

Mr. Chairman: — Good morning. Before we call the witnesses in, we might be well advised to deal with the question of agenda and dates and timing of meetings.

Unlike previous occasions, we had no opportunity for two sides in the legislature to come to an agreement as to intersessional meetings, and therefore we might be well advised to suggestions as to how we complete the work of the committee at this time. As it stands, the committee resolved to meet Tuesdays and Thursdays. I don't think that's particularly an effective way to continue to do this intersessionally but I'm open to suggestions as to how you feel we should do this.

Mr. Sauder: — Well I guess I have some ideas on it. I agree that it's not a very effective way of the committee meeting. I guess when we look at the distances and the times that, you know, involved with travel and calling members in when we're not normally in town, and I think the other thing with the House being recessed and us being scattered throughout the province and the holiday season coming up and everything else, I think I would suggest that perhaps the committee stands adjourned until the chairman and the vice-chairman would agree on a time sometime later to perhaps meet for extended periods of time.

If you'd like, I'd put that in the form of a motion:

That at the normal adjournment time today, the committee would stand adjourned until you would agree on a suitable time.

And I think that's keeping with past practice, that during periods of the House adjournment, that it would normally only be worked out between the two sides as to an agreeable time to sit for an extended period of time — to work that out.

Mr. Chairman: — Alternatively the committee itself could agree today as to how it wants to . . . or when it wants to meet. That's an alternative. But I'm open to your direction by way of motion or otherwise.

Mr. Baker: — Mr. Chairman, you said that there was no opportunity to deal with this, and we're living in a modern age where we do have telephones. And I think the expenditure that's taking place this morning is an absolute atrocity because of the number of dollars it costs to bring us all together, and the staff, and I don't know what it costs, but 15, 20, \$30,000 if you figured the whole thing out. And I'm disappointed that we're spending money this way without some consultation on it.

I know we ended abruptly and we were slated to meet this morning but we do have to bear in mind that we should be acting responsible. And if we're going to have a meeting today, I think that we should have done it by agreement and sat all week.

I mean the costs go like this when you're here for an extended period of time. But if you're coming in for a scheduled two-hour meeting, it seems to me that it's not money wisely spent on behalf of the taxpayers. And us, of all committees, to be pulling stunts like this, I just don't

think it sits well. It doesn't sit well with me anyway.

Mr. Chairman: — I just might, before I recognize the next speaker, I think that all of us would like to make a contribution to the debate whether or not this is the best way to meet and all that kind of thing. Certainly I would want to make a number of comments on that, whether it's in the chair or otherwise. But I don't know how that helps us in terms of planning our future activities for the committee. Having said that — Mr. Lyons?

Mr. Lyons: — Given Mr. Baker's comments, Mr. Chairman, I would give notice of motion that after we deal with this motion, I'll give notice of motion that the committee deal with the whole question of per diems by not accepting them, that that be transmitted to the Board of Internal Economy.

Mr. Baker: — That's fine for you. You don't have to travel a thousand kilometres and pay hotel rooms, and you might even be able to go home and have dinner.

Mr. Lyons: — No, I can tell you right now that I won't be taking that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm not finished my comments. And let's just cut through the . . .

Mr. Sauder: — Is there a motion on the floor for discussion?

Mr. Lyons: — That's right. We're going to deal with the motion.

Mr. Chairman: — The motion of Mr. Sauder is that:

Moved that at the normal adjournment time today, 11 a.m., this committee will stand adjourned until such a time as the chairman and vice-chairman agree to the call of the committee.

We don't normally debate adjournment motions, but the instructions on here, that it be up to the agreement of the chairman and the vice-chairman to agree to call the committee, certainly is open for debate. As it stands, it's a substantive motion and debatable, so . . .

So then I assume you're addressing your remarks to the motion at hand.

Mr. Lyons: — Exactly. In light of Mr. Baker's comments, I'm wondering whether it would be acceptable to the mover of the motion whether or not that it would be amended in such a way as to say that it would be adjourned as of on Friday, the 28th of this month, and that we continue meeting throughout the rest of the week. If those concerns are valid concerns, we can get down and get doing it for the rest of the week.

Mr. Sauder: — . . . (inaudible) . . . because we've all got other commitments that we've accepted for the interim times. I know myself, within my constituency, I have two functions tomorrow and further functions throughout the rest of the week that I've agreed to attend, and it's not an agreeable amendment to me.

Mr. Lyons: — I want to move that as an amendment even

if . . . so it's not a friendly amendment, it will be an unfriendly amendment.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, just a few comments. The motion as it stands looks all right on the surface of it, but I can imagine what will happen. If it means an agreement between the chairman and the vice-chairman, we will not be meeting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, that's what I'm saying. We will not be meeting, and that's what I'm concerned about. If the chairman can make the decision that we shall meet in consultation with the vice-chairman, that may be another matter. But if the motion has been made so that both have to agree, then we know what's going to happen I think, that the committee won't be meeting until after the next election.

I do want to make a comment. I am not opposed to adjournment now in order that we can formulate the agenda. I do think however that all the departments knew that they . . . what the agenda was of the committee. And therefore I would be prepared to, even though I have some other commitments this week in my constituency, to cancel those commitments and for the committee to meet for the rest of this week and let's see what happens after that.

I think it is important that we analyse and peruse the *Public Accounts*, and they should be done, I think, before the next election.

So I would be prepared to meet, continue to meet this week, and if the committee feels that that is acceptable, then I think the committee can substantially do much of the work that has to be done in Public Accounts. We may not be able to complete it, but certainly if we sit from 9 until 4 or 5 each day with a break in between, I think we can get a substantial amount of the work done. This is what I think we ought to be doing in order to carry out the work of this committee.

I find it a little bit difficult. If the mover could assure me that they would not jeopardize the opportunity for the committee to meet very shortly, and that it is not his intent or the intent of the members opposite, then I, you know, I can see some positive aspects to his motion. But I think I'd want that assurance before I'd vote for it.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I can agree with either sitting through the rest of this week and cancelling whatever I have, or to have a date at some other time where we block off a week or whatever time is necessary to fulfil our role in reviewing the *Public Accounts*.

But I, like Mr. Rolfes, want some assurance, and preferably an agreement today, as to the date when we come back here to do that. I think it's far too easy to just forget about it and let things go on and have the election held, whenever that might be. So I could agree to Mr. Sauder's motion but I want to know that date before I cast my vote one way or the other.

And I'm wondering if there's some possibility before we go on and debate the motion any further, whether or not there's some dates in mind that Mr. Sauder has or the vice-chairman, Mr. Hopfner, and yourself as to when this would be that we'd go through the *Public Accounts*. I ask

that as a question at this point.

Mr. Sauder: — Well I don't have any particular dates in mind at the present time. And as far as the question of me providing assurance, I think it's one of those things that needs to be worked out as to how it fits into various people's schedules.

And I think that's, as I said earlier, keeping with past practices of the committee, that when it sits intersessionally, it does it with that agreement and with some period of notice ahead of time to the members, so that they can clear their calendars or be prepared for it as opposed to only a couple of days notice.

And in this case, with your suggestion of meeting for the rest of this week, I mean, as I said earlier, I have commitments that I think are fairly important out in the constituency that I would want to keep. And I can't speak for all the rest of the members.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I think that's the answer to my question. I want to contribute something now to the debate on the motion. I suppose the committee doesn't need all the members to operate; we need a quorum to operate. And if one member had such pressing commitments, they could likely honour those commitments and committee could still keep a quorum to conduct the business of the committee.

But I find it rather strange that one of the members that has spoken already called this an atrocity, money not wisely spent, pulling a stunt like this, consultation.

Well the legislature, we would have likely still been sitting if the government hadn't been so afraid of losing confidence in their own government. I mean there was no consultation for just shutting down the legislature. And the way you people operate, you never even attempted to bring one single government department before estimates.

Mr. Chairman: — Can I just . . .

Mr. Anguish: — This applies to the debate. I'm talking in response to Mr. Baker's comments, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: — I think I suggested to the members that they exercise some caution to talk about . . . I know what Mr. Baker says, but to escalate the rhetoric is . . . you know it's not going to get us anywhere.

Mr. Anguish: — How can you exercise caution when these members want to finish the two hours that we have here today and they don't want to appear. They want to run out and hide somewhere.

Mr. Chairman: — Well that's not clear yet. I mean the members have put a suggestion before us, and I think we should try and work at resolving that.

Mr. Anguish: — Well if those comments are out of order, Mr. Chairman, obviously . . .

Mr. Lyons: — No they're not. They're in order and they're fine comments.

Mr. Anguish: — I can't see how the members opposite say there was no consultation. We had the agenda set up for quite some time. And because of the haste of fleeing from the Legislative Assembly, there was a little oversight that I guess the members on the Public Accounts Committee forgot to inform the Executive Council that the Public Accounts Committee was meeting.

And was there consultation by Mr. Hopfner, Mr. Chairman, to you? Did he come and tell you the legislature was adjourning so we should maybe do something about Public Accounts? I ask that question of you. Did he come and talk to you, saying look, they're going to close down the legislature; what are we going to do about Public Accounts? Did he?

Mr. Chairman: — Well I don't think we had that opportunity, no. No.

Mr. Anguish: — Oh. So nobody came and told you that Public Accounts should not be sitting because the legislature was closing down. Was there consultation with you?

Mr. Chairman: — No.

Mr. Anguish: — Oh, I see. Were all members aware, Mr. Chairman, that Public Accounts Committee was to meet on Tuesday, June 25?

Mr. Chairman: — Yes.

Mr. Anguish: — I don't see your arguments. I don't know where you stand. I think you should be reprimanded. It's an atrocity that you'd prorogue the legislature without even calling one single government department for estimates. You're criminals and you should be treated like such.

Mr. Chairman: — I don't think . . . again, you know, there's no suggestion of any criminal activity here. I caution you on your choice of words.

Again I encourage members to think about resolving a problem that we have before us, to look to the future and some resolution of that as opposed to escalating the rhetoric about past events.

Mr. Anguish: — This is not rhetoric. This is applicable to what's happening. The members don't want to sit on Public Accounts. If criminal is maybe too strong a word, I certainly suggest to you that there was a member who treated the Reichstag in Germany the same way before the Second World War. Read your history. It's exactly the same way that the Reichstag operated prior to the Second World War. And after that event there were trials, and people were found to be criminal.

Mr. Chairman: — We're getting off the topic here.

Mr. Anguish: — What is the topic?

Mr. Chairman: — The topic is the question of when we adjourn, that it stands adjourned until the chairman and the vice-chairman agree. And we have an amendment by

Mr. Lyons, who hasn't moved it formally but I assume he will, that . . .

Mr. Anguish: — You didn't even try and bring one government department for estimates.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, because I've seconded the motion I'll speak on it. I guess I should have spoke on it before.

Mr. Chairman: — Mr. Hopfner, Mr. Hopfner. There's certainly nothing to preclude members if they want to carry on another discussion in the middle or the back of the room or out in the hallway to do that, but in the meantime, Mr. Hopfner has the floor.

Now, now, now. Both Mr. Britton and Mr. Anguish here seem to be wanting to carry on another conversation than the one we should be listening to, and that's Mr. Hopfner's contribution at this time.

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Chairman, I'm in agreement with the motion as you no doubt see because of my seconding the motion. I do believe that there are a few points that I'd like to make regards to Public Accounts not having to really sit.

First of all, I'd like to point out that we have really no pressing timetable for the Public Accounts to be completed. I probably think the Public Accounts Committee has been in probably as good a shape as ever previous to us going into . . . this committee sitting in and going into a session of the Public Accounts. I would think that there are a couple of points to be made on just that, by not having really a pressing timetable to have it completed. There is a point to be made, is that there is the legislature is now prorogued. So the committee would have actually no forum to report to, as a point.

And as well I believe that Mr. Rolfes may have a point. I can't see this committee really needing to have to sit . . . or the need to have to sit is not there prior to the election. I would think . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, I know you didn't say that, but I say it. I think that it's not necessary. I agreed with you. I don't think, as vice-chairman, that there's a necessity to sit prior to an election. I would think that these *Public Accounts* that are now before the committee could be rightly handled by a new committee structured after the next election, which will be held within the next couple months, I would imagine.

So therefore I would think that the new committee should be able to handle this Provincial Auditor's report, and then at the same time report their findings to the legislature. I don't believe that it's necessary to spend the thousands of dollars, and I agree with that. There is a cost factor here. And so there's no need to really get into spending those kinds of dollars.

As well, I am committed to a graduation at home. In fact, Mr. Chairman, my son is graduating this year. My oldest son is graduating this year, and the festivities start on Wednesday night, so it's impossible for me to be here to sit through the rest of the week here in meetings. I have other commitments in the riding as well, other than the

graduation. And so it makes it fairly difficult. And I believe that we can get along very well. In fact, if I go a little bit further, it's really, as Mr. Rolfes heard, just a conversation, it's not . . . it hasn't been really . . . I guess probably hasn't been of any great value to be sitting here and discussing the *Public Accounts* without having both sides here.

And I'm not prepared to, as Mr. Anguish suggested, to allow one or two members here as they see fit to come in here and question. Because we've seen badgering going on in this committee from the member from The Battlefords in the past, and we're certainly . . . I'm not going to be not at this table while there are witnesses here before the committee and then I don't know whether they're being badgered or not. So I wouldn't allow that to be happening.

So these are just a few of the reasons why . . . the graduation and some of the commitments in my riding, family and constituent-wise, are the reasons that I cannot sit for the remaining part of the week.

So I'm against the amendment. And a few of those other points that I've made, that we have no legislature to report to, there's no sense spending the thousands of dollars, and allow the new committee to function under the *Public Accounts* and the auditor's report — I think that's the proper way to go. And I'll be voting in favour of the motion.

Mr. Britton: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I also feel that I can't sit the rest of the week now. However I think you remember, we talked a little about this, and I wouldn't mind coming down and spending a week, with prior notice. I've got no problem with that. I believe that I've been on record saying that we could get more work done if we got at it. I also feel that I can agree with the two chairmen coming to an agreement. I have more confidence I guess in our vice-chairman than what seems to be the minds of the other folks.

I also accept the argument that Mr. Hopfner put forward, that if it is decided we don't meet, I don't think we're really hurting anything because there is nothing to report to at this time. There is no place to report what we do here.

But I guess what I'm saying is that I'm in favour of the motion, particularly today, and I'm in favour of consultation between yourself and the vice-chairman. And I'm also, Mr. Chairman, would put myself available on agreement between the two of you to actually come down and stay a week. Because I believe that if it is decided the work should be done, then I have no problem with spending considerable time getting it done.

But I have to once more say that because of commitments that I have — and I have given up some commitments for today to be here, appointments and things that were made — I wouldn't be able to sit here for the rest of the week.

Mr. Chairman: — If I might, I hear a number of members indicating a problem with the amendment that Mr. Lyons has put before us — or he hasn't formally put before us but I guess he intends to. I hear members saying that the chair

and the vice-chair should agree. But I'm not quite clear what the vice-chair is saying. I'm not sure whether you were indicating that . . . whether it was your opinion that the committee should in fact not meet and just leave it up to some new committee, subsequent to the next election, to deal with this. Because if that's the case, then I don't think there'll be any opportunity for agreement then in terms of us calling future meetings. .

Mr. Hopfner: — No, if you want clarification, I guess probably there is no sense in prolonging the debate on the thing that you and I can agree to it. I would doggone well just say straightforward that there's no need. I would say, right after the election, that if you're still the chairman and I'm still the . . . no, I guess we're not because there's no committee any longer.

Mr. Chairman: — No, the committee is dissolved once the legislature's dissolved.

Mr. Hopfner: — Yeah, it's dissolved; that's right. You're right, Mr. Chairman. But I would say, just as soon as a new committee is structured, that's when it should be dealing with this *Public Accounts*, the public accounts report.

Mr. Chairman: — I've got some problems with the motions personally. I mean if there was a sincere indication on your part . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — No, the motion came from this. The motion was moved by Mr. Sauder. I gave my viewpoint.

Mr. Chairman: — Can you give us some assurance that if the motion passes, that you will in fact try your best to set up a meeting in conjunction with the chair?

Mr. Hopfner: — I would have to be convinced — because I am a vice-chairman — I would have to be convinced from my side of the committee here, from my members, to . . . they would have to indicate to me that there was a pressing and urgent need to call the meeting and spend those kinds of dollars.

Mr. Chairman: — But if the motion passes . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — If they can convince me of that, well then we're away.

Mr. Chairman: — If the motion passes, isn't that sort of then some indication that you should be convinced to call a meeting? Because that's what the motion talks about.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well if they want to convince me of it, fine, I'll do it and whatever. I carry out their wishes.

Mr. Chairman: — I'm a bit uneasy about it all.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, well I know why you feel uneasy about it. The words of the vice-chairman couldn't have been any plainer when he said that he felt that there's no need for this committee to meet.

Let me, first of all . . . I want to make some corrections of the vice-chairman. First of all, he says there's no forum to report, which is not true. There is a forum to report. If the

Premier wishes, he could call another session before and pass his budget. If he doesn't do that, that's fine — there would be a forum then — If he doesn't, after the next election this committee reports to the legislature that is in session at that particular time, if we complete our work now. That report will be reported to the legislature, not by this committee, but by another committee. But that report is finished and will be reported. I mean so that's not true.

Mr. Anguish did state . . . Now Mr. Hopfner made the statement he didn't want one or two people to make the decisions here. Mr. Anguish was very clear that if one or two people on that side can't make it, as long as we have a quorum this committee can still function. And if one or two people on this side can't make it the odd day, we can still work as a committee as long as we have a quorum.

And I think it should not be forgotten that when we were appointed as members of this committee our duties were to peruse and analyse and report on the '89-90 expenditures of the government. That was our duty. That's what we are supposed to be doing.

I can't help it if there was prorogation and there was no notification given by the government at the time. That, I mean, is not our fault and I guess it's no fault of any of the committee members. But it's obvious that some people were given notice, because if they already completely filled their week this week, not knowing that we were going to be sitting this week, then that's not being very truthful with the committee here. Because obviously you people knew, and had long in advance made commitments for this week.

But I do find . . . I cast no doubt on the sincerity of the member from Wilkie when he says that he wants to meet because I think he would make himself available to meet. But his words — and I think he will admit that — ring rather hollow when you take into consideration what the vice-chairman says. I mean the motion reads that there shall be agreement between the chairman and the vice-chairman as to when the committee shall next meet. But the vice-chairman says, no, he doesn't think we should meet.

So why are we . . . Of course if we can change that, that Mr. Britton and the chairman shall meet, I might take that into consideration, because he's already stated that if the committee so feels, that he would make himself available. But to have the vice-chairman on when he says that he himself does not believe that the committee should meet, then we know of course what's going to happen to the resolution of this motion that's before us. Nothing will happen. We simply will not meet.

I therefore find it rather difficult to support the motion that's before us, Mr. Chairman, because either there was no consultation between the member from Nipawin and the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster or they're simply not sincere in what they're proposing. I mean you can't have one member present a motion that the chairman and the vice-chairman shall agree and the vice-chairman speaks and says, well I don't agree with the committee meeting. I mean why put the motion forward? That makes a mockery of the whole thing.

So I find it rather difficult. I do think the committee should meet. But if we can't meet this week — and I can understand that, that maybe people have made commitments — then let's agree on a future date, set a week aside if we need a week and let's do the duties . . . carry out the duties of this committee. Let's go through the various departments, analyse them and make our report, and let's finish off the work of this committee.

Mr. Chairman, I really do think that we ought to meet sometime in the very near future to do the work of this committee.

Mr. Baker: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Herman, while the session's on I don't know how you handle your constituency, but when I'm here five days a week I usually say, as soon as the House gets out, we'll tee up this and we'll tee up that and that's what you do.

But as far as the committee meeting, last year, the first time since I've been here, and it's in excess of nine years, that the committee sat while the House was not in session. And it was by agreement. There was sort of an agreed-upon time schedule per each item that was brought before the agenda. It was kind of laid out and said, look, we can do this, this, and this today and this tomorrow. And we sat down and we basically stayed pretty close to the agenda. Some ran a little longer; some ran a little less time than anticipated. And if my memory strikes me right, we wound up about a half an hour early on the whole week and we had achieved what we started out to do.

Now in the period of time that I have been here today, June 25, 1991, we are the closest to being completed or current, other than last fall when we came down and did the week. So you know, this is the closest we've been to being kind of current on it, other than when we cleaned it up last fall.

So I really particularly don't care. If we can set it up and structure it so we can accomplish something, where we have an agreement that we'll be an hour here and four there and could complete it, I guess that's part of the duties that we take on.

Whether in fact we can find a fitting time period, is another question. We may be into a writ situation within a couple or three days. Who knows? I mean Herman's saying no. I guess he's probably got a handle on the rope. So it's kind of the uncertainty of the whole thing.

I can support the motion the way it is drafted. There has to be some give and take, and be able to sit down as two groups and talk. But I was really upset, Mr. Chairman, I have to reiterate, as to coming in for this meeting. We could have said look, we had a meeting, we're half-way through this; think we can shove a few days work at it rather than coming down for . . .

The first thing that I thought of, and I probably still think that, that it was done for political reasons on somebody's political agenda, and I don't think that's good expenditure of the taxpayers' dollar.

Mr. Chairman: — I think this is a useful discussion in

terms of moving ahead and trying to get some time set aside for the committee to finish its work. And I frankly didn't know of any other way to do that except to do it in this way.

Mr. Baker: — . . . I'm not a bad . . . reasonable person, Harry. A couple of Harry's get together, we could have probably solved it.

Mr. Chairman: — In terms of the motion, did you have any deadline in mind that we should agree by, in terms of calling the chair? End of July, end of August?

Mr. Sauder: — Not anything specific, because we felt it was something that both sides would likely want to consult with their . . . you know, yourself and the vice-chairman would both want to consult with their members and work out an agreeable time to the group.

I think we find with the holiday season and everything else, that at any given time there may be one or two of the members that can't make it. And if that's the case, as members opposite suggested, so be it. But I would leave it open to that.

Mr. Chairman: — just based on it right now, I wouldn't want to bet the farm that there will be a meeting then. In fact I wouldn't want to bet very much at all that there'll be a . . .

Anyway, Mr. Lyons, do you want to move your amendment now, just so it's all . . .

Mr. Lyons: — I wonder if I can have it read out. Or I'll read it out.

Mr. Chairman: — I wonder if . . . well go ahead and move your amendment.

Mr. Lyons: — Yes, I'd like to move that:

This motion be amended by striking the words "at the normal adjournment time today, 11 a.m.," and insert the words "at 5 p.m. Friday, June 28."

So that the motion would then read, moved:

That at 5 p.m., Friday, June 28, this committee will stand adjourned until such time as the chairman or vice-chairman agree to call the committee.

And the reason that I move that, just if I may motivate that, is based on the comments of Mr. Baker and some other members of the committee who profess to have an interest in seeing that the work of the committee is done and that there's some concern that they have raised about coming down here for one day.

And as far as I'm concerned, since people are here, there is certainly an opportunity for many members of the committee to be able to keep on going, that we work through — and as Mr. Baker says we're fairly far advanced — that we keep on working through the agenda until Friday, and that that then leaves members an opportunity to go ahead and do what they have to do. And if there's the feeling that a subsequent meeting needs

to be set up intersessionally, that we can do it.

That of course is based on the notion that there was good faith behind the original motion put forward by the member from Nipawin. Having heard the comments of the vice-chairman, however, that good faith does not seem to be there, which is the second reason for the motivation of that amendment — that is that since the people are here, and since we are charged with the responsibility by the people of Saskatchewan to peruse the *Public Accounts*, that in fact that we go ahead and do it and get the job done prior to any election call that may be issued.

This is Tuesday. There are four days left in the week. We can make substantial progress in terms of *Public Accounts*. And it's for that reason that I would move the amendment.

Mr. Baker: — I'd like to speak to the motion . . . or the amendment.

Mr. Chairman: — Okay.

Mr. Baker: — Well how are you fixed for shorts, shirts, and socks?

First of all, I think it's ill-timed. None of us came prepared to spend the week. But the chairman needs some time to structure who can be available and at what time and lay it out. Here we are Tuesday morning trying to change the rules, and no one came prepared to spend the week.

This could have taken place on Friday when I got my fax. Instead of that, we could have been on the telephone saying: guys, we got some work to do; why don't we sit down, figure out how the heck we can make best use of our time next week instead of haggling about it at this point in time. Pardon, Doug?

Mr. Anguish: — I've got all my shirts and socks here for the legislature.

Mr. Baker: — You have? They're probably all dirty.

Anyway I just don't think anybody came prepared. I know I certainly didn't come packed for the week.

But that wouldn't deal with it properly. I don't know how long it will take to line up and agree on two hours and five hours and whatever and get the officials and folks prepared to get in here. I mean this is kind of like some people run their businesses, like a shotgun effect. I wouldn't support the amendment.

Mr. Chairman: — Okay. Question on the amendment. All those agreed? Opposed?

Negated

Mr. Chairman: — Mikey, can you take the chair?

Mr. Hopfner: — Which amendment was that on?

Mr. Chairman: — That was on: do we meet the rest of this week.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I'd like to move a further amendment, and that is:

To strike all the words after "until" and add the words "the call of the chair after consultation with the vice-chairman."

So that the motion would then read, moved:

That at the normal adjournment time today, 11 a.m., this committee will stand adjourned until the call of the chair after consultation with the vice-chairman.

So that it's not a matter of agreement, but it's the call of the chair after consultation with the vice-chair. I'll just write that out.

And the reason that I make that is that I'm not wholly convinced that agreement can be reached. Yet I sense that members feel that the committee should meet and complete its work. Therefore I feel that the chairman should be given some latitude. I mean I think he should consult and put forward a range of options. But I'm uneasy about this matter of agreement, and therefore I suggest the amendment that I do.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Well that's a motion or is that an amendment?

Mr. Van Mulligen: — That's an amendment to the motion that's before us. I don't have any further comments on it. If you want to vote it off, that's okay with me.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Did you guys hear that? Moved that, you know . . .

Mr. Britton: — I wouldn't mind if you read it out.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Okay. It's been moved:

Strike all the words after "until" and add: "the call of the chair after consultation with the vice-chairman."

And so it would read then that it would be, moved:

That the normal adjournment time, 11 a.m., this committee will stand adjourned until the call of the chair after consultation with the vice-chairman.

And that's it. Will you take the chair? I've got to speak to it.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well I want to speak to it again too.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Chairman, the member mentioned uneasiness in the other motion. I see the same thing here. He's saying in the motion: after consultation, not agreement, so that in effect after consultation he could call it whether you agreed or not.

So you know, if you don't . . . You know, you don't have any faith in our chairman, but you're asking for complete faith in the other one. I will not support that motion.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I had indicated earlier that I did not doubt the sincerity of the member from Wilkie, but he's just proven how insincere he was. He's just proven how insincere he was because, Mr. Chairman, you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, when you were seated in your chair over there, you had clearly indicated that you did not want this committee to meet, that you did not think it was necessary for it to meet. You said that. That's correct.

And the motion reads . . . the motion that was put forward by the member from Nipawin clearly states that it has to be agreement. But if you do not think this committee should meet, we are . . . therefore . . . I mean it clearly indicates what the members opposite are trying to do. They're trying to move a motion which prevents this committee from meeting. And it brings forward very clearly your insincerity of the member from Wilkie — very, very clearly. He should have thought first before he made the second statement that he wants this committee to meet.

Mr. Chairman, he is saying to us that . . . He is saying to us, Mr. Chairman . . .

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Order. Come on, you guys. Come on. Smarten up. Let's go.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, I think it is very clear what's going on here, that government members simply do not want to meet, and they know that no agreement can be reached between the vice-chairman and the chairman as to when the meetings shall be held, because the vice-chairman has made it very clear that he does not think that this committee should meet. Therefore, the insincerity of the members opposite, and particularly the member from Wilkie, is very evident as to what's going on here.

Mr. Chairman, I think it's a very reasonable amendment, and I ask all members to support it. I know that the chairman will take into consideration when members are available. He will want to have as many members here as possible, and I'm sure that once the members opposite realize that this committee should meet, that a common time will be able to be found that most members can be here. And therefore I think it's a very reasonable amendment, and it should be passed and supported by members.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — My choice of the word consultation is very deliberate. Consultation is found in the Act that governs the Provincial Auditor. When the government is about to appoint a new Provincial Auditor, it has to be done after consultation with the committee chair. And the words consultation are used — as opposed to agreement — in the event that no agreement can be found. If agreement is not possible and it's anticipated that there may not be agreement, it's suggested that the government had the right to proceed. But there is an onus on the government to consult in that matter prior to making the appointment.

How one defines consultation? Well I mean we've had discussions on that in this committee. I don't necessarily interpret it the same way that, say, the Minister of Finance

has done in certain instances.

Also, appointments such as the appointment of the provincial Ombudsman is done after consultation, I believe, with the Leader of the Opposition. That's so to ensure that if there is no agreement, that the government can press ahead and make the appointment even if it might have to explain the nature of any consultations, where there wasn't any agreement, after the fact.

But again, the words are consultation as opposed to agreement. And it seems to me that in this case, that in order for the committee to meet to finish its work, if agreement is not possible, then the chair should be given the opportunity to call the meeting after appropriate consultation with the vice-chair. In my case I would want to put some alternatives before him to give him an opportunity to canvass members on his side and then determine what's the best alternative; what would be our best opportunity to finish the work of the committee. And that's why I suggest that it be done at the call of the chair after consultation with the vice-chair. And that's the reason for my amendment.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, I have a question for the Clerk, and I was wondering, in the opinion of the Clerk, whether or not it's in the purview of the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to call meetings as the chair deems fit. Whether in fact that he is empowered to . . . he or she would be empowered to do that. Do you have an opinion on that?

Mr. Vaive: — Mr. Chairman, in the absence of an order of the committee to the contrary, that the chairman does have the power to call a meeting, an initial meeting, at which time then the committee would decide on its future business and its schedule for meetings.

Mr. Lyons: — So in order for the calling and orderly functioning of this committee, it needs that authorization by the Public Accounts Committee. It would need this motion to pass . . .

Mr. Vaive: — To carry on.

Mr. Lyons: — To carry on. Okay, I'm going to support the motion. I think it's clear — very, very clear — that we have, like the amendment to the motion, that we have seen in the past while in this legislature the manipulation of agendas and of timings of meetings of not only the legislature, the failure to meet of the Crown Corporations Committee, the failure to call estimates, that the political agenda here, the refusal to meet by the members, the Conservative members of the Public Accounts Committee, is part of a political agenda that they are trying to pursue.

I think it's very clear. There does not seem to be need for more debate, particularly after the statements from the member of Wilkie in which that agenda was made manifest, that there's really no need for further debate.

So I would call the question at this time.

Mr. Chairman: — I want to vote for this motion. Can you take the chair on this?

Mr. Hopfner: — I'm voting on it.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, given that it's 10 o'clock, do we have time for a normal recess?

Mr. Chairman: — Yes, take a recess. Come back in five or ten minutes.

The committee recessed for a short period of time.

Mr. Chairman: — Who was on my list? Was it Mr. Baker? No, Mr. Lyons.

Mr. Baker: — I was just going to say, but I suppose we'll have to let it roll the way it unfolds, but it would be nice to get to the department that we came down to work at. But as time ticks away, I'll pass and say no more.

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, I'm surprised, I just want to say how surprised I am at the reluctance of the members, Conservative members of this committee, not to go ahead with the . . . not to support your amendment that would result in the calling of the Public Accounts Committee, whether it was the rest of this week or at another time fairly shortly.

Because again I want to remind the members of the committee of those things that we have not dealt with in the Public Accounts, and those things which have I think public interest and which relate directly to our responsibility as members of the legislature. If we turn to the auditor's report itself, leaving aside the fact that members have questions and concerns of things not necessarily included in the auditor's report, but just based on the auditor's report itself, it would do members of this committee some good to just step back a second from the political game that they're playing and to look at what we really should be dealing with here over the course of a normal sitting of the Public Accounts Committee.

You look, for example, to the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, and the issues that have been raised there by the department of internal affairs and by the Provincial Auditor in the question of the appropriation authority under the Agricultural Implements Board; the question of bonding of employees by the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission, and the lack of the appropriate bonding mechanism by the commission.

If you look to the Department of Economic Diversification and Trade, the authority for the revenues and expenses related to a trade show, and the apparent problems with the expenditure of \$175,458 under the trade show.

Controls over venture capital tax credits, amount of \$710,000, almost three-quarters of a million dollars that there was some question as to how the controls were missing which resulted in, in the opinion of the auditor, a loss of public money, on page 42.

If you look at the northern Saskatchewan economic development revolving fund, again a loss of a substantial amount of public funds, \$73,233.

I know that all members of the committee will want to ask questions regarding those matters, or at least I would hope that they would. After all, they have been elected to peruse, and been charged by the legislature to examine, these kind of things.

If you look at the Department of Education, under the Saskatchewan student aid fund, the auditor raises questions of public accountability, the loan verification procedures, the segregation of duties, controls over the accuracy of student loan records. Look at the questions that he raised regarding the Northlands Career College in terms of reliable accounting records required.

The payments require authority. In other words, obviously payments were made without authority. And I want to . . . certainly I'd like to ask the officials in the Department of Education of that particular matter.

Again the questions that the auditor's raised around Prairie West Regional College; the questions raised around the Saskatchewan Indian Regional College — those are just some of the questions that I know I want to ask as a member, and hopefully other members would want to ask, regarding the Department of Education.

Go to the Department of Energy and Mines — the system development controls over petroleum and natural gas and royalty revenues. An issue which is fundamental in terms of the economic situation we find ourselves in this problem, the whole question of petroleum and natural gas tax and royalty revenues.

The question of the payments by this department and the need for authority. Again, given the insertion of the oil and gas industry in the economy of Saskatchewan, I think that we'd want to have a fairly decent perusal of that particular matter.

The Department of Environment and Public Safety. Again this is . . . The Fire Prevention Act issue has been ongoing, and I don't imagine that would take very much time to deal with, but perhaps some members would want to deal with it.

On the other hand, you have the Department of Finance. And we find just in the table of contents alone, there's two pages devoted to it — payment requires authority, spending controls over the executive government, the question of special warrants.

A Member: — Special warrants, what's that?

Mr. Lyons: — The auditor raises the question of special warrants. And special warrants of course is the means by which this government is proposing . . . the executive is proposing to make expenditures after the Appropriation Bill which covered in June, laid out.

Public Accounts, commitment controls, reservation of opinion, supplementary information — on and on and on and on and on. None of these issues we're going to get the opportunity to deal with, obviously, given the statements by the members, in this session of the legislature. I mean we're talking about hundreds of millions of dollars in the

case of the reservation of opinion by the auditor. The loans to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation — 554.705 million, in 1989 it was 385.136 million.

A Member: — We dealt with that.

Mr. Lyons: — No, we dealt with that only in a cursory manner. And I emphasize cursory, right. Well that's your opinion. Others of us have different opinions as to what we want to deal with again.

I can keep on going and I won't take the time of the committee to do it, but we have seen this government and these government members run and hide from public accountability. We've seen them run and hide by shutting down the legislature. We've seen them run and hide by refusing to call the Crown Corporations Committee. We've seen them run and hide by refusing to put estimates, budgetary estimates, for perusal by all members of the legislature. And now we see them running and hiding once again when it comes to the question of where did all the money go.

And it's no wonder that people across the province, and I know the people in my constituency, are very concerned about the mess that we're in, about where the money went, about why is the government hiding, and what it is trying to hide. There's absolutely no reasons, any valid reasons, put forward by the Conservative members of this committee. They've been smoked out, particularly given the statements of the member from Wilkie. They've been smoked out, and they have . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Carry on, Mr. Lyons. An experienced member like yourself shouldn't let the odd heckle perturb you.

Mr. Lyons: — I shouldn't let the juvenile comments perturb me; that's true. Suffice it to say, Mr. Chairman, that one should not be surprised — and the people of this province aren't surprised — at the refusal of the Conservative members to go through an accountability process such as Public Accounts.

It's obvious that there are going to have to be some rules drawn up after the next election by a new government that will ensure that public accountability put in place, that the Public Accounts Committee will have a role and a function which ensures that public accountability will take place, and that members of the legislature will have an opportunity, not at the whim of politically motivated agenda, but in the spirit . . . and I guess it looks like where it's going to have to be in terms of the law that those members who were charged with overseeing the spendings of public money will have to carry out that role, and that it's obvious that penalties will have to be put in place for those members who fail to discharge that duty.

One can only bemoan the fact that the whole question of good faith no longer exists in this committee or with this government. One can only bemoan the fact that what used to be done by way of precedent and tradition is no longer sufficient to ensure that public accountability takes place. And I guess there's only one remedy for that,

and that's through legislative means.

Anyway having said that, that will be my final comments in regards to this subject.

Mr. Chairman: — The question on the amendment. Do you want it read again? No? Take it as read? We've dealt with the one amendment and we have the other amendment, the call of the chair after consultation. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion? No? Well in my opinion the nays have it. The nays have it.

Negated

Mr. Chairman: — Now the vote on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Agreed

Mr. Chairman: — So just to remind you, that it was moved:

Negated

That at the normal adjournment time today, 11 a.m., this committee will stand adjourned until such a time as the chairman and vice-chairman agree to call the committee.

Mr. Anguish: — Just so that there's no more delay by the government members and the committee, I'd like to put forward the following motion:

That we now move to the Department of Agriculture as the next order of business, and at 11:01 a.m. we commence the next meeting which shall continue until such time as the date(s) of the next meeting(s) are agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — The motion moved by Mr. Anguish:

That we now move to the Department of Agriculture as the next order of business, and at 11:01 a.m. we commence the next meeting which shall continue until such a time as the date(s) of the next meeting(s) are agreed.

That's in order. I mean the committee has taken the position that when it adjourns at 11 today, that it should be subject to the agreement of the chair and the vice-chair.

This motion proposes something different, but committees are the masters of their own procedure and so it's in order.

Question, are you ready for the question? Okay, I'll read it again:

That we now move to the Department of Agriculture as the next order of business . . .

A Member: — It is on there. We don't have to move it.

Mr. Chairman: — That's okay. That's still in order to move that if you want to do that.

. . . and at 11:01 a.m. we commence the next

meeting which shall continue until such time as the date(s) of the next meeting(s) are agreed.

Mr. Baker: — If you go back and read that little bit of a . . . just before the end of it, the last paragraph. At 11:01 we . . .

Mr. Chairman: — At 11:01 a.m. we commence the next meeting, which shall continue until such time as the dates of the next meetings are agreed.

Mr. Baker: — Oh, well the way that we had a debut and an encore by Bob here a few minutes ago, that that meeting may last till September. I can't support that.

Mr. Chairman: — Okay. Any further discussion on the motion? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion? In my opinion the no's have it.

Mr. Chairman: — Prior to calling in Agriculture, Mr. Lyons.

Mr. Lyons: — I have another motion that I'd like to move at this time, very short motion:

That notwithstanding any other rule, the intersessional per diem which normally would apply for today's sitting of the Public Accounts Committee be waived.

And the reason I move that is the concerns raised by, among other people, members, Mr. Baker of the committee, that that was a waste of money. In order to show the people of the province that we're not here to waste their money, but in fact to carry out the mandate given to members, that that portion of the expense claims be disallowed, the intersessional per diems.

Mr. Baker: — Well we have more politics floating around here this morning than . . . But I'd like to bring to the attention of the member that it isn't just the members that costs. We have staff, we have verbatim, we have about 15 folks from Agriculture standing in the hallway for an hour and a half. We have the comptroller, we have the auditor. We have the majority of the costs that we've triggered this morning has been from other means than just members. And it's pretty easy, if you happen to live in Regina, to make a motion to that effect.

I sat here for about 50 days this spring, paid my hotel rooms and meals out of tax-paid dollars . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, you bet I did, same as the rest of us — out of tax-paid dollars. I sat here and spent a hundred or a hundred and twenty-five dollars a day, paid the gas down and back for whatever number of days we sat in the spring session, out of tax-paid dollars.

A Member: — Out of your tax-paid dollars.

Mr. Baker: — You betcha. And difficult for everyone, but not nearly as tough on the folks that live in Regina. And I don't mind making my contribution, but here we're being asked now again to spend another night or two in a hotel, buy a tank of gas, put another thousand kilometres on our

vehicle, and the member from Regina probably for 35 cents can get home on the shoe leather.

So I don't care one way or another whether we defeat the motion or whether we pass it; it's really immaterial after you've already poured out 5 or \$6,000. So a few more dollars doesn't bother me one way or the other. I could care less. It's just that if the motion had have come from the member from Battleford, I would have had nothing to say about it.

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, just in response to Mr. Baker, I specifically dealt with the intersessional per diem. I did not include the travel costs which all members incur, which are it seems to me a legitimate expense, and as well the meal expense today. But all members are being paid as members of the Legislative Assembly, whether they're here or whether they're somewhere else. And I guess the whole question of per diems will be obviously . . . is going to be reviewed after the next election.

But members have raised the cost, and it seems to me that while we can't control other costs, these are some costs that we can control.

Mr. Chairman: — Are you ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Negatived

A Member: — I want a recorded vote.

Mr. Chairman: — We don't have any provisions for a recorded vote, but if the members want to raise their hands for those that are opposed to motion . . . or in favour of the motion, I'll count the hands. If you're not sure about the count . . . I don't think there's any question about who voted for and against.

Okay, we're on to the next item of business which is the Department of Agriculture.

Public Hearing: Department of Agriculture and Food (continued)

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Kramer, one of the things that we talked about last meeting was the Silver Lake farm just outside of Green Lake. And I'd asked you to come back with advice and with the file particularly concerning the bid price and what was paid for the land. Could you answer that now?

Mr. Kramer: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. We did deal with our Justice solicitors on the advice of the chair in terms of Information related to *Beauchesne's* rules and would confirm for the committee that the issue of bid price for the land is one that would be treated as public information.

The information is one that has been made available by Silver Lake Farms Inc. And I guess I would use that terminology for the rest of discussion to refer to the group that put forward the proposal that was accepted — Silver Lake Farms Inc.

They have filed a statement of claim which as a statement of claim is public information. In that statement of claim against the government they have indicated the sales price. That was \$488,000, which was their proposal for the land portion of their bid on Silver Lake farms.

I believe we have dealt with the other cost items on sale related to the cattle and had indicated a price, and for the equipment and had indicated a price as well. In both of those cases, that is for the cattle and the equipment, the funds were paid in full within a day or two of Silver Lake Farms Inc. taking over the farm in the early part of May of 1989.

So they were paid in full in cash with the exception of the land. And in the case of the land, for two reasons. The government wasn't in position, when the cattle and equipment were sold, to enter into an agreement for sale with Silver Lake Farms Inc.

Things that needed to happen at that point were, one, that part of the land, 120 acres, went to another bidder, a gentleman that was employed by the farm previously. Wilfred Morin was successful in his bid for 120 acres. So community planning approval was needed in order to exclude that from the original full amount that was posted.

And secondly, a regulation under the lands Act to permit the formal sale was something that still had to be entered into as well.

So that Silver Lake Farms Inc. was given a permit for operation of the land for 1989 which is for use of the land without agreement for sale being concluded. And the intention was to put in place the agreement for sale once those two things which I had referred to had taken place.

And obviously then the caveats which were brought by the village of Green Lake were events that intervened and interfered with the government's ability to follow through on the agreement for sale, because at that point the government was not in position to provide clear title or follow through on the agreement for sale as it had intended to when it entered into the permit agreement for 1989.

I provide that background and the price as basic information to the committee.

Mr. Anguish: — And the livestock and machinery were paid for in full in cash in May of 1989? Is that what you said? I'm just checking on the month and the year.

Mr. Kramer: — Yes, that's correct, Mr. Chairman. They would have been paid for in full in May of 1989.

Mr. Anguish: — Now I understand that the department wouldn't be able to provide clear title because of the caveats that were placed against the land, but that certainly didn't stop the department from creating title from unpatented Crown land to titled land.

I want to know why the department wouldn't proceed with creating a title so that when the caveats were overcome or there was some equitable . . . some equity in

settling the dispute, that the title wouldn't be there ready to be transferred.

As I understand it, Mr. Kramer, for unpatented Crown land to become titled land, there has to be a grant issued by the department. And I want to know why the department wouldn't, in preparation for the sale of land, create title.

Mr. Kramer: — Mr. Chairman, the reason would be this: that normal process in raising that grant for title would be done with a view to a sale but would be done in the name of the purchaser. That is, we would not raise title in that kind of a situation, looking at sale, in the name of the Crown for future transfer at a later date to the name of the purchaser.

So that in that kind of a situation, we would make whatever plans needed to be done to ensure community planning approval and other things were in place, but we wouldn't raise title in the name of the Crown, because again the formal transfer then would have to have title raised again or formally transferred then when the due date for sale came, to the purchaser.

So in effect you would go through two sets of transfers raising . . . or initially one, raising title in the name of the Crown; and at some later date when you're in a position to actually follow through an agreement for sale, you would transfer title to the future owner.

So I would just say that that is normal practice. When there is a sale that is looked at for the future, we would do the planning that was needed, but we would not go to the point of raising title until we could legally — because the transaction was taking place — raise it in the name of the new purchaser.

Mr. Anguish: — The 120 acres that Mr. Morin received, has he received title for that?

Mr. Kramer: — Yes, that's correct, Mr. Chairman, he has received title.

Mr. Anguish: — So that 120 acres had to be severed from the original package of what was known as Silver Lake farm?

Mr. Kramer: — That's correct. And the explanation for how he has received clear title is that the folks who have brought the caveats and have put the caveats on the larger parcel of land that would go to Silver Lake Farms Inc., they have been willing to remove the caveat to provide clear title to Mr. Morin. They have been unwilling to remove the caveat on the remainder of the Silver Lake farm's land.

Mr. Anguish: — Those that placed the caveat against the land actually put in a bid, a proposal for the Silver Lake farm, at the same time as Silver Lake Farms Inc. did. Is that correct?

Mr. Kramer: — That's correct.

Mr. Anguish: — Can you tell me the nature of their bid? Did they bid on the farm as one total package, or did they

bid it on sections as the Silver Lake Farms Inc.?

Mr. Kramer: — Mr. Chairman, I'd confirm that in both of those cases, the bids that would have come in would have dealt with the farm as a package, in the sense that there would have been bottom-line prices or values that would have been put on. They would have been willing to split those by various components in terms of land, equipment, and other things, but there would have been bids that covered all of the assets — put it that way — from both Silver Lake Farms Inc. and from the village of Green Lake.

Mr. Anguish: — Why was the bid from the community rejected?

Mr. Kramer: — The evaluation of all bids from the 13 proponents that referred to last day we were here at committee, all of those would have been evaluated against the criteria that I believe the committee looked at last time we were here as well.

None of the proposals would have received full marks in terms of 100 per cent rating on any of the criteria that were there. But in total, the bid of Silver Lake Farms Inc. was judged to be the most adequate in meeting the criteria as they were laid out. And on that basis there was recommendation to cabinet to proceed with acceptance of their bid, and that was ratified by cabinet.

So it would have been on an evaluation that looked at all of the criteria that were outlined, recognizing that none of the proposals were ones that would receive full marks on all of the criteria.

Mr. Anguish: — At the current time, in relating to the year under review, Silver Lake Farms Inc. would likely rate zero on it by this point in time because they have broken basically all of the criteria set out in the call for proposals.

When you look at the items that were covered, you talk about the proposal will show a potential for success, protection for employees, opportunity for local residents, potential for economic development and diversification. I mean they fail on all of those criteria now. And certainly I think that one of the major stumbling blocks for the community to have acquired the Silver Lake farm was that they didn't have the cash to give you. Am I correct in assuming that?

Mr. Kramer: — Well again, I make this comment just to ensure it's clear. I think that Green Lake has in their proposal made it clear that they wanted the contents dealt with in confidence. So in terms of the kind of detail I would provide, I would want to lay that out to the committee.

But what is true is that even for the value of the bid that came from Green Lake, it did not meet in dollar terms that which came from Silver Lake Farms Inc.

What was also true is that the nature of the repayments — kinds of things that were going to be provided as payment to government based on their bid — was far less certain and based on future profitability and other events that would take place. So certainly the nature of the payment

was far less certain than it was in the case of Silver Lake Farms Inc.

Mr. Anguish: — What about the indication that Green Lake gave as a strong desire to continue operating the farm as a going concern.

Mr. Kramer: — I think we need to go back to some of the rationale — I'm not sure if we've dealt with that in previous discussion or not — but some of the rationale that was taken in looking at the four farms that were there.

The one farm referred to went to Cumberland House, to their economic development corporation, on the basis of a settlement for the Campbell dam. That was a lawsuit settlement. Ile-a-la-Crosse and Green Lake both were given opportunity to acquire one farm. Ile-a-la-Crosse acquired theirs, and arrangements are still — I believe as members of the committee will know — under way with regard to Central farm, but community was given an opportunity to acquire that farm.

The rationale was that Central farm at that for Green Lake was the largest of the four farms in total acreage, and that was given on the basis of a farm for each of the communities and one farm that the public would have an opportunity to acquire.

So certainly Green Lake was given the opportunity to take over the Green Lake farm on the same basis that Ile-a-la-Crosse was given an opportunity to take over their farm. The arrangements with Ile-a-la-Crosse were finalized, and they have both the land, the value of a portion of the assets. That same offer went to Green Lake on what was the largest farm, Central farm, and the decision was then made that the public should have an opportunity to recoup some of its operating losses, some of the investment in terms of a sale from government, but also to provide the public at large with an opportunity to purchase.

I guess I'd provide that information as background to why the Silver Lake farm was handled in a different fashion than the other three farms. Essentially the effort was to provide each community with one farm to which they would have access.

Mr. Anguish: — You mentioned that there was a permit issued for 1989 when you ran into a problem with creating or transferring clear title. For '90 and '91 does that permit continue?

Mr. Kramer: — There was a permit for 1989. And for 1990 and '91 there was not a permit as such that was entered into with the Silver Lake Farms Inc. What occurred, because clear title could not be provided, the Silver Lake Farms Inc. participants became increasingly unsettled in terms of their view of operating the farm, their wish to operate the farm, and increasingly unhappy that they were put in a situation that they hadn't expected, in the sense that both government and Silver Lake Farms had expected to transfer title on the basis of an agreement for sale, with the two things happening that I referred to earlier — basically community planning approval and the regulation — and then to move into an agreement for sale.

That couldn't be concluded because of the caveats, and then in turn the Silver Lake Farms Inc. people were not able to do the normal kind of things that one might expect in owning a farm, in terms of improvements or any other things that they could do that you would do with long-term tenure.

So that pretty quickly it moved to a position of uncertainty for them that has gone to the point where in the last month Silver Lake Farms Inc. has filed a statement of claim against the provincial government for its inability to enter into an agreement for sale. That again is public information that's has been filed in the courts, I believe, in Battlefords. Again it's public information, that is, a statement of claim in the order of \$12 million against the provincial government.

And that has meant then that the status of the land is something which is uncertain. The Department of Justice has notified both the Green Lake individuals that occupy part of the land and Silver Lake Farms Inc. that they do not have legal access to the land.

Mr. Anguish: — Who doesn't have legal access, I'm sorry?

Mr. Kramer: — Both parties, the Green Lake farms incorporated or Silver Lake . . . sorry, the village of Green Lake and Silver Lake Farms Inc. have received letters from Justice indicating they do not have legal access to the land, and it is now an item which will need to proceed to the courts to determine the rightful individuals that should have operational responsibility for that land.

So in effect the village of Green Lake has brought suit against government at the time that the caveats were filed. That is public information. And Silver Lake Farms has as well.

And I think when the questions are asked in terms of use of the land, obviously it's a legal dispute that the courts will need to settle. Both parties feel that they have rights, for the reasons I've talked about, to use of that land. And at this point the government isn't in position to serve eviction notices which it can in fact act on in the short term. It's a matter which will need to be sorted out before the courts, and at that point there will be some certainty on future use.

At this point there is an inability to deal with the issue apart from the court, going through, I would expect, the statements of claim, the caveats, bringing those to a conclusion. And at this point the last individuals that were granted legal tenure of the land were Silver Lake Farms Inc. They continue to possess it until such a time as the court deals with who the rightful operators would be.

Mr. Anguish: — My final question, because we're pretty well out of time. The results from last meeting . . . I was wondering, in review of your files since the last meeting, the other topic we talked about was Fair Share Saskatchewan. I was wondering, in your long-term planning minutes, whether you did in fact some long-term planning, that you had decided to move the department's headquarters to Humboldt.

Mr. Kramer: — Mr. Chairman, I believe I confirmed for the committee last session — and if I did not I would confirm it this session — that in the year under review there was no long-term planning inside the Department of Agriculture and Food with regard to a relocation of the department. And I believe that was confirmed at the last sitting of this committee when we were present.

Mr. Chairman: — It's 11 o'clock. This meeting stands adjourned until such a time as the chair and the vice-chair can agree on another meeting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon me?

Mr. Anguish: — Is there time for a motion before the meeting adjourns?

Mr. Chairman: — No. The meeting stands adjourned, although I'm not optimistic about the . . .

The committee adjourned at 11:03 a.m.