

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goodale: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, under presenting petitions I rise to present a petition today signed by many citizens of the province of Saskatchewan from communities such as: Coronach, Yorkton, Fife Lake, Weyburn, Estevan, Willow Bunch, Mortlach, and Moose Jaw.

These citizens are critical of the disestablishment of the Saskatchewan dental plan in our school system. They call for the reinstatement of that dental program, and ask for the rehiring of the dental therapists and assistants. And I file the petition on their behalf, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to members of the Assembly an individual I am sure who is very familiar to most members of this House - a member of a very prominent political and public family in the province of Saskatchewan, and a gentleman who is a former member of this Assembly. And I would like all hon. members to join with me in welcoming Mr. Wilf Gardiner, who is seated behind the rail.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Plight of Western Farmers

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture, I direct my question to the Acting Minister of Agriculture. You may be aware, Mr. Minister, that a comprehensive poll was done over the weekend in respect to the plight of western farmers, in fact Canadian farmers. And in that poll there was headline in the Star-Phoenix: "Farmers in despair; expect to leave land."

And within that poll, Mr. Minister, it indicated that within two or three years, that 29 per cent of Saskatchewan farmers say they will have to leave their farms. And I ask you . . . and it indicates further in that poll that over 53 per cent of the farmers indicate they will not be making any money at all in their operation this year. Only 13 per cent indicate any income or profit.

I ask you: in light of this desperate situation, what are your plans to address it? The farmers of Saskatchewan are waiting for an announcement in respect to the deficiency payment. I ask you: have you again contacted, in light of the desperate situation of agriculture, to move the Mulroney government to bring in immediately, this fall, a deficiency payment?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, our government,

and particularly our Premier, is well aware of the difficulties that the farm sector have faced over the past two or three years, whether the issue was one of drought or low grain prices or the impact of high interest rates, and the list goes on and on, unfortunately. Grasshoppers one could throw in there as well if one surveyed the last three or four years.

And because our Premier and our government recognized those difficulties, we've continually responded. And if more response is necessary, I think one could expect to see that forthcoming as well.

And I think specifically, Mr. Speaker, of the kinds of responses that have been forthcoming from this government: whether it be the farm land moratorium; whether it be the production loans, the low interest production loans to make sure that the farmers have the cash to do the seeding and the harvesting; whether it be cash advances for the farmers in the livestock or the grains sector; and indeed, the interprovincial . . . or federal-provincial co-operation that was behind the deficiency payment and will be behind and result in a second deficiency payment, I have no doubt.

One of the very big issues facing Saskatchewan farmers, as the hon. member has raised, is the question of the debt load that they carry, and how we might address that in the months and years to come. And that's precisely why our Premier has convened a symposium, an international symposium, to bring people from not only across Canada and within our own province have done some fair degree of study on this, but as well from across the world, to look at some options that may have some application here in dealing with a very serious problem.

I might add as well though, Mr. Speaker, that I think every farmer across Saskatchewan and across Canada recognizes there are no quick fixes when it comes to the agriculture issues facing us today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I'm glad the hon. members are clapping. I'm sure that the farmers that were watching weren't clapping with that answer.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, that . . . It's indicated by the federal government that the details will not be worked out until October, and they won't be announcing any decision until December in respect to a deficiency payment.

And what we want to know here today: do you support that timetable? Are you urging the Mulroney government in fact to come forward with a payment this fall to meet the crisis that the farmers are having, or are you prepared to play the politics of waiting until possibly there's a federal election, like the last deficiencies payment, or when are you going to stand up for the farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Our government, Mr. Premier, and I think like every farmer across Saskatchewan, would

like to see a payment sooner than later. As I have said many times in this House before, the important thing is that we do get one, and I think our Premier has made great strides forward in that area. He got the unanimous agreement of all ministers of Agriculture, including the federal minister, at the last ministers of Agriculture meeting.

Part and parcel in terms of getting the payment, and when one gets it, of course, is how that payment is structured, and to make sure that the payment is as fair as possible, given the varieties of kinds of agriculture and the kinds of crops and agriculture enterprises that may or may not be subject to deficiency payment, is why our Premier, along with the federal minister, has consulted widely amongst farm groups; and as I understand it there's a fair consensus forming on how that payment should be structured so that nobody is left out unfairly, or to make sure, indeed, that the program gets as fair an application as possible, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, what we don't need is more studies, more symposiums, more MLAs running around the province like they did in the output . . . in respect to the costs inputs. The farmers of Saskatchewan are asking for action, and what I want you to do is to detail what action you're going to do in order to prevent 29 per cent of the farmers to lose their operations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate the hon. member would view our Premier, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of Agriculture from Canada - it's unfortunate he would view the consultations that those politicians might have with farmers and farm groups as somehow yet another study. It seems to me that loudly and clearly the farmers across this country have said, let us be involved in designing a model because then we will have one that we can all live with and all defend and, in fact, that will be fair, because there are many, many dimensions to framing a deficiency payment - paying on seeded acres versus arable acres, for example; what crops are in and what crops are not in - all those kinds of questions. It's only with consultation. They don't believe in the value of consultation; we do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goodale: — Supplementary. Mr. Speaker, the government opposite often claims that their Premier is the most knowledgeable with respect to agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — They often claim, Mr. Speaker, that they've got all of the best programs. But in the poll referred to in this . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The member has risen on a supplementary which allows a very, very short preamble directly related to the question.

Mr. Goodale: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I will relate it directly to the question. The poll referred to in the

previous questioning, Mr. Speaker, indicates that Saskatchewan farmers are the most pessimistic of all in Canada, and I wonder how that jibes with all this rhetoric, about the Premier and the agriculture programs of Saskatchewan being the best, when our farmers are the most pessimistic in the country about their prospects.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, our Premier, our government, this caucus, doesn't need any polls or any pollsters to tell us what the issues are facing us in agriculture today. I would make that point front and centre, Mr. Speaker.

As it relates to the poll results in so far as the difficulties facing Saskatchewan versus other provinces, I suspect one might draw some conclusions about the percentage of our farm income that comes from the grain sector, which has been particularly hard hit, as opposed to the red meat sector. And I think any fair-minded person who is going to examine this area would take into consideration those kinds of things.

But having said all of that, Mr. Speaker, because we recognize that Saskatchewan has been particularly hard hit, because of that, that is why this government, unlike Alberta, unlike Manitoba, unlike Ontario, unlike anywhere else in the country, has responded in spades, whether it be with a debt moratorium legislation; whether it be with 6 per cent production loans; whether it be with cash advances; or whether it be with getting the assurance that there be deficiency payments, Mr. Speaker; that's why we have responded, and that's what we will continue to respond, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Lay-offs at Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, they're not getting anywhere in agriculture; perhaps we'll switch to the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. I'd like to direct a question to the minister in charge of the potash corporation. On Friday, even before, Mr. Minister, your potash Bill passed third and final reading in this legislature, PCS announced the lay-off of nearly half of its work-force - 710 people now face indefinite lay-offs as early as next month, Mr. Speaker. Can you justify this unprecedented lay-off of potash workers in light of the government's promise that Bill 36 would prevent job losses for Saskatchewan potash workers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, again, we have a question from the opposition which is less than accurate and probably deliberately misleading. That was not the announcement that was made, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. member knows that.

The announcement that has been made is that Cory division, I believe, has had the required five-weeks' notice of a two-week lay-off, and that notice has gone out. Let me assure the hon. member that the announcements that have been, and will be, made are the traditional announcements made by the potash corporation, with

one exception, Mr. Speaker, made by the next leader of the New Democratic Party who in 1981 did not have any lay-offs because of an election. These are the traditional inventory control, the maintenance shut-downs that have always happened in the potash industry, and there is absolutely nothing out of the ordinary, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, the minister says this is routine. When in the history of the potash corporation was half of its work-force laid off and described as routine? Never, Mr. Speaker. He says it's routine. The spokesman for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan says it's over-supply.

I want to direct a new question to the Minister of Energy. The Minister of Energy wrote to every potash miner in Saskatchewan to justify The Potash Resources Act. Her letter said, in part:

Without action our jobs and our mines are threatened. I am not willing to stand idly by while other governments (and it goes on) affect the livelihood of our people and the health of our industry.

And later the same letter says:

The main objective of this legislation is to protect the jobs of the workers of the potash industry.

Were those, Mr. Speaker, just hollow words to save your government's political skin in the potash communities; and if not, why is half of the PCS work-force now facing indefinite lay-offs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I think the hon. members asked two questions, and one which was the final one, Mr. Speaker, which dealt with why have - and these are his words, I believe - why have half the people in the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan received notices of lay-off.

First of all, that is a blatant untruth, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest that the hon. member is deliberately misleading not only this House but the people of Saskatchewan.

I'll tell the hon. member what the notice is, Mr. Speaker - because I find it unfortunate that he wants to play with the lives of the potash workers in such a slipshod manner, Mr. Speaker - that 225 employees were given notice of a two week lay-off at Cory plant, from October 25 to November 7. Now that is completely different, completely at variance with the allegations of the hon. member after. So I will give him the truth, a word that he is somewhat unfamiliar with.

The lay-off is not due to The Potash Resources Act. It is part of the inventory adjustment plan put in at the beginning of the fiscal year, January. The union was informed of the plan several months ago, and this message was reinforced in the past month.

Mr. Speaker, those are the facts; those are the notices that

have gone out to the members; one mine, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what the hon. member said.

I believe he asked a second question with regard to the notice that has gone out to the potash workers, Mr. Speaker, and I'll ask the Minister of Energy to respond to the second question.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. I will not allow one minister to pass on to another minister because, you know, we could go through two or three ministers, and I realize that what you're saying . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well they asked two questions.

Mr. Speaker: — I understand that. The point I would like to make is this. We see here this afternoon - and this is an appropriate time for me to mention it - a situation where questioners and those who are answering the question are entering debate, rather than actually answering and asking questions.

I think this is an appropriate time to mention it. There was a couple of instances last week when this also was happening, and I didn't mention it at that time, but I do now. So I ask hon. members, in your questions please stick to the question you wish to ask because as soon as you refer to something the minister said, you're entering debate. And at the same time, I would ask the hon. members who answer the questions to ask it in a reasonable and fair manner and that they don't comment on two or three things before they actually get to the answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I'll direct a question to the Minister of Energy since I didn't hear her voice responding to the last question.

I don't know how the minister is curbed from responding to a letter she wrote to every potash miner in Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, but apparently she's prevented from speaking to that letter, and the minister attempting to deny the connection between the government's potash legislation and these lay-offs. The Premier in this Chamber is the one who made the connection for the last three weeks, in this issue, in this Chamber and outside. They said that this legislation is needed to prevent lay-offs and job losses. Now 710 workers are facing lay-offs.

Just what is this Bill, Mr. Minister, supposed to prevent? Is the minister admitting this legislation will not protect Saskatchewan jobs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not prevented from answering questions, but as it relates to the specific questions on PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) there is a minister responsible, as the member well knows, Mr. Chairman.

Let's deal with the issue to the workers, the letter to the workers, Mr. Chairman, and the objective of the

legislation has been stated very clearly. The main problem, namely the issue of over-supply, and the productive capacity was the main issue, Mr. Speaker. A symptom of that problem was the anti-dumping petition that was brought down on the Saskatchewan producers.

Given the degree of those levies, to do nothing, to address this issue, Mr. Speaker, we face the prospect of total mine closures and total job lay-offs, not only job lay-offs but you have the potential for permanent job loss if a potash mine, Mr. Speaker, is closed for any length of period.

The member from Regina Rosemont sits on his seat and he chirps there like a bird in a tree and says, that's not true. I invite him to either come in to my office or the Department of Energy and Mines or go visit the producers and find out, as opposed to simply reading the headlines in the Star-Phoenix.

Mr. Speaker, we also said, in presenting the legislation, that there would still be the normal course of maintenance shut-in periods and that would mean some temporary lay-offs. We've always recognized that that indeed would take place, and that is what they're facing today.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I have the letter here, Madam Minister, and it's on the stationery of the Minister of Energy and Mines - not in the minister in charge of the potash corporation - that went to all the potash workers in the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. And in this particular letter it says:

I will not stand . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The member knows that we are not quoting on supplementaries, so I ask him to paraphrase the point and put his question.

Mr. Brockelbank: — You're quite right, Mr. Speaker. I referred to the matter directly out . . . a quotation out of the minister's letter before, and that still stands. The minister said it to the potash workers of Saskatchewan.

And I want to ask a final supplementary: is one Katrina Forrest among those that will be laid off by the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, once again I have stated what the objective of this legislation is, and I would remind the members from across the floor that the legislation, in part, is not different than similar legislation back in 1969 in terms of volume controls or production.

I might also add, Mr. Speaker, that that party across the floor supported the legislation then and, in fact, carried it on through when they became government in 1971. I suspect for political expediency the member from Saskatoon raises the issue today.

Constitutional Process and Aboriginal People

Mr. Goulet: — Because the minister in charge of Indian

and Metis affairs is not here, I will direct my question to the Minister of Justice.

Yesterday at Fort Simpson, the Pope paid his respects and provided a great sense of optimism for the aboriginal people in Canada. His basic statement was one of reopening the constitutional talks so that we can go ahead and deal with the entrenchment of self government for aboriginal people.

Mr. Minister, what is your position in regards to the Pope's statement, and are you going to urge the Mulroney government to reopen the constitutional process with aboriginal people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that everyone followed the Pope through his tour, not only to Fort Simpson but also throughout North America, and, I think, the statement made by the Pope yesterday with regard to the right of self-government.

This government has, I think, not unlike any other government, supported the concept of self-government for aboriginal peoples. In the 1985 constitutional negotiations our Premier put forward what he believed was and would be an acceptable accord, the Saskatchewan accord, to deal with the question of self-government. Now that was not accepted by a series of people and we all know how it unfolded.

This government maintains its position that we support the concept of native self-government, aboriginal self-government. The difficulty - and I suppose the difficulty that came down in the most recent first ministers' conference - is while we can support the function and the concept of aboriginal self-government, we get down to the next question is: what are we going to put into the constitution, and what does that, that we put into the constitution, mean? What does it mean for self-government, let's say, within the city of Regina? What does it mean in other parts of the province? And those are significant and weighty questions.

I think that our Premier has made it clear, following the break up of the last first ministers' meeting on the aboriginal rights questions, that we would certainly be prepared to revisit that issue again at the constitutional table. As you probably are aware, the agenda for the constitutional table is set by the Prime Minister in conjunction with the 10 premiers, and I would assume that the next time that they sit and meet, that you will see those 10 premiers and the Prime Minister discussing that agenda item once again.

Mr. Goulet: — Supplementary. Mr. Minister, your terminology is one where you say you will revisit the issue. The Premier said, when he came back from the constitutional conference, it's be business as usual when we came back. Then he proceeded to dismantle the organization and took away the funding on AMNSIS (Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan) which dealt with constitutional issues. What are you going to do to get back that money so that people can look after their constitutional matters in this

province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, I think that what I indicated to the hon. member's question is that this government stands prepared to deal with the question of aboriginal self-government in this country. We indicated, as I'm sure the Premier indicated, is the definition or the meaning of any type of particular wording that would go into the constitution. I think that's fair, and that's a difficult issue. That's a difficult issue to deal with.

What I indicated to the hon. member is that when the Prime Minister and the Premier sit down again to determine the agenda for constitutional conferences that are now enshrined in the constitution to be happening each year, along with a premiers' and prime minister's conference on the economy — but I'm sure that there is going to be a series of items dealt with on that agenda. Those people will sit down and determine what the agenda item will be. Now some would argue that it should be the Senate — will it be the Senate; will it be native self-government; will it be some other issues? I'm sure that will come forward soon.

I can only indicate to you that the government would be prepared to revisit the question of native self-government.

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, the minister states that you need a definition. His government went down and dealt with the Quebec, the Meech Lake-Langevin accord, and did not give us a definition of distinct society.

Here you are, you have one set of laws and one set of processes dealing with the issue in Quebec, and you will not use the same processes when it comes down to aboriginal people in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Are you going to utilize the same processes that you are utilizing in the case of dealing with Meech Lake-Langevin accord and with dealing with the Quebec issue? Are you going to use the same principles and processes when you are going to be dealing with aboriginal people in Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, I would think that the hon. member does not do justice to the constitutional negotiations by saying that the distinct society dimension of the question on the Meech Lake accord is the same thing that we're dealing with on self-government with the aboriginal people.

The second thing he asked: will you use the same process; will you use the same process that arrived at the Meech Lake accord to deal with native self-government?

The member from Riversdale has been extremely critical of using the concept upon which the 10 premiers and the Prime Minister arrived at the Meech Lake accord. Now I hear you saying something totally different, that we would . . . that you would advocate that type of process to

deal with native self-government, I will certainly that that under advisement and advise the Premier as to your concern and report back.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 41 - An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Provincial Auditor Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 42 - An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts Resulting from the Enactment of The Provincial Auditor Amendment Act, 1987

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts Resulting from the Enactment of The Provincial Auditor Amendment Act, 1987.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ROYAL ASSENT TO BILL

At 2:34 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill:

Bill No. 36 - An Act respecting the Potash Resources of Saskatchewan

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:36 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, as we begin today, I would like to move to some questioning around an institution. Though it's not very old in our province, it has come to occupy, I think, a very special place, and I refer to the Diefenbaker Centre on the campus in Saskatoon.

You'll be aware, because of funding cut-backs to the university, the University of Saskatchewan no longer is able to continue funding the Diefenbaker Centre. And I'm told that there is some real and immediate danger that the Diefenbaker Centre may force closure.

Mr. Minister, I think that would be a tragedy. I'm told that the federal government has denied funding, and I am told

that the Diefenbaker Centre has made some requests to your government and therefore, I assume, to your department, and to this point have not, or at least a week ago, had not received word.

I find it perhaps a bit peculiar, a bit ironic, Mr. Minister, that a Conservative government in Ottawa and an Conservative government in Regina seems unable or unwilling to find the funding for a centre which honours the member of the Conservative prime minister from Prince Albert. I find it almost a bit odd that in fact the issue should be raised in this House by a New Democrat.

Mr. Minister, politics aside, politics aside, Mr. Diefenbaker was our prime minister, the prime minister from Prince Albert, and this centre in Saskatoon not only honours his memory but it houses, of course, his very valuable collection of papers which have an extremely valuable role to play in archival work and education work. It holds very valuable documents in terms of our Canadian history and Canadian parliamentary system.

But as you well know, the centre is much more than that, much more than a monument, much more than an archives. It has become a living centre. It has become a centre of opportunity for those involved in training in archival work. It has become a place of exhibit and a place where many valuable exhibits are formulated and then travel the province. And not insignificantly, the Diefenbaker Centre has become a tourist attraction for the city of Saskatoon and our province.

So, Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask today what you are going to do, what your department intends to do, to ensure the future of the Diefenbaker Centre.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, maybe I could start by addressing the university funding. I wouldn't say it was fair that university funding has been cut so Diefenbaker Centre is in some jeopardy. Rather what has happened, funding did increase — I remember I was minister responsible for that department at one point — funding did increase over the years to the universities, no question. But as enrolments have mushroomed, universities have had other priorities of how to spend money; I think we're all aware of that.

In Saskatoon the Diefenbaker Centre has been placed in some difficulties and the future in some doubt because the university doesn't feel it can commit funding to this particular venture.

To date, to the best of my knowledge, I haven't been approached by Diefenbaker Centre for assistance, but I did meet with the Minister of Education approximately two weeks ago, and we discussed several options which included federal assistance, my department and his department being involved, and I think you'll see some rescue for the Diefenbaker Centre.

Mr. Calvert: — Then do I have your assurance, Mr. Minister, that you and your government would not stand by and allow the Diefenbaker Centre to close its doors?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I can safely say, Mr. Chairman, that the government will not be standing idly by watching the

Diefenbaker Centre close its doors. We will take measures to ensure the continuance of the Diefenbaker Centre. I think I could safely give you that commitment. I feel committed to it, and we'll be working at it.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the minister could give us an indication of when we can expect an announcement with respect to funding for the Diefenbaker Centre and what kind of funding figure your government is currently look at. What kind of a financial commitment can we expect from your government to keep this very valuable centre open to the university and to the public at large?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, discussions are ongoing. We feel the federal government has to be involved, given the nature of this particular centre. The federal government should be involved. I have no commitment from them. All I can say is that we won't stand by as a government and let Diefenbaker Centre close. I would hope to have it resolved in the very near future. Certainly from my involvement in it, it will be quick. We will expedite it just as fast as we can.

Mr. Chairman, if I may take this opportunity to pass some information over that has been requested in the past.

Mr. Prebble: — I wonder if I could have one further commitment from the minister with respect to the centre. As the minister will know, the centre now plays a wide variety of roles in the community. It's the only centre in Saskatoon to offer bilingual programming on a regular basis. It's unique in offering programs to teach children about the structure of Canadian government in a very stimulating environment. There are a number of temporary exhibits and arts exhibitions of community interest at the centre as well as its major role, of course, in honouring and recognizing the life of former prime minister Diefenbaker and providing a very valuable archival resource to the community.

Can the minister give us his assurance in this legislature that all the functions that the Diefenbaker Centre currently performs will be able to continue after his rescue initiative which, I might say, members on this side of the House will be most appreciative of?

(1445)

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, for all the articulate reasoning that has come from the two members who have been speaking to this issue, we will be addressing the question.

I feel it's a wee bit unfair for me to try and steal some thunder from another minister, the limelight on this issue, because it's really not under my portfolio. But given the nature of the centre, given the types of things we do in this department, then we're certainly interested in being involved in providing some kind of relief and a rescue operation for the Diefenbaker Centre.

To precisely commit to all of the functions — I'm not really, I confess, familiar with all of the functions performed by the centre, but for the reasons which you so eloquently expressed, we would certainly try our very

best to salvage all the operations. And I'd have to discuss it with the Minister of Education.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I'd like to move our attention then to another two institutions, again which are very significant institutions to the province of Saskatchewan and particularly now to the people of southern Saskatchewan. I refer now to the Museum of Natural History here in Regina and Government House here in Regina.

In the 1986-87 *Estimates* for the former department of culture and recreation, the Museum of Natural History was listed as a separate subvote with an estimate of \$1,179,540. In the *Estimates* for your department in this current year, I find no such subvote, so I'm assuming the museum is still within your responsibility. So can you please tell me where the operational moneys for the Museum of Natural History are included in this year's *Estimates* and how much they will be?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member will be able to find this one under item 12, heritage programs, and the estimate there he'll see, the total estimate, is \$2.121 million for this year. I'll have to break down for you how much out of there will be going towards the Museum of Natural History because it's not broken down in here. But I can give you the number.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I would very much appreciate having that number. Do you have it now?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — \$1.224 million.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In April of 1986 your government announced a major expansion project to the Museum of Natural History, and I know that project has begun. I would like to know how much money is allocated for this year under that program?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, museum redevelopment for this year is \$249,000.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I want to congratulate you and your department for undertaking that work in the museum.

On an issue that concerns me now in regard to the Museum of Natural History, you well know that both the Museum of Natural History and Government House occupy very special places in the hearts and minds of Saskatchewan people. They represent our heritage - one our natural heritage and one our human heritage. And I think to the credit of many governments, including yours, these centres of common heritage have been open and available to the people of Saskatchewan without charge. I have heard rumours that in fact you are considering a user pay kind of system, an admission fee, for both the Museum of Natural History and Government House. Well I'm simply asking: are you considering admission fees for these two institutions?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, there has been no thought given to charging admission fees to Government House. There was discussion relative to the Museum of Natural History, because it does cost money to operate

and it would be rather nice to have some revenue coming in to offset some of the costs of our programs and some of the things we'd like to do, like the new diorama and other things like that.

But given this year that there is construction taking place — we're renovating; we're doing the basement — we thought it would be unfair to introduce any kind of a user fee for this year. But I'll be honest with the hon. member; we haven't ruled that out in future years as being a possibility.

Mr. Calvert: — I share your opinion that it would be unfair this year, particularly while renovations are under way, but I would also submit that it would be unfair in any year. And we may be debating this then again at some future point, perhaps next year.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to return for a few minutes back to the issues of your parks side of your portfolio, and submissions that have arisen as a result of recent negotiations between the provincial government and the federal government in relation to grasslands park.

And as you know, Mr. Minister, there was a conference held here in Regina this past weekend by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. One of the intentions of that conference was in fact to try to remove the log-jam which is holding up the establishment of grasslands park. And as a result of that conference, Mr. Minister, the united positions concerning the establishment of grasslands national park emerged as a result of negotiations between the following groups: the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Saskatchewan Natural History Society, the Sierra Club of Saskatchewan, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Mr. Minister, I want to read to you the proposal that these groups have put forward as a united position and elicit your reaction to that proposal. Now I understand very well that negotiations will be under way tomorrow between Mr. Swan, as Minister of the Environment and also minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation, and . . . But obviously a position being put forward by groups, particularly as it relates to parks, has some direct impact on your department.

The groups, the coalition of wildlife groups and conservation groups, have put forward the following proposal, Mr. Minister, and they propose that the provincial and federal governments take the following actions. First of all, that the province of Saskatchewan retain the ownership of the main stem of the six significant water courses — that's the Frenchman River, Breed Creek, Morgan Creek, Wetherall Creek, Horse Creek, and McEachern Creek — within the proposed park area.

Secondly, that the corridor of provincial ownership — and I repeat, provincial ownership — for each water bed should be defined as the 25-year floor line in terms of how the . . . how far back the ownership would extend, and also that the provincial and federal governments should sign either a long-term licence agreement or establish regulations for governing water management and use on park lands. This licence or set of regulations

should be amended . . . appended, pardon me, to the agreement which establishes the park.

The groups go on to say: by adopting these actions, the provincial government will maintain its legislative rights to water in the region, and the federal government can establish a land-based park with negotiative rights, agreements to water use.

What's your reaction to that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, I think, as I've expressed before, both in the House here on the floor of the Assembly and outside, you can add my name to a list of groups and individuals who support the grasslands park. I think it's an excellent concept, and it would certainly not complete our provincial park system but the federal park system who want that particular type of ecology within their system, and we welcome it.

Without giving away all the bargaining chips of my colleague, who's meeting tomorrow, the proposal as outlined — and I have a copy in front of me — is acceptable both to me and to my officials, and we can take that position to Mr. Swan and let him negotiate it from there, of his issue with the water, which we've talked about in the past. I think that there may be a workable compromise solution here that would be certainly acceptable to our department, hopefully acceptable to his.

Mr. Lyons: — Well, Mr. Minister, I find your answer acceptable in terms of our position from this side of the House. We feel that there has been sort of undue and unnecessary delay over this whole issue of water ownership. And I want to say publicly that we will join with you, and we think that this certainly is an acceptable compromise. So that when the Minister of the Environment goes down to Ottawa tomorrow, that I want to assure you and the minister who's just come into the House, that he will have the support of this side of the House in terms of the compromise agreement, and that I'm glad they could add . . . the conservation groups could add your name to the list, and they certainly can add my name to the list in terms of certainly what is a creative and acceptable proposal to trying to break the log-jam.

I hope that when it comes to dealing with the regulations and the setting up of the regulations, if this proposal is accepted by the federal government — and I certainly hope it will be acceptable to the federal government — that in fact we can work out the deal and have grasslands a reality when my friend, the Minister of Environment, the member returns back from Washington with an agreement in his pocket. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments the hon. member has made and the expression of support. It's not often in this Assembly that we walk out united on any particular issue, and I'm happy that we're in agreement on this one.

I think this is going to be to the good of the province and to the good of the country in general, and I welcome the support of the opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I want to join with my colleague in wanting to support you and to support the position that's been brought forward by these five groups. It seems that they have provided for us a workable compromise, and I sincerely hope your colleagues in the federal government see it that way so that we can see indeed a grasslands park in the year 1987.

Mr. Minister, I would like us to move toward what I think is one of these most significant areas of your responsibility, and that's funding to the arts in our province and the whole community of the arts and cultural activity in our province. And I for one do not see estimates as a time for long dissertations, but I think it's important on this significant issue that perhaps we each have a little bit of an opportunity to put some remarks on the record. So I've prepared just a few observations about my view of the role of the arts in the province, and funding for the arts, and I'll welcome your response to some of these remarks.

I think the discussion we will have about funding to the arts needs to be put in a context. It seems to me it used to be that we in Saskatchewan had this notion that we had to travel to Toronto or New York or somewhere to see good drama, good music, good galleries. We know that's changed. We know that's changed, Mr. Minister. Since the days of the Second World War we have seen a phenomenal growth of the art and cultural community in Saskatchewan, and I think in many ways we have come of age — we have come of age in Saskatchewan.

In the last 40 years we've seen that change; we've seen that change, Mr. Chairman. We find that we can pursue in Saskatchewan: art, music, and drama, writing, and sculpting, and photography, and craft work, here. We find that we can enjoy and appreciate artists of national and international stature right here — Regina and Saskatoon and Estevan and Moose Jaw and Pense and Davidson, and so on.

And that change has come about in my mind by the very creativity of Saskatchewan people and by appreciative Saskatchewan audiences, and in no small measure by a succession of Saskatchewan governments who have been committed to adequate funding to the arts, primarily through the Arts Board, and in later years through moneys provided through Sask trust and the lottery system.

Mr. Chairman, I submit that both of those sources of funding for the professional arts, particularly in Saskatchewan, have come under attack by this government.

(1500)

In many ways, Mr. Chairman, I believe the arts in our province represent the very state of our culture as a community, and they reflect the creativity of our people. These are the people who bring to us what is good. These are the people who show us what is beautiful. They inspire us; they draw from us emotion. It's the artist in our midst who lays before us what is eternal in human life. It is the artist in our midst who tells the human story, tells our story. It's the artist who portrays our heritage. It's the artist who probes our present, and it is the artist who shows us our future.

Therefore that community, that cultural and artistic community, is absolutely integral, I believe, to the quality of life of Saskatchewan; and without the music and the dance and the artistic expression, our lives would be measurably poorer.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to quote from a very recent federal government survey into funding of arts in Canada, the Bouvey report, from Edmond Bouvey, and I would like to read a paragraph into the record. Edmond Bouvey writes:

Though quality of life is essentially a personal concern, it nevertheless also belongs in the very special cultural, social, economic, political, and geographical context which characterizes us as Canadians. Today we accept without question the importance of the arts and the development and expression of our uniqueness as a people. On the one hand, our Canadian heritage celebrated through art galleries and museums — regional, metropolitan, and local — represents the story of our past. On the other hand, creative artists in the visual, performing, and literary arts, and the organizations that serve them daily, help to shape our heritage for tomorrow, winning for us a place among the great nations of the world. The achievements are all the more gratifying as our artists attain excellence and a recognition that carry them beyond our borders and out into the international community.

And we can heartily endorse those comments in terms of Saskatchewan artists and the cultural community in Saskatchewan. But we also note, Mr. Chairman, that not only has the cultural community become and is integral to quality of life in our province, it has indeed become a very significant part of our provincial economy.

Mr. Chairman, I can do no better than to illustrate that from this little documents which I'm sure the minister is familiar with, published under the . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Members are not allowed to use displays in the House.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was referring to a document entitled, "The Economic Impact of Culture in the Arts," produced by the former department of culture and recreation, so I'm sure these quotes will not be challenged by the minister. This document shows clearly the economic impact of the arts in Saskatchewan. A few quotes:

Only recently has the cultural community began to document its value to the province in hard economic terms. This documentation has revealed that the impact of cultural activity and industry extends far beyond building a better quality of life and unique identity for Saskatchewan people.

You will find this of interest, I think, Mr. Chairman. The arts and culture are growth industries. There are presently 60 per cent more jobs in the arts and in culture than 10 years ago - 60 per cent more jobs today in arts and

culture than there were 10 years ago. Today there are twice as many people employed in this sector as there are in the Saskatchewan oilfields or in the combined industries of uranium and potash. There are more than twice as many people working in culture and the arts than in the oil industry in Saskatchewan; than in the potash and uranium industries put together. And compared to some of those industries, the benefits of the cultural community, the economic benefits tend to remain in the province.

Another quote from this same document:

Money invested in arts and culture is more than adequately returned to the public. As an example, the province through the Saskatchewan Arts Board provides a yearly operating grant of \$153,000 to assist in the continued support of the Globe Theatre in Regina. In return, this organization generates a payroll of \$685,000 to support seven full-time and 78 part-time staff. Without this initial grant, the Globe Theatre would not be able to support this level of employment, provide entertainment to their 118,000 patrons at reasonable costs, nor to bring live theatre to schools throughout the province.

Mr. Chairman, I could talk about the business generated in our province through the cultural industries. I could talk about the investment stimulus. I could talk about the impact on tourism. I could talk about export possibilities from the cultural economy. The simple fact is that this industry now continues to outpace all other sectors in the Saskatchewan economy, and it's, today, easily one of the most productive and one of the largest industries in our province.

But I submit, Mr. Chairman, and I submit, Mr. Minister, this industry and this cultural community has been threatened by your government's lack of priority in funding to the arts, a lack of priority that has characterized your government from its very beginning.

Mr. Minister, a specific question. In his 1986 task force, Edmond Bouvey suggests that if the arts in Canada are to survive and grow to the 21st century, that his recommendation is their real growth in funding must be at a level of 4 per cent per year, federally and provincially — 4 per cent per year. I ask then specifically, Mr. Minister: do you agree with the findings of Edmond Bouvey and his report on funding to the professional arts?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, there's little doubt that over the last number of years — and we go back prior to 1982, I'd like to remind the hon. member — that funding to the professional arts community did not keep pace with inflation. I would have no quarrel with that whatsoever. To agree with a 4 per cent, or whatever the figure is; I don't know what the figure is - but what I can say is: when we look at the historic level of funding, since 1982 funding has increased to the Saskatchewan Arts Board, not decreased, and the levels that we are providing are higher than the levels of the previous administration.

And I don't say that just to make a political point. I say that

to point out that we do recognize that professional arts in Saskatchewan has an important role to play in one of our key areas, which is economic diversification. There's no question, trade follows culture. If ever we saw an example of that, Mr. Chairman, we have got to look no further than out on the east coast, and take a look at what happened in the Maritimes and in Atlantic Canada.

St. John's, Newfoundland, thought they were really going to boom when they had the oil patch off shore. They thought that the city would boom and people would be attracted to live there. And it didn't happen, Mr. Chairman. What happened was that companies, in moving their executives in, and many of their workers, located not in St. John's, Newfoundland but Halifax, Nova Scotia and they commuted by helicopter out to the oil. Why? Because they thought that Halifax had a better — for want of a better word — quality of life to offer its residents because they had a strong cultural community.

I remember, and members opposite know I wasn't born in this country, but when I arrived here 21 years ago, I remember hearing things like: Saskatchewan is a cultural wilderness. Well that's balderdash, Mr. Chairman. There are all kinds of good things have gone on in the last 20 years, certainly since I've been residing here — some of them under the administration previous, some under the Liberal administration, and I'd submit, Mr. Chairman, certainly a lot of good things under our administration.

Historical funding levels: we're up in the '86-87 year to some \$3.15 million that was channeled through the Arts Board, not including a half-million dollars that we put in there for deficit reduction to professional arts groups, some of whom literally were being told their doors were having to close; they were bankrupt.

I had a panic call from Twenty-Fifth Street Theatre. I had a similar panic call from the Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet. And I told those groups, Mr. Chairman — and I'll stand here, and I'm not afraid to stand here and tell the whole world — I responded to them immediately with money to keep them alive and to keep them viable. And they're viable today because, after they got the initial money, we said we'd go on a deficit reduction program to help them reduce their deficit, totally eliminate it over a period of time if they do some fund raising themselves so that they will be in a viable position.

Mr. Chairman, if we let our professional artistic community go, we never get it back because we lose our credibility as a government, as a province. If we let the ballet fold, it's 10 years — it's 10 years, Mr. Chairman, before we can even begin to attract dancers from other areas to come back to Saskatchewan because they would see is as no long-term commitment to the ballet, or to the theatre, or to many of the other groups which are supported by the government through the grant to the Arts Board.

So we place a very high priority, Mr. Chairman, on the professional and the performing arts in Saskatchewan. As I say, they have a role to play in our economic diversification. They certainly have an important role to play in tourism, and yes, there are thousands of jobs in Saskatchewan depending on the arts community. And,

Mr. Chairman, we're not going to let them down.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I want us to have a discussion about your government's level of funding to the professional arts. You've brought up the subject of the moneys that went out to the professional arts in the past year, particularly to those companies who were running such large deficits. I submit to you, they got into that deficit problem because of a lack of funding from your government.

I'm going to ask you: where did that money come from? Where did the money come from that you provided for the theatre companies for that \$1.5 million that went out for deficit and other uses?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, the deficit wasn't built under a Progressive Conservative government. The deficits were accumulated over a number of years. When I got the portfolio I had very clear marching orders from the Premier prior to Christmas when he said: I want you to get out there and consult with those groups; I want you to find a solution; and let's try and do something to help the professional arts community.

And the funding specifically to which you refer came from the source — which I think was instituted precisely to address this type of problem — which was the lotteries. The lotteries were set up in Saskatchewan to provide funding to sport, to recreation, to cultural activity, and to parks and recreation associations. That was the source of the additional funding, and I make no apology for that, Mr. Chairman. That's what lotteries were set up in this province to handle; I may say, set up under a previous administration, and I compliment them on it.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, so then you're being very clear here. That money that went out, that special grant that went out last year, was not money from your government; that was moneys that you expropriated from the volunteer community in Saskatchewan. I know the volunteer community is not opposed to the funding of professional arts; indeed they've shown some real leadership. But let's be clear: it is not a commitment of your government; it was not tax-based funding; it was money expropriated from the lottery funds to bail out those companies that in fact are in the deficit situation because of a lack of funding from your government over the past four or five years.

Mr. Minister, in real terms, funding to the Arts Board from 1982-83 to 1986-87 rose 4.3 per cent. That's less than 1 per cent a year, and you and I know that it will be closer to zero per cent had the volunteer community, represented through SCCO (Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations), if they had not in fact transferred some of their funding — 250,000 in '85-86; 350,000 in '86-87 — to the Arts Board to enable the Arts Board to carry on with the summer school.

So in terms of real tax-based funding to the arts in Saskatchewan, it's zero per cent, or very close to zero per cent, over each of those years. And I submit, Mr. Minister, that is simply not good enough. It's not good enough for

the artistic and cultural community in Saskatchewan, not good enough to maintain that community to what we know it can be and can do.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — A couple of points, Mr. Chairman. One, I wish I'd bothered to bring my little personal file down here with the letters I received from Globe Theatre, Persephone, Twenty-Fifth Street Theatre, Saskatoon Symphony, and Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet and numerous individuals complimenting the government on the measures we did take on their deficit reduction plan. That's the first one.

The second one . . . Let's talk about the lotteries here. The hon. member is saying that isn't government money; that's nothing to do with government; this money belongs to a volunteer group. Mr. Chairman, we license that group. We can choose to license any group we want. We pick a provincial marketing organization; we have chosen Sask Sport Inc., and they are very happy to co-operate. They were absolutely delighted when I asked them about funding via the lottery system to the professional arts. They're very supportive of that, and they understand that the money generated, which they are handling, they are handling on behalf of the government.

Now if we had a mind, we could take the lotteries and run it through the Department of Finance, if we had a mind to do that, because the lotteries are set up, run, organized, controlled by government. We have turned the function over to a PMO, a provincial marketing organization, Sask Sport Inc. The ownership of the money is not necessarily that of any one volunteer group. It is administered by that group and, I may say, administered extremely well by that group. And I am one person who's not of a mind to see major changes made in that regard.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, before this afternoon is over I hope we can have some discussion about the lotteries. I don't intend to entered into that discussion right now. But let me just make this single point: you suggest that simply because your government licences the lottery, licences the volunteer community to conduct a lottery in this province — which I think is the best system — then you suggest that somehow it's government money. Well you also licence every service club in the province to run bingos, but you don't go about suggesting that the proceeds from those bingos, therefore, are yours, or should be directed by your government.

Mr. Minister, I want to put that discussion of the lottery aside for a moment because I want to come back to it later this afternoon.

(1515)

Let's look at funding to the professional arts, particularly funding to the Arts Board in this budget year in this estimate document. Last year, 1986-87, tax-based funding through the Art Board to the professional arts was at \$2.1 million. This year that figure reads \$1.3 million. That's very substantial cut in tax-based funding to the professional arts. In fact, I calculated it somewhere about a 38 per cent cut. Mr. Minister, how do you expect the Arts Board and the professional arts community in Saskatchewan to deal with a 33 per cent cut in funding?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, let me deal with that. The figure that shows in the blue book isn't the actual grant that is going to the Saskatchewan Arts Board. That is base grant, less the salaries of the people employed there and the consultants. In actual fact they will be receiving \$1,904,400 plus an extra \$1 million of funding that will be going to them supplementary this year. So we're talking about a big increase, a significant increase. I met with the Arts Board last Monday, as a matter of fact, and they were expressing great satisfaction with the level of funding and what they would be able to do with it.

And, Mr. Chairman, I would be remiss if I did not clear up something on the lottery issue. The Government of Saskatchewan is a partner in the Western Canada Lottery Corporation. NO service group, no Kinsmen, no Lions. The Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Manitoba, and the Government of Alberta comprise the board of directors of the Western Canada Lottery Corporation. We are the owners. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, any money generated through that is in part owned by this government, in part owned by the Government of Manitoba, and in part owned by the Government of Alberta. I'd be remiss if I didn't point that out.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, may I ask: why then, why in this estimate document, if in other years the salaries of the Arts Board staff were included in the Arts Board grant, then why in this estimate document are those salaries not included?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, initially when we were looking at budgets, there were contemplated reductions in grants to third parties. Some, in fact, received that. When we looked at the Arts Board, there was discussion prior to the budget being prepared that we could in fact pay the staffs of the Arts Board, take their people and pay them through the department, run it that way. We discovered after some discussions, but the blue book had already been prepared, that in fact to do that would have meant legislation. We'd have had to have changed The Arts Board Act.

And, Mr. Chairman, I was not prepared to make changes to the Act, and I wasn't going to bring it in here. So I met with the Arts Board, met with the chairperson, discussed how we could handle this and said, well if it means changes to the Act, we're not changing it; we'll take the money that was based for salaries, put it back to the Arts Board; they can pay the staff and look after arrangements as before.

Mr. Calvert: — Well I find this very interesting, Mr. Minister. For a minister and a government who goes about priding itself in its consultation with people, you're telling me that you produced a budget, an estimate, taking for granted that you were going to take from the Arts Board all of their staff and amalgamate them into your department. It shows you planned to do that if you didn't include the money in the budget, and then you went out and started consulting.

Who did you consult with before? Who did you consult with to come up with this figure? Who did you consult

with to come up with the idea of amalgamating the Arts Board staff into your department and thereby ending, effectively ending, that arm's-length arrangement that has served the arts community in Saskatchewan for so long?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — That's an excellent question, Mr. Chairman. As the hon. member knows, I was a rookie minister of this particular department, Culture and Recreation. And the discussion was internal about how we could relate better to the Arts Board. In fact, we thought initially that by absorbing their salaries and some other costs that they had, we would have more money to give them to run their programs and to do their granting and jurying system.

It obviously turned out not to be accurate. As I said, I was not aware at the time that this would necessitate changes to The Arts Board Act, and I was not prepared to make any changes, so hence back to the *status quo*.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, will you give assurance to this House and to the arts community in Saskatchewan that before you get any more good ideas about rearranging the arts community and their staff and so on, that you will in fact consult prior? I know there was lots of consultation after your announcement was made — lots of it. Will you assure the arts community that no more good ideas will be publicly announced before adequate consultation?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, it wasn't quite a public announcement. It was a discussion of a review of the Arts Board operation, the way they do business and the function, and it had never been carved in stone at that point. The commitment the hon. member wants is a very easy one for me to give now in retrospect.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, another area that concerns me in terms of arts board funding through the Arts Board relates to the Saskatchewan School of Arts at Fort San. As you well know, 1,200 young people were involved in programs down at Fort San this summer, a significant increase over last year, and a significant increase over the year prior.

Rumours at Fort San this summer have abounded that the programs at Fort San, the summer school, will not be there for much longer. I have had, and perhaps you have had . . . I have had young people in my office who have come to me with this concern, and they have wanted me to come to this House and ask you, as minister, just what is the plan in terms of the summer school at Fort San?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — It's a fairly complex question, Mr. Chairman. And yes, I've been getting a lot of comments and questions too, the same as the hon. member and other members in the House.

The operation down there, I'd like to say, Mr. Chairman, is a first-class summer school. It is excellent. Some of the instructors there turned down some of the more better-known national summer school of arts in other parts of North America just to come here because of the unique nature of the program. It is an absolutely first-class program.

It's not a government program, as we know. It's not through the Arts Board and with help from other folks, notably the Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations, who do, as the hon. member pointed out, make a healthy contribution to make sure that the summer school can continue.

Where we're running into some difficulties is: what is the future of the Fort San complex? The buildings are in bad need of restoration — very draught, cold. It's a tremendously expensive complex of buildings to keep operating, and I don't need to bore everybody here with the history of Fort San. We know what it was originally — the sanatorium for TB (tuberculosis) and so on. Over the years, as TB lessened, there was no need for Fort San to operate as a sanatorium.

The government has been running it for a number of years at an annual loss of some . . . I believe this year we're looking at close to half a million dollars loss of taxpayers' money just to operate those buildings. Now obviously, to be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, we have to take a look at this Fort San complex and decide if there is something we can do with it to make a break-even process, or do we just get rid of it altogether. We don't know. And at this point I really can't tell you what the future of the Fort San complex is. I can tell you that if Fort San is not available — and I discussed this with the Arts Board last week — we will certainly assist in finding an alternative facility.

As the hon. members are aware — because you visited it yourself and took a look at the operation; I'm sure you were impressed with what was happening there, as I was — that we'll do our best to find a facility big enough to accommodate the arts school. And I'm sorry I can't be any more definitive than that at this precise moment.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, could you be a little more definitive then, in the process that will be undertaken to determine the future of Fort San?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, the property management corporation has been doing studies on Fort San. They've looked at proposals that others have put forward - architects - what could be done down there. It's actually in their hands right now.

Mr. Calvert: — Do you have any idea when we can expect some recommendation then from property management — recommendations to your department and to the House?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, we should have a pretty clear idea of the future of Fort San before Christmas.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and then on behalf of the many young people that I've talked to, and indeed over the weekend I spoke to those who have been involved in instruction at Fort San. I think you may have been present for some of the highland festival here in Regina. I know there was significant discussion there.

Just to say to you, Mr. Minister, that those who have studied at Fort San, those who have taught at Fort San, see that location as very significant to the program, very

significant to the program. We ought to look at, I think, every option and opportunity available to keep the summer school at Fort San. There's no question it is a place of great beauty. It is a retreat from the hurried world where artists and craftspeople and musicians can come together and explore their fields.

So I would encourage you, on behalf of the many, many who have contacted me, to very seriously consider all options for keeping the summer school at Fort San, in addition to keeping the summer school open.

And if I may say, Mr. Minister, I would like to see the Saskatchewan Summer School of the Arts funded with tax-based funding. I'm not sure how long we can expect the Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations to be so gracious with their lottery money in helping we, the government, to fund this very valuable school.

And so the two things: I would encourage you to keep the school in Fort San, and to look again at complete funding of that school through tax-based dollars.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — No question, Mr. Chairman, that the location of the summer school of the arts in Fort San is conducive to good work. The setting is absolutely beautiful; the grounds are immaculate; it is peaceful; it is tranquil; and the students enjoy it immensely.

I just have one other comment on the school of the arts I'd like to make. Some of the U.S. instructors who were there, with whom I visited when I was down, had told me — and I mentioned this — about the unique nature of the program. They also pointed out that the summer school of the arts is very well known outside of our borders, but right here in Saskatchewan we seem to have an inferiority complex about how good we are, or how well some of the things are done in this province — whether it be the performing arts, or whether it be the summer school of the arts, or whether it be our parks system which just won a national award as being the best parks system in the country. We tend somehow to have an inferiority complex and think, well, we've got to be second-class because we're just in Saskatchewan. If I go on the banquet tour and I start telling people how wonderful the school of the arts are and the great things that happen there, I can see a lot of heads shake. It can't be; this is Saskatchewan.

And yet outside of our borders, when you get away from our boundaries, the arts community know about the summer school of the arts, they know about the quality of the program, and I, for one, would like to see it continue, preferably at that site. But if that is an absolute impossibility, and I won't know for a couple of months yet, we'll certainly be looking for the best possible site where we could hold the summer school of the arts.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, when you do have a report from property management, can we expect a public announcement? Will you announce publicly any intention to alter Fort San, or will you publicly announce what will be happening?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, when we get a plan for Fort San, there's going to be nothing secretive

about it or clandestine. As far as I'm concerned, as soon as we know what we're going to do, we'll stand up and tell the public, definitely.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I have some questions with respect to recreation and facilities grant program, slashed from 6 million to 2 million. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you'd give us an explanation of what on earth you're doing with this program.

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, what we did was we extended the period of time over which the grant would be paid out. And all of the communities that meet the criteria for the facilities grant program will receive the eligible grant.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, you initially allocated 32 million for this program in 1983. Your budgetary estimates to date have allocated 21 million. I understand that that amount, full amount of the 21 million, had pretty well been spent by March of this year. If you were going to make the balance of the 32 million available, there would have to have been 11 million available this year. You've got 2 million available. I can't believe, Mr. Minister, that you're going to be able to fund this program with \$2 million for this year with the estimates coming in.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, simply put, all of the eligible communities will receive funding before the program is over. We've extended it; the buzz-word is "slow walk" the program, but communities who have made application will be paid out. The approval to date is \$22,693,549 — that's the approval to date.

Mr. Shillington: — Would you explain to me how you've extended it, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — As communities go ahead and construction, Mr. Chairman, they are eligible for pay-outs. It doesn't all come out at one time. It comes out in pieces, more or less like progress payments, and we see that going over the next two years.

Mr. Shillington: — When the program was initially announced, it was announced that it was going to expire in five year's time, which would have made it March 1988. To what has the time now been extended?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — The deadline for application remains the same at March 31 of 1988, and the additional two years we talked about would take it to March 31, 1990.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, to make sure I understand what the minister says, that the deadline remains March 1988, but you think you're going to spend the balance of the money after . . . the balance of the \$9 million after March of 1988. Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — They may apply in March, but they wouldn't be eligible for any funding until the project was substantially on its way, either a progress payment or, in some cases, substantially complete. And there hasn't

been maximum take-off in any event, as I'm sure the hon. member is aware. You were minister of this department at one time when you ran a similar program, I believe.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you have allocated 21 million . . . I do not understand why the funding is reduced to two million this year. In each of the previous years — you've allocated 21 million during the first four years, that's about four to five million a year. I would expect that as time goes on and as the projects near completion the amount of money you'd expend would increase, not decrease.

Last year you budgeted six million, you must have spent close to six million in order to arrive at this figure of 22 million to date. How is it that last year you spent six million; this year you're going to get by on two million. I do not see why the level of expenditure has such a sharp decrease the last year. I would think the level of expenditure would increase the last year.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, that was strictly a fiscal decision that was taken, that we would not be spending as much money in this year as we had previously; it would be slow walking it. Money would be paid out to the communities, however, and they will receive the money for which they are eligible.

Mr. Shillington: — Well how are you going to slow walk it, Mr. Minister; this is a formula program. As was initially announced, every community's entitled to the \$5,000 base grant, plus the 25 bucks. How do you expect to slow walk it? Are you going to . . . is there going to be a lottery? Are you going to pay every second application that's made? Or how do you expect to slow walk it?

I just don't understand, Mr. Minister, how you control expenditures in this kind of a program without some extraordinary measures such as cutting the applications off early.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, the initial fund that was announced was based on the maximum take up, and we haven't reached maximum take up yet, and indications are it won't be there. As you probably remember too, there was incentive for rural municipalities to get together with communities and jointly build, for example, an arena in a town surrounded by two or three municipalities, and that's had some impact, too.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, this is like talking to a bowl of jelly. You're just not making any sense.

Mr. Minister, last year you spent close to six million. As you pointed out, each year that goes on you should be expending more, because more program, more facilities will be finished and eligible for all the funding. How is it, when I asked you before, how it was that you could get you to spend six million last year and two million this year, you said we're going to slow walk it. I asked you how you're going to slow walk it, and now you're back telling me that nobody wanted your money anyway. Why did they want your money last year to the tune of six million, but this year they're not going to want any more money than two million. I just . . . you're not making any

sense, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I'm sorry the hon. member can't follow, Mr. Chairman. I thought it was very simple. Instead of spending six million this year, we're going to spend two million. We're going to extend the life of the program, make it a little bit longer, and spend the balance of the money over the next number of years. Is that being a bowl of jelly?

It's too bad that this member always has to try and lower the level of debate, get in a little muck-raking. I really don't think you serve the public very well, or your constituents, when you do that. And like I told you last year in estimates, when you behave like that, take your mouth to a proctologist and get it looked at.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I might add it was you who started the process of insulting each other, not me.

Mr. Minister, how is it that you . . . You don't control expenditures, Mr. Minister. Unless you introduce some extraordinary measure, you can't control expenditures. That is decided by the municipalities. You just pay the bills in this thing unless you are in some way going to control expenditures, and I want to know how you're going to do that. But as the program was initially announced, you have no control over expenditures. You pay bills as they come in, that appropriate application.

How is it that you spend six million last year and you're going to spend two million this year? How are you going to control expenditures?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, they may be eligible this year, but instead of getting a cheque this year, they'll get it next year or the year after.

Mr. Shillington: — Are you serious? Are you serious? If the city of Regina submits an application in September, you're going to put it in the file and pay them in May of next year. Are you serious about that comment?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, the mere fact of receiving an application doesn't mean construction has started. If we approve it, we'll tell them up front when they'll get paid and they can plan their construction dates accordingly; and in any event, it would be by progress.

If they're going to build an arena and they come to us and they say, it's going to cost \$250,000, we don't write a cheque for \$250,000 that day and say, well away you go, city of Regina, and build an arena. It goes by progress, and they don't build an arena overnight, as the hon. member should well know.

Mr. Shillington: — But, Mr. Minister, the . . . what you say is true, but has no relevance to what's under discussion because we're not at the stage — most of these projects are being approved; in many cases they're at the stage where they're being completed.

How do you decide when they get their cheque? Are you just going to spend the two million, and when that's gone everybody else waits until May of next year? Or how do you intend to slow walk the payments? I now understand

the minister isn't slow walking his program, he's slow walking his payments and financing this at the expense of the municipalities, I might add. How do you intend to slow walk payments? Are you going to spend the two million, and everybody else waits till May, or do you have some system of encouraging municipalities to slow walk their construction so they don't get caught, or what is your system?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm confident the \$2 million budgeted for this year will get us through out commitments for this year.

Mr. Shillington: — Do I take it that you're not going to answer my question? Is that what I am to interpret from that last response, that you're not going to answer my question?

You said you're going to slow walk payments. What system do you have for slow walking payments?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Based, Mr. Chairman, on the uptake, the level of construction, how far along they are, we will pay them as they go. And most of them are not going to be completed in this year in any event, so they'll fall into next year's budget. The program will be extended. The communities affected have already been notified that payments will be extended, not just in this one year, but over the next two years after this fiscal year.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you're not as obtuse as your . . . it's a great act, but I think you understand my question. Let me just briefly recall what we've . . . our discussions, Mr. Minister.

I asked you how it is that you spent 6 million last year, and you're going to get by with 2 million this year. You said, we're going to slow walk the program. I pointed out to you that you don't control expenditures; the municipalities control expenditures, but at pace of their construction. Your response to that was, we're going to slow walk the payments. When I asked you what your system for slow walking the payments is, you hurry back to the starting line and you say, I'm confident that \$2 million is going to do me.

(1545)

I'm delighted in your confidence, Mr. Minister. It's the beginning of greatness. But I would like to know, Mr. Minister, how it is that you're going to slow walk either the pace or construction or the pace of the payments because you can't spend 6 million last year and spend 2 million this year when many of these projects are coming to completion. You're not making any sense, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — With the full knowledge of the municipalities, Mr. Chairman, and we tell them right up front, yes, you're approved, but you don't expect payment this month, next month, or the month after. We explain to them they will be down the road, and they can plan their construction accordingly. If they want to start immediately and they have sufficient funding to carry on, they can, if that's their decision. But we do have some control over the construction by telling them when they

may expect payment. Therefore they know when they may begin construction.

Mr. Shillington: — Well what system do you have for ensuring that this is done fairly and that all municipalities . . . I'm trying to think of the community that the . . . Turtleford, but I'm not sure if . . . how do we ensure that Turtleford is treated in the same manner as . . .

An Hon. Member: — Regina.

Mr. Shillington: — Regina, yes. It's not the best example in the world. How do we ensure that Turtleford is treated the same as Wynyard in this slow walking system of yours?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — When communities apply, they are taken on a first come, first served basis. They're dealt with by individuals within the department whose role it is to go out and meet with them and talk to them, and it's explained to them right there and then that, yes, if they're eligible, they will be approved - if they're eligible, they will be approved; and then we explain the payment system, and they plan their construction date accordingly.

Mr. Shillington: — Well that doesn't answer my question, Mr. Minister. Time, however, I don't think permits me to draw out of the minister your system for postponing payments. I suspect that's because there isn't a system, and I suspect that it has everything to do with who represents those communities and how much political punch they have, and very little to do with a fair and reasonable allocation. I suspect, Mr. Minister, that ridings which do not have a spokesman in the government benches have some difficulty getting the same treatment out of such a discretionary system . . .

An Hon. Member: — Is that a charge . . . an allegation?

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, indeed it is. I just finished making it for the benefit of the member from Weyburn who has some difficulty with the English language. I just finished making that as an allegation. I just finished making it, so the member from Weyburn will understand me. I am saying that your system is far too discretionary, that it's almost certain to be abused, and you should . . . you should, and you need some system for doing it fairly.

The initial system, as it was initially announced, had no such qualifications attached to it. The initial program which you announced was 32 million for five years; there was a formula. When they got their project completed and the paperwork all done, they got paid. Now you're saying that's not the system any more; you're not going to pay them when they get done, if they finish it before your timetable.

I say to you, Mr. Minister, it's a bad system. It should be such that there's little discretion in it, and all communities are treated the same because the nature of any political system, and particularly this one which is built upon patronage, is that communities won't be treated the same. Those that are represented by government members will be treated . . . and influential government members, will be treated well. So I say to you, Mr. Minister: if you're

system is as I understand it, it's a bad system.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm a little disappointed at the lack of faith being expressed by the hon. member. I could give him, constituency by constituency, the projects which have approved and where they money's going — Assiniboia . . . In fact, what I'm going to do, Mr. Chairman, what I'm going to do, I'm going to take the grants and the cheques that went out this year and all the ones that were passed by OC; I'm going to find a list and I'll have it sent to you and you can peruse it for yourself. And you'll see that ridings represented by NDP members have, in fact, received funding in this year. Frankly, I find it a little disappointing that you'd make that kind of charge on the floor of the Assembly.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, it's been a trade mark of this government; patronage has been a trade mark of this government. As I've said on so many occasions, it is normally a sign that a government's getting long in the tooth. Mr. Minister, it was a pillar of this government from the very beginning. You came into office apparently believing that patronage was the foundation upon which any successful government was built.

Mr. Minister, I want to address an ancillary issue before time elapses, and that is the fact that your slow walking expenditures, in and by itself, I think is unfortunate. Mr. Minister, this particular program had a number of positive features to it. It generated employment; had a very significant multiplier effect. I think I was told last year that your estimates were that, for every dollar the government spent, \$4 wound up being spent in the community.

So, Mr. Minister, it is an expenditure which results in a good deal of economic activity had hence employment, something those communities need very badly; provided part-time employment in communities for farmers. We've lost a good deal of that.

So, Mr. Minister, here again the public of Saskatchewan is paying for your fiscal incompetence. Because you've got yourself into difficulty on such a grand scale, a program which is needed, which provides important benefits, has been largely lost. We've gone from 6 million to 2 million.

And as I say as well, Mr. Minister, that the program itself is needed. This program has resulted in a significant enhancement of recreational, cultural facilities in Saskatchewan, and thus an enhancement of the quality of life in Saskatchewan. It has provided employment, often part-time employment, and it has enriched the communities.

Once again, Mr. Minister, the public of Saskatchewan are paying for the incompetence which you people demonstrated on such a grand scale in 1982 to 1986.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I'm glad the hon. member appreciates the value of the program and understands why we put it in. Certainly, it created a lot of employment, it's done a lot of good, and it's put needed facilities scattered right throughout the province, so I'm glad he appreciates the program. I'm confident, Mr. Chairman, that we can fulfil all of our obligations by March of 1990.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, I just want to touch briefly on this grant because of the implication it has for the building of public libraries in the province, particularly in the regional system. I recognize that this grant has been in place for some time, but I was very alarmed to see the amount reduced from 6 million to 2 million for this year, and it sounds to me as if the five-year plan is being extended for the next three years. There are rumours that this grant may be dropped altogether. Is there any substance to that rumour, that in the future it won't be there in the budget at all?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we introduced the program; we said it was a five-year program, and expected it to expire at the end of five years. There hasn't been any particular consideration given right now as to renewing it or bringing in a different program, a similar program. It just really hasn't been discussed. We extended this program a little longer for the period and that's as far as it's gone.

Ms. Smart: — Well, to extend it for another three years out of a five-year program is extending it quite a bit from the original.

I just want to put on the record my concern about the building and the renovating of the public library buildings in this province that belong to the regional system. When I questioned the Minister of Education about this, and about the building of library facilities, he pointed out that the public library system is supported by this facilities grants. There is a lot of talk from the government about the building of library facilities, by the Minister of Education. The facilities he's referring to are buildings within the schools and the community college system, and presumably the technical system. There's no money, in the budget for education, for the building and maintenance of public libraries in this province.

But your government has talked a lot about the development of the information age in Saskatchewan going into the 21st century, the knowledge-based industries, etc., etc. What plans do you have to build public library buildings out of the Parks, Recreation and Culture budget? A 50 per cent grant coming to the municipal governments is not enough for the funding of these library facilities. They are very badly needed.

And I suggest that the 50 per cent . . . requiring the municipalities to put out 50 per cent is too high, and it's no wonder that the municipalities are not able to pick up on this benefit. And I want to know . . . Okay, two questions. One is: what are your plans for the public libraries, and what are you going to do to help the municipalities fund these buildings?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, communities make those decisions. I don't make them on their behalf. I see she's waving her arms around there and probably thinks there hasn't been anything spent on libraries. The amount . . . For your information, because you've come in here totally ignorant of the facts, you should do your homework before you come into estimates.

The amount approved from a grant program is \$569,981, of which \$500,861 has already been paid. Number of projects per community status: cities, two; towns, 16; villages, 15; R.M.s — not one — 36. There were projects in 27 constituencies, and the very first one I'm looking at, to allay the fears of the member for Regina Centre, was in Prince Albert. And I believe that's the constituency not held by anyone on this side of the House.

Ms. Smart: — It's my job to ask you questions, Mr. Minister, and I don't think that that kind of arrogant response is necessary. I'm asking you an intelligent question about the development of the information age in Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Try it. What are your plans for extending the public library system buildings in this province in co-operation with the Minister of Education who wants to see this province enter the information age? What are you doing specifically to support public library construction in the future, since the grant has gone down from 6 million to 2 million?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I think, Mr. Chairman, I outlined already for the hon. member what we have done. We've put in over half a million dollars, and we'll be looking at other projects in consultation with the minister responsible for libraries, and certainly with the communities.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I'd like to go back again to talk about some of the things that are happening in some of those cultural facilities that this program is intended to provide - some of the things that are happening inside. I want to pick up just three issues again from funding to the professional arts, and I want to make a couple of what I think are very positive suggestions and get your response to them.

Again I ask: do you support the recommendation of Edmond Bouvey that the professional arts community, the culture community, needs annually, between now and the turn of the century, a 4 per cent increase in funding? We certainly don't have that in this budget. Will you commit yourself to looking at at least that amount in the upcoming budget?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, in a perfect world it would be great to say there's all kinds of money available, and yes, we'd make commitments to increase every year the amount of money government's spending. We made a conscious effort this year to try not to spend any more than we spent last year, in order to do that we had to take a look at all of the operations of government, the sheer size of government, as well as the granting formulas.

I can say that we have increased the amount available, as the hon. member is aware — we discussed this earlier — to professional arts in this year. I would like to maintain it at least at that level. And if there's any possibility of increasing the level of funding, I'd be the first to do it because I'd be delighted to do it.

Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Minister, I remind you that we have employed in the cultural industry in Saskatchewan more than twice the number of people employed in the

potash and uranium industry. That's from your document. Now I hear rumours that we have \$800 million to write off a debt for the potash corporation. I hear that kind of figure — \$800 million. So apparently there's money around.

If, in fact, this underfunding of the arts is to continue, would you look at another recommendation from the Bouvey task force, and that is to insert some stability into funding for the arts — some stability. So that the arts community wouldn't be looking at funding just for one year, but that they could have a commitment for a minimum, a minimum of a three-year funding period. It would certainly help the cultural community in Saskatchewan in their planning if they could have at least a three-year commitment. Would you entertain that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — One of the problems we have, Mr. Chairman, is that government is voted money on an annual basis, and we go through this democratic process which we're participating in right now. I think a three-year commitment is, in fact, a little on the short side. We'd prefer to look at a five-year plan and a five-year budgetary process for those particular groups.

We have to talk to them about where they anticipate being down the road. And in fact we have to talk about the survival of some of those groups. I would like to see the current level of funding plus the access that we have to the lotteries kept up. If there's any way to increase it, yes. But obviously this is going to be a cabinet decision to say, well there's not going to be a cut to that particular grant in future years. It's going to be a discussion that will take place in the budgetary process which will be coming up again in the next few months.

(1600)

But I really believe that we have to look further than a one year at a time ad hoc basis with funding to professional arts. And I take the advice of the hon. member and I'd like to say we'll look at a five-year program if possible.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I'd be more than delighted if you would look at a five-year period — more than delighted. And certainly we do that with other government programs and then commit to that five-year period so there will be some stability for the arts community in terms of their funding.

One other question, Mr. Minister which I think is a positive direction you might move in terms of the arm's-length principle of the Arts Board, would you look at changing the legislation, changing the legislation governing the Arts Board so that the board themselves may choose their own director rather than having a director appointed by order in council, who may or may not be a political appointment? Would you consider that option?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — I certainly would consider it, Mr. Chairman. I've discussed it with the Arts Board. I strongly feel the incumbent executive director would probably resent it if anybody suggested he was a political appointment. I'm quite certain he wasn't, and doesn't

regard himself in that capacity at all. But it's something we've talked about at the Arts Board and it's something I'd be prepared to discuss further with them and explore it and see what possibility there is to do that, yes.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I certainly agree the current incumbent, the current executive director, I would not describe as a political appointment. But you will recognize that that danger exists when the director is appointed by cabinet, no matter who may be government of the day.

An Hon. Member: — My dad would like the job.

Mr. Calvert: — I'm sure your father would like the job.

So I'm happy to hear you say that you would consider it. I would encourage you to give it a lot of consideration and continue that dialogue with the Arts Board, and perhaps by this time next year we can see a change to the Act.

Mr. Minister, we discussed a little earlier the summer school of the arts in Fort San. We have had in our province in the last 18 months another school involving young people involved in the arts. You should know it well — the Saskatchewan School of the Performing Arts in Saskatoon. It operated in this past year providing some 30 students, ages 10 to 18, with classes in voice, music, drama, dance, in addition to their academic training. That school, as you know, had financial difficulties, and I may say had some difficulties with your department. And the most recent media reports that I see, and the reports that I hear from Saskatoon is that the school is now effectively closed — at least it certainly hasn't reopened this fall. It's trying to sort out its financial difficulties. And I wonder if you could give the House just an update on the school of the performing arts.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, I remember the details on this. Obviously this started before I assumed this portfolio. But as the hon. member is aware, we did get into an agreement with the school of performing arts that we would give them funding of \$200,000 to capital; the city of Saskatoon matched it. But there was a condition in there that that was it. They wouldn't be coming back for any more money. And they in fact thought that they could survive with that; they could run with that.

Now I'm aware of their internal administrative and organizational difficulties. I'm somewhat loathe to get into those because it entails some criticism of individuals, and I've no intentions of doing that on the floor of the legislature, to start criticizing people. But it did have internal organizational administrative difficulties which caused them some severe problems.

One of the difficulties was, they tried to start up too quickly. They didn't plan long enough ahead for a curriculum and looking at staff and all of the logistical things. They were gung-ho, enthusiastic, which you have to admire, Mr. Chairman, but they started up just a little quicker than they were actually able to cope with, and that helped to contribute to their difficulties. I may say, we did give them an additional 50,000 after that, but it didn't rescue them.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, in a letter that you sent to me, dated February 20 of this year, you said that you believed the school to be a "visionary idea." Do you still hold that position? What will you and your department do now to see this visionary idea continue and come to some reality again?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, no question about it being visionary. This would have been the only school of performing arts in Canada, as a matter of fact. It's unfortunate it didn't get off the ground. It wasn't on the best financial footing; it certainly was not on a good administrative footing. And consequently, subsequently they ran into difficulties.

If the hon. member is asking me for a commitment of funding to do a new school of performing arts, I cannot give him that today. I can tell him we're very interested if other groups have got a concept and a plan. I have had one or two individuals in Saskatoon who don't want the idea to die, and they certainly are more than welcome to bring it to the attention of our department. I cannot at all commit any more funding. We've already spent \$250,000 on that, and that's gone. And I don't want to commit to that particular school, but I would be interested in meeting with anybody else who's got a good idea for a school of performing arts. Visionary doesn't even come close to describing what an exciting concept it is.

Mr. Calvert: — I say to that: hear, hear, Mr. Minister. I share your enthusiasm for the vision of that school and the concept of that school.

Can I make one simple point. If, as you suggest here in the House today and certainly as officials of your department have suggested outside the House, the difficulties encountered by the school of performing arts had much to do with the management of that school, would you then commit to lend, to offer some of the expertise of your department — and I'm sure you must have expertise in your department — in terms of management? Would you offer to lend that, to provide it to this group or to any other group that may come with such a visionary idea, and would you commit to do that when you're providing public moneys, as were provided in this case? I submit those moneys were provided without some of the expertise that might also have been provided to assist that school and its management. So would you commit your department and yourself to that kind of a direction?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, definitely we'd make all the expertise available. As a matter of fact, the assistant deputy minister sitting beside me is meeting with them tomorrow to take a look at the situation.

I will point out, Mr. Chairman, that initially when they started up, they really didn't want our help or our expertise. And frankly, I honestly believe that contributed to their subsequent problems, that they did not accept offers of assistance from the department. They wanted to go it alone. Ultimately, we had to insist that we had someone represent us because we had money on the board.

But yes, we'd make expertise available not only to them

but anybody else who thinks we can be of service to them. That's why we're here; we're here to serve.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some questions of the minister regarding forestry and his government's record and the future for forestry in this province.

Specifically I would like to ask some questions about the closure of the nurseries in northern Saskatchewan, the nursery at Macdowall and at Chitek Lake. And I would ask, Mr. Minister, the closure of these nurseries, in some people's estimation, is going to create some hardships in terms of the future of our forests. And I would like to know how the closure of these nurseries is in fitting with a good plan, a solid plan, for sound forest management in the province.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Chairman, one of those nurseries to which the hon. member refers is in my own seat, and if he doesn't think that was a very difficult decision, believe me, that was a painful decision. Nobody likes to close anything down, especially if there are jobs affected. And we did our best to accommodate all of the people who were affected by the decision to close them.

The simple fact is, Mr. Chairman, we have more than adequate capacity with the north branch and the Big River nursery right now. We have all the capacity we need for reforestation programs. As we probably had this exchange before, I believe, in terms of reforestation and forest management, what we have to be cognizant of, Mr. Chairman, is that the forest industry is changing, and the traditional type of tree we planted, spruce for example, is not in such great demand now because of changes in technology in the forest industry. And because of the high tech that has come into that industry, they're utilizing other species of woods.

And in managing of forests and in looking ahead and trying to project what will be required in the future, we're having to take into account the nature of the industry as it exists in Saskatchewan, which is not at all the same, as the hon. member is aware, in say, Manitoba, Alberta, B.C., or down East, Quebec and Ontario, which are the big forest partners in the game.

We have to take a look at what is specific to our industry; where it is going to be. And this is a difficult thing, as I'm sure the hon. member can appreciate, saying where are we going to be in 25, 50, or 70 years' time. The fact is we have still not harvested the first tree we planted in Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, I realize of course that one of those nurseries was in your riding and one happens to be in my riding. And I guess that's one thing we do have in common — maybe not a lot of other things, but certainly that we may.

I understand as well the changes in technology and the changes in demand, and those things change from time to time, and we have to be a forward looking province if we're to maintain a viable industry. But, Mr. Minister, I think there are some people in this province who maybe

tend to disagree with what you're doing.

In terms of the backlog of areas that have been harvested and not reforested, I think you will agree with me that there is a problem there, and that there is a problem that needs to be addressed, and the way to address it is by sound forest management activities.

And I was sent a news release in the first part of March from the Saskatchewan Forestry Association, Mr. Minister. And in part it says, and I want to quote from that release:

Recently our silviculture efforts in Saskatchewan have been declining. Planting has dropped from a peak in '83 of 12 million to a low of 8 million in 1986. Similarly, scarification to assist natural regeneration dropped from a high of 11,000 hectares in '82 to 75 hectares in '86. Only 39 per cent of the total area harvested is scarified and 32 per cent planted.

With this commitment to forestry, it is apparent that a more substantial forest management effort is required. The longer this effort is delayed, the more expensive will become the treatment.

I wrote to you urging some action, Mr. Minister, shortly after there. But this from the Saskatchewan Forestry Association would seem to indicate to me that the professionals, as part of that association, do feel that your department is not keeping up and not doing what you perhaps should be or might be doing in order to enhance this industry. Could you comment on that?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, I'd be delighted to comment on that, and don't misconstrue this as being a political comment, but the individual in question who wrote that actually lives in my riding, and I'm very familiar with him. I do know him; we've met several times.

But he's talking about how the traditional levels have gone down, and that statement's entirely false. In the last four years of the NDP administration, they planted 39 million trees. In the first four years of our administration, we planted 45. So the comment is obviously false, as made by that particular individual.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, I'm not commenting on this individual's particular political affiliation, nor do I care to go back years and years. I'm looking at the problem as we see it now, and how we can solve those problems.

The Saskatchewan Forestry Association is not one man; the Saskatchewan Forestry Association has many members, and I've met with an awful lot of them. And so I would hope that you wouldn't want to indicate that each and every one of the members of the Saskatchewan Forestry Association are part of that association for political reasons. I frankly don't believe that to be the case.

Mr. Minister, regarding the forestry or the nurseries, I would like to take you back to 1986 where you're

government cut funding. And I believe this debate went on in the legislature at the time. And I want to refer you to a inter-office, I guess it is, memo, and in it it indicates that because of your cut-backs in 1986 that Simpson Timber, which you rescinded by the way, after some public pressure through this House, that Simpson Timber wouldn't get 500,000 trees for fall planting because that department would be out of money to fund the nursery to supply those seedlings.

(1615)

I ask you, Mr. Minister, having gone back to your government's record of 1986, looking at what has happened in 1987 in terms of the closure of the two nurseries, do you not feel that the people involved in forestry and the people of this province who depend on the forest industry for their livelihood should have some concerns? I frankly, Mr. Minister, after listening to a lot of debate and a lot of rhetoric in here over the last weeks, am a little hesitant to believe that because of the closure of those nurseries and the funding cuts in 1986, I'm a little hesitant to believe that you're not making these cut-backs strictly for financial reasons as opposed to what will build a good, economic forest industry.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, with the two nurseries that we are currently operating, we have a capacity of close to 20 million seedlings annually, and that is more than adequate for our particular needs right now.

We have made a commitment over five years that we'll plant 50 million seedlings. That's the commitment by cabinet; it was a decision taken some months ago. Now we may not plant 10 this year; we're probably looking in the order of 7 million this year, maybe a little more. But certainly we intend to get 50 million seedlings into the ground in the next five years.

The forest management license agreements which we're negotiating with the companies, contain provisions in there for reforestation. They are paying a fee for reforestation, and we're saying to them, you're the beneficiary of those trees which really are there for the use of all of us in Saskatchewan, so you're going to have to pay to put them back into the ground.

And we've got a use it or lose it policy with the companies. I think the FMLA (forestry management licensing agreement) process has been a good one. Our process is as good as any of the other provinces. Having met with the forest ministers frequently and examined what we're doing across the country, I think we're comparing favourably.

As the hon. member knows, we're one of the small players in the forest game in Saskatchewan in terms of export. We export about one-half of 1 per cent of what goes out of Canada, so we're not really on a competitive level with, for example, British Columbia. But then again, the nature of their industry is different from ours. Their climate is different; their soil is different.

And if there is one need, in my view, in Saskatchewan, if I may make this comment, it's for increased research, Mr.

Chairman. And I think we're doing a reasonable job in silviculture. I think we're doing a reasonable job in reforestation. I know we're doing a reasonable job in forest management, and we've really improved quite a bit. But the one area that has me concerned is research.

There has been some done on cloning different species. But just imagine, Mr. Chairman, if we could grow a commercial forest in instead of 90 years, which it approximately is now, certainly nothing less than 70; if we could cut that time in half, what a tremendous boost that would be to our forest economy. And that's the kind of thing that's being worked on now, but not at a speed that would suit me.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, certainly we're all concerned about research and development. And if you look at the program and the package that the New Democrats had indicated that we would implement if we had formed government in 1986 or 1987, I'm sure that the people of the province understand certainly what our commitment is. Yours, however, may be a little hazy.

You indicate — and you did a couple of weeks ago in this House — that it was your government's intention to plant 50 million seedlings over the next five years; however, first year only seven, which is a major decrease from years previous, and what I think, Mr. Minister, we're looking at here is, is do the people out there believe you?

When is this slack going to be picked up? And why, Mr. Minister, haven't you allocated the funds for this year to plant the 10 million seedlings that you have committed yourself to, as opposed to putting it down the road somewhere.

And as well, Mr. Minister, I would like you to answer: in terms of the Canada-Saskatchewan forestry agreement, where you committed your government to \$14 million spent over five-year period starting in 1984, could you indicate — and by the way, the funding would be matched, as I understand, by the federal government — could you indicate from 1984 to this year how many actual dollars your government has spent in that program?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have the numbers for the previous years, but I can commit to get them for you and send them to you, if that's okay. I'll tell you what's in this year: provincial share is \$2,599,036; the federal share is \$2,192,090 and we are currently in the process of scatter flying and doing site preparation for three planting for next year, and we want to catch up that backlog. This year we're having to do the site work; next year we'll start planting, and we'll be into our program of 50 million seedlings.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, certainly, Mr. Minister, I appreciate your offer to give us those figures. I do, however, find it awfully strange a program — an investment of \$28 million of which you fund 50 per cent — I do, however, find it strange that your officials wouldn't know how much your government has spent each and every year since 1984 on that program.

And I want to bring you back to the nurseries and some of

the reasons why people are a little hesitant to believe your commitments. As I say, I appreciate your offer, and I would like you to forward those numbers to me.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, the Saskatchewan government has spent 5.6 million; the federal government has spent 7.8 million towards agreement-related projects; the total is 13.4 million. That represents about 48 per cent of the planned agreement funding, so we're just about right on target with the agreement. That's the number you're looking for. The specific, year by year breakdown, yes, we can find that, but I think that answers your question in terms of are we spending our share and how are we doing with the agreement. We've spent 48 per cent.

Mr. Lautermilch: — So you're telling me then, Mr. Minister, since 1984 your government has spent 5.6 million, or have I misunderstood you, and that the federal government has spent 7.8 million? Is that what I'm led to believe?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — That's right, Mr. Chairman, I point out that the federal government also has a pretty hefty investment put into the Big River nursery. They've got something in the order of \$3 million in there.

Mr. Lautermilch: — So then over a three-year period, if we were to average what your government's commitment was at \$2.8 million per year, you have spent 5.6, which falls considerably short of that. And given the fact . . . And am I right? Do I understand that the federal government was matching dollar for dollar what the provincial government spent? Is that what I understand?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Some of the programs, Mr. Chairman, are provincial direct programs, some are federal direct programs, and some are cost shared; dollar for dollar we match them.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay. Mr. Minister, the FMLA . . . and if you might indicate to me where the harvesters get their nursery stock from. Does it come from the provincial nurseries? Are they purchased elsewhere, or where do those . . . where does that planting stock come from?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, that all comes from our provincial nurseries.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay, so then they're purchased from the government as part . . . from the stumpage fees, the fund that Weyerhaeuser is administering. Am I to understand that is correct, and that they will then purchase from the provincial government?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — We supply the trees, Mr. Chairman, and they use their funds for the planting operation.

Mr. Lautermilch: — So then the provincial government supplies the stock at zero cost?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's correct. And I point out to the hon. member we do that for parks, schools, licence holders, and anybody else in the

province.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Can I ask you, Mr. Chairman . . . you surely are aware, I would hope are aware of Weyerhaeuser's plans or any other major harvesting operations in this province. Are they going to be requesting enough stock from you in each and every year to be planting what they're harvesting?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — What we have in our agreement, Mr. Chairman, is on the length of the lease, is a five-year agreement that they have to give to us their plan, their silviculture plan, reforestation plan, harvesting plan for five years which is approved by the officials within the department. We supervise what they do from there. Natural reforestation takes care of about 20 per cent, the rest this year will probably be in the order of some 7 million seedlings that we would be planting manually.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Minister, regarding the five-year plan, I'm wondering if that plan has already been submitted by Weyerhaeuser and if you would be willing to share that five-year plan with the people of this province.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, they have a five-year plan, and every spring they have to submit to us what they plan on doing in that particular year, and it goes through an approval process within the department. Part of the approval process is that we check within our department, the wildlife branch, the fisheries branch, to see if it's compatible with any other integrated resource management plan we have in the forest; plus we check with the Department of the Environment.

I'm informed that the whole thing is a very, very thick document. It hasn't been practice, as far as I know in past years, to publish anybody's particular harvesting plan. I can certainly take a look at that. It wasn't suggested before, but sure, we can discuss it.

Mr. Lautermilch: — I think, Mr. Minister, you know, rather than discuss it, I would certainly like to have a look at that agreement. We're not unfamiliar with large, huge volumes of paper from your government. You might be aware, we've gone through the conditions of the PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) asset sale to Weyerhaeuser, that thick, and we're more than pleased to do so on behalf of the people of the province. And if you would submit that to the members on this side of the House for our perusal, we would most certainly appreciate it.

In terms, Mr. Minister, of reforestation and the moneys collected from the provincial government, I've had from some private operators harvesting in the North under the FMLA, some concerns in that some of the small independent operators who are doing selective cutting feel that they are subsidizing the clear-cut operations. And the way it was explained to me was, as an example, selective cutting along a river edge — some, whatever, 300 yards, whatever it might happen to be — that when they're in there selective cutting, they're paying the same stumpage rates as would be a large clear-cut operator who in a lot of cases should be selective cutting, but they tell me, aren't. And, you know, that would be left to argument

and debate between us or between some of your officials.

(1630)

But the problem and the concern that they have is because they're selective cutting and still paying the same rate, that they're unfairly subsidizing the larger operators. I'm wondering if you might want to comment on that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Yes, I can appreciate the comment the hon. member's making. When we talk about the smaller operators or the SCIFI (Saskatchewan Council of Independent Forest Industries) members who might think that, well, they're paying the same stumpage for selective trees instead of a clear-cut type of operation. But they also, Mr. Chairman, I point out, don't have responsibility to build roads or some of the other things that are in the agreement with the companies — Simpson, L & M Wood Products, MacMillan Bloedel, Weyerhaeuser. They have other obligations that they have to meet that the small operators don't have to meet.

And when we're doing selective cutting with them, we are cognizant of the fact that at one time they got one-half per cent, one-half of 1 per cent of the total harvest volume schedule in Saskatchewan. They are now closer to 8 per cent of the harvest volume schedule in Saskatchewan, and it's not all scrub timber or poor wood or inaccessible wood. We've made every effort to try and find them good wood and easily accessible wood.

So I think that they may feel that they're being discriminated against because they've been asked to pay the same stumpage, but they don't have all the same responsibilities inherent in the agreements we have with them.

Mr. Lautermilch: — I think that there might be some misunderstanding in terms of what that stumpage rate is going for in terms of the small private operators, because I would want to share with you, Mr. Minister, that they are concerned, and there are some hard feelings out there, some ill feelings, that in fact they are subsidizing larger operators.

And I would want to say, Mr. Minister, that in my riding as well as in yours, I think you're aware of the number of employees, the number of local people that our small harvesters have employed over the years, and let's hope will continue to employ in future years. I know that it's a big economic boom to the people of Prince Albert and area, and certainly we want to see those operations economically viable and to continue to operate as they have for many years.

And might I suggest that you contact, have your officials contact some of the private harvesters who have these feelings and who are concerned that in fact they are subsidizing other companies. They understand as well that the larger operators are responsible for building roads. They also understand, Mr. Minister, that the provincial government is responsible for building an awful lot of roads for them each and every year under this new agreement, which creates some reasons for concern for them.

Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you a few questions, and I would like to know if your department has had any problems with contractors in the Big River area who supply Weyerhaeuser. And I guess I would ask you specifically if you have reports of contractors harvesting aspen in unapproved stands and continually bulldozing aspen on roads and landings. I would ask you, Mr. Minister, if any of those concerns have been raised with you.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, no, I'm not familiar with any of those kind of problems. I haven't had any expressed to me. I was in my constituency this weekend, as a matter of fact, and I didn't have any calls of that nature. If the hon. member's aware of some problems of that nature, sure, we'd like to hear about them and do what we can to address them.

I should point out to the hon. member, we do have a resource committee of caucus. The chairman is the member for Kinistino, and he has been meeting on a very regular basis, as you well know, Mr. Chairman, with operators from your constituency and others around the province. And we've been trying to listen to their concerns and see how we can address them.

He's also, with other members of the committee, yourself included, have met with SCIFI on numerous occasions, and we plan to continue meeting with them and hearing their concerns.

Mr. Lautermilch: — I would want to share with you, Mr. Minister, that in fact there is some concern. I'm sure . . . I was hoping you may have been aware of it. But I know that there are some concerns from people who work within your department, in terms of the utilization of aspen and the other areas in terms of the cuts and the right of ways.

Is it — if you might be able to share with me, Mr. Minister — is it, as part of the harvesting plan that was submitted by Weyerhaeuser, is it their plan to salvage aspen and other valuable wood from major right of ways, might I ask?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that Weyerhaeuser has full intention of taking all the usable wood that's there and taking it to the most economic use that they can make of it, whether it be the aspect of pump in P.A. or wood more suitable to studs which would go to Big River. That's my understanding.

Mr. Lautermilch: — I appreciate that, Mr. Minister, that that is your understanding. I just would like to share with you that that is not in all cases what's been happening. Perhaps, and I hope you will check that, perhaps you would want to check that for us. I would not want to see any of our valuable timber bulldozed into the ground and left sitting.

And, Mr. Minister, I would ask in terms of violations of the forestry Act, and I think we've been over this a bit before, but I'd like to know if there have been any violations in the past five years of the forestry Act in terms of over-cut or cutting in an area where perhaps there shouldn't have

been, that have gone unpunished? And if so, I would ask you, for what reason?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, before I get to that question, I'd like to refer to the penultimate. If there are some specific examples of a problem going on with either salvage or leaving wood in the bush, we committed years ago to cleaning that particular aspect of the operation up and not leaving viable good wood in the bush at all.

If there are some examples, and I certainly appreciate the hon. member bringing them to my attention, I can commit to you that we will investigate every one of them. I haven't had calls in my office with complaints. Perhaps some of the members of the resource committee have, but we would certainly send our foresters out to take a look at the situation and make sure that the agreements are being adhered to strictly, because we intend to enforce them strictly.

With regards to over-cut, or someone contravening sections of The Forest Act, there have been some, but they haven't been in the large companies as I am informed. But some of them have been smaller operators, sometimes inadvertently in the wrong area, going into the wrong piece, sometimes not so inadvertently, and taking out more than their allowable cut. And in those cases we've had to investigate them and do something about it.

Mr. Lautermilch: — I would then ask a little more specifically, Mr. Minister. It's my understanding that there have been violations in terms of lack of clean-up in different areas that have been harvested. And I can cite some, give you the number of cords of wood that have been apparently misused.

In the Steep Bank Lake area, 39.6 cords in 1984-85; Fort a la Corne, 235 cords, '85-86; Hall Lake, '86-87, 128 cords, mismanagement and waste of this nature and, as you say, not done by a large major operator. But I would ask: are your officials aware of these infractions and has there been anything done about them?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, we're not aware of any particular operator who has been guilty of the particular alleged infraction that I heard about just now. We'd certainly be prepared to look at them, if we haven't already had someone at the local level.

And it doesn't necessarily, obviously, always get to my desk. Operations that are taking place out in the field level, they're handled at the field level by individual foresters who would report to the regional forester. But on the specific examples cited by the hon. member, I'll certainly have those run back through the system and see if there were, in fact, any charges laid or if there was insistence on clean-up and we'll check who the operators were too.

Mr. Lautermilch: — I would certainly appreciate, Mr. Minister, if you would pass that information on to me. It appears that the particular operator — and I didn't want to name him and I won't — has been in consistent violation of your department's regulations and it's been going on for a considerable period of time. And so I certainly would hope that you would indicate to us whether or not

that situation has been cleaned up.

I ask you as well, Mr. Minister, if you might be able to inform the members of this House in respect to timber being utilized at the Prince Albert pulp mill. It has been a consistent complaint from people that work out there and people who know that industry, to me and other members in the area, that in all cases the best utilization of our forests is not happening. And the example that is brought to me on many, many occasions is that there is a lot of saw timber that is being pulped.

I would hope that the new owners, the Weyerhaeuser corporation, will be good corporate citizens in this province and will utilize that timber to the best of its ability. And I would ask you, Mr. Minister: what type of policing arrangements are there to ensure that, especially when we have larger operators who do clear-cut operation? We understand sometimes that sorting is not maybe the most economical situation in terms of the bottom line for the corporation, but we who represent the people of this province, you and I, have a responsibility to ensure that that wood is utilized in the best way possible.

And I would ask, Mr. Minister: have you had any complaints or any dialogue with any particular parties in terms of that type of a situation?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, we're not aware of any specific complaints, but we do, to use the hon. member's word, do some policing. We do spot checks; we do yard checks where the foresters go to the yard and examine what is in the yard; we also do checks out in the bush; and we look at the sorting operation.

I would say, and I'm sure the hon. member understands this, that any company or any individual would want to put whatever wood they have to the best economic use. If the dollar is to be made by putting it to pulp, that's where they'd put it; if it is to be made by stud, by going to the Big River mill, that's where they'll put it. And obviously there's good money in the softwood lumber, in the stud business. So I don't think we'd find too many examples of anybody wasting it on pulp.

I am aware of cases in the past where, in the old PAPCO days particularly, I remember having complaints sent to me that there was wood lying in the yard that should not be there. It was big, large dimension timber and it should not be going to pulp, it should be going to saw timber. And I think that case is going on now, that is the case in fact that they would be taking the large dimension to saw timber; it would not be going to pulp. Again, it's the kind of thing that can be checked. But the company wouldn't want to lose any money by putting wood to something less than its best economic use.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Minister, whether it be a privately owned corporation or a publicly owned corporation, I wouldn't suggest is the debate. The debate will be and should be the best utilization of our resource, and I certainly hope that your department will ensure that those types of things happen.

Mr. Minister, I know that our officials don't want to spend for ever in this House, they'd like to get back to

doing their jobs, and I'm going to do my part to allow that by keeping my questions short.

But I would, Mr. Minister, want to share a letter with you by a person in this province who is quite familiar and quite concerned about what's happening in terms of the forest industry in the province. And you and I, I suppose, could stand here and debate and banter back and forth for hours, but I just want to read this in so that you may be able to understand the feelings of some of the people associated with the forest industry and their concerns about what's happening in this province. I'm going to try and shorten it as best I can.

Concerns about ... and believe the source of this letter I wouldn't want to table; I think it would be unfair to this individual, but some of the concerns are: a valuable wood like white birch being sent through for pulp — white birch, a tree that sells for many, many dollars a cord down in the southern part of the province that a lot of Southerners would very much like to have in terms of being able to burn in their fireplaces and in their wood fire furnaces. But that white birch is being wasted by putting through the pulp mill.

(1645)

And there are areas, and I know areas, that have been bulldozed and that's not proper forest management or utilization of our forests. And I'm hoping, it appears to me in my questions today, that a lot of questions that have been asked, your officials have not made you aware of problems surrounding those questions, so I bring them to you today.

In terms of post stands — areas where rails could be harvest and utilized and more money garnered to the forest industry — that that, too, is going through for pulp wood. And I would hope, Mr. Minister, that you will do some studies to determine whether or not these kinds of things are happening. And I'm hoping, Mr. Minister, that you will allow your officials to be working in those forests and to be doing a proper job of policing the job that they have started, the job they were hired to do; to police the kind of utilization that is going on from our forests.

I've indicated that it's ... it's been indicated to me that there is a lot of problems in terms of good, soft, saw timber being chopped up. I think it's no secret when we look at what's happening to the number of small saw mills in northern Saskatchewan that employed local people that live in those areas, the number of those mills are rapidly disappearing. I would hope, Mr. Minister, that your department will take some initiative to ensure small independent saw mills the opportunity to operate and to employ local people. I would think, Mr. Minister, that that would be a concern of yours as well as all members of this House.

It's been indicated to me, on a number of occasions, that there's no wildlife management, that in a lot of cases economics overtake the good of the wildlife that live in our northern forests, and that this department is getting less and less attention as your government governs and as the years go on. And I would hope, Mr. Minister, that the concerns of those people who care about wildlife in this

province wouldn't be undershadowed by the desire of some operators to make the big buck.

I would very much, Mr. Minister, like to see an independent study done on harvesting in this province because I think there is need for concern, and there is reason for concern. I think that we need a utilization study, and I would think, as well, we need an investigation into what kind of planning your government is doing for wildlife in the future.

I would think, Mr. Minister, as well, you would need to be talking to trappers and people who work in northern Saskatchewan and who've made their livelihoods in those forests for decades, many of them, so that you might better understand, and your department might better understand, what is happening in northern Saskatchewan as we move into that area and as we develop the resource.

I say, as well, Mr. Minister, I feel that these studies and these concerns should be addressed by an independent body rather than an internal body who may be at the whim of a particular deputy minister, minister, or whoever it might happen to be, and I think it's important that you look very closely at doing an independent study in those areas.

I want to say as well, Mr. Minister, in closing, that this is the first chance I've had an opportunity to work with you in the estimates and to talk about your government's role in terms of forest management and utilization of those forests.

I wish to say to you that I intend to watch closely over the next three years, if this is still part of my critic assignment, the way you're developing forestry in the province. And I'm pleased today that we've got some numbers on record in terms of what you planned for reforestation in this province.

And as I said to you, I will be closely studying and closely scrutinizing what your department is doing on behalf of the people of northern Saskatchewan and the rest of this province who depend so heavily on the forest industry, who make their livelihoods through that industry. And I intend to work with you in the spirit of co-operation and fair play, so that we can do together what's best for the people of this province.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the hon. member, I appreciate his sincerity. I know he is sincere, and I know from past correspondence he has a sincere interest in forest management and what we are doing as a government. Naturally we don't always agree; that's why we're on different sides of the House. Certainly, I believe we both want what is best for the people of Saskatchewan. It's just how we achieve it, maybe done in different ways. But I look forward to working and co-operating with the hon. member in the future.

Could I just respond to a couple of things. As far as birch is concerned, there is a lot available for fuel wood, so if people want fuel wood, we can give them a permit. There is plenty available.

In terms of posts, we're setting aside special areas for post operators so they will be accommodated. In terms of the small operators and the wood available, as I say, the harvest volume schedule has gone from one-half of 1 per cent to some place around about seven and a one-half to 8 per cent, now, that is available to the small operators. So I think, within the constraints of the source, we have been trying to address their problems.

In terms of wildlife I should point out to the hon. member that out with the boundaries of Saskatchewan it is recognized that we have the best wildlife programs, not only in Canada but in North America. And this has been pointed out to me many times by officials, by elected people from other provinces, and from the United States. I can point out the World Wildlife Fund people think we lead the country; there's no question about it. That was one of the reasons Prince Philip was here, and why Saskatchewan was chosen to spearhead there.

We're the only province committed to the North American Waterfowl Plan, both financially and involved in the day to day work. We're involved in the prairie pothole project, the heritage marsh program. We have the only Critical Wildlife Habitat Protection Act in the whole of North America. Again, that's attracted considerable attention to Saskatchewan. We're recognized as being leaders in that regard, and leaders in integrated resource management of the forest and complete utilization to the best use of all of the users of the forest, be they people, animals, or whatever.

But I do take the hon. member's advice that we do some consulting there. I plan to meet with the trappers' association in January, as a matter of fact. And I think many of his points are well made.

Mr. Kowalsky: — ... (inaudible) ... some of the questions that my colleague from Prince Albert-Duck Lake asked. I would like to ask the minister questions regarding what has happened to some roads in the northern forests. I have been told that there are roads that have been there, in some cases, for 70 or 80 years, that have had ditches dug across them, and that the roads have been ripped up.

And the question, Mr. Minister is: where has this been done, and what is the purpose of this? And I believe it is your department that this has been attributed to.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, this has been done in numerous locations, and I can undertake to provide a listing for you if you want to see specific areas. Perhaps we could take it in the form of a map and mark them for you. This is part of our resource management for wildlife. It is very easy for people with four-wheel drives and trucks to drive down these roads, step out, and shoot. So some northern roads have been closed.

And we do have game corridors. They're not new; they've been around for a number of years, whereby there's a zone of about 400 metres either side of the road that foot only, you must walk through, no hunting, before hunting starts. And it is a valuable tool in resource management in preserving any dwindling numbers we may have in moose and elk.

As I say, it's not new. We've been doing more in recent years, however.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Minister, you indicate that the purpose of it then is for wildlife management and that this restricts the traffic due to trucks. However, by doing this it doesn't restrict the traffic to all-terrain vehicles, and the concern of some people that I've heard from is that it restricts the hunter that has been in there over the year s- in many cases perhaps a senior who has sort of driven through there leisurely. It also restricts access for leisure driving, and also restricts access to people who may be wanting to go in there and do berry picking.

My question is then: why did you choose that method to restrict access to the wild game instead of just restricting the number of licences or the quotas, restricting the quota, so that it would apply more evenly to all?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, we do restrict licences on moose. And the hon. member should hear my phone ring some days — the people who aren't drawn for moose or drawn for elk, including the Premier, who hasn't been drawn for a few years either.

We do restrict the quota; we restrict the number. We restrict the number of licences. We found it is a good tool in resource management.

The hon. member may have a point about senior citizens particularly going down those roads. I haven't heard of that one before; this was a new one to me, but we'll certainly look at it.

As the hon. member will probably be aware, we don't do anything unilaterally or independently. We do consult with the wildlife advisory committee, and we have very close contacts with the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation; in fact, I attend the president's council meeting, that's his executive, when they meet twice a year. At least two of the meetings I go to, plus the annual meeting, so we do listen to those folks.

If the hon. member has no objection, I'd like to welcome some guests to the Assembly, Mr. Chairman.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's been pointed out to me we have a group of guests here, I believe from Lethbridge and surrounding area. We welcome you to Saskatchewan; we welcome you to the Legislative Assembly.

I trust that you're having a pleasant stay. I know the weather's certainly co-operating with you. Maybe you brought the sunshine for us so we can get our harvest finished up this year. Welcome to Regina. Welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — We want to indicate to our visitors, Mr. Chairman, that what you're hearing is not a

Saskatchewan accent on the other side. But I, too, on behalf of the members of the opposition would like to extend a welcome to the guests in the Speaker's gallery.

We are now undergoing a debate on estimates where the opposition has an opportunity and, indeed, a responsibility of asking question of how the money allocated to the department - in this case the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources . . .

An Hon. Member: — Recreation and Culture.

Mr. Kowalsky: — . . . Recreation, we're dealing with, and it's some forestry. It's a hodgepodge. But at any rate, we ask the questions and the minister . . . to which the minister responds.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Kowalsky: — I have one comment with respect, Mr. Minister, one comment with respect to what you were just saying. And in my contact with the Prince Albert Wildlife Federation, I've been given to understand that they do favour the closing of the new pulp roads once the pulp has been taken out of a particular area. They seemed to be somewhat concerned about the older roads, the roads that have been there for a long time. And I would advise you, through me, that they seem to have some objection to that and would have wished to have been consulted on it.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Chairman, we do try and accommodate some of the other user groups. It has been pointed out to me, as an example, that there are people who use those roads for berry picking. Instead of the road being closed, they put a gate on it, and it is opened for them so they do have access to it.

The hon. member is probably referring to some very old trails that existed somewhere up around the Paddockwood area. And I'm informed that one of the reasons for those trails being closed was it was a very bad area for night hunting, which apart from being illegal, and apart from being a very despicable way to hunt animals, is also an extremely dangerous activity at night. Blinding an animal with a spotlight, fixing it, and shooting it with a high-powered rifle - an extremely dangerous activity, as I'm sure all members would agree. And that was the main reason for those particular roads.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.