

2:01 p.m.

Thursday, November 7, 1991

[Chairman: Mr. Ady]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the meeting to order. We have before us this afternoon the Hon. LeRoy Fjordbotten, the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, who has come to spend some time with us while we discuss the expenditures of his department from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

We would like to welcome the school classes that are in the gallery and tell them that they are witnessing one session of the annual hearings of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund where all the ministers and others who access funding from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund come and talk about the expenditures and, to some extent, what they project they may do in the forthcoming year from the fund. We welcome you to the Legislature and hope that you have an enjoyable day.

Mr. Minister, if you have some brief opening . . . Oh, I'm sorry. Before we do that, I'd like to recognize members of the committee who have recommendations they would like to read into the record. The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to submit two recommendations this afternoon for the committee's consideration. First:

Be it recommended that the segmented information attached as a note to the audited financial statements be expanded to include a breakdown of income earned on each investment of the Alberta investment division of the heritage fund.

Second:

That the Alberta government seek to recover as soon as possible the early repayment of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund loan to Vencap Equities Alberta Ltd.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
The Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to read into *Hansard* today two recommendations. The first:

Be it recommended that the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research be requested to conduct systematic, ongoing research into the Alberta health care system with the objective of enhancing the system's effectiveness and efficiency.

And:

Be it recommended that the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research convene a provincial symposium to explore the legal, moral, and ethical aspects of physician-assisted suicide with the objective of providing the Alberta government policy advice and related research data.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to read into the record the following recommendation:

That a review of the performance and mandate of Vencap Equities Ltd. be undertaken by Alberta Treasury.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: I'd like to move, Mr. Chairman:

That all proposals for developments in Kananaskis Country be submitted to environmental impact assessments, including a requirement for public hearings.

Secondly:

Be it recommended that the government of Alberta stop using the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to provide subsidized loans to

foreign-owned companies such as the Alberta-Pacific joint venture, thereby seriously harming the fund's future investment income.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the proposed investments of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund individual projects be subject to approval from a full and public environmental impact assessment process.

Secondly:

That financial investments of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund be made or retained in those companies which follow or practise sound environmental policies and activities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there others?

One other order of business. The Chair has had a request that we extend the time for the recommendations to be submitted to noon on the 12th from 10 a.m. on the 12th. I would assume that two hours won't matter that much to members. All those in favour of changing that time? Thank you.

MR. DOYLE: Before we vote, Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if it would be more frugal if we waited until we meet with the next minister and be able to read them into the minutes at that time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The disadvantage of that, hon. member, is that it doesn't give all the committee members very much time to prepare their debates on the recommendations. That's why we have given this spread of time in there: so that they can have time to prepare for the debate. If we do that, we've really defeated our purpose in putting that span of time in there. As you recall, we moved that meeting of the 19th as an exception in order to allow people to go to the School Boards Association convention in Calgary. It really is the anomaly in the system as opposed to the reading of the recommendations. So hopefully we can stay within those parameters, if that clarifies something to the hon. member.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, my question has to do with some of us rural members not being in the city. Is it okay if we fax something to your office? Is that the best way to do it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Certainly. As long as they're submitted by 12 o'clock in some written form, that will be fine. The legislative clerk will type them up and circulate them around immediately to all the members so that you have access to them to prepare for the debate.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: I just want to make a point, Mr. Chairman. I can appreciate your concern that we have time to prepare for the debate, but the committee or you weren't as concerned about us having time to prepare for the presentation by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. We didn't have very much time between the time we received his information and the time that we had to question him. I therefore think that it isn't unreasonable to extend this time. I just wanted to make the point that I think there's a contradiction in that.

MR. DOYLE: I'd like a motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not clear, hon. member, on what your point is.

MR. MITCHELL: My point is that I'm making an observation that there's a great deal of concern now that we have time to prepare. It seems like this is going to give us two or three weeks to prepare. Well, some of us, my colleague for Calgary-Mountain View and I and others, were concerned that we wouldn't have much time to prepare for the presentation by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and no concessions were made in that regard. I mean, we were saying, "Why don't we wait and have him come back two weeks from now?" What some of us got was about 24 hours, if that, to review the material that we got prior to his being here, and that material wasn't even complete.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I understand. You're making an observation, and I'll accept that observation. The Chair did the best that we could under the circumstances, because it wasn't really possible to reschedule the minister into a reasonable time frame. There's going to be additional effort put into endeavouring to have annual reports available earlier or more timely next year. So we'll accept your comment.

If that concludes the business of the committee, we'll move to the minister. We appreciate you being before us today, Mr. Minister. We would welcome some brief preliminary remarks if you have some. Then we'll move to the questions from the committee.

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pleasure for me to be with the committee today. I'd like to say that sustained development of our natural resources within Alberta has always been a priority of my department, and that certainly is reflected in the programs in the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I might say also that if I'm not able to answer some of your questions today, I'll be happy to get answers for them and provide them to the committee as quickly as I can.

I'd like to touch on a couple of areas that are in my department involvement under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The first one is the provincial grazing reserve program. What that program does is provide opportunities for grazing livestock to the producers of Alberta, but in addition to that and as important as that are the recreational opportunities such as hunting and fishing and hiking and photography for the general public, and it also contributes significantly to a very excellent habitat. It offers many services to Albertans.

Its ability has been questioned at times on why it can't break even with respect to its cost. I'm pleased to report that even though the program had a small deficit in 1990, we increased the user fees last spring and the program will end up with a small surplus. Questions have been raised about the ability of the grazing reserve program to have a return investment on that initial capital investment. I'd like to point out that the primary purpose of developing the grazing reserves was to help diversify the rural economy of Alberta and make grazing opportunities for local livestock producers. The programs ensured that these are multiple-use areas and that they're available to all Albertans. This development pattern that's been agreed to and takes all the other uses into consideration has in some cases affected the efficiency of livestock operations if you were to look at it as a single benefit. But it's not a single benefit; it's a multibenefit project, and it's designed with the other resource users being considered. An example would be the planning and management and conservation of wildlife habitat. While these other uses are very important, we don't believe that the livestock producers should bear all those costs of providing for other uses as well, but we are getting to a break-even position this year.

2:11

Through the grazing reserve enhancement program – as you know we have 32 grazing reserves in the province – what we're doing is enhancing 21 of them in central and northern Alberta over a seven-year period, and 136,000 acres of low-yielding pasture will be enhanced. Total funding for the program is \$19.2 million over a seven-year period ending in 1996-97. There will be about a thousand producers benefiting from that work. In the first year of the program \$1.4 million was allocated to break 20,000 acres of brush-covered, low-producing land. Once we have this completed, it will allow us to increase the current level of stocking of those reserves. If we didn't do that, if we didn't do anything, they would increase in size as far as the brush cover, forage production would be decreased, and the existing allotments would have to be reduced over all subsequent years. But when redevelopment has been completed, those livestock producers who presently use that – and the number I gave you was about a thousand – will increase to about 1,300. So not only will it enhance them, but it will increase opportunities for those who want to use it.

The enhancement will also increase revenues to the government of about \$900,000 a year. The program will be returning about \$4.1 million on an annual basis to the General Revenue Fund. So it's a very good program, and it's also helped in a very dramatic way the local economy.

I'd like to talk for a couple of moments now about the Pine Ridge tree nursery at Smoky Lake and the ongoing partnership that the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund has brought to this project. It's brought a number of changes to our provincial reforestation program, and I want to review a couple of the positive initiatives of reforestation, some of them directly enhanced by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. On nursery production, since the funding was approved by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund in May, we've been moving rapidly with the upgrading and expansion of Pine Ridge, and if all goes well, the first crop will be in the greenhouse space in 1992. What it really does is maintain Pine Ridge as a significant supplier of seedlings and establishes a facility that can really be called a cornerstone of nursery technology and ensures that a sufficient seedling supply is available to manage our forests. After the upgrade is complete, we'll grow about 28 million trees a year at Pine Ridge. We're concentrating on a variety of seedling types specially stocked to meet different situations that come about in the field.

The remainder of the seedling production is coming from the private sector, and I must say we're proud of the effort to establish the tree seedling industry in Alberta. We've instituted a starter program to get people into the business and away from other things that weren't as productive for them, and it's certainly helped a number of communities. We've been doing all that we can to help them to succeed. Small contracts are issued really at the onset. Then they have an opportunity to increase over time as their expertise is developed. Also, our Pine Ridge staff help and provide advice where required to assist the growers with any problems they might have during their start-up phase.

It looks like about 50 million seedlings will be grown in Alberta by Pine Ridge and commercial growers in 1992, and that will meet all the demands that we have. We have 12 starter nurseries across Alberta, many of them in small agricultural communities. In addition, we have three Alberta producers with larger contracts for 1992 production. So we're moving along quite well with that and will continue to meet that demand for more seedlings with additional contracts as demand shows that we need.

I'd just like to briefly inform you, Mr. Chairman. Even though it was not funded this past year by the heritage fund, I think it's

important to know that the Maintaining Our Forests program implemented about 45,000 hectares of conifer plantations. About 60 million trees were planted between 1979 and 1986. Since that project was completed in 1986, we've been monitoring those areas very carefully and completed working on tending and removing mostly aspen and willow and elder to enhance the growth of conifer on about 30,000 acres. It's worth noting that the tending's been done with manual mechanical methods except there were a few areas where we had some herbicide trials. The majority of those plantations are developing into a successful mixed-wood forest where spruce and aspen are both doing well on the same site. We'll continue to monitor and tend those as needed. I thought I should report that one to you, Mr. Chairman, because it had been funded by the heritage fund.

Alberta's tree improvement program was made possible by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund as well, and it had support in the early and the late '70s. The seed orchards developed under this program will enable us to harvest seed which comes from a parent that produces very high-quality seed, and we've now developed seven orchards from that program. It would be interesting to note that we expect to be able to collect seed from them in the mid-1990s. So the dollars that had been invested by the heritage fund previously are now going to, if I can coin the phrase, "bear fruit," and we will see some excellent genetic stock come from there. Those areas are managed in co-operation with the forest industry because they recognize the value of the work.

I'd like to briefly talk for just a couple of minutes, Mr. Chairman, about the new regeneration standards in March 1991. We've been reviewing some of the older regeneration there has been across the province. The department's excited about what they found when they started reviewing that, because they looked at 55,000 hectares from across the province, and it's the most intensive look that we've had since these areas were checked off as satisfactorily reforested a few years ago. The results are extremely impressive. Hardly any failures at all were identified, and the healthy mix of aspen and conifers and tending those areas has just been a great success. Tending has accelerated as a treatment plan over the last five years, and we've been demonstrating our success in reforestation. We hope to increase the area treated in the next three years through funding from the new Canada/Alberta resources development agreement, and this should be in place in 1992. I hope to use some of the dollars from that to enhance that as well.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks. I'd be more than willing to try and answer any questions that the committee members might have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The Chair recognizes Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Lloydminster.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome this afternoon to our minister. My first question is along the lines of trying to understand whether money is exchanged in the purchase or the sale of the seedlings that are raised at Pine Ridge. I wonder if the minister could talk a bit about that. How much does the nursery charge per seedling? Is it done on a nonprofit basis? Is it done on a certain percentage above cost? Are there any pricing policies, or are they all just simply given away? I'm just wondering if you would talk a bit about the money and those kinds of arrangements.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Initially, Mr. Chairman, I'd say that we were one of the first places in North America to start on an active

program of reforestation and making sure we're having quality reforestation. There weren't nurseries or anything available at that time to provide those seedlings, so that's basically how we got into it. Over the course of the years, depending on the contract size and certainly FMAs, depending on what FMA it was, we had the obligation to provide the seedlings. They had the responsibility to collect the cones to start with and deliver them. We cleaned and separated the seed and tested it, grew the seedling, and then they have to plant and tend the seedling. About 20 percent of the cost was the seedling; 80 percent of the cost was collecting the cones and doing all the other things. So that's what was done with a number in the initial stages. There are some now that must provide all their own seedlings at their own cost. The Alberta Energy project is one that has to pay for all its own seedlings, and there are others. There are some that it's a percentage of the seedlings. I can give you an example. Probably in the Al-Pac case they will need about 3 million seedlings total, and we will provide about 600,000 of that 3 million. They have the responsibility for the others. It all depends on what type of contract was arranged for. By contract I mean that it was under the forest management agreement that was signed with the company.

To answer the question, Mr. Chairman, on whether any money changes hands: no.

2:21

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Okay; one of the questions raised by this. There's an evolution that's taken place, as I understand the minister's answer that there are seedlings that are being recovered from somewhere. If sort of a market is being created by helping other growers get established - perhaps I'm misunderstanding; I'm making some assumptions here that a market is being created in seedlings in which this nursery might have a role to play. Is any consideration or thought being given to the idea of implementing a charge or some more financial recovery for the costs of producing these seedlings; that is, if others are in the market, why doesn't the government get into the market too?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, we've had a number of delegations from the United States who looked at our operation and also looked at the financial aspects of it and were impressed with the research and the quality control we're able to maintain by having that facility there. It might help you to understand that, first of all, when the seed is collected we want to make sure the seed is collected from the best trees in the area where the harvesting took place. It's tagged, and then it comes to Pine Ridge where the cones are opened and the seed is tested. Then it is grown to a seedling, wherever that might be, whether it's at Pine Ridge or somewhere else. Then that seedling goes back to the same general area, the same elevation and everything, so that it's acclimatized to the area.

Now, in answer to the question of whether or not we intend to charge for that, our intention is no, we're not. The companies are responsible for buying seedlings from the private sector as well, and, of course, we will buy some from the private sector as well under a tender basis in order to meet the commitments that we have. As far as a direct charge at Pine Ridge there's been no thought, and in fact the recommendations that we received from those in the business recommend against it.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Okay.

A final question, Mr. Chairman. The nursery appears under the capital projects division and is a deemed asset, and as we know from the Auditor's report, that represents amounts expended which are not recoverable by the fund. Can I take from all of this that

no thought or consideration has ever been given to privatizing Pine Ridge and that it will never be privatized in the future; that is, sold into the private sector as a potential market asset or a money-making asset for a private owner?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, the government has given no consideration at this point to that. But to say that, no, we would never consider privatization of Pine Ridge, I don't believe that's true either. It certainly has a value, and there may be good reason to look at that being in the private sector. I'm of the personal view that it shouldn't be, and the reason it shouldn't be is that we maintain a quality control and a research capability there that will make absolutely sure that the seedlings that are grown within Alberta for planting within Alberta are maintained at the highest quality.

Now, you could come back and say that maybe that could be done by proper controls in the private sector, and maybe that's a possibility, but at this point no consideration has been given.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I would like to draw the minister's attention to page 52 of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund annual report, note (j), where reference is made to the \$275 million subordinated debenture that the heritage trust fund now holds on the Alberta-Pacific pulp mill project.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the Chair has trouble understanding how that ties into the grazing reserve development enhancement or the Pine Ridge reforestation nursery enhancement programs that are funded out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, I believe that if this government did this subordinated debenture out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, there was no question but that they consulted this minister, and if they didn't consult this minister, then that in and of itself is a very serious matter. If we can't ask this minister about a \$275 million debenture from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, then this committee is a charade. I want to ask three questions . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, if you didn't ask this minister, it would probably be the only minister you haven't asked that question to. But be that as it may . . .

MR. MITCHELL: I asked the Premier these questions and he couldn't answer them, so I'd like to ask this minister. I expect that he can. I've got three specific questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All having to do with that subordinated debenture.

MR. MITCHELL: I had other questions for my next go-round, but this is for this particular debenture, three specific questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could you explain to me how it ties into the money that was paid out to Pine Ridge reforestation?

MR. MITCHELL: Where does it say that we have to ask a minister about those three things, except in your ruling?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We really do bring ministers before the committee to talk to them about the money that they received from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund in the year 1990-91.

MR. DOYLE: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. DOYLE: I asked this question of the Premier and he didn't answer it, so who is going to answer it? Somebody's responsible for \$275 million. If it's not the Premier, then it must be this minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would seem to me that there was response given by the Provincial Treasurer to that question, as I recall.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, I've got another question here; I've got three of them to ask this minister. If this isn't something that comes under his purview in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, then this committee is an absolute charade. We should be able to ask a minister who has a responsibility for a \$275 million debenture from this government, this heritage trust fund, to that company some questions about it. If he doesn't have a responsibility for it, Mr. Chairman, then I don't know who would.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the minister has responsibility for that debenture, then the Chair will certainly allow the question to flow.

Mr. Minister, do you have responsibility for the . . .

MR. CARDINAL: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, Mr. Minister. A point of order.

MR. CARDINAL: That question was answered already by the Provincial Treasurer, the question they are bringing up for the third time.

MR. MITCHELL: You don't even know what my question is. How could he know it's been answered?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, all the financial aspects of all the mills in this province are under the Provincial Treasurer, and that's where the question should go.

MR. TAYLOR: Surely you made a recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, let me deal with the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. It's his time for questions. Please, let's deal with that.

Hon. member.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm going to ask these questions to put them on the record. I'm going to put them on the record, if need be, as a point of order. I'm going to put these questions on the record. I believe that I am owed that. I want to know to what other debentures or debts is that particular debenture subordinated, because it is referred to here as a subordinated debenture. How many other creditors stand before us in line, should something go wrong, before we could collect our money? That's one thing. Secondly, the Premier said that there would be a manual defining the terms and conditions under which interest would have to be paid to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, because that is not a given. I would like to know whether such a manual exists defining those conditions, and can we have a copy of it? Thirdly, I would like to know, when it says here . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: One question.

MR. MITCHELL: When it says here . . .

MR. JONSON: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Point of order, hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.

MR. MITCHELL: . . . that the interest would be accrued and capitalized on a 20-year term . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, when a point of order is called, the Chair has no alternative but to recognize the member.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Chairman, the procedures for hearings before the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee have been well established. They were reviewed and emphasized at our first organizational meeting. The particular topic that's being raised now was one when the first guest before the committee, the hon. Provincial Treasurer, was there, and it was responded to. This is just a means of making an issue and getting some print into *Hansard*, I suppose, on a topic that should be raised during estimates, during question period, and as I said before, it was already raised during the hearing that involved the Provincial Treasurer.

2:31

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, that member is impugning my motives. He is suggesting that I am doing this to get something in *Hansard*. He has no right to impugn my motives. I am asking this question because . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the Premier did respond to you, telling you that there would be a manual made available that would outline the information that you asked for, if I recall correctly, and by your own quotation that was the response.

MR. MITCHELL: That was two weeks ago, and we haven't got an answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't believe that the Premier intended to rush right out and print the manual, but . . .

MR. MITCHELL: Why not? Doesn't he have a manual? Maybe we could ask this minister whether he has a manual.

MRS. BLACK: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Point of order, Member for Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, the minister present has answered the question that the financial dealings of the heritage trust fund fall under the direction of the Provincial Treasurer, who's already appeared before this committee. Maybe if the hon. member had attended that meeting, his questions could have been dealt with at that point. Questions were brought forward.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, it's out of order for you to make mention of a member not being present in a House committee or in the Legislature.

MRS. BLACK: I will retract him not being present at that meeting. However, I'm sure that if he has any questions that he

feels were not answered during that session, he could document them and forward them to the Provincial Treasurer, and we could get on with the minister of forestry.

MR. MITCHELL: Then what's the point of having so many meetings?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the Provincial Treasurer did appear before the committee.

MR. MITCHELL: I don't want to ask the Provincial Treasurer. I want to ask the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife; that's who I want to ask. I'm a member of this committee. I am standing to ask these questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, there are some guidelines for this committee. Now, you may want to ask that question to the provincial Minister of Health, but that doesn't necessarily make it right.

MR. MITCHELL: I think that often we get to ask questions of people, as of Dr. Spence this morning, that bear very little relationship to what they in fact are doing. You allowed those questions to be asked. As soon as we want to ask a difficult question, a pointed question, a question about which this government might be embarrassed, we are not allowed to ask it. That to me is an affront to the process of this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, all the Chair's endeavouring to do is to stay within guidelines that the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund select committee is to abide within. Now, if we're going to change the rules of the committee, we should do that in the organizational meeting, but that we'll let far-ranging questions range to any minister on any subject is not the intent, because we would never get anywhere with the questions. I believe that the minister has answered your question.

MR. TAYLOR: A point of order, Mr. Chairman. Sure, many questions interface. I can see a worry about asking a Minister of Health, for instance, how the seedlings are doing out at Smoky Lake, but I think there's nothing wrong, maybe, with asking a Minister of Health if there's more cancer out there in Smoky Lake than there is somewhere else. All I'm trying to say is that there's an interrelation, and surely the minister who is in charge of forestry – that's in his title – must have some interrelation with a subordinated debenture for forest products. There must be an interrelation. If he does want to answer it, let him do it. We've wasted more time on whether the question should be asked or not. If he doesn't know, he can say he doesn't know. If he doesn't want to answer, he can say he doesn't want to answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, time is not the issue here. It's a matter of the proper procedure within the committee.

Okay; so the minister has answered your question. Do you have a second question?

MR. MITCHELL: Let somebody else ask him questions. This really appalls me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to, of course, welcome the minister and also ask about the grazing reserves development enhancement. I guess that needs to be done.

I'm wondering to what extent the removal of brush and trees is planned. I notice you're also talking about some type of technique that was developed or pioneered within the department that would enhance the grass quality. Is that what you're saying in this report? That being the case, could you perhaps elaborate on that?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, the reason we got into this program to start with was the demand for grazing from individuals. A lot of that area had to be cleared of brush to make the pastures work. Frankly, the job wasn't very well done. It was done quickly to try and get the pasture going as quickly as possible, and what often happened in those cases was that the roots that were still in the ground grew again. It wasn't cleaned properly. What has to be done now is to go back in and do it in a proper way, and we have a lot more expertise now than we had then. What we're trying to do in addition to that is spread it out over a seven-year period, because if you try to do it all in one year, you destroy all the grazing capacity that there is. So we're trying to stage it in a way that the grazing numbers can remain while we're enhancing it. Of course, we know more about forage quality now than we knew before, but I can't comment on exactly what kind of grasses are being put back in. I'm not sure of that. But I do know that the scarifying and the cleaning and then letting it stay there so they can go back in the next year and finish the job properly is one component of it.

MR. EWASIUK: Okay. While I agree that there needs to be clearing of brush and trees and so on, there also at the same time is an obvious need to retain some of that growth for wildlife habitat and so on. Probably the other major factor is that I think bush, trees, and shrubs retain snow and preserve moisture in those areas. So I'm wondering: how do you do that? What's the extent of the clearing? Now, you mention that roots are left; obviously, they're going to sprout again. Isn't that a valuable process, to leave some roots to have continual growth? You may have to do this on a regular, cycled basis.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, no one should have the illusion we're going in and just cleaning the whole area, because we're not doing that. Each of these grazing reserves is planned on a multiple use concept. We've got habitat; we've got clubs that use it for different things, 4-H and Guides, and hunting and a wide variety of other things. So having some retained brush in the area for all of those reasons is there as well. What's happened, though, is that it's just become totally covered with it again, so it has to go in in a proper, planned way to do it. Absolutely, we need to retain it, not only for shelter and habitat and snow retention and all of that, but we're making sure that we're cleaning the area again to make it so it's truly a multiple use.

MR. EWASIUK: Okay; thanks. One further question then. I wanted to turn to the Pine Ridge reforestation nursery station. I know the Member for Calgary-Mountain View touched on it; I wanted to sort of follow it up a bit. The minister in his presentation talked about some commercial growers getting involved in the nursery portion of it, I suspect, the growing of the seedlings, I take it. I had some questions about that from individuals who in fact were interested in getting involved in that process. How do you contract the nursery portion out to commercial ventures? Are there some criteria, and what are the criteria and so?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Well, first of all, I would refer hon. members back to June 24, 1991, when I announced a seedling supply strategy for Alberta. I believe I did it in the Legislature at

that time. I have a copy of it here - I'll be happy to send it over to you - that explains clearly what our intentions are. But just for *Hansard*, I will say this: we believe we need over a hundred million seedlings by the mid-1990s. Pine Ridge will bring in about 28 million of those seedlings; the balance will come from the private-sector growers. I thought initially we would end up with about a 50-50 split: 50 public, 50 private. We're just about at that number right now. It would be our intention to build that to a 70-30 split. I might also add that we have some 12 starter programs out there now, and we have three larger commercial operations that we tendered just recently. The one at Bonnyville won the tender at that time, and we intend to tender more as we have need. We have no intention of expanding Pine Ridge. We would like to see it done in communities all across this province by small starter programs or larger commercial operations. The seedling supply strategy explains all of that.

2:41

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
The Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Afternoon, Mr. Minister. I want to talk a few moments on the grazing reserves. I guess one part of your reply earlier on, saying that the department was brushing more areas, worries me a little bit. I would hope that when we look at the brushing of pastures, they're not going back and brushing off what they hadn't done before so that we leave it completely open altogether. I wondered if you might comment on that a little bit.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would say that we are not rushing now. We did rush before to try and get a number of pastures bare so we could expand the cattle numbers in the province. We are certainly not rushing now, but we have to go back in, unfortunately, and redo the work that was rushed and improperly done. As I explained to the Member for Edmonton-Beverly, we want to make sure that when we're brushing, we're not talking about denuding everything in a grazing reserve. What we're talking about is developing it so it can truly be a multiple use pasture, used not only for grazing but for all the other uses and habitat as well.

MR. CHERRY: A supplementary. The number of head that are allowed onto the pastures: is this looked at in the spring? In other words, if the carrying capacity is 5,000 head, do they look at the type of year that they're forecasting? Is that in consultation with the area farmers, or how does that work anyway?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, I know that's a very important consideration if there's drought in a certain area, as there is, for example, now in the northeast. That's a very major consideration. I know it's done in full consultation, particularly with the grazing reserve patrons, but I can't be specific, I'm sorry, on exactly how formal that process is.

MR. CHERRY: Okay. My last supplementary, Mr. Chairman, would be: with this work that's being done, is that being done by your department, Mr. Minister, or is this let out to the private sector? I hope your answer's going to be yes, that it will be the private sector that is doing the work. I would hate to think that the department is taking on the job of doing the work themselves.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I assure you, Mr. Chairman, we're not, but all contracts over \$25,000 must be tendered by us. Contracts

under \$25,000 are done by the grazing reserve in their own area. In many cases they're utilizing local farmers.

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Minister, and also welcome to the committee. You do look at home over there in the opposition, if I may use that one again.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I was just going to say: don't get too comfortable over there.

MR. TAYLOR: I was sitting in your desk over here too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the member have a question?

MR. TAYLOR: I'm intrigued with the reforestation of poplar. I notice your pictures are of evergreens, and certainly all the trees you buy are evergreens. When you cut poplar, as you know, if it's the type of poplar we have, it comes back from the root, but when you do a clear-cut on poplar, I would suspect that you might get something that looks more like grass than trees when it comes back. Have you done any experimentation on just what you have to do - it's almost the opposite of what you have to do with evergreens - in a clear-cut to get poplar back?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: That's a very good question, Mr. Chairman, because what happens is not just specific to aspen only. One of the problems we have with conifer is that we end up with actually too many trees as well. We replant in a conifer forest about 1,500 when we only logged out 400. Then you have some others where the seed blows in. You end up with more trees, really, than there should be, so stand tending is important to make sure they're free to grow.

The same thing with an aspen forest. However, when you cut aspen, they end up sending more suckers up than what the area can handle. So stand tending on the aspen is extremely important, or you're right; it will end up looking like grass, spindly little things that won't amount to anything. In cutting aspen, the tending portion of it is extremely important to make sure you end up with a healthy aspen forest in the future.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Supplementary.

MR. TAYLOR: I don't think my question was answered, but I guess I'm going to use up my supplemental. In eastern Canada - I've toured some of their areas - where they cut things like poplar, they get what you call an alder growth. It's just a local name for thick poplar that's useful to no one. They go in and put conifers in there anyhow. In other words, they neglect it. But here, we are trying to get poplar back. What do you do to thin that growth so the poplar will grow to a substantial size?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, we use stand tending. You have to go in there and thin. Actual thinning operations are done to make absolutely sure that you end up with a healthy forest that's actually free to grow. When we're talking about free to grow, we mean free to grow for aspen as well as free to grow for conifer. It's stand tending that's important. The thing with aspen is that you have to continue tending because each year, depending on the area you're in, you can get tremendous growth. So there's a lot of tending that needs to be done in an aspen forest.

I should say as well that we aren't interested in having a straight aspen forest in places just because that's what the pulp mill may be using. If there was a mixed-wood forest there that was aspen and conifer, we'd want aspen and conifer back in that area, not just aspen. That's part of our consideration as well.

MR. TAYLOR: Lastly, then, in your reforestation plans is there any effort to . . . [interjections] He's bothered again, I guess. Be careful; I'll keep talking till the end of the period is up.

What I want to ask is: in the reforestation of poplar or conifers, are you trying to change the next growth at all? In other words, the percentage of conifers. Are you trying to put more conifers into the plot or are you trying to perfectly repeat the past?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: We're trying very hard to repeat the past. There's been a lot of misinformation pumped out by people that we want to have a monoculture in Alberta, that we've actually got plantations out there. That isn't what we want at all. We want to maintain the great forest that we have and basically the same numbers as we have now. To give you some idea, I'm happy to share this with you. I've been looking for an opportunity to raise it. I have two pictures. Of course, *Hansard* can't read pictures, but in here I can give you some idea.

If you have natural regeneration taking place, you end up with a ceiling in five years that's like this on spruce, for example, and you have to scrape away the leaves to find it. In the proper regeneration that we're talking about - here's an example in a picture here. This guy is a big guy, and that's about six feet high. What he's doing here with his hand is showing about a foot's growth in one year on a conifer. Now, that tree there is under 10 years old, but that was done by our regeneration.

Now, this picture here shows basically the same tree. I don't know why they can't use a standard person, but this guy is shorter. The tree hasn't grown as much as it shows here. But what that's meant to show is that that's the regeneration of a cut block in under 10 years. It shows the mixed-wood forest as well as healthy regeneration of spruce. Now, that's what we want to have, because it's not a monoculture or a plantation style. We want to maintain the great heritage that we have.

2:51

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to be very careful here not to ask any questions on money. The minister apparently answers questions on tree growth.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member have a question?

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, in regards to the Pine Ridge nursery . . . [interjections] Could you shut the canaries down from the background, Mr. Chairman?

I want to first welcome the minister and his staff who are sitting behind us here. Generally, the minister brings them down on the floor, but I'm pleased to see the minister is able to answer the questions by himself. My question has to do with the Pine Ridge nursery. The minister mentioned that they're producing, I believe, somewhere around 50 million trees by 1992, and by the end of the '90s we'll need 100 million. Could the minister tell me: is this because of the seedlings that we'll have to supply to Al-Pac? Is that the reason for the doubling of the trees, and is this going to be another subsidy to the Al-Pac mill?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Well, frankly, Mr. Chairman, I can't believe a question like that, because I have already answered it clearly in saying that our intentions were to increase the size of Pine Ridge to some 28 million, that there would be some 100 million trees used by the mid-1990s, and that we were going to get the bulk of those from the private sector. I also made it clear, if the member would listen, that, first of all, about 3 million trees are going to be needed by Al-Pac, and of that we will provide about 600,000; the rest they will buy on their own.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Supplementary.

MR. DOYLE: So, Mr. Chairman, I understand that we'll be giving them 600,000 trees per year. I just wanted to be sure that this really was another subsidy to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, do you have a question?

MR. DOYLE: A further question, Mr. Chairman. I was pleased to hear the minister say that they are using more mechanical means of controlling the forest rather than herbicides. Does the minister see in the future that they will be totally eliminating the use of herbicides in the province in fighting the undergrowth of some of the deciduous forests?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, I hope not, because I think a lot of scare tactics have been used. We have chemicals, and that's the reason for our testing now and trials, working very closely with the Department of the Environment. There are biocides, not herbicides, that may be a tool that is very valuable in managing the forest. But I should say clearly to you that in our reforestation standards that we've established, we did not consider chemicals as a tool in establishing those standards. They can be done by stand tending. It would be much better if we had safe biocides to use. We are in trials and testing and research to see which ones are available, but I feel it certainly would be overreacting to say that there is nothing that can be used.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At least I'd hoped the minister would be looking at using more mechanical than chemical in the forest. I'm very pleased to know many of the foresters out in the field that do a great job; I visited with many of them last night at the AUPE convention in the city here.

I asked the Minister of Economic Development and Trade a few days ago in regards to the \$120 million investment in Millar Western at Whitecourt, and he said that it was the responsibility of the minister of forestry. Is it still the minister's responsibility that they're allowed to bid on a mill that shut down in Peers, Alberta, and at the same time fight against the private investor who has had no government money, Mr. Rehn from the Lodgepole area?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Well, first of all, Mr. Chairman, the responsibility on the financial aspects at Millar Western are under the Provincial Treasurer, and I suggest that go to him. I would say, though, that it is a free market economy in this province, and if a company wishes to bid, they have every right to bid. Whether or not they're successful remains to be seen. I would say that my priority for that mill, as well as the MLA's for the area, is that we want to see the mill remain. We want to see it reopen, and we want to see the jobs in the area. We'll do all that we can within reason, but to try and say, "You can," or "You can't," or "We select you over you for all these reasons," is something that I don't agree with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: I'd like to come back to reforestation yet again. It's with respect to the I guess you would say aboriginal forest, a concept that I noticed used in Scandinavia a lot. Do you require timber agreements . . .

MR. MOORE: You're in Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. TAYLOR: It sounds like the hon. Member for Lacombe has had an intravenous from Molson's again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has called for order, hon. member, so if you'd please proceed.

MR. TAYLOR: Can you cut off his Molson's intravenous? He seems to be . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please proceed with your first question, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: The aboriginal forest method – because apparently there are certain types of bacteria and other things that exist that don't exist when you do a clear cut and plant or let it grow back, are you trying to set a certain percentage of your forests or your cuts aside that will have no cutting at all? In other words, they'd be allowed to rot and grow as old as they like. What would that percentage be?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, first of all, there's no concrete evidence that there is more of whatever in a forest that's remained than one that's been properly regenerated. There are those – and with the reading I've done I tend to agree with them; I believe there isn't that much difference. However, having said that, there are areas in this province that we have excluded. I can use the Al-Pac case as an example. When we first announced Al-Pac, we defined the area we were working on with them towards a forest management agreement, which was some 73,000 square kilometres. When we finally signed the FMA with them, we had whittled it down to 61,000. Now, why down to 61,000? What did we exclude?

We excluded a number of areas . . . I don't like the word "unproductive," – I don't think it's fair – because you can't say an area is unproductive; it has many other uses besides just a tree. However, there were areas that were excluded because they were considered for forestry not to be productive; there were areas that were excluded because it was sensitive habitat that was identified; there were areas that were excluded because it would be too hard to regenerate; and there were areas that were excluded because there was some old growth, which we don't have a lot of because of the fire burn in this province. Normally fire has cleaned us out so we don't have that much old growth. But that was identified.

I don't personally subscribe to these percentage numbers: saying we have to set aside 12 percent of Alberta. I don't agree with that number. The reason I don't agree with it is that there are some areas where maybe it should be 20 percent and there are some areas where maybe it should be 6 percent. I don't know what the percentage number is, and the difficulty with trying to set aside areas, Mr. Chairman, is that we set aside a lot of areas in Alberta that they won't recognize. They say, "Well, it's not

legislated properly so we won't recognize that one," and you get into all this number crunching.

The bottom line, putting percentages aside, I have to say is yes, we want to make sure we have set aside our ecosystems in the different regions properly. We have it done in the Medicine Hat area in grass, and we've been working on the military reserve to have some set aside there. Working with the committee, we intend to do that all across this province and have done in a very significant way, and we won't stop identifying it, because I also believe that we're not smart enough today to recognize everything as forests grow and change. Ten years from now we'll notice an area that we would like to set aside, and we have built into the agreements withdrawal privileges to take those areas out and protect them as well. So in answer to your question: yes.

MR. TAYLOR: I think you hit it on the head when you say we're not smart enough to look ahead. So a certain amount of protection of aboriginal forests is a good idea just in case we are not that smart. Did I understand you correctly when you said you think this percentage would be roughly 12 percent overall?

3:07

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: No, I didn't say that. That was the Brundtland commission. It didn't really say 12 percent, but everyone suggests that it means 12 percent. So you've had people running around with a 12 percent number. Well, I don't subscribe to the number, as I stated clearly, because in some areas it may be higher and in some areas it may be lower. In some provinces it may be higher; in some it may be lower. I think it's more important to identify the area itself and get it set aside, whether it be in a natural area, an ecological reserve, a park, or whatever it's going to be, and see that it's protected. It's a wide variety of reasons. It might be habitat, it might be a whole list of reasons, but I assure you that that's given very serious consideration and will be even more so in the future, in my view, because of establishing a new public participation process and being involved in the management of the forest. There are more people involved, and I think we will see it develop properly.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, I hope with you that it will lead to fair protection of aboriginal forests.

I'd like to go on a bit, back again to a yield of our forest area, but it's not timber. I'm thinking of fur. Does the minister keep any records as to what the fur yield appears to be – I suppose you could combine that with the hunting yield – over the FMAs or forestry areas? In other words, reforestation is part of it, but besides reforestation that's also there for game cover and everything else. Has he got any ongoing method of measuring what forest operations and reforestation do from animal generation to animal generation in the fur and hunting for food market?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Yes, we do. I don't know what more I can say about it, except that if there's something specific, I'm happy to provide it. But yes, we do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to thank the minister and his staff for being here today and participating in the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I'd like to just take a brief moment to commend the department for the fine work they are doing utilizing the fund, not only on a short-term basis but also on a long-term basis.

My question to the minister, Mr. Chairman, is in relation to the tree seedling projections. He indicated over a hundred million by the mid-1990s. Can the minister explain to the committee if this projection is still accurate and if our present seedling facilities are sufficient to fulfill this demand?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: We believe, Mr. Chairman, that the forecast is still accurate. This year we do have enough seedlings to meet what the demand is, and we will continue to develop that over the years ahead by tendering out more seedling contracts until we finally achieve the full number that we need.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you. The first supplement I have is: does the minister's department have plans to expand its supply of trees for public education and conservation purposes? I think the opposition members could use a lot of education when it comes to planting trees, so I think it would be a good move.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I believe this last year we provided some 250,000-plus trees for that purpose to many different groups that were carrying out planting. We use them as well for giving out for education purposes. They're used in research as well as conservation.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if the minister could inform the committee what the annual operating costs are at the Pine Ridge nursery. Are they picked up by the heritage trust fund, or do we recover them by selling the seedlings to the people who are running the forests?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, I don't have the number of the annual operating costs, but I believe it's paid for by the General Revenue Fund, not by the heritage fund. I don't have the number, but I'll be happy to get it and provide it to you.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Chairman, I seem to have a problem. I understand the minister informs us – and I agree with him – that they do supply a healthier tree by doing the proper research and hopefully a tree that will grow quicker, but does this not discourage companies like Weldwood, who have a nursery attached to their mill? They've kind of slowed down on their operation. Does it not take the incentive away from them to also be in reforestation and grow their own trees?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, no, I don't believe so. I really would like to see the companies not only growing more trees, but I'd like to see the companies doing more research.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They have some very good foresters in places like Weldwood who really truly believe in the reforestation, but government policies have let them get away with some things they shouldn't have.

Mr. Chairman, I have a hard time understanding why we would put all this money over in the Pine Ridge nursery and not have greenhouses closer to where the trees have been taken. Would it not be beneficial to all the local economies if there were more greenhouses that would be able to sustain those forests and grow those trees right in the local areas through the private sector?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, I can't give an answer on why Smoky Lake was chosen, but I would expect it was, hopefully, for all the right reasons. My view is that I don't want to see all the eggs in one basket. I like to see nurseries spread all across the province, because if there is a disaster in one nursery, you've got a disaster for a whole year. How do you correct that? I'd like to see a number of nurseries across the province supplying trees so if there is a problem in one, then it doesn't affect all of the others. I really agree with having more, widely dispersed.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. TAYLOR: I'd like to come back, if I may, to the fur or animal yield. The minister said that he had something that he could send me, which I'll be looking forward to. Did I understand that right? If so, can he recall from memory at all if there are any changes in, again, fur patterns as they go from a mature forest to a clear-cut to a slow growth back again? Does he know anything relative he can tell me?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: The reason I answered the question as I did, Mr. Chairman, is it's a very broad question, and I have to be more specific, I guess, in getting the question before I can give the answer. For example, you said "fur or animal yield." Now, let's talk about animal yield for one moment. When we talk about elk and moose on areas that have been cut, it increases dramatically. We can give you those numbers. It increases habitat and forage and everything over the first few years after a cut and gives them more grazing capacity; hence, they produce more animals.

When it comes to fur, there are some animals that need old growth forest and there are some that need young. We work with the Trappers Association very closely because there are trap lines in some of those areas. The difficulty with being very specific in the answer is that the trappers have been having a difficult time. The fur market is down, and looking at the yields, some of them just aren't trapping, or if they are trapping, they're not taking as many animals. I'm able to provide some general information to you on the larger animals and on what happens on clear-cuts as well as what's been happening with the fur production in the province. I'll be happy to do that.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, and I'll look forward to receiving some of that data from you or some reports if you have anything on that.

The second was on, Mr. Chairman, the grazing leases. Has the minister any policy of taking out of grazing those leases that are near high-density urban uses for hikers and so on and so forth, like areas between Calgary and the foothills and Edmonton and the foothills? What are we doing on our grazing lease policy? Are they going to take those out of use, or does the minister intend to develop them further?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, grazing leases are not part of funding from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to the minister. It's grazing reserves.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry; grazing reserves. I'll alter that to reserves then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, does the question fit under grazing reserves?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I understand the thread of the question. There are 32 grazing reserves in the province. We aren't looking

at adding any, and we aren't looking at reducing any. There has been some suggestion we could privatize some of them. I'm not enthused about that. I think there may be some possibilities that we should never close the door entirely on.

The demand, pressure on the grazing reserves and the way they've been run: I, frankly, have heard no complaints from those who are using them for grazing as well as from the multiple use people that they haven't been able to do a lot of the things they wanted to do. So I don't see any reason. If it isn't broke, why fix it?

3:11

MR. TAYLOR: I'm not sure I followed you; I'm sorry.

Maybe you could call this a question. In the handling of the grazing reserves, did I understand you to say that there was some thought of privatizing them but there's no thought of reducing in total the number of grazing reserves out there for the province?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I don't believe that we will reduce the grazing reserves, and I'll tell you why. You have a number of people in a grazing reserve. If you privatized it, I can assure you it wouldn't be very long before it would be in the hands of a very few rather than the many. That would be a concern to me. The areas that we might look at are maybe the irrigated ones in southern Alberta. That might have some merit to look at a little differently than some of the others.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. That's the conclusion of the list of members that I have.

Assuming that those are all the questions to come from the committee, the chairman would like to thank the minister on behalf of the committee for appearing today and for the information that you've given us.

I would entertain a motion from the Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: I move that we adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All those in favour? Motion carried. We're adjourned until November 19 at 10 a.m. when the Hon. Peter Trynchy, minister of Occupational Health and Safety, will appear and, in the afternoon of that day, the Hon. John Gogo, Minister of Advanced Education.

I remind the members of the committee that recommendations can be submitted up till noon, November 12.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 3:14 p.m.]