

## EVENING SITTING

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

## Item 1 (continued)

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Seated to my immediate right is Doug Cressman, the deputy minister of the department; behind Doug Cressman is Keith Rodgers, assistant deputy minister of Culture and sport; and immediately behind me is Alan Appleby, assistant deputy minister of resources.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, when we finished the last time we were in here we were on . . . I just pretty well got through Parks. I want to make a few comments on Parks, and then I'll start off where I left off, asking you the question about the vessel from Uranium City. I had asked for some information.

Since the last time we were in here, we have passed a Bill yesterday, Bill No. 35 respecting the implementation of the Grasslands National Park, and I had had a few questions that I wanted to put forward today on a motion that didn't get to the floor.

When we were discussing the Grasslands National Park the other day, I had asked you a question of how they were going to determine the perimeters of the Grasslands National Park. We had the Prince Albert National Park up in northern Saskatchewan, which is a forest within a forest — it's all forest — and there are some roads and some boundaries and lines drawn around there. But when you get into the Grasslands National Park, Mr. Minister, you're dealing with prairie and a completely different environment.

And I was asking the question as to how they were going to determine the boundaries and were they going to put fences around the grasslands park. And it seems to me, Mr. Minister, that when you're dealing in the grasslands that, you know, you're out in the prairie. And I don't know how you are going to implement and how they are going to look after the Grasslands National Park when you have cattle grazing all around in that area. It would just seem to me that somehow they're going to have to come up with a way of marking that Grasslands National Park out. And I sort of had visions of putting fence around the Grasslands National Park so that you could keep out the grazing livestock from the park and the wild animals that are within there.

My question to you, Mr. Minister: has there been any discussions with your department and the federal department regarding the jurisdiction of the Grasslands National Park, and just how you are going to determine the boundaries?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, as I advised the hon. member yesterday, the final determination of

boundaries will depend upon the amount of land that is acquired by Parks Canada, a branch of the federal department of Environment. They will be purchasing land from local ranchers and they will decide the extent of the boundaries.

As regards the fencing, there's a couple of factors there. One, we talked about bison and if they do introduce bison I do believe some fencing would be required. However, nothing is going to happen without consultation between the federal officials and the local advisory committee which is composed of people from the area, some of my folks obviously, and ranchers from that particular part of the country.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, has there been any concerns forwarded to you regarding how they are going to determine the boundaries of that provincial park, especially when we talk about preserving it as a national park and we're dealing in the grazing land where there is many ranchers down in that area?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, there haven't been any concerns that I'm aware of. I just asked my officials if there's anything that we've received in writing or phone calls. There's nothing that we can recall. To the best of our knowledge, all of the difficulties we had encountered previously — and as the hon. member is aware, this goes back quite a number of years — we've painstakingly resolved all of the outstanding issues whether it be minerals, water, or anything else, grazing rights. That is a subject between the federal department officials and the local ranchers, and that all seems to have been satisfactorily resolved. Any ongoing dispute or arising . . . I shouldn't say ongoing, any new arising dispute will be solved at the local level.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. It would just seem to me that somehow they're going to have to find a way of setting the boundaries up for the park. It's so much different than the Prince Albert National Park where you're dealing with a forest within a forest. Here you're dealing with range land and you're competing with the ranchers in the area, and it just seems to me that somehow they're going to have to determine a way. I don't know if there is such a thing as a prairie grasslands park in Canada. I think this is probably the first one. And there's probably going to be some of these areas that will have to be worked out, and I just see that as a problem on the horizon — not a great problem but I think you'll probably have to look at that.

Unless you have any other comments on that, Mr. Minister, I will now turn to other items of the department. When I closed I had asked about a boat, and you were going to get me the information, I believe on a boat, a jet boat, that was the property of your department up in Uranium City. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you have that information or do I have to go to another department to get that.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we did find the information the hon. member requested, and I have a copy. I'd be pleased to send it over to him this evening.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, I may come back to that after I read this material. I want to now go into reforestation, and I wonder, Mr. Minister, is you could indicate how many tress . . . I believes that's under department. How many tress were planted in Saskatchewan in the year that we are reviewing?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, for the hon. member, the year we're reviewing, that's this current fiscal year, and there would be more planting to be done during the course of the fiscal year, as you're aware, later this fall. You mean, as of April onwards from this year?

**Mr. Thompson:** — Yes, Mr. Minister, I believe that will be the figures that we want, because we'd be taking them from the nursery in the spring.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I can advise the hon. member that site preparation is under way to plant 10.3 million seedlings. That has been taken care of, so we anticipate 10.3 will be planted in the year under review.

**Mr. Thompson:** — How many were planted in 1988, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we're having a little difficulty locating all of our forestry material. Perhaps we could give that information a little later.

I can tell the hon. member that we did commit to 50 million seedlings over five years and we're certainly on target.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Okay, Mr. Minister. It looks like you're planting at the rate of 10 million trees a year. Is that the total amount of reforestation that we have in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, that is.

**Mr. Thompson:** — That cover all the forest management lease agreements that we have with the Meadow Lake saw mill, Weyerhaeuser and the works, right?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's correct.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, I believe that we were planting at one time in this province around 11 million trees per year. It would seem to me that we are going down.

As you know, Mr. Minister, reforestation is very important in this province. We take a look at what is now catching up to us, and that is a lack of forest; we just take a look at Simpson Timber over in Hudson Bay that are now going to leave there because of lack of forest or lack of time, and they indicate that the program to reforest just wasn't enough in the earlier years, and we take responsibility for that if that's the case. One has to take a look at how long it takes a tree to grow in Saskatchewan, and the amount of trees that we are transplanting seems very small. I wonder if there's anybody in your department that could indicate how many tress are harvested in this province in a year.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, first of all, I'd like to clarify something that one or two members from their

seats who are commenting, which is fair enough, but the fact is that in the last five years of the previous administration, they planted 39 million trees. In the first five years of our administration we planted 46 million trees. So we certainly planted no less than the previous administration. There was a peak year of something in excess of 11 million trees under the previous administration. We also had a peak year where we planted that many, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to point out to the hon. member, too, and I'm sure he's aware of this because he does come from the North . . . He lives there and he knows what's going on with various forest operations. But what has happened over the last number of years is there's been a change in the type of tree that is being utilized. With the switch from softwood to hardwood in the pulp industry, as an example, there's been a greater demand for aspen, and indeed, we're looking at reforestation programs, many of it natural, in previously aspen covered areas because that has become a very valuable commodity to the forest industry.

In addition to that, we're not including in this other areas that we're preparing, site preparation, scarification, and the other things that go in prior to actually planting seedlings.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Just a short comment there, Mr. Minister. You talk about site preparation. You didn't get to the question that I asked you as to how many trees are harvested in the province in a year.

You talk about site preparation and preparing the forest for 10.3 million trees, seedlings. Last year, did you reach that figure that you had planned on? When you prepared the soil for these seedlings, did you get the 10.3 million seedlings in last year, or the number that you had planned on in the spring?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman. I can advise the hon. member that we're right on target with our numbers. Occasionally we have a problem with a particular contract whereby, for reasons of weather or other problems, perhaps a contract doesn't get fulfilled properly or we have to do it over again. We're not counting that number in. If we target 10, we accomplish 10. We have met targets, however.

**Mr. Thompson:** — I guess that's the easier question to answer. I will repeat the question, Mr. Minister. How many trees do we harvest in Saskatchewan in a year? How many trees do we take out of the forest?

(1915)

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, that information is generated in the form of cubic metres, not in the number of tress. I don't have that right at my fingertips, but we'll have officials do some checking and find that out. The harvest volume schedule in Saskatchewan, as in other provinces now, is measured in cubic metres, as the hon. member, I'm sure, is aware. So we'll get that information for you and send it over to you.

**Mr. Thompson:** — And when we deal in cubic metres, we

deal with a mature tree, so we can't go back to cubic metres with seedlings. Is this right?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, that's quite correct, Mr. Chairman, and we can get that kind of number for you. You're talking about area that has been harvested of mature timber and then vis-a-vis the area that would be scarified and ready for site preparation, if that's what you're looking for, to see if they match up. I'm sorry, go ahead.

**Mr. Thompson:** — The question that I asked you was: how many trees do we extract out of the forest in a year? You tell me that the only way that we can get that, or you have those figures, is in cubic meters or square feet of timber, or whatever figure you want to use. If I had the cubic feet of seedlings then I could figure that out, but we're dealing in square feet, in square feet of timber that is taken out of the forest. Some trees may have 700 feet to 1,000 feet, and some of them may have 200 feet of timber in a tree. What I was looking for was the number of trees; you plant 10.3 million seedlings. What I would like to know is: are we extracting out of the forest 10.3 million mature trees?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, it's quite difficult to actually count the number of trees that are being harvested because of the harvest methods and the volume schedules. I was saying earlier that the mix is changing in the forest industry in Saskatchewan and the demands are changing. Indeed, with the advent of Meadow Lake saw mill and the enterprise that's taking place in the north-west part of the province, they're looking for a different type of mix. So in fact quite often what is happening is there's natural regeneration of aspen in areas that may well have had some softwood in them previously. So we have a little difficulty just giving you those kinds of numbers.

The assurance I can give the hon. member, because I think this is what he's looking for, is that when we harvest trees and we make up our harvest schedule in conjunction with the various companies and with the small outfitters who also have a timber allocation, what we try to do is match what will be regenerated in the following year so that we are replacing what we've taken out.

And the hon. member alluded to earlier, and he is correct, there was a period of time where we were taking far more out of the forest than we were putting back in, for various reasons. And I'm not pointing a finger and saying we're doing better than you were, or you did better than a Liberal government, or anything else. That serves no good purpose here. The point is, we have to justify that as a department and as a forestry branch, that we are giving responsible care, silviculture, and management to our forests. And I believe we're doing that, and I'd like to assure the hon. member that what we are doing when we're harvesting now is we're looking at the overall system and looking at what is going to be required in future years for the industry with the kind of modern mix that we have now between Weyerhaeuser and the other companies who are planting.

I can tell the hon. member that on a tree-for-tree basis,

because we did some numbers with Simpson Timber — it would be about four years ago — they were planting at the rate of 110 per cent of what they harvested.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. When we talk about reforestation, we're dealing strictly with industry who goes in there and extracts a tree, or individuals for their own use; we're not talking about fires. Are you planting any burnt-out areas?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I'm advised that with burn-over areas, Mr. Chairman, we give them a couple of years to see if they will regenerate naturally because biologically that's generally what happens. If there are a combination of factors to exclude that from happening, then we do in fact go in and do a scarification program and we reseed.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Yes, I assumed that, Mr. Minister, because I know at one time the department were carrying out controlled burns where they would set the fire and then they would reforest themselves. I'm just wondering, Mr. Minister, are there any contracts that have been put out for reforestation in the last number of years that have had to . . . you had to go in and redo the job again?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, we do check the plantation after a one-year growth and again at periodic intervals thereafter. And if there's significant failure within that particular plantation, we go back and redo what has to be done within that area. I've asked the officials if they can find a specific example. You may have one in mind, if you want to share it with us; if not, I've asked officials if they could track down in the past two or three years something — well it would be the past five years, because we check every year for a five-year period — if we could go back and take a look and see if there has been an example of a big failure for whatever reason, the primary reason being in the last few years, Mr. Chairman, drought. I know when we think of drought we tend to think of the southern part of the prairie grain belt of the province — the south-west probably springs to mind most readily — but we have had drought in the provincial forest as well, large pieces of it in the last three or four years.

**Mr. Thompson:** — The one area that I'm aware of, Mr. Minister, is in the Green Lake area, and that was a major burn; that was a number of years ago. And I see some of those trees are coming up quite well, but I have seen some work in there this summer. It looked like they were replanting that area again, and I thought maybe that there had been some sort of a failure there.

Mr. Minister, could you give me the percentage of success rate that you ask for with your contractors?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, the success rate we ask for is 90 per cent.

**Mr. Thompson:** — And who does the inspections on the planting of those trees?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Department foresters carry out those inspections, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, when the contracts are

let out for tree planting, and Weyerhaeuser in their lease agreement and Meadow Lake in their forest management lease agreements, who lets the contract out, and who determines how many trees are going to be replanted in those areas?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — If it's something that we're generating ourselves, we would make that determination. If it is under the purview of a particular company, whether it be Simpson or Weyerhaeuser or one of the other companies, they would make the determination. But in any event, their planting program is subject to our scrutiny and our ratification.

**Mr. Thompson:** — So you're indicating to me that if Weyerhaeuser is going to plant a couple of million trees in their forest lease agreement area, they get the trees from Saskatchewan's nurseries, and they let the contract out to the contractors to do the planting. Is that the way it operates?

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — Do you do the same with all small forest operations around the province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — In the case of the smaller operators, Mr. Chairman, they do pay a reforestation fee to the company and then that same process I described earlier would come into place.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Okay. I just want to close off on the tree planting, Mr. Minister, and indicate to you that I think that the forest is an important part of Saskatchewan. It's becoming an important part of our planet that we live in, and we have to plant more trees than we've been talking out. In other places, other provinces, other parts of the world, in some cases they take 40 trees out and put one back and as a result we end up with more desert and less greenery on our planet. And we now are running into a situation where environmentalists all over the world are indicating that we have to take a new approach. If we're going to take a tree out, we should be putting two or three back because there's a success rate; it takes a long time for a tree to mature. And especially in northern Saskatchewan or any place in Saskatchewan, it takes a long time for a tree to mature. Climatic conditions are against us with the long, cold winters.

So I just want to indicate that I think forestry is an important part of our economy in Saskatchewan. We have to protect it, and I would just urge you to continue with reforestation. And as far as I'm concerned, I think we should step up the process and start planting a lot more trees than we are taking out because of the slowness of growth in the province.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I concur most heartily with what the hon. member has just said. In fact, trees have been described as being the lungs of the earth and this is absolutely accurate. And there are portions of this world where unfortunately — Brazilian rain forests, a case in point — where they're just being totally denuded. Fortunately in Canada we haven't made that mistake. But we have made the mistake, Mr. Chairman, over a very

long period of time, of extracting more out of the forests than we've been putting back in, and I think it is important that we do accelerate our tree planting programs.

We have in the last number of years made a commitment over the long term. We're not going from year to year any more. We're setting five-year plans and five-year targets and we're adhering strictly to them, and I may say at the behest of the Premier. We want to make sure that we continue this type of program. The hon. member would be aware that there are programs right now in place by the World Wildlife Fund. I know my family have all been subscribing where you buy an acre of rain forest in other parts of the world and they're preserved, and I would urge all members to do the same thing and of course we want to do that right here at home in Saskatchewan. The hon. member's correct. The trees are the lungs of the earth. We have to preserve it. We recognize now, more so than any other time in previous history, just how vital they are to us, and we must protect it and we're trying to do our best as a government to ensure that will happen.

(1930)

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I fully agree with your assessment of planting more trees. I don't know . . . I think maybe that we have to start planting more trees in the southern part of our province. And we have the Grassland National Park. I think that forest belts put through that Grasslands National Park would be a real asset to that park and to the rest of the province. And I think the Department of Parks has a role to play here, an important role, and I would suggest that reforestation and the nurseries that we have should be expanded, and we should provide more trees. And I know that other countries in the world are most certainly looking at planting more trees and bringing the forest back into the planet.

I want to turn, Mr. Minister, to some other items. If I get some co-operation from the minister and he will give me some answers and make some decisions, we should be able to work fairly quickly through these items. I want to now start with a contentious item in northern Saskatchewan that has been for the trappers for the last number of years, a decision by your department, Mr. Minister, to not allow trappers to harvest lynx.

We now have seen the effect of the moratorium on the lynx population, and I might add that lynx are trapped in northern Saskatchewan and they are not trapped in the South. You don't find lynx down in the Meadow Lake areas or in Carrot River or Big River areas. But lynx in northern Saskatchewan is a vital part of the economy of many of the fishermen and the trappers who live up in northern Saskatchewan. That decision to go away from the traditional styles where lynx were trapped as the rabbit cycles moved in and the rabbit cycles moved out, was always the way it operated up in northern Saskatchewan. It's still going the same way, only what we have now is that the cycles have come and cycles have gone and trappers have got themselves into a lot of problems.

One of the highest priced items in the fur industry is the lynx. You chose the lynx over the marten or the otter or

the beaver or anything else, and you put a moratorium on there. Rabbit cycles work from east to west. The rabbit cycle will come into the province from the east and it will work itself through to the Alberta border. Followed by the rabbit cycles, you have the lynx cycles that follow along. We now have seen the rabbit cycle come through the province with the lynx population going with them and in certain areas, where we had a lot of lynx, we now see that they are gone and trappers have missed that income.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you would make a decision here. I've written you letters and asked you to go back to the way it was before. The trappers, they look after their own areas. They know when the cycles are coming and when the cycles are going. They know how to harvest those furs. They've been doing it ever since trapping started in this province. I think that to make those decisions for those trappers and to take the income away from them because of someone — trappers' association in southern Saskatchewan or yourself or myself, being a member of the legislature — passing the type of laws that we pass in this province and on consulting with those local trappers, has been a hardship.

And I would ask you, Mr. Minister --I've asked you in letters — to reconsider that and to let the trappers know ahead of time. Don't wait until the trapping season is upon them. Many trappers, they leave in September or October. They go out to the trap lines. They stay there over the freeze-up and they still don't know whether they can take a lynx or not. And you indicated that you were going to make that decision. I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to once again open that lynx season so that the trappers in northern Saskatchewan will have an opportunity to once again go back and harvest the fur the way they have always harvested and managed their trapping lines.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member's a native Northerner himself and he has an advantage over me in that regard, in that he's also operated a trap line, which is something I've never done; he's been a commercial fisherman; and he knows whereof he speaks when he speak about northern Saskatchewan. So I never question what he tells me that is relevant in the North.

What has happened . . . The member is correct that it is cyclical and it does change and they do follow the snowshoe hare, and when the hare population is down, the lynx population is down because it's their natural food. And when it was down and the lynx were very scarce, we had to take the zero quota option. Nobody likes doing this because certainly it reflects in the pocket-book of the trappers, but at the same time we want to make sure that there is sufficient lynx population for the future, that indeed there will be an ongoing trapping industry.

The hon. member has asked for a decision. I'm pleased to give him one. The December season this year, we will have a lynx quota. There'll be one lynx per trapper. The indications are they will peak . . . They are close to peaking at that time. It won't be a high peak, unfortunately. It's not going to be as good as in previous years, but we will open a season in December when the pelts are at their best, when they're at their healthiest, and

it will be a one-lynx quota per trapper.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well thank you very much for those compliments, but then you turn right around and do the opposite to what I was asking you, Mr. Minister.

If you're going to put a one-lynx quota, you put the one-lynx quota, once again you're tying the hands of the trappers. That's what you did at the start, and anybody that know anything about the industry, that lynx, if they are in a pocket of rabbits, you don't just find one lynx. And a trapper doesn't go out and set one trap to catch one lynx. If he sets 10 traps and he goes out and he has two lynx, then you've got a problem. And you're creating that problem. Your department is creating that problem by putting this quota on the lynx.

I say to you, Mr. Minister, and you indicate that you want to take advice from me, then I say that forget about the one-lynx quota. I don't know where you're getting this one-lynx quota advice from, because if you're getting that from trappers in northern Saskatchewan, I would like to know what trapper you got that from. Because I've talked to many trappers who go out. Trappers will go out and they'll stay on their trap line from October and come in at Christmas and they'll have seven to 10 lynx, and they'll catch those lynx, and that's the difference between profit and loss for a year.

But you're saying that if one trapper catches 10 lynx, or if he catches two lynx, what's he going to do with the other one? And that is a prime pelt. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that that is wrong-headed and it's a decision that you have made by consulting with . . . I really don't know where you're getting this advice from, but you indicate that you don't know the trapping industry and you don't know the fishing industry, but yet you're making a decision to put a one-lynx quota on, which you did at the start and that caused a lot of trappers a lot of problems. And I would ask you to reconsider this and open that lynx season and let the trappers look after those trap lines the way they always have and the way they're capable of doing.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we do in fact speak with the trappers' association, both the northern as well as the southern trappers' association. And we've asked them the question about the seasons and about the quotas and they don't have an easy solution for this either. They are telling us that it is cyclical, and the biologists believe this from not only the empirical evidence picked up by the trappers themselves, but by the biological studies that have been done across the North. And we think this is a viable . . . a viable option is the one-lynx quota for trappers this season.

In the case of the trapper who does in fact come back with more than one lynx and wondering what to do because he's worried that he may be charged with overtrapping, if they do turn it in, the proceeds go to the fur trapping block for humane traps and further education in humane trapping, as it was in the previous year.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I just don't accept that. You're going to tell a trapper that, you go on out to your trap line and trap all the species of fur that are

out there and you come in at Christmas and you bring your fur in. And if you catch two lynx, you can sell one — you make the decision what lynx you're going to take — you sell one and you give one to your department, to the Government of Saskatchewan. They will go out and sell it where they see fit to sell it. Where are you going to sell the fur? That poses a big problem because we have fur outlets all over Canada. you're going to go and take it to the Hudson's Bay store or the department; they're going to sell that lynx. Where are they going to sell it? You're causing more problems than you're solving.

And for you to say that a trapper who's coming back out of the bush with two lynx . . . And I'm just using that as an example. Many of them could go up there and could come out with 6, 7, or 10 lynx because the lynx are starting to come back in pockets and those trappers know where they are. But for you to say that if a trapper comes back, that he has two lynx, that's just like telling a farmer he's got two prime bulls but you can only have one and you give the other one to the government and the government will sell it. You've raised it. You've raised it to maturity — because those trappers they look after those trap lines — but you say to that farmer, well you've raised two bulls. We're going to take one; you sell one. That's just not fair; that's just not the way governments should operate. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that if a trapper comes out of the bush in the fall and he has three or four lynx, that means profit or loss for that trapper in many, many cases, and they should be allowed to sell those furs.

There's no lynx in North Battleford, and there's no lynx down in the Redberry country, but up in that country that's where you have it. You have lynx up there and that's what the trappers go after, because it's the prime fur right now. And for you to make that decision that you're going to take three or four lynx, or anything that's over one, I think is wrong-headed and the wrong way for the Government of Saskatchewan to be operating.

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

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — One hon. member says, come to my senses over here. Well I'm advised by people who are experts in the field, and I will be guided by them as well as by many of the northern trappers, that indeed, if we do permit an open season on lynx trapping, we're going to have them extinct. It's going to be the end of it.

And I'd appreciate if southern members wouldn't inject themselves into the debate when they don't understand the situation. But if we take the situation with lynx, and this is for the benefit of the other members — I know the member from Athabasca would be aware of this, but other members would not — the lynx is the only large cat, in fact, that is not on any protected species and can in fact go right out to Europe. And because there's a fairly high price on them how do we keep control and make sure that these things are not trapped out? What we have to do is make sure we're going to have a viable trapping industry with lynx and with other species of fur bearers for ever more.

And I'd like to point out to the hon. member, as I have in times past, I've been the only wildlife minister in Canada who's stood on a national stage and said, as long as I am

the wildlife minister in the province of Saskatchewan, we will have fur trapping. We will have traditional trapping, and it will go on in Saskatchewan, and we will not interfere with the trapping that goes on in the North. We will try to control it to the extent that we'll make sure we have an ongoing, viable, feasible industry, but under no circumstances will we yield to foreign European pressures and outlaw trapping in this province.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, and I respect your decision there and the battle that you've put up on behalf of trappers.

On the one hand you're trying to protect the trappers; you stand up and you fight for their rights. And on the other hand you take away their rights to make a living when you talk about the lynx running in cycles, then you turn around and say if you allow them to trap two lynx, then they're going to be extinct. So you can't have it both ways. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that that's a wrong decision. What's happening is when the rabbits move through the province from the east to the west and the rabbit cycle is at its peak, the lynx, they're at their peak and they reproduce at their peak. As the rabbits die out, so does the lynx. They also become infected and the number of kits that they have in a year — I use the word kit because that is what they're called — but the number of young lynx that are born to a mother is less when the rabbit cycle is gone. So really, they come and they go with the cycle, and whether you want to put a limit on them or not is not going to determine which way the lynx are going to be as far as being extinct. That's just not going to take place — never has since time began and it never will.

The same thing happens with your foxes and your coyotes in the South. They get diseases. You can look at your coyotes around here now; the prices are down to nothing. The farmers are not trapping coyotes the way they used to. And you can take a look at some of these mangy-looking coyotes that are running around on the prairies, and they eventually starve to death or they freeze to death, and that's exactly what happens on all animals if they are not controlled.

And what I am saying to you, Mr. Minister, is that the trappers up there know how to control the fur on their trapping blocks. They know how to control the beaver. They'll go in, they'll take so many otter, they'll take so many martens — they take what they feel can be taken. But you're all of a sudden saying that you and your department know better than the trappers who trap those trap lines, or the farmers that farm their farms. That's exactly what you're saying. We got to compare them; there's got to be a comparison there.

And from what I can see, you're going back to your same old pattern. You're starting off; you're hitting these trappers, and you're hitting them hard again. And if you're not going to change your mind, we'll just leave it at that. But I say to you, that's the wrong decision. That lynx season should be opened up and let the trappers look after their own area.

(1945)

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — A couple of points just from what

came out from the hon. member's remarks. He did touch on beaver. I'd just like to point out there's more beaver now than there was at the height of the fur trade 100 years ago. A lot of people have trouble understanding that, and it's as a result of sensible trapping and good procedures.

As a matter of fact, the trappers' association and northern trappers themselves will tell you, wear a fur coat for conservation. A lot of people question that and say there's something wrong with it. But if we don't have a sensible trapping and culling, what happens eventually is they disease out with over-population of numbers and then nobody is served, least of all the animals themselves.

Further to the discussion on the lynx, I should point out that the CITIES, with which the hon. member would be familiar, which is a Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species, does not protect lynx. And if we are not careful with our own lynx quotas here, we're going to have the international ire that was directed against pup seals off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador also directed at us by the same, in my view, misguided Europeans who put an end to the sealing industry.

And what did they accomplish when they did this? All they accomplished was an over-population of seals, a diseased population; and they died out and they served no good purpose for anybody. And they destroyed an industry, and they destroyed an economy, a much-needed economy for people in that part of the world. And Chief Erasmus, a much-respected native leader, certainly someone for whom I have the utmost respect, has said that to allow that to happen would be nothing short of cultural genocide, and I agree.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Just a few comments, Mr. Minister. It looks like you're set in your ways. You're going to put this penalty on the trappers. But you make the comment that there are more beavers up in Saskatchewan now than there ever has been. And I can tell you that it's not by sensible harvesting — has nothing to do with it. It's the world demand; it's the prices for the fur. If the beaver prices come up, then the trappers will go out, the farmers will go out, and they'll take those beaver.

I just go through telling you about the coyotes and the foxes. The prices are down, and you've got coyotes and that there starving to death in their province because they're not taken and they have nothing to eat.

So far as the beaver, it's nothing to do with it. It fluctuates the same as the domesticated minks did; the different colours were in demand, and that mink was a good price. And the same thing goes with all fur-bearing animals.

Mr. Minister, I just urge you to leave the lynx system the way it was before and allow the trappers to look after their own trap lines and let them make the decisions.

I want to turn now, Mr. Minister, to the corridors. Do you have a corridor between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake right now — hunting corridor?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, we currently don't have one, based on moose populations within the area.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, three years ago in this House you stood up and said that you were going to put a corridor between . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, you indicated that you would put the corridors. Once again, it's no different than the quotas that you're putting on the trappers for your lynx.

You have two laws: one for southern Saskatchewan and one for northern Saskatchewan. Those corridors — you go north of Meadow Lake and the first thing you do, you have a corridor. The trappers and the hunters and the citizens who live up in northern Saskatchewan cannot even carry a firearm in their truck unless they have it in a regulation case. You come down to Meadow Lake, there's no problem. They can carry their rifles in the windows, on the gun rack in the back of their truck. You can drive down the corridors.

And I give you a good example: between Meadow Lake and Glaslyn, which is in the member from Meadow Lake's constituency and in your constituency, there's no corridors there. You can go and hunt all you want along those corridors. But as soon as you get past Meadow Lake, you come into a different world. We come into a world that is ruled by a Conservative government, right now, that uses no compassion and who are penalizing citizens who live up in those northern areas. It's just like night and day. As soon as you go past Meadow Lake, you have no regulations. But when you get down to your constituency, and the member from Meadow Lake, it's totally different.

And I say once again, Mr. Minister, that if you're going to keep those corridors on in northern Saskatchewan, then you better put them on in the rest of the forested area in this province.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — The road corridors are based entirely on moose populations, nothing else. And a corridor means there's a no-shooting zone 400 metres either side of a road. Primarily these are forest roads. There's something like 27,000 kilometres of forest roads that have been driven into commercial forests over the last number of years, decades of years in Saskatchewan. It's very easy for hunters to drive down those roads and shoot from the side of the road, especially, especially at night, which is a despicable type of hunting, but it has happened in certain areas across the commercial forests, which are not primarily in the North but in the central belt.

And there are road corridors that run right across that area, that run right through several constituencies — I know they run through the member from Shellbrook-Torch River's constituency, and a piece of mine, and other, and it's based strictly on moose populations. What we're trying to do is preserve the moose and allow them to recover in certain areas of the province. And there's certainly no intent to discriminate against any part of Saskatchewan, whether it be in the Cypress Hills or whether it be in Meadow Lake or Bronson Forest or any other part of the province.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, it's in the same forested area — Meadow Lake, you draw the line — same forested areas as you have from Meadow Lake north. No

different, exactly the same, the same type of forest. The only thing is it's in different constituencies. And I say that once again you're using a law for the North and a law for the South.

Mr. Minister, could you tell me how many big game surveys were carried out in the province last year.

**An Hon. Member:** — Sorry?

**Mr. Thompson:** — Big game surveys . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You could give me the moose first, if you want.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — That would take a bit of work to start defining right now, but if it's okay with the hon. member what we'd like to do is furnish him with the complete report for the entire province, and that would be with all species. That would give him all the unqualates. I believe we could do the bear population as well on surveys . . . whatever we have on that, too. We'll give you all the big game, if that's okay with you.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I can't really go through the department and ask the questions that I should as if I don't have the information on the surveys. Could you just give me the number of aerial surveys that were carried on in the moose area last year?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — We did a quick count through the hunting guide and it looks like 10 moose aerial surveys.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Could you give me the results of the aerial survey in the Meadow Lake area?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we don't have those numbers with us this evening, but I've asked one of my officials to make sure that he digs out definitive numbers that we can send to the hon. member. What I can tell him is that the moose population, overall in the province, is approximately 25,000. South of the Meadow Lake area, the moose count comes to one per square mile. North of the Meadow Lake area — it may sound a little foolish talking about proportions of a moose — but in terms of the proportion, it works out to two-thirds to three-quarters moose per square mile south of that area. But we will give you definitive numbers on what our biologists have come up with in the past aerial surveys.

**Mr. Thompson:** — You indicate that per square mile there's one moose in the southern forest belt, and in the northern forest belt there's three-quarters of a moose per square mile. And you indicate that there's more moose in the southern belt than there is in the northern belt. Is that your indication? And that was the reason for the corridors not being put between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Quite often where the road corridors exist, the populations are indeed significantly lower. And that can happen in some southern belts in specific regions.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well I just want to indicated to you, Mr. Minister, that if you have one moose per square mile in the southern belt and three-quarters per square mile in the northern forest belt, then the moose population would be

far greater in the North than it would be in the South, because the southern area is just a small portion of the forested area, and really not a great moose area.

I don't know how many moose you would find between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake, but I suspect very, very few. You have to go farther north into the muskegs and the lake to find the moose. There's a lot of deer, I'll grant you that. There's a lot of deer between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake, but it would seem that the deer population — and probably your surveys will show this — are fairly heavy all over the province, especially between Green Lake and Buffalo Narrows you see a lot of deer now, and Big River and Green Lake.

But without the proper information on these surveys, just taking it as a whole, I would say that the corridors that you have implemented either should be lifted or they should be uniform throughout the province. If you're not going to put a corridor between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake, then I say you should lift it up in the northern areas, because the arguments that you're using on the moose per square mile is just not a good argument. You have to take a look at the geography of northern Saskatchewan and the southern area that you're talking about, and I suspect there's a lot more moose up in that area than there is in the southern area.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — We did have a recent consultation process, Mr. Chairman, involving natives, trappers, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, and the wildlife advisory committee. The overwhelming consensus was that we should continue with the road closure program, and it is based on need; it is based on population. And where population is depleted and we want to recover, we implement the road closure program. Where, down the road, the populations do recover, then we're pleased to take it off.

What I had indicated to the hon. member approximately three years ago was, I would ask the biologists to check and if there was any need to do a road corridor program in that particular stretch of road. I certainly would be pleased to do it, and I certainly wouldn't be afraid to do it any place that it has to be done.

It's not always popular with local folks who has traditionally hunted on these roads unimpeded and been able to have gone in with four-wheel drives. But overall it does have the support of native groups, the wildlife federation, trappers' associations, and individuals such as the natural history society and the Sierra Club. So we think we have some support for this.

I appreciate what the hon. member is saying, that we should look at it with a common sense approach, and that's precisely what we're trying to do.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well I agree with you that it's probably an unpopular move, and that's why you have not put the corridor in your own riding. Because I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that the same individuals that drive between Green Lake and Meadow Lake are driving between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake. And you have the corridors up North but you don't have it there.



(2000)

So an individual that is travelling from Canoe Narrows, wants to go through to North Battleford, they can't even carry a gun legally unless it's in a special case. But once they get to Meadow Lake, then between there and Glaslyn then they could start hunting again. And I just think it's high unfair, and your figures show that.

I want to now turn to . . . Have you done any bear surveys in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — It's recognized by biologists across the North American continent that it's rather difficult to be definitive in taking surveys of bear because of the movement. They cover vast territories in a very short period of time. What we do is take biological indicators such as the age of population and we combine that with the reports we receive from trappers and hunters and others. We try to compile records and as near as possible try and keep a tab on the population.

**Mr. Thompson:** — You haven't carried out any more young calf moose projects, in tagging young moose, have you, in the last number of years?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No.

**Mr. Thompson:** — I won't add to that, but that most certainly was something that should never have been done. And I suspect it's never been done again since the one time you done it.

So you're going to provide me, Mr. Minister, with the big game surveys in the province, and that will cover the deer, the antelope, caribou.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I'll give you the list.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Okay. And could you add . . . You don't have any bear surveys per se, just coming in from the outfitters and the trappers and the hunters.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — We'll give you any numbers we have on them.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Okay, Mr. Minister, I want to ask a few questions about fishing, but I'm going to turn it over to my colleague from Elphinstone who has a number of questions. I'm going to turn it over to him and then I will go on to the fishing portion of your estimates.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairman, what I wanted to ask, Mr. Minister, is on the Cypress Hills, the provincial park. As you'll know, the infrastructure of the park there is privatized to some extent, but that's not the main gist of my questions.

I want to ask a specific question, and I hope you have officials here who can answer questions about the park because there's a couple of them I want to ask that are specific to that park. But in the park there was a cafeteria that was built back in 1979 or '80, I forget the exact year. But there's a great deal of concern up there, and it may only be rumour, but I want you to either confirm or deny that that cafeteria is being planned to be close in the near

future. In fact the rumour is that next year it will not open as a cafeteria. Can you indicate to me whether that is, and I hope, only a rumour?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, no decision has been made as to what will be done or what will happen to the cafeteria. There have been a number of suggestions made, including making it into a visitors' centre. But no decision has been taken. There's been a study done to say what is the best use. One suggestion has been making it into a visitors' centre, but no decision has been taken.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I would have leave to introduce a couple of guests in the gallery.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairman, and members of the Assembly, I want to introduce a couple of special guests who are here tonight, Art Kluzak and his wife Betty, who are with us tonight.

Art was the member in Shaunavon from 1960 to '64 with the Tommy Douglas government and will well remember the medicare debate at that time, which is still well remembered in this province. Art was a key player during that debate. With him is his family, and I want all members to join with me in welcoming him here tonight.

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

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

#### Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Minister, on the issue of the cafeteria at Cypress Hills, I just want to tell you that on behalf of a number of people in the park who are concerned about that building, the word is that it will be closed next year and turned into a museum.

I want to know whether you've done any study or analysis on that, and if so, why you would be doing that. Now I notice members of your staff are shaking their head. I want you to be clear on this, because this will be an issue that will, I'm sure, hit you broadside if you continue on down the path of making changes there. Because the cabin owners' association, others who come to the park, are quite concerned that what will happen there is the cafeteria, which is relatively inexpensive food, will be close down to be replaced by a regular restaurant or cafe.

And most people who come to the park are people of modest means who don't want to be spending 15 or \$20 for their evening supper, but rather they have families with them and merely want a hamburger or something to tide them over. And I want you to be quite clear in making a commitment tonight that that isn't what you're up to in the Cypress Hills park.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I join with the hon. member in welcoming the former member, Art Kluzak, his wife Betty, and family to the Assembly this evening. Nice to see you here, hope you have a pleasant evening.

Mr. Chairman, back to the question that was just asked. As I've said earlier, we've made no determination as to the final outcome of what will happen with this particular building. I would point out that the cafeteria is under lease to the same operator whose company operates the lodge and provides food service through that. As far as we're concerned, no decision has been taken. As I've said, a museum wasn't in the works, but certainly there was some discussion about a visitors' centre, but certainly no decision has been taken in that regard.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — You're being less than forthcoming by saying that no decision has been made. What I want to know: is there active consideration of that being a possibility? Have you discussed it, for example, in the department?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — All I can reiterate, Mr. Chairman, is that within the department there have been a variety of options outlined, and we're looking into all of them. Again no decision has been taken.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Is one of the considerations, or one of the changes that you're considering, is one of the options turning the cafeteria into a museum?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, that hasn't been considered.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — The other issue that I want to ask about, there's been active consideration in terms of building a road that would connect the Cypress Hills in Saskatchewan with the Cypress Hills in Alberta. And here I don't think anyone's talking about building a new road as such, but merely laying down a mat of pavement that would sit in fact on the existing trail that is presently there and I think have very little environmental impact.

Can you tell me where the plans are to do that, or if there's active work being done and negotiations taking place between the Alberta government and the Saskatchewan government at this time?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, there's kind of an exciting development down there that we hope later this year, probably the end of summer, we'll see our ways clear — certainly we've done our homework and we hope the Alberta government gets theirs done very quickly — to form the first interprovincial park in Canada. It hasn't been done anywhere in the country and we think this particular park, the Alberta side, the Saskatchewan side, would make an ideal first interprovincial park anywhere in the country.

The connecting trail, it's kind of rough. I went over it last summer myself. It's not in the best of shape. There's also a reason for that. It does limit the heavy vehicles going over. But if the interprovincial park this summer does come into being, the road is under consideration for some upgrading and work.

Only yesterday I spoke with my Alberta counterpart about that, and they're looking at the kind of dollars they might have to put into it, if indeed they want to put the money into it.

But it's such an exciting project and such a good project that I'd hate to see this one not come to fruition.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Minister, can you tell me what kind of money you're talking about to amalgamate or make a joint park in that area? What kind of money are you looking at? I know the infrastructure in Alberta. Much more money has been spent there in the last six or eight years. I wouldn't care to guess how many millions of dollars the Alberta government has spent on their side in the park, but it would be 8 or \$10 million, I would imagine. There's been a great deal of work done on the Alberta side, and it seems to me that we are really playing second fiddle in the area in that south-west corner of the Cypress Hills.

I wanted to know what your plans are at the present time. What kind of money are you looking at injecting into that park in the next year or two years? What are your projections for that?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I can tell the hon. member that capital isn't a major concern for us in that area. We could . . . As the hon. member would be aware, we've put significant sums of money into the swimming pool, the leisure pool, the parking area, and the road within the park, just within the last two or three years. So we have put a lot of capital in. There's been private sector money invested, I believe 2 to \$3 million, with expansion on the lodge and what has happened in there.

So in terms of playing second fiddle, we're not as large as some of the things they did on the Alberta side. Certainly they have a very sophisticated marina and boat system and lake on their side, and they have the ski hill on their side. But on the other hand, we don't have to duplicate things that have already been done, and that was part of the discussions that took place between our officials — not duplicating what already exists on either side, but rather complementing each other in as far as possible.

What we're looking at over the next two to three years down there is a marketing strategy to try and get that tourist traffic off No. 1 Highway and let them know that there is an alternate route across the South that would take them through some of the prettiest country anywhere in this province or indeed anywhere in this country. We have the highest land mass from the foothills of the Rockies in the West to the lakehead in the East. It's simply spectacular; it's breath-taking; and it just amazes me that so many people don't know about it.

So what we're going to be concentrating our efforts on doing within the next three years is marketing what we already have there and trying to bring the tourist traffic into that area and showing them a unique piece of Saskatchewan flora and fauna.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Minister, tell me again where the negotiations are at for the combining of the two parks or

the joining or linking of the two parks. Is it close at hand? Is there an agreement that has been initialled — not signed but initialled? Where is the agreement and negotiations at, at the present time?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I should point out that we wouldn't join the parks and have one administration. We'd each be responsible for administering our own parks, our own boundaries. Our conservation officers, as in the past, would provide the various services they currently provide in our park and vice versa on the Alberta side. What we would have is an agreement for interprovincial travel and one park permit would be valid for both parks.

The stage we're at right now — as far as we're concerned, the officials have finished the negotiations to put the deal into place. We're only waiting ratification from the Government of Alberta, and if we get that within the next month, then there would be a signing to declare an interprovincial park.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Minister, I don't know whether you're aware of the way the road structure in the south-west part of the province would work, but the highway linking the west park or the Alberta park with the Saskatchewan side, that road would then either have to go north or south to continue their route east.

However if Highway 13, where it joins on to 37, were extended across, you would have a direct link, for example, with Assiniboia, Lafleche, and those towns along 13, with the Cypress Hills. My understanding is that it would only take several, oh maybe 10 miles of road that would have to be rebuilt that then would link the Cypress Hills with the eastern stretch of 13 Highway. Is there any consideration of doing that at the present time?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, we haven't really made a decision on roads in the south-west. And as I indicated to the hon. member in discussion on the Grasslands National Park yesterday, when we were looking in Committee of the Whole on that particular item, that we're going to have to get together with the Department of Tourism and come up with a marketing strategy that would reflect the existing highway system and what potentially would have to be done in order to ameliorate the situation to bring more people into the area. And it's going to be part of a larger strategy. As I committed yesterday, I would be writing the letters you asked me to write and I will be copying you with them.

(2015)

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Minister, earlier you talked about not wanting to duplicate between Alberta and Saskatchewan and I understand your concern. And you referred to the Alberta side having a ski hill. I want to remind you that we have a ski hill in Saskatchewan as well, although some winters you'd never know it simply because the snow doesn't stay very long. Years ago, when we were in government, we had considered bringing in snow-making equipment even to the extent of possibly looking at putting in a chair-lift. I wonder whether or not, at this time, you can confirm whether or not you're considering this winter putting in snow-making equipment in the Cypress Hills for the ski slope that exists.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, we're not considering it for this winter and probably not the following winter either, for some of the reasons the hon. member outlined — the chinooks and the type of warm weather. We have got a problem with water supply. And we did look into this at some length, and it would appear to be not only costly but tremendously difficult to secure a water supply such as would be adequate to have snow-making facilities in our side of the park.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Minister, just a final question or a comment. I want to let you know that I'm please that you gave a commitment tonight that the cafeteria is going to remain open and that it's not going to be turned into a museum. I believe there is a cabin owners' association meeting this Sunday in the park, if I'm not mistaken, and I'll be taking *Hansard* to that meeting so that they will be aware of the commitment that you made here tonight.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the hon. member just says, and I certainly stand by what I said in *Hansard*.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask a few questions of the minister.

Mr. Minister, there has been a recent controversy over the sand dunes area, great sand dunes area because of the apparent decision by your government to allow drilling by Lone Pine Resources for oil and gas in a fairly extensive way. The number of wells to be drilled apparently range anywhere from 100 to 1,500 which is a very, very massive kind of proposition.

Now in the face of that, apparently, Mr. Minister, you and your department have been seriously considering establishing a certain area of the Great Sand Hills as a park. One of your officials was quoted in the newspaper as saying that you were to announce that in July, I believe. We're now in July. Mr. Minister, can you report to the House on the status of this park that you are proposing to announce in the great sand dunes area.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, could we just clarify something. I was in the House the day the hon. member was speaking to my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, on this subject, and he was talking about great sand dunes. And I believe they were being confused with the Great Sand Hills in the south . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Great Sand Hills.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Well there's a significant difference in this . . . And believe me, I'm not being pejorative about this at all, but he quoted from something that was said by my officials in the June 2 edition of the *Leader-Post*. In the June 3 edition of the *Leader-Post* there was a correction printed, and I'd like to quote, with your indulgence, Mr. Chairman. It says:

A story about a protected designation for the Great Sand Hills that appeared in Friday's issue of the *Leader-Post* was incorrect.

The story, in which Parks Department officials

said they would be announcing a designation for the sand hills, should have referred to the Athabasca Sand Dunes in north-western Saskatchewan.

And I know that's not your fault if you took the verbatim from the *Leader-Post*, and you probably didn't see the correction because it's a very small piece. you can have this copy if you want to look at it. And it did appear in a subsequent edition. But it was in error. I'm not blaming you. That's not your fault; it was printed in the *Leader-Post* and they made a mistake. They misquoted officials.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you for that clarification. Let's get it clear then. Is there then no plan, Mr. Minister, on designating any part of the Great Sand Hills as a protected area or as a park or any other kind of designation? Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can confirm for the hon. member the Great Sand Hills in south-western Saskatchewan has been examined by officials from my department. We are very interested in protecting some areas of it. It's not the whole area that is at risk or is particularly fragile; it is particular sections of it that's at risk and is fragile. And we are interested in protecting those areas and we are looking at the potential and possibility of a future designation.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, there is now in process an environmental impact assessment study that is being put together by the proponent in the area in the anticipation of drilling in a very extensive way. I would assume therefore that you and your department would be very interested in this proposition. I have no doubt that you are, because of the ecological impact this kind of activity might have, in fact will have there.

Have you, Mr. Minister, through yourself or through your departmental officials, made some input into this proposal, either through the environmental impact study, which may not be the right way to go, or to the Department of the Environment, so that it is clearly understood what the position of your department, whose role it is to look after this kind of an area. Have you made some input into this, and if so, in what form?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we will be invited after the EIA, the environmental impact assessment, is complete — I'm not sure that it's complete yet — we will be invited to make input. It will be given to us for review. We certainly will review it very carefully and we will make comments. And the hon. member's perfectly correct; we do have a deep and abiding interest in this area. As he may be aware, and I know some members over there would be aware, there are some portions of that that have been designated critical wildlife habitat protection land. So naturally we would have some vested interest in making sure that the interests of this department, or more precisely, the interests we represent, whether it be wildlife or parks or protected areas, would in fact be looked after.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and I invite you to look at the 1978 study, which is a very extensive

one, and I'm sure that you have and I know that your officials are aware of it. Because I think that having looked at that, the position of the department ought to be a very strong one in opposition to what is being proposed to take place here because of the kind of impact that it could have.

I want to leave this subject, and I want to ask you another question dealing in another part of the province. On Saturday I had the good fortune of spending a brief period of time at Madge Lake. Unfortunately I wasn't able to find the time to do a round of golf, but I was there and speaking to some of the people there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I won't say what they said about the MLA. It could be unparliamentary.

But as I was speaking to the people there, Mr. Minister, I was informed that for some strange reason your department had taken a very unusual action. There had been a certain business operation that was selling ice-cream — I think it was at a filling station. And they received a letter from the department informing this business place that they not longer would be able to sell the ice-cream because they were going to provide it to someone else. Now can you provide, Mr. Minister, the explanation of this. I don't know what it's all about, but I thought it was a little unusual.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we're just going to go back and dig out the specific terms of that particular lease. I'm advised that the agent who was providing ice-cream actually didn't have provision within the lease to do that. I believe it was a garage and a few other things, but ice-cream was not one of the commodities he was supposed to be selling.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Was an opportunity provided to make appropriate renovations or whatever might have been necessary in order to make this possible, Mr. Minister, rather than simply a cancellation so that . . . I don't know what the whole thing is all about.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we just dug up the terms of the lease, commercial lease approval, and as a service station, electronic games over a number of seasons, there was no provision for selling ice-cream within that lease. I'm further advised that the proponent did not request to add on to his business in any form to make provision for the sale of ice-cream.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — I see. Just so I can get it clear, are you saying, Mr. Minister, that the operator did not in any way request whether he could do anything at all to meet the requirements? I don't know if he did because I don't know the operator, quite frankly. But I think your officials will know because I am told that there was some communication with him, and I am wondering whether he had requested whether he could continue, if he met the requirements, Mr. Minister — just for the record.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, if there was any communication at all it would have to have been at the local level because the officials here are unaware of it. We don't have anything on record that there was a request to go ahead and do this.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, can you tell me who the new operator is then. Apparently there is an ice-cream stand. I was tempted to go, but as I said to the member from Pelly, I decided not to for certain reasons well know to him. But can you tell me who the operator is of the new ice-cream issuing facility?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I did receive an unsolicited proposal to do an ice-cream parlour. It was called 45 Flavours, I believe, and was subsequently given approval.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Can you tell me if the owner of this business is a Mr. Boyd?

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

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Are you aware, Mr. Minister, that this Mr. Boyd is a former PC candidate in the area? And I'm wondering if maybe there was some connection with this whole story state of events that took place here. Are you aware of that, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Some people behind me indicated yes, he was in fact a former PC candidate. I don't see any sorry mess. We had one individual who was selling ice-cream contrary to terms of his lease, and he was told he was not supposed to be doing that.

Subsequent to that, someone else comes along who in my view should not be excluded from submitting an unsolicited proposal merely because he's been a former PC candidate, as indeed nor should a former NDP candidate, former NDP minister or MLA be excluded from making an unsolicited proposal to conduct business in one of the provincial parks, and should be given every due consideration.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Minister, I think I'm quite prepared to rest my case; the story speaks for itself.

The facts are . . . Mr. Minister, I'll make my comment and I'll leave it at that. The facts are that notice was given to this operator; the operator offered to meet any kind of requirements that were necessary in order to meet the standard. he was told that that was not possible, and soon after that . . . Maybe you're not familiar with this because it might have been done at the local level, but if you're not I suggest you should take a close look at it very quickly, because these are the facts. And then very soon after that, this other gentleman, who probably is perfectly qualified but so happens that was a Conservative candidate, was given the permission to operate.

(2030)

Now I wouldn't probably raise this if this government's record in the last little while wasn't so dismal about the kind of way it operates, but I won't pursue it any further. I think the local people are the ones who should judge here; I'm not going to do the judging. I just wanted to make sure that this was on the record of *Hansard*. It's there and I shall therefore rest my case.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I've had an opportunity, Mr. Minister, to go over the bids and the tenders that you received for the boat, or the

yacht, or the vessel — I shouldn't use the word boat. Mr. Minister, I just want to make a few comments on this.

What the department had was a 32-foot, aluminum cabin boat, twin port engines, supercharged engines, fridge, stove, furnace, partial furnishing, triple-axle trailer, which is a heavy-duty trailer. Mr. Minister, I say to you, that is a pretty expensive yacht. The department in 1976 paid \$35,000 for it and I see that one Don Lay of Meadow Lake purchased the boat from the department for \$13, 752. Mr. Minister, considering the fact that that boat today would be worth in the neighbourhood of \$50,000, do you not think at that time that you should not have accepted this bid of \$13,000 and retendered it?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, the bidding was handled in the normal fashion through the property management corporation. This was the third bid that was received. I believe if we look through it, earlier bids were not accepted. And we found this information because the hon. member requested it from me to get it from property management. I undertook to do that and I did, but it's really between yourself and the property management corporation to pursue the whys and the wherefores. I undertook to find the information from them and that's what I've attempted to provide for you, in just as forthright a manner as I could.

**Mr. Thompson:** — thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I shall pursue that with the property management corporation.

I now want to turn to an item up in Jan Lake, Mr. minister, where some individuals are claiming that the taxes on their property have increased . . . well some of them have . . . They indicate that they have increased their taxes by 120 per cent. Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could confirm if that is the percentage of increase in the taxes on . . . That is in a recreational subdivision, I believe, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, but we don't levy taxes in any of those areas. That's under the purview of the Minister of Urban Affairs.

**Mr. Thompson:** — I'm having a tough time here tonight to get answers. This is a recreational subdivision, Mr. Minister. Does your department not have authority over the recreational subdivisions?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — If there is no municipality, Mr. Chairman, taxes accrue to the Department of Urban Affairs. We have a lease fee if it's land that is owned by us, just a lease fee. That's rather like the situation in a park, where we'd lease land within a park to cottage owners. We would charge a lease fee and get money from them in that fashion.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Okay. Mr. Minister, could you indicate what the lease fees are on that subdivision at Jan Lake?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — On that kind of property, lake shore lots, \$200; back shore lots, 140.

**Mr. Thompson:** — And they're all uniform throughout the subdivisions?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, basically according to the size, the length of the frontage, but that's a standard frontage lot and a standard back shore lot, as well, that I quoted to you.

**Mr. Thompson:** — So one would assume that the taxes on those that Urban Affairs put on would be identical, the same as the lease is.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I guess that would depend, hon. member, on the assessment on the buildings and the type of property they have. Again, taxation just doesn't fall under my bailiwick; it's under Urban Affairs. So I'm sorry I couldn't give you a definitive answer on how the taxation amount was arrived at.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I will follow that up with Urban Affairs then.

I want to now turn to fisheries, Mr. Minister. Have you opened up or have you planned any new fish hatcheries in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, we haven't opened up any new ones and at this precise moment there are no new plans in the works.

**Mr. Thompson:** — What would be the newest hatchery that we have in Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — That would be the revamped, reworked, remodernized Fort Qu'Appelle hatchery, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Thompson:** — And the Fort Qu'Appelle hatchery, do they produce all species of fish?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, we have between eight and 11 species each year.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Could you indicate how the lakeside hatcheries are working, or are they still in operation? I'll be more specific, and I'll give you the one on Stony Lake or Delaronde Lake.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I'm advised that we did have problems at Delaronde, Mr. Chairman, due to drought in this last year, and we were very unsuccessful with the fishery in there.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Have you ceased operations of that lakeside hatchery, or are you still going to continue with the operation?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — We do have an enhancement proposal ready to go there next year, Mr. Chairman, but it is contingent on getting water, making sure we have more than we had this last year. I think the early indications, because it's near a part of the world where I live, they have had quite a bit of rain this year, so hopefully that one's going to be a success.

**Mr. Thompson:** — That lakeside hatchery, was it not successful up until, as you indicate, last year it did not produce fish? Was that not a successful lakeside fish

hatchery, and the first one in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — That's correct, Mr. Chairman. It was the first one and it has been successful in previous years. It's produced up to 41,000 fish in some years before drought took its toll.

**Mr. Thompson:** — You're talking about 41,000 fingerlings. Is this right? And one species only?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — That's wall-eye, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well I refer to them as pickerel. Mr. Minister, some people call them dories. Mr. Minister, could you tell me how many fish are being produced in the hatchery at Meadow Lake?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — With your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, we're finding those numbers right now. I have an official going through the book, and we're trying to find all our fish numbers.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, when you get that information you can pass it on to me and the species that you are producing in the Meadow Lake hatchery.

My next question would be, Mr. Minister: are you looking at any other lakeside hatcheries in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — There are two on the go right now, Mr. Chairman, Lake Lenore and Kenosee, and a new one planned for this year, Nichol reservoir. And I did find in the fish and wildlife development fund report for this year, Meadow Lake, A and B ponds at Meadow Lake, operated by our fisheries branch, was 97,000 fingerlings, the majority of which were released into Greig Lake. And if the hon. member would like a copy, I'd be pleased to send this one over.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Which species are you raising in the Meadow Lake hatchery, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Sorry.

**Mr. Thompson:** — What species are you producing out of the hatchery in Meadow Lake?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Wall-eye.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Okay. I now want to turn to fish kill that we had in northern Saskatchewan this spring. and it was under investigation by your department where there was over 1,000 mullets or suckers that were found floating in the river, and this was just after break-up in the river.

And I wonder if you could indicate if the department . . . I know the department had sent out water specimens, fish specimens, and I also know that there are individuals up in Canoe Lake area, in the Broad Creek is what I am talking about, who also took specimens out of there and had them sent out to get them tested. I wonder, could you indicate what your department found out as to what happened to that kill?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, yes indeed there

were investigations done, and we found there was not contamination in the water and no contamination in the fish; however, we did find lack of oxygen, which contributed to the fish kill and stress in trying to get up through a blocked culvert.

**Mr. Thompson:** — So you indicate, Mr. Minister, that your departmental officials indicate that there was no problem there, that as the mayor of Cole Bay, Daniel Desjarlais, indicated that there was either some sort of a chemical that killed the fish or possibly dynamite was used. You indicate that it was just a normal kill normally associated with a creek of that size in the springtime.

(2045)

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we found no evidence of dynamite, and it appears just to be a normal occurrence with a lack of oxygen.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well I would suggest, Mr. Minister, that that is not the case. Most certainly if . . . when you know northern Saskatchewan, and I'm sure that you have biologists who are aware of this, we have thousands and thousands of rivers and creeks that are running in the spring. The mullets go in there to spawn. There most certainly is a lot of fresh water.

The mayor of Cole Bay indicated to me quite clearly that there was no blockage of the creek that you're talking about with a culvert, and most certainly lack of oxygen just doesn't take place at that time of the year with all that fresh water and it's running freely. You don't have a lack of oxygen; if you did, we would have million and millions of suckers or mullets dead in all our creeks in northern Saskatchewan.

I've lived in that country, and every spring I see mullets that are so thick in the creeks that you could walk across them, and I'm not exaggerating, they are that thick. And you never, ever see kills for lack of oxygen. Most certainly I think that the citizens of Cold Bay and Canoe Narrows and in that area have some concerns. I know that they have taken specimens out of there to get them tested. And I just say to you, Mr. Minister, that that just does not take place at that time of the year in that fresh water moving the way it is with lack of oxygen.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — If I can further perhaps expand on my previous answer, Mr. Chairman, for the hon. member. There was a temporarily blocked culvert as a result of beaver activity. So what happened was . . . And there was a low amount of water . . . The fish, and as the hon. member indicates, do come in there *en masse*, and they're solid such as one could walk across them, help to block it because they get stuck in there, hence the low water, the high number of fish caused the lack of oxygen problem, which was a result of the fish kill. I am advised that we found no evidence of dynamite at all within the area.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Could you indicate where the fish were found; were they up the creek from the lake or on the lake side of the culvert?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — They were found mainly, Mr.

Chairman, in the downstream pool and some in the culvert.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well I would like you to check into that further, because I know that I've been up in that country for many years and I have never ever seen a mullet kill of that magnitude — never, ever.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, just closing that off, could you indicate how many mullet kills that your department officials have seen, and how many have been reported up in that northern area?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, this is the only one that we're aware of, I'm advised, that has happened in that part of the country. Apparently we do have an updated report on this particular incident to which the hon. member is referring, so I've asked my officials . . . It's not something that they've got with them tonight; it's a report that's been filed. If they'll bring that report out and I'd like to send a covering letter with it to the hon. member so he can look at it, and if he's not happy with what's contained in the report, naturally I'd be pleased to discuss it with you.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. And when I get that information, then I will pass it on to the Canoe Lake council and Cole Bay and Jans Bay.

I now want to turn to the lake limits for the commercial fisheries, Mr. Minister. And as you know, in the last number of years you keep adding more and more tolerances to the commercial fishing industry, and now you have reverted to the species limit. And as you go through the *Gazette*, you will now find lake after lake in northern Saskatchewan who now have species limits.

I wonder if you could indicate to me why you would put species limits on the commercial fishing industry in northern Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, as an outcome of the 1985 commercial fishery options paper, it was determined that some species were being overharvested. I don't think that's any secret to anybody — primarily wall-eye, pike, and lake trout. And of course that depends on market, as with so many other things, and the market was high, the demand was good, and the price was good on those, so there was some overharvesting.

Most jurisdictions do have a species limit by lake. We were one of the last to impose this particular measure. We also have one, of course, for anglers, and it's just, in our view, a matter of good conservation.

**Mr. Thompson:** — So, Mr. Minister, you are going to continue with the species limits and you're going to put these quotas on other lakes, are you?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — This would be on an as required basis, Mr. Chairman, yes.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, once again the species limit is no different than the lynx that you've put on, it's no different than the corridors. It's another example of a department making decisions in northern

Saskatchewan that they are making it very hard for traditional users to make a living.

You talk about these species limits. Well let me tell you, when you go out there to fish a lake and there's always been a 40, 50,000 pound limit on that lake, and the fishermen go in there . . . The biologists are the ones who set those limits. They gazette them every year. They check the limits, and if the commercial fishermen are taking a little bit too much fish out, then they just lower the limit — 50,000 pound lake may go down to a 40,000. Or it can be gazetted at 60,000 if the fish hatch has been a good hatch.

But what you've done with the species limit, you've put a species on each fish. And if you've got a 50,000 pound limit on some of those lakes and you've got a species limit on northern pike or jack fish, and wall-eye and white fish and trout, then if you have a 50,000 pound lake and a fisherman goes in and he catches 10,000 pounds of trout first, or 10,000 pounds of any species, you shut the lake down. And the other 40,000 pounds of that limit stays there and the fishermen also loses that income.

And I say that this is a policy that is set by yourself in a department in southern Saskatchewan who is not looking at the needs of northern Saskatchewan. Once again you're making those decisions. This species limit is one of the most backwards way of operating a fishery in this province. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, and I ask you: will you consider changing that species limit and going back to the system where biologists go in, they check out the fish and see what the catch is that year, and then they gazette it for the next year? Would you do that, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, it is in fact the biologists who do recommend those limits, those species limits, and we're taking their advice. Prior to the imposition of a species limit it was 1.8 million kilograms taken out. That was the normal take. The year immediately prior to the imposition it went to two million; with the imposition it went back to 1.8, so there was no net impact on what had happened prior to species limit being introduced.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, are you indicating that there was only 1.8 kilograms of fish taken by the commercial fishery in the province of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Of the species, Mr. Chairman, of wall-eye, pike and trout.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well I just want to say this, and I want to make it very clear, that the advice that you're getting on these species limits is a bad one. I've got fisherman, and the Patuanak fisherman right now have been waiting for the estimates to come up because they wanted me to bring this up.

In that Patuanak area those fisherman have limits of 40 and 50,000 pounds in some lakes that are sitting there that they can't touch because of your philosophy and ideology that you are going to make things tough for Northerners. And that's what this species limit has done.

There is no lakes up in that area that the limits have been

taken off. You have biologists who are going out there. They check the amount of fish that should be taken and that should be put on the limits, and you turn around and make a policy that totally contradicts that. There are fisherman who have 10,000 pounds on small lakes, that every year they go in and they take 10,000 pounds of fish. you come along with your species limit. Some of those lakes they take 2,000 pounds and they have to leave the other 8,000. And I say that that's not fair.

You say that you have limits on the sports fishermen, and that is right. But sports fishermen can go out there and they can catch their limit, they can go to shore, and they can fillet those fish and eat them and go back out and catch a limit again. And they can do this on a year-round basis. Where a commercial fishery, they have those lakes, they fish them once a year, they have a limit gazetted by your biologists that indicates how many pounds that lake can handle.

But now when you started putting on the species limit, it's just like putting on the lynx, the species on lynx or the corridors that you have up there that takes away the rights of northern fisherman, northern trappers and hunters to make a living. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that that is a wrong decision. If you just take a look at some of those lakes up in northern Saskatchewan where commercial fishermen have always got their licence in the spring — the *Gazette* indicates whether it's 20,000 pounds or 30,000 pounds for that lake — they go in and they take the limit and they come out, they know that that's theirs. Now you've went and you've put the species limits on all those lakes, more and more of those lakes for species. And I just think that it's a bad move.

And I wonder if you could tell me, Mr. Minister, what percentage of the lakes that are commercially fished and gazetted do you have species limits on now?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — It works out in round numbers, Mr. Chairman, to be about 150 out of 400 lakes. I hadn't bothered converting that to a percentage . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, sorry. Out of 850 lakes. There's 150 out of 850.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, are there 850 lakes in northern Saskatchewan that are commercially fished?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — There are 850 lakes upon which there are commercial quotas, not all of which, however, are fished every year.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Could you indicate how many limits have been taken out in the last year? I speak of the lakes that are gazetted and are fished. Could you tell me the percentage of those lakes that the complete gazetted limit was taken?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — That's not a statistic we normally carry around, Mr. Chairman, but it is a number that we could generate within the department, if that's okay with the hon. member. I think he knows from years past, when I commit to find numbers and get them to him, I get them to him within a reasonable length of time. This is one we can generate and find. I don't want to guess at it — we were guessing on percentages — but would rather be



accurate and send it to you in due course if that's acceptable.

**Mr. Thompson:** — I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could break that down further and give me the number of limits that have been taken completely out of lakes that you have applied the species limit to also.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, we can undertake to do that for you, hon. member.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, I wonder, do you realize that impact that the species limit has on the commercial fishing industry in northern Saskatchewan to the individual fisherman who every year has gone out there? Do you really understand the impact that it has on the fishermen, and have you met with any of those commercial fishermen to discuss this yourself?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I have met with groups of commercial fishermen, Mr. Chairman, specifically on this issue I don't recall. I did have a meeting in La Ronge, it would be a year past this winter. I don't recall if that was one of the specific items; there was a wide-ranging discussion for about a two-hour period.

(2100)

Yes, I have some idea, because there's a sensitivity within the department and among the officials as to imposing a species limit, again, may I say and reiterate, in keeping with other jurisdictions across the country. And it's not something we undertake lightly; we are interested in the conservation in the long term.

We're very worried that many of these fishermen who are fishing today may not be fishing in the years ahead unless we take some measures in the interests of conservation. We think this is a good measure to take. The hon. member is raising some concerns. We'll go back, visit the data, provide you with the information, and I'm sure I'll be hearing from you in due course.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would agree to go into Patuanak. you could fly up there; there's an airport. And the commercial fishermen up there either want to come to Regina and meet with yourself and your officials, or they would like you to go into Patuanak and meet with them. I have held off arranging a meeting with those fishermen with yourself until we brought the estimates up, thinking that maybe this situation could be resolved. Would you agree to meet with the fishermen in Patuanak? It would take you only an hour to fly up there, an hour and a half, and meet with those fishermen to discuss the issues pertaining to the species limits where that has especially hit those fishermen in the Patuanak area very hard.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Now, Mr. Chairman, we have had a regional biologist in the area meet frequently with the individuals concerned — Robert Wallace. However, to answer the hon. member specifically, it's probably easier for me to go there than to have a group of people trying to arrange logistically to get down here. So at some stage in the future — it certainly won't be during the session; you know we're tied here to Regina a considerable amount of

our time, so it would be rather difficult to arrange a trip up there during session — but some time subsequent to the close of the session perhaps in the fall, I would have no problem going up there. If for some reason I can't make it, I'd certainly arrange to have a senior official there. I'd prefer to go, too.

**Mr. Thompson:** — I thank you very much, Mr. Minister. The fishermen up there have wanted to either come down to Regina, or you go up there. And it doesn't take a long time to fly up into Patuanak. There's lights on the airport. We have daylight up north till 10 o'clock yet, so I would ask that you consider this request and let the fishermen know up there, or through myself. And if you would just go up there and talk to those fishermen, talk to the families, and just see what the impact is of the species limit that have been imposed by your department — they are a tremendous handicap, more and more species limits are coming on every year.

I wonder if you could indicate, Mr. Minister, how many more new lakes are you putting under the system this year of species limits?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — The number is under 15. We were not sure if it is 12 or 13, but it is under 15.

**Mr. Thompson:** — That's not a large number of lakes. I wonder, could you indicate to me what those lakes are?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'll undertake to find out for the hon. member. We don't have them listed with us, but we'll include it in as part of the package of information I've previously committed to find for him. We should put a time limit on this. I don't like these things dragging on for ever. I'm quite sure we could probably get this put together within a two-week period? How long? I'm advised it's probably going to take a month because we don't have the statistics from the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation back yet, but just as quickly as we can, and certainly we'll aim for a one-month period and give you the whole package.

**Mr. Thompson:** — No, I guess you misunderstood the question, Mr. Minister. All I asked — it's got nothing to do with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation — all I asked you, Mr. Minister, was for the names of the 15 new lakes that you have applied the species limit on to this year. And surely it's not going to take a month, and you don't have to go to Winnipeg to get that information.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I was referring to the package of information, which I had committed earlier, which included numbers and species and so on.

In terms of just that number of lakes, I can have that for the hon. member within seven days.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I wonder . . . I've had another request for an extension for the commercial limit on the Beaver River. There's a 10,000 pound limit, I believe, on the Beaver River. Once again, there's a species limit on that river, and they have taken out the limit, the species, and there's still a number of pounds, I believe, approximately 3,000 pounds left to

be taken out. We now have a situation up there where Waite Fisheries, the agent in Buffalo Narrows, is taking mullets, and in order to fish for the mullets that limit would have to be extended. I wonder if you would consider an extension on the Beaver River and let me know if it's possible.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that the commercial fishermen's association has in fact recommended against that particular extension.

**Mr. Thompson:** — What organization, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — The Saskatchewan confederation . . . I'll have to get this. Saskatchewan commercial Fishermen Federation of Co-operatives is the official title.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, there's only two fishermen that fish that lake. There's only two fishermen that hold a licence on the lake, and only one fisherman has fished it. And are you telling me that some organization is making the decision as to how that Beaver River is going to be fished.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we've already had some representation from the organization, and I believe it's to do with some downstream work at Ile-a-la-Crosse — fishermen from downstream who've made some complaints about problems that they've experienced. But I've just asked officials if we can take another look at that and revisit that particular situation, and we can.

**Mr. Thompson:** — If you could give me an answer whether there could be an extension or if you would just lift the species limit so that they could just take in the 2 or 3,000 pounds that are left on the Beaver River.

I realize that the Beaver River feeds into the Lake Ile-a-la-Crosse, and Ile-a-la-Crosse, as you are aware, now has only a winter fishery. There is no summer fishery on Ile-a-la-Crosse and that seems to be working out quite well. But we're only dealing with a small limit — I believe 10,000 pounds — and I'm not too sure when talking to the fishermen that fish that lake whether they have made that representation to your biologist that they not take that limit or not. But I will pass that on to them and let them know that that's how the decision was arrived at. And you'll provide me with that information?

Once again, Mr. Minister, in closing off on the species limits, I want to indicate to you that I think this is a bad deal. It's not the way that you operate a fishery. We've had fisheries operations in this province for many, many years, and it's always been done through the system of a biologist determining how much fish had come off of those lakes. It was taken off, and if it was ever over-fished or anything, then the limits were just dropped accordingly.

Some of those lakes there's absolutely not tourists on them, it's just the commercial fishermen, and the decision to go with these species limits, I think, is just another decision that's making it very, very hard on the commercial fishermen in this province. In some places it might work, but I say to you that it's something that you should, as a minister, look at very seriously. And when

you meet with the fishermen in Patuanak, I would sincerely hope that you have an open mind as to their concerns, because I know that they're going to express that to you as they've expressed it to me many times, and so has fishermen in northern Saskatchewan. It's something that you do when you gazette, and these fishermen go to get their licence in the spring, not even aware that all of a sudden there's a species limit on that lake.

It's just not the way that the fisheries should be operated in this province. It's not the way that we done it before when it was successful, and I think that what we should do is go back to the way we used to do it. And the species limit is just not the way to go, and I would ask you to reconsider those species limits. And when you meet with the fishermen at Patuanak, I would ask you to go in there with an open mind and really take a serious look at their concerns.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I appreciate the comments of the hon. member. And as I said before, and I mean it quite sincerely — he know that; he's been my critic for a number of years — when he speaks, I listen. If we wants me to visit and meet with these fishermen, then I'd be pleased to do so. I can't guarantee there would be any change of policy as an outcome of the meeting. I can guarantee an open mind, and I will listen.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. You indicated that you would make arrangements to meet with the fishermen in Patuanak. Thank you very much.

**An Hon. Member:** — Down the road. After session's over.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Oh, I think we should not wait until after the session because after the session we may be into a provincial election and then everything is gone. So I suggest that you don't . . . It only takes you a few hours to go to Patuanak, and I suggest that you do that fairly quickly.

I now want to turn to, Mr. Minister, to the game farming the province. How many commercial game farms do we have in this province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Once again, Mr. Chairman, this is an area that doesn't really fall under my bailiwick. We don't license the game farms, the Department of Agriculture does, so I imagine when the Minister of Agriculture, the Premier, is up for estimates, you would probably want to get into that with him. I'm advised, however, it's under 50. But again, we don't have a definitive number because we don't do the licensing.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well once again I'll take that up with the Department of Agriculture. But I want to indicate I'm sure that the regulations that game farming in this province operate under are regulations that come from your department.

Mr. Minister, could you indicate if there have been any new regulations re game farming in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Again, Mr. Chairman, the regulations are under the purview of the Minister of Agriculture.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well I'm probably going to end up with a dry hole here too. Are you in charge of Ducks Unlimited, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, Ducks Unlimited, which just celebrated its 50th anniversary in the past year, is a non-profit operation. It is completely separate from government; it's supported by private donations. They do work in conjunction with governments; we joint-venture various projects: wetlands, marshlands, and things like that. The aim, of course, being to increase the number of ducks by increasing the amount of wetland and habitat available for the breeding of ducks.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, could you indicate what success you've had in the Ross Lake project up in Green Lake . . . the Ross Lake project which is up in the Green Lake area?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Now, Mr. Chairman, it doesn't ring a bell with any of my wildlife or operations officials. It must be strictly a Ducks Unlimited project and not one we're involved with. But I can certainly undertake to find information for you from Ducks Unlimited. If you want me to do it or you want to do it direct, it doesn't matter; I'd be pleased to do it.

**Mr. Thompson:** — No, that's fine. I just assumed that your department was involved in the Ducks Unlimited projects. Well are you involved in any Ducks Unlimited projects and marsh extensions in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, and I've alluded once before in the House to the heritage marsh program. And this is one that is joint-ventured; and our other partners are the natural history society, Ducks Unlimited, and the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation.

(2115)

**Mr. Thompson:** — Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I now want to turn — and I'll be closing off the estimates for the Parks with the fire suppression. Could you indicate how much money was spent in fire suppression last year, in fire control, and the fighting of . . . of fire-fighting, the prevention and control?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — It was just about \$32 million, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thirty-two million dollars that was spent on fighting fires in the province last year. I wonder, Mr. Minister, could you indicate how much of that money was spent on aircrafts, both the fixed wing aircraft and the choppers, the helicopters?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I just did some quick addition, Mr. Chairman, on the contracts we had out for helicopters, and it comes to approximately \$1.4 million. We don't have the fixed wing because, in part, it's contracted through the property management corporation, so it's not all our responsibility. There's some tie-up with the

property management corporation on those fixed wings which we have, some of which we own. But I'm advised it would be about \$3 million.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Could you indicate how much money was spent on helicopters that were here on speculation then? Not the contract; you gave me the contract helicopters.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, rental of helicopters with those that were contracted, the ones the were brought in, given the horrendous situation we faced last year, record forest fires, the second consecutive record in a row — came to \$3.4 million.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Am I right in saying that you spent 3 million on the water bombers from the fixed-wing aircraft, 3.4 on helicopters that were in here on speculation, and 1.4 million on helicopters that were on permanent contracts?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, that's approximately correct.

**Mr. Thompson:** — How many helicopters do you have on contract this summer?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we have two light helicopters and five medium, for a total of seven.

**Mr. Thompson:** — And could you give me the cost per hour of those helicopters? You only have two sized helicopters on contract, is that right?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — That's correct, Mr. Chairman. The cost per hour, a Bell 206B is \$379 an hour; the medium lift helicopter Sikorsky range from \$705 an hour to \$900 an hour.

**Mr. Thompson:** — On the Sikorsky, could you give me the difference between . . . you say between \$700 an hour for a helicopter and \$900 an hour on the Sikorsky. Could you give me why the difference of the \$200 and hour?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — It goes by, Mr. Chairman, it goes by model of helicopter. We've got a Sikorsky S55T, as opposed to a Sikorsky S58P which is a larger machine. The larger machines consume more gas and cost more money.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Who pays for the gas for those helicopters?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we have some confusions differentiating on numbers. Just the way they're listed here, it just shows a blanket total. I'll have to break that down and get back to the hon. member.

**Mr. Thompson:** — The only question that I asked, Mr. Minister, was who pays for the gas. I don't need any breakdown, and I don't need any figures there. I just want to know who pays for the gas.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Inclusive in the figure I gave, I believe we are paying for the gas, but I'll have to confirm that.

**Mr. Thompson:** — So what the department is paying, they're paying up to \$900 an hour for a Sikorsky helicopter and they are providing the gasoline and oil for that machine. Are they also providing food and lodging for the pilots?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, we do not provide the food and lodging for the copper operators.

**Mr. Thompson:** — So the pilots do not eat in the cafeterias that Parks and Resources have at their headquarters?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — At any time, Mr. Chairman, whereby the operators of those particular machines would eat or, in fact, sleep over in anything sponsored by our department, anything that we would normally provide for our own crews is billed back to them, so they pay it themselves. And a case in point happened at Meadow Lake recently. I had an inquiry on that and I tracked it down, and it turned out that they were billed for any fuel they filled up, and they were billed for staying overnight out at the base.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, I just want to close off by . . . You had an announcement; you colleague, the Minister of Social Services, and yourself made an announcement on the hiring of a forest fire strike team. You indicated that you hired 68 individuals in northern Saskatchewan as a forest fire strike team. Could you indicate if all 68 of those jobs that you announced are in place right now?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to say they are. They were involved very early on in the course after having been brought into the program and did just an admirable job in the first fire with which they were involved.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Could you indicated how much an hour they're being paid, Mr. Minister? And is there a two-tier system? I would like to know if they are getting the same wages that they started with or right through the duration of that job.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, when they are involved actually on the fire line, involved with forest fire fighting, they are paid \$6.45 an hour. When they are not involved on the fire line, they do other things such as work in forests, stand tending, that type of thing, and they're paid \$4.50 an hour for those activities.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well I would just want to say in closing on this, Mr. Minister, that when you had all the hype . . . I believe that you were up in La Loche and made that announcement and the Minister of Social Services made the announcement in the legislature, and . . .

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Prince Albert.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well okay, you made the announcement in Prince Albert and Regina, and you talk about hiring 68 Northerners and you pay them \$6.45 an hour when they're fighting fire, and if there's no fire, doing other jobs, and I'm assuming other jobs . . . I don't know really what the other jobs would be unless they are

looking after the campsites and getting wood and things like that, but you lower their wage to 4.50 an hour.

So really what you're doing, you're hiring 68 people, and it's a social welfare job that you're using. And I think, Mr. Minister, when you take those individuals — you made the big announcement here in the legislature that you were creating 68 jobs, paying them \$6.45 an hour, but you only pay them that when there's a fire. So if there's no fire they go back to 4.50 an hour.

And I don't know how you can jump up and pay an individual \$6.45 an hour one day and then the next day pay him \$4.50 an hour. Can you just imagine how degrading that must be to the individuals that you have created these jobs for? All of a sudden for one week they're out there working getting 6.45 an hour, and I would assume that when they're out on the fire line that they're getting their board and room also, the same as the pilots, and then as soon as there's no fire the next week, they're back at \$4.50 an hour working who knows where, doing what?

I say to you, Mr. Minister, that when you announce a job like this or a program such as this one, why not pay them the same wage from the start to the finish, and if anything, increase their wages like normal working people would get — not go backwards.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — You have 68 northern people up there who need the jobs bad, and to pay them 6.45 an hour and then reduce it when there's not fires . . . and I say to you, Mr. Minister, we had a lot of fires at the start, and then we had a period up until now where there was about a month there that there was a lot of rain and there was very little forest fires, so I can only assume that those individuals were back down to 4.50 an hour. I think that's a bad decision on your part.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I think we should bear in mind that these are 68 positions that didn't exist before, and they're 68 people who had been receiving social assistance. And as far as we hear, they're quite happy to have this opportunity to work because they are, in fact, receiving some on-the-job training. We are helping them with silviculture. They're doing some fire-guard clearing. Mainly, I would emphasize, it's in the area of silviculture, and they are learning a skill that will be of use to them later on.

In terms of the number of strikes — and yes, we had a horrendous start and it did die down, but I would like to point out yesterday we had 32 new fires; today we have 20 new fires burning in the province.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I still maintain — regardless whether those individuals are fighting fire or they're out making the forest look better, using silviculture, planting trees, thinning out the forest, whatever it may be — that they most certainly shouldn't have a reduction in wages. They should be paid the same wage that they started with. Why would you want to reduce their wages from 6.45 an hour to 4.50? I think that that's the wrong move.

(2130)

Mr. Minister, I want to close off now by indicating that I think that it's important that you create jobs like this, but I think it's important that you do not reduce their wages. You can imagine if you were getting a reduction of wages in here rather than an increase as we went on. And that's the same way those people are up there, only you're putting them at the bottom of the scale; you take them from 6.45 down to 4.50. And let me tell you, that is degrading, Mr. Minister.

You have helicopters that you have on spec last year, that you paid almost three and a half million dollars to those helicopters, just on spec. The department even paid their gasoline. You're paying \$900 an hour for some of those helicopters plus gasoline. You don't do that to anybody else — the truckers in this province, the farmers, they don't get free gasoline — but you're doing that to those individuals who own these helicopters. And I say that that program where you cutting the wages on those 68 jobs, that you should go back and retroactively pay them 6.45 for every hour that they have worked this summer.

I want to indicate in closing that I think that we have to work forward and plant more trees. I think that reforestation is important, and we're going to have to improve on our nurseries and get more trees. I ask you to take surveys of the big game and the animals that we have in this province so we know what we're dealing with.

I had a call today from northern Saskatchewan, from an individual who found a cow moose and her calf, who was all chewed up, on a little island. And the flies and everything had got to them, but the timber wolves had literally eaten the small moose alive, and the mother moose, she had her ears chewed off, and everything. And I would ask you to take a survey, and you have to do this through the trappers and the fishermen, and see what the wolf population also is up in northern Saskatchewan. These are sad situations when this happens. The one that was phoned in today was a serious one, and I would ask you as a minister to look into that.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — ... (inaudible) ... is brought to my attention, Mr. Chairman. We'll certainly look into it; be pleased to do so.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to ask you some questions pertaining to the topic which we'd started back on June 23, and that was questions with respect to the tax on lotteries. And it's affecting us now, and it's been implemented in the province of Saskatchewan. Could you confirm, Mr. Minister, that there are approximately 700 vendors in the province that actually vend on behalf of Sask Sport or are licensed through Sask Sport and yourself for your department, and there are about 35 of these kiosks that are actually in malls.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, the licence is given. It is now a five-year licence that has been given to Sask Sport Incorporated to operate the lottery. Their arm who operate this particular aspect is called Sask Sport Distributors Incorporated. They, in turn, license, and I

would believe that it is 781 retail outlets, of whom 40 are kiosk operators.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Would it be possible, Mr. Minister, to obtain the addresses of the mall operators, the kiosk operators, from you? Would it be something that you would be able to give me over a course of a day or two or three?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I don't have that kind of information. Sask Sport operates entirely independently of the government, and contract that they sign — and one was alluded to already in the House a week or so ago — those contracts exist between ... that particular contract exists between the 40 kiosk operators and Sask Sport Distributors Incorporated and has nothing whatsoever to do with me. So I don't know who they are. I don't have the lists and I don't even have access to the information. It's not anything I've ever requested.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Would you consider it appropriate, Mr. Minister, for a member of the legislature to go to Sask Sport and ask them for such a list?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, Sask Sport is an independent operation of government. Anybody can approach them for any information that they want to divulge. It's up to them what they want to give out. They're an organization. They're a business. They have contracts with other business people, and it's up to them to decide what information they want to give out.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — So I take it from that, Mr. Minister, that you would have no objection if such a list was distributed to a member of the legislature.

Could you tell me, Mr. Minister, whether you have the names and address, and whether I've be able to get the names and addresses of the 781 vendors who are licensed to sell lottery tickets?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I don't have those names and addresses at all. I don't have access to them.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Would they also be ... Would you confirm then that they are also licensed through Sask Sport and that the same conditions would apply.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is correct, and that's SSDI (Sask Sport Distributors Incorporated), that's a division of Sask Sport Incorporated.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now with respect to the number of lottery machines in Saskatchewan, you indicated that there are 781 vendors now, and 40 of these ... I should just get that confirmed. Is it 40 additional or 40 of the 781? I guess it's 40 additional that are in kiosks in malls. And would you indicate to me how many were cancelled over the last ... since January of this year?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I have no knowledge of that, Mr. Chairman. The contract exists between the independent operators and Sask Sport Incorporated, through SSDI. I have nothing whatsoever to do with the day-to-day

operations. My involvement is simply, look after the licence, negotiate the licence and give it to Sask Sport Incorporated. It used to be a one-year licence; it's now a five-year licence. And they operate the lottery, and we have nothing to do with it.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Forty additional?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I said 781, of whom 40 would be kiosk operators. So that would give 741 retail operators. Now that's the last number I have when I asked how many there were. That may have changed but I believe it to be accurate.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Do you have the number of the vendors from the year previous? You were giving me the existing number 781; do you have the previous years?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — No, Mr. Chairman, I don't have any numbers, I only have those numbers. I asked how many there were in the province as a matter of interest, and that was the information given to me.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Would you confirm, Mr. Minister, that the money generated from the lotteries through Sask Sport Incorporated goes to 1,185 groups in the province or thereabouts, and that these represent approximately 600,000 people in various sports, cultural, charitable, or charitable volunteer organizations?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — The number I am familiar with is 1,185. The total number of people effected — I would be guessing, but I'd say, yes, I think it's in the ballpark of 600,000 people.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — would you confirm, Mr. Minister, that the gross sales last year for this was approximately \$108 million?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that it was \$110 million.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — And would you confirm, Mr. Minister, that since the tax on lotteries was announced, since March 1 of this year when it was announced, till about the time it was implemented, that the revenues generated through the lottery system is down slightly over 10 per cent.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** --I don't have that number, Mr. Chairman. We only have the empirical evidence that's been gathered from kiosk operators and retail outlets who've been saying they have seen a decline in the amount of sales. In that first month, I think, you're fairly accurate. Put it this way: I'd hate to be misquoted two or three months from now and say the member from Turtleford said definitively it was 10 per cent. We're not certain, but that sounds like it could be about right.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — The indication that I have would be that it's around slightly over 10 per cent as well, so I'll use that as an estimate rather than as a definitive figure, Mr. Speaker.

And the additional figure that I would ask you to confirm, in terms of an estimate, is that since this tax has been

implemented that there has been a further decrease so that we're now looking at a decrease of sales between 20 and 30 per cent through most of the vendors.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Again, Mr. Chairman, I don't have any definitive numbers. We do know, again empirical evidence, that the numbers have declined in total sales. We're not sure how much. What I have asked lottery officials to do is when they get the numbers, the on stream numbers, the computerized figures and so on. We'd like to take a look at them and see how far down they are, it indeed they are down. Early indications have been that there was some pick-up in sales last week. Again that's only verbal; we have nothing on paper to substantiate that.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — The sales being down 10 per cent when the tax was announced and increasing close to the 30 per cent level and hovering around there, even at a time when the lottery prices . . . 6/49 right now is in the 7 million or close to \$7 million range. I would think that we would expect, and the operators tell me that they expect, when you get prize money like 5 and \$6 million, that that's when the people of Saskatchewan traditionally flock to the kiosk operators and the vendors and put some of their discretionary money into it simply for the excitement of it. But in the is particular . . . some members included, I see, but particularly this year, for some reason, that's not happened.

Now has it occurred to you, Mr. Minister, that the imposition of this tax is 90 to 95 per cent or largely the reason that this is happening? And in view of that, are you putting any argument, or what type of argument are you putting to your colleague, the minister in charge of consumer and corporate affairs, who is also faced with the same problem in the bingo parlours, and together talking to the Minister of Finance about this ridiculous tax and about what it's already done to the revenues generated to Sask Sport, and what the possibilities . . . what rather terrible consequences it could have if this tax is allowed to extend for a longer period of time, if it's let to go for another month or two or three.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, I haven't discussed it with the Minister of Consumer Affairs, the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission. In the broader context of a gaming tax or a gambling tax, I have had some informal discussions with the Minister of Finance. And I'm sure that when the Minister of Finance estimates come up for consideration in the House, that will be a topic that will be directed to him because revenue and taxation does fall under his purview. That's, I think, answering the first part of your question, hon. member.

The second part of your question: yes, of course I've given some consideration to the ramifications of a potential downturn in sales and the concomitant downturn in the amount of money, the reduced revenue that would be available to the three umbrella groups and to government as a result of the lottery tax. I'm not convinced yet — and I'm not saying I never will be convinced — but I'm not convinced yet the lottery tax is the only reason. There's no question that with the initial imposition of the tax there was an immediate downturn in the sales. I'd be very remiss if I said that I didn't believe it was connected to the

lottery tax. I think there's an obvious connection there.

I think, however, people will become accustomed to the tax. We've seen some recovery, according to the empirical evidence within the last five days, certainly. I think it is a worthy cause — a dollar for a ticket and a dime towards hospitals. I really don't believe it's a ridiculous tax.

Obviously, you know, we're going to disagree on this, Mr. Chairman, as to the benefits of the tax and the potential downsides to having placed this tax. I think it's the kind of tax that you have to allow to run for a two-to-three-month period to get the full impact of what really is happening with the tax.

(2145)

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I'm afraid of what the full impact could possibly do in this case, Mr. Minister, and I'm wondering about the advisability of running it that far, because this tax will not just affect the operations of the government, it will affect the operations, as you mentioned of . . . as we established earlier, of 1,185 different organizations in the province. And I'm wondering what's going to happen, Mr. Minister, when they look at . . . when you get the groups together sometime this fall, or they start looking at their projections and they find that they're down 20 per cent. What are you going to tell them at that stage, Mr. Minister? Are you going to tell them that you're going to . . . are you going to take it out of some place else and fund them at that stage? What are you going to tell these people?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Mr. Chairman, we're really dealing with a hypothetical situation here, so it's difficult to address a hypothetical situation which may or may not occur. Certainly there will be discussions later this fall; the hon. member is correct. Certainly I'm sure groups will raise the potential of a downturn in sales, and consequently diminished revenue for their coffers for their ongoing programs. They have had, within the last three, four years, significant increases in the amount of money that has been available to them. That's a discussion that will take place later this year.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Well I think the minister has been quite forthright so far about his approach to this. He's been honest in saying that there is a . . . admitting that there is a problem here. I think it's incumbent, Mr. Minister, that we do spend a bit of time projecting about what the possibilities are because I rather . . . I fear what may happen if the same thing happens over the next two months as happened prior, where the Minister of Finance imposed this thing without really thinking it through and all of the implications that it has.

From that figure that we had, Mr. Minister, of a gross sales of 110 million, my understanding is that about an annual profit of approximately 20 million goes to the Sask Sport, and 40 per cent of that is profit, which is approximately . . . pardon me. Let me say this again . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sorry? Let me state this again, because I want to come up with a different concept here.

There was \$110 million in revenue there, and if we're

looking at a 20 per cent decrease, we're looking at a \$20 million loss in revenue over an entire year approximately, if we estimate that. Now my understanding is that there's about a 40 per cent profit on that that is distributed, which would mean that these people would be in the vicinity of \$8 million short. Would you confirm those figures?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — I'm sorry if I missed the precise nature of the question, but the amount that would be available, the profit on the sales, I believe is about one-third — it's 33 or 35 per cent. Also depends what figure you were including: it's the 20 million to the trust plus some other obligations and payment to non-profit participating community groups who used to be responsible for selling tickets, and when they were no longer involved and the system changed they still received an annual allowance. So when we put that all together I think it comes to about \$36 million.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — The amount that goes to the trust to use for charities — around 35 or \$36 million.

**An. Hon. Member:** — Twenty million dollars.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Twenty million dollars. Twenty million dollars. So the figure I'm trying to establish here, if we had a 20 per cent loss, a permanent 20 per cent loss of sales over the following year, then what would you predict would be the shortfall to the charities?

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — He's doing some rapid calculations, Mr. Chairman, and I stand to be corrected with my arithmetic. Given the scenario, again it's hypothetical, that the hon. member has outlined, but given the scenario, the drop when you take the percentage of profit from the 20 million decrease which be outlined would be the difference between 36 and 29 million, should be a 7 million drop, given that scenario, and you know we still don't know that that is going to happen, and we hope that it doesn't, frankly.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Okay, Mr. Minister, we're looking at a possibility — and of course and I think it's important in your department to be projecting which way this is going — a possibility of a \$7 million drop.

One of the things that I notice that your government has been trying to do is rationalize this whole thing by calling it a hospitals' tax. And at best you're looking at 108 million or \$110 million gross from your end of it. That means at best that the hospitals could get from that 10 per cent would be about \$10 million.

So what we're finding is the hospitals' gain is very close to a projected possible loss in this particular department. It points to a direction where a program which has taken years to build and is a model program across the country, which is sort of the epitome of promoting health styles and life-styles that we in government and people in your department have been trying, and people in Sask Sport have certainly been promoting, we see that it's tending to undercut this. This whole tax structure is tending to under cut it because it's undercutting the funding. And it took years to develop it, and here in a matter of a couple of months it's slowly eroding this.

And I think we're into a situation of very close to what I would call a law of diminishing returns on it. We try to extract a little more tax money from here, and while we're doing it we're taking a little bit off where we can see and grasp it in our hands, and the Minister of Finance can probably walk over to the Department of Health and say, here's another \$10 million I got, but look where I got it from. I got it from a program that was used to prevent the very thing that he's using the money to cure.

I want to make the point, Mr. Minister, and ask you whether you and your department, and with the mandate of your department, wouldn't be able to use that kind of an argument when you go to the Department of Finance on this and get him to cut this ridiculous tax.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Well of course, Mr. Chairman, before the tax was announced we did a lot of thinking and we had looked at potential ramifications. We're still very hopeful that the initial downturn is precisely that, merely an initial downturn. We expected probably there would be a downturn in the first week, 10 days. We hope it recovers, and early indications are there has been some recovery. So the worst case scenario, that we're discussing round now, we hope does not come to pass.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I tell you, Mr. Minister, why I believe that there is not going to be a very fast recovery of this, if there is at all. And when I stand beside the kiosk or a vendor and you hear what some of the people are saying as they come up to buy these tickets, or why they're not buying them, and why they're only buying nine tickets where they used to buy 10, you'll hear remarks repeated over and over again, that they're sick of being taxed to death. And they're using this discretionary money as a way of giving your government a message — giving your government a message that they just don't want to be taxed any more.

And this is a very, sort of a personal way of people doing it. They're able to say, well that's the money that I'm not going to ... They are using this as a way, Mr. Minister, of telling your government that they just don't want any more taxes because they've seen tax increase after tax increase. At home they see their property taxes increasing because of the different way that the government is now cost-sharing the property tax for municipal purposes and for school board purposes; they've seen increases in their licences, and all government fees. They certainly haven't seen a downturn in their income taxes.

And this is one place where they can sit down, where an individual can sit down they're not addicted to gambling; this is a fun thing for them to do; many of them even go to buy the tickets and go to bingos because they want to support the organizations, through your department and through Sask Sport, and they're saying, I've had enough; I've got to show that government that they can't tax us any more. I think that the scenario of thinking that this is going to be something that's going to pass is just not going to happen.

Mr. Minister, I have, I think, time for another question with respect to this same topic, and that is with respect to the reserve fund that Sask Sport used to have. It's my

understanding, Mr. Minister, that there used to be a reserve fund which was attempting to get one-year equivalent worth of funding for purposes perhaps like this, except maybe one that was more of a natural downturn rate than a government-inflicted downturn, but that you took this money and it was directed at least in some way to pay for Canada Games. And now that we're without that money, would you confirm, Mr. Minister, that there is no longer a reserve fund from which Sask Sport can draw to make up the shortfall for the cultural, sport, and charitable organizations.

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Now, Mr. Chairman, there's some fairly wide-ranging comments took place in the last couple of minutes. It's difficult to respond to them all in minute detail, but I would like to run through some of the program that has been established in the last number of years.

As the hon. member would know, Sask Trust exists as a parent body to three major groups, Sask Sport, Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations, and Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association. The money within that trust is divided respectively 50 per cent, 40 per cent, 10 per cent, respectively; that is, to each of those governing bodies.

For example, Sask Sport would fund some 75 to 78 sport governing bodies, Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations would fund some 27 bodies, and Sask Parks and Recreation Association have over 100 groups. In addition to those, there are a number of other groups who receive allowances for various things around the province. So in that regard, yes, this is a great avenue and a great mechanism for paying money out to those kinds of activities.

I would point out, however, the lottery is owned by the Government of Saskatchewan. The Western Canada Lottery Corporation, of which we are a one-third member, comprises Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, so the three of us have the ownership of the lottery corporation. We choose in Saskatchewan to give the licence to Sask Sport Incorporated and allow them to operate the lottery on our behalf. In that regard, Mr. Chairman, what they are doing is spending money that actually could accrue to the government if we decided to run that lottery in any other fashion. We've chosen not to run the lottery ourselves. We think it's a much more efficient method to give the licence to Sask Sport Incorporated and let them run it on our behalf.

And yes, there are some things that do accrue to us, such as money from which we paid our share for the Jeux Canada Games this summer, and a number of other activities that took place. Those are activities that either we would not ordinarily be doing or we would have to fund in some other manner, whether it be through the Consolidated Fund making an appropriation to my department, or whether we raise taxes in some other way to do it. But yes, it serves a great purpose. It's well administered, it's well run, and we hope it continues to run that way for a number of years to come.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:03 p.m.