the spill site at approximately 1800 hours. And the Lee's construction were able to move equipment and material from the airport to the spill site and make a quick inspection of the area prior to nightfall. And on October 26th Lee's Construction began the clean-up.

So the point, I guess, Mr. Chairman, is that not the local municipality was involved in the initial arrangements for the clean-up, but rather the Department of the Environment, which is fair in the case of Uranium City because we were better equipped to do that than they. And I would think that in future that that type of co-operation with any municipality would continue.

I think if the member looks at page 1305 in *Hansard*, I had read what I have just read again to him, and so the answer would be there.

Mr. Thompson: —Mr. Minister, you indicate that the Department of the Environment organized the first portion of the clean-up. You indicated in the House yesterday in questioning that it was not the responsibility of the Department of the Environment to get involved in this; that it was the responsibility of the individuals who owned the oil. And as you indicated, Burksen Transport were the ones who were responsible.

I also see that you made a statement in here that you determined that the spill occurred because of vandalism or carelessness, one or the other, and I'm quoting from your own statements, Mr. Minister. You indicate that it was not really . . . You weren't blaming the Burksen Transport but you indicate that it was carelessness or vandalism.

Then you also went on to say yesterday that because Uranium City, which the local community indicate that they had the equipment there and still have the equipment and are still prepared to clean up the site, but it was not your responsibility in the Department of the Environment to hire any local people but rather it was the responsibility of the transport company, Burksen Transport. And I'm assuming that you must . . . You must assume, because you make that statement, that the transport company made a mistake or that, as you put it, it was caused by carelessness on the part of the transport company or vandalism.

Now I don't know how you determined that, but I just wanted to bring that out. And I see a quote today in the paper from the community of Uranium City, by one of their officials. And I will just indicate what he said for your benefit: "The absorbents needed to contain the spill were needed last year," not this year. They were needed last

year.

Last fall you had an opportunity, Mr. Minister, to clean up that spill and hire local people to do it, and that wasn't done. But you chose to hire, as you indicate . . . The transport company hired a local firm from La Ronge to oversee the clean-up. Was there any moneys involved or put out by your department for work done on that clean-up?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — There are a number of things, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct that last fall Environment did take the lead in cleaning this up. And we did that for two reasons: one, because we felt that time was of the essence and it should be done now, and the ownership of the oil at that time was not known. So we weren't about to wait around to try and find out who owned the oil and get the ball rolling that way.

We did, and we will on any occasion that we have to, undertake that work ourselves. The bill, however, for that will be billed to the owner of the oil. So he will pay for the work that we initiated and he will . . . Obviously now that we have ascertained who the owner is, he is directly responsible for the rest of the clean-up this spring. As I mentioned yesterday, that should be under way soon. So that is why we initiated it last fall. But the payment will be the owner's, not the government's.

My understanding of the local employment situation is that Lee's Construction Limited did employ four residents of uranium City in the clean-up work last fall, I guess. And I'm not sure what he's going to employ now. So I think the answer to your question is that we will initiate any clean-up if we don't know who the owner is at the time, time being of the essence.

The question of why we did not clean it all up last fall: my notes would indicate that on October 30th, which would be about 10 days, I guess, after we were first notified, Saskatchewan Environment staff were back on site to inspect the spill clean-up progress.

The clean-up was progressing — this is October 30th now; however, below zero temperatures were making it difficult to pump the oil-water mixture. And some shore line clean-up had been done around small docks located in the end of the bay. Absorbent materials were being used to soak oil off the water. So, I mean, they did have absorbents up there last fall. I mean, they're not just being introduced into this clean-up this spring; they were being used last fall. Absorbent materials were being used to soak oil off of the water surface on October 30th.

Now I'm not quite sure of the total bill to be sent to these people yet, but the bill for it will be sent to the owners of the oil.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Yesterday in questioning I asked you why the Department of the Environment hadn't used the local contractors who were on the scene with equipment and men ready to go to work. And you indicated to me at that time that it was not the responsibility of your department, that you did not hire the company from La Ronge.

Now today you stand up in the House . . . And I don't want to get into a long debate on this. I think you've made it quite clear that you're not fully aware of what's going on within your department. And *Hansard*, which I have in my hand and I'm quoting from — yesterday you got up and clearly stated that it was not the responsibility of the Department of the Environment; that you did not undertake to hire any contractor from La Ronge, but it was the trucking firm that did the hiring.

Today you get up in the House and now you say that it was the Department of the Environment who took the initiative — they were the ones who started the clean-up last fall — and that the trucking firm is now going to be billed for the total clean-up. And that's all I was asking you for, Mr. Minister, yesterday, was that the Department of the Environment . . . And you did that. Your officials have carried out the policy of your department. They have taken the initiative to clean up that mess.

(1615)

But I just ask you why you did not use the facilities that you had at Uranium City, and then you could have contained that oil spill that's up there. You say, Mr. Minister, that your officials have cleaned up 7,000 gallons of crude oil. And I just question that because I'm not too sure how they could measure the oil that they have taken out, especially due to the fact that the reports that are coming out of Uranium City now from town officials and from local citizens is that there is a massive oil spill up there, and that oil is still in the lakes, and sooner or later it's going to get out into the big lakes, if it hasn't got there last fall. And you stood up here a few minutes ago and said that they will be starting this week or next week on the clean-up.

And I say, Mr. Minister, that that's not good enough. Equipment is up there; men are up there. I say, and I say the same as I said yesterday, that you should take the initiative. Fly up there with your deputy minister and your officials and meet with the local community and hire local people on the scene and get that oil spill cleaned up before it gets into the water system that could lead it right down to Fort Chipewyan and up the Athabasca River.

And there are hundreds and hundreds of citizens who use that water for human consumption, let alone the animals and the birds that are going to be affected by this type of a massive spill. And it's not like you're spilling ordinary oil. We're dealing with crude oil that could be in that water for many, many years because of the type of weather that we have up in that country.

And I just ask you, Mr. Minister, to reassess what is going on. Go up and meet with the community of Uranium City and get that clean7up started — not next week, as you indicate here that it may start next week — get that clean-up started right away because it's something that we can't let expand.

The lake is starting to open up more and more all the time, and as a result of the dead animals floating around and the way they . . . You talk about a boom, but that boom doesn't work when you have ice flows that come in. That boom can be here 15 minutes and gone the next because

of the ice flows when the lakes break up. And the dead animals floating around, as a result, the danger to the drinking water for many, many communities that get their water from that chain.

And I just say to you, Mr. Minister, that the information that you have given is contradictory. And we can continue that debate if you want, because I have it in writing now and we can debate that, but I'm not going to debate that any more - what you said or when the spill took place, whether it was in the fall or the summer, or 1985 or 1986. All I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, is to use your good offices and go to Uranium City, meet with the folks up there, and get that spill cleaned up.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess I could rise to the occasion but I think it's sufficient to say that what I've read into the record twice in the chronological events of what has happened up there, would indicate quite plainly that the Department of the Environment was right on top of the situation; that in fact as soon as they were notified of the spill on October 20th, they were on the site and the clean-up proceeded directly after we were notified.

I am advised that of the 10,000 estimated gallons of oil that had seeped into the bay, about 7,000 gallons were recovered last fall until operations had to cease because of freeze-up; that equipment has now been flown up for this clean-up to continue. And I'd indicated to the member yesterday that it was our information that the clean-up would be proceeding this week or early next week. So it is under way and we have got a good handle on it.

I won't debate that any further with him, but I think it's quite clear that, from the moment that the department was notified last October, they have taken the appropriate steps, and the clean-up is being done as quickly as weather permits.

Mr. Thompson: — Just one short question on that, Mr. Minister, then, you can assure the citizens of Camsell Portage and the other communities on Lake Athabasca that that oil that has flowed into Bushell Bay on Lake Athabasca will not get out of the bay?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — I can assure the residents of northern Saskatchewan that we will take all actions that we possibly can to recover as much oil as we can, and that's all I can tell them realistically.

Mr. Thompson: — So you will not indicate to anybody up there that oil that has spilled will be contained in the bay; that as far as you're concerned you give no guarantees that that oil will not make its way out into the lake and down the shores of Lake Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I would love to guarantee to those people that the spill would have never taken place, but obviously that did happen. It obviously was not planned. The clean-up is being done as quickly as possible. It is being handled as well as possible. We cannot guarantee, obviously, anything except that we will do the best that can be done to recover that oil.

Mr. Thompson: — Well, Mr. Minister, you indicate that everything is under control, that there's no need to rush into this clean-up because you indicate that the clean-up will start maybe next week. So I think you should . . . you must feel fairly secure in stating that this oil spill is under control and that there will be no trace of crude oil on the shores of Lake Athabasca or you wouldn't be making these statements.

But I still urge you, Mr. Minister, to go into Uranium City. I think that it's only fair when we have a major spill, the magnitude that we have had up there and what's happening now to the wildlife in that area and the potential for damage to the drinking water, I think it's only fair that you go up there as a minister and have a look at it, firsthand, and talk to the mayor and the councillors of Uranium City. And I just ask you that.

I now want to turn to one more area of concern for myself and for the citizens of this province, and for you, Mr. Minister, as a minister of the Department of the Environment, and it's a new policy that has been implemented by the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources to close down 75 campsites in the province of Saskatchewan . . .

An Hon. Member: — We've been all through this.

Mr. Thompson: — Well the member for Moosomin, he figures we've been all through this and it's not important, but I say that it is important. And I just ask you, Mr. Minister, have you directed your officials to take a look at . . . I'm sorry, I thought the member from Moosomin wanted to . . . Did you want the floor?

Mr. Minister, if you had indicated to your officials that . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well I thought I had the floor.

Mr. Thompson: — No, I'm on the floor. I just asked if you wanted the floor. I have the floor right now.

Now that the minister has indicated that he will be closing down 75 campsites throughout the province, and I think that you, yourself, will realize that in his statement he said, we will not be shutting them down but we will not be maintaining the sites. And I think that when you take a look at what's going to happen or possibly could happen if the sites are not maintained, that there's going to be all the garbage that is going to be deposited in the 75 campsites and will not be picked up. I think that if this takes place, and I'm hoping that your minister will change his mind and not close down any of the sites, but I think that . . . I'm sure, Mr. Minister, that you realize that this will be an environmental hazard if this type of garbage is allowed to be scattered throughout the 75 campsites in our province.

And I just ask you, Mr. Minister, if you have instructed your officials to watch this one closely, because I think it could become a very serious problem this summer.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well it's obvious, Mr. Chairman, that the bulk of this question belongs in the estimates of my colleague, the Minister of Parks, whose estimates, I understand, are to come up shortly.

But as I understand the discussion as it has gone on in question period over the last number of days in regards to these 75 park sites, they are little more, I take it, than parking lots — neither electrified or used.

So while our litter laws are in place and will be enforced not only in those sites but in Saskatchewan generally, there'll be no special emphasis given to this outside of the general litter laws that apply to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Thompson: — Well it's funny, Mr. Minister. You talk about the problem not being one of yours, and you also say that the 75 sites are not electrified or used. For the life of me, I don't understand how your cabinet works. Surely you must get together on these things, because this is an environmental problem. And to suggest that the closing down of 75 campsites in Saskatchewan just because they're not electrified, and to say that they're not used, is just not true.

Sure, they're not electrified. That's why them campsites are there. They're out along the roads, off the power line, off the grids, and they're there and they've been maintained. But if they're not maintained and the garbage is allowed to build up and then spread around by the bears and the birds — and that's what'll happen — then it becomes an environmental problem. Regardless of what department is involved, the Department of the Environment is involved when it relates to the environment.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that it most certainly is a serious problem regardless if we're going to do the minister's estimates right now. And the question I asked you is: if this takes place this summer, have you talked to your officials and have you put something in place that you can clean up the campsites, because it certainly will be an environmental hazard?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, as I indicated to the member opposite, the environmental laws and the litter laws in the province of Saskatchewan will be enforced this year.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. That's really all I wanted to know, because we have 75 of them campsites that are going to be closed down, and I think there's going to be a lot of litter that your department is going to have to move in and make darn sure that the environment is safe.

Mr. Yew: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, Mr. Minister, is your department able to lay charges against a company or an individual that is responsible for a chemical spill or pollution of some kind, Mr. Minister? Are you able to lay charges?

Hon. Mr. Embury: Yes.

Mr. Yew: — Is it The Environmental Management and Protection Act and the spill control regulations that permit the laying of charges against a polluter?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Yes.

Mr. Yew: — During the PC government's term of office, Mr. Minister, how many charges have been laid against polluters, and how many convictions have there been?

(1630)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, there have been none.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, at the end of May of last year, charges against Eldor mines under the federal fisheries Act were stayed by a Crown prosecutor. The charges dealt with the company allowing pollution to enter Wollaston Lake. I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: can you tell me what your department knows of the current status of the case? Are charges still pending? Have radiation levels on any part of that lake been checked and found to be high?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — There's two parts to the question, Mr. Chairman. First, dealing with the charges, we're not aware that charges are pending. Second, dealing with the harm to the lake, as you know, a study was just released some months ago which indicated that no harm could be found. The consultant who produced the study could find no evidence to say that the lake was harmed.

Mr. Yew: — The residents of Wollaston Lake in my constituency, Mr. Minister, have expressed a lot of concern regarding the fisheries of that particular lake and the fish resource, and other related wildlife habitat in the area. I raise the question because of this high concern that has been expressed to me as well.

And I wonder, Mr. Minister, why your department to date has not gone as far as it should have in dealing with matters of this nature. It seems that you've suddenly become impartial when it comes to serious environmental hazards.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I've indicated to the member previously that a study prepared by Beak Consultants Ltd., which was an environmental evaluation of the effects of the Eldor mines, the Rabbit Lake operations, and Wollaston Lake, was released November of '85. I don't know if the member had received a copy but it is available. I'll just read the conclusion into the record:

... it can be stated that, on the basis of the available data, the operation of the Rabbit Lake uranium mining and milling operation has had no significant nor discernible effect on the aquatic ecology, fishery or any other use of the waters of Hidden Bay or Wollaston Lake.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Minister, how many spills of radioactive material or other pollutants have taken place in Saskatchewan's uranium mines in the course of the last four years?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — We do not have that information with us, Mr. Chairman. I'll undertake to provide that information to the member.

Mr. Yew: I understand, Mr. Minister, that you will

provide that information later on, but you are aware then, that there have been major spills in your term of office. Knowing that fact, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you: have any charges been laid as a result of those spills?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, there have been no uncontrolled spills. All spills have been controlled, have been cleaned up, and there has been no basis for charges.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, how much pollution, radioactive or otherwise, can enter lakes close to uranium mines before provincial standards are breached?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Speaker, we do have emission standards which are included in the permits, licences, given to each mine. If the member has a specific mine that he wishes information on, and it's a fairly technical piece of information, we'd be happy to furnish him with that information.

Mr. Yew: — I'd personally dispute, Mr. Minister, the Eldor mine's report. I take exception to the fact that nothing has been done whereby the area residents, the people directly affected by this spill, are still feeling some very ... there's a lot of concern expressed in that area re the fish population. The other wildlife — moose, caribou, etc. — have somewhat been affected in one form or another.

I really want to question the practice of the major companies involved and the Department of Environment. You know, surely the minister must realize that the traditional pursuits of hunting, trapping, and fishing are very important to the people of the remote northern areas; whereby we have such high unemployment in many of those areas, there's a high welfare dependency rate. And the only means of putting bread on the table in many instances is by going back and falling back into our traditional pursuits.

Once that valuable resource is gone, Mr. Minister, there's nothing for us left. There is nothing there for future generations. I really wonder, you know, what commitment your government has towards environmental issues. I don't believe there is — like my colleague, my seat mate, has just concurred with me — in terms of environmental commitments by your government.

I want to go on, Mr. Minister, and deal with another aspect of your government's environmental positions, or a commitment.

Mr. Minister, has the provincial government completed its studies into the effects of the various sources of supplying water to the oil companies in Cold Lake, Alberta? I'm sure you're aware of the issue. The oil companies extract oil by various means and require water, but supplying that water may have significant environmental implications to our province. I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: what have you decided to do?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — The company, Mr. Chairman, has decided to use water obtained from the North Saskatchewan River.

Mr. Yew: — Pardon me, Mr. Minister, I didn't catch your response.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — I said, Mr. Chairman, that the company has decided to obtain their water from the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta.

Mr. Yew: — How will that affect us, Mr. Minister, downstream from the North Saskatchewan River and into our province?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, it's the preferred option for Saskatchewan, mainly because then they won't be using any other northern water, rather than the lower quality water of the North Saskatchewan. Now outside of that there won't be . . . which is a positive for Saskatchewan, so it won't have a negative impact on Saskatchewan.

Mr. Yew: — It seems to me that that position is not concurred with by area residents on that west side, Mr. Minister. I've had occasion to talk with some elected officials that are concerned regarding this project and I would advise the minister to check further into it.

I want to go on to another question, Mr. Minister. As you will recall, last year motorists followed a truck between P.A. and Saskatoon while the truck leaked PCBs. The car had to turn its windshield wipers on at the time because of the oil that was being spilled. When the driver of the car learned that it was PCBs that had created the smearing to the windshield of his car, he phoned your department, the Department of Environment, and was told to take his car to have it washed in a car wash.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: do you not think that this is an indication of a need for a much better system of handling inquiries coming from the public?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, the . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. The minister is having difficulty making his answer heard.

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, while in general the member's information is half correct, actually what the driver was told to do was take his car to Saskatchewan Power who knew all about this by this time, and that Saskatchewan Power would have the car cleaned, mainly because Saskatchewan Power knew about the car and knew about the PCBs, so he was not told to take it to — just go into a commercial car wash; he was told to take it to Saskatchewan Power to have it cleaned.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I listened yesterday while you discussed with my colleague from Cumberland the environmental impact assessment statement with respect to the Rafferty dam, Shand power project.

Mr. Minister, I was wondering if you could tell me when you expect to receive the statement back, first of all, and then I have some other questions on that.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — I'd indicated, Mr. Chairman, yesterday, mid to late summer.

Mr. Shillington: — Would it be your intention thereafter to hold public hearings?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well the normal course of events will take place. That is, it will be released for public review. Depending on what reactions we have back from the public, it will then be decided whether to have public hearings or not, which is the normal course of events in these types of things.

Mr. Shillington: — Well I'm aware of the normal course of events. The normal course of events, Mr. Minister, is that you have a discretion with respect to public hearings. It would strike me that there's ample evidence of the necessity of a public hearing with respect to this affair. It is most controversial with the ranchers; the users of the Dr. Mainprize Park and others in the area. So I wonder how much more evidence you need of sufficient public interest and concern to merit a public hearing, and thus give those people the opportunity to make their views known to the government in a public forum?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we've gone through this. We went through exactly these questions yesterday, which is fine. Sask Power is presently having hearings locally to hear the public's concerns. The environmental impact study will be done. That review will be published. There will be a review period after that and then, if it's deemed necessary after that, we would have public hearings. So there is . . . The opportunity abounds for public input, and if it's deemed necessary at the appropriate stage in this process to have public hearings, public hearings will be held.

Mr. Shillington: — Well public hearings are, I think, normally held. I think it's fair to say they're normally held where there's a good deal of public interest and concern. Where the matter is not of such widespread public interest and you're unlikely to elicit much response, public hearings aren't held. But where the matter is one of wide public concern, of such a nature that you are likely to get a good degree of public interest and a goodly number of hearings, the philosophy, I think, which underlies the environmental and impact assessment statement Act, the legislation — I'm not sure that's the right name — the philosophy underlying the legislation is that the public should have the right to make those representations.

You refer to hearings held by Sask Power. Mr. Minister, the normal course in the past, unless you're going to change the rules, has been that such hearings are held before an impartial tribunal or body, who then, on the basis of those recommendations, on the basis of the public representations to them, make some recommendations to the public. And that has been the course of action with respect to past public hearings.

Again I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you haven't got ample evidence of sufficient public concern to allow the public to make the representations to a relatively impartial body who will weigh them and report to the government and to this Assembly and the public with respect to those concerns and their legitimacy, and the extent to which, if at all, they can be accommodated by the project.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I had indicated to the members opposite yesterday on this very subject, a debate prior to receiving the EIS (environmental impact study) and its findings, a debate on this subject at this stage in this place, is a little premature. There's nothing known today that would preclude public hearings. There very well may be, but we'll await the results of the EIS and the public review that follows.

Mr. Shillington: — Well let me then close my remarks on the subject by saying that I think it would be an injustice if there were not public hearings. I don't recall a development in recent times which has caused as much concern and sparked as much interest among the people of an area as this particular project. And if there is no public hearings consequent upon the receiving of this environmental impact assessment statement, then the legislation which provides for public hearings no longer has much effect.

Mr. Minister, I heard you say yesterday that you had not requested an environmental impact assessment statement with respect to the ammonia project in Regina. Did I understand the minister correct to say that?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — No, Mr. Chairman, he's not correct.

Mr. Shillington: — Well perhaps you can tell me then what has been requested, and when you expect to receive it.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — I could tell, Mr. Chairman, I could tell the member more when I receive that project proposal.

Mr. Shillington: — Sorry, I missed the minister's comments.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — I said, Mr. Chairman, we have yet to receive a project proposal. So again, I couldn't tell you whether we're going to have an EIS or not.

Mr. Shillington: — I take it then, Mr. Minister, the whole project is of such an indefinite nature, and of such a tenuous nature, that there's no point in doing an environmental impact assessment statement because you've no idea yet whether or not the project's going ahead. Is that a fair summary of the situation with respect to the ammonia plant?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — No, Mr. Chairman, that's the member opposite's conclusion. I'm saying as far as environment is concerned, we have yet to receive the project proposal. I'm sure it's on its way, and once it is, we'll be able to discuss with you more fully what we're going to do with it.

Mr. Shillington: — During the last session of the legislature, Mr. Minister, a goodly amount of concern was expressed by both the public and subsequently by members of the opposition with respect to the storage of PCBs in populated areas. I know my colleague from Cumberland raised this. I'm wondering, Mr. Minister . . . And it appeared at that time that the then minister of the Environment was giving the go-ahead to the

establishment of a storage depot within the city of Regina without the necessity of any environmental impact assessment statement — a rather strange and bizarre approach to storing such a dangerous chemical.

I wonder, Mr. Minister . . . I think we all hope that the change in the ministers has produced a more conscientious and a more responsible approach to the storage of PCBs. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, could you give us the position of this government now under your tutelage with respect to the storage of PCBs in populated areas?

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as the member is aware, probably, since about a year ago or more when PCBs were no longer shipped to Alberta, PCBs have been stored on site wherever they are accumulated. My colleague, the former minister of Environment, announced that we were going to create a sitting board to find a site somewhere in Saskatchewan to accommodate the storage or eventual destruction of PCBs, and we would have something to announce in that regard in the near future.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, the amount of PCBs in this province is fairly considerable. They were of course used by Saskatchewan Power Corporation in, shall we call it, an age of innocence. Their capacity to cause illness to human beings wasn't really recognized. They're of course no longer used. I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, what plans the department has for the long-term disposal of these chemicals. Surely they're not going to be stored in cans for ever.

I recognize that, given the fact that this government's going to call an election, given the fact that the government is going to start writing its death warrant at the nomination of the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, it may not be of great relevance to know what you're planning on doing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I understand there's going to be an election called on May 24th. And it seems to many people in the province, that's the government taking pen in hand and beginning to sign their own death warrant.

But as a matter of academic interest, if it is of no practical importance, Mr. Minister, I wonder what this government is planning on doing with respect to PCBs. Surely our plans do not consist of simply leaving them in cans until someone else thinks of a solution.

Hon. Mr. Embury: — Well two things, Mr. Chairman. The low-level PCBs - we have a mobile unit that now can destroy them and that, by the way, is a first for Canada. For higher level PCBs, and other toxic materials, we have undertaken a study with the other western provinces to look into the possibilities of what they term a mobile incinerator.

The theory behind it is that rather than all the provinces building a rather expensive site and getting involved in the incineration of these things, there may be a possibility of sharing a unit that can be moved from province to province and used part of the year to get rid of your hazardous material. And in the case of Saskatchewan, that would be beneficial to us because we simply don't

create the volumes of hazardous waste that other provinces do and if this thing pans out, it would be advantageous to us. We don't know . . . We haven't got the results of that joint study undertaken by ourselves and our neighbours, so when we get that study, we'll know what our next step will be.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.