

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred residents of Saskatchewan whose names I will not seek to read. These petitioners are urging the government to retain the children's dental program, and not to destroy it. These petitioners are from a number of communities, including Raymore, Semans, Saskatoon, Regina, Nipawin, and Dalmeny.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred Saskatchewan residents. These petitioners are urging that the children's dental plan be retained, and not destroyed. These petitioners are from several communities, including Moose Jaw, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatoon, Rosthern, Paradise Hill, Lloydminster, and Regina.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I rise also pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred residents of Saskatchewan. The petition urges the Saskatchewan government not to eliminate the Saskatchewan dental health plan in this province. The petition says that the plan was an outstanding initiative in preventive health care, and the petition urges that the plan be reinstated, and that all workers who were fired under the plan be re-hired.

Mr. Speaker, I present these petitions from the communities of Regina, Saskatoon, Kamsack, Birch Hills, North Battleford, and Osler.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 11 of the *Rules (and Procedures) of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, I rise to present a petition, solemnly signed by hundreds of people, with regard to the Saskatchewan dental plan and asking the government to reconsider its position. The people that signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Outlook, Lumsden, Saskatoon, Swift Current, Regina, Cupar, and Pilot Butte.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition on behalf of several hundred Saskatchewan residents who urge that the dental plan be retained, and not destroyed. These petitioners are from a number of communities, including Regina, Earl Grey, Southey, Duval, Bulyea, Govan, Craven, Semans, and Regina.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Speaker, I also rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly by residents of Saskatchewan, urging that the children's dental program be retained, and not be destroyed. These petitioners are from Wilkie, Weyburn, Saskatoon, Regina, Kindersley, Pense, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Tribune, Weyburn, Regina, Estevan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish to rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly with respect to the dental plan, the children's dental plan. This petition is also signed by several hundred Saskatchewan people, urging the government to retain the dental plan, and it's signed by petitioners from Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Kelvington, Preeceville, Indian Head, and Moose Jaw.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to this Assembly from several hundred very concerned residents of Saskatchewan, and these petitioners are urging that the children's dental plan be retained and not destroyed. These petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Weyburn, Regina, White City, and Moose Jaw.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present to the legislature a petition concerning the children's dental program. These petitioners are urging the government that the dental plan not be destroyed, but it be retained. These petitioners are from several communities in Saskatchewan. They are from Milestone, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I also rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred residents of Saskatchewan, urging that the children's dental plan be retained. These petitioners are from several communities, including Willowbrook, Stoughton, Truax, Fort Qu'Appelle, and Regina.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundreds of people, residents of Saskatchewan. These petitioners are urging that the children's dental plan be reinstated, and not destroyed. These petitioners are from several communities, including Balcarres, Weyburn, Raymore, Cut Knife, Regina, Quinton, Prince Albert, Christopher Lake.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to

present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred residents of Saskatchewan. These petitioners are urging that the children's dental plan be retained, and not destroyed. These petitioners are from several communities, including Regina, Melville, Wynyard, Esterhazy, Kamsack, Clavet, Sedley, Whitewood, Moosomin, Kipling, Lumsden, Gray, Southey, Markinch, Weyburn, Wolseley, Yorkton, Milestone, Buchanan, Ituna, Riceton, and Cupar, among others, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to this Legislative Assembly from several hundred residents of Saskatchewan. These petitioners are urging that the children's dental plan be retained, and not destroyed, and that children should continue to have access to dental services in Saskatchewan schools. These petitioners are from several communities, including Weyburn, and Pilot Butte, Regina, Lang, McLean, Qu'Appelle, Rouleau, Balgonie, Moose Jaw, Parkbeg, Mortlach, Pasqua, Fort Qu'Appelle, Yellow Grass, Chaplin, Yorkton, Melville, Gray, Ogema, and Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred residents of Saskatchewan. These petitioners are urging that the children's dental plan be retained, and not destroyed. These petitioners are from several communities, including Lumsden, Fort Qu'Appelle, Kelliher, Regina, Weyburn, Albertville, and others.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise also pursuant to rule 11, and I've been asked to present a petition in the House today to the Hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and legislature assembled. The petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan humbly sheweth: that it is not in the public interest for the Government of Saskatchewan to eliminate the school-based Saskatchewan dental plan; that this program was a very good program that resulted in a great improvement in the dental health of Saskatchewan's youth; that Saskatchewan dental plan should be reinstated; that the dismissed workers should be rehired, and the children should continue to have access to dental services in Saskatchewan schools. Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your hon. Assembly may be pleased to urge the government of Saskatchewan to keep the school-based dental plan, and as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this has been signed by several hundred residents from Fort Qu'Appelle, Southey, Cupar, Dysart, Regina, Melfort, and Moose Jaw.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I also am pleased to rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred residents of

Saskatchewan. These petitioners are urging that the children's dental plan be retained, and not destroyed.

These petitioners are from several communities, including Davidson, Lang, Midale, Oungre, White City, Yorkton, Francis, Sedley, Lake Alma, Willowbrook, Theodore, Buchanan, Churchbridge, Regina, Yellow Grass, Sheho, Tuffnel, Rama, Foam Lake, Weyburn, Goodwater, Wynyard, Edenwold, Watson, Regina Beach, Prince Albert, Saltcoats, Pilot Butte, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to this Assembly, a petition that asks this Assembly and of the government of this province to reinstate the Saskatchewan dental plan, to reinstate the workers that have been dismissed — working for that dental plan — in order that the children of this province should continue to have access to dental services in Saskatchewan schools.

Mr. Speaker, this petition comes from, among other places, residents from Wilcox, from Gray, from Milestone, from Pangman, from Maple Creek, from Estevan, and from Regina.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am proud to rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred residents of Saskatchewan. These petitions also urge that the children's dental plan be retained, and not destroyed.

These petitions are from several Saskatchewan communities including Nipawin, White City, Cupar, Craven, Regina, and Lumsden.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from 700 residents of Saskatchewan. These petitioners are urging that the children's dental plan be retained and not destroyed. These petitioners are from several communities. They come from Moosomin, Rocanville, North Battleford, Saskatoon, Kamsack, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Macdowall, Shellbrook, and Cudworth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred residents of Saskatchewan. These petitions are urging that the children's dental plan be retained, and not destroyed. These petitioners are from several communities including Weyburn, Lang, Regina, Pilot Butte, Prince Albert, Kelvington, Preeceville, Rosthern, Waldheim, Moose Jaw, Melville, and Goodeve.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I too rise pursuant to

rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly from several hundred Saskatchewan residents. These petitioners are urging that the children's dental program be retained, and not destroyed. They make the point that this program was a very good program that resulted in a great improvement in the dental health of Saskatchewan's youth. These petitioners come from several communities, Mr. Speaker, including Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Allan, Lloydminster, Weyburn, Riceton, Moose Jaw, and Pilot Butte.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to present the last of the more than 15,000 petitioners' names — names that have been collected over the last 10 days. These petitions urge that the Government of Saskatchewan reinstate the dental plan and reinstate the 411 dismissed workers. They come from Pilot Butte, Fort Qu'Appelle, Lebreton, Balgonie, McLean, Lipton, Rosthern, Hague, Kerrobert, Milestone, Humboldt, Lanigan, Allan, Lloydminster, Weyburn, and Saskatoon. And I also understand, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Thunder Creek has some more petitions and we don't have them, and I would ask him to introduce his petitions as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pride that I stand here today to introduce the more than 100 members of the children's dental plan who are seated in the Speaker's gallery and the gallery behind me. These are some of the more than 411 dental workers who were dismissed by the provincial government when the plan was eliminated. The people of Saskatchewan owe you an enormous debt of gratitude for your work.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — It has been your commitment and your professionalism that has allowed Saskatchewan people to have the very best dental plan in North America and the world.

The children of Saskatchewan are proud of you, we are proud of you, and we thank you for your service to the people of this province, and I would ask you all to stand so that we could thank you for your service and welcome you to the legislature today. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I want to join my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana in welcoming the dental assistants who are here, and the dental therapists. I do not think in the time that I have been in the legislature, the 12 years I've been in the legislature, that I have seen as many names presented. I think this is certainly a modern record.

I also want to welcome to the Assembly, 10 students from the Regina Plains Community college who are here with their teacher, Ken Konoff. I trust you will find the proceedings instructive. I look forward to meeting with you for a brief period of time at the end of question period.

I urge all members to join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pickering: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure this morning to you, and through you to all the members of the Assembly, 17 grade 5 and 6 students seated in the east gallery. They are accompanied here today by their teacher, Wally Hauk, chaperons, Ed and Arlene Howse, and their bus driver, Earl Williams.

I would hope that they find question period entertaining, perhaps informational and educational. And I look forward to meeting with them at 11 o'clock for pictures and refreshments. I would like all members to join with me in welcoming the students from Pangman.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with other members of the Assembly this morning in recognizing and paying special tribute to the dental therapists and assistants who are gathered in our galleries. And may I particularly, Mr. Speaker, draw your attention and that of other members of the House to those members of that group from the constituency of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, who have provided exemplary service to the people of that constituency for many years.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, a former member of the House. He served in this House from 1944 through to 1956 as a member of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation). He is well-known for his work in establishing grid road system in Saskatchewan. He is now 78 years old, and lives in the constituency of Regina Victoria, and maintains an avid interest in politics. Please join with me, Mr. Speaker, and members of the House, in welcoming Niles Buchanan.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, as the member of the legislature now who presently represents that portion of Saskatchewan, or a good chunk of it, that used to be the Notukeu-Willow Bunch constituency, I would certainly want to join with the member who just spoke to welcome Mr. Buchanan to the Assembly today, and to say that we are so delighted to see him back with us in such fine health, and we wish him many, many more years.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Reinstatement of Children's Dental Plan

Ms. Atkinson: — My question was going to be to the Premier, or it was going to be to the Minister of Health, but they weren't brave enough to come here and face . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — So my question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, you have just received over 15,408 signatures from the people of this province — people who want the dental plan reinstated. These signatures are in addition to the more than 6,300 signatures that were presented to the Minister of Health, and he didn't have enough jam to come out and get them from the dental therapists.

I want to know: will you now listen, listen to the people of this province who are telling you very clearly that they want this plan back and they want these women reinstated? Will you listen?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, let me indicate to the Assembly and to all gathered here, as having been the Minister of Health in this province for the last four and a half years, I feel that we have put together one of the best health care systems in this country.

As we move ahead, Mr. Speaker, and face some of the economic problems that are here in this country, we have to make some changes. And those changes are not made flippantly, and they're not made without due consideration and thought. I listen with interest to the petitions, and I understand from the addresses that were read off they're from considerable number of areas in Saskatchewan.

I did notice though, that in many of the cases, that the members opposite were saying that the dental plan was destroyed. Mr. Speaker, that is simply not correct. There is a change, Mr. Speaker, there is a change in the dental plan. And that is a change from a school-based plan to one in dental offices. That was done, Mr. Speaker, because there was considerable savings to be brought about by that. But I want to assure the people of Saskatchewan that their children in the age group of five to 13 will be receiving the same benefits and the same coverage on the dental plan as they previously.

Ms. Atkinson: — Supplementary, Mr. Acting Health minister, you know that's not true.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Rather than fire 411 workers, most of whom are women, rather than blame children and blame workers for your deficit problems, why don't you start cutting the more than \$10 million that your government spends on political aides and political hacks who give you bad advice and are responsible for the deficit? Why don't you start cutting those people instead of these people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I don't think the dental service to children in the province of Saskatchewan is a political argument at all. And also, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that anyone is blaming the children. I heard the member opposite say, why are you blaming the children. No one is blaming the children. I'll reinstate what I said earlier: that the benefits to the children in the age group of

five to 13 years of age will be the same as it has previously been — one of the best in Canada.

Now she says that's not correct. I tell you, that is correct. Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you that those benefits are some of the best in this country.

I want to assure the people, the people who may be watching today, that I think there is a deliberate attempt to try and mislead in saying that the dental plan is destroyed. That simply is not correct.

Ms. Atkinson: — The Minister of Health has told the press that this is part of deficit reduction. But this wasn't the only reason that they wanted to privatize the children's dental plan. You wanted to move it over to dentists. The minister says, and I quote: "One very important aspect to the decision is the . . ."

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. The member is on her second supplementary. While I know that members would like to use quotations, I've given this considerable thought and, I believe, in the best interests of the House, I'll have to rule that we don't use quotations in our supplementaries because they tend to get too long, and sometimes they become a new question.

Ms. Atkinson: — Study after study has shown that our dental plan is the best in the world. I would ask you to tell me, and tell the members of this Assembly, what do you mean by "appropriate delivery system"? What do you mean?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, as I said previously, Mr. Speaker, that my understanding is that the benefits of the coverage that will go to that age group — the target age group which is five to 13 — will be the same services that have been provided before.

The other thing is that in northern Saskatchewan, where there isn't the access to professional dentists that there is in other parts of the province, that the school dental plan will be retained there. So I must say, in the best of my understanding, is that the dental plan for that group of people, from five to 13, is exactly the same plan, only it is delivered different.

Rather than a school-based program, it is delivered through professional dentists. That is the difference that's taking place. And that, Mr. Speaker, I must mention again is not destroying it; that is change. Nobody questions that there's change taking place. There will be more changes that take place in this world as we go on. Certainly it has been done with great concern, and . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Next question.

Statements by the Premier Regarding the Dental Plan

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Acting Minister of Health. In answer to a question from me on Monday of this week, the Premier suggested at least twice in his answer, that the work done

through the years by Saskatchewan dental assistants and therapists, was somehow unprofessional and substandard.

Every study . . . every study, Mr. Speaker, every assessment of the Saskatchewan dental plan has concluded exactly the opposite, including the study that I hold in my hand, conducted by independent university faculties of dentistry, which says the quality and the coverage of the Saskatchewan dental plan is impressive.

And my question is this: why has the Premier attempted to demean the dental therapists and assistants of this province with that slur on their reputation, that they were somehow unprofessional? And will the Acting Minister of Health now withdraw that innuendo and admit that the Premier was wrong to cast that slur?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the member from Assiniboia is trying to read in some accusations and some connotations to the statement. I don't think there's been anyone saying that the service was not good service.

I think what we're looking at is the cost of delivering service. And as we look at the delivery of services, not only in health but in government services as we move ahead into the 1990s, as sure as I stand in this Assembly today, Mr. Speaker, there will be change. And change always brings about some insecurity, there brings about some insecurity, Mr. Speaker. I understand that; I think everyone does. But let me assure you that the dental health care of the students of Saskatchewan is the primary concern of this government. The coverage is exactly the same as it was before, only delivered in a different manner.

As I was going to say previously, we have concern for the people who are delivering the service before, and there has been plans put into place to try to have as many as possible hired, and also retraining policies that are being developed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, the government has said that they had to make some hard choices and that their choice was between providing good dental care or the fight against AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and drug abuse. They say that they can't have both, that it's got to be one or the other.

And I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the minister can tell us why it was that narrow choice? Why didn't you choose, for example, between the dental plan and the freebie election give-aways to subsidize the private Jacuzzis? That program is costing . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, please. I'm not sure how the member's making a supplementary out of this, number one. And number two, it's getting to be too long, so if he has one, please put it.

Mr. Goodale: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will. What you are spending in relation to the home program per month could pay for the dental costs for two years. Why didn't you make that choice instead of saying that the dental plan had to go?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, again the member is trying to mislead. The dental plan hasn't gone. There will be a dental plan in Saskatchewan. There will be children having their teeth fixed in Saskatchewan in that target group. He questions about the AIDS, and the drug and alcohol.

It's true, Mr. Speaker, the 14 to 17 age group are not in the plan any more because we felt, as a government listening to the people of Saskatchewan, that their concern, Mr. Speaker, was more worried about the serious impact of drugs and alcohol upon that age group than upon the dental services. Because of the good plan we've had over the years, most of those people — and I give congratulations to the people who run the plan and work there — have had those people realize the benefit of good dental health.

But the problem out there — and if you dispute that, I wonder who you're listening to — the problem out there, Mr. Speaker, with our adolescents — and you could ask any teacher across this province, and they will tell you drugs and alcohol is a serious problem in Saskatchewan . . .

Consultations Regarding Changes to Dental Plan

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Acting Minister of Health. And in his answer to the previous questions, he indicated that the purpose in making what he is pleased to call "changes" in the dental plan was to get the most efficient and effective method of delivery — obviously thinking about how to save money.

Now, Mr. Minister, when you announced the changes in the children's dental plan in June, had you consulted with the people involved, in order that they might know what was happening, and in order that the maximum savings could be achieved?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think the hon. member will realize that it would be folly for me to say what consultation my other minister had taken place. I can't . . . In fairness, and I think the member opposite would realize that, that I can't answer that part of the question. Certainly, and I think he realizes that . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Order. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think he realizes that we have made a change, and I think the member opposite is the type of member that would understand that, and that that change is that the delivery method is different. There is considerable savings in the different delivery method. But as to the consultation, to the member opposite, I cannot answer for that because I'm not privy to the consultation that my colleague had.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I ask you, sir, or one of your colleagues who may know, whether you deny that this decision was made in haste, and whether you deny that as a result of this hasty

decision, you're stuck with a 410,000 bill for printed pamphlets which are no longer useful; that drugs and other supplies worth more than \$350,000 have been ordered to be destroyed, and that school clinics . . . clinics in schools were under construction, in schools like Clavet, up to the very day you made your announcement? Are those not true? And is not that evidence that you are acting in haste and wasting the public's money, not saving it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly I can assure you that it was not a decision made in haste. There was considerable discussion about it. But I want to point out to you that I will take notice as to the drugs or the cost of pamphlets. I'm not aware if that had taken place or not. I will have my colleague . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The minister has taken notice. He cannot continue on to try to answer the question.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure whether to direct this question to the Acting Minister of Health or to the Deputy Premier, but I think I'll direct it to the Deputy Premier as the person who is in charge, if I may put it that way, for the operations overall of the government in the absence of the Premier. And what I want to ask the Deputy Premier is this: does he concur in and support the Acting Minister of Health's explanation a few moments ago in question period that the main rationale for doing away with the dental technician's program is because there was a greater concern communicated to the government with respect to teenage and youth abuse of drugs and alcohol? Is that the main reason?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Certainly . . . again, in all due respect to the member opposite, the dental plan has not been taken away. It's been changed. And you know, I must come back to you when you say it's taken away. You know as well as I do that it isn't. There has been a change. There's been a change in delivery method, and there's been a change in the number of people that are covered, and that is the 14- to 17-year-old group. And certainly, certainly, if you are listening to groups across the Saskatchewan, if you're listening to high school administrators, to guidance counsellors, to PRIDE (Parent Resources Institute for Drug Education Inc.), to all these concerned groups, they will indicate to you that drugs and alcohol is certainly a very serious problem in the 14- to 17-year-old group in this province. And if you want to debate that, I will stand in this House for hours with you, sir, and debate that topic.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. I gather from the minister's answer that the main reason for doing away with the dental technicians' program has been because the government chose . . . or determined that there was a greater priority in another area, namely alcohol, drug abuse. If that being the case, that being the answer which we have just heard now and which, may I add for a moment, is absolutely illogical and nonsensical to say the least — but that being the case, my question to the Acting Minister of health is this: can you explain why it is that the Premier, outside of the legislature yesterday,

speaking in Saskatoon, purported to give another totally different rationale for doing away with the dental technician's program? And I direct you to the article on page A8 of the *Star-Phoenix*, which says, "Parents' demands cause the changes in dental plan." And in particular, "Parents want their . . ."

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. Order.

I have ruled earlier on that we are going to stay away from quotes in supplementaries. And it's difficult to say which quotes we will allow and which we won't, even though it may be part of the supplementary. But we cannot make exceptions in supplementaries, and I've ruled that we will not have quotes, and for the best interests of the House. And I ask the members to please try to abide by that.

Mr. Romanow: — Of course I abide by your ruling. I will ask the minister a new question. The new question that I have is as follows. Yesterday in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, the Premier of this government said the following:

Parents want their children's teeth tended to by a dentist and not a dentist assistant, says Premier Grant Devine, in explaining recent changes to the province's dental plan.

My question to you is this, sir: how does that statement square with the one that you just made a few moments ago that the main reason is alcohol abuse of teenagers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Once again, Mr. Speaker, either the member on the other side is not listening or does not care to listen to the reply. I indicated that the change to the dental plan with the 14- to 17-year-old group, why they were eliminated from the plan, is that parents across this country are indicating that a priority is treatment centres like we're building at Whitespruce at Yorkton — the first in Canada. The first adolescent drug and alcohol treatment centre in Canada is at Whitespruce outside of Yorkton. And that is why the change is taking place in the adolescent part of the dental plan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, new question. In the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* article that I referred to just a few moments ago, the Premier says the following:

Many parents let me know that they would rather have their children go to a dentist than they would have an assistant deal with the teeth in the school.

My question to you, sir, or to the Deputy Premier, is this: will you undertake on behalf of the government to table to this legislature the numbers of parents who have communicated with either the Premier's office or the Minister of Health, or any other minister of this government, to substantiate that statement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I have no knowledge of what the Premier said in Saskatoon

other than what the member opposite is reporting, and we know what the reporting techniques sometimes are. So I am not in a position to react to something within the paper.

But certainly, Mr. Speaker, and it just shows . . . I just want to illustrate this one point. I heard the member from Moose Jaw North the other day say, we want to return . . .

The Speaker: — Order. If the comment that the minister wishes to make is directly on the question . . .

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I heard the member say, we want to return to '82. And this just indicates . . . When I hear the member from Riversdale, who is supposedly in tune and maybe hoping to lead a party sometime, indicating that he doesn't understand . . .

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

Agreement between Government and College of Dental Surgeons

Mr. Romanow: — A new question to the Acting Minister of Health. The Acting Minister of Health says that the member from Riversdale may want to go back to 1982. I want to tell the Hon. Acting Minister of Health that as far as the dental technician program is concerned and the way medicare was, I definitely want to go back to 1982!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Now you have refused already, Mr. Acting Minister of Health, to table the names of the parents and the submissions that you have received with respect to this plan. I ask you another question. You claim . . . your government claims that you signed, with the College of Dental surgeons, an agreement which will result in savings to taxpayers and that up to 150 jobs for the 411 dental plan employees that you have thrown out of work will be protected. That is the agreement you say you have. I ask the Acting Minister of Health, or the deputy Premier, simple yes or no: will you table that agreement, showing those savings and those numbers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1045)

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear the member from Riversdale want to go back to '82 in health care. With going back to '82, there would be no chiropody program; there would be no new re-hab . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

We seem to have a misunderstanding in the House, and perhaps if we all took notes on both sides of the House of what's happening, we wouldn't have questions of the minister — whether or not he's on the topic, and just exactly what the question was saying.

Now in this particular instance, we did hear . . . First of all, the minister in a previous answer had mentioned about

going back to '82, and we did hear, in the preamble to the question, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale also refer to it. And these are the problems that occur when questions are put . . . if they become a little bit too wide ranging, then ministers become too wide ranging and go on too long.

So I think that both sides of the House, ministers and those asking the questions, should try to adhere to the rules and we wouldn't have these problems.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'm sure no one in Saskatchewan wants to go back to the moratorium in nursing homes in '82. However, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite indicated that, would we be tabling the agreement? I would have to take notice of that and ask my colleague . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well if the agreement, if I don't have the agreement . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please.

Dismissal Procedures re Dental Assistants

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to ask you about what is really the most appalling aspect of this whole sorry affair. It's the way you went about dismissing dedicated employees who had dedicated their lives to this superb public health program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — More than one worker called me and complained about the concentration camp atmosphere which hung over the June 11 staff meetings in which people were herded into hotel meetings to be told, *en masse*, that their careers were over.

How do you justify that sort of inhumane, uncaring treatment of dedicated public employees?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the lay-offs in the dental program, or as it relates to any of the lay-offs in fact that we've had to do throughout the Public Service Commission, our objectives always have been to do it in as reasonable and fair and compassionate and humane manner as possible. That was . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please; order, please.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That was the objective here, Mr. Speaker, as well, for the Department of Health. It's a given that this is never easy, Mr. Speaker; this is always difficult. It's not a task that anyone enjoys. There are a number of methods, I suppose, one could employ, but we've relied on professional advice as far as how to best accomplish this, how to help the displaced persons find new employment, counselling — those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker.

And as it relates to the dental therapists specifically — because we are concerned about them and their future careers — we have trebled the number of training spaces available, Mr. Speaker, in our hygienist program to perhaps accommodate some of those therapists to find

new employment as hygienists.

MOTIONS

Hours of Sitting

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Before orders of the day, since next Wednesday, July 1, is a holiday in Canada, and since last night at adjournment all parties on the floor of the Chamber here agreed that we should have a Friday routine on Tuesday to accommodate members to the extent that we can to be at home for that Wednesday holiday, I, by leave of the Assembly, seconded by the Minister of Justice, move:

That notwithstanding rule 3 of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, this Assembly shall on Tuesday, June 30, 1987 meet from 10 o'clock a.m. until 1 o'clock p.m., and that when this Assembly adjourns on Tuesday, June 30, 1987, it do stand adjourned until Thursday, July 2, 1987.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Environment and Public Safety Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 9

Hon. Mr. Swan:— Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce the officials that are here today: my deputy minister, Peter van Es, sitting beside me here; Rick Knoll, the director of administration and communications; Randy Sentis, director of mines pollution control branch; then in the back row, Bert Sheasby, executive director of public safety; Bob Walker, director of environmental assessment; Larry Lechner, director of air and land protection; and Don Fast, director of the water quality branch.

Mr. Chairman, in opening my estimates today, I would like to make a few remarks. I believe that these remarks should be reasonably brief, but I want to touch on a number of things that are happening that may be beneficial to the House to have on the record, and beneficial to the critic in the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to first of all commend the Premier and the Minister of Finance for all their hard work on the budget, and on setting the direction that is necessary for the province of Saskatchewan at this time.

The Premier is a man of vision, a person who is deeply committed to the future of this province and to the people here. He is concerned about Saskatchewan's economy, so he stresses diversification. He is concerned about the agricultural sector and the problems farmers face today, so he stresses necessary farm assistance programs. The Premier is concerned about those people who are less fortunate, so he stresses protection through health care, social service programs, and for senior citizens. Mr. Chairman, all of these areas relate to the environment and

to the things that people in our province are doing, and things that they enjoy.

Environmental protection is the fastest-growing issue in the minds of the Canadian public. Recent opinion polls are evidence of this. This is reflective of the growing importance that many people throughout Canada, and in fact the world, are attaching to our collective need to better understand our environment – how to keep it a clean environment, healthy and productive for the people in Saskatchewan to live. I stress the fact that this is a collective need, for only through the mutual understanding and co-operative effort of governments, industry, non-governmental organizations, and the public at large can we hope to deal successfully with the many environmental issues which challenge us today and which will continue to face us in the future.

Our government takes the responsibility of our environmental protection and public safety very seriously. When we are approached with major developments in the province, our government insists that the environment must be protected in all cases, whether it's a heavy oil upgrader in Regina, a bacon plant in North Battleford, or a new paper mill in Prince Albert.

As a Saskatchewan farmer for over 30 years, I know the value of a strong and healthy environment in the production of crops and livestock. My son and I do not take our land for granted. We know it is a valuable resource and must be protected for the future use of this generation and generations to come. This is the kind of attitude that our government has relating to the environment and to our resources – protection for present and future use.

An area of key concern to our government is that of chemical use, and disposal in an environmentally safe manner. I'd like to comment on two programs we initiated which have proven to be very successful. The pesticide container disposal program was implemented in 1983 to collect discarded pesticide containers and associated residues that could damage our environment.

Since that time about 85 per cent of the rural municipalities in the province have established collection sites. Last year alone over 670,000 containers were crushed, recovering almost 100 barrels of residue. The reduction of potential risk to the environment, water supply, or land fill areas from chemical residue, is quite significant.

The second program is the institutional chemical collection program. The storage and disposal of old surplus or deteriorated chemicals, has become a burden to many of our public institutions, especially schools and hospitals.

In order to relieve this burden our government established a two-year, province-wide program to collect and dispose of unwanted, hazardous chemicals stored in the laboratories of these institutions. Certain chemicals are treated directly by department staff, others are shipped out of the province by a special chemical firm.

Besides this we also provide advice to institutions

concerning laboratory management and proper disposal of chemicals. We know that public and municipal concerns over the use, transportation, and storage of toxic chemicals has continued to grow with increasing industrial activity.

In response, the toxic chemicals management program has been established to develop and administer the hazardous substance regulations under the Environmental Management and Protection Act.

The program will also provide information to the public regarding chemical safety and will undertake environmental studies aimed at assessing the impacts of chemicals on the environment.

A \$200,000 annual grant is also provided to the Toxicology Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan to provide financial assistance for their operational costs. This enables the centre to co-ordinate provincial resources for toxicology research on effects of toxic substances on human health and the environment.

After becoming Minister of Environment last year, one of the first items I began dealing with was that of hazardous waste. Our department is currently investigating all the options available to us, and how we should deal with this issue. In the forefront is our active involvement in the programs established by the Canadian council of Resource and Environment Ministers.

We're also in the process of developing regulations to deal with hazardous wastes. The regulations will be compatible in providing for the management of industrial and hazardous waste presently regulated under the transportation of dangerous goods and its regulations.

(1100)

Concerning acid rain, we recently released a report which indicates that there is no evidence to believe that there is an acid rain problem in Saskatchewan. The levels of sulphate and nitrate in precipitation are still quite low. Studies have shown that there appears to be little acid rain effect in the southern part of the province. However, the pre-Cambrian shield of northern Saskatchewan seems to be quite sensitive to acid rain. Here the threat is also greater since several large sources of acid rain are located in neighbouring provinces, and virtually opposite in the Saskatchewan shield area. We will continue to monitor the situation, at the same time participate with the other western provinces in co-operating to obtain necessary information in order to control acid rain.

Water quality management is one of the key issues my department currently deals with, and I expect it to continue to be a priority matter. The department is carrying out comprehensive studies on major water bodies and watersheds. In the last year over 60,000 tests were completed on samples from surface waters – drinking water and industrial and municipal waste water. The surface-water sampling includes ongoing sampling at sites on our major rivers and lakes.

Detailed studies have been collected on the North Saskatchewan River, and work is in progress on the South

Saskatchewan and also on Lake Diefenbaker. A major review of Saskatchewan's water pollution control and waterworks regulations has been completed and are to be enacted in the near future. These regulations are expected to increase the minimum requirements for sewage treatment, to strengthen requirements for the disinfection of drinking water, and to establish the basis for setting drinking water quality standards.

Saskatchewan is also dedicated to protecting the quality of its air. The Air Pollution Control Act is being revised and will be renamed the clean air Act. This revision will facilitate a greater focus on client needs, to streamline the licensing process, to fill legislative gaps, and to clarify various aspects of the existing legislation.

The revised Act will remove the exemption which allows industries in operation prior to January of 1976 to operate without a permit. It will also allow for long-term benefits and incorporate a control order mechanism to ensure operational changes can be made during the term of the permits. We will be introducing this legislation in this session.

Now let me say a few words about the environmental impact assessment process. Over the last two decades, assessment processes have been instituted in numerous jurisdictions in a concerted effort to prevent undesirable environmental effects from occurring. The purpose of environmental impact assessments, as I see it, is to facilitate environmentally sensitive development decisions.

Over the past year, numerous proposals for new development in Saskatchewan were reviewed by the department, judged to be environmentally acceptable, and given departmental clearance to proceed, provided applicable permits and licences were obtained. However, a dozen such proposals were deemed to require closer technical and public scrutiny under provisions of the assessment Act and are currently in various stages of the assessment process.

Comprehensive reviews of impact statements associated with these proposals will ensure that, before ministerial approval is granted, the developments are environmentally sound and able to proceed in an environmentally sensible manner. Both senior department officials and I plan to be more active in the coming year in promoting the benefits of environmental impact assessments, so that people of Saskatchewan do not find themselves burdened in the future with unnecessary and avoidable costs of environmentally unsound development decisions.

In conclusion, let me reiterate once more that our government is very concerned about protection . . . protecting the people of Saskatchewan, our environment, and our wildlife. With these comments, Mr. Chairman, I invite the questions from the members of the opposition.

Item 1

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, like the minister, I have a few brief comments to make regarding the performance of his government, his

administration, and his own department over the past several years, since we have had an opportunity to scrutinize what he, as the Minister of Environment, and what his department has been doing, or I should say has failed to do, over the last little while.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to do this. It gives me a certain pride to be asked to represent our party and our caucus in developing the questions and developing our party's attitude towards these environmental estimates. And I look forward, indeed, to being able to act on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan in scrutinizing the activities of the minister and of his department.

Because, Mr. Chairman, unlike the minister, I believe that our party and I believe that the people of Saskatchewan have a different view and have a different estimation of the role played by his government, and of the role played by himself as minister in, in fact, protecting the environmental interests of the people of this province — either the short term or over the long term.

And, specifically, in regards to some of those areas and duties which he has recently acquired — and I speak here specifically of the public safety duties — I think that as we go through these estimates, the people of this province will see that the fine words and the fine rhetoric of the minister are nothing more than that. Fine words, fine writer, but in reality when it comes down to the hard and cold reality of the facts and figures of what his department and what his government has done, that the people of this province will see there, in black and white in these *Estimates*, that that is all it is — just so much rhetoric. Just so much rhetoric and not much reality.

Because I think, Mr. Chairman, if we'd look at the history, if we look at the history of the environmental protection afforded to the people of this province by the government opposite, I think you will see a history of betrayal, a history of betrayal of the environmental protection which the people of this province were afforded prior to 1982.

And we can see that, we can see that, Mr. Chairman, in both the amount of money expended and also in the number of people employed by that department. The amount of money expended and the number of people employed by that department since 1981-82 has shrunk drastically. It has shrunk drastically despite the fact that the department has taken on added responsibilities.

I would submit, Mr. Chairman, that what we have heard from the minister here is nothing more, nothing more than some political and partisan rhetoric from a minister who himself is nothing more than a minister, as part of a series of ministers, with no real ongoing concerns for the environment.

Despite the fine protestations to the contrary, when it comes to the actions of a government, real concern is shown by expenditure. Real concern is shown by action. Real concern is shown by the promulgation of new laws which in fact extend, as opposed to retract, protection for the citizens of this province.

I would submit, Mr. Chairman, that the facts and statistics outlined in the estimates speak very clearly, speak very

loudly for themselves; that these facts and statistics reveal that this government has been negligent, has been negligent in a while number of areas regarding the environment, and that, in fact, the Department of the Environment . . . And here I speak of the political Department of the Environment, as opposed to those fine civil servants who have carried on under most trying and difficult circumstances. So when I refer to the department and the minister, I am not referring — I want to make it clear — I'm not referring to any particular official, but I am, in fact, referring to the policies of that government and of that minister.

And as I said, the civil servants who work in the Department of the Environment have been carrying on under trying circumstances in the light of budget reductions, in the light of increasing work-loads, and in the light of a certain blurring of departmental responsibilities, given what has happened with the additional duties put onto the department itself.

As I said, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the department has been negligent, I believe that the minister, I should say, has been negligent in his duties, and that we shall show, and endeavour to show over the period of this estimates, that that is not an empty statement, but that in fact it is a statement of fact.

Because we have seen negligence develop by this department in the area of environmental and public safety. And I believe there's a reason for it. And again, these things will be developed further on as the questioning proceeds apace. This negligence, this lack of sensitivity, and this lack of forthrightness with the public stems from three major causes.

First of all, it stems from a lack of understanding, a lack of understanding by the minister as to the real fundamental importance of the issues dealt with by his department. These are not ordinary issues. These are not ordinary issues. These are the life-blood issues of this province. For without clean air, without good soil, and without safe water, this province . . . and without an adequate supply of safe water, this province will shrivel up and die — literally shrivel up and die.

I don't believe, Mr. Chairman, that the minister . . . and I don't believe that the minister by his actions has shown that he understands fully the fundamental, underlying importance of these issues that are dealt with by his department.

Secondly, I believe that the negligence shown by his department stems from a lack of priority — a lack of priority given to his department by the government.

We have seen a consistent pattern since 1982 by that government opposite, by the government of the minister. And I certainly am not going to try to blame the minister for action taken prior to his election in 1986. As we all know, he was former Speaker of this House and, in fact, has just been appointed Minister of the Environment. So I'm not going to put all the blame on that ministers' shoulders. I think that the government as a whole has to shoulder that blame. And that blame is this, is that it consistently underfunded and shrunk funding for the

department, and that, in fact shows a lack of priority given to environmental issues by the government opposite.

Those facts and figures will show that in fact, Mr. Minister, that your department has taken on less and less importance in the minds of your own government, that in fact environmental issues have become less and less in the priority to the government opposite. So your negligence results in that lack of priority.

Thirdly, the negligence of your department, I believe and I would submit, stems from a desire by your government to utilize the resources of your department for nothing more than partisan political purposes at the expense of the people of Saskatchewan. And I want to say, Mr. Minister, as we go through these estimates, that statement will ring more and more true, and you will see the truth of that statement.

You and your government have turned environment into nothing more than a political tool to enhance the political projects of your government – not to protect the interests of Saskatchewan, not to protect the long term interests of all the people in this part of the Northern Hemisphere, but in fact for narrow, partisan political issues. And we will show that, I believe, as the estimate process goes along.

(1115)

And what's all this negligence led to? Well, Mr. Minister, I submit, and that we will prove – because we've got the facts and figures to prove it—that your negligence has led to a degradation of the environment, that in fact it has led to a lessening of the quality of life and, in the broad sense, enjoyed by the people of this province. And I just want to list a few. I just want to list a few of the areas in that degradation that's taken place.

We look to south-east Saskatchewan. We see a growing ecological crisis throughout south-east Saskatchewan caused, among other things, by your refusal and your department's refusal to step in to take issue with the Department of Energy in policing the oil industry in this province and allowing the oil industry in this province to time after time pollute the land – the very land that we live on – through things like salt water breaks, through things like so-called ecology pits, through things like oil spills, and your refusal to in fact demand that the Department of Energy go ahead and utilize the resources that exist down in south-east Saskatchewan to help clean up the mess created by the oil industry.

We look to south-east Saskatchewan and we see plans under way to drain marshlands. And I am told by conservation and wildlife groups in this province that 40,000 acres of wetlands are going to be drained in south-east Saskatchewan as part of Shand-Rafferty. Forty thousand acres are going to be drained, and yet do we hear one peep out of you or your department? When it is a fact Saskatchewan – half the wetlands in Saskatchewan have been drained over the last few number of years and in fact that we've had the Ramsar convention here in Saskatchewan, a convention dedicated to the preservation of wetlands. And we see your government and your department refusing to deal

with that problem.

Mr. Minister, we've seen a degradation of the environment in northern Saskatchewan. We've seen a degradation of the environment caused by your refusal to carry out the laws that exist, the laws that exist in the environmental assessment process regarding uranium mining and milling, regarding the storage of uranium tailings. And we will get into that further as estimates proceed.

We see a degradation of the environment in this province by your refusal to develop a comprehensive strategy in respect to even minimum planning, even minimum planning for long-range water conservation wetlands development. We see a degradation of the environment in Saskatchewan by your refusal to develop ecologically sound farming and soil conservation practices, something which should be at the very heart of the Department of the Environment's job, something which strikes home to each and every person in Saskatchewan. And yet what do we hear from your department? Not a word.

Mr. Minister, we see a degradation of the environment in Saskatchewan by your refusal to extend protection to Saskatchewan citizens in regards to the production, storage, distribution, and use of hazardous substances. And we will deal with that matter much more fully as estimates go along.

Despite what you said in your opening statements, Saskatchewan people are less protected now from hazardous substances than they were four years ago, five years, or six years ago. The record will speak for itself, Mr. Minister, as we go along.

We've seen a degradation of the environment due to your failure to help municipalities in regard to the sewage treatment, water treatment, and refuse disposal problems that fall within the purview of your department. We've seen a degradation of the environment by your failure to protect the northern environment from the effects of acid rain. And here, Mr. Minister, I want to take direct issue with the conclusions drawn by the acid rain study. I think, when we get onto that topic further on in estimates, you will see a difference in water quality between northern Saskatchewan and southern Saskatchewan. And what we will even further see is the long-term trend, something which you, sir, do not seem to be overly concerned about.

We've seen a degradation of the environment in Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister, by your refusal to put Saskatchewan front and centre as a leader in the environmental protection movement on a global basis. Your government had an opportunity to be number one. Your government had an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of our predecessors here in this place prior to 1982, in which environment as a priority of the government was growing, in which environment was beginning to get the recognition that it now has as an issue on a global basis. Instead of increasing the priority of the environment, we've seen nothing more than a history of a downgrading of the environment.

And finally, Mr. Minister, I want to say this: that we have seen a degradation of public safety. We've seen a degradation of public safety by your government because you have failed to provide adequate standards and inspections in certain public safety duties, those duties which have been recently assigned to your department. And as we go through estimates, perhaps the most striking part of the estimates of your department revolves around this issue. Perhaps the essence of the low priority you give to the well-being and safety of people in Saskatchewan is shown by your refusal to provide adequate funding for the standards and inspections that deal directly with the lives of everyday people in everyday situations.

I believe, Mr. Minister – and like I said before, I don't blame it all on yourself – I think you and your government's record is this: it's one of failure to meet even the minimum standards, even the minimum standards which were set prior to 1982 for environment and environmental and public safety protection.

And I submit that in saying that, I believe that you personally do not have a grip on your department. I believe that you do not have a grip on the issues of the day. I believe that you have let your government downgrade environmental protection and public safety. I believe that you have used the department for your own narrow, partisan, political purposes, and we will show that . . . We will show that as clear as a bell, let me tell you, Mr. Minister.

You have failed to meet even the minimum standards . . . even the minimum standard, the standards which the people of Saskatchewan had come to expect prior to 1982. So I suppose it may be somewhat Utopian to talk about what you could have done. But maybe it is Utopian. Maybe we're all just dreamers. Maybe we're all just living in the future, as opposed to living in the antediluvian past in which you and your government have been.

But I don't think so. I think, with a little imagination and a little priority given to your department by your government, that a lot could have been accomplished in environment here in Saskatchewan. If you had not been blinkered, if you had not been blinded by your free market ideology, your slavish devotion to the market-place, you could have accomplished a lot in this province, sir.

For example, you could have used the department to develop a long . . . a program, both long term and short range, to shift present production, distribution, and consumption practices carried on in this policy in all areas of the economy. You could have begun to shift direction to an ecologically sustainable basis, to an ecology and an environment which says there are certain things we can do, there are certain things we can't do, and if we want to have quality life in the future, we have begun to have to . . . have to begin to grapple with those issues and to begin to grapple with them now.

For example, you could have utilized present resources available to your department to begin to tackle some of the social ills that beset us . . . some of the social ills like unemployment, like high social welfare rates, rates of the

number of people who are on social welfare in this province, particularly among young people. You know, it wouldn't have taken much . . . It would not have taken much imagination for you, sir, to press for the development of an ecology core, to say that we have, to young people in this province, that we have environmental problems that we as a government want to clean up, and that we as a government are going to put some priority to.

And whether it's cleaning up uranium tailings in northern Saskatchewan, which would provide jobs for young Northerners, or whether it's tree planting in southern Saskatchewan to begin to enhance soil conservation practices, you could have done that. You could have done that, but your department didn't have, your department didn't have the long-term protection of the environment as a priority.

Mr. Minister, you could have used your influence in cabinet, such as exists, to develop a massive job creation project revolving around energy conservation, from the research to the practical applications stage. As you know, Saskatchewan is one of those areas of the world in which we are lucky and fortunate enough to receive high amounts of energy from the sun.

You talk, you and your government talk about developing research, developing high tech, moving ahead into the future. Why haven't you, why haven't you moved ahead in this issue? Why haven't you moved ahead and done things like . . . Well, let's look at solar research. Why haven't you made Saskatchewan number one in solar research? It's a natural. It's a natural, for not only does it save energy, it also creates jobs. It's ecologically sustainable and, more importantly, will provide long-term economic opportunities to the people of this province.

Doesn't take much imagination. You've got lots and lots of resources in your department. You've got highly skilled people; you've got people with imagination. Why haven't you used them? Why haven't you used them?

You could have helped, Mr. Minister, some of the cash flow problems down on the farm. You could have used your department to help some of those cash flow problems.

For example, why hasn't you and your department pushed forward power generation as they have in California, as they have in New Mexico, as they have in Washington, as they have in Oregon? Why haven't you and your department pushed forward the generation of power by utilizing wind power technologies?

Used to be in this province that we all saw a windmill. A wind mill on every farmstead in this province. A windmill which was used to pump water, which was used to help, in fact, on-farm problems. Well, you know, the technology exists, although I don't know if you understand that, but the technology does exist here, where we could have similar type of windmills which will generate electrical power to be used both on the farm, but more importantly, which could be used to sell to Saskatchewan Power Corporation, which could be

hooked into the provincial power grid.

(1130)

The technology exists; the technology is in place, as I said before, in California. The technology is in place and is at work in California, in New Mexico, and Oregon, and Washington. You could have done that if you'd had the foresight and the imagination, if you had said we're not going to just meet the minimum standards, but we're going to be number one in Canada. You didn't, your government didn't take it as a priority, and so you didn't even meet the minimum standards, I submit.

You know, and you didn't, Mr. Minister, because you personally, you personally don't see a role for government in the economy. You personally don't see a role for government. Deep down you don't see a role for government protecting people in Saskatchewan, in the environment, in environmental and public safety issues.

You're caught in the past, you and the rest of all you free enterprisers over there. You're all caught back in the 1700s along with Adam Smith, and Dave Ricardo, and Michael Walker, and the Fraser Institute, and all you antediluvian thinkers who try to dress up the essential tenets of a rising capitalism as something new. Well let me tell you, that ideology, when it's translated in a practice in your own department – when it translates into your own department – doesn't even meet the minimum standards that people in Saskatchewan require.

Well that was a partisan comment, Mr. Minister. I think you'd admit that that was a partisan comment. What can we do? Well first of all, one of the things that we can do is make the whole question of environment and ecology and public safety a non-partisan issue. We can do that. We can work in co-operation if we approach the long-term problems of the environment in a point of view which says – and it's not hard; it's not difficult to comprehend – from the point of view that says each and every citizen in this province has an equal stake in the future of our air, of our land and, most of all, of our water quality and our water resources, which I submit is Saskatchewan's most precious resource.

If we approach it from that point of view, I believe that all members of the House, and I believe all people in Saskatchewan can work together. We can work together if we make the environment, we make public safety the starting point, the foundation upon which other major economic decisions are made.

So what I'm suggesting to you, Mr. Minister, is your responsibility to push forward in cabinet, and I will help you in that – I offer to help you in that – that if you say that underlying all decisions that affect the economy and affect people in this province, that we're going to put the environment, that we're going to put public safety first, I think we can develop some co-operation on that.

But you know, I don't think you want the co-operation. And I think your own record in the past proves that. As you know very well, Mr. Minister, when I was first elected and was appointed critic to the environment, I wrote you and said: I want to work together with you. I want to

co-operate with you to raise the profile of environmental issues across this province, because I don't care whether it's a Conservative farmer from Carievale, who's getting poisoned by spray, or whether it's an NDP worker here who is working in one of the warehouses in Saskatchewan that in fact bottles that spray, bottles that chemical, they're both getting poisoned. And the poison doesn't care whether they're NDP or whether they're Conservative. And that's the point of view that I approach it from. And I believe that there's a responsibility upon us as legislators to protect both that farmer and the workers, people of this province.

But I wrote you and said, I want to co-operate with you, and in doing so I'd like a briefing by members of your department. And you know this is true. You know this is true. I said, I want a briefing so I can help you carry out the questions of environmental concern to this people of the province to raise those as an issue. And what did I get from yourself, sir? I got a turn-down – a flat no. I got turned down, a flat no. Because you didn't want to co-operate with us. You didn't want to co-operate because you wanted to use the department for your own narrow, partisan, political purposes. You didn't want to co-operate with the opposition in protecting the people of Saskatchewan and in protecting Saskatchewan's environment. Your record stands and speaks clearly on that. You don't want to co-operate. You don't want to co-operate, Mr. Minister, because you think the environment is nothing more than a narrow, partisan, political issue upon which you hope to be able to score some points on the opposition.

Okay, but if that's what you want, let me tell you – if that's what you want, Mr. Minister, that's what you're going to get. That's what you're going to get, because the environment, if you approach it from that point of view, will become a political hot potato. It'll become the kind of political hot potato that the people of this province are going to see you juggling over the next little while. Let me tell you that. They're going to see you juggling, because we have a list of environmental issues that we want to talk about that you and your department haven't addressed, or you've addressed poorly, or that you haven't, in fact, made any substantial progress – in fact have done the reverse, gone backward on. And we're going to be talking about those over the next little while, Mr. Minister.

Having said that, I want to take some note of some of your comments in regards to . . . well I guess in regards to trying to defend what is your own, and your government's own personal and sorry record in terms of the environment. What I was listening to in your comments, Mr. Minister and what was noticeable, was noticeable by its absence, was noticeable by its absence, was any underlying philosophy, any underlying philosophy of how you as a minister approach the questions and the issues of the environment.

So what I'd like as a first question, Mr. Minister, what I'd like to ask you is this: will you please expound to the House your own personal philosophy of what to you – of what to yourself is your responsibility as Minister of the Environment? Let me put it another way. Do you see your role as Minister of the Environment strictly in terms of the rules and regulations as laid out in the various Act, or in

fact do you see yourself as a Minister of Environment having other functions?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The hon. member has had a very wide ranging address, and once in a while he touched the Department of Environment. But many times you're a long, long ways off the subject.

Let me start by telling you that the quality of the environment, since we've been government, has actually improved. And I could read you a nice article from the *Leader-Post* of a study that was done that shows that Saskatchewan stands, not at the bottom of the list, but second on the list, following only Ontario. We were in third place prior to this year. We have moved up to second place. The province of Manitoba has been 10th place, and continues to be 10th place, so I don't think that you can entirely say that the environment is going all to pieces.

The hon. member raises the wetland drainage with the Shand and Rafferty. There's been no wetland drainage at this point, but we do have 1,800 pages to evaluate in an environmental impact statement that came in. That is going through process in my department. There's been no decision to let the Shand/Rafferty projects go ahead at this point. And so to make the wild statement that all this drainage has occurred is nothing more than that — just simply a wild statement.

You talked about the uranium industry and the lack of environmental assessment. The environmental assessments have been in force throughout the uranium industry. And if you were referring to the very recent project at Cluff Lake, where they have added a piece to their mill and are now reprocessing leach tails, I think that that was not considered to be a development under the Act, according to the terms of the Act, and a court case that was held verified that that was not a development under the Act. So the member, again, is off the subject a ways.

You touched public safety and are making wild accusations. Let me assure you that the backlog in 1981 was almost exactly the same numbers that we still face today. I don't say that that's great and that we should continually have that size of backlog. We are moving in areas and, I think, some of the things that I can give you today will likely indicate to you directions that we will move. But we are making changes in the public safety area that I believe will address many of those concerns.

You indicated that we needed to do something to protect the air. I indicated to you in my opening remarks that a clean air Act will be introduced in this session. And I believe that Act is going to have an impact on the way that businesses operate in this province to protect the air within the province. It won't only pick up the existing . . . the new businesses that are coming on stream, but it will go back and pick up the older businesses who have been polluting. So I believe that's an important move, and you will see it when the Act comes in; and I hope to have it in in a very short time.

I wouldn't like to get into the windmill business quite as far as the hon. member is indicating. It's not part of the

environment. When I was a much younger man, the power on my farm was generated by windmills. I was most appreciative when Sask Power put a power line through and we could have a dependable power source. The member is quite a lot younger than I am and perhaps has very little background information on what he speaks about, but that is not one of the items that is really under Environment, so I think I'll leave it there.

If the member would like to get on to specific questions on any issues, I would be glad to deal with them.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, just in regards to some of the statements that you've just made, regarding that environmental quality report card, I wonder, would you please give us the grade that was given to Saskatchewan in that report that you just referred to.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— We were classified second of the provinces of Canada.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, I didn't ask what the position was. I asked you: what grade was given to Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— There is no specific grade listed. There are percentages — that's the only thing I could give you — and we come in at 61 per cent. The only one higher is Ontario.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, you referred to a news report that came from the *Leader-Post*, and if I believe my recollection is right, Saskatchewan was given a grade; not just a percentage, but was given a grade. Would I be wrong in saying that the grade given to Saskatchewan was C minus?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The grade given to Saskatchewan is C minus. It's still second of all the provinces of Canada. It would be nice to be an A, I agree with you. I've only been minister for a short time, so we're heading that way.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, thank you very much. I think you have admitted the very first thing I said in my comment was that it's not all your fault. In fact, that it's the fault of the previous ministers before you, and that you're just one in a series of ministers who've been put into the portfolio and who have not been given sufficient funds to put Saskatchewan in number one place when it comes to the environment.

Now I'm glad to see that you admitted that C minus is a pretty damn poor grade when it comes to the environment in Saskatchewan, and that your government has to take the responsibility for that grade. I'm also pleased to hear, Mr. Minister, that you intend to do something about it. But those are fine words, and your intentions—the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Things are done when they're given money. Your department can achieve its objectives when you're given money, and that's not what's happened.

Now, Mr. Minister, you've talked about the C minus given Saskatchewan, and that was the grade given it, and that you're not very proud of that fact. I'm glad to see that. I'm very glad to see that. It shows that you've got a realistic attitude to what's happening here in the province

and that you agree with us that there's the environmental degradation.

I want to turn to just another thing you mentioned in your reply. That's the question of the environmental assessment process as regards to Shand and Rafferty. You said, now, that the environmental impact statement has been received by your department. I wonder if you will now table that statement for the legislature to peruse.

(1145)

Hon. Mr. Swan:— That's not the customary process, but there will be a tabling of the environmental . . . I shouldn't say tabling; there will be a releasing of the environmental impact statement for public review, and there will also be an opportunity for public hearings on the assessment for the Rafferty and Alameda project.

Mr. Lyons: — Now am I to take it that the environmental impact statement given to you by the . . . now were you given the statement, first of all, by the Saskatchewan Water Corporation? Is that the originator of that impact statement?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— No, the study is done by the Souris Basin Development Authority and it is through that group that that particular assessment is brought forward.

Mr. Lyons: — So the study — let's get this clear — the study is coming directly from the Souris valley basin authority. Will the study that you release for public consumption, will that study be the same study that was given to your department by the Souris valley basin authority?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— Yes, I'm advised that it is the same statement that goes forward for public review.

Mr. Lyons: — When you say same statement, Mr. Minister, are we to conclude that that includes all the technical data and all the back-up studies which went into, in fact, producing the environmental impact statement? Will we receive each and every report that was used to draw up the environmental impact statement?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— Yes, all 1,800 pages of that — 1,800 and some-odd pages of that particular assessment — will be made available for public review.

Mr. Lyons: — Okay, Mr. Minister, let's pursue this line of thought for a minute. Were there, in the production of the environmental impact statement regarding this project, were there technical reports prepared by firms or engineering groups or by other government departments, or by anybody else outside the Souris valley basin authority, which were used to determine the final 1,800 pages of the report — were there those other reports?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I think that the hon. member has to realize something here, and maybe you're not aware of it. Environmental assessments are not done by the department; they're done by the proponent. So the Souris Basin Development Authority used expert people throughout the province to come in with that statement.

We have no input on the areas that they may use while they're doing their statement; they draw from as many experts as they can.

So I would say that the consulting firms that were used would go out and use many different resources that are available, and then they develop the overall assessment statement that's presented to us.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, you're saying to me and to the House that the reports which are used to develop environmental impact statements which is presented by the proponent, and I'm quite aware of the process, that the back-up technical reports which were used in fact to shape that overall statement, your department doesn't peruse, your department doesn't ask for, and your department doesn't check the technical data which forms the basis of the EIS (environmental impact statement).

Hon. Mr. Swan:— In the review process, the department acts for any back-up information that they may need. And they aren't always tabled at the time that the statement comes into us but they are available to my staff as they worked through that assessment process.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, in order to be able to give to the people of the province all the information — all the information regarding the development of Shand, Rafferty-Alameda, will you undertake to guarantee to this House that each and every document, including the terms of reference, be tabled in this House?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— All the pertinent information is included within the report itself. If there's anything that the department needs beyond that, then they go out and ask for it. But traditionally, it's all incorporated and it's available when that report is tabled. Now I don't know if you've ever looked at 1,800 pages in one report, but if you don't think that's enough pages, I'm sure they would develop more.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, having had the opportunity to peruse the *Carter Report on Taxation* — let me tell you, I've seen some length reports — 1,800 pages is not that much, given the fact that your government plans to spend 120, or I guess it's 130 million now if you use 1987 dollars. So the size of the report shouldn't be too daunting to anybody.

What is concerning me is that you're saying that we are not going to get access to the back-up technical reports done by consultants, whether inside or outside government, that went to act as the basis for the environmental impact statement. Is that what you're saying, Mr. Minister? That you will not release and will not table (a) the terms of reference; (b) the report itself; (c) all those technical and similar reports that were used in the production of the environmental impact statement. Is that what you're telling us? That you won't — that you will not provide us with all that information?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— No, I am not telling you that at all. What I am telling you is that all of the reports that are used are referenced within the assessment report. Those then become public and available, mostly in libraries and places of that nature. But they are available to you, and if

you want them, I don't see any problem getting them. So, no, the information is readily available when that assessment is tabled.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, will you undertake to table that report now including what you said. I take to be that that includes all supporting documentation. Will you table that now, this time, to the House?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I told the hon. member, that's not the process, is to table it now. What will happen is that the assessment process goes through the Department of Environment first. And then it's made available for the public. And at that time you'll have access to any of that information. But, no, it won't be tabled now.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, I'm surprised, I'm shocked, and I'm appalled at what I just heard. Are you saying that we in the legislature, we who have the responsibility of giving to your government the authority to spend \$130 million of taxpayers' money in the Estevan constituency, that we're not going to be able to get — get to be able to review the material upon which the financial decision was made?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The hon. member is trying to put words in my mouth. I told you that it's going to go through the department, then it will be made available for the public, and you are one of the public. You can certainly get all of the information that you need. It has never been the practice in the history of Saskatchewan to table that kind of statements in the legislature, and it's not going to start today. But that's not meaning that it's any different.

Mr. Prebble: — I'd like to ask the Minister of the Environment a question, and that is: when can we expect the environmental impact assessment on Rafferty to be released? When? When are you going to be releasing that to the public? Give me a date.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I can't give the hon. member a date for release. It has only been in, just a matter of about 10 days since we received it. It'll probably be in the fall some time, but I couldn't even hope to give you a date, because they go through the review process within the department and then they have information that they need, so they go back to the Souris basin authority to get that information, and sometimes there are time lags.

It's a major project. It's going to demand a lot of work. And we want to be sure that when we complete the review of that environmental impact statement, that we've done a thorough job. So to me the most urgent thing is not to have it out tomorrow, but to have it when the department has had time for a full review.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, we're not talking about the environmental assessment statement that your department does now — clear on that. We want, and we believe that the people of Saskatchewan want to be able and to have the opportunity to peruse the environmental impact statement put into your department by the Souris Valley basin authority, and in addition, the other supporting documentation. The other supporting documentation include the terms of reference. Because that does not, Mr. Minister . . . And I would submit . . . Are you trying to say that somehow that inhibits the process

within your department? Is that the rationale you're trying to give us?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— No, that's not the rationale. You'll get all of the pages that come in from the Souris Basin Development Authority, plus the recommendations from the department itself like what our department review and what they write. So you'll actually get all of it at that time.

Mr. Lyons: — I understand, I understand what you're saying, Mr. Minister. It doesn't seem to me that you're giving a good reason why, and we'll come back to that, I guess, a little later on. I just want to ask you a few more questions in regards to your response to my opening speech, or my remarks.

That Cluff Lake, I was interested to hear your remarks on Cluff Lake and the lack of environmental assessment process which took place on this so-called extension of a normal development. I would differ on that. I think the people of Saskatchewan differ on that. I think we saw a redefinition and redesign of the tailing pit up there.

Be that as it may, be that as it may, I was interested in your statement that the department was justified in making the decision not to hold an environmental assessment of the process because the court has somehow absolved you. Is that what your statement means, that the court case which preceded it has absolved the department from making that assessment?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— No, that's not what I said. We made the decision based on very good fact, on the legislation that gives us authority and the areas of authority that that legislation gives us.

I personally visited Cluff Lake with the mines pollution staff to take a look at what was happening to Cluff Lake, and then gave the necessary permits to allow them to go ahead and process leach tails. I believe the process was followed exactly. What I did say was that the courts, in a court challenge after the fact, upheld the decision that the department had made.

Mr. Lyons: — Okay. You just said, Mr. Minister, that the court case that was heard, the court case was heard, upheld the department's decision. Are you saying that the court, the court in its written decision, said that the department of the . . . cleared the Department of the Environment of any responsibility?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The Department of Environment is never trying to get cleared of responsibility. We take the responsibility very seriously, and I think the record speaks for itself in the uranium mining industry in the province. If you look at the end result at each mine, you'll find that they are doing much better even than the requirements that the federal government would ask. And so I am indeed pleased with the process and the concern that the mining companies have shown for the environment in Saskatchewan.

(1200)

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, are you familiar with the court decision? Have you read the court decision?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— Yes.

Mr. Lyons: — Can you tell the House on what legal basis was the challenge thrown out?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The challenge that was made had no standing before the court; that's the crux of it.

Mr. Lyons: — In other words, the court did not say in its decision that it was okay for the Department of the Environment not to do an environmental assessment. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The court doesn't say either one way or the other. I think if you read the statement you would agree with what I'm saying. But it did not chastise the department because we gave the permission to go ahead.

Mr. Lyons: — I read the statement and that's why I'm asking those questions. You, 10 minutes – not more than 10 minutes ago – said that the court . . . You said that the court absolved the Department of the Environment, reaffirmed the Department of the Environment's decision. We'll see in *Hansard* tomorrow, because you said that the courts reaffirmed the Department of the Environment's decision not to proceed with an environmental assessment. That's what the words . . . those were the words. You just stand now and say, the courts didn't say one way or the other. Which is it?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The hon. member tries to turn the words around and use his own words, and that's fine. We went through the normal process. We made all of the decisions based on the legislation that gives us the direction that we need. That was challenged in court after the reprocessing of the leach tails began and the courts said that the woman that was challenging had no right to the challenge that she was raising. The court case, if you read it . . . and I'm not going to read a whole court document here. You can read it. It's public information.

Mr. Lyons: — It is public and I have read it. I repeat – I have read it, which was why I raised the question and which was why I was surprised that you would try to use the court decision to somehow justify your decision not to go ahead with the environmental assessment. In fact, as you have just admitted, in fact you have just admitted the court did not justify that. Wouldn't you say that the court did not justify your decision? That the court decision had nothing to do with your decision and that you made the decision independently and has not been backed up by a court, but in fact that the court challenge of the department's decision not to go ahead with the environmental assessment was thrown out on a legal technicality in which the person, Maisie Shiell, was not given legal standings before, and that was the only reason. It had nothing to do whatsoever for your decision to go ahead – not to go ahead with the assessment.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— In its consideration of the facts the court found no fault with the department.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, that's not what the question

was and that's not what you said earlier on. We weren't talking about the consideration of the facts that the court found no fault with the department. Did you consult with any legal authority, through the Department of Justice or any outside legal help, to get a legal opinion prior to making your decision not to go ahead with the environmental assessment study at Cluff Lake?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I believe if the court reviews a case and they find no fault with our action, then it effectively gives approval to the action that you've taken.

Mr. Lyons: — Would you please read from the court document that portion which says you are . . . that the court gives approval to the Department of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— That isn't what I said and it would not be in any report. What I said was if the court gives a ruling after a hearing and they make no assessment against the department, then they in effect give approval of what the department has done.

Mr. Lyons: — So it's in effect given approval. It's in effect given approval. It hasn't given approval in substance, it hasn't given approval in reality, but only in the mind of you, sir, has it given approval.

There is nothing down anywhere in any document, either court or environmental or otherwise, which gives approval to your actions in not going ahead with the environmental assessment at Cluff Lake. So I think that we better be pretty clear on that. Is my statement correct that no court in this province has in fact ruled? Now I want you to listen carefully. No court in this province has in fact ruled on the department's decision to carry on an environmental assessment, whether or not to do an environmental assessment at Cluff Lake.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The court reviewed the facts, and in so doing they found no fault within the department's action.

Mr. Lyons: — Is that stated anywhere? Does it state in any court document that this court finds the Department of Environment is absolved from, or is not responsible for, or has not done anything wrong, in terms of the process? Is it down in black and white, or are you just reading things into the decision that gave Maisie Shiell no standing?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I'm not sure what the member is trying to get at here. But I wonder whether the hon. member is inferring that the judge of the court did not do his job when he gave his ruling.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, I'm saying that the court made a decision. It said Maisie Shiell, when she made a challenge to what was occurring at Cluff Lake, had no standing before the court. That's what the court document said. You, sir, are trying to imply or impugn – and you said directly that the court has absolved your department, has reaffirmed what your department did in not going ahead with the environmental assessment. It had nothing absolutely whatsoever to do with that court case.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I suppose we could stand and argue

back and forth about what the meaning of the court ruling was, if that's the whole purpose. But I see really very little purpose. I've given you my answers. If you don't accept them, that's your choice.

Mr. Lyons: — Which of the answers am I expected to believe? First of all you say that the court ruling absolved the department. The court ruling in fact said that the department did right in not doing an environmental assessment. That's the first answer you gave.

Then the second answer it is – it didn't rule one way or the other. Which of those two answers are you giving? Which of those two am I to believe?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The member puts words in my mouth. I think when the *Hansard* comes out, and I would ask you to review the *Hansard*, that I did not use the word “absolved.” I think that you'll find that that was your word.

Mr. Lyons: — We will review the *Hansard*, Mr. Minister. So we'll wait till the *Hansard* comes out, but pursue this line of questioning a little later on.

Earlier on I'd asked you about outlining some of your philosophy in regards to the Department of the Environment. And you failed to do that. So I'm going to ask you – I guess I have to – on each specific item as we go along.

Because the environmental assessment study was not done by your department, what I submit is a new process, including for example the interjection of cyanide into the atmosphere and into the environment of that area. Because your department did not undertake that assessment, a private citizen, one Maisie Shiell, was forced to go to the court to seek redress. She asked the court to in fact put an interim injunction on the project at Cluff Lake until in fact the people of this province had an opportunity to look at the kind of process.

The court, in its wisdom, following the law of this province, in citing numerous precedents, said that Maisie Shiell has no standing before the court. In other words, that a citizen of this province does not and is not allowed to challenge projects which may be environmentally damaging. What I want to know from you, Mr. Minister, is this: do you believe that people in Saskatchewan should have the right to make a court challenge to projects which they think are environmentally hazardous?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I don't believe that it makes much difference what I believe. People have the option to do . . . what people have the option to do in court are the things spelled out by our laws within the province. If they meet those requirements, then by all means they go ahead. But what I think or what I might suggest would have really no weight in that setting.

Mr. Lyons: — I don't believe what I just heard, Mr. Chairman. I don't believe what I just heard. Here is a minister of the Crown saying: I don't think my opinion matters. I don't think what I believe matters in terms of dealing with issues in my department. I don't believe you said that. I don't believe you gave sufficient thought to

what you just said, that you as a minister, your opinion doesn't matter. Will you tell us, first of all, when it comes to environmental matters and it comes to citizens standing before the courts regarding environmental matters, whose opinion does count, if it's not yours?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I think the hon. member tries to address more than one thing in one question. What I did say was that in our justice system they follow the laws of this province, and that whether or not I think a person has the right to go to court or not, really will have no significance. As it relates to environmental matters, yes, my opinion does make a difference.

Mr. Lyons: — In regards to environmental matters, do you believe that all citizens of the province should have a right to go before the courts, to pursue and to object to – through legal means – projects which they determine may be environmentally hazardous? Do you believe that environmentally, within terms of the environment, that citizens have that right?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— When you go to the court you follow the laws of the court and the laws of the province and the opinions of individuals in society, and it doesn't matter whether you're a member of the legislature or anywhere else, you will still follow the rules and the laws of this province and of the courts of the province.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, perhaps you would like to enlighten us as to where those laws come from.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I know the member is new here, but I thought he might have understood that the process of the legislature is to make the laws of the province, and in that setting we all have some voice within this legislature. And once the laws are written, then the people of the province use those laws to access the court system when there is need.

Mr. Lyons: — Okay, now I think maybe we're getting on to something here. So you will admit that the laws are made by the legislature, that you, a member of the Executive Council of the legislature, have a certain determining influence as to what is the nature of those laws.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I think the kinds of questions the member is asking would be more properly asked in the Department of Justice estimates. We're talking about the legal process. I don't believe that that is my job as the Minister of the Environment, and so I would ask you to come back to environmental issues.

Mr. Lyons: — I'm referring directly to environmental issues. We raised the whole question of citizens' standings before the court on an environmental issue, i.e., your refusal to carry on an environmental assessment at Cluff Lake. So we're dealing with environmental issues. What we seem to be, is dealing with your refusal to admit that, in fact, you have some influence as to determining the laws which gives the citizen standing before the courts.

Now as Minister of the Environment, will you say, will you admit that, yes, we in the legislature can change the

laws which will give a citizen standing before the courts? Yes or No?

(1215)

Hon. Mr. Swan:— As the member knows, the legislature has the authority to change laws, but we have no law before us at this time that anybody is suggesting that we change. And that's why I say that it really doesn't matter what I think, if we have a law here, of course, then my opinion and my input can have an effect.

Mr. Prebble: — My question to the Minister of the Environment is that he knows full well that there are many U.S. states that make provision for citizens to have standing before the courts to question and to oppose developments and projects that will be environmentally damaging. He knows that. And he also knows that the reason why Maisie Shiell and many other citizens of this province are not able to get standing on projects is because the legislation in Saskatchewan is not in place to grant them standing before the courts. He knows that full well too.

Now this is an important question with respect to northern issues in particular, because what we're talking about here is a uranium mine where there are very few people who live in the area of the uranium mine — in the immediate vicinity of the uranium mine. There are about seven or eight people who would actually be immediately impacted by environmental damage from that mine in the short term.

But in the long term, the environmental impact of that mine, and the environmental impact of the radioactive waste disposal that we're talking about will impact all people of Saskatchewan in the long term. But the narrow provisions right now, with respect to standing, are such that any resident of southern Saskatchewan isn't able to claim under the current provisions that the minister's legislation provides for. A citizen in southern Saskatchewan isn't able to prove to the courts that in the short term they will be impacted by that project. And that's the reason they don't have standing.

Now, Mr. Minister, my question to you is: do you know that many U.S. states make provision for standing before the courts for all citizens of the state to question and to oppose a project whose impact on the environment will be environmentally damaging? Will you now indicate to this legislature whether you're prepared to change the legislation in Saskatchewan to allow the citizens of this province to have standing before the courts when questioning projects like the Cluff Lake uranium mine in northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— It's interesting that the hon. member should raise this issue. The hon. member was a member of the Government of Saskatchewan when his party were in power a few years ago, and the environmental impact assessment legislation was put in by that government. If there were some fault within the legislation, then at the time that you were a member of that government, you had opportunity to have influence.

An Hon. Member: — My question to the minister was

very straightforward . . .

Mr. Chairman: — I would like to remind the member from Saskatoon University that we still do go through the Chair at a time like this. As long as you have a back and forth kind of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. All I'm trying to say is that we still have to have some decorum here, and I'm asking you to be recognized for the first time. Then if you want to have a series of questions, I will let you continue but for the first time. So I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Mr. Prebble: — Sorry, I will make a point of going through you in the future.

My question to the minister was very straightforward. I asked the minister: are you prepared at this point in time to follow the lead of many U.S. state legislatures and introduce provisions in environmental legislation for this province that would allow citizens of this province to have standing before the courts to raise questions and opposition to projects that may be environmentally damaging? Will you answer that question, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The member is introducing a new idea to the legislature. This is the first time it's come forward. What I would do is go back to the department and have a look at the legislation and make some decisions to see whether or not there is a need for change.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, you said that it's a new idea to this legislature. Are you aware of any other legislature in Canada that are dealing with this issue?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— Not particularly aware of it, no.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, I want to get this straight. You said, not that you're aware. You're not aware of any other legislation in Canada which deals with the question outstanding. I'll ask you this then, sir: are you aware of the Bill which was recently passed — a private members' Bill — which recently passed second reading in the Ontario legislature, supported by all parties, which gives to citizens the right of standing before the court, and more than that, more than that, provides funds from the province, provides funds from the province of Ontario, in order that citizens can launch those challenges. Are you aware of that Bill?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— In the first question, the member said legislature. In the second one, you said legislation. Now I think you're going to have to distinguish a little between the two. There is a difference. Yes, I am aware that that particular Bill was in the House in Ontario.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, and we'll go back to *Hansard* on this again. In response to the question, in response to the question from the member from Saskatoon University, you told this House that you were not aware of any legislation or any ideas that would give citizens standings. In the very next question, in response to the very next question, you tell us that you are aware.

I asked you, I asked you, I asked you if you knew of any

piece of legislation in any legislatures in Canada that was introducing legislation of that type. You said no. Then I asked you, were you aware of the Bill in Ontario? And you say yes. Now which is it? Which one are you . . . (inaudible) . . . You're not aware of it, or you are aware of it. Would you please tell us? Would you please tell us what you know?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— You were the first person to raise the question of the Ontario Bill that's in the House. And I gave you my answer.

Mr. Lyons: — You gave two answers, Mr. Minister, with all respect, sir. Mr. Chairman, the minister gave two answers – two totally contradictory answers.

On the one hand, he said he was not aware of any legislation, he was not aware of any legislation in any legislature in Canada, because that was the question. You were not aware of any legislation which deals with the question of standing. That was the question and you said you were not aware of any. Very short. You got up and said, no, I'm not aware, and you sat down.

I asked you then, were you aware of the legislation in Ontario which dealt with the question of standing, and which also provided funding for people who wanted to challenge, who wanted to challenge the environmental projects. And you got to your feet and you said, oh yes, we're aware of that. Which are you, sir? Where do you stand? Are you aware of legislation which deals withstanding? Or are you not aware of legislation, which deal withstanding? Would you please tell us: are you aware or are you not aware?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I indicated to the member I was aware of the piece of legislation in the Ontario legislature. I'm not aware of any other.

Mr. Lyons: — Fine. So you are aware of at least one piece of legislation. Then how does that jive, how does that jive with your . . . How does that jive with the answer to the question immediately before that which said, and your response which said, I'm not aware of any legislation. So now you're saying that your first answer wasn't correct. Am I to assume that your first answer was not correct on that issue?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The member is going over the same question several times. I've given you my answer.

Mr. Lyons: — Now you said you are aware. You say you're aware, you're aware of the legislation before the Ontario legislature which gives people standing. Would you please tell the House . . . Would you please tell the House, who was the hon. member in Ontario which put forward that legislation?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I believe that the hon. member should come back to the Environment estimates for Saskatchewan. I'm not dealing with Ontario, and I'm not going to give any more answers on Ontario.

Mr. Lyons: — But we're talking, Mr. Minister, we're talking about . . . We are talking about the estimates in Saskatchewan, and, in fact, how rulings of your

department have denied citizens in this province rights before the court – rights which are being granted to other ministers.

You, in your opening statement, said, Mr. Minister, that you thought Saskatchewan was up there in either number one or number two in terms of the environment. You said in your statement, and you professed to have a grip on your department. You profess to have a grip on your department and a grip on the issues that are before you in terms of environmental issues. We are criticizing that; we are saying, no you don't.

And I believe that we're starting to prove that you don't have a grip on those issues. You don't have a grip on one of the major issues before the environmental movement in North America, which is the question of legal standing.

Now I want to know: have you read the Bill? You said you were aware of the Bill in Ontario. I want to know from you, sir, have you read that proposed piece of legislation?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I told the member that I'm not going to answer any more questions dealing with Ontario. But I can tell you this much, that the legislation that our department operates under is Saskatchewan legislation. It was put in place when the New Democratic Party was in the province. We've had no requests from anybody on that side of the House to tell us that they thought the legislation need amendment until now.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, let's just talk about legislation which you and your party have dealt with or have proposed in terms of the environment. We'll go back to this because you see to be very, very willing to talk about Manitoba. You and the rest of your government seem to be very, very willing to talk about Manitoba but it's interesting you won't talk about Ontario because you still have not answered my question. You still have not answered my question.

Mr. Minister, the member from Maple Creek – the member from Maple Creek, when she sat in opposition, put forward what she called the "Magna Carta" of the Environment. She put forward what she said was the charter of rights for the Environment, to translate it into English.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we don't see you introducing that kind of legislation now that you sit in government. We haven't seen one initiative in that area. But you know one of the central tenets of the Magna Carta that the member from Maple Creek was putting forward contained the exact same type of thrust that the people in Ontario were putting forward. Do you agree – do you agree that the thrust to give individual standing before the courts contained in the private members' Bill from the member from Maple Creek – do you agree that that thrust should be introduced in Saskatchewan, as it has been introduced in Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The private members' Bill was introduced by the member, was not given much heed by the government of the day, which happened to be a New Democratic government. They wouldn't allow it to go

anywhere. If you really thought it was so great, perhaps it should have come forward at that time.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, when we form the government after the next election, let me tell you there will be that and more. There will be that and more. But I am not yet, or any of my colleagues not yet, occupying the portfolio of Minister of the Environment. You, sir, are. You, sir, are occupying that portfolio. You, sir, are occupying that portfolio and you have taken no initiatives.

But I want to get back to the specific question. You said to this House that you were familiar with the legislation put forward in Ontario, similar legislation that's contained in that private members' Bill. You said you were familiar with it. How are you familiar with it? Was it because you read the Bill? Was it because you read the Bill, or was it because you got the idea from the member from Maple Creek? How were you familiar with it? Did you read the Bill or not?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I don't think that I have to account to anyone for what I read and what I don't read, and how I understand or whether I do not understand what's happening in Ontario. What I'm telling you is that I'm here to defend the estimates and the Department of Environment for Saskatchewan, and if the hon. member would like to ask any questions on that subject I'd be pleased to answer them.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Minister, once again I think *Hansard* is going to show . . . it's going to be enjoyable reading for the people of this province the next . . . here we have a minister who says I don't have to be accountable. I don't have to be accountable for what I know. I don't have to be accountable for what I read. I don't have to be accountable for the actions I take. I don't have to tell the people of Saskatchewan on what basis I take action. That's what you just said.

(1230)

You said, and I'm questioning your credibility, Mr. Minister, you said to this House that you were familiar with the legislation from Ontario. I asked you: who proposed the legislation? You didn't know, or else you won't tell us, or else you're keeping all your vast esteems of knowledge to yourself. I asked you: were you familiar with the contents of that legislation? And you won't know or else you won't tell us because you want to keep that wealth of knowledge to yourself.

I'm asking you now: you said you were familiar with that legislation. How are you familiar with it? Did you read it, or were you briefed by an officials from your department here in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I told the hon. member that I was aware of the legislation, but that the legislation in Ontario is not part of these estimates, and I'll leave it there.

Mr. Lyons: — You said, Mr. Minister, that you were aware with it. Now you're aware of one or two ways. You either read it, or you didn't. You were either briefed by it or you didn't. Let's put it this way: were you briefed by any of

your departmental officials on the legislation that has been put forward in Ontario that deals with the question of standing? Were you briefed? Because that deals directly with Saskatchewan's estimates and the department . . . the activities of your departmental officials. Were you briefed?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The department has given me no briefing.

Mr. Lyons: — Then I am to assume that you read it yourself. Is that a fair assumption?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The hon. member can make any assumptions he wishes.

Mr. Lyons: — Please tell the House, Mr. Minister, how is it, if you didn't read it and you weren't briefed on it by any of your department officials, how are you aware of that legislation? How are you aware of that legislation if you didn't read it and you weren't briefed on it?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I didn't make those statements. Simply, I told you that I don't believe that the laws of Ontario are part of these estimates. I didn't tell you I didn't read it. I didn't tell you I did. I told you I'm aware of it, and that's as far as I'm going on it.

Mr. Lyons: — May be as far . . . that may be as far as you want to go. We'll see whether or not that's as far as you go. We'll come back at it another way. We'll come back at it another way at another time, because I know some other members want to enter the debate. I have a letter here, Mr. Minister, that I'm going to be handing to you and I want to read it into the record. It's to:

The Hon. Herb Swan, Minister of the Environment, 302 Leg. Building, Regina. Saskatchewan, S4S 0B3.

Dear Herb: (It says) For the purpose of environment estimates, could you forward to our caucus office the following materials.

1. Two copies of each of the environmental impact assessment statements that have been filed with the Department of the Environment in the past three years since July 1, 1984.
2. Two copies of the comments prepared by the staff of the Department of the Environment as they conducted a review of each of these assessments.
3. Documentation on what decision, if any, has been made on each of the projects on which an assessment was conducted? Could you indicate in each case whether the proposed development was granted approval or rejected? In cases where approval was granted, could you indicate what conditions were attached to the approval? Could you also indicate on which projects a decision regarding approval has not yet been made?
4. Two copies of each of the uranium mine lease

agreements that your government has signed since assuming office in April of 1982.

5. Two copies of each of the spill reports prepared following a reported spill at each of the uranium mines in Saskatchewan. Please provide these back to April of 1982.

6. One copy of each of the other spill reports filed with, and prepared by, your department since July 1984.

7. Two copies of a statement that provides a listing of all projects that were exempted from requiring environmental impact assessment by your department. Please indicate what the grounds were for exempting each of the developments that were exempted.

8. One copy of all the documents submitted to the Department of Environment in Saskatchewan by the Department of Health in Ottawa on the safety of 2,4-D (the chemical 2,4-D).

Yours sincerely (and it's signed by myself).

And that shall be delivered to your office post-haste. The member from Saskatoon University will take that over to you.

I will defer now to . . . My colleague from The Battlefords has an engagement. He wants to have a few questions, so I'd ask that he be given leave to question.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, my question is in regard to the Gainers bacon plant in North Battleford. And I'm wondering if your department has done any inspections or studies, either prior to, during, or after construction, in regard to the Gainers operation in North Battleford.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I wonder if the hon. member would repeat the question. I just caught the end of it. I don't think your microphone was on at the beginning.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, what my question is, is whether or not your department has done any inspections and/or studies of the Gainers bacon plant in North Battleford in regard to their operations or proposed operations there, either prior to, during, or after construction of the plant?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— Since we have environment and public safety both represented in the Department of Environment, I'm not sure which side the member would like the answers in. We have had, of course, the electrical and gas inspections that have been done during the course of construction and at the completion. Environmental work would be done, and it would be done by Gainers, not by us. So I'm not just sure what the member is looking for. Maybe if you could be more specific, we could try and do better.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm of course concerned with both sides, of the public safety and as

well as the environmental. I don't quite understand what you mean if there is environmental inspections or studies or reports to be done, that that would be the responsibility of Gainers.

I would think, Mr. Minister, that it would be the responsibility of your department as to whether or not, that if there's an environmental assessment necessary, was it done? If there is no environmental assessment necessary for the plant, I would like to know why it was not done.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— There was no environmental impact assessment done on Gainers itself, but that would be done by Gainers. And we have made no inspections up to this point on the emissions from that plant. They go into, I believe, the hospital lagoon there. And I don't believe that there has been any assessment of that up to this point.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, I certainly think that it's the department's responsibility, and I could be wrong. I certainly don't know the legislation as well as you do, so I would defer to your comments. But it seems to me that if there's an environmental assessment necessary, then it should be the department that does it and not Gainers.

And are you sure, Mr. Minister, that it's the responsibility of Gainers and not the department to do environmental assessments of such things as the emissions or the waste coming out of the Gainers plant?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— When I refer to the assessments, that's prior to construction. But beyond that, it is the responsibility of the department and the city to do the inspections. And we likely will be doing, but I don't think we have up to this point.

Mr. Anguish: — Do you have some sort of time frame then, Mr. Minister, as to when there'll be an environment impact done, or at least an inspection there? Because there are some problems, at least to complaints of individuals who live in the area of the Saskatchewan hospital.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I'm informed that the sewage effluent, when it goes into an existing system, as long as that system meets the requirements, they normally would not be tested by our department.

Now there are tests made by the Department of health, and I'm not sure if that's the ones that you're concerned with within the plant. Like the Department of Health still has the health side of inspections.

Mr. Anguish: — If we could go back just a bit, Mr. Minister. Did Gainers actually do an environmental impact assessment prior to construction?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I'm advised that they didn't. The city would likely have given the necessary permits for construction.

Mr. Anguish: — Did you say that they did not do an environment impact assessment?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— That's what I'm informed, yes.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think that they would be in contravention of existing legislation within the province of Saskatchewan at the current time. And I do not know how a municipal government, Mr. Minister, could exempt a company from obeying and honouring provincial legislation. I don't understand how a municipal government would have that power delegated to them.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The department say that they saw no evidence of environmental impact effect, and there were no calls from the public for an environmental impact assessment, and for that reason they were not done.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think the department has some responsibilities in that regard to have looked into the situation, and I maintain that you're in contravention of existing legislation in the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I'm advised that it was done in accordance with the requirements of the Act. As you realize, I was not the minister at the time, but I'm advised by the officials that it was done and met all of the requirements of the Act.

Mr. Anguish: — Well, Mr. Minister, you told me that there wasn't one done. Now you say that it was done in accordance with the legislation.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— No, I didn't say that there was an environmental impact assessment done. What I said was that the department reviewed what was happening. They didn't deem it to be environmentally a problem, and they let it go ahead. It met the requirements under the Act.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, there is a problem that exists there now. You were correct in your earlier information that the waste product from the Gainers plant is pumped into a lagoon on the Saskatchewan hospital grounds, and that is property that is owned by the Crown. It's owned by the government. The lagoon was there for quite a number of years and people live within the immediate area, and until the Gainers plant came along there was never a problem with stench and smell from the lagoon. And many people, whether it be an amateur or professional opinion, maintain that because of the brine that comes from the plant being pumped into the lagoon, it stops the bacteria action, and therefore allows a great stench to come off of that lagoon.

And I'm wondering if, at this point, what recourse do those people have in terms of the property that they live on in regard to the smell that comes off of that lagoon that no longer existed, or didn't exist prior to the brine being pumped into the system?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The indication I have is that the department has been made aware very recently of odour problems from that lagoon. And they say that additional surface aerators are being considered for immediate control of the odours. So it is being looked at. I guess the solution isn't final yet.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, now you're saying there is a problem. But the department didn't see any problem before in doing an environmental assessment. I don't understand that. If there are problems now, and you're admitting there's going to be remedial action taken, and I appreciate that, Mr. Minister. But I think this is just a very small example. Not small to the people who have to live on those grounds, but a very small example of the department under your direction — and I appreciate you weren't the minister at the time — under your direction should be doing environmental impact assessments on such operations.

Why wasn't it done? The two don't go together. There is a problem now. Before the department could not see a problem enough to do the environmental impact analysis.

(1245)

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The department advised me that prior to construction, they did not see the need for an environmental impact assessment to be done. But at this point, when there is a problem in the sewage area, the department say that they have recently been made aware of it, and they are looking at the aeration.

So even if you had done the assessment, it may have been most difficult to have that decision that it was going to cause odours from the lagoon.

Mr. Anguish: — Is it not true that there was no environmental impact assessment done because you're trying to exempt Peter Pocklington from those controls and regulations?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The man that does the assessment review said that he wasn't really worried about Peter Pocklington.

An Hon. Member: — But were you?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I wasn't the minister at the time, as I told you. No, I think they looked at all of the environmental impacts that it would have, and reviewed under the Act to see whether it would require an environmental impact assessment, and there was no public demand for it. Therefore, it was not considered.

Mr. Anguish: — Is the only option available now to put aeration equipment into the lagoon — aerate the effluent that's in there — to make it a little sweeter to the smell of people that have to live in that area?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I don't suppose that you can ever say that that's the only option that's available. That's the option that's being looked at and discussed with the city. If that didn't meet the requirements, then you would likely have to do other things. But this is the initial feeling, that the . . . (inaudible) . . . will likely be needed to solve the problem.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, when do you expect this to proceed? When will the decision be made, if there is a

decision made, towards aeration equipment? When can we expect it to be installed?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I'm advised that they expect the decision will be made very soon. And if that's the route they're going to go, it will likely be installed this summer.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I would certainly hope that they'll be installed this summer, because of course in the winter-time, with there being less heat around, it isn't as much of a problem for people.

There are many people who have lived there. There are some people that are in their retirement. There's other people living there with children. It's just a very awkward condition on a hot day, and the wind blowing from the right direction. They can't barbecue in their yards. They can't even stay in their houses. They can't open a window or anything else because of the smell that's come from that lagoon because of the brine being pumped into the lagoon system.

I suppose, before I sit down, I would like to know that when the remedial action is taken to rectify this problem, who in fact will foot the bill for paying for the equipment or whatever other remedial action is taken?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I'm advised that the lagoon is presently on property managed by the Saskatchewan property corporation and therefore the decision of who would actually pay will have to be sorted out between them and Gainers.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, if there'd been an environmental impact assessment done – if there'd been one done prior to the construction of the plant – and it was discovered that the brine would cause a reaction with the bacteria in the lagoon, then who would've had to pay for that remedial action?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I suppose the same answer would have to be given, that the property management corporation owns the property and owns the lagoon so they would've had to negotiate with Gainers to decide on the process of who would pay.

Mr. Anguish: — I just have one final question. I may come back to this later on during estimates, Mr. Minister, but I do appreciate that the department is going to take some action, and take action fairly soon on it.

The other question I have affects the city of North Battleford in respect to the Saskatchewan Water Corporation, and in light of the fact that there've been severe cuts in the budget for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation, I'm wondering if you could just detail, very briefly, as to how that'll affect the North Battleford office.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I can't deal with the Saskatchewan Water Corporation under this estimate. It's in a different estimate.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I watched with, I guess, perplexity, the exchange between yourself and the member from North Battleford in regards to the actions of your officials in the department not

carrying out the environmental ... or requiring Peter Pocklington – let's get this really precise – requiring Peter Pocklington and Gainers, not requiring them to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Do you have in your possession, or is there within your department, reasoning – written reasoning – which would lead your officials to make that decision that you are not going to carry out the environmental impact, or not going to require Gainers to submit an environmental impact study.

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I think perhaps I answered that question to the hon. member from The Battlefords. The whole process was looked at at the time, and there was no public outcry for an environmental impact assessment. The department felt that the project, according to The Environmental Assessment Act, did not require the assessment.

Mr. Lyons: — That's not the question, Mr. Minister, I asked you. I asked you: is there written documentation within your department, upon which the decision was based, not to require Peter Pocklington and Gainers Ltd. Not to submit an environmental impact statement? Do you have a written decision, or do you have written reasons for the department's decision not to require them to submit a statement?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— I'm advised that under the Act and the sections that deal with the need for environmental impact assessments, that's the area that was used to make the decision. The department are not sure that there would have been anything in written form except the Act itself. And they apply the criteria to the Act, and they felt that at that stage it didn't apply.

Mr. Lyons: — Well I wonder, Mr. Minister, somebody made a decision some time, somewhere in your department to get Peter Pocklington off the hook. Somebody in your department said, hey, we're going to let Gainers get away with this; we're not going to require Gainers to submit an environmental impact statement. Somebody made that decision.

First of all, let me ask you this: the person that made that decision – was it the minister that immediately preceded you in your portfolio?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— The decision is always made by the minister. But it's made on the advice of the people in the assessments branch of the department. So they advise the minister, and then the minister is the person of course that's on the firing line and has to make that final decision. It was made with the advice of the department though.

Mr. Lyons: — I appreciate that answer, Mr. Minister. The minister that immediately preceded you made a decision to let Peter Pocklington and Gainers off the hook environmentally. The minister that immediately preceded you said, Peter Pocklington doesn't have to submit an environmental impact statement to your department. Now the decision, or the advice to make that decision, came from within your department – came from within the environmental assessments branch. Is that correct? Right. Okay. Now, how was that advice

transmitted? Was that transmitted in written form to the minister?

Hon. Mr. Swan:— My department staff member says he cannot recall whether it was written or verbal, but he would go back to the department and check. So I would have to defer that answer.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.