

July 9, 1987

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

Item 1 (continued)

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, before we broke for supper at 5 o'clock we were talking about emergency procedures. And I would like you in some detail to explain to the House what sort of procedures are in place for PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) spills? What sort of procedures does your Department personnel use?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I gave the hon. member some of the information prior to the break at 5 o'clock. I told you that we have the spill line. It operates 24 hours a day, and there's always someone responsible to monitor. So as soon as there's a call on the spill line, it would indicate where the spill was, where there's a PCB, or whatever, spill. Someone goes then to the site to see that the clean-up is done properly.

One of the first things they do is to isolate the spill. Then the spill is cleaned up and, in most cases, put into metal containers. The containers, if there are low levels of PCBs . . . and that has to be ascertained by the lab test. If there are low levels of PCBs, then they go to the firm that we have operating in the province, PPM, and they can process to remove the PCBs.

If there are higher levels of PCBs, then they go into storage until such times that we can access another disposal. Sometimes they've had to be transported out of the province to an incinerator or whatever the case may be. It depends on what level of PCBs we deal with, but the process would be very similar, except in one case they'd go to be processed, the other way they'd go into storage until a later date.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, you will recall that there were two spills in 1985 in Saskatoon. Can you tell me where those PCB-contaminated materials ended up?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The one spill was cleaned up and the product is stored at Inland Steel. The other my staff is not entirely sure of the storage site. We've had a change of staff personnel, and the person that had been looking after that at that time is not here tonight. He's left the employ of the Department of Environment. We could look it up for you, but we don't have that information here.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I know where the other spill went to. It went to the 600 block of main street which is within two blocks of where I live and half a block of where I have my constituency office. This storage site is located in a residential area. I asked you earlier to give some indication of whether or not there are PCB-contaminated materials stored in residential areas and you were not able to provide me with that information.

In this situation, PCBs are stored across the street from

Nutana Towers, which is a high-rise for a number of residents, and it's within a couple doors of where people live, and it's within a couple doors of where people work, and it's across the street from the native survival school. Now this storage site is . . . it's the storage site of Saskatoon; and it's an electrical substation.

And I think we spoke of earlier how PCBs required very high temperatures in order to properly burn. And in this situation, Mr. Minister, my concern is that here we have a PCB storage sight within a residential neighborhood at an electrical substation, and there is potential, and I do say, potential, of fire.

Now you earlier talked about temporary storage sites. And I asked you what temporary meant, and you said six months. My question to you is this: is that storage site, on the 600 block of main street within a residential area, across the street from a school, is that a temporary site, or a permanent site?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My staff advise me that the site can be either temporary or permanent, in that case. It's approved by the city of Saskatoon and the Power Corporation. Sometimes you'll put low-level PCBs in for longer periods. If it's high level usually they're moved sooner than that. So it depends a bit on which product you have, how much of it, whether it's going to stay a long time or a short time. So it's a difficult question to be definitive and give you the kind of answer that you're looking for.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, you just told me a few minutes ago that low-level PCB-contaminated material goes to PBM, I believe, here in Regina. . .

An Hon. Member: — PTM.

Ms. Atkinson: — . . . or PTM, and higher-level material is pit in storage. Could you tell me whether the PCB-contaminated material on Main Street is high-level, or low-level?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My department doesn't have the answer here. We could find out for you, but I'm not sure which ones are stored there.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, one would have to presume that it must be a high-level material or it would have been dealt with, with regards to your earlier remarks. Is that not correct?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's quite possible it could be a high-level. I think that the hon. member must realize that if it's a very small spill and they contain it in one barrel, it would be very difficult to have a portable machine move in to process that one small amount. They come only when there's quantities in a given area enough that they have significant work to do.

An Hon. Member: — Even in a residential area, Herb?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — If the member for Riversdale has a question, I hope he'll stand and ask it.

The product is left, perhaps, in residential areas, I suppose. I've had a transformer in the yard where I live, right beside my garden. It's been there since 1954; it has caused me no problem. And so you may have one in the backyard where you live, and many people do have. It's not a chemical that floats around freely in the air and would cause you any problem. The only time it will cause problems is if there's a leakage and it's a direct skin contact. So it's perhaps not as dangerous as many people think.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, we're not dealing with one barrel of PCB-contaminated soil, we are dealing with between 9 and 13 huge drums — huge drums. They appear to be the size of Loraas disposal bins, and they're sitting outside of the yard in the Saskatoon electrical substation. So it's a large quantity of material.

My question to you is: is it temporary or is it permanent? Is it high level or low level? If it's low level, why hasn't it been dealt with; and if it's high level, what's it doing in a residential neighborhood?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We don't, as a rule, direct the movement of that material. I would suggest to the hon. member that the site that you speak of is likely owned by the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, being you say it's a substation, an electrical substation. Perhaps it would be more appropriate if you asked that question of the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Power Corporation and he would have his staff there who could answer your question.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, you are the Minister of Environment. You're the Minister of Environment, so in my view it's your responsibility to protect the public safety of Saskatchewan residents.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — My question is this: can you tell me what happens when PCBs are involved in a natural fire, Mr. Minister? What happens to the air and the water and the soil?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's a fairly technical question. I don't have a group of scientists around me that can give you an actual answer to that. I suppose it depends to some extent on the temperature involved at the time of the fire and what kind of substances are burning. Every product burns at a different temperature. PCBs require a fairly high temperature. We don't even have the exact temperature that it does take. That would be something I would have to try and get for the hon. member.

In the brochure that you have, it says 1,100 degrees centigrade is the temperature in which PCBs are destroyed. That's quite warm.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, natural fire would not be over 1,000 degrees Celsius. And therefore, if a fire were to occur at that substation site, we have the potential of a serious health hazard in Saskatoon Nutana on Broadway and Main Street. And my real question, Mr. Minister, is: what are PCB-contaminated material doing in a residential site?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised by my staff that the products that you are concerned about are in an area that's secured — it's fenced, it's secured, it's in a metal drum. So the likelihood of fire on that site with metal drums is fairly remote. It's never impossible. I might tell you that when the NDP were in government, they weren't even collected. They were left sitting wherever the site happened to be, and they were all over the province. At least now they are being collected.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me what is inside the building on the site? I'm not talking about the metal drums in the inner yard of the site; I'm talking about what's in the building. How many electrical ballasts are there? How many transformers are there? Can you give me that information?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, we don't monitor the storage of that kind of equipment. The power corporation may be able to give it to you, but they would likely have to go back to staff members in Saskatoon for that kind of detailed information.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, in 1985 when the citizens of Saskatoon Nutana were concerned about this material being stored in that site, the Department of the Environment did give us the information. I'm asking you for an update of that information, and I would like it within the next day or two. I'm sure you can get it.

(1915)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would doubt if we can get it in the next day. We may be able to get it. We would phone the power corporation and ask them for the information. I would think the hon. member has the same kind of telephone privileges. So do you want me to do it for you, or are you going to make your own telephone call?

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I'm not the minister of the Environment; you are. And when I'm the minister of the Environment, then I'll make the telephone call for you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I go back to my original point. What are PCB-contaminated materials, both in huge Loraas disposal bins, both in the electrical ballast and transformers, what are they doing in a residential neighborhood? How can you justify that? How can you justify PCB-contaminated material being in a residential area? I'd like you to justify that to the citizens of this province and to the residents of Saskatoon Nutana.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would like just to mention to the hon. member that in the power substation, you have a number of large transformers. You have to have, because otherwise you wouldn't have power for your district. Those containers have the same kind of PCB-contaminated oil in them as the barrels. So there's very little difference in storing a barrel of goods or storing

a transformer which is just like a barrel with a top on it, that's all. Both of them are fairly secure. So the product is probably no more dangerous in its present state stored on that site than it was in the power transformer. And with no current going through it, it's likely less dangerous.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I would like to get back to the fenced yard that you referred to earlier. I want you to know that there have been numerous incidents of children in the yard. It's easy for children to get over the fence and into the yard. So there have been instances of children playing amongst PCB-contaminated Loraas disposal bins.

Now I'd like to get back to fire. Mr. Minister, that substation does have a wood roof. The Department of the Environment made some provisions in 1985 to ensure that the plumbing had been filled in with cement so that we wouldn't have leaching into the earth and into the sewage system. But there still is the potential possibility of an electrical substation starting on fire. That's not an unreasonable possibility.

And my question to you is: why would the Department of the Environment want to jeopardize so many residents of Saskatoon Nutana and area by having PCB-contaminated ballasts and transformers and dirt, etc., etc., in that electrical substation? Why would you want to jeopardize the citizens of Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I say again to the hon. member that it is not our storage. It's the Saskatchewan Power Corporation's storage, with the approval of the city of Saskatoon. It's not our storage.

We have, I think, been fairly effective in cleaning up many, many products that have been stored around the Province. We have a company now in this province who travel from site to site and dispose of many of those hazards. So it's the first one in the country. I think we've made a step out ahead of most provinces in Canada. We're doing a good job, in my opinion, of looking after the welfare of the environment and of our people.

I might tell the hon. member that it would be far more dangerous to the children that are climbing into that substation, the effects that could occur, because they're close to the very high voltages in the power transformers than the problem they're going to face from the PCB barrels. So if you're having that problem, I think you should phone the power corporation to put up a fence that is capable of holding the child out.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I don't disagree with you that there is a possibility of two potential health hazards in that situation. But it is a situation that is occurring and it's a situation that has been brought to the attention of the owners of that particular electrical substation.

But I go back to my original point, Mr. Minister, would you take it upon yourself to ensure that those PCB-contaminated materials are removed from that particular location which is a residential neighborhood? Would you please do that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that at this time we don't

have the authority to demand that Sask Power move the articles stored on that site and put them in another site. That isn't our authority. It's within the authority of the power corporation and the city of Saskatoon. They both agree that they have a good site, a safe site to store. And I think for that reason I couldn't agree that we will go out and have them moved.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, that's very disappointing because I do think that you have some influence in this province. I do think you have some influence with the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. I do think you have some influence with municipal government in Saskatoon. And so I guess I'd go back to my original premise that I think it's time that you started showing some leadership in this area, and I think you're capable of showing leadership. I do think that you are a minister with some integrity, a great deal of integrity.

And I guess my question to you is: why aren't you prepared to do something about a situation where we have PCB-contaminated material in a residential area?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would expect that the area that you speak of is likely zoned both commercial and residential form what you're telling me is located there. I don't have a zoning map of the city of Saskatoon, but I don't think you could have the things in the area that you speak of without that zoning.

I would ask the hon. member to please refer to her city if she's really concerned. You know many of the city council. If you're concerned about that site being a storage site, it's been approved by that city. You are a resident of that city, an MLA representing that city. I have some authorities, but I think you also have some. So sometimes the best way to deal with things that are right on your doorstep is to deal with it yourself, and you may give that a try.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, we have given it a try. and I guess I go back to my original argument — I think that you are capable of providing some leadership. I think that if you wanted to, you could amend the legislation to protect residents in residential neighborhoods who have to deal with this sort of thing. We shouldn't have to put up with toxic, chemicals and PCB-contaminated material because the legislation allows various jurisdictions to do what they will.

I think, Mr. Minister, if you were prepared to amend the legislation, I know it would certainly be supported on this side of the House, and we could protect residents of Saskatoon Nutana and other residents in residential neighborhoods across this province. So my question is: will you amend the legislation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm not going to make a commitment right now to amend the legislation. That's a fairly major decision and one that I would like to give much more thought to.

You know, that site didn't just occur after 1982. That site has been a storage site for some time. It says:

Since 1980 the City of Saskatoon has been using a brick building at 619 Main Street to store PCB capacitors and other electrical equipment containing PCBs.

So it's been there a long time, and it says that the city is doing it. This was the report that was given to you last year, that I was reading from. It's not new information; it's last year's. So it's not updated. So that indicates to me that the city would not be the source, and if you're really concerned, you should go back to that source.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, it's obvious that you're not going to do anything, and we can discuss this for aeons and I suspect you're not going to do anything. I find that very disappointing. I thought that you were capable of providing some leadership for people who are concerned about the environment in this province, but it's obvious that you're not.

So then my question is this: what are you prepared to do to ensure that that site is properly monitored, and to ensure that a number of other sites across this province are properly monitored, so that the health and safety of the public is protected?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that the sites are inspected on an ongoing basis to be sure that they are secure sites that are suitable for the storage of PCBs.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I don't think that's what you told me last week. I think you told me that they were only monitored if there was a public outcry of some kind. So are you changing your story? Do we now monitor sites or don't we? What's the answer here?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that they're monitoring on an ongoing basis. That doesn't mean every day or every six months, but on an ongoing basis they're checked and people try to see that they are secure sites, sites that are fairly safe.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I'd just like to quote *Hansard* here, and I asked you on July 2 the following question:

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, if you're not aware of all the storage sites around the province, I'm wondering what sort of process your department goes through to monitor the storage of PCBs.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that our department does not monitor the storage sites. If there is any complaint raised about a storage site that's not proper, then of course we will have it checked out. But Sask Power traditionally is the company that we deal with. Sometimes there have been others, but traditionally that's the main company that would be storing the product.

Whoops! Have we changed our story? Do you monitor sites or don't you?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My staff advised me that in one case you talked of storage disposal, of disposables; the other one is storage of equipment that would contain. So there are two answers indeed.

We don't monitor where Sask Power stores its transformers and things, but we do monitor the actual disposal sites. So there's a definite difference.

I don't recall now what your question was. The answer I gave you would be the answer from the same people, and that's what they're indicating to me. On an ongoing basis, they do monitor the disposal sites. They don't monitor the sites where the Sask Power Corporation stores their transformers and that sort of equipment.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, can you please tell me what you mean by disposal site and storage site? I'm confused. My presumption is that they're the same. Can you tell me that?

And I'm wondering who monitors this. Have you contracted it out, or does the Department of Environment monitor the sites or the disposal sites, storage sites? Who does the monitoring?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — When we talk of disposal, it's an area where we have had a spill cleaned up and moved to an area, and eventually that product then is gathered and moved on for disposal. And that's what I refer to as a disposal. It's a disposal from a clean-up to that site and then another disposal when it's taken away. So that's what we mean by the difference in disposal or just the storage of equipment by Sask Power. The monitoring is done by the staff of the Department of the Environment.

(1930)

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I think we were . . . I was talking storage site last week. I clarified what I meant. I was talking about PCB-contaminated material that was moved to a site. You talked earlier in your remarks of how this material is there for awhile, it's temporary. And I'm wondering if you can tell me whether the storage site at the 600 block of Main Street is temporary or permanent.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well, as I read to you, the site has been there since 1980, and that would be very hard to say that's temporary storage after seven years. The products that are stored there at times may be PCBs gathered up from a spill site, but at other times those may be gone, taken away to be processed. And the only thing that would be left on site then could be transformers and equipment. So it varies. At one time it may be a product storage space for a spill, other times just strictly used by Sask Power for their everyday operations.

Ms. Atkinson: — Then, Mr. Minister, what you're basically saying is that that particular site in a residential neighborhood has become a permanent site. And I go back to my original premise. Will you, Mr. Minister, undertake to ensure that that is no longer a permanent site, and will you do something to ensure that those PCB-contaminated materials are removed?

That site is located across the street from a school. It's located across the street from an apartment building that for all purposes is a senior citizen complex, and it's within a couple of doors of residences, Mr. Minister, will you either make sure that the site is done away with, that we no longer have PCBs stored there, or will you change the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm going to read this section on 619 Main Street to the hon. member. You've been misleading me on the fact that it is a residential district. And I'll read the paragraph. It's just one fairly long paragraph. It says:

Since 1980 the city of Saskatoon have been using a brick building at 619 Main Street to store PCB capacitors and other electric equipment containing PCBs. The property also houses three large transformers that are currently in use by the city. As a result, the property is completely fenced with warning signs posted. The area is zoned light industrial; however, it is primarily residential.

But the zoning is light industrial, and that is extremely important to realize. It says:

Following two capacitor failures in April of 1985, the city placed the excavated soil in sealed steel bins and moved them to this location.

So I think that's fairly clear that it is light industrial area. That's what I indicated to you before. From what you were telling me, it didn't sound like a residential district. The people can live in a light industrial area, but it's still zoned that way.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, I haven't misled you a bit. That site is located in a residential area. It's across the street from a high rise, for the most part is occupied by senior citizens. It's within two doors of people who live in houses. It's across the street from a school and there are residences all around it. So I haven't misled you one bit. And my question . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — And my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: when are you going to start showing some leadership? When are you going to change the Act so that people in residential areas can be protected from this kind of haphazard storage of toxic and dangerous materials?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I can advise the hon. member that we have been going through a process of drafting regulations to deal with hazardous goods, and the regulations are nearing the final stages. They're in the drafting process. They've been reviewed a number of times and have had changes, but they are nearing the final stages of drafting and will likely be in place in the next short while, like within two, three months.

Those regulations could address, I believe, the concern that you raise. I can't give you the detail until they are finalized. It's a little awkward timing, I guess, but it looks like the regulations could very easily deal with the storage

sites such as the one you mention. Whether or not we can actually bring that one because it's under city jurisdiction, it gives us some difficulty, but it's one that we can look at.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, a few minutes ago you said you didn't have any authority, and now you're saying that you do. So I'm wondering under what statute that you're going to be introducing these regulations.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It'll be under the environmental protection Act and it will deal with hazardous substances.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, what now prevents you from putting in this new policy? What's preventing you?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I indicated to the hon. member that these are regulations that will deal with the storage and the handling of hazardous products. So once those regulations are through, that would give us the authority that we need.

At this point the regulations are not in place, and until that happens, they have to go through the whole regulation process. I'm sure the member is aware of most of that process. They're drafted by my department. They go through the committees, through Executive Council, and then through the legislative Regulations Committee before they become final. So there is quite a process, and I would expect within two to three months, likely they can go through that process if we get our committee structured. We've had some trouble in this session and the committee are not in place.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, the Regulations Committee is in place. I'm a member of it, and we have met on two occasions.

And I guess my question to you is this: Are you giving me your words that the regulations will deal with the issue that I raised of PCB-contaminated material being stored in a residential area? Will these regulations ensure that that can no longer be the case?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The regulations cannot be as specific as the hon. member is mentioning. They're not going to mention 619 Main Street, for example. But the regulations will give the kind of direction that is required to ensure that the storage of hazardous goods is properly carried out. That's what we don't have in place right at this point. So we're dealing with it. I think that once the regulation comes through, you'll be quite satisfied with it, and we'll make every effort to see that PCB-contaminated material is stored properly.

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Just to clean up on the PCB matter, I'm wondering if the minister could tell me how the mobile destruction unit works.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that the portable equipment is capable of handling PCBs up to 50 parts per million level. It's a chemical process that they use. I'm not scientist enough to give you the whole process, but it is a chemical process that it goes through, and it brings it back down to a very low level, usable by the power corporation

Mr. Koenker: — Has that unit been operative here in Saskatchewan yet?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, the mobile has been operating in the province since 1985, I'm advised, so it's running on two years.

Mr. Koenker: — Is there more than one mobile unit?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, I'm advised, one unit.

Mr. Koenker: — I understood that on February 14, 1986, the former minister of Environment entered a joint agreement with British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba for a mobile disposal or destructing unit. How can it be that it was in place already in '85? Or maybe there was another process?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think what the hon. member refers to is discussions that were being held between the four western provinces. At one point they looked at the complete handling of toxic wastes. Then later on Alberta decided to go on its own and build its own plant at Swan Hills, Manitoba has now moved to set up its own Crown corporation to look after its hazardous substances. So we've gone on our own and have the first mobile unit, anywhere that we're aware of, that is doing that kind of work. And they've been most effective in cleaning up much of the contaminated oil that is stored within our province. They're not completely finished; it's an on-going process they're still working at.

Mr. Koenker: — Is that unit on the road throughout the year,, then, or does it only go out in special circumstances?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — For the most part, the mobile is located in the industrial park here in Regina. And when it has sufficient work away from Regina, it's capable of going out and doing that work and coming back.

Mr. Koenker: — What is deemed sufficient work to merit the unit leaving Regina and going to other parts of the province?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well this is a business. They've set-up; they operate on a business economic basis. Unless there is enough product to warrant the move, the set-up, and the processing of significant volume, they won't go out. They'll have the volumes of material brought to them, if it's small quantities. So I can't give you the exact gallonage that would be required. I could probably get it if that's important, but they go out only when there's enough to make it economically viable for them to go out.

Mr. Koenker: — What then, Mr. Minister, is the problem with the unit going up to Main Street in Saskatoon and dealing with the waste there, or else making the arrangements for Sask Power to convey the material, if it is in fact, such a relatively small amount that doesn't merit the unit going to Saskatoon, to make arrangements for that material to be transported to the unit in Regina and be dealt with.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That kind of arrangement would be

made between the group that have the product in storage at that site and PPM. Like, we don't get directly involved in that process. That's between the company that has the product that needs the treatment, and the people who do the processing. It's a business venture; they deal directly with the power corporation and with others. so there may be nothing stopping them.

I don't know whether the volume is high enough that it would require them to move out, and if it's higher contamination than 50 parts per million, then their equipment is not suitable for that process. so there are many unknowns as far as I'm concerned. I couldn't give you an answer beyond that.

(1945)

Mr. Koenker: — In other words the department really has nothing to do directly with the PTM company and this mobile disposal unit?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We don't have any direct ties, no. We do have the . . . We've had the negotiation with them to get them to come, and the permit that's required for them to operate here is issued by the department, but they're an autonomous private company that do the work.

Mr. Koenker: — Does the department review their records on an annual basis?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm sorry, I was talking. I missed your question.

Mr. Koenker: — Does the department review the records of PTM on an annual basis?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No. I'm advised that we don't monitor the actual business operation. What we do is to watch the site where they operate to be sure that the operation is not contaminating the environment, but we don't look at their business books. They work directly with their client. The client pays them. There's no involvement by Environment to pay them any money or anything of that nature. So, no, we don't monitor their business activities.

Mr. Koenker: — Do you monitor their activities with respect to the residues that are left over after the destruction process?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that after they process the oil, it's clean and ready for reuse. So the little parts that they would take out, you know, like they use a chemical treatment which destroys the PCBs . . . So there's no basic problem with the residue.

How much residue there is, I'm not really sure. They tell me that they store what little bit there is, but it's not large quantities.

I might tell you with the major spill at Federal Pioneer, this company was able to come in and process the spill and to clean it up for the province and for the city. So it's been a very valuable company to the province.

Mr. Koenker: — Well it sounds to me that we have here an example of the privatization, really, of the public

welfare again, by virtue of the fact that the department only intervenes to get PTM to come into the province, and then really once they establish themselves here in Regina, they're free to do pretty well what they want, or not serve the public welfare, depending on whether it's economically viable for them. Could the minister comment on that.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We have many private industries within the boundaries of Saskatchewan. This group developed the technology to deal with PCB-contaminated products. They came and we negotiated with them to get them to establish in our province because we had a problem of PCB-contaminated oil and no way of processing. I'm indeed happy that they came.

I think far be it from me to criticize anybody because a company like that comes. I would say here we have a company who does it on a viable basis. The province doesn't have to pay out a lot of dollars. We do monitor to see that they're not contaminating our environment. The product that they turn out has to be checked to be sure that it's free of PCBs before it can be reused. It's lab tested. So I'm amazed at the member criticizing that. To me it sounds like a perfect solution for a serious problem.

Mr. Koenker: — I agree, Mr. Minister, that it does help to provide a solution. And I think the department is to be commended for negotiating the company coming into the province.

My question is though, with respect to the role of the department in facilitating the clean-up of PCBs rather than simply leaving it to the economic factors of the market-place, do you not think that you have some role to play, as the minister responsible for the Environment, in facilitating the clean-up of problem situations such as the member from Saskatoon Nutana just pointed out in the previous half-hour?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I suppose you can identify that one in Saskatoon as a problem area. The city of Saskatoon doesn't view it as a problem area. Saskatchewan Power Corporation hasn't viewed it as a problem area. It's a storage site. And the products go to that site and then they're moved on and processed and the site is clean. And then when there's a need, there's other product moved there. So I don't identify it as a problem site.

I just wanted to advise the hon. member that since this company has operated here, they have processed something in excess of 500,000 litres of PCB-contaminated oil. That's a major improvement to our environment, and we're very pleased with the work they've done.

Mr. Koenker: — I would concur in that opinion too. I think that is a good record. It's just that I would like to see further problem areas dealt with. And I think that you as a minister have the ability to deal with that.

Let's talk about 1986 and 1987 now in terms of the estimates. What was the funding for the air pollution control program last year?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Last year the budge amount was 386,430.

Mr. Koenker: — What was spent last year?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The expenditure was 368,479.

Mr. Koenker: — And what is the estimate for air pollution control this year?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — 264,510.

Mr. Koenker: — We have a reduction of about a third for the air pollution control program here in the province. Would you not agree?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The budget figure this year is 264,510. You can't look only at the budget as it relates to this because we have changed the internal structures of the department. We now have one director that deals with the air and the land both — both areas. So much of the saving that you see there will be staff savings.

We had some retirements, some changes, some people that left. And sometimes you will end up getting people at a lesser cost because they haven't had 25 years of experience, so that again drops it. So I think there has been a significant reduction, and yet I think we've left enough money to do the job that needs to be done.

Mr. Koenker: — My understanding is that this year you'll be doing or anticipate doing more of a job than you have done in this regard with respect to air pollution control than in previous years. You've mentioned yesterday and in the Speech from the Throne that there will be a new air pollution control Act. Do you anticipate any added expenditure by virtue of the introduction of that Act?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't expect a lot more work because of it. The requirements for industry will be spelled out clearly and the industries will be expected to meet the requirements under that legislation. But the staff will continue to work hard to see that the job is done and the monitoring that's needed under the Act will be carried out.

Mr. Koenker: — You don't anticipate that the department will be providing any assistance, then, to companies in terms of facilitating their compliance with the Act?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Our department doesn't provide any monetary assistance to them to meet the requirements of the legislation. What we do is to measure the emissions at plants to be sure that they come under the guide-lines of the legislation. Many of the industries here have been measured and are monitored on an ongoing basis, if need be. So we may have to check different industries, but likely not all that many more than what we have checked in the past.

Mr. Koenker: — Well in the past you've only really been responsible in terms of The Air Pollution Control Act for those industries that were covered as of the introduction of the old Act. As you said yourself yesterday, you'll be going back to clean up some of those major industrial projects or corporate projects that were able to operate

without compliance. I would think that now you would need additional staff, or have to make some sort of provision in terms of dealing with those companies, to facilitate their compliance. Do you not admit to that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — This new legislation will come into place. The compliance by the industries will be phased in over a period of time. You can't do it all in one day or anything of that nature. Most of the industries in the province will be operating within the guide-lines of the new legislation. What this does is gives the department the authority to go back. Now that there's always a problem, but industries established prior to 1976 were not covered by the legislation. This will cover them by the legislation, which I think is a step forward, in that if there is a problem we can deal with. At the present time, we wouldn't have the authority to.

(2000)

Mr. Koenker: — What will the staffing component for the air pollution control program this year be?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The only change is that the director that we have now will also cover land. So we have five people instead of six covering the area.

Mr. Koenker: — This surprises me, quite frankly, that at a time when you're making a major new initiative to enhance air pollution control, we see a reduction from six staff people to five. We see a reduction in spending by approximately a third.

If we go back to the year '84-85, it represents almost half of what was spent in that year. I believe the figure of the fiscal year '84-85 was \$497,830. I'm wondering what is not being done now by virtue of this air pollution control program that would have been done, let's say, three years ago, with double the expenditure and probably four people — almost double the staff. What work isn't being done now? How have these cut-backs affected the program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The big change will come in the acid rain program because we've done the studies. Studies are expensive as the member would know. We've put the monitoring equipment in place. Now it's a matter of going out and reading the equipment. So you don't need near as many people to do that. That's the biggest change.

Mr. Koenker: — And you don't feel that the introduction of this new Act will result in any additional expenditures for the department over the previous year, that in fact the introduction of this new Act will affect an economy of approximately one-third within the department for the air pollution control program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well as the member realizes, when we went into the budget process this year, the decision was that every program was going to have to be trimmed and that the operating costs, the administrative costs, were going to have to be trimmed. That didn't take very many of the people who are actually on site doing the work. That means that the office structure will operate less expensive than it did before, and because of the acid rain program and the studies under the acid rain program

being complete, there won't be large expenditures there.

There will be the ongoing monitoring. If there's something shows that we need more activity back in the acid rain area another year, then we can do that. But at this time, it doesn't show that that need is there. The monitoring that we're doing is giving us a very good picture, and we will continue to monitor. And I believe that with the dollars that we've put in place, our department can still do a good job of looking after the air and the land within our province.

Mr. Koenker: — What portion of \$264,000 allocated for this budgetary year will go for personal service?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — 231,260 and \$33,250 for other expenses. That will be postage and that kind of expenses. So the biggest cost is personnel.

Mr. Koenker: — My goodness, Mr. Minister, it seems as if you have all the people but you give them nothing to do with — \$33,000 for a staff of five people to work with over the course of a year, a year in which they're introducing a new program. Can you comment on that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's basically what it costs. Most of the work will be done here. Like, the industries being in their emissions and most of the work is done here. There will be some traveling out, but it will be limited.

The other expenses for mailing and things are covered under a different subvote. Like, if they're mailing out, then that's not covered directly here — if they're doing a mailing of any significance.

Mr. Koenker: — I imagine that amounts to thousands upon thousands of dollars. I'm wondering how you can justify what would then appear to be gross extravagance for other expenses in the previous budgetary year when you allocated \$170,000 for these other services and a year later you can come back and allocate \$33,000.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well if the member looks at \$170,000, I just told you that the main decrease was because of the deletion of the acid rain program and the special studies. Special studies on acid rain over a province the size of Saskatchewan are very costly. So, you know, you delete that, it changes the cost considerable. I haven't got the figure in my mind — maybe the staff do — of what those studies actually cost, but they are expensive.

The actual study was \$136,920. So if you take that from 170, you see that it isn't that much different in other expenses this year.

Mr. Koenker: — And yet you began this portion of the questioning by telling me that much of the savings reflecting the figure of \$264,000 this year, you indicated that much of the savings is a result of staff savings, when in fact this year you've decreased staff positioning, the number of staff positions, from five to six, and you're actually spending more on staff than you did last year. How can you explain that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well when you talk of a difference of

something like 121,000, the staff member that left — I haven't got the exact figure — but he was an engineer that was paid at a pretty substantial salary. I don't have the exact figure, but he would have been in the 50-thousand range which is a good portion of that 121.

Mr. Koenker: — Who was that engineer replaced by?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Larry Lechner, that is sitting right behind me, is now the director of both the air and land divisions. Before we had a director in each division.

Mr. Koenker: — What kind of technical background does he have with respect to this role?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Lechner has a master's degree in civil engineering.

Mr. Koenker: — Well, all I can say is the proof will be in the pudding, and we'll have to wait and see the results of this new air pollution control program. It certainly does raise some questions, however, when we note the kind of decrease in funding in a year in which you introduce a new program. We also note a decrease in staff, and at the same time, staff expenditures climbing, and the material or the resource provided in terms of other services or other expenses for the staff almost negligible.

Would the minister — changing the subject now — would the minister please comment on the Ontario environmental legislation which proposes fines for polluters, including provision that corporate officers and members of the cabinet can be jailed for failing to prevent pollution.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I haven't received the Ontario legislation and I don't think that it's part of my estimates. I think it would be unwise for me to even comment.

Mr. Koenker: — Why do you say that it's not part of your estimates? It has to do with protection of the environment; such legislation which is within the jurisdiction of the department if it chose to enact it.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I wouldn't want to comment on the Ontario legislation, but the Clean Air Act and the other Acts in environment do have provision for fines as well.

Mr. Koenker: — Would you care to comment on the federal Act?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, I don't believe that I need to comment any further. We've had considerable discussion back and forth across the floor. The answers that I would give on that legislation are in *Hansard*. The member, I believe, was here at the time of the discussion, and I don't consider that it's within the parameters of the Environment estimates for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Koenker: — Well I'll ask you a question that has very directly to do with the parameters of the environment in Saskatchewan. I'd ask if you're considering legislation comparable to the Ontario legislation for polluters — industrial polluters — or the federal legislation on the same.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The answer would be fairly straightforward; we're not considering anything like that at this time.

Mr. Koenker: — None the less, given the fact that you aren't considering it here, I think that you might . . . I'd recommend to you, let's put it that way, that you consider such action.

It's finally your responsibility and your decision, but I would encourage you to do so. No doubt, or notwithstanding that, you'll know that you will be called on to comment on the federal legislation. It's my understanding that that will be developed in concert or in consultation with the provinces. Have you given the legislation any thought?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I indicated before that staff in my department have worked at the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers in conjunction with the staff from Environment departments across Canada and have, I think, done a lot of work to bring the legislation to the point where it is now.

It's been introduced into the federal House and it's there for the public review over the summer months. We will, of course, be looking at it again during the summer period. But at this time I haven't even read the actual legislation that's going on into the House. There have been many changes from the time that we had it last, and probably after our estimates, I may get time, but I haven't had time since the very brief time since they introduced it.

Mr. Koenker: — I can certainly appreciate that you wouldn't have time to have dealt with it during the estimate process. I guess I would ask, however, would you envision making public comment on it during the course of the next couple of months?

(2015)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's an answer that's most difficult to give until I review it and decide whether there's any need of public comment. I wouldn't like to give a definite answer one way or the other. I will be reviewing it; my staff will be reviewing it; and I'll have to make that decision as time goes along.

Mr. Koenker: — I think I can speak for other members on this side of the House in terms of encouraging you to comment publicly on it after you've reviewed it, and to hold up the positive aspects of that legislation for the Saskatchewan public, and by the same token, maybe point out some of the inadequacies of it and how we might regard it here in Saskatchewan.

I'd like to turn to yet another matter. Is the sale of carbonated beverages in aluminium cans legal in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — They have been allowed in the far North where it's difficult to transport bottled goods, and in some institutions, and it's legal to use on aircraft. But for general sale, they are not legally permitted at this time.

Mr. Koenker: — Is the minister aware of aluminium cans being sold anywhere in the province, outside of aircraft or the North or institutions?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, I am aware that there have been cans coming in from both sides of us, from Alberta and Manitoba, and there are cans being sold in some places in the province. I couldn't give you all the places by any means.

Mr. Koenker: — I can tell the minister that aluminium cans are in fact being sold along the borders of the province, and I know for a fact that they're being sold in the constituencies of Souris-Cannington and Estevan. I'm wondering what steps the minister has taken to curtail these kinds of sales which have been going on at least since early 1986.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I can advise the member that we're very well aware that there are a number of places that cans have been brought into the province. I dare say almost every person that goes on holidays and ends up coming through either Manitoba or Ontario or Alberta or whatever, comes back with a case or two of cans in their car. Some stores have considerable volumes. We did have a court case in Estevan where we laid a charge, and it was thrown out of court because it didn't meet all the requirements of the court.

We've had many discussions since I've been Minister of Environment with the bottlers, with the Retail Merchants' Association, with the Consumers' Association, with a number of individuals. And we're looking very seriously at what we need to do.

I think there are so many places that cans have been brought into the province that you couldn't begin to prosecute all the stores. You'd have everybody in court and the courts couldn't even handle it. So we have to do something to correct the problem. We're working with it and may have some recommendations in the next couple of months.

Mr. Koenker: — You've had one? Am I to believe that you've had only one, taken one legal action with respect to the aluminium cans?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There was only the one dealing with cans that was taken to court and I believe it was in Estevan, and it was thrown out on the technicality. I might tell the hon. member that as I meet with individuals around our province, and I imagine you're hearing the same thing, that the public would like to see cans within our province. We're hearing it everywhere we go. The Consumers Association, the retailers, they're all telling us the same thing. It's only the bottlers who are objecting, and it's mainly because of the benefit that they receive by having a closed border. They had a cornered market and it was advantageous to them.

Mr. Koenker: — Could the minister tell me when the charges were laid in Estevan with respect to the aluminium cans?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It would have been during 1986, but I

couldn't give the member the exact month. I don't have the information; it was prior to the time that I came as a minister.

Mr. Koenker: — Would the minister share that information in the next day or two, when the charge was laid and where?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, we could bring that information. I just don't have it here in the House.

Mr. Koenker: — What is the minister's view of allowing for aluminium cans in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I can ensure the hon. member that for those who are selling cans at this time, it's illegal to sell them. The decision of my department and my decision is not made at this time as to which way we're going to move to correct the problem.

I can't give you just a personal view. It has to be a view of the government, and I would prefer to wait until that decision is made. We are dealing with it. We're meeting with a number of different groups in society. And each one adds a dimension as you meet with them. You get new ideas and varying ideas on the best route to deal with the issue. I would hope that in the next short while we'll bring it to a conclusion.

Mr. Koenker: — And I hear you saying that in the next short while we'll have a solution to this problem?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We'll have recommendations on how to solve the problem, yes.

Mr. Koenker: — And the public will have been fully consulted in this process. Will it be characteristic of the process that we've seen this spring in terms of public consultation, or will you have full public hearings, not just private public hearings?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't think we're talking about the kind of thing that would require large-scale public meetings to discuss.

We're getting quite a quantity of letters, many phone calls. And this is not just this year. They've been building over the last while. The public is demanding a convenience packaging, and I think the use of New York Seltzer kind of bottles has indicated some of the requests, and that is an approved container, by the way.

So I don't expect to go out to general public hearings, but what I am doing is talking to many groups. Like, when you get the Consumers' Association of Saskatchewan, I would hope that they represent the public view. When I talk to the retailers from across the province, and we've met with many of them, they represent a fairly large segment of the public. I've met with the bottlers association, which again represents the complete bottling industry for the province.

So I think we are reaching out and touching many of the interest groups, and if anyone is concerned about the

process and what they would like to say about it, let them give us a letter or a contact any way they wish. We'd be glad to hear from others.

But to actually go out around the country and hold public hearings, I don't think it's the kind of issue that requires that.

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, this is the kind of issue that the public would like to know that you're considering. And up until this point, I don't think it's public knowledge at all that you're reconsidering changing the legislation with respect to aluminium cans.

I asked you last week about your advertising budget for the Department of the Environment, and you told me that you were going to be doing everything that you did last year, only doing it better.

I'm wondering, in light of the increases in advertising that you have budgeted for advertising in the department this year, whether you might not at least advertise the fact that you're contemplating this change and solicit and invite public comment. You don't have to hold hearings, necessarily.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I have been meeting with many groups, as I have advised the member, and you don't meet with groups all over the province and keep the meetings secret.

I think that you go to any small town in Saskatchewan and talk to the store, and they'll tell you, yes, the minister's been meeting with different groups, and we've been telling him this and this and this.

And at the time that our decision is made, that's the time that you would likely make a public release of that kind of information. Even after a Bill . . . If we go that route, if we were to introduce a Bill in this House . . . Even after the Bill is introduced, the public have many opportunities to react. You know, that's what this process is, is to come forward with a solution.

I haven't indicated to you yet that a Bill is the way that we should go. We're looking at it, we're assessing it, we're trying to put together the ideas that have been generated from the public. And when we get that far that we feel comfortable with the direction that the public is looking for us to move, then we'll be making the issue very plain to everyone exactly what we intend to do. And people will have the opportunity at that time to state their case.

Mr. Koenker: — You certainly said it, Mr. Minister, that you'll be making clear to everyone at the time that you announce your change, you'll make it clear to everyone what you're doing. Prior to introducing the change, you'll make it clear to very few people, a select group of people that you choose to do consultation with.

You are the minister who's responsible for enforcing environmental legislation. And part of your responsibility as Minister of Environment is to regulate The Litter Control Act of 1973.

And it seems to me that simply because a year ago you

encountered — you had one case in Estevan, charging an Estevan store, and it was dismissed out of court on a technicality — you choose, it seems, it sit on your hands and allow the sale of cans to continue when you have a responsibility to enforce the legislation until the time that it is changed.

Now in my one hand, I have the cans that were purchased in Estevan, along with the receipt dated July 4, 1987, in the other hand, I have The Litter Control Act that you're responsible for . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, please. Order, please. I would like to remind the member that exhibits of that nature are not permitted. You may continue.

Mr. Koenker: — How can you explain your inactivity in this matter? Does it have to do with the fact that the beverage in question is being sold in the constituency of Estevan?

(2030)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'd like to indicate to the member that I'm aware that that there are many cans within the province of Saskatchewan. We only moved on one case. Then as we started to get the information from across the province of the number of places where cans indeed have been sold prior to the time that I was minister, and they are continuing to be sold . . . There are hundreds of stores now selling cans in differing, varying quantities. I indicated to you before that I was aware of that, and if we were to proceed to lay charges in every location that we're aware of where cans are being sold, the courts could not handle it. The public is demanding convenience packaging. I think we have to do something different than just lay court charges.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, it seems that you choose to selectively enforce environmental regulations. What determines whether you choose to enforce or not to enforce any given piece of legislation? The fact that the public ignored the legislation, you'll just simply roll over and play dead? What is your responsibility for the legislation that has been passed by this House until such time that it is changed?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would like to ask the hon. member who he things was guilty, the storekeeper that had the produce, or you when you bought it. That's the kind problem we face right now. Who do I lay the charge against? And the member has the cans here. You must have bought them somewhere. So it would indicate to me that both would be guilty to some degree, and that's the kind of problem we face.

I'm not taking about a few hundred cans, I'm talking about many thousands of cases of canned goods coming into this province — canned soft drinks — coming into this province in the last year. It's a major problem; we're well aware of it and we're looking at solutions. If the member has a solution, I'd be very pleased to hear it, but if it's only to take everybody to court, I don't think our courts have time.

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, I don't know that my solution is to take everyone to court. I'm wondering whether you, though, as the Minister of the Environment, gave any consideration to taking anyone to court after the first case was thrown out on a technicality.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The best answer I can give the member is the one that I have given. When I became Minister of Environment, if I were going to lay a charge, I can't selectively pick one person and single him out and lay a charge. I don't think that's fair because there are hundreds of locations where soft drinks are sold in cans. So what we have to do is something that will be applicable to all across the province. That's what we're looking for, is that kind of solution, and we're working very hard on it. We've spent many, many hours on this problem and I think we are reaching close to the time when a decision will be made.

I believe that the hon. member will likely be quite satisfied once we announce what we intend to do. But I think the idea of laying one court case or 10 would not really be fair with the number of problems that we find of people breaking the law in that particular area.

Mr. Koenker: — Why would it be then, that you would choose to lay charges last year in one particular case when you now say that you can't do that? Why did you do that?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — At the time that the charge was laid, the problem was not near what it is today. But it was because that charge was laid and thrown out of court that the borders almost were thrown open. And it was thrown out of court on a very minor technicality.

So we can lay another court case if that would really please the hon. member, but I don't think it's the fair way to go. I think the route that we are following is probably much more sensible at this time. And I indicate to the member that he'll likely be satisfied when he does hear the solution that we propose.

Mr. Koenker: — Well I guess again we'll just have to wait and see. Actions will speak louder than words.

I'd like to talk about another topic now, in terms of government actions, and this concerns the initiation of a program last August to dispose of hazardous chemicals in hospitals and school storage shelves. And I think that's a commendable initiative for the department to have taken, I think it's an initiative that's long overdue, and it bespeaks a concern for public safety when it comes to the environment. This program was called the institutional chemical program, as I'm sure you're aware.

Could the minister tell me if this program is still in effect.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The program is still carrying on and we are continuing to collect and dispose of chemicals in the schools. It's the kind of program where you go across the province and do the job because it's in institutions, in schools, in hospitals, and universities. And when the job is done then there likely will be no need of continuing it on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Koenker: — How many institutions or provincial sites have been visited in this past year under the program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Since October 1 of '86, they've visited about 150 sites and have removed approximately 6,500 kilograms of chemicals from schools and hospitals.

Mr. Koenker: — That sounds pretty good. I don't know how many are out there, but I do know that that would be, oh, approximately a third of the schools and hospitals in the province that were said initially to have these sorts of chemicals.

What happens to the chemicals after they are collected under the collection program? After they leave the schools?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — They're categorized according to what product is in the container, and then they're packaged and marked as to what is in each container. And some are neutralized, if that's possible to do here; others are shipped out of the province for disposal.

Mr. Koenker: — Have any chemicals been shipped out of the province to date that were collected under this program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes. Some have gone to Ontario. I couldn't tell you exactly how many, but some have gone to Ontario.

Mr. Koenker: — What was the budget for this past year under which the program commenced, and what would be the budget allocation for this budgetary year for the program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The overall cost of the program is expected to be about 250,000. We've spent approximately 160,000 at this time, and the balance will have to be spent over the course of this year. It's not a separately identified item in the budget. It will be taken out of the overall budget of the department, that amount of money, approximately another 90,000.

Mr. Koenker: — Do you believe the other 90,000 will enable you to complete the collection of the chemicals outstanding in the province?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That was the intention, that that amount should do the job. They tell me that we're past the half-way mark, and that we're doing well as far as the collection is concerned.

I might mention to the member that this was intended to be a one-shot operation. You do the job and then you've finished the program, and you come to an end.

The University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon is setting up a similar idea, a collection type of facility that will handle this type of chemical. And it is their intent to handle the disposal of laboratory chemicals for schools and hospitals and universities at that site. So once they're established, the schools will have access, and hospitals will, to a disposal site. So that's the other side of it.

Mr. Koenker: — But you anticipate that you can complete the program with the \$90,000 and collect those, that aggregate of chemical that is still in the Saskatchewan institutions?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, that is the intent of the department. I think that there will be some ongoing need to educate the public so that they are aware of the problem that can exist in laboratories, and from there on that they can take their product to the university in Saskatoon for disposal. So that's an educational program that will have to be continued and it'll be part of our advertising budget.

Mr. Koenker: — Which department of the university will be responsible for the continuance of this program once it leaves the auspices of the department?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — It's the general administration division of the university that is building the facility and will, as we understand it, be caring for the operation of it.

Mr. Koenker: — Does the minister know which department though, or which segment of the university community will be directly involved in running the program? I would think that the general administration obviously would be responsible for it, but who are they charging with particular responsibility for the program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — They'll be appointing special staff to do the job, but that's a question that I really wouldn't have an answer for. You'll have to ask the university. They likely have in mind . . . I would think somebody with a pretty good chemical background would be required in order to know what to do with the product.

Mr. Koenker: — You seemed to indicate that the university was actually building a facility for this program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, the indication is that they're planning on building. I don't know whether it's actually under construction yet. They've been working, and they have budgeted for it, and have dealt with the city of Saskatoon. I think they're pretty well along in their planning processes at least.

Mr. Koenker: — Is there any cost sharing between the department and the university with respect to this facility and this program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, our department will have no involvement in the cost of that.

Mr. Koenker: — Can you advise me what the role of the provincial government might be then in enabling the university fiscally to assume this responsibility?

(2045)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Our involvement will be the licensing and the permit to operate.

Mr. Koenker: — How will the university then pay for the operation of this program? Where will they receive funding for it? Out of student fees or government grants,

or how will that work?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm not sure how the university's funding will work. They probably have to take it out of their administration, or if they're doing it for other institutions, they may levy some

change. I'm not sure of the exact process, but there are a number of ways they could do it.

Mr. Koenker: — Is there any cost sharing under the present program?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, we as a department have not been charging for the work that we've done.

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you very much for those comments.

I'd like to turn now to the question of fungicides and to ask whether the minister is considering any action with respect to fungicides. A recent National Academy of Sciences, United States, report states that 90 per cent of the fungicides tested by the academy were found to be carcinogenic. And these very fungicides that were tested are frequently added to waxes on fruits and vegetables.

We're all, I think, familiar with the waxes that are found on apples in the winter months. Vinyl chloride polymers, that are very toxic, are used. These have been classified as human carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

OPP, orthophenylphenol, is also a carcinogen placed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on its list of most toxic inert substances.

Benomyl is a cancer-causing agent known to cause birth defects and genetic damage. In addition to its use as a post-harvest dip on fruits to protect and preserve it, it's used as a seed treatment and on field crops. And in fact this chemical, Benomyl, accounts for 55 per cent of the \$320 million world fungicide market. That's a sizable component, more than half of the world fungicide market.

Has the minister given any consideration to banning any of these fungicides here in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The fungicides that the member mentions would not fall under the control of this department. They may come under the health and safety side of the Department of Health, or under the federal programs, but they certainly don't fall within the jurisdiction of this department.

Mr. Koenker: — Does the minister know for sure under whose jurisdiction these fungicides fall?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm sorry, I really don't know which department, but they don't come under the Department of Environment.

Mr. Koenker: — How is it that you can say that they don't fall within the parameters of your department, since they're used in the environment as seed treatments, in addition to preservatives on other food substances? How

is it you can say they don't fall within the parameters of your department?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised by my staff that they don't fall here. And I think when you talk of agricultural chemicals, they would go under the federal jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture.

Others, if you say they're cancer-causing agents, may fall under the Health department, but they certainly don't fall here within the Department of Environment. This is what I'm advised by staff. They've been in the department since the time of its information; I guess I take their word for that.

Mr. Koenker: — Would the minister give any consideration to reviewing the data on these fungicides with a view toward calling it to the attention of the appropriate department whose jurisdiction at this point in time apparently remains unknown? Would you consider reviewing the data?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We could look at the issue, but since it doesn't really concern our department. I don't know whether that will be that beneficial to you. We don't mind looking at it.

Mr. Koenker: — Well if you don't mind looking at it, would the department consider . . . could you give me your assurance that the department would in fact look at the issues, particularly with respect the three chemicals that I named?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I indicated to you, yes, they would look at it. But it really doesn't fall under this department. So how much work they'll do on it, they'll read it, and if there's something they could recommend, they'd likely do that. But it wouldn't be part of the department's normal work.

Mr. Koenker: — Who in the government monitors complaints about agricultural or farm chemicals and their use?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That would be the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Koenker: — does the Department of the Environment have any role with respect to the use of farm chemicals?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, they would be under the Department of Agriculture. The only involvement that we have is the chemical can collection program. And we're involved in that respect, but that's a very minor role in that industry.

Mr. Koenker: — Although that's an important role, the chemical can collection program, and one that I think it's fair to say is of great benefit to Saskatchewan farmers in terms of preserving and protecting their health, I'm wondering though whether the minister might consider going one step further than simply monitoring the collection of these cans and consider putting notices on product labels — requiring that notices be put on some of these agricultural chemical labels — that farmers can register complaints with the Department of Agriculture

should they have problems in the use of the chemical that they happened to purchase.

In other words, that there would just be a simple labelling system. It would be one step before the cans are collected after they're used that there would be some notification on the chemical cans, just an adhesive label that might indicate where an individual farmer might contact the provincial government should they have questions. Would you see that within the parameters of your responsibility?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Almost every can of agricultural chemical that you purchase has a considerable amount of information on its label. But most of them also have a booklet that comes with them outlining the name of the company that produces it, the address of that company, what the responsibilities of the company are that produce the chemical if the chemical doesn't perform. These types of things are there now with the purchase of almost every agricultural chemical.

Mr. Koenker: — Certainly that's the case, but it's also certainly true that in most instances, these booklets, as you say, would not have Saskatchewan points of contact in terms of contacting the manufacturer, inasmuch as most of the chemicals aren't produced there. Would you give consideration to providing information, perhaps by way of an adhesive label system, where farmers can get further information from the Saskatchewan government or one of its agencies with respect to the chemicals that are being used?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't think that we really have a problem in that area as far as farmers knowing where to contact. It doesn't really matter if you're contacting a chemical company. You know who the supplier was; you can go back through that route to come right to the company that produces. So any time a farmer has a problem with a chemical that he has used, he can go back to the person that he purchased from and right back through to the chemical company that's responsible. I know many farmers that have had to do exactly that, and it has been really no problem to make the contact. So I think this would just be a make-work program that would serve very little purpose.

Mr. Koenker: — Is there a registry here in Saskatchewan where Saskatchewan farmers can register complaints with respect to damage done by virtue of aerial spraying, or other damage done to crops by way of chemicals?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm not sure whether there is or not. You would have to ask that, I think, in Agriculture estimates. They could give you an answer. I really don't have an answer.

Mr. Koenker: — Certainly if damage is done to a particular crop or to a particular field by an agricultural chemical, it would be of concern to you as the Minister of Environment inasmuch as the soil might be rendered sterile. We all know about the Tordon case and the Eston farmers who were left with this particular circumstance. Do you not see yourself as having some role in this regard to see that there is some sort of registry where farmers can register complaints with respect to agricultural

chemicals?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — If there is a problem like the member mentions, he would have to contact the company that was responsible and deal through the legal process. Companies producing chemicals have a responsibility that the chemical will do what the label says it will do. If it doesn't, then they must go back through to the company, and if they can't get satisfaction without court, then they have to go the legal route to arrive at a solution.

Mr. Koenker: — I would agree entirely that the companies have a responsibility to ensure that the chemical does what they say it will do. I would also suggest that you have a responsibility to the environment if the chemical doesn't do what it's intended to do, and in fact damages the environment as has been the case with the Eston farmers. Do you not see yourself as having some role in this regard?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — If there is a spill that is reported, we would deal with that. If a chemical gets into the water through run-off, and it's significant quantities that it would be considered an environmental hazard, we would be involved in that respect. But just with the application to a crop on agricultural land, no, that would not be our responsibility.

Mr. Koenker: — Am I to understand the minister to say, then, that if it has to do with the ground water, for example, it would be a responsibility of the Department of the Environment?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — In most cases it's not the responsibility of the Department of Environment. If there are spraying operations close to major water bodies, then the person doing the spraying has to be licensed by our department to do it, and the types of chemicals that can be used are controlled.

Mr. Koenker: — Is the minister aware of the legislation introduced in Iowa earlier this year, the Ground Water Protection Act?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No.

Mr. Koenker: — Would the minister give consideration to having his departmental officials review it? I think it would be a good follow-up to The Air Pollution Control Act that the minister has initiated this year. Would you give consideration to doing some investigative work, in terms of ground water protection?

(2100)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The department could seek to get a copy of that legislation and review it. We haven't any information on it at this time.

Mr. Koenker: — I'd simply leave it at that and commend that to your consideration and to the consideration of your officials. I think it could be of real service to Saskatchewan people, and to your credit as Minister of the Environment, to look at that legislation and perhaps make applicable applications here in Saskatchewan.

One following concern about water quality: I'd like to ask what the process is for individuals who would like to have their water tested here in Saskatchewan. Where do such individuals go, let's say if they have concerns with the testing of their water with respect to pesticide contaminants? Where would they go?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that if we are contacted and there's a problem identified that a well or something is contaminated, we will make an ascertaining look at it and then advise them where the best place would be to have that particular type of water tested. The Canadian laboratory at the Canada Research Station here in Regina does have that capability and sometimes we have referred them to that one.

We have testing facilities for some things, but when it comes to identifying pesticides and chemicals like that, it takes a very good laboratory in order to do that.

Mr. Koenker: — Can the Canadian research lab here in Regina do pesticide detection work?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, I'm advised they can.

Mr. Koenker: — A full range of pesticide or only a very limited spectrum of . . . What are the parameters of their ability to detect pesticides?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that they can do a reasonable range of chemicals — not all chemicals. We do refer some to Burlington where there's a major laboratory that has more capability than this one. This one is fairly effective, but not capable of doing the whole broad range.

Mr. Koenker: — Can the lab here in Regina do nitrates? Can it detect total organic carbon? Can it detect total organic halides?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think for a question that technical, the member would be well advised to contact the lab directly because it's not something that I could give you an answer to.

If we were to have an indication of what was in the water, then we would contact the lab to see whether or not they have the capability. If they don't, then it would have to go on to Burlington.

Mr. Koenker: — So in other words, if it's a known commodity that a plane has sprayed a field and somehow or another contaminated a dug-out or something, you'd probably be able to handle it here in Regina. If it were just a general concern of a quantity of water with an unknown element in it, it might have to go out of province. Is that the gist of it?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That's about the way that it's explained to me, yes. This lab has not the capability of doing a complete chemical analysis of the water. It could identify whether or not the chemical that they were concerned about had got in the water but not the complete analysis.

Mr. Koenker: — Are there any municipal water supplies

here in Saskatchewan that can extract pesticide residues from the water supplies?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Most of the treatment processes are not designed to remove pesticides.

Mr. Koenker: — So it's a little bit of an unclear answer. I think what you're saying then is, basically, Saskatchewan municipal water supplies are basically unable to remove herbicide or pesticide residues from the water supply, on the whole.

I'd like to ask the minister about the impact of the radiation emissions from the new uranium mines proposed for Wollaston. Have the cumulative effects of these emissions been studied by the department to date?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The mines at Rabbit Lake that have been operating have been monitored by professionals, tested very carefully, and they tell us that there will be no major impact on the environment from those mines.

The new ones that are proposed, they aren't far enough along yet to have that kind of monitoring. So it will be done as the process goes along. I'm not even sure of which ones you're talking about, whether or not they're even through the environmental impact assessment stage or not. You'd have to be more specific of which ones you're referring to.

Mr. Koenker: — I guess let's take the Collins A, the Collins D, and the Eagle Point sites which are being proposed, I believe, by Eldorado Nuclear. Can you describe what kind of monitoring the department proposes or would propose to see take place with respect to those three developments?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Those are still in the proposal stage. They will have to undergo an environmental impact study. So we don't have really, any data that we could give you information on at this time. Those mines will, before they can go ahead, have to do an environmental impact assessment and go through the process of review and all the way down the line. They're a long ways from being at the stage where you could look at their emissions.

Mr. Koenker: — But your own . . . I guess I'm asking about your own monitoring procedures or standards. Would they be in place relative to the development proposed? Or would you in fact have your own standards and procedures already in place now regardless of what shape the development takes, so you could say already now, thus and so will take place with respect to the monitoring?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, those standards are in place and any mine coming on stream would have to meet those standards.

Mr. Koenker: — So any mine would then meet existing standards? Has the environmental impact statement from Eldorado Nuclear been delivered to the department already?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, the Eldorado one is in the

department now.

Mr. Koenker: — Has it been released to the general public yet?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, it's still in the technical review process.

Mr. Koenker: — How long will that technical review process take? What's the time framework for that technical review process?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that normally it would take about a six-week period. We've had it about two weeks so it would be a minimum of another month. And it's a very hard thing to put a time frame on. If we come into areas that we need more answers for . . . And the communication back and forth can be a bit of a problem when you're dealing with a mine that's quite a ways away, so traditionally, approximately six weeks, but it could take longer.

Mr. Koenker: — What will determine when the public has access to the environmental impact statement?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — As soon as the technical review is complete, then the environmental impact assessment plus the recommendations that my department attach to it are open for the public review. And I believe the normal public review is 30 days under the Act.

Mr. Koenker: — Does the minister consider that 30 days an adequate period of time for a public review?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, I believe it has been in most instances. We don't see any problem with it, up to this point, for most environmental impact studies.

Mr. Koenker: — Well the minister certainly must know that it presented some difficulties to the general public and proved to be insufficient when it came to phase 2 of the Cluff Lake development — that the 30-day period was, in fact, rather inadequate.

I'm wondering whether the minister would consider giving extension to that 30-day public review period for this particular environmental impact statement.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My staff are not really aware that there was a problem on Cluff Lake 2, but the minister has the authority to extend the review period if there appears to be a need for that. So I suppose each case would have to be played on its own, but most of the time it appears that that's sufficient time for public review.

Mr. Koenker: — If there was reasonable public comment calling for more than a 30-day review would the minister consider such a review?

(2115)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yes, of course, I would consider it as long as there is a reasonable need. You know, it's very major projects when you talk of uranium mines going ahead, and many people are concerned about different things.

I believe that the government has always taken enough time that the public has had a chance to have its input. That's extremely important, and I believe that the mining companies that we have here in the province have leaned over backwards, almost, to provide the information that people want.

So yes, if there is a major concern raised, or a reasonable concern raised, that there needs to be more time, that would certainly be looked at.

Mr. Koenker: — I guess, Mr. Minister, my concern is that we're dealing with a very technical document, an environmental impact statement, one in which your departmental officials have access to for at least six months, you've indicated — excuse me, that was an inaccuracy — six weeks in fact, if not more time, given the technical nature of it; time that they as experts need to digest and reflect upon the material.

I think the case ought to be made that inasmuch as the document is not made available to the public, as you've indicated, until after the technical review has been done, and so the public doesn't have access to this information, that the case is to be made that it's rather difficult for lay people and the general public to review such a document in a four-week period.

I would certainly commend to the minister consideration for extending that public review period from beyond 30 days to at least an equivalent amount of time that the technical review itself is found to take. Would you consider doing that, taking the period of time that the technical review takes and allocating that same period of time for public comment, particularly in light of the fact that the public will not have access to the document until after the technical review?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — There's been no change in that process, you know. The technical review period has been similar for a long time. I think the hon. member realizes that the department staff are the watch-dog of the province. They go through that environmental impact study with a fine-toothed comb, and they spend many days assuring that the public's interests are being looked after.

When that's made available for the public review, we have found usually that the 30-day period has been more than ample. I indicated to you that if it appeared that there was need for more time, the minister has the authority to extend the period.

So you would have to deal with each environmental impact study on its own merit. Many of them are very simple and they are gone with very little public comment. Others are not that simple and there may be need. So the opportunity is there, and I have given you my word that I will look at it and, if there is need, indeed extend it.

So I don't think you would make an overall extension. That would just be a time delay that would have very little purpose in most cases. So I think it's better to deal with it the way I mention, is to deal with them individually and if there is a need, then to extend a given project.

Mr. Koenker: — I appreciate your comments on that. I think that they're very appropriate and very reasonable, that if there is public concern you will give due attention to that.

I'd like to ask the minister just briefly if you can give this House the assurance that a nuclear power station will not be built in Saskatchewan within the next five years. Can you give that assurance?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I haven't heard anybody even asking about one. We are talking about another coal-fired plant which should meet the needs of the province for at least five years. It would not be my decision to make, whether or not there would be a nuclear power station. That would be a very major decision by a government, and I can't give you assurances, but from what I am seeing on the horizon you don't have very many fears.

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, back to water for a moment. In 1986, in September of 1986, there were two fertilizer companies in Edmonton that spilled contaminated water into the North Saskatchewan River, polluting the water supply down river for some 50,000 Saskatchewan residents, the residents of Lloydminster, North Battleford, and Prince Albert.

I'm wondering if the minister can comment on the kinds of representation your government made to the Alberta government at the time of that spill.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that there's an organization called the Prairie Provinces Water Board that is in place; it has representation from Saskatchewan and Alberta. At the time the spills occurred in Edmonton, we were advised immediately by that body. That allowed us to set up monitoring stations along the river so that we were aware of the contamination and could advise the communities and Saskatchewan of the things that they would have to do to assure that their water was safe for use within the community.

Mr. Koenker: — Did your government make representations directly to the Alberta government with respect to these spills?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The committee, that I gave the member before, met, discussed the problem and the solutions, and Environment Canada assigned in providing some of the monitoring to enable us to do the job in a fairly short time span.

Mr. Koenker: — I take it then that you did not make direct representations to the Alberta government?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I told you that the committee — that's the Prairie Provinces Water Board — is there for that purpose to deal with interprovincial waters, and that board did meet. So the Alberta government would be represented on the board, and so would Saskatchewan's government. So it that way there was the contact with the government in Alberta, but as far as going beyond that to deal with the minister, no, that was not done.

Mr. Koenker: — Did your department discuss with the

Prairie Provinces Water Board the possibility of charges being laid against the two companies involved?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — That would be a matter for the minister in Alberta to decide. It would not be within our jurisdiction to deal with that.

Mr. Koenker: — Well I certainly realize that it wouldn't be within your jurisdiction to charge them, and that it would be a decision for the Alberta Department of the Environment, but I'm wondering if your department discussed the laying of charges with the Alberta representatives of the board?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No. As I indicated to you, that responsibility would be with the Minister of Environment in Alberta. And the board, as a board, would not really enter into that kind of discussion. The minister there knew the spill occurred and he has the authority to proceed with any charges that he might feel are required.

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, I realize that the Alberta Minister of the Environment has the authority to proceed with charges. He obviously chose not to proceed with charges, even though his own departmental officials at the time were recommending that he do so.

I'm simply wondering why you would not have broached that subject with the Alberta representatives, particularly when their own departmental officials viewed the matter serious enough to feel that the minister was wrong in not laying charges. And I'm just wondering why you would not even have broached the subject.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I think that the minister — I wasn't the minister at the time it happened — but I think the minister here would not be making a good decision for Saskatchewan if he interfered in the decisions of the Environment department in Alberta and the methods that it would deal with companies within the province of Alberta. I know that I would object very strenuously if the Minister of Environment in Alberta interfered with decisions made within this department, and within my office, as it relates to environmental matters within this province. I don't think that's the proper way to go. Each province has its own laws; they have their own department; they have their own minister; and they must make those decisions within their own boundaries.

Mr. Koenker: — That's certainly true, although in this case we have an instance where in Alberta a pollution problem affected the drinking water of 50,000 Saskatchewan people. And that's history, but I'm wondering what steps you and your department have taken now with respect to this water board, the Prairie Provinces Water Board, to ensure that similar accidents aren't repeated, and that Saskatchewan residents aren't subject to further spills from Alberta companies.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Alberta has the responsibility, to the best of its ability, to protect the water that flows through that province and comes into ours. We have the same responsibility for water that flows on through Saskatchewan and goes into Manitoba or goes into the American states.

I think that we have to trust the government of Alberta to act in the best interests of the protection of the environment and the water within their province. And for me to interfere in that process, I don't think would be proper. I'm sure that at times we've had less than desirable water flowing into Manitoba. We have our hands full to see that our industries are not polluting the waters and the rivers here in our province.

Mr. Koenker: — In the view of your department, are there problems with the quality of the water entering Saskatchewan by way of the North Saskatchewan river from Alberta? Does your department view there being any problems at the present time, or are you satisfied with the state of the water, the condition of the water entering the province?

(2130)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that there is no significant problem with the water quality coming into Saskatchewan at this time.

Mr. Koenker: — Where would the first point in Saskatchewan be where your departmental officials would monitor the water coming in from Alberta?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm advised that Environment Canada monitors one location very near the border, and then we have several that are close to the border, but they're inside Saskatchewan a little ways.

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, I'd like to thank you very much for the answers that you've supplied. I found them very helpful and very informative, and I want to tell you that I appreciate them very, very much and the consideration you've given. Thank you.

Mr. Goulet: — My first question, Mr. Minister, is in the area of acid rain. And before I ask the question in relation to acid rain, I'd like to give you some preliminary historical information on acid rain.

I come from Cumberland House, and we use to wonder about the smoke stack that was from Flin Flon mines which we could see when we were out fishing, or when we were out doing guiding during tourist season. And we used to wonder what effect, you know, that would have on the livelihood of people in our area.

We had watched the changes in the environment. One thing we did notice was the different foams that are formed on the lake shore, and that there are different types of foams.

And I hadn't known anything about chemistry at that point in time, and as I looked back later in regards to reading reports on acid rain, I thought that the acid, you know, the sulphur dioxide emissions from the mine were interacting with the limestone base, because we had a lot of limestone on Cumberland Lake, and also on Sturgeon Lake — the mill lake, it's called.

And I checked later on in that same basis on Morin Lake and Pelican Narrows area. And most of the people had wondered why there was a depletion in certain fish. One

of the fish that was gone from our area was trout, and of course the immediate reaction was to blame the people who did the fishing.

But as I read the reports on acid rain, it says that the first fish that it does attack is trout, and that it, in many cases not only the food supply is gone, but also it affects, you know, the biological reproduction capacity of the trout.

And I asked the people, not only from Cumberland area and Sturgeon Landing area, but in the area surrounding Mirond Lake and Pelican Narrows, and they reported much the same thing. They said they only found trout in the most deepest waters where there was possibilities of ledges there, and so on.

So I guess when we come into a newer phase where we are talking a lot more about the problems of tar sands development in from Alberta, and the requirement for inter-provincial agreements, and so on, one has to look at, I suppose, not only the impact on fishing — the sulphur dioxide emissions on trout — but the people also mentioned the sturgeon. We used to have two different types of sturgeon in that area. We had the regular grey type sturgeon and a darker sturgeon, and we're finding out that a lot of them are diminishing and not coming back.

When people tend to over-fish and that type of thing, they tend to regenerate and come back; but such is not the case. Slowly but surely, you know, as in the case of the trout, they're starting to go. The water levels are not protecting them because of the long-term accumulation of that acid rain.

The question is: what degree of monitoring is being done in northern Saskatchewan in respect to the acid rain question?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I'm not going to comment on the fish because I really have no knowledge of how fish survive and why they don't. What I will tell the hon. member is that we have monitoring in 25 locations in the North, and we check them on an annual basis. We check them for rainfall and we check them for the snow and then we actually check the water in the lakes.

There has been no indication of any problem with acid rain in your area — no problem with it across the North. So if you're having difficulty with the fish, there must be a different problem than what you're thinking of. It isn't acid rain; the tests will show that, and we've tested many times and on an ongoing basis every year, and there is no acid rain problem in the area that you speak of.

Mr. Goulet: — Then I will ask the question: how long, in order to make a conclusive statement that you've just made, how long has your research taken place? What is a longitudinal basis? What is your argument? How long has it been taking place?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — They've been testing since 1982, but the levels of contamination that it takes in a lake to indicate that has an acid rain problem have been established for many, many years. And when they test the water in the lake, and the lake tests within the ranges that

are permissible, then they indicate that there is no major problem with acid rain.

Mr. Goulet: — You give me the information that you've been only testing for the past four years. I am talking about a mine that's been there since 1930. And I think that it's very important to start recognizing that the problem of acid rain, and the recognition of the effect of sulphur dioxide, is a recent thing.

But I could see that the research has only taken place in the past four years. But I don't think — I think that the level of research and the monitoring may therefore be not that thorough, from the evidence that you are giving me of that. And I'm just wondering, in regards therefore to the monitoring that you're doing, what research reports and evidence have you got to this date to prove the point that you made?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The statement that you make that the mine has been there for 30 years, and when we have the water tested after 30 years it still doesn't indicate that it has a problem with acid rain. I think that speaks reasonably good for the operation of that particular mine.

We have done some of the research on our own testing. The Saskatchewan Research Council has done about four different studies, and each one of the studies come up with the same answer: that we at this time do not have a problem with acid rain in that area. So I think it's encouraging to me, at least, that the mine has been there 30 years and your water is still in good condition.

Mr. Goulet: — I would ask a more specific question, then, in regards to the research in that area. The places that were reported to me were Mirond Lake, Suggi Lake, Beaver Lake, Namew Lake, and Cumberland Lake. Has actual research been done on those lakes? I will repeat those lakes: Mirond Lake, Suggi Lake, Beaver Lake, Cumberland Lake?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We don't have the list of the lakes here; we could give you a list of the lakes that are monitored. I would imagine that most of those lakes would have been, but I'd like to give you the exact list and the department says they'll provide that list to you.

Mr. Goulet: — Okay, I will wait for the research report then. I would just like to know when you would be providing those research reports to me.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I didn't indicate to you that I was going to provide the research reports. I believe that they would be available at the library, and if the member would just slip across the hall to the Legislative Library and ask for them, I think you would get them. But I did indicate to you is that we would provide the list of the names of the lakes that were monitored in that area, and we'll do that.

Mr. Goulet: — Could I have your research staff, then, get me . . . Most of the research that will have been done in the past four years will be on this in that journal. Not all research evidence is always in one spot in regards to the reports. Could you give me a summary then of all the research evidence, and the titles of where I can get them?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — My staff will give you the names of the lakes and the names of the reports. You may have to contact the Saskatchewan Research Council if the library doesn't have it, but I would expect the library right beside you will have it.

Mr. Goulet: — The next question is in regards to herbicidal spraying. There was concern, especially in the past couple of years, in regards to the possible utilization of Roundup in regards especially to the deciduous forest, you know, in regards to poplar and so on. I was wondering, is this going to be a follow-through? Are you going to be using Roundup in the future, or anything similar to that in the forests of northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The member may not have been in the House when we went through the same questions in these estimates earlier. I don't really feel that we should have to go back over all of the same ground and answer the same questions. If the member refers back to the *Hansard*, the answers were given in detail and for a long period of time on that very topic, and I would ask you to review the *Hansard*.

Mr. Goulet: — There was a question, initially, in regards to the more specific information in regards to the actual chemicals used, and I was wondering if you do have that information now?

(2145)

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We have the list here of the information that the member was seeking. It was actually Hoechst chemical company that made the request to do that testing.

Mr. Goulet: — In regards to the transmission line in the northern area, you know, that proposed transmission line, is there any proposal there to utilize chemicals also?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — No, the proposal for the clearing of the right of way was intended to be done by hand, and I believe many of the people in the area have been employed. The project passed through all of the environmental impact stages and the public review stage, and is under construction. From what I'm hearing from people in that area, they're very happy with the opportunities for employment that they've had in both the clearing and the construction of that particular transmission line.

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Minister, that is being done during the developmental stage of the transmission line. Is that also going to be your policy in the long run, as we go into the future?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I don't think the decision is mine to make. What we do as a department is, when there's a proposal to do certain things, then they bring that proposal forward. We review the proposal, and the decision is made. We've had no request for anything of that nature at this time.

Mr. Goulet: — Some people have also been complaining in around Weyakwin about some spraying that was done on the roadside. You know, whether it was putting

something on the road and that type of thing where the vegetation surrounding — around the — you know, by the roadside; where a lot of the vegetation was dying and so on. And I was wondering what type of chemical was being used on that road there; this was in around Weyakwin area.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I would have to advise the hon. member that I have no knowledge of anyone spraying on the road. If it happened, it was not reported to me. So I have actually no knowledge at all of it.

Mr. Goulet: — The question refers to the area of environmental damage which the hydro-electric power developments cause in Cumberland House and in Sandy Bay. And what levels of research are going on from the government to determine, you know, the levels of damage that have been done in regards to Cumberland and Sandy Bay area on that hydro-electric power development.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We have not undertaken any studies with regards to damage in that area. If there has been damage, you would have to raise that issue with the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation; or if it's highways, then with the Highways Department.

There's been no one bringing forth concern that there has been damage to our department. If the member is concerned, send us a written statement of what the concern is, and we may be able to deal with it. But we've no indication that there has been damage.

Mr. Goulet: — For the minister's information, many of the trappers have complained to me in regards to the water fluctuation levels. One instance is this: when the water levels go right down and they go on the shallow area, the fur rubs against the ice, and as such, a lot of the fur then becomes damaged. And as a result, the water fluctuation levels . . . And I would like to put that on record.

And also the fact that one of the sub-species of sturgeon in the Sandy Bay area had been wiped out. There are two types of sturgeon in the area, and one of them has been wiped out from that area, so I'm providing you with information on that.

In light of information like this, would you be pursuing any type of research if those types of information are forthcoming?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The kind of question you raise about water levels and things would certainly not be something dealt with by the Department of Environment. If there are significant concerns in that area, perhaps you should bring them forward to me. If you've been made aware of them, you didn't pass them on, at least, because I wasn't hearing it until now.

So if you have concerns like that, those would take very detailed study, and perhaps somewhere in government we can do it. But it certainly wouldn't come under Environment.

Mr. Goulet: — I'm very glad that the minister is open to information that I've come across as I travel around, and I'll make sure that the information, as such, will come to you in writing in the future.

I would like to relate another one in that regard. Many of the communities just don't have the research space to do water studies. And many of the communities do not have proper shore and water systems. But a lot of community environment gets damaged, and especially a lot of the water that seeps into the river systems and the lake systems surrounding, let's say, the communities of Stanley, or the communities of Southend, and that type of thing then contaminates their water. Is there any special effort being made to look into these water quality levels at the communities in northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — The community water supply is tested by the community and the tests sent in. And we do assist the community; they take the sample, they send it in. We assist the community to have that tested. Some of the tests we pay for completely; others we assist to pay for. But the department does do that kind of a monitoring service to see that the water is safe for use.

If it goes beyond that kind of a question as regards to water, then you would be better to deal with it under the water corporation, who is the deliveries of water systems and could do a better job for the member in that area.

The committee reported progress.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: — Before the House adjourns I would like to lay on the Table several reports which I have received from the Chief Electoral Officer.

The first report is a report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the annual fiscal returns of registered political parties in Saskatchewan for the period January 1, 1986 to December 31, 1986.

The second report is a report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the returns of election expenses filed by registered political parties pursuant to section 222(1), The Election Act, in conjunction with the 21st Saskatchewan provincial election held on October 20, 1986.

Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

The third report is the report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the returns of contributions and election expenses filed by candidates pursuant to section 218 of The Election Act, in conjunction with the 21st Saskatchewan provincial election on October 20, 1986.

And the final report is the 21st general election October 20, 1986, the report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.