

Title: **Thursday, May 1, 1997**

Date: 97/05/01

5:54 p.m.

[Mr. Boutilier in the chair]

Des.subcom: EnvirProtect.

Designated Supply Subcommittee – Environmental Protection

Boutilier, Guy C., Chairman
Amery, Moe
Carlson, Ms Debby
Coutts, Mr. David

Gibbons, Mr. Ed
Langevin, Mr. Paul A.
Magnus, Richard
Marz, Richard

Nicol, Dr. Ken
Pannu, Dr. Raj
Strang, Ivan
Yankowsky, Julius Edward

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks very much. We'll call our meeting to order. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for coming. It's been really difficult getting an opportunity to be able to schedule a meeting with everyone's busy schedules, but this is the time that has been allotted.

With that, what I would like to do is just briefly go over the agreement that was established by the respective House leaders. It does say that we have a procedural motion that is required prior to the beginning of our meeting. Essentially it is a motion that requires that the designated supply subcommittee on Environmental Protection allocate the four hours allotted to it pursuant to Standing Order 56(7)(b) as follows. The minister responsible first addresses the subcommittee for up to a maximum of 20 minutes. Then the opposition subcommittee members have one hour for questions and answers. The government subcommittee members then have one hour for questions and answers, and the opposition subcommittee members then have one hour for questions and answers.

I might add that the opposition subcommittee time of 120 minutes total will be split 90-10 with the third party, the New Democrats, receiving a block of 12 minutes to be used in their opposition hour. I might add that tonight there is no representative here from the New Democrats, so based on our interpretation the extra 12 minutes would go to the opposition party.

MS CARLSON: And we thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: You'll take it? Okay.

Finally, the government subcommittee members have the remainder, and once those government members are finished their questions, the meeting is concluded. I would like to invite someone at this time to move that. So moved? Dr. Nicol, so moved? Okay. All those in favour of that? Okay; that is carried.

Now, with that in mind, though, in keeping with the spirit of co-operation, I would like to ask, in terms of that time allotted, in terms of the opposition members, I would assume that in the hour you would like questions and answers coming back and forth. I was just wondering if there is any preference in terms of the two-hour allotment of time. Would you like to alternate one hour, then back and forth, or is there a preference to perhaps use your two hours after the minister's introduction?

MS CARLSON: Yes. We'd prefer to take our two hours in a row right after the minister's comments, if that's possible.

THE CHAIRMAN: And take your two hours then? Okay. If that is okay with everyone. To the minister: that would be okay with you?

MR. LUND: I'm at your mercy.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. We will then go on for the government time remaining, ask the questions from the government members at that time.

Okay. With that, the first 20 minutes maximum is left to the minister, and I'll turn the floor over to the minister.

MR. LUND: Well, thank you. Before I proceed, there's one other little thing that I want to make sure is okay with the committee. It's been the standing practice in these subcommittees that staff can assist in answering. I think it makes it much more meaningful when we operate that way because we can get into real detail if that's what the members want. If that's agreeable, Mr. Chairman . . .

MS CARLSON: It's agreeable with us.

MR. LUND: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great deal of pleasure for me to have this opportunity to discuss the '97-98 budget and the business plan of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Before I begin, I'd like to introduce staff that we have here. On my immediate left is Peter Melnychuk, deputy minister; Bill Simon, the executive director of finance; Ron Hicks, the ADM of corporate services; Al Schulz, the ADM of regulatory services; and Craig Quintilio, and he's the executive director of forest management. Then, Jim Nichols, who is the ADM in charge of natural resources, and he has the parks, the water, the fish and wildlife, and all things in between.

With that, Environmental Protection's business plan for '97-98 to 1999-2000 builds upon the key directions and initiatives of our previous plan and Budget '97, the Alberta government's most recent fiscal plan. In doing so, it puts the department and the province in a position of strength as we enter the next century. The business plan sets the course for the ministry for the next three years and incorporates the activities of the department as well as the Natural Resources Conservation Board and the Environmental Appeal Board. As I mentioned earlier, our consolidated business plan builds upon the results of previous years, dedicating resources to the efficient, effective, and responsible delivery of the ministry's core businesses, the wise management of our province's renewable natural resources, and the management of environmental hazards that may pose risks to people, prosperity, and resources.

Over the next three years Environmental Protection will continue to streamline, reduce overlap through regulatory reform, and work with multistakeholder groups on long-term strategies, such as the forest conservation strategy and special places program.

As part of our ongoing business planning process we have reviewed the statements which define our mission, operating principles, core business, goals, and performance measures. We have fine-tuned our business to more accurately reflect our

contribution to the Alberta government's core business: people, prosperity, and preservation.

The ministry's three key goals as outlined in the business plan reflect how our core businesses will be delivered. Those key goals are:

- Goal 1: To protect and maintain Alberta's high quality air, land and water for the health and enjoyment of Albertans.
- Goal 2: To manage Alberta's renewable resources for the continued prosperity and benefit of Albertans.

And the final one is:

- To protect and manage Alberta's natural heritage for present and future generations.

These goals demonstrate our commitment to the needs of the environment and the expectations of the public and our other stakeholders. This responsiveness is exactly what's needed to keep Alberta's environment and economy strong.

Our estimates for '97 to the year 2000 show that Environmental Protection is meeting the Alberta government's overall goal of deficit elimination. Under our '97 to 2000 business plan our ministry budget will be reduced by \$50 million from our 1996-97 estimate of \$346 million. As a result of these reductions and earlier reductions our total spending will have declined by \$136.1 million or 31.5 percent from the '92-93 level. The 1997-98 ministry budget of \$317 million includes a reduction of \$29 million and 254 full-time positions. These reductions are from the 1996-97 estimate of \$346 million. By the year 2000 the ministry will have reduced staff levels by some 1,550 full-time equivalents or 33 percent from the 1993 levels. The ministry's 1997-98 budget of \$317 million will see 3,326 full-time staff positions dedicated to provincewide delivery of the high-quality environmental programs that Albertans have come to expect.

As you know, the Ministry of Environmental Protection is always looking at ways to improve delivery of services. Through our recent functional review the department identified a number of important initiatives to ensure ministry resources are used as effectively as possible. As a result, we are delivering our core businesses and staying on target in terms of our spending reductions.

6:04

Some decisions from the functional review are being implemented, such as the privatization of the Pine Ridge nursery and department maintenance services. Also, we're doing business differently in some areas by creating delegated administrative organizations or nonprofit organizations. These were established to manage and administer the Tire Recycling Management Board and the fish and wildlife trust fund. Other similar initiatives should be implemented in the coming months.

In closing, I believe that our new business plan builds on the foundation we've laid in our previous plans. It's often easy when talking budgets – dollars and cents, that is – to lose sight of our number one job. Environmental Protection's priority has always been and always will be to protect, enhance, and manage Alberta's environment and natural resources. Our new fiscal plan allows us to meet this responsibility in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Environmental Protection will continue to use resources wisely and exercise responsible fiscal management while preserving key businesses that Albertans have told us they have as their top priority. Most importantly, we will carry on the tradition of sustainable resource management and responsible environmental protection that makes Alberta the outstanding place it is to live in.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

At this point in time, then, we will allocate as a question-and-answer period, the next two hours, as agreed to by the Official Opposition. With that, who would like to ask some questions?

MS CARLSON: Thank you. We will take turns. I'll go first, and then Ken.

Good evening, Mr. Minister, and good evening, gentlemen. I'm a new critic in this area, but you're all familiar faces from Public Accounts, so onward we go.

My first question is general in nature. It's to do with the more than 30 percent cuts over the past few years that you talked about in your opening statement. I'm wondering: other than the services that you've privatized, which are easy for us to track, can you tell us what services you're no longer providing and the criteria or rationale you used in order to determine that those services were no longer necessary?

MR. LUND: Well, it's been a long process to determine what it is that Environmental Protection should do. As I mentioned in my opening comments, we went through a functional review which looked at absolutely everything the department does, and from that we weighed all our activities against some criteria: does it fit our core business? In other words, does it protect the environment, the health or safety of people? Is it wise management of the resources, whether it be fish and wildlife or the forest resource?

Out of that we determined that there were a number of things that really didn't fit; for example, operating campgrounds, some other services that could be more efficiently done by the private sector. As you've mentioned, you've been able to track those.

I think some of the things that maybe you haven't been able to really identify – we set out to deliver our services in a different manner. We are getting out of the business of rowing, and we are going to be in the business of steering. When I say that, we will not have people out counting trees, for example, on a regular basis. That was a big function in forestry. What will happen in the future: when companies come forward with things like their cutting plans, their management plans of the FMAs, our people will be looking to see that in fact the assumptions that are used are accurate, that the numbers they've come up with through their in-depth surveys are accurate. We will be out there auditing. We will be doing a number of spot audits whether it's in forestry or with industry.

Another initiative that we started. You'll see as you go through the budget where a number of reductions in operating costs have been as a result of consolidation of the department. We call it community-level service: one-window, one approach in a community. It's working very well. We're getting a lot of efficiencies by consolidating. If we have in the community, for example, an office with fish and wildlife and forestry or we might have water, we consolidate those into one office. We get a lot of efficiencies by doing that. So those are the types of things we are doing that I think are not as evident as the contracting out, say, of campgrounds.

Peter, did you have anything else you want to add to that?

MR. MELNYCHUK: Yes. I might be able to supplement that a little bit, Mr. Minister. Some of the other things that we've been doing, for example. We've gotten out of a parcel mapping program that the private sector can do better than government can. We've reduced the campground activities in our parks from a governmental perspective. We've reduced some water management programs that to a large degree had already been completed; for example, our floodplain mapping program to a large degree was completed, so we could reduce that and in some cases

terminate it. A big piece of business for us is the privatization of our maintenance activities. For many years in southern Alberta the government had maintained all of what they call the head-works infrastructure systems. It is clear now to us that the private sector can do that. They are geared up for it and are able to do it. So those are some of the areas that we have gotten out of.

MS CARLSON: When you talk about things fitting in with your core business, to me part of that means monitoring a lot of the things in the industry that are regulated. I'm concerned that having had 1,500 layoffs to the conclusion of these cuts, you're not going to have enough staff to adequately protect and manage resources and monitor the information that's either provided to you through self-regulation or information that you collect as a department. What do you have in terms of safeguards to ensure that happens?

MR. LUND: Well, our philosophy, I believe, has shifted somewhat as well. We have said to industry that we will allow them to self-report, but if we find that in fact there are inaccuracies, then we will come down hard. I think you'd notice that. We've had fines of \$300,000. Those were unheard of before. In one incident we even had a person sent to jail because of violations.

I think now with the sophisticated equipment, for example, for monitoring air emissions, effluent from the mills, and those kinds of things, the reporting systems we have in place and the requirements in that reporting allow us to have a comfort level. We don't have to have somebody standing there watching it every day. We spot-check to make sure the calibrations are accurate on the equipment, to make sure that the equipment is working first of all, of course. We require that reporting on a regular basis. While it hasn't been widely publicized, we have taken a very heavy hand on the timing of this reporting. We use administrative penalties to start with if companies do not report on time and in the proper manner.

So I believe we do have the safeguards in place. I also believe industry is taking a different approach. Yeah, there are some bad apples, but it doesn't take us long to find them. That's where we will really focus our resources.

6:14

So many of these mills like the pulp mills, for example: unless they have an upset in the process, they'll go days and days and days without any change in the effluent or in the emissions. Now, if they have an upset, we have criteria they have to meet at the start-up. The reporting is much more severe: things they have to do at the time of the upset. Of course, if we find that companies are not fulfilling that, like I say, we come down hard on them. We'll also be watching a lot closer.

Do you want to add to it?

MR. MELNYCHUK: Just a couple of points in support of that answer. If you look at the overall departmental reductions for the manpower, or the FTEs – let me put it that way – you'll see that Mr. Schulz's part of the department that deals with environmental regulatory services and that part of the department that's mainly concerned with enforcement and auditing of industry has taken a proportionately smaller reduction than the rest of the department. So we have to a degree shielded from these reductions that part of the department that deals with strictly regulatory enforcement and regulatory matters.

MS CARLSON: The next question I'll ask here rather than in the Assembly during question period, because I don't want it to be

confrontational. There's been some concern expressed to us that you often don't take any action in terms of noncompliance unless there's been some outside question raised or reported to your department or that the action that's taken takes some length of time before it's implemented. How would you respond to that, and what kind of safeguards do you have in place so that that doesn't happen?

MR. LUND: Well, I don't think that that's an accurate statement.

MS CARLSON: That's why I'm not asking it in the House.

MR. LUND: We're not a bit bashful about taking action, and I think our record shows that. Certainly if somebody reports an incident, we of course go and investigate it. If it's accurate, then there's action. As far as the time frame, I'd like to know the incidents and try to get an understanding of why there might be – now, of course there are times when if it's going to lead to prosecution, then you have to gather the evidence and put everything in place for that to happen. So it may not be quite as fast as the individual that reported it would like to see.

Al, maybe you want to add something about some of your investigations because it would be mostly in your department.

MR. SCHULZ: Sure. I can add some other things to the points raised by the minister. I think we have different tools that allow us to respond in the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and also different ways in which we can get the information. Industry self-reporting is very important. If the public raises an issue before us with a complaint, we respond to it. We have a seven-day, 24-hour reporting opportunity and have the response capability to respond to those complaints. So I think in terms of responding to these situations, we can do that quickly.

When we do find a situation, we can either issue an emergency environmental protection order or an enforcement order. We can issue an administrative penalty, issue a ticket, or we can take the prosecution route. The major prosecutions especially can take one or two years to resolve. Consequently, sometimes that may give a bit of an impression of inaction. The prosecution generally looks back in terms of what happened, whether there was due diligence exercised by the people or not.

The other thing in terms of remedying the situation in some of the situations like maybe – they already raised Swan Hills, but we prosecuted the company as well as issued an order for the remedial action that the company needed to do to undertake to correct. The order then allows us to put them on a fairly tight schedule in terms of responding and correcting the situation. So in terms of going back and responding to that, sometimes I think we need to gather a lot of information, so it takes us a little longer until we get the evidence. It's tougher to come up and maybe say, "Okay; this is what we are doing," and sharing it with the public. But there is always the action response.

MR. LUND: I think it's fair to say that if the incident is one that is going to be harmful to people or have a major impact on the environment, as Al said, we've got tools that'll stop them from operating immediately. If it's one that is somewhat less dangerous to the environment or one that I'm thinking of where people were actually burying some material but it was encased in drums, it's not going to go anywhere. In fact, what we did was have an undercover operation to check and see what else was going on. So I'm sure that if somebody knew that and reported it, they would think we weren't doing anything, but in fact we were trying to gather more evidence.

MS CARLSON: Thank you.

DR. NICOL: Good evening, Mr. Minister. I just want to follow up a little bit on some of the discussion we've been having and how it relates to your business plan. Almost every area that we look at in terms of your goals and your strategies relates to some either reference or direct statement to the regulations that are in place for that particular mandate.

In preparation for this evening I was reading back over some of the statements last year, and one of the little things you said really intrigued me, and that was basically that when it came to delicate regulation change, you would be dealing with and encouraging public input. I would like to ask first: what's a delicate regulation change? Then I would like to follow up with some other questions on the public input part of it.

MR. LUND: Well, I'm not sure of the context of the question that evening and when I used the word "delicate."

DR. NICOL: If I might, it had to do with your comments. You were asked a question about at what point in time was public input going to come into this whole regulatory review process, and you said: well, there's a lot of background work that has to be done, but when it comes to delicate regulation change . . . Just the use of that term "delicate" really intrigued me, as to what constitutes delicate.

MR. LUND: Well, I guess controversial would possibly be another adjective that one could use.

Basically what has been happening in regulatory reform is we've been going through looking at regulations that really are more of an administrative function, like you fill out a form on Thursday afternoon, quadruple it, and send it in. Well, is that necessary, those kinds of administrative regulations? When it gets into the more difficult ones, ones where people might be concerned if removal would adversely affect health or the environment, then we will have more public consultation.

Now, we do have already an outside committee that has looked at the regulations and is working with Gary Friedel's people. I know that AI has had interest groups, consultations on some of the regulations, so we are moving in that direction. I don't know. Ron and AI probably would like to add something too.

MR. HICKS: All of the regulatory changes that we're making have been published in our regulatory reform plan, our intent to change them, the nature of the change that we're proposing, and schedules set out there. So, you know, we have given public notice of the things that we plan on changing. The type of consultation, as the minister has alluded to, has been based on the degree of change and the significance of the change, so purely administrative where we're changing a form that someone has to use to report on. We basically consulted with the person that uses that form and said: this is what we're thinking of doing; would that meet your needs and be easier for you to use? On some of the more extensive changes we've gone out and consulted with stakeholder groups. So we've been trying to tailor the form of the public consultation to the impact of the regulatory change.

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MR. LUND: AI, did you want to make any comments about your consultation?

MR. SCHULZ: Well, I think we've been trying to have some sensitivity; for example, in our regulatory reform when we did

away with approvals. Now, approvals as per the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act provide an opportunity for the public to have input before the approval gets issued or an appeal after the approval gets issued. When we replaced the approval for some of the simpler activities regulated under the Act with codes of practice, that raised a concern by the public in terms of their loss of opportunity to have input. That certainly was a delicate issue. I think we recognized that. So we tried to deal with the public, and we had meetings with some of the environmental people. There was a public meeting in Edmonton and one in Calgary. We got some input from that. We dealt with some of the issues and tried to provide some mechanisms to deal with some of the concerns the people raised. So where regulatory change impacts on the public, there's opportunity to be involved.

MR. LUND: This goes all the way back to when the Act plus the regulations were being formulated. I've never seen so much consultation on regulations. As a matter of fact, I think that's really probably the first time regulations were put out for public input the way they were. We're currently doing that with the Water Act. We're going the extra mile to make sure that the regulations meet the needs of the people that are out there using it.

DR. NICOL: Thank you. Your reference to the Water Act. I just wanted to mention that I think that sets a new standard of quality in terms of consultation with the people of Alberta in trying to pull together an Act. I think there are always going to be people who didn't feel they got a fair hearing, but it set a new standard, and I congratulate the minister on that one.

MR. LUND: Thank you.

DR. NICOL: In following up on the regulations, though, there always are these groups who want to get involved, who want to have their input. They may be directly affected, you know, participants, interest groups. How do you decide how far to go in terms of interest group participation? I've had a number of calls in my office. That's why I raise this, in terms of: well, they did that and I never even heard about it.

MR. LUND: Well, of course, it's unfortunate. You can advertise. You can hold public meetings. Until the day that the person is affected by it, they don't recognize what's going on. I don't know how we get around that.

One of the problems I have with a lot of the consultation: we don't draw it to a close soon enough. If you leave it out, it just keeps on, and you hear the same things over and over and over. I'm not sure that's what the general public wants anymore. I think you're going to see us set tighter time lines and come to a conclusion on these things.

DR. NICOL: Once you get some of your programs operational and advisory groups or management groups put in place to facilitate the operation of these programs – one I can think of because it's southern Alberta and it's been around for a while is the Oldman River dam advisory committee. You end up there with a lot of controversy about who should be eligible to serve in those advisory capacities, both in terms of special interest and in terms of geographic interest. I would like the minister's comment in terms of how they go about making those decisions as to who can serve as a representative of an interest group, who cannot: how you make that selection, because you recognize that has been quite a controversy in southern Alberta as to who gets on that committee and who doesn't.

MR. LUND: Well, all of these are controversial. We're going through the same thing with the special places local committees, and it's a tough one. Like the special places local committee, we want to see these groups represented, and then we leave it to the local municipality to pick. I'm not picking; they are. Our involvement is to make sure that there's a broad cross section of the population out there that's represented. I know there's always somebody who feels that they should have a seat at the table and not have somebody else represent them. But, as you know, working with committees, if you really want to get anything done, you sure don't go beyond 12 people. So it's tricky. The Oldman dam: yeah, that's an interesting one. So if you've got some ideas how we might – because I think there are about three positions coming up this fall.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Minister, I'm glad that's in your court.

MR. LUND: Maybe we'll appoint you to do it.

DR. NICOL: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like to sit on the committee down there?

DR. NICOL: For sure.

MR. GIBBONS: The Natural Resources Conservation Board. The budget has estimated \$1.4 million. This is more than last year's spending. The forecasted expenditure of '96-97 is \$500,000 less than \$1.5 million. Page 192.

MR. LUND: Go ahead, Ed. Oh, yeah, I got it; it's 192. I can find it quickly.

THE CHAIRMAN: If we get the page number, we can do it very quickly.

MR. GIBBONS: Okay. So it's more expenditure than last year; '96 is \$500,000 less than the \$1.5 million. Can you run through that with us?

MR. LUND: Yeah, for sure. That's a good question. The fact is that last year we didn't have any hearings in this past fiscal year. We believe there's one for sure coming up in this fiscal year, the Little Bow reservoir. As a matter of fact, that committee is very close to being struck. There's a possibility of some activity by the board as it relates to one or two of the forest developments. So we've increased the budget because I think before the end of this fiscal year, they'll be gearing up for that as well.

MR. GIBBONS: I've always been interested in the Tire Recycling Management Board. That's on page 193. Accumulated net revenue is nearly \$20 million, transferred to delegated administrative organization in '96. Whoever can answer or explain.

MR. LUND: What about it?

MR. GIBBONS: I'm just interested in how you're managing that.

MR. LUND: Oh, okay. Well, that is one of the designated administrative organizations that we've established. It's outside of the department now. That's why you see in '97-98 a bunch of blanks because the money will not be coming through. So they're

out there. It's the same structure as before. The difference is that the budget does not come through the Department of Environmental Protection.

I've got to comment that we are extremely pleased with the activity of the board over the past year. They're going to recycle some four million tires this year. That's just about double what they've done in any other year. When you look at the fact that there are about 2.5 million that come into the stream in a year, well, all of a sudden this stockpile is starting to disappear, and so that's good news. This \$19,978,000 that was transferred was what was accumulated since the inception of the tire recycling, the \$4. That's where it all went. Well, it was going in there, and of course their expenditures were coming out of it. It generates about \$10 million a year on the new tires, a little more than that I guess, Bill, would it be?

MR. SIMON: Per year. That's right.

6:34

MR. LUND: Yes. So this is what was left in the reserve. It's in. We've turned it over to them. So all of that money that was collected was being used by the tire board. None of it went into general revenue. [interjection] Yeah. Peter just mentioned that we've got to make sure that people understand that these DAOs are subject to the audit. They're not out there with this money and able to just go and do anything. They're subject to audit. For example, they cannot raise the fee. They have to report back to the minister. So the problem we'd run into before because of our reduction targets – any increase that the tire board, any increase in expenditures . . . Even last year they were going beyond their budget, and here I'm telling them that they have to reduce their budget because it all comes to my bottom line. So we had to move it in order for them to operate efficiently.

MR. GIBBONS: A couple of questions just coming to mind and in thinking about coming in here today. In all this logging of private farmlands around the province and everything like that – maybe it goes back to Mr. Schulz – are you regulating the people doing this type of work, or are you depending upon the farmers themselves or the landowners, that they are going out, looking for the proper person?

MR. LUND: Well, that's a tough issue. We view trees as a crop, and we normally do not interfere with harvest and/or sale of a crop. Having said that, though, we do require that they do not violate the Soil Conservation Act or the Fisheries Act. So those are the two that are most likely to be violated, if in fact there is any violation.

There was a major problem – when was that? – three years ago when the big rush was on. We learned that there were some very unscrupulous operators out there. Farmers were not getting what they thought was the true value of their timber, and we discovered that there were a number of people with very long axe handles who got onto some of our timber. So we implemented a transportation program requiring that anyone who transports coniferous logs on public roads must get a permit from us. That has worked really well. We've been able to track where the activity is. We know that through our auditing process the farmers are getting what they're supposed to, and we've got a pretty good handle on it. But as far as going and telling a farmer that they have to get a permit to log the land, no, just so long as they meet the requirements of not violating those Acts that apply.

MR. GIBBONS: Just so I don't get audited somewhere along the

line, I went through the process in the last year. I'll tell you that it took me two years before I picked somebody because I went to look at the work of 20 different operations. It's just terrible, the people who did it, and, you know, I just talked to an awful lot of landowners.

I think the permit thing is good. I think you should almost go farther and make sure that you have a list of the bad and the good and take a look at some of their lands. So I'm going to learn by experience by letting Debby go on.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Did you have more comment to that?

MR. LUND: Well, I was only going to say to Ed that if he's got some information, I'd be only too happy to talk to him about it.

MR. GIBBONS: Yeah. Well, it's just that I think I picked somebody good, but there are a lot of bad ones out there. I spent a lot of weekends looking.

MR. LUND: We knew some bad ones, and it was amazing, in the phone calls I got after we implemented the program, how many of those were on our list.

MS CARLSON: So just following along with that comment, then, do you have anywhere that you're going to go with that in terms of tighter regulations in the industry or possibly publicizing people who've been poor operators?

MR. LUND: No. I didn't mean their means, their mechanisms. I meant some of the shenanigans they were pulling. But as it related to the environment: no, we're not. If a landowner feels that he's got a problem, he can remedy it. The beauty of getting the permit is that we're able to tell the landowner, because our people know the terrain: "If it's close to a stream, okay; watch. If it's on a slope, watch for soil erosion." Those kinds of things. We also, through that program, are able to make people aware of the woodlot program. It's something we've been promoting and are anxious to see people get into. As far as us getting into saying that trees have to be a certain size, no, we're not going to get into that. That's private land.

MS CARLSON: Okay. A follow-up to my first set of questions. How often do you do industry spot checks? Do you have certain parameters? Do you change them for what you might deem to be poor operators? What's the process you go through?

MR. LUND: I'll get Al to respond to that question.

MR. SCHULZ: We do spot checks on both the atmospheric emissions as well as the discharges. We have our own what we call stack sampling team in terms of air emissions. What we do are two things there. We recognize that the bulk of the monitoring gets done by industry. As a matter of fact, for the most part, it doesn't get done by the industry themselves, but they hire somebody, a company, to do it. So what we do is go in there and audit the companies or the various crews, and through that process we have established a pretty good comfort level that, "Yes, this is a very reputable firm, and they do a pretty good job," or if we see problems out there, then we have in the past rejected the surveys, and that gets companies' attention very quickly too. So we have that ability to go in there and do the audits.

We do our own sampling ourselves, because I feel that's important, even though we only have three people associated with that program, but I feel that they need to be technically on top of

it and be able to do it themselves so they can audit it properly as well.

So we do the spot checks in that way on the industry. Clearly there is only a limited number of stacks or discharges that you can do, but if we do have any indication of problems, if we get a public complaint, or if we get contraventions reported from the industry, then what we do is focus and swing over to that particular sector or that particular plant and spot-check them a lot more frequently. These are unannounced; we get out there and do our checks.

MR. LUND: I think there's another area that's worth mentioning. For emissions we do have a number of mobile monitoring machines, so we're able to go out and get the ambient air sampling. Of course, if there's a problem, it'll show up in those as well.

The monitoring on the rivers: that's an ongoing process. We're doing that. So of course if there was any sign of a problem, we would track it and find it. Occasionally we get reports that an individual thinks there is a problem with emissions; they see something coming out of a stack. Well, we can quickly move in a monitoring machine that would take samples plus, of course, the monitoring that's going on right in the plant.

6:44

MR. SCHULZ: Mr. Minister, maybe another comment that I could add is that what we're looking at trying to do as well is to make a lot of this information more available. Through the clean air strategic alliance we've got one group there looking at ways of making this information available perhaps on the Internet, where we get some of the company data, and our own monitoring data, then, would be available. We will take a little while to develop that system, but that's where we're going, the direction in which we feel that it might be worth while just to have this data in terms of the ambient monitoring data available to the public.

MS CARLSON: So for a business that is compliant, would you go out twice a year on spot checks or three times a year or once a year on average?

MR. SCHULZ: What we have done at times is target a particular sector. For example, we will go out and look at hazardous waste storage, and then we'll try to do a campaign where we'll try to go out there to all the sites very quickly. We may get a whole group of people together to do that. I think on a regular basis there are some industries probably that have a good record and we have no indication that there are any problems. We may not get out to those industries at all that year. There are others where we probably have been out every couple of weeks.

MS CARLSON: Okay.
Ken?

DR. NICOL: Yes. Thank you. Mr. Minister, earlier on in the discussions you talked a little bit about the water headworks to get diversions for irrigation or other uses. I just wondered how you went about the consultation process and the decision process to actually go ahead with that process that you're putting in place for the private management or the private operation of the headworks.

MR. LUND: Go ahead, Peter.

MR. MELNYCHUK: I think the reference there was that I mentioned that one of the reductions that we're looking at in our

human resources package was the privatization of our maintenance of these headworks structures. Was that the question? We've had discussions with the irrigation districts and the users of the water that is diverted by those headworks systems for many, many years, and we have been in a phased way privatizing some of that maintenance and even some of the operations.

We are taking a more focused approach to it now, because history has shown us that it's working and it's possible to do and that the industry in southern Alberta is now geared and able to do that kind of maintenance that government people did before. We think we have a track record that'll make that successful.

DR. NICOL: Do you see the eventual separation, though, of that from government in the sense of monitoring regulation or review?

MR. LUND: Were you thinking of going as far as ownership?

DR. NICOL: No. I would hope not. Is that the ultimate objective in the sense that the headworks in essence would become part of the main canals and in the distribution network all under the umbrella of an irrigation district as opposed to what we now really have, three separate units: the irrigation district, the provincial main canal rehabilitation programs, and the headworks program? Do you see those linking together into one operation management, an eventual possible ownership situation?

MR. LUND: I don't know how far this is going to go. As Peter says, we're getting somewhat of a track record in the maintenance, and if there are some more movements, it'll be in consultation of course with the irrigation districts.

In your question I thought you said something about "private," and I'm curious what you meant there.

DR. NICOL: Well, it's like everything else, Mr. Minister. Once things start to percolate through the consultation process, the rumours run. Southern Alberta before the election was quite involved with the ideas that maybe the headworks were going to be privatized. Now, that has a very broad connotation in itself, what constitutes privatized. But, you know, that's I guess the reference that I made to privatization. I was aware more that it was the management and maintenance that the discussions were being held with, you know, because I had, I think, maybe better information than some of the people who were bringing these concerns to my office.

MR. LUND: Peter, did you want . . .

MR. MELNYCHUK: Just maybe to perhaps put it in a little better context. There are a number of reasons, at least I believe, why government needs to be in management control of those river headworks. The water that is diverted and supplied by those works is for a variety of users, not only irrigation. It's for municipal and recreation and so on; also, in order that Alberta can meet its obligations to Saskatchewan in respect of our apportionment agreement with that province. It would be difficult if a private or a single irrigation district was in control of those river works, because then we would have difficulty in operating it as a network so that we could not only meet the obligations to Albertans in respect of water requirements but also to our downstream neighbours.

DR. NICOL: I think that's all on that topic. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

MR. GIBBONS: Under performance measures – see the estimates on 184 and 185. In 1996 one of our former members asked about the 31 performance measures referred to in the '95-96 budget estimates.

MR. MELNYCHUK: I'm sorry; this is . . .

MR. GIBBONS: Pages 184 and 185 and the plan on pages 151 and 153.

MR. MELNYCHUK: The business plan?

MR. GIBBONS: The business plan, pages 151 and 153.

Hon. minister, you made a statement: we'll be bringing those forward as soon as we have them completed; we hope to have them out within a month. And some subsequent questions to that. Has the minister dropped the idea of referring to the 31 performance measures, or are you going to be supplementing them? I can't see them in the budget at all, 20 items that we were going over back and forth.

MR. LUND: Well, we have actually reduced the number and believe that these are the ones that are really important that we continue.

Ron, did you want to add more to the discussion?

MR. GIBBONS: Just answer the question whether this will be included in a state of the environment report, or have these been dropped altogether?

MR. LUND: No. We've been issuing the state of the environment report. We've got another one that's just about ready to go.

MR. HICKS: Two years ago we issued our 10-page business plan and also issued a more detailed business plan. So our 10-page business plan that was released in the government documents had, I think, six performance measures in it at the time. Our more detailed business plan had these 31 measures in it. So it was an additional level of detail in terms of performance measures.

Last year we did not issue a more detailed business plan because it took us a while to finalize some of the ways that we were going to achieve our reductions that we had to meet last year. We were asked the question previously: what happened to the 31 measures? We still have them; we're still using them. It's just that we hadn't released a more detailed business plan. We didn't in fact release a more detailed plan last year; we just issued our 10-page plan.

This year we have our 10-page plan again with our seven performance measures in it, but we also have a more detailed operational plan, as we're calling it, our '97-98 operational plan that again has that more detailed level of performance measures in it. That is available as a plan, if you would like to take a look at it.

The difficulty in using performance measures is to try to come up with some measures that are understandable to the public, and they can look at trends. That's why we've gone to the air quality index, to the surface water quality index, and so on. These indices that we're using, like air quality and surface quality, are a roll up, more detailed measures, and we think that they will provide to the public a good indication of trends. How overall has surface water quality – what are the conditions? What's happening with air quality overall. But the more detailed information on what's happening with CO₂ or what's happening with ozone we can provide, and they're available through our more detailed plan.

6:54

MR. GIBBONS: The air quality one wasn't available last year.

MR. HICKS: Last year the air quality one was available in the government's overall document, Measuring Up, and the surface water quality was available also last year in the government's overall document, Measuring Up. We didn't have them in our department business plan, but we have added them this year to our department plan. So I think that's where some of the confusion was. They were in a more detailed plan two years ago. Last year we didn't issue the detailed plan. It wasn't that we dropped those more detailed measures. It's just that we hadn't published a detailed plan. We have a detailed one again this year.

MR. GIBBONS: And the surface water one also?

MR. HICKS: Yes.

MR. GIBBONS: Reduction of municipal solid waste to landfills. This is the same as last year. It shows 1995 as about a 27 percent reduction, compares 1988 with a goal of 50 percent by 2000. How is this measured?

MR. LUND: Well, it's as near as we can come to an actual measurement. Of course, we are continuing to look at other means of reducing that waste. You probably saw today or yesterday the establishment of an oil recycling program. That will take out all of the filters and the containers, so that's going to be a fairly hefty reduction. We've told the tetra pak people that they must come up with a plan to get at least 70 percent of their product out of the waste stream. We'll be moving on that one.

On the whole issue around milk cartons, we've said: no, we're not going to bring those in at this point. That material is recyclable, but of course the shelf life is short. I think before we really get into that one, we have to make sure that the public is educated that they can't just take the milk out and throw the carton out and expect us to recycle it. It won't work. We'd have to get into a very extensive education program similar to what farmers do with rinsing pesticide cans. That's been very successful once the farmers were educated to do it.

MR. GIBBONS: How especially is it measured, and have you got a tonnage measurement to it?

MR. LUND: Well, maybe Al could add more to the exact measurement.

MR. SCHULZ: Yes. This is really a Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment initiative and goal for the reduction. So the CCME tries to provide guidelines, too, in terms of how an inventory should be taken. In our case we have the municipalities involved in terms of reporting to us the volumes, the tonnage that is going in there. Also the CCME has done - I believe it was in '93-94 - an independent inventory then of waste reduction throughout the country, and they're doing another one. So the idea is that we have comparable data nationwide so we can gauge our progress.

MR. GIBBONS: Is that available?

MR. SCHULZ: The CCME reports would be available, yes.

MR. MELNYCHUK: Yes. Both the one that was published, I

believe it was in '94, and the one that is to be published either this year or next are public documents. We'll provide it.

MR. GIBBONS: Okay. Thank you.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Minister, where are you going in your department on the gas flaring issue?

MR. LUND: Well, really that's in the AEUB. It's not in our department, but we will be working co-operatively with the oil and gas industry. I believe the AEUB are starting some kind of consultation work on how they're going to address that issue. Now that some of the compounds have been identified, it's necessary to move forward. I feel that there needs to be some more research done to find out exactly quantities and if there are effects. As I say, that's really the AEUB.

MR. SCHULZ: This is supplementary to the minister's comments. This issue initially came up through the Cattle Commission report and the study there. That issue, then, was moved over to the Clean Air Strategic Alliance. A task force was formed very quickly. They are working right now on providing some of the guidelines in terms of what should be done, what the alternatives are, what the options are. That task force should be then reporting back through CASA.

The EUB is on that task force. We are sitting on it. We're not taking the lead on it, as the minister has indicated, but we are certainly looking because we're concerned from an environmental protection perspective. There are stakeholders. Health is involved also with the CASA. So I think it is a priority issue right now, to come up with some of the options.

MR. GIBBONS: Is that something to do with what the concerns are coming from people just north of St. Albert and so on, with the dairy farms?

MR. SCHULZ: In fact, one of the ladies that is living, I believe, just north of St. Albert is on the CASA board. She is in fact also on the CASA task force, the flaring task force. So we do have some of the people on that group. We have, then, some of the people that are more directly impacted. We have industry there in terms of a representative of CAPP. We have the EUB there and ourselves as well. Various stakeholders are represented there.

MS CARLSON: When you talk about further research being required in that area, were you talking about effects on humans research, and what kind of participation would you see your department having in that?

MR. LUND: Well, we won't be taking the lead role. This is just a personal opinion because we won't be taking a lead role. Through CASA and the people that are looking at this situation I think - and I'm not a researcher - it's really important that they do involve possibly the research centre at Vegreville, the universities. There is some real good expertise in those places, people who can design research projects that are meaningful. I think it's important that the oil and gas industry get involved in it and in fact be a major contributor to the cost, to paying for it.

MR. MELNYCHUK: I would just add to that that the Department of Health has a senior representative on the Clean Air Strategic Alliance that is looking at this whole question. I'm sure that experts from that department will ensure that this review and study takes into account any health impacts of this problem.

MR. LUND: Just to add, there has been some real good work done around that new gas plant down at Caroline. They did a very extensive baseline study prior to the plant starting operation. Not so much human health – Shell was committed to doing that – but a researcher out of the University of Calgary studied the community for a fair bit of time. She was not comfortable that there was enough population to really have a strong base.

There is a committee and a group that have got their cattle herds on a program. They did a broad cross section prior to the plant starting to operate, so they got that base. Now they're monitoring the herds very closely. So there's good information coming. I think there has to be more of that kind of thing done.

7:04

MS CARLSON: Mr. Minister, last year my colleague asked you a question on the natural resource services regional operations, and you came back with what we thought was a very good answer. If I give you the format for the question this year, I'm wondering if could you do a follow-up for us. It's a breakdown on the regional budgets for parks and fish and wildlife.

MR. LUND: Which one?

MS CARLSON: Can I give this to you? This is the question we asked last year. I'd just like a similar response if that's all right. You can provide that at some time in the future; that would be appropriate. Okay? Thanks.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Again, in looking through your business plan, one of the performance indicators you've got is the reduction in municipal solid waste, and you're going through from '92 up to '95, a 12 percent to 27 percent increase in the reduction of solid wastes going into landfills. You're targeting 50 percent by the year 2000. Do you see most of this coming through recycling programs, through alternative use of waste programs? I'd like to see where you're trying to focus that change?

MR. LUND: I think the recycling will take care of the largest portion, but there is a reduction as well in packaging that is very important, something that the CCME has been working on for quite some time: to try to get a standard across Canada. It's extremely difficult though. Without the manufacturers buying in, it's virtually impossible. But the consumer is becoming more cognizant of the need to reduce the waste.

I think, like I said, the program that we just announced is one that will help considerably. The tetra pak issue: we're anxious to see how they're going to accomplish what we require there, because there are about 1,500 tonnes of that material put into the system each year, so if we could get that out. Wax-coated paper containers is one that we're going to be zeroing in on and seeing what we can do, but like I said earlier, it is a problem. You can't take that food product and just throw it in the garbage or throw it in the blue box program and expect to recycle it. It just won't work. The material spoils.

Another little problem, just as an aside. Right now recycling that product is not a big problem if it's clean, but the market is basically flooded. There's no plant in Canada that can handle it. There are three or four in the U.S., but they're getting all the product they can handle. You can only use so much of it in a new product. As long as virgin pulp is as cheap as it is, it's going to be difficult to move it. Over time, we hope that we can do something there.

Al.

MR. SCHULZ: If I could just add some other things to what the minister has indicated. One of the things that I think we're excited about here in the Edmonton area that we feel can help reduce the volume going into the landfills is, in fact, composting. We think that if we manage our streams even in some of the smaller areas, then perhaps composting or diverting that organic stream – we'll assume, you know, grass clippings or whatever. If we can divert that from landfills, we think that is where we can also have fairly significant success.

The other thing that we're also trying to do is increase the product stewardship of the manufacturers. One of the areas that we are currently working on is paint stewardship, paint manufacturers for example, that tries to encourage the manufacturers to also take back some of the streams and have the industry involved, not that we have to fund it but have the industry spearhead this kind of program. These streams, then, can be diverted back to the manufacturer for reprocessing or proper disposal as opposed to ending up in the landfill.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Minister, when I was in university in Ames, Iowa, they started a separation plant there that ended up with combustible products going into a cogeneration, and then they took all the other recyclables off. They sold some, and they used the final parts of it that couldn't burn into a landfill. Are there proposals like that or possibilities like that here in Alberta?

MR. LUND: Well, as a matter of fact, when we had that discussion about tetra pak back in January, that product, if in fact we got into it, would end up being incinerated in Wisconsin. It's not a desirable thing to do, but it's better than going to the landfill.

No. Right now there's nothing in Alberta. There's no plan or plant that we're aware of that is interested in trying to recover the heat from that kind of material.

DR. NICOL: So that kind of thing, then, hasn't proven successful? I hate to admit it, but it's a couple of years since I was in Ames going to school, and I just don't know how successful it was.

MR. LUND: It gets back, of course, to one of our problems in so much of this recycling. As long as the virgin product is cheap, it's hard to get people to put the money up to incinerate. In order to incinerate those kinds of containers, you've got to use other fuel. Well, the other fuel turns out to be cheaper per BTU than the material that you're adding to incinerate, plus the problem with handling.

DR. NICOL: So there are no private initiatives in that kind of area right now other than the one you're talking about in Wisconsin?

MR. LUND: Not that we're aware of.

MR. SCHULZ: The Wainwright incinerator is trying to establish that, but they've gone through a lot of problems in trying to get that established.

MR. LUND: Yeah. I'd forgotten about that one. That's had so much trouble. I guess that's why I was trying to forget about it.

DR. NICOL: Do they have problems with the emissions out of the smokestack? Is that how it works?

MR. LUND: No. They met those requirements. It's just that when you're trying to incinerate a garbage stream, a waste stream, the fuel is so inconsistent that it's difficult to handle, especially if you're trying to use a very high percentage of it.

MR. SCHULZ: The first prototype burned out the scrubber plastics. They burned out the scrubbers, so that wasn't very successful. Then they started over again. I think technologywise they're not bad.

DR. NICOL: Thank you.

MR. GIBBONS: I think your area had a great goal for 12.2 percent of the total area of Alberta being park by 2000. It's jumped from 60,000 square kilometres in 1990 to 1996 being 63,972. I can't see any way in the next three years you're going to reach the goal of having 81,000 square kilometres of parkland.

MR. LUND: Well, the last time I checked, the national parks were part of Alberta.

MR. GIBBONS: Yeah. Well, that's part of it, even then. That's all included in the figures I've been giving you.

MR. LUND: Well, which page are you on? Are you on 185?

MR. GIBBONS: Page 152. The target is to have 81,000 square kilometres of Alberta "designated as parks, natural reserves and related sites (including national parks)" by the year 2000. That is 12.2 percent of Alberta's area, which is a great goal. If your department can do that in the next couple of years, it would be great.

7:14

MR. LUND: Well, under the special places program, of course, we're attempting to get a representative sample – and we will – of the six natural regions and the 20 subregions. What exactly the acreage will be – whether it ends up being the 80,000 or 70,000, I'm not sure. I think the important thing is that we get that representative sample.

MR. GIBBONS: Okay.

I know that we're all familiar with what has been said in the paper: Lund gives wildlife fund critics an F.

MR. LUND: I didn't do that, by the way.

MR. GIBBONS: Oh, didn't you?

MR. LUND: No.

MR. GIBBONS: No, you didn't do that, but they gave it an F.

MR. LUND: No, they didn't. They gave us a D plus.

MR. GIBBONS: Oh, D plus.

MR. LUND: Big difference.

MR. GIBBONS: Yeah, big difference.

The main question I'm going to ask to that one: will you stop industrial activities in the designated parks and reserves. I mean, is there anything that you've got set up within your department to regulate that?

MR. LUND: You said parks. Are you talking about provincial parks?

MR. GIBBONS: Reserves, designated areas.

MR. LUND: I've said from day one that we would be honouring the dispositions that are out there. To say that we'd have absolutely no industrial activity in any of the sites I think would be misleading. I guess a real good example – I don't know if you're familiar with Rumsey. That's a designated area. There are oil and gas wells in there. The way the area is going to be managed in the future, they cannot go and build any more pads. If there's to be any more drilling in the area, they have to directional drill from the existing pads, and the area will be preserved.

Of course, as soon you start talking about activity, then cattle grazing is one that gets tossed up and is supposed to be thrown out. Well, quite frankly, some of these sites that have been chosen or dominated – there's been cattle in there for the last hundred years, and before that it was buffalo. So what on earth is the problem with allowing cattle to continue in there?

I guess a real good one is Banff and Jasper national parks right today. You know, we're having problems with the grizzly bear population in those parks. Why? Because there's an overgrown forest and there's nothing living in there. One of these days of course that thing is going to burn, and I really question – I really question – if in fact some selective logging, very controlled, very environmentally friendly, wouldn't really assist instead of damage, a lot less damage than a fire's going to do.

I think there's room. I believe there are a lot of things we can do and still preserve whatever it is natural that we're trying to preserve, whether it's grassland or like we have up at Chinchaga, those landscapes. I think it can be done, and it will be done.

MS CARLSON: I want to return to the recycling issue and stockpiling problem for a moment. It's a problem not just in Alberta, but I see it all over the Pacific Northwest. Over the years we've seen what happened with tire recycling in this province. It was good. Some bumps along the way, some corrections along the way, but in the end that program I think has turned out to be quite successful. Are you looking at any other areas of potential helper assistance or research support in terms of recycling other kinds of stuff that's out there?

MR. LUND: Plastic probably is the big one.

MS CARLSON: Yeah, anything. Sure, plastic would be the biggest one.

MR. LUND: No. We haven't. We hope that through, like, the Research Council people will become more interested in it. We're back to the old problem, particularly in this province: plastic is so cheap, the virgin plastic. I think you're right that with some research that could happen, but we don't have plans to get into it.

MS CARLSON: Did you have some additional comments?

MR. MELNYCHUK: I was just going to mention that we are doing some things with the used oil, for example, a program there that we are about to embark on. We rely to a large degree on the Alberta Research Council to provide the kind of applied research that can be used in the recycling problem.

MS CARLSON: Okay.

I think sooner or later in this province consumers are going to realize that a lot of their blue box material is actually going to landfills, that there's no market for it. There's no one in Alberta who is processing that stuff right now. I'm wondering if your department has any PR dollars or anything of that nature to help manage that problem when it becomes a large awareness problem.

MR. LUND: Well, I'm not aware of material that's collected in the blue boxes ending up going to the garbage. Al, are you?

MR. SCHULZ: You do have a valid point that it's very difficult sometimes to develop the markets for these products. You can collect them, but then it takes usually a lot longer to develop viable markets for these products. On the other hand, I think that the industry here is maturing a lot more. I think the attitude of industry has changed in that they're trying to be more responsible. We have very little initiative here volumewise, but I think what exemplifies the attitude is the small mercury batteries, whatever they are, for everything from hearing aids to cameras and whatnot. They're setting up a program of having them returned to the point of sale, having a little box there. It's a small issue here, but I think it helps to divert this stream from going to a landfill, and they're able to do it that way. As the minister alluded to earlier, a lot of the times if you can have these products dealt with individually or clean, then you can process them subsequently a lot easier too.

MS CARLSON: For sure things that people think are being recycled are going to landfills. There's nothing in the department that would be taking a look at that in terms of public awareness management?

MR. LUND: Well, if you're familiar with something that is, then let us know, and we'll follow up and see if there's anything we can do. But we do not have dollars for research into alternative products.

MS CARLSON: Right. Okay.

Just a procedural question, if I can. All of the questions we have are in a similar nature to what we've been asking here, Mr. Minister. I'm wondering, since we won't get through all of them this evening, if we could provide these to you, and at some point in the future you could provide answers to us. Would that be acceptable?

MR. LUND: I've got no problem.

MS CARLSON: Great. That's good. Okay.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Minister, again as I was reading last year's comments, you made a reference to the possibility of beginning to indicate the CO₂ levels in the air as one of your performance indicators so that we can track, you know, the voluntary reduction program that's in place. Yet in this year's performance indicators - now, I've only got the ones here. You said there's another more in-depth business plan out.

MR. LUND: It's not out.

DR. NICOL: Coming. Will CO₂ be a part of that?

MR. SCHULZ: I think CO₂ would likely be handled more on a national basis through something like the NPRI, the national

pollution reduction inventory, so that you could track it that way. It would not necessarily be a performance indicator per se, but you would have a better handle in terms of what the emissions are and how these emissions are being reduced.

7:24

MR. LUND: Yeah. We will be filing with the national registry. They're keeping track of exactly where each province is, so that information will be available.

DR. NICOL: So you're not doing anything, then, to kind of monitor what I think is called the voluntary challenge?

MR. SCHULZ: The voluntary challenge; uh huh.

DR. NICOL: So they would have the measure of how much . . .

MR. SCHULZ: The focus of the voluntary challenge is to identify the reduction projects. Okay? So the difficulty with the funding we've talked about here, too, is that that does not give you an indication of what happens to all the other CO₂ emissions that are remaining constant or that may be ongoing, so you need to go beyond the voluntary. The voluntary challenge I think is very useful in terms of providing an indication of how those emissions are being reduced, but you also need an emissions inventory that tells you what the others are so you can add those or take a look at what the overall emissions are and what you're reducing, then, in terms of your voluntary challenge.

MR. LUND: It's very difficult with, like, automobiles or transportation to get a handle on exactly. You can do some calculations with the amount of fuel that's sold and how that converts so that you get some measure, but it's difficult to get a precise measurement. But like Al says, for the major industries, we will get those quantities.

DR. NICOL: So at this time, then, there's no plan in place to kind of report some index of CO₂ emissions in Alberta or anything like that.

You know, we've got to be able to show that we as Albertans are participating to reduce the CO₂ emissions. Otherwise, we're going to end up with national and international pressures for who knows what, including maybe things like the dreaded carbon tax that nobody wants. So we've got to show that we're really participating, and I just wondered how you plan on doing that.

MR. LUND: Well, yeah, and now Alberta industry is doing that. In Alberta we have the highest percentage of registered companies in Canada. Industry has really taken it on.

One of the other things, of course, if you want to look at the big, overall picture, is that perhaps we've got to start talking about some credit. This year we will be planting more than 70 million trees. That is a very important component of all of this greenhouse gas control because that's a major carbon sink that we're creating. Those kinds of things have to be taken into account.

MR. HICKS: The air quality index in our performance plan is related to human health. In that index we are monitoring dust and smoke, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and sulphur dioxide. We're monitoring all those in the major cities, and those go into that air quality index that appears in our business plan. Carbon dioxide is not directly related to health; it's more a climate change/global warming issue. The emissions from across

the country are documented to compile, you know, the summary of Canadian emissions and how we compare per capita to other countries. So that information is being documented. It's just that we haven't used it in our index because we were looking at those factors that contribute to people's concerns about health.

DR. NICOL: I might suggest that it would be very interesting, because I found it very interesting when you made the comment that Alberta has the highest participation in the voluntary program. You know, I think it would be very good if that kind of statistic, even for a public perception piece of information, could be put out into the public. It makes the public aware that our businesses are being responsible, that they are being community conscious. So I would encourage you very much to publish that at some time, even if it's in your business plan just as a piece of information.

MR. LUND: Good point.

DR. NICOL: That would be very helpful. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

MR. GIBBONS: Mr. Minister, it seems to be that in the 1990s you've got the big buzzword "user fees." User fees goes into the relationship of how your department's controlling privatizing parks. Is the environment going to be lost because of it? Are we monitoring and controlling very closely what's happening in the parks now that were once controlled by yourselves?

Then I go back to my concern that I put in front of you a couple of weeks ago, the Dutch elm. Dutch elm does not grow in the wild; it grows in the cities. If we don't monitor it and really help the cities, the two big cities, the transportation of that wood is going to be in the back of that trunk out to that campground. Then it just spreads and spreads. Whether you can control it – and you can educate and you can do whatever, but I think you just have to go through and look at the destruction in Montana, Manitoba, wherever. You can go up to the old Chateau Lacombe – it's the Crowne Plaza now – and watch in the summer, when you're going around, the amount of trees we actually have in our river valley, and Calgary too. I think it's more of a statement than a question. I really hope that we are concerned about that.

MR. LUND: Yeah, we are concerned about it. I know that Jim Nichols is feeling left out, so I'll get him to comment, after I've made a comment about the parks though.

I want to assure you that we're using different types of contracts in the parks for the campgrounds. We have some that are strictly on a year-to-year maintenance-type contract. Then we have those that are longer term that are operating the campground. But we write the standards, we enforce the standards, and we're not backing away from that at all. What we are trying to do – we went through all of the areas that we operate: some beside the highways, for example, and some areas where it's just a campground, not a park. People refer to it as a park, but it's not a park. Then, of course, we do have those that are provincial parks that have a campground in them. Well, what we've done for administrative purposes is we've gone through the whole list, and we identified those that fit into the preservation/heritage category and then those that are in the outdoor recreation/tourism category. So you find that recreation/tourism ends up being all the campgrounds, and those we are going to be getting out of mowing, what I said earlier. We're not going to be out there cutting grass with our employees, but we will set the standards for

the operators that they must meet. We are going to be spending our money and our personnel on the preservation/heritage sites like Dinosaur provincial park, Writing-on-Stone, those kinds of places that we feel we must stay in and operate.

The idea that somehow the operator is going to have free rein and do whatever they want: no. We are looking at the possibility in some cases that we may give a longer term tenure and allow the operator to put some infrastructure in. People have got these big mobile units now, and many of our campgrounds are so small they can't get in. They also want to have power. You know, we're out roughing it but we've got to have power. We don't have the money to put that in. Many of them want things like a washhouse. Well, once again it's a capital investment that we don't have the money to do, so we are looking at the possibility of allowing some operators to construct some of these kinds of things, but it would only be with our permission. We won't let them just go in and willy-nilly do whatever in one of these campgrounds.

Jim, do you want to talk Dutch elm disease?

7:34

MR. NICHOLS: Just before that perhaps with respect to user fees. When we first started privatizing, the way we privatized most of the operations was in fact to contract out the grass cutting and the garbage removal. What we're doing now is moving into the larger area where we're going into what we call facility operating agreements, where in exchange for keeping the revenue from the campgrounds, the operator runs more of the services. We try and do that in campgrounds or parks that will allow an operator to make a living at one. If he can't, then we look at grouping some together. Over the years we've now got about 92 percent of our campgrounds privatized. The department is actually running only about 8 percent.

On the Dutch elm disease, our rangers and staff in the parks have been monitoring this thing. Quite frankly, we haven't seen a big trend of people bringing firewood in for their own use, and we haven't detected any problems with it.

MR. LUND: We have trouble keeping the wood in, not people bringing it in. As a matter of fact, we've got to the point where we have to spray paint the wood that's available in a lot of our campgrounds because it walks.

MR. GIBBONS: But what maybe isn't now is still something to monitor for tomorrow, that it's not just a pamphlet out there. It's to educate.

MR. LUND: I'm not trying to make light of this situation. We do take it seriously. Like I told you in the House, we are trying to educate people of the importance that they don't transport that wood, that they don't move it around, that they don't bring it into the province.

MR. GIBBONS: Just jumping off that one, do you have a line figure in your revenue on what user fees are or anything like that? Do you have a line figure in dollars and cents that jumps out as to what the user fees are bringing in?

MR. LUND: You mean as far as parks are concerned?

MR. GIBBONS: Yes.

MR. LUND: Well, we can get that information for you if it's not broken out. Do you have it handy, Bill?

MR. SIMON: I haven't seen anything, but I haven't spent as much time as you people. The total dollars brought in through camping fees is \$1 million. I believe, Jim, that's the amount that comes in to general revenue.

MR. LUND: Is that the actual fee, or is that what some of the facility operators are paying us?

MR. SIMON: That's the actual money that comes into our general revenue.

MR. LUND: Yes, okay. So that could include, then, the money that's received from the facility operator as well as the individual that pays.

MR. SIMON: I'm not sure. I don't have that breakdown.

MR. LUND: It's hard to break those down. We can get them, but we might not have them right now.

MS CARLSON: I just want to go back to regulations for a minute. I'm not sure if this is a regulation in Environmental Protection. No, I don't think it is. I think it's in Health, but if you'll just bear with me for a minute, I'd like your opinion on something.

Currently when beer manufacturers spoil a load, the beer doesn't get dumped at the factory, and therefore the bottles can't be reused. What happens is it's trucked out to a landfill site and then crushed on site, so we lose the ability to recycle those bottles. It fills up the landfill, plus the nominal pollution rate of just sending out more trucks that are unnecessary. Would you agree that that regulation should be changed so that the spoiled beer could be dumped on site? In theory I agree with it. I just think that it's misuse of some possible recyclable material.

MR. GIBBONS: Seems like a waste of beer too.

MS CARLSON: Well, the beer's already spoiled for whatever reason, so we can forget about that. It happens quite often in fact. The big beer trucks go out two or three times a week to a couple of landfills around the Edmonton area, so the same must be happening in Calgary.

MR. LUND: They take these export bottles and crush them?

MS CARLSON: Yes.

MR. LUND: Are they crushing them and putting them into the landfill?

MS CARLSON: Yes. They dump the crates into the landfill, and then they crush them, run over top of them.

MR. LUND: I was not aware that that was going on.

MS CARLSON: I think it comes under a Health regulation.

MR. LUND: No.

MS CARLSON: Is it you guys? Oh, is that right?

MR. LUND: I thought they were crushing that and the imported bottles were being crushed along with some other glass containers

and being recycled. Al, do you have any comment?

MR. SCHULZ: Yes. As part of the beverage container delegated administrative organization, we've tried to encourage the brewers to become part of that. The brewers have resisted that because they've always indicated they feel that they have worked hard at establishing a pretty high rate of container recycling.

[Mr. Langevin in the chair]

There is a concern that the brewers are trying to work on a standard industry bottle. If we could get the brewers to be more part of the overall effective recycling system, then we could try to avoid that. Right now the beer bottles are exempted from the beverage container Act, so we have a hard time regulating in terms of how these bottles should then be dealt with and recycled. I mean, ideally we don't want the glass to go there. We'd like to see the bottles recycled too. So we're working with the brewers on that.

MR. LUND: I wonder if a lot of these aren't damaged bottles. They can't use them if they're damaged, chipped.

MS CARLSON: No, no.

MR. LUND: Are they import bottles?

MS CARLSON: Well, not just import bottles. It's my understanding that it's stuff that's being filled locally, and when they test it - I don't know what the testing is - to make sure that it's up to the standard that they can sell it, and it fails, then those bottles go out to landfill.

MR. LUND: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize that you were talking about bottles that have got beer in them.

MS CARLSON: Yeah, beer in them.

MR. LUND: Okay. I'm sorry. We'll have to look at that.

MR. SCHULZ: I'm not sure whether they're treated differently than just the empties. Normally the brewers pride themselves on recycling a very high percentage of their own bottles. So it's not import bottles or whatever which then get crushed.

MR. LUND: They claim they're over 90 percent.

MR. SCHULZ: Yes.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Will you look into it?

MR. LUND: We'll look into it.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Great.

Back to the air quality index for a minute. Do you have any plan to expand the number of things that you're currently testing?

MR. LUND: Al, do you want to talk about that one?

MR. SCHULZ: I think what we're trying to do is be responsive to some of what we see as some of the national issues. For example, in terms of the respiratory fraction of fine particulates, we are increasing our monitoring capability, which is quite exciting. We're having a mobile monitoring system installed in

our big mobile unit. So I think that will help to give us a better handle in terms of to what extent fine particulates are a problem. With the dust on the prairies, you would normally have more particulates, but they're not necessarily the issue. The fine particulates are a problem.

Other parameters in terms of the monitoring. The difficulty is that, you know, some of the monitoring, say, for some of the air toxics or for the whole bunch of organics is not easy technology. It's expensive technology. We key on those parameters that are basically national parameters, that are part of our air quality guidelines. We also have the capability to do some sampling for some of the organics for some other systems. So yes, we are doing more monitoring. We're monitoring more parameters.

Also, again, as part of the clean air strategic alliance there is some zonal monitoring going on in Alberta. One of the things they're looking at is trying to see whether we can get some biological indicators that can be then used to provide some indication of air pollution impact, such as lichen or things like that. It's a difficult issue to be on the leading edge because that's very expensive, but we're tracking what's happening nationally and doing the monitoring as we can. Some of our monitoring capability is right up there, so I think we can be proud of what we have, given the reality of the times too.

7:44

MS CARLSON: Earlier tonight you talked about setting tighter time lines for hearings on regulations. Then there's always a concern that someone legitimately might not have been heard. Is there or do you plan to have some sort of appeal process if the time lines are shorter and tighter and people are saying that they haven't had a chance to be heard?

MR. LUND: You're referring to the repeal of a regulation. Is that what you're asking?

MS CARLSON: Yeah. If you shorten the time line for the hearings, then if for whatever reason someone has a legitimate concern that they weren't heard, would there be some sort of an appeal process? Or you really haven't anticipated that?

MR. LUND: Well, of course they've always got the ability to appeal to the minister. I guess if it was legitimate and they could demonstrate that what we've done was a real concern, then we would certainly take another look at it.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Or something new or different; right?

MR. LUND: We're open and accountable.

MS CARLSON: Let's not go there.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Minister, one of the things we noticed as we were going through the books of the budget this time is that the detail you seem to be putting in them compared to two or three years ago is much reduced: the line items, the detail that comes up. Are you consolidating activities in your department to the extent that we no longer have as many programs or line items? You know, I just have a couple of sheets here – I guess this would have been from the '94-95 budget – and I look at it comparing it to what's in the same program now. There seems to be much fewer line items. I was wondering why the detail isn't being provided that we used to get.

MR. MELNYCHUK: We're still reporting our budget on what we

call an element basis no differently than we had before. However, you must realize that the department has gone through quite a consolidation and restructuring process over the last several years, and that probably has an impact on the number of elements that we are showing. Perhaps Mr. Simon would like to add to that.

MR. SIMON: The basic format of the estimates is, of course, dictated by Treasury. We do have identified here the various core program areas of the department and of course the ministry support and the reporting agencies. Below that, we follow the definitions of a subprogram, an element, in accordance with what Treasury gives us in terms of a definition of each of those.

MR. LUND: You have to recognize that at the time when this department was consolidated, there were 10 assistant deputy ministers, each responsible for a certain area. As you can see, we now have four. That makes a difference in the way the whole budget is presented, because you have fewer programs.

DR. NICOL: I guess I wasn't quite so concerned with the number of programs; it's the elements that you see within a program. I guess with the reduction in full-time equivalent personnel that are in the department, I was just wondering: are you getting to the point where some of these line items that used to be reported now are disclosure problems in terms of, you know, pay for an individual? Why are they being amalgamated? Have the programs actually been eliminated?

MR. LUND: There are some programs that have been eliminated, like the one on mapping, as the deputy minister mentioned earlier. Bill, did you have anything else?

MR. SIMON: No. Perhaps we can do a comparison and figure out something in terms of what's happened to some of the elements, if you wish.

DR. NICOL: We'll send you over in an actual document the ones that we would like to see compared. That'll help a little bit. You know, it will give you some examples. It's hard to follow what's actually going on in some of the subareas and that, so it makes it much easier. I appreciate that co-operation. It really makes it helpful for us.

I guess on that question, it's my responsibility now to pass it on. I don't have another supplemental.

[Mr. Boutilier in the chair]

MR. GIBBONS: Back in the late '60s there was a plan to reroute water from the Pembina into Big Lake down the Sturgeon and so on. Has that ever been thought about since?

MR. LUND: Well, that's much before my time. Peter.

MR. MELNYCHUK: Well, the water plans on the Pembina, at least with respect to storage, are not active anymore. While there continues to be some flooding on the Pembina River, as there was this year, we're dealing with those kinds of problems primarily through channelization and diking. But no major diversions or major storage plans are there now.

MR. GIBBONS: Okay. Maybe a supplement to that. With irrigation happening more and more – you take the Sturgeon

River, where a lot of water has been sucked out of it right from Big Lake all the way down. I mean, for people that have had permits for years down there in the mouth, by mid-July there is no water. There's just been a tremendous amount of water being drawn out of there. I used to be able to jump off the tractor, run down and jump in the river anyplace along the mile I own on the river. Now you get your knees wet, and I'm still quite a few miles from the mouth. So it's just something that I thought I'd ask a question about. We look at the irrigation system. Over the years with more fertilizer and everything else the rivers are just – if they had more flow, I would surely think that you'd have a lot better waterway.

MR. MELNYCHUK: One of the things that we may come to here in central Alberta, as we have in the south, is that we may have to store some of that spring flood and use it later when it's needed. That's the whole philosophy of water management in southern Alberta. Maybe as time goes on, we'll have to look at that kind of a philosophy in central Alberta, if we find that our water is running off too quickly in the spring and we can't retain enough for summer and late fall.

MR. GIBBONS: We just went through seven years. I mean, last year wasn't as bad, but you might go back into that seven-year cycle again. Actually that's when you can really see that it's happening: the fertilizer problem, the runoff, and all those things.

MR. LUND: I don't know if you had an opportunity to study the new water Act, but one of the things that'll be required under that Act is water management plans for the various drainage districts. The problems you identified would be addressed in a water management plan.

MR. GIBBONS: I'm finished.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Some of the oil companies are using drilling techniques that are labeled experimental, so they therefore come under the research umbrella. I'm wondering if exactly the same environmental controls and checks and balances are applied to them as to more traditional techniques. I'm thinking particularly of Esso at Cold Lake.

MR. LUND: I'm not sure what you're getting at.

MS CARLSON: That steam technique they use there. They've used it for many, many years, but my understanding is that it still comes under some sort of a technicality that's deemed to be experimental. So I'm wondering, regardless of that kind of label being put on it, if all drilling in the province is subject to exactly the same kind of environmental controls. I'm trying to find out why it is they're wanting to stay within that mandate.

MR. LUND: It gets a little fuzzy here. We're responsible for groundwater. Once they get below that, the EUB is responsible. So we're responsible for things above and, of course, responsible for the groundwater. So I'm not sure what it is that you might be referring to. Oil companies are subject to the same environmental requirements that others are. There's no differentiation.

7:54

THE CHAIRMAN: At this point we have 12 minutes remaining, and I know the next 12 minutes are compliments of the New Democrats to the opposition.

MS CARLSON: And we appreciate it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, wherever you are.

MR. LUND: Well, the deputy may have something to add. I don't know if there's something particular at Cold Lake.

MR. MELNYCHUK: As the minister said, there are actually two departments and two sets of regulations that bear on this whole issue. The oil companies that are operating in the area that you mentioned must get a licence from this department if they're using any water in their operation to make steam or whatever. They are also operating under permits and licences from the Energy and Utilities Board with respect to how they process and use that steam, primarily to ensure that there isn't contamination of the shallow groundwater. Those regulations apply regardless of whether it's the operation you referred to or any other operation. I guess I'm not clear as to where there is a special treatment for that area.

MS CARLSON: Maybe it's not in this department.

MR. LUND: Well, you may have heard of the groundwater contamination that resulted from some, I believe it was, cracked casing in the Cold Lake area. We were involved in the remediation of that problem. That was our involvement. It was because the groundwater became contaminated. So we were involved in the remediation there.

MR. MELNYCHUK: We might be able to provide a clarifying answer to this question when we check out a few things with regard to our regulations and the Energy and Utilities Board, and perhaps we could provide a more detailed response.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Sure. Thanks. I'd appreciate that.

Well, I'll pass a question to Ken now. That was my last question, so I'd just like to thank you very much, all of you, for the degree of co-operation here and the depth of the answers.

DR. NICOL: Again, Mr. Minister, I've got a question here that comes up that deals with the environmental impact assessments that are done through your department and how they relate. This one is specific to the wetland that's being considered for a road around St. Albert. How does your department fit into those environmental impact assessments. You know, is that triggered because that is a classified wetland that this road may go through? Do you have to do one? How does that work?

MR. LUND: No. That environment assessment that was done was not something that we asked for in order to rewrite the terms of reference. That was one that the city did, and they did it to give them guidance in their decision, as I understand it. That is a significant wetland. It's a major staging ground for migratory birds. It's also been identified as a special landscape under the study that was done, and I'm not sure which one. Anyway it was a significant landscape identified in the province.

Now, into the future. Our department has been working with the city. If it turns out that people are concerned about this proposed road, then they can get in contact with our department. Our department then will do a screening to see if in fact it's necessary for an EIA. If it is deemed to be necessary, then they can call for one, and our department would write the terms of reference for the EIA. They would then see if it's complete, and we would be making recommendations based on that.

DR. NICOL: In other words, if they make a presentation to your department with specific concerns, you'll see whether or not that concern falls within the scope of an EIA, and that can be included, as opposed to not, as part of the mandate for an assessment.

MR. LUND: It would go through a screening process to see if in fact an EIA is necessary. If it is deemed necessary, our department writes the terms of reference and determines whether the report, once it's done, would fulfill the terms of reference, and then a decision is made about what happens beyond that.

DR. NICOL: There are some concerns in that area about the wetland being a kind of archaeological or historic site. I'm not sure how the difference between those two words fits in. Can that be included as part of your assessment mandate, or do they have to go through a historical . . .

MR. LUND: In the screening process, of course, the other departments are consulted. Community Development would be consulted. The historic side of it would be addressed. That's the screening we're talking about, whether there are those kinds of things that are legit.

DR. NICOL: Again, as Debby said, this is probably going to be my last question. I'd very much like to thank everybody. It really has been a very good session, and I really appreciate the answers that you've been forthcoming with. It's really nice to see that kind of co-operation. So, Mr. Minister and staff, thank you very much.

MR. LUND: Thank you.

MS CARLSON: How much time do we have left?

THE CHAIRMAN: We actually just have about four minutes left.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Well, as the minister has agreed to answer written questions that we'll provide to him, we'll call it a night.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to first of all thank the opposition members for very good questions. Certainly I think tonight

you've posed some very good questions. To Mr. Minister, you and your staff: I think some very detailed response has been noted by the hon. members of the opposition. This concludes the close to two hours allotted to the opposition.

I'd like to share with you just briefly a message that a citizen shared with me about a week ago when they said that words should be used as if you were spending money. So in this question-and-answer period tonight I think it was money well spent in terms of what was covered, but I might add that if there was unanimous consent now pursuant to Standing Orders 56 and 57, we actually could come in under budget tonight by about 50 percent, which I think we'd all be very proud of. So if a member is prepared to make a motion at this point in time – I guess before I go for it, I would like to ask, Mr. Minister, if there would there be any concluding remarks from yourself.

MR. LUND: After you said it would come in under 50 percent, I wouldn't dare take up any time and make it just 50 percent.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Hon. member.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has been a very long day and in particular over the last two and a half hours. This subcommittee had very good discussions on the estimates of the Department of Environmental Protection. We've heard some very good questions from the members opposite, and the hon. minister and his staff so ably provided all the answers.

At this point I'd like to move a motion pursuant to Standing Orders 56 and 57 that the designated supply subcommittee on Environmental Protection now conclude its consideration and debate on the '97-98 estimates of the Department of Environmental Protection prior to the conclusion of the four-hour period allocated.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. That motion's on the floor. I'd ask: all those in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those opposed? That's unanimous. Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 8:03 p.m.]