

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Parks, Recreation and Culture  
Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 39

Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, just before we broke for supper, we were discussing the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park and the proposal of your government to privatize the park, to lease it out to private interest, private developers. And I was attempting to get some assurances from you, if in fact you proceed with that plan. We were talking about the gate admissions and keeping the park accessible to people.

And you will realize that I do have some concern in this regard when I read media reports concerning the privatization of the Blackstrap operation, and I read through the media that, after that leasing out to a private interest, the cost to a family for a pass on the Blackstrap ski lift went from \$200 to \$500. That's a 150 per cent increase, and so you will understand my concern about the admission charges for the animal park.

On another area, I also read, concerning the privatization of Blackstrap, that 15 people lost their jobs through that privatization.

And so I would appreciate your assurance tonight that if indeed you go ahead with this proposal – ill-advised as it is – to privatize the animal park, would you assure me and this House that no person currently employed at the animal park will lose his or her job.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, that might be a very difficult assurance to give depending on the nature of the activities that would subsequently be taking place within the park. The key word used by the hon. member was “if.” So at this point in time, this is strictly hypothetical. We don't even know what kind of expressions of interest do exist out there. So that's a rather difficult assurance for me to give.

I would say, that, naturally, nobody likes to see anybody losing their job, and we'll take every possible mitigating measure open to us to ensure the viability, not only to the parks, but the people who work there.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, I guess we've seen such a large number of people lose their jobs over the course of this spring and summer that we find it a little difficult to accept your assurances.

Mr. Minister, just to sort of come to some conclusion on this line of questioning. On May 14 of this year, I heard an official of your department being interviewed on CBC radio and say that if this fall the city of Moose Jaw did not find itself able to take over the animal park, and if no private developer, if no lease proposal was acceptable, that in fact the animals in the park may be disposed of and that in fact it would become little more than a glorified

picnic ground.

I would appreciate your assurance tonight, Mr. Minister, that that no longer is the position of your department, and that failing an acceptable proposal, failing the city of Moose Jaw, that in fact your department will continue to maintain and operate the animal park.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I spoke with that official personally, and as he put it to me, he was asked a hypothetical question and he gave a hypothetical answer. I'll leave it at that for now.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, I would ask you not to leave it at that. Just, can I have your assurance that if no proposals are acceptable, and if the city finds itself unable to take over the park, will you ensure that the park will remain a wild animal park, that the animals will in fact not be disposed of, and we can look forward to another good season in the park next year.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — We would endeavour to do everything possible, Mr. Chairman, to make sure that comes about, but I can't give a cast-iron guarantee that we could continue to operate a park losing \$250,000 a year *ad infinitum*.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, then, how long can you, in your judgement, continue to operate the park before you dispose of the animals?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Again, Mr. Chairman, we're dealing with a hypothetical situation. I don't honestly believe it's going to come to a position where we're looking at being forced to close that park at all. I think that park will be open next year, will operate as a wild animal park, and will have some degree of success doing that.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Chairman, I sincerely wish that the minister could say more than, he thinks the park will remain the park that we know and enjoy today.

Mr. Chairman, I think, had the events of this summer not taken place, I might very well have come into this House and been willing to congratulate the minister and the government for continuing the initiative at the wild animal park in Moose Jaw, an initiative begun during a time when we were in government.

Through initiatives of both of our governments, we have put in place a park of outstanding quality, a park that is accessible to families for their enjoyment. We have built, as I've said, a show-case of indigenous species; we have created what has become a major tourist attraction and, in many ways, a centre of education.

Of course this kind of park costs money – of course. Of course it's going to take some tax dollars. But I submit that taxpayers in this province do not mind their tax dollar going into parks, going into the kind of facility that we have at the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park. Every park costs money – you know that, Mr. Minister. We have in the city of Moose Jaw a beautiful downtown park called Crescent Park. It doesn't generate one dollar of revenue, but the taxpayers in the city of Moose Jaw are happy to

fund Crescent Park because it's a place of beauty, a refuge.

But you can't expect the city of Moose Jaw to bear the total tax bill for the wild animal park and so, frankly, I think it's a mistake, the direction you've undertaken. I think it is unreasonable to ask the city of Moose Jaw to do it, and if you do indeed persist in this plan to privatize the park, I continue to fear for accessibility to that park; I fear that the nature of that park could be dramatically changed; I fear that the quality of the park may suffer because of someone's search for profit. And fundamentally, I think it's wrong. I think it's wrong to take a public facility, an investment that has been built on goodwill, beginning with the Green family way back in the 1920s through to the contribution of the Lions Clubs, from local government, and then to the province. We've invested a great deal of the taxpayers' money in this park – since 1978, the figure you gave me, \$2.5 million. And I think it's wrong to take that public facility and to put it into private hands for private gain.

I believe you have a responsibility as minister and as a department to provide parks for people and rather than trying to shift your responsibility on to the city of Moose Jaw or rather than threatening to dispose of the park, dispose of the animals and so on, I think that we should be looking at constructive ways to help meet that deficit and at the same time continue the park in the provincial parks system and continue to make it a park of quality and accessible to all people in this province.

And so I ask you, Mr. Minister: will you join with the majority of public opinion on this one? Will you join with the majority of public opinion and stop the ill-advised proposal of privatizing the park or trying to put the weight on the city of Moose Jaw and maintain it in your department? And let's talk then about some constructive future directions.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member made some good points. He talked about profit. He's talked about accessibility of the park. He's talked about perhaps we should look at a philosophy of parks for people and not worry too much about the cost. Well the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, our expenditures on parks in this province, just parks alone – forgetting all the rest of the facets of this large department; just the parks – is \$7 million, and revenue is \$2 million. So the net loss every year is \$5 million. Now I have never said that I believe that parks ought to or should break even. And I rather feel that they won't break even unless we took some really Draconian measures in terms of jacking up the fees and the entries which – to use the hon. member's point – could have some restriction on accessibility. And we don't want to see that, Mr. Chairman.

But I do believe we have to narrow that gap of 7 to \$2 million, somehow. I'm not sure it is fiscally responsible to say that we're going to operate an urban park in the city of Moose Jaw with the taxpayers' money from all of Saskatchewan when 90 per cent of the benefits go directly to the city of Moose Jaw. Now I do concede that it is important in terms of economic diversification for the city of Moose Jaw. And that's why we're taking the

measures we are, Mr. Chairman, to try and ensure the viability of the park, that it can continue, perhaps with some added facilities, in there that would make it more attractive to a larger segment of our population and to other tourists from perhaps beyond our borders. That's the goal. That's what we're trying to do.

I can give the member the assurance that I am most sincere in wanting to see the park stay open, primarily as a wild animal park, but perhaps with some other facilities that would prove to be a good drawing card, not only for the park but for the city of Moose Jaw also.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Before I enter the field that I intend to question the minister on this evening, I would like to allude to a remark he made prior to supper. And he was indicating that on the Diefenbaker Lake, the Elbow harbour area, they were spending public funds because they were having problems getting private entrepreneurs to invest in that area.

Well, Mr. Chairman, the area I'd like to deal with tonight is the Douglas park area, where you have had some success in getting a young entrepreneur to venture into the private enterprise world, and I believe, Mr. Minister, as well, it's his first venture.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to speak a few moments tonight about Douglas park foods and the family that have invested in a food concession and a confectionery there. In 1985, they opened their operation. They invested some \$60,000 of their own funds, and July 1, I believe, was their opening date. And in my conversation with this family they indicate to me that some commitments were made from your department to them in terms of the kinds of facilities that would be available to the people who would come to Douglas park, not only because of their business operation there, but because of the kinds of park facilities that in Saskatchewan we would like to see and that Saskatchewan families are used to.

I would ask, Mr. Minister, if you're familiar with the situation, and if you might want to ask your officials to bring out any documentation that they have. I'll give you the name of the store – I've asked that it be used and there was no problem. The name is Douglas park foods, if you could get your officials ready with that.

Mr. Minister, one of the main complaints that the people in that area were finding was that although there was money invested in this confectionery and fast food operation, that, as I said before, the facilities that people expect in parks aren't there.

In 1985, when this business was established, he was under the understanding that there was a commitment from your department to have a service centre facility located there very shortly. Mr. Minister, to this date there is still no facility there – showers, toilets – to service the camp grounds, the camp spots, and I ask you, Mr. Minister, when might they expect this to happen.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, we'll be starting that particular facility this fall, early October.

(1915)

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — I want to remind you, Mr. Minister, that this man has established this business in 1985. He's gone through, I believe, now his third season without the kind of facilities that you, as a department, should be committing yourselves to when you would get someone to invest in a private enterprise operation in a park.

And I'm glad to see that that facility will be started this fall but, Mr. Minister, I'd like to read a couple of quotes from letters to yourself and to other MLAs, and I'd like to read into the record what his attitude is to the kind of treatment that you've given him since he established his operation in 1985. And I'm quoting from a letter.

I do not mean to appear ungrateful, but I spent \$60,000 on my building and equipment and the government never made an effort to have anything ready for the use of the public until late in 1985 to assist my operation.

So what he's saying is, he committed himself, expecting the department to commit themselves, and the kind of promises that you committed yourself to, as I understand from his correspondence to you and to others, simply wasn't followed through. I ask you, Mr. Minister: are there any other facilities for Douglas park, that you are under the impression that he would expect, that you still haven't put in there, that you might be willing to put in in the near future?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I'm advised by officials who've handled this situation in the past that they did not, in fact, make promises to the individual concerned. What they had indicated was the things they'd like to be doing in the park, and in that general area. And we wanted, I'm told, to have started that service centre in '86. Circumstances didn't allow it to happen in '86; it is going to go ahead in '87.

And you asked what had been done in the area — \$200,000 spent on a boat launch and road, \$50,000 on beach front and landscaping, and 50 new campsites placed in the park.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. We appreciate your noble efforts to make this an environment where he can make a living, but I want to remind you that he struggled through, and this is his third season that he's had some difficulties. And I think what I might want to do for you this evening is to quote from some of the letters and some of the correspondence that he's had with government officials. This is a letter to Gerald Muirhead, the MLA, of June 26, 1986, and I quote:

There were promises to provide showers, more electrified sites, paving of the boat launch road, paving of the parking lot road, and a playground. But the most crucial requirement is the showers and more sites.

Now, Mr. Minister, he also indicates to me that last winter your department came in and bulldozed what are to be sites for campers and since then nothing has been done. Can you indicate to this House when those campsites will

be completed and what the total number will be when you're finished?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I would like to address two issues or two separate questions. I'll take your latter question first, if I may.

You had asked about campsites. I'm advised that's ongoing. Yes, we did some preparatory work earlier this year; and yes, we put campsites in; and yes, we're ongoing and there will be more added in the coming year to that particular area.

**An Hon. Member:** — Next year?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, they should be ready next year.

Now we were talking about a business at Douglas and some problems they encountered. And I wasn't aware of the specifics because I hadn't dealt with the gentleman personally, to the best of my knowledge. But one of my officials just sent a letter this past week to that same individual — I'm not sure if you're aware of this — and we are voluntarily reducing the lease fee that he's charged in there for last year, with credit applied to this year. And I may say this is something which he had already agreed to, that particular lease fee, Mr. Chairman.

We voluntarily, as a gesture of goodwill and spirit of co-operation and to demonstrate that we're not at all unreasonable and do recognize that he had some difficulties, are quite willing to reduce that lease fee down for this year and last year with a credit applied to this year.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well, Mr. Minister, that's very noble. This fellow's been struggling to make a living out there since 1985 and what we get for help is an indication that the lease fee is going to be reduced and, as I say, I commend you for that.

But I just want to draw some of the other problems to your attention, and the reason that he's having problems paying his lease fee and the reason that he's having problems making a reasonable profit out there.

He's done without the service centre — we've established that — and you're bringing that in this fall. I understand, and that's fine. Electrified campsites, I assume, are going to be done in the year of 1988, as you've indicated. But, Mr. Minister, he still have a problem. And in a note from him just the other day he tells me that they've got no beach out there. They've got nothing but mud and weeds, and repeated suggestions to dump sand on that beach have apparently fallen on deaf ears.

He indicates to me that the playground for the children that attend that park consists of a swing and three tractor tires. He indicates to me that the facilities, the docking facilities for boats, are slim to nil and, in short, not acceptable or not conducive to bringing people to that park.

And, Mr. Minister, he also has another problem that he feels unjustly done. He feels that the fact that you put up a

toll booth there at the same time he opened his establishment, without putting those services in there, was very unfair to him. And, Mr. Minister, from what I understand now, I have to agree with him.

And if that's the way we're going to be treating private entrepreneurs, unless they happen to be friends of the government, and I'm not sure what this gentleman's politics were – it's none of my business and I wouldn't ask – but I'm hoping that this individual will get the same kind of treatment that the Darryl Binkleys and others in this province will get.

And that's the commitment, Mr. Minister, that I would ask from you tonight, that this operation have the same opportunities to make a dollar – private enterprise at one of our provincial parks – that any other person in this province might get.

Mr. Minister, as well, I'll ask for the answers to the questions that I've asked, but while I'm on my feet, I may as well indicate to you that he feels the increase in the camping fees that have been placed upon the people in this province and those that come to this province has been unfair. He indicates to me that the number of people coming to that park are not what it could be or what it should be or what it might be because of those fee increases.

I have some other figures, Mr. Minister, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe them to be right. In the year of 1986 some 390 children took swimming lessons at that park. I would assume the majority of those are from that area that do their annual swimming lessons, as my children and as your children probably have done. The fee for those swimming lessons, Mr. Minister, used to be \$5 a week, I understand that that fee has been raised to \$12.50 this year, and as well I understand the number of children that are taking lessons at that park this year has dropped from 390 to 113 children.

If that isn't an indicator that we're pricing those children away from those parks, it's . . . A lot of that area in there is farming community. We understand that, and we understand that the farming community is fairly hard pressed right now. And if those figures aren't an indicator that we're chasing our own people away from those parks, then, Mr. Minister, I don't know what is.

I've asked a number of questions, and if you have some of them ready, I'll take my seat and listen for the answers.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could revert to the business man at Douglas Lake first.

I will say that he wanted that business, and he wanted to get into it obviously, so he submitted a proposal. And department officials did negotiate in good faith with them. In fact, we did some landscaping for him that was not an inconsiderable sum. And behind his establishment we put in grass and trees, and the problem, I'm told, with the beach is the water level. And there are some difficulties there and we acknowledge that.

If we can do something about it that is not going to end up being an exorbitant amount of money for us, we would be

pleased to take a look at it. We don't want his business to suffer, obviously. We'd like him to be a success, as we would with any business operating anywhere in the province regardless of whether it's in a park or anywhere else, Mr. Chairman.

As regards the swimming fees, yes, they did go up. They were \$5 a week and the figure quoted by the hon. member is correct. Again, it's not a fee that actually makes a profit or makes money for the people involved in it, but it does close the gap on the amount that is being lost in that particular activity.

I've been through some of the park numbers and park fees and some comparisons with other members earlier in estimates a few weeks ago, and we don't really think that the fees that we are charging in our parks are out of line with what is going on in other provinces, or what was proposed earlier in the year in other provinces, or in national parks. They vary slightly but we're not really that far out of line, Mr. Chairman.

We won't know for sure on the numbers until mid-October when they have been compiled for the whole year, and I'd already assured some of your colleagues on that side of the House that those numbers would be made available to them. I believe it was . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and we would get that information to you as soon as it's compiled.

We had numbers for the early part of the year, and they did not seem to be significantly down in terms of park visitations. I have been advised, however, that due to some inclement weather in the latter part of the summer, we did experience a dip in the number of visitations; and yes, it did affect swimming lessons, and I can attest to that in my own constituency on Chitek Lake.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you. Mr. Minister, I think if I were to offer a suggestion to your department, and I'm hoping it will be taken in the spirit that is intended, that this particular business man knows full well that the visitation rates are down in his park. I know full well they're down in the park that's adjacent to my cabin at Murray Point on Emma Lake, and that, I'm sure, will prove to be correct.

(1930)

But, Mr. Minister, I'd like to spend a little bit of time tonight dealing with forestry, and I just want to make a few remarks before I do. And what I'd like to indicate, Mr. Minister, is that I'm a little disappointed that this government hasn't seen fit to treat forestry – one of the major industries in our province and in western Canada, but especially in our province – with the respect that it does indeed demand.

I'm curious as to what's going to happen in these estimates, Mr. Chairman, because I'm not sure if there's one department that's totally in charge of forestry, or if some of the questions that I might ask regarding the forest in our province might be shunted to another department as we've seen in other estimates.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's SFPC's (Saskatchewan Forest

Products Corporation) department.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Pardon?

**An Hon. Member:** — That's SFPC's department.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well those are questions . . . The Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation, I understand, is under the minister from Meadow Lake. I am hoping that I can get answers that I want this evening from you, because as I said, I feel a little bit disappointed that this government hasn't seen fit to handle forestry with a department — a department of the stature that it does really require because of the future that it can give our children and the people of our province, and, as I said, that disappoints me.

Mr. Minister, I don't want to take a lot of time tonight, although I'm sure we could spend a couple or three hours dealing with it, but I'm going to try some questions on your department. And let's hope the shoe fits because I don't want to be chasing around three or four different departments here asking questions that people have asked me to bring to this House.

And I'd like to ask you, Mr. Minister, about inspections done by resource officers with the forestry branch of your department. I'd like to know, are the inspections done at the operations of the various companies identical, or do they vary depending on the size or whatever that might be? I'm asking, Mr. Minister, if the procedures vary depending on the companies involved.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I tell the hon. member he's asking the right minister with that particular type of question, and if your questions relate to reforestation, silviculture, forest management in general, then yes, you're speaking to the right minister.

In answer to the question the hon. member just asked, there are no distinctions made between companies. Foresters, and in some cases resource officers, are responsible for on-site inspections and checking levels, checking quality of work that's being done, and the standards are the same for everybody.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Minister, you indicate that there are no restrictions placed on resource officers of the forestry branch, and I would like to know if that pertains to investigations involving Weyerhaeuser.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, specifically as it relates to Weyerhaeuser, as the hon. member knows, a forest management agreement was negotiated with Weyerhaeuser which places upon them, contingent to the FMLA (forestry management licensing agreement), specific requirements. Now the requirements don't vary significantly from what is required of everybody else, and as FMLAs are in place with all companies, they will all reflect the same requirements.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Minister, I wasn't asking the situation of the forest management licence agreement. We've all seen that; we all know what it does. I was asking the role of the resource officers in the forestry branch of your department. When they do inspections

during Weyerhaeuser cutting operations, is there any difference?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, just a point of clarification, if the hon. member wouldn't mind. You're saying resource officers. Now we're not talking about the role of conservation officers who have seen some duties in the forest, you're speaking about resource officers within the forestry branch of the department. Am I right?

**An Hon. Member:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Thank you. Essentially, Mr. Chairman, they're not being treated differently than anybody else. The resource officers have been instructed to work with them because they are a licensee. They are site-specific because of the FMLA and because of requirements that have been built into it. What we are interested in is good utilization of the forest and good management. And our resource officers work with the licensee to ensure that will happen. And when we negotiate the FMLAs, or finish signing them with the other companies, the same requirements will be in place, and the same type of relationship will exist where the officers go and deal directly with the licensee.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Maybe then, I could get you, Mr. Minister, to explain the procedure. I'd like, I guess, to know what will happen say in the instance of a trespass cut, where an operator is out and cuts in an area that they weren't authorized to cut it. Can you explain to us, what do the officers do? Who do they issue instructions to? Who do they report to?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, at one time, I'm advised, it was automatic to fine people if they strayed into an area which was not in their cutting rights. In other words, if they didn't have cutting rights in that area and they were in there, it was regarded as trespass, and at that point, officers who would be out checking on them would bring them in and they would be fined.

What is happening now is that we are negotiating with groups, we advise them when they're in areas that they shouldn't be in or if there has been no clearance to be in that area, and we discuss it with them rather than automatically imposing a fine.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Then I would ask you, Mr. Minister: when these officers fill out a report on forest operations, can you perhaps tell me what the process is there? Do they have any direct . . . These resource officers, do they have any direct contact with Weyerhaeuser, or are they sent to senior officials in your department where they might be buried?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, the resource officers do have contact in their field with operators who are out there, whether it be Weyerhaeuser or other companies. They do deal with them directly.

If they have a problem with one of the operators and it is something that can be resolved, then it is indeed passed up the line. It's not buried, however. It is passed up the line because it comes in a written form. It would go to the regional forester and ultimately to the executive director

of forestry branch.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — So you're telling me then, Mr. Minister, if one of your officers is in the field and finds a problem, that they're to report back to the department where it goes to senior levels, and senior levels will deal with, as an example, Weyerhaeuser, as opposed to the people. If this is in case the fact, Mr. Minister, isn't this a major shift in policy, in government policy?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, I'm advised it's not a major shift in government policy.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well, let me go back to this now. Prior to this change in . . . in this supposed change in your type of administration, or the way you administer this, the resource officers would perhaps deal with the camp foreman, or the people at that level, to try and resolve the dispute. Now they're asked to pass it on to senior levels who will deal with perhaps Weyerhaeuser at senior levels. Is that what you're saying the change is, and you're telling this House that isn't a major shift?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, it's only handled . . . it's only passed on if it can't be handled at the field level and resolved. If there's some problem that constitutes a dispute of some type, then it would be referred to officials within the department who would then deal with the problem.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well now . . . I'm not really clear. So you're saying then if the resource officer can't come to an agreement with the camp foreman, or who's ever in charge of the harvesting company, that only in the case of a dispute between those that can't be resolved at that level does it come up to senior levels. Is that what you're saying?

Because I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, that's not what your officers feel, and that's not what the direction they have indicated to me that they're getting is. They're telling me that it goes to senior management level who deal with the forest operations at a senior management level, and that basically the role that they have as resource officers and people who should then be there to protect the forests of this province, that they no longer have a role because of this change in your direction and this change in your philosophy.

I want to say to you this: if there is a dispute, those people know full well what their job is. They know the conditions of the FMLA and the cutting rights that these people are given. I know that many of those have been in that business for many years and worked for this government and for this department for a number of years and know full well what their job should be. And you're telling me that this doesn't constitute a change in government philosophy where the control is taken out of the hands at the local level, the people that know those forests? It goes up through the chain of your government department's bureaucracy, and then your government deals with Weyerhaeuser, and you're telling me that that's not a change in direction, and are you telling me that that's better for the forests of this province?

(1945)

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, 'twas ever thus. That's the way it's been done for years. Now I don't know to which resource officers the hon. member has been speaking, or which officers are particularly unhappy with forest management, or which ones may even be unhappy with the presence of Weyerhaeuser in the province, but I'm advised that was a system, that's the way problems have always been handled.

Resource officers at the field level attempt to ameliorate whatever difficulties they find. If it's a problem that they can't handle themselves and conversely, if it's a problem that the field staff of the company involved can't handle, then they take it to their superiors, our officers take it to their superiors. They get together, discuss it, and hopefully a resolution is forthcoming.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Minister, I will make this very clear, that you're not going to know which resource officers that I've been talking to because I think they're professionals who've been doing their job and want to continue doing their job and care very much about what's happening in this forest and care very much about what's happening in this province.

I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, that it's not an isolated case of one resource officer that I've talked to. I've talked to a number throughout this province, and they indicate to me that they were given instructions that they weren't to give any instructions to camp foremen or to contractors. Now if this is the case . . . And it's clear by your statements tonight that you have taken some responsibility away from them in terms of protecting the cutting areas. It's pretty clear to me that that's happened; and I think it's clear to the people of this province. If that's the case, do you not feel that centralizing the power within the upper management level of your department as opposed to letting resource officers do their work is the wrong way to go if you have the interests of this province and of those forests at heart?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Perhaps I'm reading something into this the hon. member doesn't intend, but it appears to me that there's an allegation being made that somewhere, whether it comes from my office because ultimately I'm responsible and the FMLA is under my jurisdiction, my administration, and exists between Weyerhaeuser and my department, for which I have stewardship — that somehow the direction comes either from my office or the deputy minister, assistant deputy minister, down the line to the resource officers to do something perhaps untoward. That allegation is simply not true, Mr. Chairman.

The resource officers are empowered to do their job in the field, whether it be inspecting a logging plan and making sure it's in order to looking at cutting rights and areas. That's their role, that's their job. And they haven't been told to do anything untoward. I would just have to assume the hon. member will believe whatever he wants to believe.

He talks about professional resource officers. Well I guess we may have a slight difference of philosophy there, but I would deem those civil servants less than professional if

they feel obligated to run with stories to a member of the opposition rather than deal with it internally where it would belong. Now maybe that was not the inference; if not, then fair enough, we'll just be disagreeing on upon it.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Minister, I'm not going to stand here and debate the professionalism of a resource officer or 2 or 3 or 5 who have worked for this government for longer than your government has been around. And the fact that they can't get any kind of response through your department doesn't make them any less professional than if they were able to get answers through your department, that they wouldn't have to go the opposition in order to get help to make their case.

There seems to be a difference of opinion there, and, Mr. Minister, there will continue to be a difference of opinion in terms of that.

I would like to carry on, and I'm afraid that the length it's taken you to get answers back to me, we would be here for many, many weeks, and many weeks longer than I think the government side or the opposition side want to be, because it's clear, Mr. Minister, that you don't know your department. In a half an hour it became clear to me, when I have to wait for five minutes for an answer to what should be a very simple question, it tells me that there is a problem over there, and that's maybe why you have some disillusioned or disgruntled staff.

Mr. Minister, I will pass on these estimates to the member from The Battlefords — he has a few questions to ask of you — and if time permits this evening, get back into some questions on forestry.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I was going to give the member the last word. Good manners cost nothing, so I was quite prepared to just let him have the last word. I realize, you know, he's got to score his political points — that's the name of the game. Certain members of this side of the House were in opposition at one time, and, I guess, they didn't do anything particularly differently, so I'll just leave the comments of the hon. member from P.A.-Duck Lake and move on to the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We certainly appreciate your good manners, Mr. Minister.

I would like to, first off, before I go into forestry — I do have some questions on forestry I would like to talk about with you this evening — but I would like to ask about a question you had taken notice on last time you were here in estimates, and it concerned the hiring procedure at The Battlefords Provincial Park golf course in which ultimately one Mrs. Hamilton was hired. And I had asked you as to what the hiring procedure was. You had indicated that there were three other people who had been offered the position and had, in fact, turned it down, and I was wondering if you were in a position now to answer as to the hiring procedure, and as to actually who the other three people were who had turned the job down, Mr. Chairman.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Now, Mr. Chairman, I asked staff to check out that particular situation and get back to me, and I am assured that everything was done above-board;

everything was done according to the rules. There was no hanky-panky in this at all, otherwise I'm sure we'd have heard a grievance filed by somebody else.

I do have the names of the three people who had been offered the position and chose not to take it; they were from other areas. I'm not sure I'd be serving them well by reading their names into the record this evening.

I felt, Mr. Chairman, that I came here to estimates to talk about things like the North American water-fowl plan; the heritage marsh program; the prairie pot-hole project; The Critical Wildlife Habitat Protection Act; major thrusts in forestry, where we want to go in the next five years with planting seedlings.

And in all honesty and in all sincerity, Mr. Chairman, I don't know how we're serving the people of Saskatchewan, the members of the legislature on either side, by wrangling over one hiring of a summer position of one person which was handled in a fair and equitable manner. Otherwise, as I say, there would have been recourse through union or PSC (Public Service Commission) for a grievance procedure. I just feel that we should be doing all these other things that are so much more exciting and things that people really want to hear about and things that they're concerned about.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Well, Mr. Minister, you had indicated that it was important the last time we appeared in estimates. You had indicated that in fact you would release that information. In fact, if I can recall your words from memory, you had an official running out to the telephone to get that information for you, and I don't know what the change of heart has been since. I agree there are many other important situations to go on to. I find it difficult to take what you say at face value, when you say one thing when you're in estimates at a prior date and something totally else when you appear in estimates at this time, here this evening in this House.

Are you saying to us that even though you have said you will release that information as to what the procedure was, who the three individuals were who were offered the job — you've said you would give us that information — are you saying here this evening you will not give us that information?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, here's the procedure. No local employees were on lay-off in that particular park, therefore out-of-town employees were considered. The department approached and offered this particular vacancy, a sales and service attendant I vacancy, to three non-local employees who were not been recalled to their own jobs. These employees rejected the offers. A long-standing PSC practice has been that names of applicants for vacancies are not disclosed because often the individuals involved consider this process to be confidential and personal.

This particular position is an entry level position, was filled from an inventory of applicants held by the Public Service Commission. And the filling of entry level positions in this manner is in accordance with the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) agreement.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your partial answer, Mr. Minister, and I won't pursue that because I think it's likely a waste of time trying to get you to, in fact, reveal the information in the hiring practice that you've instituted within the department.

I would like to, Mr. Minister, ask you about a very serious situation, and it involves an individual that was released from your department. This individual is a resource officer in Melfort, one Mr. Barry Steward. Apparently Mr. Steward was charged by the department, or by the government, whichever the case might be, on two individual charges. When Mr. Steward went to court, Mr. Steward was not found guilty; he in fact beat the two charges that the government took him to court on. I understand that the department is considering appealing the decision of the courts. I would like to know from the minister whether or not there is going to be an appeal filed by your department or by the Government of Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, essentially the facts as presented by the hon. member are correct. I can advise him the Department of Justice did put in an appeal. It had to be done within 30 days, and the Department of Justice did that. It's not really in our hands, so it's rather difficult for me to comment upon it, but there is a grievance procedure with SGEU. There will be a full hearing; it will go the full course, and I'm sure that justice will prevail.

(2000)

**Mr. Anguish:** — Well, Mr. Minister, the individual and his family have through a lot of turmoil in their lives since he was released from the department, and it has cost him large sums of money and personal concern. He has had to move from the community of Melfort.

I'm wondering whether or not if, in the appeal process, if the Department of Justice does in fact appeal, and the appeal court in fact holds up the ruling of the preliminary findings of the court, whether or not the department will consider taking Mr. Steward back on as an employee of the department or acknowledge that he was wrongfully dismissed.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that this will be going to arbitration, in any event, despite the appeal and the outcome of the appeal. And should the individual win the arbitration we'd be bound by any decision that was handed down by the arbitrator.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if the minister could describe the arbitration process. Has Mr. Steward been given notice that this will go to arbitration? Is the SGEU involved in the arbitration case? Does Mr. Steward have representation on his behalf by the union, or is he to appear himself? Is there a location? Could please provide us with the details of the arbitration, Mr. Chairman.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think I can give you that information. It's gone through the grievance procedure with SGEU and it's now gone to arbitration which goes before a three-member panel: one independent member, one management appointee, and

one from union. And he's represented by an SGEU staffer.

**Mr. Anguish:** — I was wondering, Mr. Minister, if you could tell us the name of the arbitrator in the case. There's three individuals on the arbitration committee or the arbitration board, whichever the case might be. Could you tell us who those individuals are.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, we don't know the composition of the three-member panel. We don't have names of those members.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Well I would think that the department would nominate the arbitrator in the case for the committee. I'd like to know: first, whether or not you put forward a nomination as the arbitrator; and secondly, Mr. Minister, whether or not there has been a date set and whether or not Mr. Steward has been notified of the date for the first hearing on this arbitration matter.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that this is handled under the auspices of the Public Service Commission, and indeed the management rep would not be appointed from within this group you would see here. It wouldn't be from the department; it would be appointed elsewhere.

I don't have specifics of dates or that kind of information, but we can certainly find out and send it to you. I'll have to go back to the Public Service Commission, however, to get that because it's not handled within this department. It's handled through the Public Service Commission.

**Mr. Anguish:** — I'd appreciate if the minister would look into that or have one of his staff members in fact look into it, because it is a very serious case. Although it may not be for the minister or for myself or other members, it's certainly a very serious situation for Mr. Steward.

I understand that the arbitration process, Mr. Minister, comes about by way of the government appointing one individual, the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union appointing another individual, and the two of them agreeing on an arbitrator — and I see the minister acknowledging that that is the correct process.

I'm wondering whether or not the SGEU and the Government of Saskatchewan — whoever represents the Government of Saskatchewan — has met to put forward names for an arbitrator in this case.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, the process as outlined by the hon. member is correct. The department meets with Public Service Commission and agree on a management representative. The union representative, I believe, is already appointed. I also believe the management rep and the union rep — whoever they may be, because we don't have the names — have met to decide on a third party arbitrator. And those names, as I say, I'll have to check with Public Service Commission. I'll have my staff check that through the Public Service Commission to find the names, or I imagine you could get it direct from Public Service Commission, if you so choose. If not, then I'd be happy to try and find it for you.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Well, the individual was a former



employee of the department that's represented by the minister, and I would appreciate that if the minister or someone in your department or your office, if you in fact, Mr. Minister, would give me your undertaking that in fact you will communicate with me to make sure that Mr. Steward is aware of the process that's involved, the requirements of him, and in fact when he has a chance to present his case before arbitration.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'll attempt . . . Well I don't need to attempt; I know I can find your information. The officials say that we'll get a hold of Public Service Commission, have the three names, and send them to the hon. member. Obviously he has been represented by a SGEU staffer, so I'm sure SGEU have made him aware of the situation and his rights in this particular case.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, I appreciate your responses. I say again, it's a very serious situation, certainly for Mr. Steward, and I would hope that there is some remedy found through arbitration even though he has not been able to find a remedy through the department till this point in time.

I'd like to turn now, Mr. Minister, to some things involved in forestry, and I was wondering if the minister could tell us in fact what the situation is at the tree nursery in Prince Albert.

At the tree nursery there, as I understand, they had reached a maximum production of seedlings of some 11 million per year, and in subsequent years that has been reduced to about 6 million, and in fact this year there'll only be about 3 million seedlings produced from the Prince Albert forestry nursery. I find that a difficult situation to accept. I think that trees are being taken out of our forests at a much more rapid rate than what they are being replaced and that will cause serious repercussions for the forestry industry in Saskatchewan in years to come.

So my question to you, Mr. Minister, is: is it in fact correct that this year there will only be about 3 million seedlings produced from the Prince Albert nursery?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, the inventory count for this year is 6 million. For next year, however, we're gearing that up to 10 million to meet our goal over the next five years. We have a commitment. There was a decision of cabinet, I believe it was in June, to plant 50 million over five years so we have to gear up our nursery capacity to handle that, which would be 10 million per year.

**Mr. Anguish:** — So, Mr. Minister, you're saying to me that the Prince Albert nursery will turn out 6 million seedlings this year. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, that would be between P.A. nursery and the Big River nursery.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, how many seedlings will the Prince Albert nursery turn out this year?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — That would be approximately 3.5

million seedlings, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, there's also an operation at Chitek Lake, I understand. It's a private concern that supplies trees to the department. Could you tell us what that private concern at Chitek Lake is turning out this year, or what the department is going to be taking from . . . the number of seedlings that the department will be taking from the Chitek Lake operation.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — The Chitek Lake operation was a government operation, Mr. Chairman. It's not in operation this year. We're not going to be operating it. It had a maximum capacity of about one and a half million.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, I understand that there is a nursery in the Macdowall area as well. Could you tell us what the numbers are that will be coming out of Macdowall this year?

(2015)

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — The Macdowall is a . . . We call it south branch, which is again a satellite nursery. Chitek Lake and south branch were both satellites with a maximum capacity of about one and a half million. We are not operating south branch this year, and south branch has an inventory on hand of just under half a million, which we will be salvaging and using.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Well, Mr. Minister, could you tell us, in total, out of the Prince Albert nursery, including the satellites, how many seedlings will be produced this year — not counting ones that are in reserve at Macdowall, but the total number of seedlings that'll be raised this year out of the Prince Albert nursery with the satellites. How many seedlings will we have grown out of that?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — The number shipped from both those nurseries this year will be approximately 6 million. That doesn't reflect future capacity, or on hold for new program.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, could you now tell us how many seedlings Weyerhaeuser will be providing this year and where, in fact, Weyerhaeuser are obtaining their seedlings from.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman. The total for government and industry for this year will be approximately 6 million, as I'd said, and Weyerhaeuser will be responsible for almost 1.7 million.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Could the minister tell us where Weyerhaeuser is obtaining their seedlings from.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, we supply them.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Would the minister care to explain? You told me the total requirement for this year is 6 million; 1.7 million of those are coming from Weyerhaeuser.

**An Hon. Member:** — To Weyerhaeuser.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Oh, 1.7 of the 6 million are going to

Weyerhaeuser for reforestation. Is Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Minister, providing any seedlings from outside the province of Saskatchewan in order to reforest the areas that they're cutting in?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, they're not using anything from outside the province. I do know, having visited several of the nurseries and looked at some of the experiments that are taking place, they have been working with some high-grade stuff. It's not a significant amount, but that's in the province. I'm sorry if I misled the hon. member. I don't believe I did. I didn't use the wrong preposition there, I don't think.

We supply seedlings to the companies. That's our responsibility and we've always done that. So to Weyerhaeuser would be approximately 1.7 million, and Simpson Timber, approximately 375,000 and so on. We supply those, and the total would be about 6 million for this year.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Could the minister tell us, at the present harvesting rate of the forests in the province of Saskatchewan, what the number of seedlings would be to replace the harvesting operations that deplete the forests.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, under the terms of the forest management licence agreement negotiated with Weyerhaeuser, which is a model for the other agreements with the other companies — L&M has already been signed; Simpson is in the works; MacMillan Bloedel is in the works — negotiating those. What we're trying to do is put the onus for reforestation and forest management back on to the companies so that they will be reforesting as they go and sites will be scarified and prepared for reforestation. Specifically, are we cutting down more trees than we are planting? Yes, we are. But I point out that we have still not cut down the first tree that was planted as a seedling in Saskatchewan, given the length of time it takes to grow a commercial forest.

With the change in the mix of woods that are now being utilized within Saskatchewan, and as technology has changed so the aspen, poplar, has become more popular and usable, it's changing the forecast for what we need for future harvest schedules. Because the companies are moving more away from the softwoods to the hardwoods and it's kind of changing the picture of what is required, not just in this province but in other provinces across Canada too.

We recognize that there has been some shortfall in planting in years gone by. But contrary to some published reports, I'd like to reiterate that in the last four years of the former administration they planted approximately 39 million trees. Corresponding over the four-year period — the first four years of our administration — we planted 45 million trees. Now I'm not using this as a statement to say, ha, we beat you or we're better than you. Quite frankly — 39 million, 45 million — there are those on both sides of the House who would argue that neither is enough. And we have set our target for the next five years. And this year, and I stand here and admit is not a good planting year for us, but given the next five years we're committing to put in 50 million in the next five years.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I wasn't here to get you to make a political statement. What I asked you was, to what the reforestation rate would have to be. If you look at the current depletion rates of taking forests out, how many seedlings do we have to put back in per year to keep up with the current rate of depletion of the forests?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, and this opens up all kinds of interesting debate about what the future of forestry is in Saskatchewan, given our climate, and given the length of time it takes to grow a commercial forest here, as opposed to some other parts of the country where the climate is somewhat more favourable towards a quick growth. But we can't grow a commercial forest of softwood in under probably 75 years; in fact, to maturity and to a full harvest schedule, would be closer to 90 years. But if we were going to say one for one, a tree harvested to a tree replaced, we'd probably be looking at about 17 million a year, but that would be based on the premise that we would be using only the softwoods and nothing else.

But what has happened in the last few years is with the demand for aspen, that has come down and in fact the volume that will be harvested by companies and individual operators I really believe will decrease on those softwoods, as the demand for the hardwoods increases.

**Mr. Anguish:** — I don't want to unduly delay the estimates, Mr. Minister, but I would like to turn very briefly to the issue of wood-fired electrical generators, and I'm wondering whether or not your department has done any studies or has had any communication with companies or other interests that would be interested in looking at using the aspen, or what are considered traditional waste woods in the province, for producing electrical power plus other by-products from that operation.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I recall about 40 years ago there were studies done, but it was done under the auspices of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and not, I believe, this department.

I remember meeting with groups from other provinces who were interested in getting into that business in Saskatchewan, and I wasn't the minister of forestry at that particular point in time. But where they wanted to go was in my own constituency. That's why I was involved with the discussions. I can tell the hon. member if he wants to get into that with the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation when his estimates are up, you'll find he is very knowledgeable on that particular subject.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, I want to give my other colleagues a chance at you in your department.

**An Hon. Member:** — With.

**Mr. Anguish:** — With you? Well, certainly.

But I would like to find out from the minister what the status of the application is by Weyerhaeuser to do some spraying to do defoliation of broad-leaved trees in northern

Saskatchewan. We understood during the environmental estimates, from the Minister of Environment, that Weyerhaeuser had made application to your department to do some spraying in northern Saskatchewan, and I'm wondering whether or not you are aware of that, and whether or not, in fact, you've granted permission for Weyerhaeuser to do the test spraying in northern Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Now, Mr. Chairman, Weyerhaeuser has not submitted any application to the department for a spraying program. About two years ago, three years ago, the former company, PAPCO, had submitted an application and then they withdrew it. I believe, however, that the Canadian forestry service has submitted a 2.27 hectare experimental proposal, and that's where it is now. Candle Lake was the . . . yes, the area that they were talking of using, and nothing has happened with that yet, as far as I'm aware.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Have they made the application to your department to do that spraying, Mr. Minister?

**An Hon. Member:** — I'm sorry?

**Mr. Anguish:** — Have they made the application to your department to conduct spraying?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, they have made an application for that small plot. It hasn't been considered yet; the application would still be under review.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Chairperson, it's indeed a pleasure to finally get to speak to the minister responsible for Parks, Recreation and Culture, directly. I want to discuss with him a topic of concern that I have corresponded with him about for some time now and that is the privatization of the Blackstrap ski operation, about 25 miles outside of Saskatoon. And that operation is of significant importance to the people of Saskatoon because a number of people use the skiing operation in the winter-time.

As the minister will recall, I first started to correspond with him shortly after the election. My first letter was sent to him on November 24. I then sent another letter to him on December 12, and I was asking a series of questions about the arrangements made between the department and the commercial operator of the facility. The minister did respond on December 19, but his response was less than satisfactory. I then wrote him again on January 13, February 5 and February 24. I did finally receive a response shortly thereafter. I wrote again March 23 and May 6, and in my final letter to him I told him that I would appreciate receiving a response to my letter of February 24, and that if he intended not to respond to my request for information I would appreciate an indication from him to that effect.

(2030)

Well it's interesting, Mr. Chairperson, the minister finally did respond on July 13, 1987 — some three months after I'd initially wrote my letter in May.

So in order to stop the paper war, I think I'll ask the

minister some questions directly. And in particular, Mr. Minister, I want you to advise the people of Saskatchewan, and advise this House, the name of the person who leased the skiing operation at Blackstrap; how that person got to lease the operation. Was it put out for public tender? Could you also advise us the amount that that individual will be paying for the year 1987-88 to lease the operation?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman. As the hon. member is aware the lessee is one Lloyd Hedemann. He was an existing lessee at Blackstrap. He and his mother had operated a pro shop, food service, lessons, for some time. Policy within the department has been — and before I got there — that a new business would be offered to an existing lessee. And the new business which was being offered, and he was interested in it, because he's a professional — he understands skiing very well — was to take over the operation of the ski hill. So in actual fact there are two separate leases in existence here. The first lease is on the shop operation and the second lease is on the hill, for which we receive some \$30,000 a year, plus in each of the next five years an extra \$2,500 per year.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Minister, I'm quite aware that Mr. Hedemann did run the shop. Can you advise me when he first started operating the facility surrounding the ski hill. I'm not talking about the pro shop or the concession booth, I'm talking about the facility that skiers use when utilizing the ski hill. Can you tell me when he first got into that side of the operation.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — According to notes that I have, it would be May of 1985 because that's when the department entered into a one-year fee for service agreement with Headway Management Limited, which is of course operated by Lloyd Hedemann, for the '85-86 operation of the Blackstrap ski area. I'm assuming that was the intent of your question.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — So if I'm correct . . . Am I correct in saying then he entered into a rent for service contract with the department, and that, for the most part, the department provided the staff for the operation, they made the snow, and they did the grooming and repair and maintenance around the operation? Is that correct, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is essentially correct.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Minister, can you advise me whether or not it is true that in the 1985-86 year of operation that the Blackstrap ski operation had its very highest deficit in the history of the Blackstrap ski hill?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, no, that wasn't the highest operating deficit that it experienced.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, in the information that you gave me in your letter of February 5, 1987, you sent along to me a revenue/expense sheet for the year '78-79 through to '85-86. And I found it quite unusual to see that in 1985-86 — and I'm looking at this unaudited statement that you provided me — that that was the year in which we had the highest deficit ever at the Blackstrap

ski operation. So I find it curious that you are privatizing the ski hill operation, giving it to a lessee who has had one year of experience running the hill, has had the full advantage of the department of parks and renewable resources staff, and for the most part has used the staff to run the ski hill operation and to do the snow and do the grooming and that kind of thing, and yet this small-business person, or business man, experiences the highest deficit at the Blackstrap ski hill ever in the history of the hill, as far as my information is concerned – information that you supplied me with.

Now nevertheless, I had asked you for a copy of the leasing agreement between the lessee and the department. I was able to obtain that, not through you but through other means. And I was interested to see that one of the provisions in the agreement has to do with personnel, and it says here that:

The lessee shall employ an adequate number of competent, neat, and obliging personnel in order to carry on the operations, and shall comply with all federal, provincial, and municipal laws respecting employees.

If that is the case, can the minister explain to me why this lessee is violating section 37 of The Trade Union Act that states very clearly that employees who are employees of one particular operation and then they become employees of another operation – the operation is transferred from one person or company to another – that under section 37 the new employer has an obligation to those employees? My interpretation of your lease, signed between the department and Mr. Hedemann, is that he is violating one of the provisions in your own lease, and that is to abide by provincial laws, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, with regards to that section 37, there was a ruling handed down, and what it said was the SGEU would be the bargaining agent for the employees and now they have to sit down and bargain. So I don't know if he's in contravention of any laws, I'm not aware of it. I was aware of the judgement when it came down and that was the interpretation given to me.

Now let's revert to a couple of other things the hon. member brought up. The '85-86 . . . I am assuming – you may nod your head or shake as you so choose – I'm assuming the figure you got was \$142,193. I'm sorry, the figure was wrong. And I've got it scratched in by hand down here, and there was a little asterisk beside it. It didn't include entry gate revenue. So in actual fact, the figure was considerably lower than that and certainly lower than the year before.

But I would point out that since that year he's taken over the operation, there is no deficit because it cost us nothing and he's paying for the whole operation. And by all accounts, and I won't bore you or take up your time by reading newspaper reports to you, but the *Star-Phoenix* itself ran a column saying how much better the skiing was, how much better the conditions were now that Hedemann was looking after it, and it's not costing the taxpayers any money at all.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Minister, wasn't the real purpose of this little revenue and expense statement to show me why it was such a great benefit to the people of this province to have this particular facility, that the people of Saskatchewan have bought and paid for, privatized? And so when you now tell me that the information you gave me was much overstated and over-inflated, I'm suspect as to why you sent me faulty information in the first place. I'm suspect because I think what you were trying to do was paint a case for privatization. And so anything you say is suspect in view of the fact that you did not give me the proper information in the first place.

Now getting back to the employees under section 37 of The Trade Union Act, 15 employees were dismissed from their jobs at that Blackstrap ski operation, dismissed by your department because Mr. Hedemann wanted to hire his own employees and he didn't want to pay union wages. Isn't the real purpose of privatization not only to so-call lower your deficit, but to lower the real wages of working people in Saskatchewan? Isn't that the real purpose of privatization when it comes to parks and other facilities that have been owned and operated by the people of this province for many, many years?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Now, Mr. Chairman, the bottom line here is that public participation does provide Saskatchewan citizens with more recreational opportunities than they had before and at a comparable or expanded level of service, in the case of existing facilities, and at no increased costs to the government, and in many cases, with significant savings to the government. And I think that just indicates a measure of fiscal responsibility, Mr. Chairman.

If a private operator can run it and run it well, and yes, maybe with a facility that was built by taxpayers or built by the government – yes – but pays us for the privilege of being there, pays us a reasonable lease fee, we have no deficit. It costs the taxpayers nothing and we have some income coming in. Any activity that would take place in a park, or anything else that we're running, is subject to regulation and non-negotiable standards to protect the environment.

(2045)

So, Mr. Chairman, I think I can say that as a representative of taxpayers, my job is to provide them with the best services possible and, at the same time, make wise use of their money. And I'm not sure that there would be widespread sentiment or support for the position being advocated by the hon. member.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I just want you to be very clear on one thing, and that is that the men and women that were working at that facility, prior to your privatization move, made fairly decent wages, and many of those people were working on that facility as off-farm income earners. And once again your government is penalizing people who require that income in order to support the family farm.

And I hold by my theory that the real reason for the privatization scheme is to significantly reduce real wages

in this province so that we have poverty wages and that so people of Saskatchewan can't have a decent standard of living.

But nevertheless, the one final question, depending on your answer, is: would you please advise me why you decided to forego park entry fees for the Blackstrap ski operation this past winter?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, that was waived because it was built into the lease fee that the operator is paying.

Now just one point I'd like to throw out for the hon. member, and one or two members on the other side were talking about park entry fees and raising them, hear of a situation — and I think the member for Saskatoon South had raised this with me at one point — where there isn't an entry in there and now we're saying, well, we should have had an entry in there. It seems to me to have been fair and equitable to get . . . We're more than compensated in revenue and what we're receiving from Mr. Hedemann and his lease fee than we would have had charging an entry fee at the gate.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well I have to respond to this. It's very interesting, Mr. Minister, because what you've done is foregone about \$20,000 in gate entry fees. In exchange, you've got a \$30,000 lease. So it's costing Mr. Hedemann . . . you're making about \$10,000 here. Not much of a return. In exchange, what do you have to do? You have to paint the buildings; you have to look after the parking lot, repair and maintain it; you have to maintain the furnace and the water heaters and all of the other equipment that goes into those buildings. And what have we really gotten in exchange? We've given our park, our facility, over to a private operator who has in some cases increased the fees from \$200 to \$500 a year — all of the ski tow tickets have gone up significantly. And some may say that we have a better service out there. Some may say that, but I'm not so sure about that. And it's costing us a lot more as taxpayers in terms of the public use of that particular facility that was built for and paid for many years ago by the people of this province.

So we've given up a great deal so that you can say you're reducing your deficit, and I don't really think we've gotten a whole lot in exchange. What we have lost is 15 jobs that paid decent wages, Mr. Minister. Some bargain.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, it was a bargain because we're not losing any money at all. We're saving \$140,000 a year that we would have been spending of taxpayers' money. Yes, we do some maintenance out there, and yes, we still make money from the lease, and it does belong to the public because they can go and use it any time they want. And it's comparable with ski hills of that ilk anywhere else in the country, and it's still reasonable skiing.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. My question, Mr. Minister, concerns the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range agreement. Under the agreement compensation is provided to the province for loss of

revenue due to lack of access to resources within the range, and compensation is also apparently provided for provision of fire fighting and fire protection services. I'm wondering if you could tell me what payment was received by the provincial government from the federal government under the terms of this lease agreement this past year.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I can advise the hon. member that the financial provisions — I'll go back to 1981 — \$561,500 per year, 1981 through 1983; \$391,500 per year from 1984 to 1987; and reimbursement for fire fighting credited to us was \$250,000 on January 14, 1987.

**Mr. Koenker:** — So to make sure that I understand correctly, the total for 1987 . . . the total payment then received in 1987 would be what? And it would be broken down in what fashion?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, the information I gave the member was correct and the amounts that are being paid to us. The amount varies according to the number of fires and the expense incurred in fighting of fires. The actual figure in 1987 was \$430,840 that was forwarded because of fire.

**Mr. Koenker:** — And what was the figure for loss of resource revenue? Was that 391,000? Okay. That was for the year ending March 31, '87. What would the corresponding figure have been for the year ending March 31, 1986?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we don't have the specific forest fire number for the previous year, but it was approximately the same, I'm advised.

**Mr. Koenker:** — Could you supply me with that. And now, I'm to understand that from '83 to '87 the \$391,000 figure has remained constant — is that correct? — for the loss of revenue.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, that's correct. It remained constant.

**Mr. Koenker:** — In what year does the agreement expire?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I don't have the date when the first agreement was entered into, but I know it was renewed in the 1970s, in 1975 when the supplementary agreement was made. And it's for a period of 20 years.

**Mr. Koenker:** — In 1975 a supplementary agreement was signed for another 20 years. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes.

**Mr. Koenker:** — Will the supplementary agreement be subject to any modification or amendment before the conclusion of that 20-year framework? Is that a possibility?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we've already modified it in regard to forest fire fighting, and it comes up for review for details every five years, but it is renewable

after 20.

**Mr. Koenker:** — Is there any possibility, Mr. Minister, of the agreement being cancelled before the end of the 20-year term?

(2100)

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, I don't believe it will be. We are prepared to honour the agreement that was entered into by the previous government.

**Mr. Koenker:** — You aren't particularly concerned then about any of the terms of the agreement? You find the terms favourable to the province of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — It can be reviewed every five years, Mr. Chairman, and when the renewal date is up, we would be pleased to take a look at the terms and the conditions and see how much leeway we have to move.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have a few straightforward questions I'd like to address to you regarding the operation of the White Track ski hill in Buffalo Pound Provincial Park.

Mr. Minister, it is my understanding that the deadline for receiving of proposals for the operation of White Track was extended to August 24. I would like to ask, Mr. Minister, if you have received what you consider an acceptable proposal, and also, as a matter of fact, I would ask if you have made a decision regarding the proposals that were submitted.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, no proposals have been submitted; we do anticipate receiving some. Certainly there have been no agreements made with anybody. I've not had any discussions with anybody.

What I have been told is, there was a meeting the other day and nobody showed up because the people who were interested in the proposal already had the answers to the questions that may have been asked by someone not as familiar with the area. Apparently some local groups have got some interest in the ski hill and they were making a proposal. We haven't received any yet.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Am I to understand that you're still anticipating and receiving proposals prior to the operation of the ski hill in this coming winter season?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes. We're hopeful we'll receive some proposals, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Well, Mr. Minister, it will be of concern to skiers in the Moose Jaw and Regina area, and I ask you: will you give this House your assurance that in some form, at least, that White Track ski hill will be operating this winter?

I would also ask you to respond, if I may combine two questions with one, if you will give your assurance that not only will it be operating, but with sufficient snow-making equipment as well.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — As the hon. member would be

aware — certainly coming from the Moose Jaw area he's concerned about the continuing operation of the ski track, and I understand that — we have suffered and incurred some fairly serious losses on the operation in the last few years and we would like to see a way to remedy that. And if we can do it by letting a local ski club or someone else run the operation and look after it, then we'd be pleased to do so.

We would be interested in seeing it operate, certainly, in the coming winter. It would be rather difficult to give a cast iron assurance today, because I don't know the status of the proposals. I have heard of about five different groups who have expressed interest — not to me personally, but to members of the department. So we're hopeful that a proposal will come in, but at the moment it's hypothetical and we won't know what we're going to be doing until the proposal date closes.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Well, Mr. Minister, if I may come back to the bottom line then — and I'm not planning to enter into a privatization debate with you at this point; there'll be other opportunities for that. But simply in terms of assurance of the provision of that facility for skiers, if it does ... if the eventuality does come to pass that you don't get what you consider to be a viable proposal, will you give your assurance that the province will continue to operate the White Track ski hill?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, we haven't made our final decision on that yet. We've not saying it's either/or at all. We haven't taken that decision yet at all, I can assure the hon. member.

**Mr. Hagel:** — I would appreciate it, Mr. Minister — and I know skiers in both the Regina and Moose Jaw area as well would have appreciated a little more definitive statement than that — if you feel that you could offer such a statement tonight.

I note as well, Mr. Minister, that some positive things have happened, that last year's operating loss at White Track ski hill, as a matter of fact, is almost exactly half of the operating loss of the two seasons prior to that. Obviously some of the right things are happening in order to make that possible. I would like to ask you, Mr. Minister, first of all, if you could make a more definitive statement in terms of the commitment of the province to see that the White Track ski hill will be in operation this winter. I'd appreciate that.

But in the interest of time, if may I add another couple of questions here as well that your officials may be looking at at the same time: could you advise me as to how much money was spent in the last two fiscal years in advertising for the White Track ski hill, and what is planned to be spent on advertising for White Track ski hill in this budget year.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, what we do with winter recreational opportunities in the province is we advertise them as a package. I'm sorry we don't have that broken down. It's part of the overall campaign for winter activity within parks, so I don't have it specifically for White Track.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Minister, would it be possible to break that down and advise me at some future time? Would that be a possibility?

And at the same time, if I may ask, then, a general question. That is in the context that many people who have been involved in skiing at White Track have been of the opinion that one of the reasons for low usage of White Track has been the relatively small attention given to it by way of advertising. Can I ask, then, if the intention is to increase the profile of White Track in advertising for ski facilities — and I'm talking about the budget of the provincial government for the coming year, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Our last figure is promotion for winter programs was approximately \$19,000. And yes, you know, I can buy your argument that perhaps if people were more aware of some of these facilities that the usage would go up. We did take some measures this last winter to try and cut down the operating deficit at that particular ski hill, and with some success. We still lost money. We had to alter the hours and we've had to look at the revenue picture.

So you know, it's not a totally bleak future, or I'm not feeling terribly pessimistic about it. Personally — and I know we could have a philosophical difference on this, obviously — but personally I'm still hopeful that someone will be submitting a proposal to take it over, do the promotion, and be business as usual. If that doesn't happen, then I will have to make the decision on what we're going to do for the winter.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Coming back to the advertising issue, Mr. Minister, because I think those who are concerned about the future of White Track have got a very valid claim. Just by way of example, let me point out that as I drive daily from Moose Jaw to Regina and back, you don't see, anywhere on the Trans-Canada Highway, a sign advising you: (a) of the existence of White Track ski hill; and (b) directions to find it. And that would seem to me to be a distinct neglect by way of the province's initiative to let people know even the basic things, that it exists and how to find it, as people are motoring up and down the Trans-Canada Highway. Could you please advise me as to whether that is something — and it's a very basic issue — that you're planning to address.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, the member's point is well taken, and I'll be pursuing that with officials. I think your idea is correct. If we're going to talk about economic diversification, promoting tourism, we've got to let people know what we've got.

And I know you don't like the phrase, "Saskatchewan has been a well-kept secret," but virtually it's true. When we travel beyond our own boundaries here, for instance, going down East they think there's nothing but bald prairie. They don't know about 18 million acres of commercial forest; they don't know about the North; they don't know about Cypress Hills. Your point is very well taken. I think we have done something in the last couple of years towards promoting the province. Probably we should be doing even more in the future, particularly if we want to achieve our goal of economic diversification.

**Mr. Hagel:** — And if I may, if I may encourage you, Mr. Minister, we talked earlier, my colleague from Moose Jaw South spoke earlier this afternoon about concerns for the wild animal park, and I would simply offer the suggestion that I think both the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park and the White Track ski hill are very well kept secrets, and to a large extent, I think, some of that is easily remedied with some roadway signage on the Trans-Canada Highway as a very basic approach to provide some solutions.

Mr. Minister, could tell me why it is that you're planning to tender out the operations of the White Track ski hill, but not the Cypress Hills ski hill? What is the difference that causes you to conclude it makes sense to tender out White Track but not Cypress Hills?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, our losses at Cypress have fluctuated considerably over the years, and we don't have snow-making equipment at Cypress. We depend on natural snow there. Some winters there is extremely poor skiing — no snow at all, especially subject to chinooks coming in in that particular part of the country.

There has been a decision in the past couple of years within the department to keep one ski hill, and that was the one that we wanted to keep and operate.

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Minister, my question refers to treaty Indians and hunting in the La Ronge area.

About four years ago, I guess, the concept of game preserves were put in and, of course, it would restrict hunting, including hunting by treaty Indians. Now when it first came in, a lot of people were a little bit concerned that this device may be spread out to engulf large areas, and a lot of the people were concerned that while they were restrictive in nature initially, that wasn't too bad.

(2115)

But as time went on, as they looked at the new hunting regulations, it seems to me that they are expanding. And they cannot practise their treaty Indian hunting rights in those areas, and they have a great fear that they cannot hunt in the traditional hunting areas that they've hunted for all the time. They are wondering why it was that these game preserves are now just about engulfing the La Ronge area and they're raising their concern to you, Mr. Minister. And I was wondering what you have to report back to us on that concept of game preserves and its relationship with treaty Indian hunting rights.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, in some areas of the province the moose population has declined severely; other areas we found a great improvement. And, I believe, I went through this with the member from Athabasca one afternoon as well.

And one of the ways that we've managed to preserve moose population is not the game preserve, but road corridors, game corridors, whereby we eliminate casual road hunting by the side of a vehicle. What it means is there's a 400-metre area on either side of the road that you must get out and walk through before you can hunt. And most hunters, most of the people I know — and

certainly I've been a member of the wildlife federation for a number of years and many of my friends and colleagues are – don't object to leaving a vehicle and walking 400 metres before they start hunting. And we've really found that the moose population in those areas have come way up to the benefit of everybody including the treaty Indians who would want to use them for food.

**Mr. Goulet:** — I guess, Mr. Minister, the person that I talked to mentioned the game corridor area, and he was under the impression that it was a way larger area than the 400 metres that you had just mentioned. And I had picked this up over the phone just a couple of days ago, and I hadn't had time to look at the new hunting map areas for hunting this fall. And so I think it is more than, you know, that 400-metre corridor that you're talking about. You mentioned something about the pink areas throughout. Maybe one of your officials can clarify that issue with me.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, there was one game preserve added in that area. I had to look it up. Candle Lake is the area to which you're referring where the moose population has dipped, but at the same time we dropped one, Woody Lake, where the population has come back up again.

**Mr. Goulet:** — I'm just wondering, Mr. Minister, when your officials make recommendations to draw up these game preserve areas, do you meet with chiefs and councils in those areas, you know, as part of the consultation process? And if so, when did you meet with the chiefs and councils, you know, from that area in regards to that game preserve? I understand that you probably have, you know, from the implication of your previous statement, the consultation with the wildlife groups and so on. But I'm just wondering whether or not, because the concern did come from the band level, whether or not you do have the consultation process going with treaty Indians and bands in that area.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, the local biologist, the wildlife biologist, does consult with all user groups in an area, including Indian bands in the area. But what is happening . . . For instance, the P.A. district chiefs have approached us and said they would like a more formalized process to discuss this and to look at that particular issue, and we've agreed.

We did have a native conservation committee at one time, and I was hopeful that it would progress from there and we could discuss these particular problems. It hasn't met for some time. I think it's kind of fallen by the wayside. I would be interested in resurrecting it, and certainly we would be interested in talking to the band chiefs.

**Mr. Goulet:** — So I can report back then that you are very open to the consultation with them.

The next question refers to your letter of August 7, and that's the one from the NorSask Native Outreach, and this regards the information . . . this is the letter you sent us on August 7th. What NorSask Native Outreach wanted was specific information related to the temporary work camp permits. And the reason why they wanted them was, of course, their central goal was to get more people hired

from that area. And sometimes they're in a catch-22 situation basically, because if they don't get the information, then they can't perform. You know, one of their objectives is to provide the most up-to-date and effective information to prospective employers in the area.

But in your letter you state that "because of confidentiality we can't give that information out." I was wondering why a system of confidentiality could not be examined a little bit more closely. I think that it is fair to say that confidentiality already exists. Now, all it would mean is probably to work with one other person from NorSask Native Outreach, and I'm pretty sure that that confidentiality could be respected, and the goal of employing more people from northern Saskatchewan would be enhanced if that question of confidentiality was looked at more carefully.

I was wondering if you would want to re-examine that issue in the light of a lot of people looking for work and you also wanting to get more jobs in for people in that area. I was wondering, why is it that this confidentiality thing is so rigid? Could not a mechanism be arranged with NorSask Native Outreach to deal particularly with that issue?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Now, Mr. Chairman, if I could address this issue for the hon. member, what NorSask would like us to do is give them a list of all the temporary work camp permits that are being issued so that they, in turn, can then contact and see what would be available and offer their services to the companies.

One of the problems is most of these companies in the North right now are engaged in mineral exploration, and where the confidentiality comes in is that they're not really anxious to let everybody know where they are, which would happen if their location was being spelled out publicly.

What we have offered to do and, in fact, have started to do, is take the NorSask brochures and attach them to the work camp permit, so that when we issue them, we also provide them with a brochure and say, now here's the organization and here's what they can do for you. So the information is going to the employers.

**Mr. Goulet:** — The other thing is that work camp permits are issued not only to mining companies but also in other work situations as well. And I was wondering, is that same procedure being followed up in that case?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, that procedure is in place, and we're following up on it.

**Mr. Goulet:** — Just one other point. In regards to the confidentiality question, maybe that could be re-examined again if at all possible, just to re-check it out to make sure that all angles have been covered, and also that indeed if the minister feels that confidentiality is absolutely necessary in regards to mining, then the other question may arise that the question of confidentiality may not be in the same situation as other work areas. And maybe the minister may want to examine that question again.



**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, the member does make a good point. Not all work is of the same nature in that area, and certainly I would be prepared to review it.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My question to the minister also relates to the Primrose Air Weapons Range and specifically to your government's policy of supporting the testing of cruise missiles on the territory that you rent out on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to the Government of Canada.

(2130)

Mr. Minister, you indicated earlier in this Assembly that you were receiving \$391,000 a year on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan for leasing out the Primrose Air Weapons Range to the Government of Canada. Now last time that the lease agreement was signed back in 1975, of course no government had knowledge of the fact that that range would be used for nuclear weapons.

But, Mr. Minister, my question to you is this: basically, in my view, Mr. Minister, and in the view of members of this side of the House, you are now selling the soul of the people of Saskatchewan to the Government of Canada to allow them — and particularly the U.S. government — to test nuclear weapons in this province for a mere \$391,000 a year. And you know full well, Mr. Minister, that the weapon that you're allowing to be tested on the Primrose Air Weapons Range is upsetting the arms control process; in fact, it's sending it back many years. It's a highly de-stabilizing and dangerous nuclear weapon that you're supporting to be testing on that range, Mr. Minister.

And my question to you is simply this: are you now prepared, in light of the de-stabilizing and dangerous effect that the testing of the cruise is having in terms of the safety of the world, are you now prepared to go to the Government of Canada and ask the Government of Canada, indicate to the Government of Canada that you want to cancel your agreement with the Government of Canada on the Primrose Air Weapons Range? Or at the very least, Mr. Minister, are you prepared to go to the Government of Canada and insist that one of the conditions for continuing the leasing out of the Primrose Air Weapons Range by the people of this province to the federal government be that there be no testing of nuclear weapons on the Primrose Air Weapons Range in Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No. The first agreement was signed by Tommy Douglas. The renegotiated extended agreement was signed by the current member for Saskatoon Riversdale, the incoming leader of the NDP.

**Mr. Prebble:** — And, Mr. Minister, a question to the minister, Mr. Chairman: you know full well, Mr. Minister, that when those agreements were signed, the Primrose Air Weapons Range was not being used for cruise testing. It's only been used for cruise testing since your government came to office. And, Mr. Minister, you have done nothing to indicate your opposition to that range being used for nuclear weapons testing.

As a result of that, you, in effect, are supporting that testing, and I ask you, Mr. Minister, again, will you answer my question: are you prepared to go to the Government of Canada and insist that as a condition for that range being rented out to the Government of Canada there be no cruise testing or any other use of nuclear weapons on that range?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to honour the commitment signed by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, you will have recognized that members of this side of the House have a good many questions concerning the Parks side of your portfolio, and I anticipate there may yet be more. But I would like us to move now for the time remaining tonight into the Culture and Rec side of your portfolio.

I would like to begin with a line of questioning around what I would describe as some of the heritage responsibilities. I have in my hand, Mr. Minister, a news release which I'm sure that you've seen from the Western Development Museum people. And for the record, I would like to read part of this news release. It was dated August 17, 1987.

The Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Western Development Museums has developed a plan of action in response to the 12.1 per cent reduction in the provincial grant to the WDM system. The reduction which translates into approximately \$155,000 will mean major changes to the WDM operation throughout the province. A review of these changes is as follows:

Museum exhibits at the WDM branches in Moose Jaw, North Battleford and Yorkton will be closed to the public during the winter months (November through March).

The Saskatoon WDM will be closed for at least one day per week during the winter months.

Staff at the Provincial Service Centre in Saskatoon will be reduced.

Mr. Minister, I submit that the cut in funding to the WDM's (Western Development Museums) will in fact be setting back our Western Development Museums 10 to 15 years. We're setting them back 10 to 15 years in this cut of 12 per cent to their funding.

Mr. Minister, what the release does not make clear is in fact how many staff positions will be lost. How many jobs will be lost in the WDM system because of this cut?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, that would be a decision for the board, and I would quote the board chairman who said that the steps they were taking were what he considered to be prudent business decisions.

I should point out that, overall, 97 per cent of the current number of visitors can and will be able to go to Western

Development Museums – 3 per cent of the visitation, of the total visitation, takes place in the winter five months. The savings generated by the museums, as far as they are concerned, will be in the order of \$75,000, and this is not out of line with what happens in other provinces. Other provinces do the same thing with heritage sites and museums. The board want to concentrate, Mr. Chairman, on improving visitation during the peak season and that's why they've taken that particular decision.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, I would appreciate an answer to that very specific question. How many jobs do you as minister responsible anticipate will be lost in the Western Development Museum system because of the cut in funding?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — A decision will be made by the board, Mr. Chairman, not by me, and they haven't communicated that decision to me.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, it has been suggested in the media and in other forums that in fact six to seven positions will be gone. Would you anticipate that happening?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I have no idea, Mr. Chairman, how many positions. The board haven't discussed it with me; that's an internal decision that they will take in due course.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Because of the closures now in Moose Jaw, Yorkton, and North Battleford, and the one day per week in Saskatoon, even though you're suggesting that only 3 per cent of the visitors attend in those months, how much revenue do you anticipate the museums will lose because of the closures?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Revenue loss for Moose Jaw would be approximately \$10,000 for five months. But I should point out their heating costs alone at that time in this last year, which was a mild winter, was \$53,000. I believe the figure is 3 per cent, overall, revenue down.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Could you or one of your officials provide for me what, then, the total loss in revenue will be, not just from Moose Jaw, but because of all the closures.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Projected, anticipated total admissions that would be down would be approximately 6,000. You'd have to average that out, whether it was adult, senior citizen, child, and so on, to get a dollar figure on it, however.

**Mr. Calvert:** — So the anticipated loss, Mr. Minister, would be \$6,000 — \$6,000? Mr. Minister, it's my understanding that the Western Development Museums now receive somewhere — or have received somewhere — in the neighbourhood of \$80,000 in grant money from the national museums, and that that money has been conditional on increased provincial government support; and in light of the cut-back and the closures, that in fact that money is now endangered, and it's probably going to be lost. Is that accurate that we have to lose 80 to \$90,000 in federal government money?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, I'm assured that there would

be no federal funding jeopardized whatsoever and that that would be safe.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, I think it's fairly obvious that if, in fact, the museums are going to absorb this cut in funding, it is going to mean some loss in staff, and that will likely mean for the WDM (Western Development Museum) some cost in terms of severance pay. It will also, and I think more significantly, mean that we're going to lose some very qualified people.

Some of the people in the system already are uncomfortable with the funding levels that have ... the cuts that have happened over the last few years. It seems fairly obvious we're going to lose some very qualified people. They'll be forced to leave our province. And will you agree that it's going to be very difficult to get those people back?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, this will be a seasonal lay-off, so I don't anticipate any pay-outs to anybody, and I don't see why they're be forced to leave the province.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I think these people would hope to be working full-time in their chosen profession. They would hope to be working full time in the museum system, and if they can't work full time in Saskatchewan, surely they're going to look elsewhere, and I submit it's going to be very difficult to get them back.

Mr. Minister, another very significant thing that you know has happened with the Western Development Museums, and that's sort of the increase of the role of the volunteer and support of the communities where the WDMs exist. I'm told that in North Battleford there are some 88 hours of volunteer work provided per week; I'm told in Yorkton there are 10 hours per week provided; I know for a fact in Moose Jaw volunteers are actively involved in restoring an aircraft and running the steam locomotive. I understand the current membership of the WDMs now has reached 850 people. Are you not concerned that this cut in funding, the closure, the sending the WDMs back 10 or 15 years in their development is, in fact, going to threaten some of this volunteer support that's built up?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, that is not a major concern. Discussions I have had, and the indications I've had, is that that would not be affected at all. And I should point out to the hon. member the museums in their entirety are not closing down; some areas will be kept open.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, just to go back to an earlier point that you made, that in fact the six month closure period that we're talking about is a time when only three per cent of the visitors are at the Western Development Museum. Your government has taken a position of wanting to increase tourism in Saskatchewan. Would it not make more sense to open one of the limited number of tourist attractions that we have in the winter season, to keep it open and try and encourage more visitors?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I've been informed that the board in this, as a matter of fact, are quite excited about this because they are looking for ways to increase the

visitation during their peak season. We're only talking three per cent of the total visitations over the five months of winter, 97 per cent over the rest of the year, and that's where they want to concentrate, just like has happened in Ontario and in the Maritimes.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, as you know — and I again I know this is particularly true in Moose Jaw, and I'm sure it's happening elsewhere — the museums have sort of gone beyond their role as simply places where we are going to preserve our heritage; they've become in some ways a community centre.

In Moose Jaw, I'm well aware of the fact that many community groups hold functions in the museum. It has indeed become kind of a community centre. Will you assure me that museums will still remain open for the kind of community function that we're seeing happening in them?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman.

(2145)

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, I do want to say that it seems to me a rather foolish move to save a limited amount of money. We are going to lose some admission revenues. I'm still of the position that we may, in fact, be losing some federal money. I believe we will be losing some qualified staff; we may, in fact, be losing some of the volunteer support. Artefact donations may fall off, and the savings are minimal, and so I would submit this is a rather foolish move on your part.

We've seen the Western Development Museum grow, become very significant parts of our community, and a significant tourist attraction. And I think . . . Well we've seen in the last number of years, cut-backs, so that a year ago the board was forced to increase the door admissions, and now again another 12 per cent cut-back. It looks to me as we're going back 10 or 15 years with the western developments.

If I can, I would like to, before we close tonight, turn to one or two other areas. Mr. Minister, I'm aware that you and your department have been approached by a Mr. Fred Light of North Battleford and Mr. Light's family. He has offered to, we, the province, his Indian ethnographic collection of artefacts. I'm told that this, in fact, is a unique collection in our province, in many ways irreplaceable. He has offered the collection to the province for the province to purchase through the Museum of Natural History, I suppose. And the press reports that I've seen indicate that you've turned down Mr. Light's offer. Is that your position?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, initially we had turned the offer down; it just seemed that in times of economic restraint that — and as the member correctly identified a 12.1 per cent cut in funding to the Western Development Museums and some other groups that this department funds — that maybe the times weren't right to be buying this particular collection.

It wasn't a question of Mr. Light wanting to leave it to the province — in fact, the gentleman doing the selling is not

based in Saskatchewan, he's based in Alberta — it was a question of he wanted to sell this collection to us. We didn't condemn the whole idea out of hand by any means. There's a certain significance to this particular collection, certainly.

I've also been told that the hon. member mentions a home being perhaps a natural history museum. I've also heard that there would be some strong opposition in the city of North Battleford to the collection leaving North Battleford by residents of North Battleford and by the district chiefs in that area. So what we did do was recently communicate to Mr. Light that we would be willing to explore some other options if they were feasible and viable.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Now, Mr. Minister, just to be clear. I did not intend, if I did, to suggest that the collection would be housed in the Museum of Natural History in Regina. I intended that the museum would be the agency who could secure the collection and that it would remain housed in Battleford. And yes, indeed, I am sure that the people of Battleford would be upset and will be upset if, in fact, the collection leaves their community. And I think there's going to be a fair number of people in this province upset if the collection leaves our province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Minister, can you indicate to me when Mr. Light or his son, who now lives in Calgary as you indicated, can you indicate to me when they first approached your department with the offer?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I can't find the precise date. I only have the date of my reply to Mr. Light.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Judging by the date of your reply, Mr. Minister, can you just give me a ball park figure. In May? Of this year?

Mr. Minister, I'm not absolutely clear from your first response just where we are in terms of Mr. Light's offer. I am aware that he has received some significant interest from the provincial museum in Alberta, some interest from Eastern Canada, and some real interest from the United States of America. I think he indicated that he was willing to wait till the end of August for a response from our province. So, if Mr. Light were to call you tomorrow and say, are you interested in my collection, what would your response be?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — We've already communicated with Mr. Light, Mr. Chairman, indicating that a meeting will take place, and we'll take a look at some options with him. He may not like the options that we'd be presenting, but we're prepared to look at it.

Of course, if he finds a buyer, I'll swear he's made no secret of the fact his interest is in selling the collection. In fact, I remember him referring to his retirement fund, and he said that's what it was. So I don't know if he's got a great desire to leave this particular in the province or in Regina or North Battleford. I guess he must be a free enterpriser, and he's out there going to make a profit on

something he's collected over the years. It's heartening to see the hon. member defending the enterprise; I salute you for that.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, thank you. Mr. Minister, I believe Mr. Light does indeed have an interest in seeing his collection remain in our province. I'll just quote . . . You may have seen this article; it was in the *Battleford Telegraph*. In the article Mr. Light is quoted as saying:

Between the federal and provincial governments, what little they are doing is taking history out of the province, and it's really not a lack of money, it's a lack of priority.

Mr. Minister, before we close tonight, I want to encourage you, if I can, to look very seriously at purchasing this collection. This is, in fact, a once only opportunity. If we lose this collection, it's gone. If this collection leaves our province, it is extremely unlikely, perhaps impossible, that another collection of its size and its kind can ever again be put together, and we are going to lose a very valuable piece of human history in this province. I would sincerely ask you to search your budget, find the money, and purchase this collection for the benefit of Saskatchewan people.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I believe I advised you towards the end of July that I would be asking a couple of questions with regard to the property management corporation and space that your department obtains from them and departmental consultants, and an explanation of the costs and the reason for consultations. And I wonder if the minister or his officials have that information prepared to submit at this time?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I do have a significant amount of information of the nature requested by the hon. member. I would like to check it over and make sure that it's complete. I know there were a number of things you asked for. I believe I have everything you asked for, but I'd like to take a look through it before I send it over the member.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Primarily, Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to make sure that I was going to get the information, and I'll take the minister's assurance that the information will be forthcoming.

I did want to ask the minister one question about the level of the water in Lake Diefenbaker. I wondered if the minister is concerned about that, and I'm talking about the extreme variations in the level.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of any significant problems with the levels on Diefenbaker lake. As the hon. member would know, the water Crown does have some responsibility for that; he may want to raise it with them. If he has a specific concern relating to my department with lake levels affecting beach or park, then I'd be pleased to hear about it because I can't think of anything that's a major concern right now.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, I move that we rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask the Assembly's attention. I have taken notice that in the Speaker's gallery there is a couple visiting us — a young couple who I do understand are celebrating their 31st wedding anniversary here in this next few days.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to extend the greetings of the opposition to the happy couple that are celebrating their anniversary and congratulate the lady on her endurance.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:59 p.m.