

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 30, 1990

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next move first reading of an Act respecting the promotion, development, control, and regulation of the production and marketing of agricultural products and certain amendments to certain Acts resulting from the enactment of this Act.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND
SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Standing Committee on Estimates

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Gardner, chairman of the Standing Committee on Estimates, presents the fourth report of the said committee which is as follows:

Your committee considered the estimates of the Legislative Assembly, Legislative Library, and Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, and adopted the following resolutions:

1. Main estimates to March 31, 1991:

Resolved, that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 1991, the following sums:

For Legislation	4,183,400
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2. Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses for the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1991, the sum of \$3,834,800 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

3. Resolved, that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ended March 31, 1990 the following sums:

For Legislation	\$407,600
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4. Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1990, the sum of \$407,600 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

5. Resolved that this Committee recommend that upon concurrence in the Committee's report, the sums as reported and approved shall be included in The Appropriation Bill for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Gardner: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee

on Estimates be now concurred in.

I'm sorry, seconded by the member from Saskatoon South.

The Speaker: — Since the member for Saskatoon South is not present . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if one of the other members present could second the motion . . . (inaudible) . . .

The Speaker: — Yes.

Ms. Simard: — I'll second the motion, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the legislature, Andrew Thompson, who is the new president of the University of Saskatchewan Students Union. We welcome Andrew to the legislature today and congratulate him on his recent election.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome Andrew Thompson, on behalf of this side of the House. I had a very good meeting this morning with Andrew, and we certainly appreciate the suggestions and the input from the students' council at the University of Saskatchewan and also from the University of Regina, and I look forward to this ongoing relationship, Mr. Speaker. So I would also like to welcome Andrew to the legislature this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Farm Credit Corporation Interest Rates

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture, I direct my question to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, in the past six weeks the federal Farm Credit Corporation raised its loan rate three times, and on three occasions you and the Premier ducked the issue. On Friday last the rate was increased for a fourth time as much as a full percentage rate.

I say, Mr. Minister, the federal government has to be brought to its senses in respect to increasing the interest rate on the farmers, and I ask you: why do you stand on the sidelines when so many farmers are struggling to survive under the heavy burden of debt? The last thing they need at this time is a massive increase in the interest rate on the debt from Farm Credit Corporation.

Mr. Minister, farmers are asking: why doesn't the Minister of Agriculture and the Associate Minister of Agriculture

speak up for us and oppose these massive increases in interest rates.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to point out that the province of Saskatchewan and the budget we brought down at the end of March will provide somewhere around \$94 million worth of interest relief to Saskatchewan producers, and that's the net impact. And I believe that we are dealing with a lot of the problems in interest rates. We have livestock cash advance, we've got low interest loans through the production loan. And I think that we are looking at those kinds of problems in relation to this.

And I think that I've been a farmer and a rancher in agriculture for a long time, and I know what those interest rates were like in the late '70s and the early '80s in dealing with the kinds of principal and interest we had to pay at that time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — New question to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, the fact is that the Farm Credit Corporation is raising its rate of interest faster than the prime rate. Previously, and when interest rates were high, Farm Credit Corporation was 5 or 6 per cent under prime. Today it's leading it. The fact is that the farm debt has doubled under your administration. And the fact is that over one-half of the total debt is held by Farm Credit Corporation and ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) and interest rates could be controlled.

I ask you, Mr. Associate Deputy Minister, what steps are you taking, if any, to contact the federal government to oppose these massive increases in interest rates? Can you table any of the representations that you've made to the federal government in respect to these interest rates?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, we have in the last six months done a lot of work in relation to interest rates as it relates to the kinds of representations we've made. We were at the conference where they discussed the green paper, and interest rates were discussed at that time. We were in Winnipeg at the end of January, and we talked about interest rates at that time.

We have, as western Canadians, a serious problem in relation to this, and it reflects on one part of Canada fighting the inflation, the other part of Canada fighting deflation. And we have a problem with this in any case. And Farm Credit Corporation has an agenda of its own, and I would say that we in western Canada probably have to look at some other alternatives. And that's what we're going to be doing.

And the Premier in his announcement earlier this year said that we were going to look at some loan guarantees. And we're still going to do that over the next two months, and we're going to see whether we can provide for the people of Saskatchewan added benefits for being in western Canada and being in agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Well I guess the farmers of Saskatchewan know that you aren't going to take on the federal government in respect to high interest rates in Farm Credit Corporation, because that's what you've said.

A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Mr. Minister, you'll realize that here in this House we moved the emergency resolution requesting unanimity from this House, sending a message to Farm Credit Corporation and the federal government, opposing their high interest rates. Your government saw fit to oppose that motion and interest rates have continued to rise.

I want to ask you, will you, on behalf of the farmers, will you introduce this week an emergency resolution condemning the high interest rates that have been imposed by the Farm Credit Corporation on the farmers of Saskatchewan? I ask you, will you lend your support to us in order that we may in fact help the hard-pressed farmers of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, farmers in Saskatchewan are indeed being pressed on every hand, and I would just want to point out to, not only to the opposition, but to the people who may be in fact listening, that 1 point movement in the interest rate, up or down, is a \$37 million cost in the province of Saskatchewan. I recognize that. And for the 4 points the prime rate has gone up, that's cost Saskatchewan that amount of money, and if it goes through the whole year like that, that's what it's going to cost. We recognize that.

We've made those points to the federal government; we have made them over and over again. We also have made the point that for every cent the dollar moves, it costs us \$50 million, and those are the same kinds of representations we have made to the federal government. That's why we believe that it is necessary for them to pay to the people of Saskatchewan the portion of the \$500 million that they had already said that they would do and that we don't have to match it 50-50 or dollar for dollar.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Freight Rate Increases

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Associate Minister of Agriculture, and it deals with another issue where farmers are taking a beating from the federal government.

Mr. Minister, in your last statement you admitted that a 1 per cent increase in the FCC (Farm Credit Corporation) rate means \$37 million out of the pockets of Saskatchewan farmers. If you look since November, the increase in that rate has gone up almost 2 per cent, so we can very clearly see what we're losing in terms of money out of Saskatchewan to the federal government.

I want to say to you and ask you, Mr. Minister, last week we find out that the freight rate, that rate charged and

controlled by the federal government, is going up in Saskatchewan by 12 per cent. Mr. Minister, I wonder whether the people in Ottawa, your friends in the Mulroney government, don't realize and understand that the amount of money they're pulling out of Saskatchewan at the present time is very directly leading to thousands of farmers being forced off the land. What have you done to protest the 12 per cent increase in freight rates that is going to come into being in the province this year?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — I'd like to thank the hon. member for that question because it's the first time he's taken notice that that is a problem in Saskatchewan. We've been dealing with the federal government because of the fact that the GTA (Grain Transportation Agency) had planned to increase freight rates for all the grain moved out of Saskatchewan, indeed western Canada. We have applied to and agreed with the NTA (National Transportation Agency) in an appeal process, and they agreed with us that the freight rates should be lowered.

This day I have just learned that the federal government has agreed to their appeal, and the freight rates will be going up next year because of the fact that the formula used by the federal government, by the grain transportation agency, will allow the number of bushels to be higher than they were previously calculated to be.

It's a very, very complicated formula. I would be happy to discuss it with you later in my office. But I can only say that at the present time, farmers have overpaid \$127 million because of the higher forecast that the GTA has been using, and on top of that they have now said they are going to increase their rates for next year as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, new question to the minister. He admits that the rates have been \$127 million higher than they should be. He then says that he has gone and lobbied to correct that issue, and he announces today that as a result of his lobbying they're going up another 12 per cent.

Well I say to you, Mr. Minister, that is not success. And I say to you that in the past couple of years, farmers in Saskatchewan have lost the interest-free cash advance. They've had expensive changes to crop insurance where premiums have gone up between 50 and 80 per cent. There's been a steady increase in FCC, and now we see the freight rates continuing to go up.

What I wanted to ask you is when do you think you'll stand up for the farmers of Saskatchewan and tell Mulroney that they're taking such a beating, they simply can't stay in business with Tory governments in Saskatchewan and in Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, we appeared before the federal Court of Appeal in opposition to CP Rail, CN Rail and the senior Grain Transportation Agency. They agreed with us and we won. Those companies then

appealed to the federal government, to the Minister of Transport, and asked him to overturn that decision.

Mr. Speaker, I communicated with the federal Minister of Transport on that issue urging the federal government not to overturn that decision because it was only fair — it was only fair that those overpayments that farmers had made in past years, based on that formula, be now returned to the farmers when we are in tough times. But unfortunately the Minister of Transport for the federal government disagreed with our position and indeed did overturn that decision.

And I can only say that sometimes I just wonder whether or not the federal government really cares about western Canada. The opposition has stood up day after day and they've talked about a lot of different issues, but we on this side of the House have continued time and again to communicate with the federal government. We have had discussions with them, time and again, time and again, and we have attempted to present our position to them.

The \$127 million that is now in reserve rightfully belongs to the people who are shipping the grain, the farmers. We have asked the federal government to see to it that that money came back to us, and they have refused, Mr. Speaker. I can only say that instead of the opposition standing up and calling us down, if they would stand up for once, for once in support of us and stand shoulder to shoulder with us in our attempt to have the federal government pay the money that is indeed coming to western Canada farmers . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, I just want to ask you a short supplementary. You've indicated that there's been 127 million more collected from farmers than what you believe is reasonable and appropriate. You say that you have lobbied hard with the federal government and, a result of that, rates are going up another 12 per cent.

Can you table that hard argument that you made to the government, the federal government — all the documentation, the letters that would be involved? Will you make a commitment to table those here in the House so we can tell whether or not in fact you're telling the whole story about how this argument took place, which has meant a 12 per cent increase in freight rates as a result of your lobbying?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, I told the members opposite that we did appear before the federal court of appeal in opposition to CP rail, CN rail and the senior Grain Transportation Agency. That is a matter of record, Mr. Speaker.

I can also tell the members opposite that I have had communications with the federal Minister of Transport on this very issue. And I stand firm in my statement when I say that the federal government should make sure that any moneys that are in reserve are indeed used for the benefit of the producers in western Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll take that as agreement that the minister will table his letters to the federal minister that argued the point of freight rates being too high, and we'll expect to have those tabled in the very near future.

The new question to the minister: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that when we have a total movement of grain of 33.3 million tonnes, western Canada, and an increase \$1.25 per tonne, that that increase will take \$41 million out of the pockets of farmers.

Now you announced, Mr. Minister, and your Minister of Finance, that you had a loan subsidy program that would mean \$40 million into the pockets of farmers. Now does it make any sense to you, Mr. Minister, that on the one hand the taxpayers of the province would pay extra taxes to give \$41 million to farmers, and you would stand by and allow the Mulroney government to put their hands into the pockets of farmers, and not only take the 40 million that we gave to the farmers, but an extra million. Where do you get off standing on the sidelines and allowing that to happen?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much clearer I can make it to the members opposite. The fact is that the freight rates are set by the senior grain transportation committee. We appeared in a Court of Appeal against CP Rail, CN Rail, and the senior grain transportation committee and we won. We won, Mr. Speaker. We won. They then appealed to the federal government and the federal Minister of Transport overruled that.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much more I can tell the members opposite. I don't know how much more that we can do. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the farmers of Saskatchewan. We have provided, as the Associate Minister of Agriculture has just pointed out, interest relief programs time and time again for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And just for a quick memory lesson, in 1982 when I was paying 21 and 22 per cent interest rates, the government of the day, the now opposition, told me, well, I had just kind of better try to make my payments as well as I could. It's a sudden flip-flop, Mr. Speaker, from where they were in '82 until today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hiring of Consulting Groups

Ms. Atkinson: — I have a question for the Associate Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, I have here a letter that you sent to every producer in the province, attempting to justify your failure to hold Brian Mulroney to the \$500 million in new money for spring seeding you said that you had earlier had a commitment for.

Now this letter follows exactly the formula laid out by the Corporate Strategy Group in a document we produced pertaining to health care strategies. Can you tell this

Assembly how much you paid Nancy McLean to design this mail-out, and how much you paid Dave Tkachuk to send it out? Was it in the neighbourhood of \$500,000 or a half million dollars?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, the letter that went to all the producers in the province of Saskatchewan, that dealt with the concerns that we have in agriculture, wanted to identify those specific things that we were presenting to the federal government and to show to them where we stood in relation to our agriculture in Saskatchewan as it relates to the federal government. And we wanted to have the farmers clearly understand what that volume of dollars were that we were asking. And that letter indicated that, and that pointed that out.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — New question to the minister. Mr. Minister, you've ducked the question. I want to know, how much did this letter cost? Did it cost half a million dollars, \$500,000, a million dollars? What did the letter cost?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, the farmers in Saskatchewan number in the neighbourhood of 57 to 60,000 producers, and they each received a letter. You multiply that times 40 would give you an idea of the volume of dollars it would cost.

Mr. Speaker, the kinds of things that we're talking about here is we wanted to indicate to the producers of Saskatchewan exactly what we were talking to the federal government about.

We wanted to indicate . . . the second thing, Mr. Speaker, we wanted to indicate to the farmers that we are talking to the organizations that are representing them to the provincial government and to the federal government. We sent that letter also to these organizations to deal with exactly the same observation.

The third thing that we wanted to do, Mr. Speaker, is we sent that exactly same letter to the Prime Minister and to the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada to deal exactly with those kinds of additional kinds of things that we wanted to do in western Canada — money that we need in western Canada. And we wanted them to have the first read of it, and then we sent another one to the farmers. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why we did it, and we will do more of those same kinds of things in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, it was a six-page document, so it was a little heavy for a 40-cent stamp.

Now, Mr. Minister, in your letter you tell farmers that the federal government's high interest rate policy is costing them about \$50 million each time the Bank of Canada rate goes up a percentage point. What you don't tell them, Mr. Minister, is that every time we have introduced

resolutions in this legislature condemning the federal government's high interest rate policy, your government has simply failed to endorse those resolutions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Now if this is truly an informational letter, Mr. Minister, why aren't you telling the people of Saskatchewan that you have done absolutely nothing to fight the high interest rate policies of your Tory cousins in Ottawa?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the members opposite some of the things that we have done. In the cash advance for livestock, interest-free loans available to them, \$125 on 80 per cent . . . or 75 per cent of the loan; we have nine and three-quarter loans available for livestock and for special kinds of production units in ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan); we have ten and three-quarters interest available for spring seeding program. Those are the kinds of things that we have done in this government all through the time that we have been here.

And, Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of things that we ran for in 1982; those are the kinds of things that we represent to the farmers of Saskatchewan, and I believe they are right on.

Mr. Speaker, I recall very, very clearly in the early '80s about the kinds of things that those people were doing. In fact the member from Regina North East was the minister of Finance at the time who said, that's an Ottawa problem, you go deal with it over there. And that's what we had to do as producers, and that's why they threw them out at the time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — New question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, in the early 1980s we didn't have 10,000 letters of foreclosure in this province, but they're sure there today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Now, Mr. Minister, this letter is nothing more than pure political propaganda . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, this letter sent to all producers in Saskatchewan is nothing more than pure political propaganda done at taxpayers' expense on the advice of Nancy McLean. Surely the half million dollars that was spent on sending this out to producers could have saved at least two farms in this province, Mr. Minister, but you choose to spend it on political rhetoric.

Now you close the letter by saying, "I will keep you informed of our actions to obtain assistance on behalf of grain and oil-seed producers." Since that letter was written one week ago, Mr. Minister, we've heard nothing

from Ottawa on the \$500 million, and I'd like to know, what is your government doing to get that money into the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to point out one very important item that was overlooked and the people of Saskatchewan ought to know, and that is that 1,000 farmers per year left agriculture from 1971 till 1982 — 1,000 per year, Mr. Speaker. And that, Mr. Speaker, was so-called in the good times.

And one of the biggest problems that we have in the financing today, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the loans that are outstanding today are . . . a lot of the reason is because they had interest accrued, and they went back to the bank and they rewrote those loans in 1983 because of those kinds of conditions that existed on the interest rates that they produced at that time.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that the Department of Agriculture staff wrote that letter and sent that letter out; it had nothing to do with Nancy McLean or Dave Tkachuk at all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Entrance Fees to Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the minister in charge of privatization in this province, and it has to do with his government's privatization of the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park, Mr. Speaker, and gate admissions. Mr. Minister, in 1987 a family of two adults, two children, and one grandparent could visit the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park for a gate admission fee of \$5.50. Then you, sir, went and privatized the park. Today that same family would have a charge at the gate of \$31.75.

Mr. Minister, that's going to make it impossible for many of my constituents to visit the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park. As you know, sir, that's in direct violation of the lease you signed on the park. Mr. Minister, what are you going to do to ensure accessibility to that park? And is this the kind of benefit that Saskatchewan people get from privatization?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park has improved in the last few years, has shown growth, and has finally been established as a major tourist attraction. Can't really understand what the member opposite is complaining about.

Mr. Calvert: — Well supplementary, Mr. Speaker; perhaps I can make it a little more clear to the minister if he can't understand. It costs now a family of two adults, two school-age children, and a senior to enter the park, \$31.75 for a day — 600 per cent increase in gate admission, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, can you defend that kind of an increase to the gate admissions at the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park when in fact the lease that you signed set maximum rates

which are vastly exceeded by these increases?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Speaker, in answer to that question, I think that the very simple explanation of the increase in fees is that the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park has gone from an admission fee to an all-inclusive fee now, so that when you do enter the park, your admission fee includes all the rides and all the amusement within the park. So it's an all-inclusive fee.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Dependants' Relief Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Dependants' Relief Act allows dependants of a person who has died who are not adequately provided for in the deceased person's estate to make an application to the court to receive a larger share of that estate.

The list of dependants who can make an application under the act is expanded in this Bill to include common law spouses who either have lived together for at least three years or lived together in a relationship of some permanence and are the parents of a child. This is the same definition of common law spouse as found in The Family Maintenance Act.

The Dependants' Relief Act currently provides that where an order is made for a spouse, it can be no less than the spouse is entitled to receive under The Intestate Succession Act. This Bill removes that provision.

Instead, the court is directed in all cases to make an order that is reasonable, just, and equitable in the circumstances. The existing provision unnecessarily ties the court's hands, and in some cases it may result in other dependants receiving less than the court considers to be equitable.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident, together with the proposed intestate succession amendment Act also currently before this House, this Bill will update the legislation relating to provision for both spouses and dependants upon the death of an individual. I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to move second reading of an Act to amend The Dependants' Relief Act.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want only to make a very brief comment and basically the minister has one other change within the Act which he hasn't addressed nor justified; the action being taken in respect to appeal of a given section. And I'd be interested to see under what basis, and I thought the minister might in fact address that because as he indicates, and I don't want to get into specific sections, but just to draw to your attention that subsection 9(2) is repealed. And there is no mention in respect to the minister's remark as to why he instituted the repeal of that section.

Basically what it did is, that if you made an application under The Dependants' Relief Act the old provision provided that no allowance ordered to be made could be less than that which was provided by the intestate.

An Hon. Member: — I mentioned that, Murray.

Mr. Koskie: — Oh, did you? Didn't hear it. I thought you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Not very well. Because basically taking a look at that provision, by deleting it you take out the minimum and you allow it at this total, unequivocal discretion. And there may be argued that if you take out the minimum, that there would be perhaps less pressure to negotiate a settlement in respect to that.

And the second one is in respect to enlarging the definition of the spouse, and it's exactly the same. I raised to the minister's attention that whether or not in such provisions, whether or not some aspect of the sanctity of marriage is indeed lessened by expanding outside of the formal marriage. That consideration I raise with you, because what you're doing is providing out of what I termed as the sanctity of marriage, through the formal procedures and within the sacrament of marriage in some aspects, in some religions, and what is done here is to basically put a non-existent marriage, common-law, into the same provision for benefits within The Dependants' Relief Act.

I raise those points for consideration and they're perfectly justified, and I'll be dealing with those when we get into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Parks and Renewable Resources Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 26

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I just want to review what your basic policy is. I raised this question with you and we'll work through it in more detail, but perhaps you could outline what the basic policy is within your department in respect to the harvesting of Crown land.

Let me give you my understanding of the situation. That an area, and this area is somewhere in the neighbourhood of Squaw Rapids or a little east of Squaw Rapids, Mr. Minister, and there's been some concern as to what the actual policy is in respect to harvesting lumber there. I'm referring to land which the basic timber's taken off, the spruce is harvested and . . . Well what is the policy so far as harvesting the remainder of the timber, that is the hardwoods, the birch, harvesting for fuel, firewood, and harvesting other hardwoods?

I guess what I'm really trying to do is to get you to establish the policy as the department has it set up. Is there a time

period for instance after which the main timber has been harvested — that is the spruce — is there . . . and a farmer or a business man goes in to harvest the hardwoods and they get the firewood. Is there a time placed on the permit which will allow him a given period of time?

The problem that I understand up there is that they're scarifying some of the land for replanting. And often what happens is that there is still good firewood and still good hardwood. And from my information there's good markets for it but that not enough time is allowed.

Perhaps you could just outline the basic policy that you have and maybe I could indicate some of the concerns that were raised with me.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Well in answer to your question, and I am just a bit familiar with the issue at hand, I think the first point I would make is that in certain production areas it is important that we try to renew as soon as possible. So there is sometimes the odd bit of haste in certain important areas.

But we also try to get as much salvage as you suggest yourself, prior to the site preparation. Depending on the site preparation, there's probably often more than we can get salvaged, but because of timing, it doesn't really work out as much as it should. I think we try to be as fair as we can with these sites in order that the salvage could be as complete as possible.

Mr. Koskie: — That's fine, what you're saying, and you want renewal as soon as possible. I guess that what I'm getting at is; is there a set system wherein individuals that go into harvest, say after the spruce is taken off, harvest, to get the firewood, to get the hardwoods and get the other special harvests, when they get a permit, do they get a permit which provides that within X number of years they can have in order to harvest that, or are they given no time limit? That's the problem they're facing.

And in fact I am told, in one area there was an area that had all completely been cleaned out, and what happened is that they scarified an area that hadn't been completely harvested and the area that had been completely harvested didn't get scarified.

(1445)

And what the people are saying is; we could make our plans and we could be effective in harvesting all of that valuable that's left over — the birch and the aspen and so on, and any other hardwoods. But we can't do it if there's no system. The permit should provide. In other words, the planning for the renewal should be planned so that it co-ordinates with the proper harvest of all of the timber. You understand, the member from South? I knew you would.

So that's really what I'm getting at, eh? And I want to be able to go back from your answer to say, now what is the policy? To say that there is a renewal and sometimes we have to go as soon as possible and we don't allow enough time perhaps, that doesn't help me. It's hard to operate as a business man in making decisions or setting up a lumber plant or a mill, and then be rushed so much. If they could

know that within their permit a specified time would be allocated for the extra harvesting, then they could operate. And I was wondering if you could address that.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — First of all, to pick up on your comments, I certainly want on the record that we are as interested as anyone in salvaging as much as we can out of the sites.

You asked me a more direct question than that. You asked me about a more direct guidance for anyone who would go in there. What our department has in place is, we plan now for salvage which will take place for site preparation for, say, at this time, for '91-92. So what that gives you is one complete winter, and usually because of how the seasons and the plans work out, the beginning part of the next winter.

Now the odd time it does happen, and I stress just the odd time, we've changed our site preparation activities to allow for more time for harvest. But that's the normal plan — one complete winter and usually just the beginning of the next season.

Mr. Koskie: — Well that's getting closer. Let's just take it by very specific questions. One, who issues the permit? Is it the department or is it the holder of the FMLA (Forest Management Licence Agreements), the forest management lease agreement? In that particular area, in around Squaw Rapids, who in fact issues the permit? Let's just go one by one.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Thank you very much. I appreciate that. It will make it a little simpler. The permit is issued by the conservation officer in that area.

An Hon. Member: — That's the department.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — That's the department, yes, sir.

Mr. Koskie: — What, for the salvaging — if we can call after the main timbers taken out, the salvaging — what does that permit provide in respect to the individual that goes in, wants to set up a saw mill, and wants to harvest. What is provided within the permit? Is there any specified time within which he has to harvest the salvage, as you call it?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Chairman, I would inform the hon. member that the salvage permits are valid for one year only. But if you recall the qualifications I mentioned earlier regarding certain exceptions, if there are none of those special circumstances, then of course he may have more than a year, but he'd have to apply for a new permit for the second year.

Mr. Koskie: — Is that a change in policy? I am advised that previously there was up to five years in respect to the harvesting of the salvage. I don't know if that's accurate or not but I was advised that there was a policy whereby we had up to five years within the permit to harvest all of the salvage timber. And if they said that too much waste can occur if you start to scarify before the salvage is harvested. I want to ask you though, has there been a change in policy? I'm led to believe by the people that are working it now, that previously the permit provided for five years.

Has there been a change?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — According to my officials, it is in the regs that the permits are only for one year and have been only for one year subject to another permit being issued, but each one is separate.

Mr. Koskie: — Can you indicate what the royalty rate is in respect to the salvaging, per cord or per thousand board foot.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The regular stumpage rates for green birch, and I believe birch is primarily what you'd be interested in, is \$6 per thousand for saw logs; and fuel wood, birch again, a dollar per cord.

Mr. Koskie: — Who gets the royalty? Is there any split in it, or who gets the royalty out of that? Does a forest management lessee get it or does all of it go to the department?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Within the area you're talking about, it all goes to the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Koskie: — And just for one final clarification then. You indicate that the regulations provide for the permit in respect to salvage is the maximum of one year. Could you, number one, send over a copy of those regulations so that I can make them available to the people that are interested in respect to it. And could you just clarify under what provisions it may be possible to get an extension. Exactly what procedure is used for an extension beyond the one year?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Yes, I would be quite happy to send a letter over to the hon. member with a copy of the regulations, and as well in my letter, outlining some of the conditions that you were concerned about regarding a renewal of the permit.

Mr. Koskie: — That would be fine. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'd like to continue with the area that we talked a few moments about in question period, and that has to do with the gate fees at the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park.

You are aware, sir, that the gate admission now at the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park is up to \$6.95 — or perhaps you could confirm these just so we're sure — that the gate admission is now \$6.95 for an adult and for any child or student over the age of 3; a senior daily admission fee of 3.95; with a season pass for a family at 49.95. Could you just confirm those figures, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Chairman, just to make sure that I don't confuse any of the categories that he asked about, I would like to read into the record the fees, and you can confirm your own notes from them.

Adults, that's 18 and over, 6.95; students, 15 to 18, 6.95; children, 3 to 14, 6.95; under 3, free; seniors and handicapped, 3.95; groups, 20 or more, 5.95. As well we have some seasonal passes. A family seasonal pass is 49.95, a couple is 29.95, and an individual is 19.95.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, would you admit that these fee increases are in violation of those agreed to in the lease that your government signed with the new operators of the animal park?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Within the terms of the agreement, we have the right to negotiate adjustments to the rates at any time.

Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Minister, I have here a copy of that agreement, the page regarding the gate admissions, and it says fairly clearly, sir, that during the operating seasons, 1988-1992, the daily user permit per person shall not exceed . . . and I can read the categories and the rates for this year, 1990: for an adult it shall not exceed \$4.25; for a student, shall not exceed \$3; for a pre-schooler, shall not exceed \$1.50; and for a senior, shall not exceed \$3.

Each of these, sir, have been exceeded, but not only by a small amount, but by a fair, substantial amount. And in fact what has happened, the student category has been wiped right out, and some pre-schoolers have been wiped right out, sir.

You say now, today, that you have within the agreement the power to forgive these maximum increases permitted in the original lease. Sir, then can you explain to the House why you have: one, first of all, have you officially done that? Has your department given permission to the leaseholder here to raise the rates? One, have you done that? If you have, sir: two, when did you do that? And three, why did you do that?

(1500)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in answer to the member's questions, the answers to the first one was yes, that they have received our approval. It was received, we would be hesitant about putting an exact date, but would . . . if I would mention early April to you would be, I think, sufficient to give you a very close idea on when it was done.

And then to comment on your third part about the adjustment in the structures. We felt that it was a valid change, a valid adjustment. And why we do that is because it's an all-inclusive price now. And as an example, last year, a 15-year-old youth could spend \$9 and receive entrance to the park and two bumper boat rides. Now for 6.95 that same youth would receive park entry and unlimited amusement rides. So there is a real break for some people in this new price structure.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I've received numerous contacts by constituents primarily about this rate increase. I'd like to quote to you from a letter that I received. And this individual writes, concerned about these rate increases, and she says in a copy of a letter to me that was sent to the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park:

I have no interest (she says) in the unlimited use of your amusement park. I will no longer be able to take my children and the two children I care for on a picnic lunch at the wild animal park. The extra

\$14 to take two four-year-olds to see the animals is completely unacceptable!

She goes on to say, Mr. Minister:

Surely there is a way to separate the use of the amusement park from use of the original park to allow an adjustment on the cost of a season pass. (Or, I would add, on the cost of daily admission.) If not, I am very sad to say that my children and I will not be visiting your park again. I have voiced my concern to several friends who feel the same as I do on this matter.

Mr. Minister, what's happening here is now to go through the gate at the animal park one is obliged, an adult or a child or even some pre-schoolers, to buy admission to all of the amusements which are now contained in the park. Mr. Minister, for those who wish to use those amusements, fair enough; and if they can purchase a ticket or something that gives them unlimited use to those amusements, fair enough. If it's a pay-as-you-go basis on the amusements, fair enough.

But, Mr. Minister, why would you give permission so that the new leaseholders can charge at the gate the cost of using those rides when a goodly number of people will want to visit the animal park just to picnic, just to view the wildlife displays?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The comments on the letters . . . first of all, we certainly have not been receiving a flood of letters regarding the new price structure. As far as we've . . . I've just checked with my officials, and as far as we're aware at this time, we have received just one letter in protest to this new structure.

I think that if I could start by saying it's sort of a sign of the times; it's the way things are going now. And I certainly don't want to compare the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park to, say, Toronto's Wonderland park or to Disneyland or to Disney World, but that's the concept that's going; it's a one price concept.

These families that come, yes, maybe they don't use the rides, but there are other things that are available for them. There are beautiful picnic areas; there's entertainment provided in certain times of the year. There's some attempts now being made to construct a vintage heritage set of buildings in that park area. And I think different people will use that admission price to their own advantage in many, many different ways. And I think it's just an absolutely beautiful place to go and visit at any time of year, especially in the summer-time and take advantage of those beautiful surroundings at what we consider a pretty reasonable price.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I agree with you on that point, that it is a wonderful place to visit, for a family to visit. It is a beautiful spot. Mr. Minister, the question here is accessibility.

And if I may go back just a moment, you say that you have not received letters on this issue. I've received a number of communications from constituents and they expect when they communicate with me, sir, that I will then

communicate their concerns to you, which is what I'm doing right now. So consider yourself being communicated with from constituents in Moose Jaw and elsewhere, sir.

The point here is accessibility. I take it, Mr. Minister, that we the people of Saskatchewan still are the owners of the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park; that in fact the property and the animals and so on are still owned by the people of Saskatchewan. And therefore I would argue we each, on both sides of this House, should have some concern about accessibility to those resources to the people of Saskatchewan.

Sir, that fact of the matter is that for a family of four to visit the wild animal park now, even if they just wish to view the wildlife displays and picnic in the park, it's going to cost them in the neighbourhood of \$28, sir, which is prohibitive to many families living the city of Moose Jaw, and, I would say, many families across Saskatchewan.

Sir, would you be prepared to negotiate or renegotiate with the current leaseholders at the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park that a two-part kind of fee could be charged at the gate: those who may wish to use the amusements or whatever other activities may be going on; and an admission for those who just simply want to visit the park, enjoy a picnic and enjoy the animals. Would you be prepared to do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Certainly, and you could argue this both ways. I wouldn't want to make any commitment on this, but I think I would be welcome to bring it to their attention. I would just though say that you know, as well, there's quite a bargain on a season's pass, and anybody that's using this facility, this beautiful park area, for whatever reason, if it's to view the animals or to picnic . . . you know I was just looking at the seasonal rates. A couple for 29.95 can just go there almost, well to exaggerate, every day. So it's still reasonable, but I think I would allow that much that I would bring it to their attention, yes.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, if you're going to bring it to the attention of the leaseholders, how do you intend to do that; and is there some way that you can share with myself and members on this side of the House how you intend to do that? If you do it by letter, could we get a copy of the letter, sir?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Chairman, I can't see any problem in when we do that in providing the member with a copy of that letter.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and I'll be expecting that and, I assume, in short order. Mr. Minister, I have one other question about the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park, and that is, in the *Public Accounts* in 1988-89 your department paid something just over \$62,000 to Cana Amusements Corporation, I assume of the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park. Can you tell me what that expenditure was for?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — When the private sector, in this case Cana Amusements (Corporation), does invest in a project in the park, we are obligated . . . or we provide for

the infrastructure to that project.

To give you a practical example, where a new building would be built — and I'm just, in a sense, giving you this in principle only — where a new building would be built, we would provide the water system to this building. That would be the infrastructure that we would . . . That would be our contribution to a project.

Mr. Calvert: — So, Mr. Minister, which project did we contribute to, to the tune of \$62,000?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — We are looking for the specific use for that money. I would just like to bring to your attention — and I don't think you'll be maybe quite satisfied with this answer — but they spent a total of \$800,000 in that . . . in projects in that park, and our contribution was \$62,000 to that capital investment of \$800,000 by the private investment.

Specifically how that 62,000 was spent on the 800,000, we don't have at this time. If we cannot provide it for you before the end of estimates, could we provide that information for you?

Mr. Calvert: — Yes, Mr. Minister, I would like you to provide the information to us; that's why I asked the question.

This is a \$62,000 expenditure. It's not a small expenditure, obviously. And I would have hoped that you would have come today prepared to inform the committee how this much money was spent at the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park. And so, sir, I take it that you've made a commitment now that you are going to provide what this \$62,000 provided for the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park.

Are you saying, sir, you simply don't have that information here today, that your officials didn't bring that kind of information with you?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member would be patient for 15 or 20 minutes, we'll make a phone call and get that exact information for you.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, thank you very much, and I'm sure the estimates will continue in other regards, and we can expect that information later this afternoon. Thank you, thank you.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I just want to ask some brief questions. I've been looking at the Meadow Lake CTMP (chemi-thermal mechanical pulp) Mill Environmental Impact Statement, and I know you're not responsible for the statement, but my questions are related to your responsibility as a result of what I have noted in this statement.

It was not just a little bit concerned that I became when I noted in the statement that it says environmental impacts related to the forest management agreement will not be directly considered in this report. So the environmental impact statement done by Millar Western did not consider the impact of this operation on the forestry in northern Saskatchewan, where it will be affected. It did

not apparently consider what the inventory of the forestry supply was there.

And so, Mr. Minister, in spite of that, the government has issued a licence for construction of this mill. I assume that prior to the issuing of this licence you, as the minister in charge of forestry, through your department, would have had some impact or input into the decision making. I don't see any reason why you shouldn't have, because of the joint responsibility here.

I ask you then, Mr. Minister, did you recommend from the point of view of the forest supply and sustainability, that this mill proceed for construction, and on what basis did you make that recommendation?

(1515)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Our agreement of course is with NorSask, not Millar Western. The wood supply agreement is between NorSask and Millar Western. It is based on the available volumes that were of course available when we signed this agreement, based on what we thought the sustainable development of that area was. And the other reason of course is that normal harvesting operations are not subject to environmental impact assessment.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, according to this impact statement, these — and I read from the statement; I'm referring to the subject which I raised earlier — it states: these aspects will be covered in the forest management plan which will be reviewed and approved by the forestry branch.

Mr. Minister, have you reviewed and have you approved this Forest Management Licence Agreement? And if so, can you provide that to the House so that we can know on what basis you made this recommendation? Because, Mr. Minister, as I will raise with you in just a little while, there is good reason to be concerned about whether we are really looking after the sustainability of our forests.

My colleague, the member from Athabasca, raised the other day on Friday the problem that has been created because of the Simpson Timber situation, where an industry — in that case an American industry — came in, took out all that they could as fast as they could in 25 years, made the good buck. They're gone. The people who were working there are still there or looking for a job somewhere else. And surely, I don't think you would disagree that we shouldn't allow that kind of a situation to be created again.

And so, Mr. Minister, I ask you: did you review this agreement or the sustainability question? And if you did, will you make that information available to the House so that we know that that review was based on substantial information?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The plan that you're referring to is called a 20-year plan, which NorSask has to submit to us for approval. It has not been received as of this date. It will be certainly here within the next few months; we normally give them a little bit of time to do it. But it will be based on the figures of the sustainable development that

we have that make up each year's cutting plans for that area.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well let me be clear here, Mr. Minister, and please, I hope you will be as well. What you have just said to the House is that you, as the minister responsible for forestry and the minister responsible to assure the sustainability of our forestry, gave your approval to the issuing of a licence for the construction of the Millar Western mill, which committed tens of millions, hundreds of millions of dollars of Saskatchewan money at risk on top of that, and you did that without any knowledge about what the 5-year or the 20-year plan for sustainability and how the ecosystem variety will be affected.

You gave that approval without having that plan in front of you, Mr. Minister, and the plant will be proceeding to be constructed, as it is already, and may be built by the time you receive this plan? How in Heaven's name can you justify that kind of decision, Mr. Minister, if you're responsibly looking after the sustainability of our forests. Can you explain yourself, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The FMLA that we have with NorSask is in place, the five-year one. It's in place and it calculates and agrees upon all the available volumes that will be cut. Prior to any harvest, every five years, a new five-year plan must be put into place and approved by us.

The 20-year management plan which isn't in place yet is a more longer-term in a more general agreement. But I think the real regulations are in these five-year FMLAs which is in place. It's in place at this time.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, surely even this government wouldn't pretend that the pulp mill is a five-year project. Mr. Minister, that being the case, how can you be confident if you don't have the information on the 20-year projections and beyond. How can you be assured and how can you assure the public that there is the adequate supply that's there, that there is the capacity for regeneration, that there is in place a replenishing or a replanting or reforestation process that's going to be in place if you don't have a 20-year plan. Without having that, you said go right ahead, and then we're going to hope that you will do it.

Well, Mr. Minister, there were people who hoped that Simpson Timber would do it, and they didn't do it. And now we have a situation where it's gone and so is the forest gone. And you're creating the same kind of situation here by approving a licence for construction before you know what the implications are, Mr. Minister. That is just totally unacceptable.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — I think, Mr. Chairman, I think where the problem comes is that within this five-year FMLA that is in place, it does contain the long-run sustainable volumes for that whole area. That's part of the five-year FMLA.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Minister, for five years. What about the 20 years? I'm saying I know that it's there for five years, Mr. Minister, but what about the 20 years and beyond?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — I'm going to just back this up a dash. I may have used a couple of wrong terms here. There is an FMLA in place for 20 years . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, what I should have said, subject to a rolling five-year program is the harvest plan, which is updated each year. So within the FMLAs, they contain the long-run sustainable volumes for the 20 years. The 20-year plan that we talked about earlier is more a management plan of a general nature.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Questions are supposed to clarify. I'm afraid, Mr. Minister, that that's not what's happening here, because you have just said there is in place a five-year plan. You say there is also a general 20-year plan. But in the Meadow Lake environmental impact statement, they don't agree with you, because they say that Millar Western is committed to providing a detailed forest ecosystem management five-year plan and a general 20-year plan by December 31, 1991 — probably after the mill is up — which will apply to their contractors, Mr. Minister, which will apply to their contractors and all users in the Forest Management Licence Agreement.

Millar Western are saying: there is no plan for their purposes and they have to prepare one by 1991. You've just told me there is a plan. Now if it is on this kind of contradiction that the Minister of the Environment issued the licence, then good heavens, Mr. Minister, there couldn't be any better argument for why there ought to have been a public review process and public hearings so that these questions could have been asked in a public way so that Millar Western and the government would have had to provide the answers.

An extension of the argument is that the reason there never was a public review process initiated by the government is because the government is hiding the inadequacy of this whole process and doesn't know what the future implications are going to be.

Now can you explain, Mr. Minister, why you say there is a plan, and Millar Western which prepared this voluminous report, saying there is no plan and they have to prepare one by 1991, not only for themselves, but for their contractors.

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — I shall make one more attempt to clear this situation. The first thing we have is we have a 20-year FMLA with NorSask. Then we have what we call a 5-year harvest plan with NorSask, which is a running 5-year one; it's updated annually. Those are both in place now.

Now what we are waiting for is what is called a 20-year operating plan for the entire FMLA which may include other . . . well right now it includes, let's just say it includes the two mills that they have, which will be the pulp mill and the saw mill.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I don't want to take much more time, Mr. Minister. I think the point that we're trying to make has been made. You say there is a 20-year FMLA with NorSask; you say there is a 20-year harvest plan

... (inaudible interjection) ... A 5-year harvest plan, I stand corrected.

You say, but that's not enough, right? You say there needs to be more because there will be other implications, and so that other 20-year plan is yet not ready and you're waiting for that one. That's going to be done in 1991 and that involves the harvesting operations of Millar Western as well as the other mill, as you say it.

Well then, Mr. Minister, you obviously don't have all the information you need to have in order to issue a licence, because you don't know what that 20-year bigger plan, which includes both mills, entails.

How then, Mr. Minister, not having this, can you justify the issuing of this licence when you know not what you issued it on, from the point of view of forestry supply, forestry regeneration, and forestry sustainability?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — To address some very valid concerns that you have, most of those are addressed in the FMLA — the responsibilities, the obligations, the maximum volumes that are going to be needed by those mills which were certainly well documented and figured out, payments that have to be made. All that is contained within the FMLA. The 20-year long-term plan is more concerned with long-term wood requirements within the specific mills within the FMLA areas, the general areas that are going to be harvested within the FMLA, long-term operational plans that the companies have. Another important one is wildlife forestry management objectives, where you protect the wildlife, the trappers, that type of thing. That's all contained within the 20-year plan.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think it's a bit of tragedy though, Mr. Minister, that any government ... and governments in the past have probably done it, but that's irrelevant. The fact is that we're in a different situation today and we've some examples and had some experiences that show we ought not to do it any more.

But when we think about the future of our children and their children and the future of those who will be trying to make a living in Saskatchewan after us and think about that in the context of the government making this decision without having that 20-year plan, then one cannot describe that in any other way than an absolute, total, irresponsible attitude by the government who is so driven simply by the economic development in the short run that it pays no attention to the sustainability of that economic development in the long run, because that's what has happened here, Mr. Minister.

But I think any further questions of you will not make any difference to that. My next questions will be directed to the Minister of the Environment who clearly has issued a licence without having full, due consideration of the future sustainability of our forest considered in the issuing of that licence.

Now, Mr. Minister, in order for me to be able to pursue that minister, I need some information, and I'm going to ask you to provide it to me. I don't expect you to have it with you here today, but I know that you will have it on the files and you could probably have it here tomorrow.

I would like you to undertake to table for us the FMLA that you referred to with NorSask, the 20-year FMLA, and also the five-year harvest plan which you referred to, Mr. Minister. And also I would like you to provide for the legislature the forest inventory that obviously your department must have, which would have assured you that there is enough supplies there to supply both of these mills.

Will you undertake, Mr. Minister, to provide that information so that we can be assured that you at least had the Minister of the Environment take that into consideration before he issued the licence?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The 20-year FMLA which you requested is, and as well the inventory figures, are public documents — they're in Prince Albert, of course. The five-year plan will also be available in our office as well.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. So you'll provide them for me. You've got the officials that can do that. I don't have those kind of resources. You will provide them, I suspect, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The 20-year FMLA we can provide. The other one is a very substantial document. We would have real problems moving it out of Prince Albert but we would make it available for your inspection.

(1545)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. In conclusion, Mr. Minister, I just want to underline the reason why I'm concerned and I'm sure that many other people are concerned. What prompted me to ask some of these questions was, first of all, the environmental impact statement that was provided and what I see as a problem there.

Secondly, something you said on Friday when my colleague, the member from Athabasca, was asking you questions about replanting and you said 12 million seedlings were planted in the last year but 14 million trees were harvested, which leads me to conclude, Mr. Minister, that we are falling even further behind in the reforestation of the harvested forests in Saskatchewan, because even though you may have planted 12 million, you and I know that not a very large percentage of those seedlings survive and mature. Many of them disappear.

But I want to give you some other information, Mr. Minister, which hopefully will prompt you and your government to pay much more serious attention to this whole situation. And I refer you to a document here which has been issued by your counterpart, the federal Minister of Forestry, Mr. Oberle, and I believe this is this year's document — at least he writes in this document, he may not have issued it — Canadian Pulp and Paper Association. But Mr. Oberle confirms the figures that are here. And between 1985 and 1988 in Saskatchewan, it was reported here that 86,880 hectares of forest land were harvested. During that same period of time only 19,888 hectares of forest were replanted.

It is said in this statement here by Millar Western that they will harvest a further 10,000 hectares a year for their operation. Now wouldn't you agree, Mr. Minister, that we're facing a very serious situation in this province from the point of view of being able to sustain our forests over a period of time, into generations in the future, unless something is done to turn that around and do it quickly? And therefore, Mr. Minister, if you will agree, will you not also agree that the issuing of this licence without having all of the information available was the wrong thing to do at this time?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — I think, Mr. Chairman, if the picture was as serious as painted by the hon. member, I would agree with him. But I don't think all the facts have been provided, and I did not provide them on Friday so therefore I will today.

When we talked the 12 million versus the 14 million trees and then the 12 million even dropping to 6 million that were actually harvested, which is only half, what we didn't bring to the attention of the House, was that besides that we have 4 million trees that self-regenerate, the hard woods that self-regenerate, and we have another 5 million pine black spruce that all they require is a little bit of scarifying and they grow.

So really in total what you are looking at is harvesting 14 million trees and between the reforestation, the natural reforestation, and the scarifying we actually in essence are producing 15 million trees a year which is a net gain of 1 million trees a year.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I wonder if you have the information on the Green Lake project, the tree planting project available today? And if you do, would you pass that across to me, please?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — I would like to provide that information to you now as part of some other information that you asked for as well. And I would provide at this time, not only the Green Lake-Armstrong burn information, but as well some other information that you had asked for that we didn't send over, including the roots reforestation address.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I now want to turn to fish hatcheries, and I would ask that you provide me with a lot of that information in writing so that we can move along a little quicker with your estimates here.

Some of the questions that I would like answered regarding fish hatcheries, and I suspect that you don't have all that information right at hand, would be the number of fish that we are producing, young fingerlings that we're producing in the province. Number two, the number of hatcheries that have been created in the last year including lake-side hatcheries, if any. And could you indicate if there was any hatcheries, including the lake-side hatcheries, that were closed down? And if you could provide me with some of that information in writing, Mr. Minister, I would appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — I think I have the information

that you require in your question. The amount of fish produced annually is 35 million. There are six hatcheries in the province, one operated provincially; there are five private ones. As well, there are 11 rearing ponds, and two of those ponds located at Meadow Lake and Jackfish were closed for renovations.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you could provide me in writing the names of the five private hatcheries and where they're located and the 11 rearing ponds. And I presume the rearing ponds are all operated by the department. Is this right? And where they are operating. If you could just provide me with that in writing.

And another thing before we get off the Green Lake burn, I wonder if you could indicate to me, Mr. Minister, who is Mistik Management? Who owns Mistik Management?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — First of all, I'd be happy to provide that information for you that you request in writing. The second portion of it was the Mistik, it's owned by Millar Western and by NorSask.

Mr. Thompson: — So, Mistik Management, which has prepared 80 hectares of plantation to be planted into white spruce, and this is an area that has failed; and Mistik Construction, who used the heavy equipment and prepared that 80 hectares is owned by Millar Western. Could you tell me . . . Millar Western and NorSask, could you tell me what percentage of that operation is owned by Millar Western?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Okay, it is owned 50-50 between NorSask and Millar Western, and it is termed their woodlands operation.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. That's interesting information.

I now want to turn to the fish transportation subsidy in northern Saskatchewan, and I have a letter from yourselves dated April 26 and I want to thank you for that information and also thank you for providing that subsidy to the commercial fishermen in northern Saskatchewan for another year. Most certainly they appreciate the subsidy. While it's not a full subsidy, it's appreciated, and the guarantee that you give us here, we welcome that.

I also want to ask you, Mr. Minister, about the fish kill on Broad Creek last year. And in estimates last year you weren't too sure, your department wasn't too sure just what had happened to that fish kill and what happened to the mullets or the suckers that died in that creek. I wonder if you could just indicate to the committee, Mr. Minister, what caused the death of that large amount of suckers?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Originally I believe the answer you got was that it was an environmental problem. Upon further investigation we found that there was an individual involved, and charges were laid against this individual.

Mr. Thompson: — Last year in estimates, Mr. Chairman, it was indicated that it was just a natural kill and it happened once in a while, and now you indicate that

charges have been laid. And I wonder if you could indicate what was used to destroy those fish. And I don't want the individual's name or anything — and I'm assuming that this has not gone to court yet — but I wonder if you could indicate what was used to kill those fish, because I'm sure you must know that because charges have been laid.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Evidently the evidence points to a vehicle driving up and down the stream.

Mr. Thompson: — And that's still in court, is it, Mr. Minister? Thank you very much for that information.

I now want to make a few comments on some of the species limits that we have up in northern Saskatchewan that is causing a lot of concern with the commercial fishermen. I'm going to make these comments and I'm just going to close off by asking you to reassess them. I've done this last year and the year before with no luck, but I just want to make the same argument that the species limit is a limit that has become a real handicap for commercial fishermen in Saskatchewan.

I don't know where species limits ever came from or who created them but I want to make this very clear to you, Mr. Minister — that a species limit is something that should not be taking place in Saskatchewan waters and our commercial fishermen should not have to abide by such a degrading policy that the department has.

(1600)

Species limits is something new that has been created. Where you put a 40,000 limit on a lake, which a lake has always taken 40,000 pounds off — and I use that one lake as an example — and when the 40,000 is taken, then they quit fishing it. If that fish population goes down, there's fish biologists in the province; they determine that along with the commercial fishermen, and they may have to cut that back to 35,000 or 30,000 the next year in order to maintain that level.

But what your department has done now, Mr. Minister, you've put on a species limit and you put 10,000 pounds of trout and 10,000 pounds of pickerel and 10,000 pounds of whitefish and 10,000 pounds of pike. And if the first 10,000 is taken, that's the end of the limit. That commercial fisherman, who has always taken 40,000 out of that lake, is limited to 10,000.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that that is a bad policy and a policy that I would like to see you take a serious look at and to have it changed back to the way it was before, where the biologist and the commercial fishermen and the agents could take a look at the production of that individual lake and then they would assess what the limit should be on the lake. If there's a lot of tourists in there, then they can just cut back on the commercial fishery.

But the species limit, I don't know where it ever came from or whoever, you know, created that type of policy, but it's a bad policy. And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to take a serious look at that and if you would consider changing that.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Just to give you a bit of information on how we arrived at this policy. First of all now most North American fisheries, fisheries agencies are using this method. It's because it's the conservation method to achieve sustainable development, and I guess it started from the rapid shifts in markets, in that one species would become more valuable than others, and there'd be the . . . I guess the trying to shift the fishing plants to the species in order to take advantage of the income of it.

So really it was put in place to kind of prevent the high grading of game fish harvest.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Minister, policies that work in North America and other provinces do not always work in the province that we live in. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that this is a policy that most certainly should not be in place, and I'm just asking you to consider lifting that policy of species limit.

I want to now turn to another item, Mr. Minister, and that is on the lynx. You've closed that limit and opened it up to one and it's such a confusing issue. And you've indicated that this year you would be opening up the lynx licences to the trappers in northern Saskatchewan. I wonder if you could indicate if you are going to go ahead with that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Certainly the lynx problem is something that was brought to my attention when I was in the North as well, by many, many people, and it's something that I came back to Regina and certainly asked my officials to look at. And I thought that they were very diligent in their approach to this problem.

They finally have some of their results in now regarding the population, and it would appear that we are in a position now to recommend some changes to this. And I would go on the record as saying we will be recommending some changes to the quota.

I wouldn't want to at this time obligate myself to a specific amount or even to the areas. I think the area that you are mostly concerned with would be one of the areas that would benefit from whatever the increase would be. But we will now take it to our wildlife advisory committee that set these regulations and recommend that they look at it and make some of these changes. And I think it'll be a good news item in the near future.

Mr. Thompson: — Well, Mr. Minister, you're going around the province asking for consensus, and I know that you're in Saskatchewan and I know what the trappers are telling you, and that was that it should be the way it was before.

You've tinkered around with this policy now for the last three or four years, and what you've done, you've taken a lot of income away from trappers — trappers who could have made a good living up in the bush if they could have trapped the lynx that were there.

And as a result, the migration of lynx which moved from the East to the West, and they follow the rabbit cycles, are now moving into Alberta. The best lynx seasons are gone

now. You've really taken it to the trappers again — the same as with your fish policies and the same with the fur policy. It's not a policy . . . you don't consult with the trappers up North. You go up there and you listen, and you come back down and you keep the same policies that you had before. And I say that they're wrong-headed. If you want to consult with people, then carry out the wishes of the consultations. But you're not doing that.

And I'm not blaming you, Mr. Minister. I know that you're new at the job and that you're sincere in what you're doing. But I say to you, trappers have a right to know. They prepare a year ahead, some of these trappers, to go out on the trap lines; whether they're going to go out on the trap lines or whether they're not going to go.

And through the last three, four years that you had this policy in there and the lynx were a good price, then they weren't allowed to trap them; they weren't allowed to harvest them. And it's created . . . many, many trappers have been charged and the disruption to the lives up there in northern Saskatchewan is just unreal. And I think that you have to take a look at that, at what you're doing.

When you come out with policies that are going to disrupt the lives of people, go out and talk to them and make sure that they know what's going on. Because that was another bad policy, the same as the species limit was a policy that disrupted the lives of many, many individuals in northern Saskatchewan. In both cases, the same families, because most commercial fishermen are trappers. So you disrupt both.

And the same applies to the hunting up there. When you disrupt the hunting patterns of northern Saskatchewan, you're also disrupting their lives as far as commercial fishermen and trappers, because they're all trappers and fishermen and hunters. One complements the other.

Mr. Minister, I'm going to leave that right where it is. You know what the individuals, the trappers in northern Saskatchewan . . . And that's the only place there's lynx; you don't trap lynx in southern Saskatchewan because there are no lynx. So I'm going to leave it at that. You know what the trappers are telling you. They want that lynx season open, and I'm passing that on to you and, through the legislature, to yourself. And I'm asking you to let them know as soon as possible.

Could you indicate if there is a hunting corridor between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the hon. member to once more repeat the exact road location. We're having a little problem identifying the exact road location.

Mr. Thompson: — Well it's between Meadow Lake and Glaslyn.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — In that case the answer is no, there is no corridor.

Mr. Thompson: — This is why these estimates are taking a long time, because you know, that was a fairly straightforward question, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you

could indicate why there would be no hunting corridor between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake, in that forest belt.

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — In answer to your question, the wildlife population has been high enough that we felt we did not have to install a corridor in this area.

Mr. Thompson: — So what you're saying is that your aerial surveys, your wildlife surveys show that there is a larger concentration of big game in that forested area just south of Meadow Lake and less than there is just north of Meadow Lake. Is that right?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — We don't have the exact information to back that up but in general, yes, you are correct.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay, Mr. Minister, I'm going to leave that as it is. It's just another attack by this government on northern Saskatchewan. You've done it in fishing, you've done it in trapping, you've done it in fire suppression, you're doing it in the hunting here.

The corridors, there's no difference in the game surveys that are carried out. I've talked to individuals who have carried out these surveys and I've had surveys done myself to a lesser extent than your department, which indicate there's far more game north of Meadow Lake than there is in that southern belt between Meadow Lake and Glaslyn.

But I say to you that if you're going to have corridors for no hunting, then you'd better have it on all the corridors in the forested belt. Why just pick out one certain area? And once again, I'm not after you, Mr. Minister, I'm after your government and your government's policies.

You have no difference; there's only a difference of 20, 30 miles between that forested belt between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake, and then all the area north of Meadow Lake where you put these hunting regulations in. And I just say that they're bad; they're bad for the individuals up in that country, and if you're going to have them in one area of this province, then you'd better have them in the other area. And I suggest that you be taking a look between Glaslyn and Meadow Lake for this fall hunting season.

I now want to . . . just before I get off of the hunting, Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could indicate if you've done any, not experiments but any surveys to find out if there's any problem with the lead content in our environment due to hunting, the same as you see in British Columbia where they're looking at a total ban of lead pellets in the weapons that they use in the shotguns. And I wonder if you could just indicate if the province of Saskatchewan has looked at that at all or have investigated in any way at all.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Yes, that's a very serious concern, and we've looked at it and there's no problem with that at all at this time.

Mr. Thompson: — You're indicating that there's no ducks

or any water-fowl in the province that have been contaminated with lead. Is this what you're saying, Mr. Minister, absolutely none?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — As part of our investigations into this concern, we investigated 50 different sites and found absolutely no problem. What my officials tell me they find is that our soil composition is such that the lead seems to sink into the soil, which helps the problem immensely.

Mr. Thompson: — Well I think maybe there should be some more investigation into that, because if lead sinks into the soil, it's not going to disintegrate. You know what lead is, and lead is going to be there for a lot longer time than you or I will be around here.

I didn't really realize it was that much of a problem, but if it happens in other parts of the planet, it most certainly could happen in the areas where we do a lot of hunting. And the hunting is usually done in the same areas, especially for geese and ducks, every year.

So I imagine there is a lot of lead that has been dropped on the environment, you know, over the last 50 to 100 years. So I think that the department should be looking into that fairly closely, because if it is sinking into the soil, I'm sure it wouldn't be sinking very far in and that lead will be there for millions of years.

I want to now turn to fire suppression, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you could indicate how much money was spent on fire suppression last year in the province?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Approximately \$42 million.

Mr. Thompson: — And I wonder if you could indicate how much of that was spent on aircrafts.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Well, Mr. Chairman, while my official is getting that information together for the hon. member, earlier I was asked by the hon. member from Moose Jaw South that . . . it was a question regarding some infrastructure investment that was made by my department at the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park. I would like to read into the record that information at this time.

The investment that my department made was for electric wiring and pedestals for 39 campsites, chain link fence, an earth dike, concrete bases for benches for an amphitheatre, concrete for a tiger pool, asphalt pavement for some roads and parking and walk areas, and some electrical line extensions. That was the information I believe the hon. member requested from me.

I would now like to respond to the hon. member from Athabasca. We spent \$6.7 million for helicopters and \$1.8 million for airplanes.

Mr. Thompson: — That covers all the aircraft, both helicopters and fixed wings, that were used on the fires last year. Is that right, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Yes, it is.

Mr. Thompson: — Where do you get the . . . You spent

\$42 million. I wonder if you could indicate how much of that \$42 million was spent on manual labour on individuals that were used to fight fires.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — We spent approximately \$8 million on labour.

And as well, while I'm on my feet, you asked me originally about the aircraft expense. The two figures I gave you are correct. But they are what we call the contracted airplanes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon?

An Hon. Member: — Not the water . . .

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — No, right. Besides that, we spent approximately, with SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation), about \$15 million.

Mr. Thompson: — Well it looks like you've spent about \$42 million . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Fifteen? No, you spent about 25, \$26 million on aircrafts last year. You indicated that you spent \$6.7 million on helicopters and then you gave me another figure of 1.8, I believe, on fixed-wing.

And could you indicate if there are any helicopter contracts that are permanent that they're not involved in the \$6.7 million that you gave me? Do you have any helicopter contracts that are not in that figure? If they're all in that figure, then that's fine.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — They're all in that figure. Both the permanent and short term are in that amount.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay, Mr. Minister, what is the total cost then to the taxpayers of this province in helicopters, fixed-wing, and I want to include all the contract helicopters and contract aircraft that you have, including the water bombers. What is that total figure that we spent on aircraft fighting fires last summer?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The amount you asked me for was the total aircraft figure, correct?

Mr. Thompson: — All aircrafts — fixed-wing and helicopters, both contract and permanent contracts, and helicopters that are coming in on spec — the total cost.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The total amount is \$23.5 million.

Mr. Thompson: — Does that include the fuel, Mr. Minister, or is the fuel over and above that cost?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — For the contracted aircraft, it includes the fuel. For SPMC aircraft, it does not include the fuel.

Mr. Thompson: — Could you give me the figure of how much the department spent on fuel last year for all aircrafts?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — We cannot provide that information today. I would have to suggest to you that I could provide that information for you.

Mr. Thompson: — That's fine, Mr. Minister, if you could provide me with that information in writing.

I now want to turn to another issue, Mr. Minister, and that is the stand-by crews that I indicated to you in the legislature, you had pulled in. This was crews in Dillon, Shell village, St. George's Hill, Turner Lake, and Patuanak. And they were in there for two years. And I wonder if you could just indicate what it cost the department to pay for those three fire-fighting units that I just mentioned.

(1630)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The information I've received from my officials is that the total amount spent is very close to \$400,000.

Mr. Thompson: — That's on the 45 jobs that you eliminated, is this right, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The 45 jobs do relate to the \$400,000 and they will . . . The jobs have not been eliminated and these 45 jobs become part of the new program.

Mr. Thompson: — Are you saying, Mr. Minister, that those 45 jobs have been reinstated and they are now on the payroll?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Under the new program, called the Man-up program, these 45 jobs and these people that were part of these jobs, with the experience, will certainly be given every consideration to become part of this new program. We look forward to employing a lot of them because of their experience.

Mr. Thompson: — That's not the question I asked, Mr. Minister. I asked you if the 45 individuals that lost their jobs are now working and on the payroll of the department.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — No one is working at this time because we do not have a forest fire problem at this time.

Mr. Thompson: — Okay, I'll just leave it at that, Mr. Minister. It's taking too much time here to get these answers out anyway. As you indicate, the 45 jobs are not there; they are gone. They will be hired back if it rains, and as you indicate, it's been wet weather so there's been no forest fires, so they will have no jobs.

So what you are saying then, Mr. Minister, is that the 45 individuals will have jobs if it's a dry season or if we have a fire season. If it's wet and it rains, there'll be no jobs. Most certainly there will be no jobs this spring to start off with because we have wet conditions. That's exactly what you're saying.

It costs less than \$400,000 a year to employ the 45 individuals that you released over a month ago — no warning, they were ready to go back to work, pulled in, and told their jobs were eliminated. Yet you can spend enough money in one year to pay the president of the potash corporation to keep those 45 individuals working for two full years. That's exactly what it would cost.

If you took the wages of Chuck Childers, the over \$700 million a year that he gets — you don't mind giving him that type of wage because he's from New Mexico or some place down in central United States — bring him in here and pay him that kind of wages. Also you give him a contract, no cut. You didn't give those individuals no-cut contracts, the 45 individuals. You didn't even give them notice. You gave them less than two weeks notice and their jobs are eliminated. But Chuck Childers, he's guaranteed over \$3 million and he can't be cut for five years.

That's the kind of fairness that's taking place in northern Saskatchewan and the rest of this province with Conservative policies. And for the life of me, Mr. Minister, I don't know why you sit over on that side of the House carrying out those kind of policies and the type of philosophy that is destroying this province and making our young people move out. That's exactly what's happened.

And that's why you're less than 12 per cent in the polls in this province. That's why you're going to be totally eliminated when the next election is called, and I say that to each and every member that's sitting over there. You better start reading those polls because that's where you're going. You're all going to be unemployed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — But I say, Mr. Minister, it's highly unfair that you would pay officials and guarantee them five years, a five-year contract, and yet those individuals up in northern Saskatchewan, you say, well we can't use you now, you're laid off with two weeks notice and you will be hired back if we have a forest fire. That to me, Mr. Minister, and I know to you, is highly unfair. And that is the type of policies, that's the type of policies that the member who's sitting in the back from Lloydminster . . . and he knows what the polls are saying up in Lloydminster. And they all know that. And I say it's time for some of those Tory back-benchers to . . . there's not many of them left any more, they're pretty well all cabinet ministers, I admit, or legislative secretaries. But it's time to stand up and start changing the policies around, and let's get some fairness into government.

And would you take a look at what's happening in that potash industry and what's happening to the individuals in the rest of the province and the 40, 45,000 people who are working for the minimum wage. I say it's just unfair. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, to reconsider those 45 positions and ask you to reinstate those positions and put them back working, doing the job that they were doing. And they were there to protect the forest, and they did other jobs when it was raining. But under the new policy that you got out, when it rains they're going to be unemployed. And if a fire comes up, then they're going to have a job. That's an awful way to make a living with the uncertainties they face and the families that they have to look after, Mr. Minister. That is just unfair, and I'd ask you to reassess that program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The member referred to quite a comparison to the issue he raised, and I don't think I want to comment on that. I think the minister in charge of the potash corporation has on numerous occasions covered the matter of worth of pay very clearly. I think what the member forgets is that when this program was put into place, it was a two-year experimental program. And everyone was quite aware at that time, that it was a two-year experimental program. Now I've assured him on more than one occasion now that if . . . and we don't know what the forest fire situation is going to be at this time. I think to assume that they won't have jobs is not correct or fair at this time.

But I assured him at that time and I'll assure him again that should manpower be required, these people are first in line for jobs. It would be very irresponsible for me to promise them at this time a certain amount of hours or a certain kind of a job when we don't know what the forest fire situation is going to be. To exaggerate, it could be twice as bad as last year. And then of course we would be hiring every available manpower that is available anywhere within the province, and God help us that it would get to that situation.

I don't think it's being fair at this time to suggest that these people are forgotten and won't be considered for anything. We certainly don't look at it that way.

Mr. Thompson: — Well I know you don't, Mr. Minister. But you've just indicated in your response that those individuals will be given first chance to go to work if there's a fire. You just indicated that. So that's exactly what they are. They're out there on a spare board. That's just what they're doing; they're working on a spare board. If there's a fire, fine, they'll go to work. If there's not, then there is just no work.

Now, Mr. Minister, you know that that's unfair. And I don't think that I used the wrong terms when I was comparing the moneys that you pay out to top officials of your corporations, and to what you're doing with these 45 individuals up there. It's highly unfair.

And they were pulled in here just two weeks before they were supposed to go to work. They weren't aware of this. Your department wasn't aware of it. You weren't aware of it, Mr. Minister. You weren't even aware of it. They were pulled in and told that they had to go work, or that they weren't going to work.

When you're ready to pay attention, then I'll continue.

So, Mr. Minister, when you say it's unfair to use that, I say it's not unfair. Take a look at the 45 individuals that you have taken the livelihood away from, who were so sure that they were going to work. They were all ready to go to work. And just a few weeks before they were to be called back, they were called in by your department officials and told that there was no jobs this year; that they were being eliminated.

And you stand up in the House and you say, well, they're not going to be forgotten because if it's a dry season and if we have forest fires, they will be called to work. You have a forest fire over in the Dillon area and they're called to

work for four or five days; the fire's out; they're laid off again.

But you didn't do that with Chuck Childers. You gave him a housing allowance and you gave him a five-year contract, guaranteed, no cut, no matter what happens. You even go as far as if he passes away it's paid to his estate. You didn't do that to those individuals up there; not that they would be asking for those type of wages, but at least they're asking for some fairness.

And I'm just asking you to put some fairness back in that and to reinstate those positions. And I would just ask you, Mr. Minister, if you would reinstate those positions that you took away approximately a month ago.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Well I certainly want to agree with the member that neither he nor I ever want to see anyone that could work, not work. We do have a responsibility.

A program that was on an experimental basis just happened to expire. We are coming with a new program. And because of the concern we both have for these people, I've assured you and I will assure you once again that when the situation arises we're going to certainly give these types of people the first applications because they are the ones with the experience.

Like you said though, we can't . . . I can't give you any further guarantees than that at this time. There's no question that there's going to be forest fires — we're not going to get that lucky — and certainly there's going to be a certain amount of work available for these people.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have a couple of questions concerning The Battlefords Provincial Park. Each year, as I understand it, The Battlefords Provincial Park tenders out to a journeyman in plumbing and heating trade to take care of some situations that arise at the park, and the person is basically on stand-by to come and do plumbing and heating repair work or maintenance work in The Battlefords Provincial Park.

And I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, if that is the case, if you offered an invitational tender this year to have someone perform the plumbing and heating services for The Battlefords Provincial Park?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Yes, there was a public tender for the plumbing and heating at The Battlefords Provincial Park. As a result of that public tender there was one bid received and it was awarded to the person that made that bid.

Mr. Anguish: — Who was that person, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The successful tender went to Medstead Plumbing & Heating Ltd. at Medstead, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, did you say it was a public tender? Am I correct to have understood you to say that?

And if it was a public tender, what papers and what media was it advertised through?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — The tenders are advertised in all dailies and as well, in all local papers within a 50 mile radius of each provincial park.

Mr. Anguish: — Tell me the dates, Mr. Minister, in which that ad appeared in the Battlefords' *News-Optimist* and also in *The Battlefords' Telegraph-Advertiser Post*? And what date it would have appeared in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, Mr. Minister? I'd like the dates of those advertisements.

Mr. Minister, while you're looking for that answer, I don't want to consume any more time. It should be a fairly straightforward few questions that I have to ask of you.

The other question I have to ask of you is that in the past this has not been a public tendering process. I know that last year, the year before, when the person who had it for the previous year, it was an invitational tender. I know that because I contacted the park office and asked that more people be included in the invitational tender. And now you're telling me this year it was a public tender. But, Mr. Minister, many people did not see that ad. So that's why I'm very interested in knowing the dates that the ads appeared, calling for tender for that contract service to the park.

And secondly, I want to know why there's been a change in policy — why it was invitational tender before, and now you're saying it's gone to a public tendering system.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — My officials inform me that it was a public tender. And the details regarding the dates that it was available in your local papers and, as well, in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, we shall provide that information for you.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, I assure you that last year this was not a public tendering process. I know that for a fact. I phoned the individual who's in charge of The Battlefords Provincial Park. I asked why it had not been tendered publicly. He said it was an invitational tender. And I, at that point, asked him if he would include other people on the invitational tendering list, and he said yes.

Subsequently he sent, on my request, an invitational tender to Phil's Plumbing & Heating, who was successful in the invitational tendering process, had received the contract this year, unbeknownst to the individual who owns Phil's Plumbing & Heating. He loses the contract without even having the chance to bid on it.

I would think that there would be a courtesy within your department that if someone is doing the job and they're doing it satisfactorily, then if it comes up to be tendered again they would be informed that it's coming up for tender again. This individual had the tender on The Battlefords . . . had the contract on The Battlefords Provincial Park, knew nothing about the public process because it was invitational the year that he had received the contract.

You'd think that through courtesy of your department,

you would at least ask the incumbent contractor to put in another bid, or at least that it was being put up for public tender again, because this was unusual for past practice to The Battlefords Provincial Park.

So, Mr. Minister, I'd like you to explain why the courtesy wasn't offered to the incumbent to submit or would be required to submit another bid to secure the contract or to compete for the contract in the park. I think it's very unfair of your department, unless there was some negligence in the work. And if there was negligence or the work wasn't satisfactory, I think that the incumbent should have been informed about this.

So can you tell me, Mr. Minister, why, one, the incumbent was not informed that the contract was being put up for bid; and secondly, was there something wrong with the contractor's work that the contractor was removed from the bidding process?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Each of these contracts is tendered. Now I guess the assumption is made that because this person, whoever had the contract last year, works very closely until this contract runs out, that he'd be very aware that it would be up for tender and would be alert enough to watch the papers and pick up the advertisement suggesting that the tender call for bids was being advertised.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, that is absolutely inaccurate. I will apologize to you out on the steps of this legislature if you can show me in last year where Phil's Plumbing & Heating received the contract that that was a public tender. It was not a public tender in the past; it was an invitational tender, at least in the year that that particular firm received the contract for the park. So it would be logical for that person to assume, since it was the first year they had the contract, that if it came up for bid again, they'd be invited to bid on it again. That's what logical thinking would do for that individual who had the contract.

And I'm telling you, it was not public tender. If it was public tender, I was misled by the person who's in charge of The Battlefords Provincial Park. Because when I phoned and inquired last year, they said it was an invitational tender. When I requested that another invitational tender be put on the list, they sent a copy of the invitational tender to the firm that ultimately got the contract. So it would be logical for that individual to assume that it would be invitational again.

The firm that had the contract was not informed it was being put up for tender again. They were not informed that their work was unsatisfactory. So they therefore assumed that they would be invited to bid if it was tendered again, and it would be logical to assume that their work was satisfactory since they were not assumed that it was not.

Therefore, Mr. Minister, the information you're telling me is not accurate. It was invitational last year. All of a sudden now you say it's public. If it was public last year, you tell me the dates of the ads that appeared in the local and the weekly papers within a 50-mile radius of The Battlefords Provincial Park. Because I just don't believe

that it was, Mr. Minister.

Therefore I think that there should be a more consistent policy within your department so that someone who is in a contract position with the government, and if they've performed successfully the duties as spelled out in their contract, they should be informed as to whether or not the contract is coming up for bid again.

Busy entrepreneurs, if they have a satisfactory number of contracts, don't peruse the paper every day to see if their contract is being let out to another individual.

So I would ask you to, one, review whether or not it was invitational last year. And if it was public, you tell me the dates that it was advertised and show us a copy of the ads where it was advertised. If it was not public but was in fact invitational, I ask you to retender that contract for The Battlefords Provincial Park to at least give the incumbent a chance to rebid on the contract.

You say you only got one bid. The only reason you got one bid, Mr. Minister, is because the person who was in the incumbent position didn't know the contract was being retendered. And I think that is grossly unfair of your department not to inform that individual firm as to whether or not they would have to rebid to secure the contract.

And I'd like you to give us your undertaking, Mr. Minister, as to whether or not you will pursue this and correct the inequity in terms of the particular bidding process for The Battlefords Provincial Park, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — There appears to be just a little bit of confusion here. When I said that it was tendered, it was this year. The invitational tender that you're referring to was last year. I believe that's correct.

Mr. Anguish: — Yes, I'm referring . . . Mr. Minister, we'll use the names, okay? Phil's Plumbing and Heating last year contacted me and said, why don't they advertise publicly for the contract for The Battlefords Provincial Park for plumbing and heating?

And I'd like you to listen to me and not your deputy minister for a moment, if you would, so we're both talking about the same thing, okay? And if you take a few minutes after to listen to him, fine.

Last year, Phil's Plumbing & Heating contacted my office; said, why isn't the plumbing and heating contract on the provincial park given out by public tender instead of invitational tender? I said, I don't know. So I phoned the person in charge at the provincial park and said, why don't you publicly tender it? They said, well, it's been invitational tender; that's our practice. I said, will you accept someone else being sent invitation to tender on the plumbing and heating? The person at the park said yes. They sent an invitation to Phil's Plumbing & Heating to tender. Phil's Plumbing & Heating tendered, they were successful on the bid, and they received the contract for the park.

So this year end comes about and all of a sudden Phil's Plumbing & Heating, who is the incumbent, isn't told

that's it's going to be retendered, and he would assume that he'd be told that, because in the past it was invitational, okay? Number one.

Number two is that this person has never been told that their work is unsatisfactory. They wanted to reapply, submit a tender, because they liked the work at the park. So I want to know if the work was unsatisfactory from Phil's Plumbing & Heating.

Secondly, I want to know whether you would agree with me that it's logical, if a person comes into a contract and invitational tender, when it's going to be retendered again, even if it's public, they should be informed that it's no longer invitational tender, it's public; you're going to have to watch the paper.

Because these small entrepreneurs throughout the province, if they have enough work, which lots of them don't, but if they have enough work they don't have time to watch all the papers. They're out working and struggling every day to make sure that they have enough income to meet their expenses so they can therefore have a profit to make a living.

And so you're right. It was invitational last year. I'm glad we agree on that. It's now public this year, which I think is the best route, but why was the individual who had the contract not informed? Because it would be logical for them to assume that if they got it on an invitational tender it would be invitational tender again. And even if it wasn't invitational tender, they should be informed that it's coming up for bid when they're in the incumbent position so they can work up a bid to keep the work they like doing, and I assume the park felt it was satisfactory.

So I want your undertaking that you'll review the situation because it is an inequitable situation for people who are bidding on contracts like that at The Battlefords Provincial Park.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — There's no question there's some confusion here, and I undertake to conduct an investigation into this tender for you, and we'll get back to you with the necessary information.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

Item 15 — Statutory.

Item 16 agreed to.

Item 17 — Statutory.

Items 18 to 20 inclusive agreed to.

Items 21 to 23 inclusive — Statutory.

Items 24 and 25 agreed to.

Item 26 — Statutory.

Item 27 agreed to.

Vote 26 agreed to.

Forest Renewal and Development Fund

Mr. Chairman: — Any questions? Carried.

**Supplementary Estimates 1990
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Parks and Renewable Resources
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 26**

Items 1 to 21 inclusive agreed to.

Items 22 to 27 inclusive — Statutory.

Vote 26 agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to take a quick moment to recognize the questions and the concerns of the members of the opposition. They will be taken as constructive and we hope to build on those kinds of issues and those kinds of opinions.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my own staff that are here, who acted as support staff. I would like to take it one step further and say that this is just one great department and I want to recognize not only the members of my staff that are here but every member of the staff that works for me throughout the whole province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the minister and all his staff for the information that you've provided us here for today. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: — It being past 5 o'clock, the committee is recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.