

[Chairman: Mr. Kowalski]

[10 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to day four of the hearings of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act. This morning we have with us the Hon. William Diachuk, the Minister responsible for Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation, and we'll be looking at one project funded under the fund under the portfolio that is the responsibility of Mr. Diachuk.

On page 16 of the annual report of 1982-83, there is a section which briefly describes the expenditure funding in the 1982-83 fiscal year. Mr. Diachuk enquired of me several days ago whether it would be appropriate for him to forward a package of information to me for circulation to members several days ahead of the meeting, and I guess because of the amount of paper that all of us had before, I suggested to Mr. Diachuk that it probably would be most appropriate to have it available this morning. So if there is any criticism that members might wish to address to Mr. Diachuk for not having this information available prior to this meeting, would you please direct it to me; I'll accept it and improve the record and ensure that the paper flow occurs prior to. That was one of the reasons we delayed a minute or two in getting started this morning. I wish to apologize. I guess I just looked at myself, and most of the time when papers are provided to me some several days ahead of the meeting, I find I tend not to be in a position to read them until the start of the meeting. Perhaps one should not view that the whole world rises and sets as one's personal perspective on that matter.

At the conclusion of the discussion with Mr. Diachuk, there is probably about two minutes of business that I'd like the committee to deal with.

So, Mr. Diachuk, welcome. Would you like to introduce the people you have with you? If you have opening remarks, please proceed with them, and then we will deal with questions from the members.

MR. DIACHUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I'd like to introduce on my immediate right Dr. Robert Orford, executive director for the division of occupational health and safety. On my immediate left is Dr. Lynn Hewitt, director of the research branch. Next to her is Bill Ramsay; he is the grant program administrator. These are the three people that will assist me. After my initial comments, Mr. Chairman, feel free to direct questions you may not wish to embarrass me with to any one of the three of them.

I want to say thank you for the opportunity to speak on a program that was established on October 17, 1980. I had the pleasure of announcing the establishment of a \$10 million, eight-year program to provide funds for research, training, and education in worker health and safety. Grants from the program were first made available in April 1981 through the capital projects division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, with the objective of developing ways of preventing accidents and ill health resulting from employment.

In its 1975 report, the Gale commission on industrial health and safety emphasized a need for research and education, and suggested that such activities are frequently impaired due to financial constraints and insufficient long-term funding. Through the eight-year commitment of the occupational health and safety heritage grant program, we saw an opportunity to ensure continuity of funds to stimulate research and education initiatives in occupational health and safety. It is intended that during the life of the program, now self-sustaining research and education programs will be developed and continue after the funding period ends. This is really the hope of officials of my department and myself. In many cases, the applicants for the grant program are well prepared and intend that after the initial funding, it would be carried on on their own.

The grant award to the Alberta Federation of Labour is one example of a project

which will yield short-term results, and because it aims to become a self-sustaining program in future years, there will be long-term benefits as well. This project, modelled after the training program developed by the Ontario Federation of Labour, provides the Alberta Federation of Labour with funding to develop, conduct, and evaluate an occupational health and safety training program for workers. The training focusses on the recognition, avoidance, and control of hazards in the work place and also stresses the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workers' Compensation Act.

The training is designed to reach workers from all industries and geographical regions in Alberta, with a focus on high-hazard industries such as mining, construction, and manufacturing. The major objective of this project is to train, over a four-week period, a core group of 20 health and safety instructors who will in turn provide one-week courses to train 250 additional workers as health and safety representatives. In order to provide maximum accessibility to this program, the courses will be conducted during working hours at no cost to the workers and, insofar as possible, the courses will be held within the home communities of the workers.

This program will create a nucleus of qualified health and safety instructors who would form the basis of any proposed expansion of the program. The health and safety representatives will provide information and materials, as well as assistance, to their fellow-workers, and will also be candidates for the longer in-depth instructors' training session. That's just an example of one of the programs.

Another I would like to make reference to is a grant recently awarded to the Alberta Construction Association, which I believe will have significant benefits for both workers and employers. It is the association's intention to develop a comprehensive safety program for use at jobsites. The proposal, which was funded by this grant program, is designed as a pilot test of an approach which is intended to increase the construction worker's awareness of safety hazards on the job, to make the construction worker aware of his or her increased responsibility for personal safety, and to enhance the acceptance by construction management and supervisors of their responsibility for on-site job safety. The association will be developing three training modules, using a mix of print and audio-visual materials for use on the jobsite.

Rather than going into more specific details about the grant program at this time, I would like to refer you to the material which has been distributed. This material highlights the program's administrative structure and financial expenditures over the past two years. In addition, those projects funded since the inception of the program have been outlined to provide you with an idea as to the broad application of the program to health and safety concerns throughout various sectors.

Unless there are any immediate questions, I would suggest that Bill Ramsay, the program administrator, perhaps take us quickly through the material at hand. Should you have any questions during or after his presentation, we would be pleased to entertain them and respond to them, Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen. Bill, go ahead.

MR. RAMSAY: I'd like first to refer you to the document which you have in the inside pocket of the folder entitled Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant Program, April 1981 through March 1983. The first page gives you a general introduction and objectives of the program, which I believe Mr. Diachuk has covered in his introductory remarks.

Perhaps we could start on the second page under Program Operation. Briefly, to administer the program, we have a program administrator, a research officer, and a secretary. The salaries for these people come out of the actual budget from the heritage program. Besides these three people, there is an interdepartmental steering committee comprised of nine persons: three representatives from the occupational health and safety division and a representative each from six other provincial government departments and agencies. They make the recommendations to Mr. Diachuk on these

various proposals for funding.

The 1981-82 fiscal year was the start-up year for our program. In terms of program activities, considerable time was spent during the first year hiring staff, developing and formalizing criteria for funding, and actually promoting the program itself. That's reflected later on when we get to the financial summary of the lesser amount of expenditures during that first year, because it was the start-up year for us.

In the second year, which we've just completed, March 31, 1983, more emphasis was placed on, and time was available for, discussions with potential applicants. Hence the number of actually approved projects increased significantly during that time.

I'd like to refer to Table I on the following page, which gives an overview of the actual approved projects for the three categories that are eligible for funding through this program: the research, education, and conference awards. Presented here are the approved projects for our first year, 1981-82. In comparison, our recent year, '82-83, has a noticeable difference in an increase of 12 approved projects over that time. So as of March 31, we're looking at a total of 37 approved projects.

Following that, Table II outlines the various projects broken down by those three categories that we have approved, again to the end of March '83.

The final Table III at the back outlines the program budget and expenditures we have had since the program started. You will see the grant proportion in the very first year well underspent compared to the overall budget allocated to us, pretty much due to the reasons I cited earlier regarding the start up of the program. This year we're looking at about \$7,400 short of expending the overall grant portion of the budget. The other noticeable expenditure on that table comes in the manpower costs and, again, that has doubled simply because we did not have a full complement of staff that first year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, are there any additional comments you would like to make at this time, or should we proceed to questions?

MR. DIACHUK: We're open for discussion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That being the case, I have four members who have indicated an interest: Mr. Moore, Mr. Musgreave, Mr. Gogo, and Mrs. Cripps.

MR. R. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, on the outline just described to us, I note the various research projects that money has been allocated to. I wonder — the criteria you work on in allocating this to these research projects. When I see \$20,000 for bee sting sensitivity, or whatever it is — I don't think that is too major a problem in Alberta. But I know one of the major problems is farm safety, and here we have only \$25,000 allocated to a serious area that is fairly extensive: farm accidents. How do you arrive at what you allocate, and who influences your decisions? Do you people make the decisions, or is it from the groups that come to you?

MR. DIACHUK: I'll ask Bill Ramsay, because you've asked about the criteria. As I've indicated in previous years, and Bill has pointed out, the steering committee handles all these. I don't get involved in any of the applications until they are approved by the steering committee.

MR. RAMSAY: First of all, I think we should keep in mind that this being a grant program, we're looking at unsolicited proposals. The division does not identify areas to people and request proposals on a specific topic. This work is to complement the divisional efforts to date.

In terms of actual criteria, we have pretty much five broad areas which I'll highlight: identify incidence and prevalence of concerns or problems in the workplace; demonstrate potential for improving preventative strategies in reducing work-related

accidents and illnesses; focus on areas of priority concern to employers, employees, and government; demonstrate potential for broad application and impact in the field of occupational health and safety; and the proposals should enhance the public awareness and understanding of occupational health and safety problems. The project you mentioned referring to bee stings was a co-operative venture. It was actually initiated with the Department of Agriculture and, through Agriculture, we provided some minor support to the applicant regarding the overall project.

MR. DIACHUK: Do you want to comment on the \$25,000 agricultural one?

MR. RAMSAY: The farm safety one? Lynn, would you like to address that?

DR. HEWITT: I would just mention that this study on farm safety is the only application we have received over the past two years that's been concerned with safety problems on the farm or with farming as an occupation with a number of hazards associated with it. There are also two phases to that study, so the overall expenditure there will be greater than \$33,000. It's a major study and is taking place actually into this year. It's gone on for two and a half years.

MR. R. MOORE: A supplementary, Mr. Chairman, on that point. It is a major study; I agree with you. It should be a major study, and it's an ongoing thing. For the amount of money you've expended, I think you're just looking at the tip of the iceberg. Do you foresee this as an ongoing thing for future years, or will this end at the end of this year?

DR. HEWITT: I guess from our viewpoint it depends on the kinds of applications we receive. They do go through the same kind of review process; every application is treated in the same way. So again it depends on whether it meets those criteria for funding as a research project and how it stacks up against other applications at the same time that are reviewed by the interdepartmental committee that makes recommendations for funding.

MR. R. MOORE: A second supplementary, Mr. Chairman. Following up on that statement, is it required that you require further applications or requests once you have a request from an organization — say, the farm women? I don't know where that request originated, but I know that the Farm Women of Alberta are very, very concerned in these farm accidents, and also Unifarm and several of the farm organizations. Once they identify a major problem, is it necessary that there have to be other requests to continue it until we come up with some programs or some conclusions that can be applied to lower this accident rate?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, I'll ask Bill Ramsay to supplement this. What occurs in this type of event, Mr. Moore, is that the department will assist in counselling the organization on how best to come forward with a proposal. Sometimes they might meet only one of those criteria, but we don't leave them there and just turn them down. Go ahead, Bill.

MR. RAMSAY: When a final report on these projects comes forward with recommendations, it may involve a number of areas for follow-up; not necessarily the grant program per se. Implementing the actual recommendations could affect other departments or organizations. This program pretty much provides seed money or developmental funds to initiate some of the initial research and work on it once the actual recommendations have been made. Sure, we'll get involved if it looks like further developmental work has to take place if another application were to follow. However, the recommendations could be widespread enough to cover a number of different areas

which could be picked up on at that time.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, my question was the same as Mr. Moore's. I'm quite concerned; I think maybe this program is going in a direction that I would find of real concern. You're emphasizing the construction industry, and it's in the doldrums right now and conceivably will be for some time in this province. You're talking about the drilling industry, and it's operating at about one-third capacity to what it was previously. Yet in the agricultural industry, we're spending \$35,000 and your reaction is: they've got to make the initiation.

I think you should be working with the Department of Agriculture and saying, look, we've got a major problem here. Half the industrial force of this province — I gather approximately half our income comes from agriculture. There are concerns in the agricultural community, and for one reason or another, we haven't been getting programs. The amount of money you're spending is very small in relation to the overall problem. What are you doing about identifying the problem, getting farm leaders aware of the problem, and then convincing them that they've got to do something about resolving it?

MR. DIACHUK: It's a fair comment you've made, Mr. Musgreave, and I think it's one that needs to be recognized. We in the division of occupational health and safety had extreme difficulty getting our farm safety program really effective. We felt some restraint from the farm population any time the people on staff — at that time Solomon Kyeremanteng and others — would go out because it was identified as Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation. The farm community was reluctant to have us much involved. Through discussions with the Department of Agriculture and Dallas Schmidt, the minister at that time, in the best interests of the program and to keep the whole program continuing effectively and possibly even expanding, we agreed unanimously that as of April 1, 1983, the farm safety program would be moved to the Department of Agriculture. This still leaves the opportunity for the director to work very closely with our people, and I'm going to ask Dr. Lynn Hewitt to expand on it. The key thing is that after some of these surveys are carried out, we hope other programs of research and education will be motivated and created.

DR. HEWITT: I would just comment that this is a research study. As well as focussing on the farm group, from that study we also simply hope to learn more about how people perceive risks, the kinds of information that might affect their perceptions of risk, and the willingness to go ahead in the face of a possible loss. I think those kinds of issues can be addressed through some of these other research studies as well and have application to the farm population. So even though there's a limited amount of funding here that seems directed to that as an occupational group, I think a lot of what we will learn from other research projects submitted by other people will certainly be relevant to that group. But as far as developing programs is concerned, that occurs elsewhere in the division and not within the grant program itself, unless someone submits an unsolicited proposal to us for developing that sort of an educational or training program for a specific group.

MR. MUSGREAVE: A supplementary, Mr. Chairman. I guess that's my concern. I want to know why you cannot get — I guess perhaps with their going to Agriculture, this will achieve that. I think that people who are responsible for that industry should be ensuring that various agencies, organizations, whatever, are initiating these studies and getting on with it. If I understand it, I think that what you're saying is: we wait for a request to come; we're not initiating it. I'm saying: with a large industry there and the kinds of things I hear, maybe we should be taking a different approach.

MR. DIACHUK: I'll let Dr. Hewitt further respond on it. Any opportunity I've had to

speak to groups — and my opportunity to speak to other than farm communities has occurred more often than to the farm community. In the last four years, the only occasion has been at 4-H awards nights, and that was only on two occasions. I can assure the members of the committee, Mr. Chairman, that I do advise them of this program and that my staff would work with any organization or group that comes forward to develop a program that may be of interest to them.

DR. HEWITT: We really haven't actively promoted specific areas where we would like to see research done until the present. We just completed a major study to determine the research areas that seemed to be of highest potential significance in Alberta. In fact, we're just in the last stages of analysis of that project. We took into account a lot of outside opinion of health and safety professionals from labor, industry, academics, and other government agencies in determining what these priorities for research should be in Alberta. When we have the final analysis complete, we intend to publicize those areas quite broadly, including advertising and as well through promoting it through speeches by people in the grant program and so on. In that way we may be making more people aware of the possibilities to obtain research funding through our program.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, my comments relate somewhat to what Mr. Moore and Mr. Musgreave have raised. I recognize that the committee allocates research projects based on applications. However, Mr. Minister, it would seem to me that the whole thrust of this program relates in many ways to productivity within the province of Alberta. I would think that at some point that is the ultimate goal. If we are concerned about the health and safety of our workers, we must also obviously be concerned as to the fact that in a group of 24 nations, I understand that Canada is 24th in terms of productivity, undoubtedly much of that related to health and safety programs.

It would seem to me that if we have a situation where six in every 100 employees in Alberta — and apparently this is documented — have a problem with alcohol and/or drugs, I am literally amazed that a project looking into that is not under way through your department. For example, if as a result of collective agreements or otherwise, people are entitled to sick days off, my understanding is that some 99 per cent of all the sick days off in this province occur on either a Monday or a Friday. Frankly that amazes me, because I didn't know you could predict with that degree of accuracy if you're going to be ill on a Friday or a Monday.

I don't want to be critical of the programs that are here, but it just seems to me that there would be a lot of merit if — that initiatives have to be taken to see that these research projects are undertaken. Maybe there are; if there are, I don't know where they are. Why is it — and I don't want to touch on any of the sacred cows — that many states in America, for example, insist on doctors' prescriptions being written in triplicate or duplicate, and yet we in Alberta can't get beyond single copies? Hopefully they're destroyed somewhere. It would seem to me that it would be a worth-while project to look into the prescription of drugs as it relates to the health of workers and absence from the job.

It just seems that there is a whole range of areas that I think should be looked into. I guess my first question would be: can your department take some initiative with regard to getting — on the last page of your report — comments from the various government departments to suggest that advertising be done to solicit people throughout Alberta who would like to do a research project on that? I think Social Services and Community Health, for example, would be a major one which relates to those areas I've commented on. That is the first question. Is there merit in what I've said, as it relates to your program?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, I want to say that I welcome the representation from our colleague. Without tongue in cheek, I'll ask Dr. Orford, because I'm aware that we have

done some work for the division of occupational health and safety in that area, not through the grant program. With regard to the second phase of the response, I'll ask Bill Ramsay with respect to the interdepartmental liaison and publicizing.

DR. ORFORD: Mr. Chairman, I was remarking to Mr. Diachuk that in fact internally the division carried out a two-year study evaluating occupational alcohol programs in industry. This was completed fairly recently — about six months ago, I believe — and copies were submitted to AADAC, for which I believe Mr. Gogo is responsible. We are very interested in this particular area, and we've been working co-operatively on this very issue with the two occupational alcoholism counsellors, one based in Edmonton and one in Calgary, over the past five years to try to do what we can to reduce the accident rate that may be related to alcohol in the work place. In fact, on the basis of the statistics I've seen, it appears that alcohol plays a far smaller role in accidents in work places than it does for example in motor vehicle accidents. Where the rate of motor vehicle accidents related to alcohol is close to 50 per cent or sometimes higher, in occupational accidents it appears to be in the 5 per cent range or lower. So it's not as big a problem proportionally as it is in the motor vehicle area.

MR. RAMSAY: In terms of the second part of your question's scope, Mr. Gogo, I think you've identified a key area, that being the steering committee representation and the broad area that actually covers, such as Social Services and some of the others. Part of their reason for being on that committee is because a number of these projects impact on their areas. They're certainly in a good position to at least plant some bugs in people's ears in terms of explaining the program and hopefully they will actually make an application. But any further than that, I'm not sure what their role could be, other than indicating that the program exists and that we would be more than happy to entertain proposals in various areas.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, the reason I raise it is that in America it costs some \$70 billion as a result of loss in productivity, if we're to believe the experts. And I think we should; we pay them a lot of money. In Canada it's \$20 billion and in Alberta \$1 billion. I appreciate the comments, Mr. Minister, because I've read that document you submitted to AADAC. I raise it because I think that if it could be attached to anything named "heritage", it would receive the attention it deserves at the higher echelons.

A supplementary question, however. On your unnumbered page dealing with occupational health nursing program off-campus, Calgary — you may recall I raised this about a year ago, Mr. Minister, not from the research point of view, but that it would be a very positive thing if we could get nurses throughout the province involved in a program that you sponsored in your department. I recall that with some degree of reluctance you couldn't accommodate to provide transportation for nurses throughout the province to come to Edmonton to attend courses. It's allied to this, because it sounds very similar. This is a research project, but in fact your department had a project where you brought in nurses from throughout the province to train in occupational health and safety matters. I recognize that it's not within this particular project, but has the minister reconsidered that it would indeed be a good thing to recognize that there are cities other than Calgary and Edmonton and that perhaps nurses throughout Alberta should traverse our province and receive some training in that matter?

MR. DIACHUK: I'm going to ask Dr. Orford to assist me. My only comment is that we moved to the city of Calgary and look forward to any representation from some of the other postsecondary institutions which seek to be the vehicle to provide this program.

DR. ORFORD: Yes, two comments on that question. Number one is that through the occupational health and safety division, totally separate from the heritage grant fund,

there is a program to provide a limited amount of funds in the way of bursaries to occupational health nursing students. A total of \$5,000 is allocated each year. If a student were to come to Edmonton from a smaller centre, she would be eligible to apply for some of its money. It wouldn't be a great deal, but it would help a little bit.

The second comment is that Grant MacEwan Community College, which started the occupational health nursing program in the very early '70s — one of the first widely recognized programs in North America — has expressed considerable interest in developing an off-site delivery mechanism for their nursing program, and I understand that they've been working closely with Advanced Education in trying to get this program under way. Unfortunately, like everything else, it does cost money, and Advanced Education's funds have been restricted as well.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, the final supplementary. Hopefully, the heritage grant program related to this, is to come up with the net effect that productivity in the province as a result of these studies would be increased. Is that accurate?

DR. ORFORD: I think that's very true. If occupational health and safety conditions at any worksite are improved, productivity would also be one of the factors that would improve. Dr. Hewitt may have some additional comments on that.

DR. HEWITT: Not that you haven't listed.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, was this program initiated because of a recommendation by a former Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, for reflection, this was as a result of a resolution introduced by Mrs. Sheila Embury and debated and endorsed by this Assembly. If I recall, it was some time in 1980 that the resolution was approved unanimously. After that, as I indicated, I was able to present this program in October '80, and the funding commenced in '81. But it's as a result of a debate to provide funds for research and education.

MRS. CRIPPS: I notice that your request [inaudible] \$12 million for \$1 million in funding, and two proposals have been turned down for every proposal granted. What kinds of proposals have been turned down? Are they larger in dollar value?

MR. RAMSAY: In answer to the question, a variety of proposals in different areas, ranging possibly from \$1,000 to \$1 million, are rejected for various reasons, largely due to the scope of the actual proposal itself. For example, if it were geared toward one specific company that was going to benefit, not so much the overall industry, that's one limiting factor that disqualifies a lot of proposals, especially in the training area where a company wants to establish a program for themselves and the overall industry is not going to benefit. That's one of the areas we look at very closely in deciding whether or not a proposal should go forward.

MRS. CRIPPS: A supplementary, then, to that. The approval you have here for \$141,000 for McIntyre Mines for foremen's upgrading: wouldn't that benefit only one company? How does that tie into your overall objective of provincial scope?

MR. RAMSAY: McIntyre approached us on the basis of actually doing a pilot project which would benefit the overall industry. Nothing to date had been done in terms of training foremen in that area, and the whole underground mining operation — and it would have application to surface mines as well — would be affected by that program. McIntyre devoted some of their own resources and were prepared to go ahead and do it on behalf of the industry. The actual steering committee to that project involved a

number of different companies, such as Luscar, that were interested in the overall project and the results from that.

MRS. CRIPPS: How many . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, Mrs. Cripps. If you'd like to get back a little later, we'd be happy to put you on the list. We'll now proceed with Mr. Thompson, to be followed by Mr. Martin, Mr. Hyland, and Mr. Musgrave.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I too have studied your table with great interest. I have a couple of questions to do with the criteria you use in awarding these grants.

For instance, on page 2 of Table II, recycling and disposal of chemical wastes — I think that's something we should be interested in, but how does that directly involve occupational health and safety? It would seem to me that something in that area would be more of a general impact on total society and not particularly with the individual worker.

MR. DIACHUK: I'll ask Dr. Orford to start off the response to that, because it is one that's very technical.

DR. ORFORD: I don't have the documentation on that particular one in front of me, so I find it difficult to give you a specific answer. Just recollecting the proposal, I know that a great deal of it had to do with the health and safety of the workers who would be handling the waste. In this province generally, we're very concerned with the issue of hazardous wastes. The Department of the Environment has been studying the issue for some time. From the occupational health and safety viewpoint, we're also aware that there will be workers involved whenever this waste is handled, so I believe that this particular proposal was at least in part to deal with that issue.

DR. HEWITT: Another group we were interested in that may not be implied through the title of the project is simply those who are affected by the storage of chemical wastes. If they're left around laboratories, cleaning people or anybody who comes around those laboratories could be victims of an explosion or some toxicological problem due to the deterioration of improperly stored materials. So in fact we're looking at workers in a variety of settings who could be victims of improperly stored or handled waste products.

The idea here was that the chemistry department would also come up with a manual that would describe how these materials should be handled, which would be made available through the schools and also to people who phone in to the University of Alberta asking how to properly handle specific kinds of chemical wastes.

MR. THOMPSON: The explanation you give under that heading has nothing to do with what you've said here today. This is the part that confuses me; as far as I can see, you're talking in general terms on the page here, not in specific terms to do with workers.

Anyway, we'll go on to . . .

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, the statement is:

The aim of this research is both to develop safe methods of chemical disposal and recycling and to provide an Information Centre through which such information can be made available to appropriate persons in Alberta.

That's pretty well it, I guess in order to keep it brief, we had to limit it. I trust that statement covers what my staff have explained.

DR. ORFORD: Could I just ask, is this the Armour proposal? I see. I believe that Dr.

Armour is a member of the chemistry department at the University of Alberta. On the basis of this particular funding, she developed a very extensive manual which listed chemicals that are commonly used in chemical laboratories in Alberta and elsewhere, and described their toxic properties and the best ways in which they could be cleaned up. The manual is available from the University of Alberta at reasonable cost, and it's extremely useful to the people who work with these substances. I'm starting to recollect now just what this is all about.

MR. THOMPSON: My first supplementary?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is your last one [inaudible].

MR. THOMPSON: I didn't ask a question; I made a statement, Mr. Chairman.

Anyway, let's go to page 4, where we talk about a play Rigs by Theatre Network:

To produce a play which deals with the lure, dangers, hardship, and rewards of life on the oil rigs. A main theme is the necessity for recognition, avoidance, and control of hazards related to work in the oil fields. The play will carry the message regarding the hazards of rig work to oil field workers, their families, and the general population.

How do you people propose to get this out so that people see it? Here's a play, and the oilfields are in Swan Hills or wherever.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, I'll start off by indicating that I saw the play. I've also seen the film; it's now on film. It's the film that is now being extended to others.

MR. RAMSAY: The actual play itself was run throughout Alberta. They had runs of about two weeks at a time in Calgary and Edmonton. They also toured the smaller communities throughout Alberta. So it had a wide exposure. If I'm not mistaken, I believe it reached at least 10,000 people in terms of audience. It was very well received, from all indications, so it did quite a bit to promote the actual safety awareness in the area.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to follow up, because I was a little unsure from Mr. Musgreave's comments. It's clear that in the past the practice has been that we wait for groups, organizations, or individuals to apply for research grants. The impression I was given is that there is a study, that this may not be adequate. After the study you're talking about is finished, is the idea then that the organization might go out to different people when they see a problem and say: look, do you think you could do this; do you think we have some money here; we know that's a need. In other words, are they moving to much more of a catalyst in terms of getting people to move on these things? I perceive that a lot of organizations or individuals might think about it, but there is an inertia — we've talked about it, Mr. Minister — when it comes to health and safety. I think there has to be much more of a push from the organization. To follow up, is that the route you seem to be going?

DR. HEWITT: I would say, especially in terms of the research grant aspect of this program, that we do intend to take a much more active role. If we can serve as a catalyst, that's exactly what we would like to see, but we intend to do it in a very broad way, as well. For example, I can see us placing ads in the newspapers indicating the kinds of areas in which we would specifically like to see proposals and then going to groups that we think may have expertise to do research in those areas and make them aware as well.

Until this time, we have not specifically met with people, even in the university

communities, their research grant offices, because we haven't had any specific advice to give them, other than our general brochures that this program exists. I think we will get many more proposals in these areas we're interested in, if people have something specific to respond to. So the answer is yes.

MR. MARTIN: For a supplementary question, I'll switch into a slightly different area. I'd like to call it applied research, how we get theory to practice. Having done a master's thesis that I'm sure is gathering a lot of dust, that nobody's particularly interested in, I think a lot of research is done in this way. You have a number of projects, a lot of research projects, and you're involved in education. How are we doing when we bring that to the practical? Surely this is the whole point of this exercise. Can we document that we've saved a life or prevented an injury? As I say, how are we bringing the theory down to practice?

Following along with that, are we doing follow-up studies to see that all this money we're spending on research is actually having an effect out in the work place, for example?

MR. RAMSAY: In terms of the first question, I think it's premature to say that the accident rate is actually decreasing. Some of these projects — most of them — are still in progress. For the ones that have been completed, our general policy is to bring in people who are involved in industry or in the educational area, disseminate the results to them by seminar — that's the preferred method — and then discuss dissemination strategies to get it out to the public so it will be used and not collecting dust. We'll also talk with the actual postsecondary institutions that it could have some impact on so that these developmental projects actually are implemented at some point in time. We spend quite a bit of time following up to ensure they aren't shelved.

MR. MARTIN: This is my last supplementary. In terms of the follow-up studies, I recognize that it's a very difficult task, but surely there have to be follow-up studies to make sure that the money we're spending is getting down to the practical level. How you do this, I'm not sure; I'll leave that with you as the experts. But how are you going to do this? In other words, I think it's an important program, but I want to know that it is actually not just a number of studies and research. It's good research, that's nice; we have a play, that's nice. But how are we making sure that it's actually serving the purpose? What follow-up studies are you going to have to make sure you're having an impact for the money that's being spent?

MR. RAMSAY: In the short term, on a project-to-project basis, in most of these projects, an evaluation component is built in. In the more global sense, the program itself, the administration will be looking in this year, as part of its overall '83-84 plan, to develop actual strategies to evaluate both the direction of the program and specific projects that have already been funded, in terms of what follow-up action, if any, is required or should be undertaken.

MR. DIACHUK: I wonder if Dr. Hewitt would supplement the answer Bill Ramsay gave to Mr. Martin — there's a little more to it — to indicate that that study is not on the shelf and the involvement of the staff of the occupational health and safety division.

DR. HEWITT: An example might be this project done with the Coal Mining Research Centre where they actually prepared materials that demonstrated certain hazards that arise when we dig underground. It showed in a very graphic film demonstration certain appropriate and inappropriate ways of mining. It was worked on with our mining inspectors and was also shown to them and other people in the industry. These people then will make others in the industry aware that these materials now exist and can be

obtained either through the division or the Coal Mining Research Centre. They are also considering other ways of getting this message to the mining industry and, as Bill Ramsay indicated, we're still searching for the best ways of hitting certain groups of people that seem to be more difficult than others.

That's true of most of these projects. Division staff as well become aware of the results or the findings and then take that message out to the field.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, some of my questions were somewhat like Ray's. We talked earlier about the two projects involving agriculture, and a survey of the factors influencing farm accidents. Those can probably be summed up in three or four words — the hon. Member for Drayton Valley keeps reminding me. One is machinery, one is bulls, and the other is undue care.

I'm on to the same thing as the previous member, that these things will be useful at a later time. We would do a major accomplishment if we can get the majority of these research programs into actual production. I have exchanged views with the minister before, and I would be more than pleased to see a research project from the Workers' Compensation or from some other independent group, that would say methods of influencing the compensation people into a more active selling program to demonstrate what it has and the effect it will have on farm accidents. I think that would do more good than some of these studies, looking at the factors that influence farm accidents.

I wonder if the minister would want to comment on that before I ask my other questions.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, I thought Mr. Hyland was going to read out that machinery, animals, and farmers are the causes of accidents in the farm population. As a lad, I knew that all three of them are right there. He used it a little differently, and said "bulls". Well, there are other animals out there that cause accidents.

With regard to the selling of the workers' compensation program to the farm population, to the agricultural community, I have to say that I'm always interested in any new approach and so is the board. One of the things we always have to be made aware of — and I've become quickly aware of — is the reluctance and the hesitation of that particular sector of our population to have anything sold to them. The only successful way is through the proof of the program. I've been advised that the farm population that have coverage are the best salesmen of it. Maybe we haven't utilized them enough in the community but rather tried to go with staff from the WCB. I'm open to any suggestion.

When we, as a result of the last select committee, surveyed all the farm organizations, I went out with staff from the Workers' Compensation Board and met on many an evening with 4-H clubs, dairy associations, and farmers' union groups. I detected a continuous hesitation: you guys in Edmonton will force us to comply with this, and therefore we don't even want to participate in it. That's the only answer I have. We in the occupational health and safety division and on the board are disappointed in the low participation number in the agricultural community, yet I don't see too great a swell for a resolution to make it mandatory that all farm population be covered.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you. I'd better leave that one alone.

MR. NOTLEY: You're not going to make representation then.

MR. HYLAND: We who have been here since 1975 can well remember the comments on a resolution some years ago.

A question to the staff, Mr. Chairman. To get what this program does out to the public, one of the members talked about the possibility in time of having ads in newspapers outlining the program. Is there any thought — we've spent a lot of time on

agriculture this morning, as well as other industries. Does anybody in this small organization go to conventions or meetings of the Federation of Labour, Unifarm, or another one that touches a lot of leaders in the community, both the urban municipalities and the rural municipalities associations? Is anybody attending these conventions as a speaker? Very often, most of these conventions have little booths where people have their information available and can demonstrate. Is there any involvement in that?

I might as well throw in my other question and cut it off at two. How many of these projects would be co-funded with the industry, the union, or the people involved?

MR. RAMSAY: In terms of the first question regarding promotion, to date, given the limited resources regarding staff in the program administration, we have made an attempt to get out as much as possible. Specifically, presentations have been made to various safety councils and other such organizations throughout the province. A brochure is currently being developed and will be available within a month, I would say, that will cover the province as a whole. Other talks have taken place with larger groups; as you mentioned, the Alberta Federation of Labour. It's an ongoing attempt.

As far as conferences, the division staff is fully aware of the program, and at conferences and meetings they have, they bring this to the attention of the various groups they associate with as well. So we have a full complement in both the division and the program administration.

Mr. Diachuk is reminding me of another area, the division bulletin that comes out. We tend to promote any completed projects or project results through that. That has widespread distribution to all employers with an account; that's reaching a lot of people. It can always be improved upon though.

MR. HYLAND: The second part of the question was the co-funding.

MR. RAMSAY: We encourage co-funding in all grants; however, we recognize that that may not be possible. I would say most projects are co-funded. Co-funding could mean indirect costs; in other words, their time, their facilities, their meetings with various employers, or giving up their time, things like that. In that case, I would say all projects pretty much fall in that category of being co-funded.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, my question would be to the staff. I don't know who would want to answer it. I'm on the science policy committee of cabinet. We have an advisory science committee which has to look at a variety of research projects, costing anywhere from \$1 million to \$200 million. One of the things they had to do was set up a system whereby they could evaluate these various proposals. That then enabled them to determine whether or not they would recommend funding. Have you developed a system whereby you evaluate these? I'm curious as to what your approach is.

MR. RAMSAY: In terms of the actual process, when we get an application submitted to us, research people in the division review it internally, and decide what area it would fall in in terms of further expertise required to review it. Once that decision has been made, we send it out for external review and also internal review. So we're looking at possibly half a dozen experts in that particular field reviewing the proposal. It comes back to us, and we internally summarize and assess the summaries provided by the other reviewers, and that's what's presented to the steering committee.

MRS. CRIPPS: What's the cost of administration of this program?

MR. RAMSAY: The administration outlined in the document you have is approximately 10 per cent of the overall budget. For example, last year with the \$1 million budget, we're looking at \$84,000 actually expended in terms of direct manpower cost. It comes

pretty much to 10 per cent, with the grants being \$820,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there additional members of the committee who would like to raise questions to the minister and his officials? That being the case, I wish to raise one area.

Mr. Minister, in the province of Alberta today, there are 49 municipal districts and counties and some 21 improvement districts. In all of them, there is an institution called the agricultural service board, which essentially stores chemicals — insecticides and pesticides — for use in the agricultural community.

Coming to the question, the concern I have is that in some of these municipalities in the province of Alberta, the location of the building that houses the insecticides and pesticides tends to be included in another municipality. I'll give you an example. The agricultural service board building for the county of Barrhead is located smack in the centre of the town of Barrhead. It happens to be located within 100 yards of an elementary school. It also happens to be located smack at the junction of two primary highways. I have no idea at this point in time whether or not that's a safety problem. I have discussed it with environmental officials; they tell me it is.

My specific question is: in the two years' running of this program, has any proposal been put forward to the administrators of your department to undertake a complete overview in the province of Alberta to see where these agricultural service board storage buildings are located proximate to large, populated centres? That's a very specific question. Do you know if you've had a proposal in regard to that?

MR. RAMSAY: Not specifically in the grant program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My supplementary, then . . .

DR. ORFORD: I was just going to mention that both the Department of Social Services and Community Health, environmental health division, and the Department of the Environment, pollution control division, have interest in this area. I believe they have undertaken some studies of storage of pesticides and disposal of pesticide containers, but we haven't been dealing with this particular issue in our department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In terms of the document provided this morning and the specific kinds of research projects there are, I'm not sure — I need clarification on this. Should a research proposal come from a government department, is it under the mandate for funding under this program?

MR. RAMSAY: No, it's not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's not. Okay, fine. Thank you.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could just make one more comment. This program has not required an annual report by any legislative requirement, but there will be a report on the first two years prepared by the end of this year. It will be distributed to all members in report form. We're doing it, and that will help for future years. It will be similar to the annual report but will enhance what you've had up till now. That's expected about two months from now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Diachuk, prior to thanking you and your officials for being present, this is the last opportunity for members of the committee to raise questions. There being none further, thank you very much, Mr. Diachuk, and thank you, Dr. Orford, Dr. Hewitt, and Mr. Ramsay, for being here this morning. We'll see you next year.

Ladies and gentlemen, yesterday when we had Mr. Adair, Mr. Parker, and Mr.

McDonald here before the select committee, we determined that we would have to have a second meeting with respect to the Alberta Opportunity Company. At that time, there was a quick huddle by Mr. Adair to look at his time frame. He looked at the date, and we all agreed that perhaps Tuesday, September 27, would be a very appropriate date. Last evening, Mr. Adair contacted me and notified me that one of the two gentlemen with him, Mr. Parker, had a commitment on that day, a tour of the board of directors of the Alberta Opportunity Company in southern Alberta, one of the items members were concerned about. He wondered if members of the committee would be receptive to changing the time for Mr. Adair's return from Tuesday, September 27, to Monday, October 3, 1983, at two o'clock in the afternoon. Is there a general consensus with members of the committee?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, then, Monday, October 3, from two o'clock to five o'clock. That's the only order of business I wanted. I suggested it might take two minutes; it's taken less than that.

Our next committee meeting will be Monday, August 15, 1983, and I would point out that by a quirk in scheduling that meeting will commence at 2:30 p.m., rather than the traditional two o'clock. So we'll go Monday, August 15, from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. with the Hon. John Zaozirny, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Our next meeting next week will be on Tuesday, August 16, 1983, commencing at 2 p.m., with the Hon. Mary LeMessurier, Minister of Culture.

There being no further business, I declare the meeting adjourned.

[The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.]

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