

[Chairman: Mr. Oldring]

[2:02 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, everyone. We'll call the meeting to order.

I want to begin by welcoming the minister and delegation to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund select committee meeting. Mr. Minister, we're delighted to have you with us once again. I understand it's been approximately six years since you last had the opportunity of appearing in front of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee, and at that time you were here in the capacity of chairman. So we're pleased to welcome you back. We also realize that you've taken over your new responsibilities for almost six weeks now, so we're anticipating you'll have all the problems solved and all the answers ready, and we look forward to hearing some opening comments from you.

I should say, Mr. Minister, that the committee did have the opportunity of touring through the irrigation districts in southern Alberta. We're pleased to see Mr. Jake Thiessen with us this afternoon, who was ever so helpful. He really did have an excellent tour lined up for us. He was an excellent resource person to have with us as we toured through. We covered some 1,100 kilometres, and we gave him one question after another during the whole time and he was able to provide us with some really good information.

I would remind committee members that we're here this afternoon to review the occupational health and safety heritage grant program, which is funded through the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and also four programs under the capital projects division, being the irrigation headworks and main irrigation systems improvements, land reclamation, the Paddle River basin development, and Lesser Slave Lake outlet.

Mr. Minister, I don't believe the format or the process has changed since your time as chairman, but I'd just remind you that the format has been to extend an opportunity first of all to our visitors or guests to open with some comments, at which time we follow that up with a question and answer period. We offer each member the opportunity to ask one question and two supplementaries, and the Chair recognizes them as he sees the hands raised.

So on that note, Mr. Minister, perhaps you might want to introduce some of the departmental people who are with you and then open with some brief comments.

DR. REID: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, if I could introduce the people on my left: Vance MacNichol, who is the Deputy Minister of the Environment; to Vance's left — right, looking from your side — is Peter Melnychuk, the assistant deputy minister who is responsible for the water management services; Bill Simon, who is responsible for administration but also for the land reclamation services; and Jake Thiessen, who, as you mentioned, I think you all met on the tour of the irrigation projects. On my far left is Hilary Lynas from the department of occupational health and safety, which I'm also responsible for and which also has a program under this committee's jurisdiction. On my right is John Szumilas, my executive assistant. I suppose he's my right-hand man, and Vance is my left-hand man.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, it's a pleasure to be back here, not as chairman but as one of the people appearing before the committee. I remember that in the times when I was chairing it was a very interesting committee to be on and gave one a real cross section of Alberta to look at and all the matters that have been attended to in this province under the Alberta Heritage Savings

Trust Fund. The concept of the trust fund now goes back well over 10 years, and it has been a concept that has worked well for Alberta. It has enabled Alberta to do certain things that other provinces have not been able to, and it has also enabled us to upgrade facilities that in other provinces there would have been great difficulty in finding the capital resources for those items. It's in relation to some of those capital expenditures and upgrading that I wish to address my remarks this afternoon.

I think perhaps first of all, since I do have the dual responsibility, I would like to go to the program under occupational health and safety which is funded out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Members of the committee will remember that \$10 million was set aside for occupational health and safety programs. Of that \$10 million, roughly three-quarters has now been spent, and there is some \$2.6 million still left unexpended.

This is a unique program, Mr. Chairman, only to be found in the province of Alberta. It has been aimed at the general provisions of trying to minimize accidents and avoid industrial or occupational disease. That's an obvious aim of any occupational health and safety department and any project that relates to occupational health and safety. It is aimed not at the esoterics but at practical programs and getting answers to problems that may exist in relation to accident prevention or to the prevention of industrial disease. It is different in that way from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund medical research foundation, the \$300 million endowment program, which is aimed primarily at research and especially at long-term research.

The additional item that is funded from this program was the matching dollars for the \$245,000 that were put up by industry to chair a program of occupational health and occupational medicine at the University of Alberta. There is a chair, a professorship, at the university that was funded jointly by industry putting up \$245,000 and by \$245,000 from this program. Those funds were from major segments of industry, but part of the pressure to set it up came from the Energy and Chemical Workers Union in particular, and for that reason most of the funding came from industry in the energy and chemical sphere. The details of those programs are available in two brochures that I think have been distributed to members just now. One is the annual report, and the other is the document I'm holding up, promoting safety and the heritage grant program.

Members will note that this is a more practical, program-oriented booklet than last year's, which was essentially a statement of account and expenditures. This one addresses items such as the low exposure to hydrogen sulphide, training representatives from Labour on occupational health and safety, and other items of that nature. Just to look at the headlines in the darker print, the contrast print, one can see how practical the basis of the expenditures is. It's interesting to note, Mr. Chairman, that most of the expenditures have been spent in the education field rather than in research. Almost half the expenditures to date have been in education, really in two spheres. One is industrial associations, and the information there, of course, is disseminated throughout the members of the association. There have also been some expenditures to specific corporate entities, but one provision is that anything they develop is available to all the members of the industry or, indeed, to all economic activity in the province. In other words, when a grant is made, it is not made for the narrow interest of that particular corporation but to all corporate entities.

We have, as you can also see, assisted with many conferences, and about one-fifth of the expenditures have been to assist with conferences of an occupational health and safety na-

ture. I think that rather than indulging in any more discussion at this point, I'll leave the rest of it for the question-and-answer period subsequent to my initial remarks.

I would now like to go to what is traditionally, I think, of greater interest to most members of the committee, and that is the function of the Department of the Environment and the responsibility much larger than the \$10 million I already mentioned.

First of all, I'd like to reiterate that there are two major programs -- you mentioned the four. The two major programs have been the irrigation headworks and the main irrigation system responsibility; in other words, delivering the water to the irrigation district, to be subsequently distributed by the irrigation district, and there is other funding through the Department of Agriculture for that purpose. That's the larger expenditure, and the other one is the land reclamation program.

As you said, Mr. Chairman, the members of the committee have had a major tour of the irrigation headworks and the main canals quite recently, with Mr. Thiessen in attendance. I anticipate that from that probably you on the committee now have a more direct knowledge of the system than I do, as so far in the course of six weeks I have not had the opportunity to tour it. But I intend to do that in the near future. The tour has undoubtedly given most members of the committee a chance to speak to the farmers and beneficiaries of this program, and they will understand its crucial role in the economy of southern Alberta. There is no doubt about it that the irrigated land in Alberta produces disproportionately to its area; in other words, irrigated land is much more productive, especially in high-cost items and cash crops, than is the unirrigated land.

The headworks and main irrigation improvement program does not only provide water for irrigation, however. The purposes are greater than that. There is water provided for municipal purposes to communities that otherwise would have quite serious water shortages, and there is also water delivered for some industrial requirements. In addition, Mr. Chairman, of course if one looks at southern Alberta on a natural map, there are not many water bodies in the southern part of Alberta other than those that have been created by the irrigation headworks and the distribution system. So there is a recreational factor involved as well, and of course around some of the water bodies there is some wildlife enhancement through the provision of suitable water-based facilities.

The basic provision is that 50 percent of the water in any water basin must leave the province to the neighbouring province of Saskatchewan, and the South Saskatchewan River system is the one that is addressed mainly to do with irrigation. There are some small irrigation facilities based on other watercourses in the province, but most of it relates to the South Saskatchewan River basin, where at the moment some 17 percent is diverted and used within the province, out of a potential 50 percent. The primary objective of the program is to ensure that there are adequately sized and efficient delivery systems and supplies for the irrigation districts, some 13 in number, and to the Berry Creek area in the special area. Most of this is currently utilized. The amount of residual water is not great, and the amount of water returned to watercourses and eventually leaving the province out of that which is diverted is quite small, especially in dry years such as the one we've just experienced. There is the capability, however, to increase the volume available by upgrading the canals and the system, and that is essentially what the purpose has been of the expenditures to date. The seepage does not only lose water to delivery but also has

resulted in salinization of some of the surrounding ground.

The program to rehabilitate the headworks system was started in 1975 and subsequent to the decision in 1980 was considerably expanded. As we know, very large sums of money, totaling to date some \$362.4 million, have been expended. I think it has been a worthwhile program. It is slated to end in 1996, and if one looks at the program as it is listed on the document that has been distributed to you, one can see that of the total to be expended, some \$402 million will have been expended by the end of the next fiscal year and that there will be about \$165 million still to be spent in current dollars up to the end of the program. All the major projects have been initiated at this time. You saw those on your tour, so I won't go into them in any detail, as I haven't, as I said, had the chance yet to see them.

I'd like to reiterate at this time, though, that the program is essentially a program for rehabilitation and upgrading of existing irrigation headworks and the main conveyance systems. These were built, as Alberta historians will know, during the earlier decades of this century. They were in many cases built by very primitive equipment -- horse-drawn plows, et cetera -- and for that reason were not necessarily as efficient as they could be with modern equipment and techniques. The improvement and upgrading is necessary not only to meet the demand of the present but also, as I mentioned earlier, to expand the level of use and the capability of delivering to the various users. There's no doubt about it that after 50 or 60 years of operation the canals were deteriorating quite seriously, and those projects that have been completed that the committee saw on their tour will have indicated to you the degree to which they can be rehabilitated and indeed in many cases now have been. The committee saw in the actual flesh, so to speak, what has been done, but I have some photographs. Perhaps these can be distributed amongst the members of the committee to refresh your memories of what you saw just a short time ago.

Having dealt in brief, Mr. Chairman, with the irrigation headworks and canal system, I'd like to now talk briefly about the land reclamation program and make some comments about this particular program. The money for this was allocated to the land reclamation program from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund in the fiscal year 1976-77, I think before most of us on this committee, including myself, were elected to the Legislature. The program had been originally scheduled to terminate on March 31, 1989, and I'm quite hopeful that my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly will continue to vote the dollars for this program in the years to come. Indeed, as there are ongoing requirements from municipal landfill sites and other facilities such as sewage lagoons, I presume there will be a need for this type of program on an ongoing basis, and I would encourage members of the Assembly to support the vote when it comes before you next spring.

The objects of the program, as you know, are to return lands as closely as possible to their original capability -- now, that's not always the best use, and we'll get into some details of that -- to carry out reclamation research on industrial disturbance of lands to determine how such disturbances can be minimized and to provide for early certification of reclaimed lands; and also, and this is not an unimportant factor and indeed has not been unimportant in the recent past, to create local employment for many Albertans, albeit on a short-term basis for any individual project.

Most of the projects have been municipally oriented and have been abandoned landfill sites, sewage lagoons, old reser-

voirs, sand and gravel pits. Other, nonmunicipal projects have been involved also, such as reclaiming mine hazards, and I expect some of these will increase in intensity for the next few years. To March of this year — in other words, to the end of the last fiscal year — the total amount spent on this program has been \$31.3 million, resulting in over 1,000 individual projects, mostly small but nonetheless very worth while, being completed. These projects have removed scars from the landscape of Alberta and have converted them into playgrounds, fishing pools, and other useful environmental uses of the land. The difference between that and an old gravel pit or an old sanitary landfill is quite marked when one sees it.

During the fiscal year we are currently addressing, Mr. Chairman, expenditures totaled some \$2.1 million and allowed us to complete 96 individual projects, most of which in the last fiscal year were abandoned landfill sites. Having chaired this committee, I know that members are often interested to know where the work is done. The work has been done in the last fiscal year throughout the province in many locations — as I mentioned, 96 — and we estimate currently that there are still some 400 sites where this program can usefully be applied. Some of these sites will cost just a few thousand dollars, and some may cost as much as a quarter of a million dollars, depending on the size of the site, its location, and what originally it was used for.

The irrigation scheme we were just talking about may result in some additional sites becoming available. As you saw on your tour, in certain places the irrigation canals are being rerouted for efficiency purposes, and the old irrigation ditches that have been abandoned may well be sites that can be looked at under this program. They are not related to any specific municipality or any individual owner. In addition, we have abandoned roadways in some locations, and of course there are also the abandoned rail rights-of-way from the changes to the railway system, and those rights-of-way would also be eligible for the program, as they have been in the past.

The private sand and gravel excavation sites on private lands — some of those, the people who operated those pits are no longer in business. Again, it would not be valid to leave them as eyesores, and for that reason moneys from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund have been allocated to cleaning them up.

I think most members, certainly those from the rural part of the province, have got at least some municipalities that have benefited from this program. Most of those municipalities would, I think, encourage some expansion of the program into the areas I just mentioned as they tend to be found in the same municipalities as the places where we have reclaimed municipal sites. And again, perhaps the committee would be prepared to encourage the government to continue the program on that basis.

There are — I think they have been distributed, actually — some before-and-after photographs of some of the sites that have been . . . Oh, John's going to bring them over now. These are before-and-after photographs of some of the sites that have been reclaimed in the past. You will note that they have not all been reclaimed to any individual purpose, but some are parks, some have been reclaimed to wildlife habitat, and others have been reclaimed to ponds and small lakes.

I think I've said enough, Mr. Chairman, as my voice is already giving up. Perhaps we can now go to questions and answers. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for an excellent overview. You've obviously been doing a lot of work

and have gotten a grasp and a handle on your new responsibilities very quickly. I congratulate you for that.

The Chair would now recognize the Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Reid, welcome to the committee with your staff. Undoubtedly irrigation, which we recently had the opportunity to tour — I think some 1,100 kilometres of irrigation works — will be predominant today with regard to the questions.

However, I'd like to ask you a question or two about the occupational health and safety heritage grant program. First of all, with regard to the annual report that you have so kindly given to the committee . . . And I should at the outset say I believe firmly that as a result of the publication of that monthly magazine to 75,000 or 100,000 employers it's had a very beneficial effect in terms of prevention. My first question, though, Mr. Chairman, to Dr. Reid would be on pages 8 and 9 of the report. I see where about 50 percent of the expenditures which were allocated in terms of eligibility were not expended; in other words, about half the dollars allocated remained there on March 31. I'm puzzled, because when I look at page 9, I see that over the years there's been somewhat of a decrease in terms of applications received for research projects, of which I think 33 cents of every dollar is normally allocated. Could you share with the committee, Dr. Reid, first of all — I guess one answers the other — the reasons, in your view, for the decrease in applications, the dramatic decrease, in the 1987-88 fiscal year?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe, Mr. Minister, just before you do answer that — Member for Lethbridge-West, you're making reference to pages 8 and 9 of the Occupational . . . Okay. I just wanted to make sure we're all on the same report. Thank you.

DR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think one has to take the situation in fiscal '87-88 in isolation from previous events, in that in '87-88 there was a general awareness of the concept of fiscal restraint. One has to put it in the context of trying to deal with the preceding year's \$3.5 billion deficit — over \$1,000 for every Albertan. There was an indication to many applicants that there was indeed an attempt at fiscal restraint. Also, in that particular year for the first time there was not advertising of the availability of this program, and that may have resulted in the marked decrease in applications. As I said in my opening remarks, much of the expenditure has been in the area of education and support of conferences, and if people are not aware of the availability, that may result in a decrease in requests.

I think one has to put the '87-88 fiscal year in the context of what Albertans were trying to achieve, all 2.3 million of us, and that was to avoid getting into a situation of a mushrooming deficit and avoiding expenditures that could perhaps be delayed for a year or two. It does not in actual fact affect the total funds available. It was rather a deferral of expenditure. There is still some \$2.6 million available, and I would hope that the Legislature will continue to approve that.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Minister, in no way, I take it, based on your answer, has the priority of occupational health and safety been diminished in your eyes as the new minister responsible.

A supplementary question, Mr. Chairman. As Dr. Reid is well aware from his profession, there has been over the years a fairly high incidence of absenteeism in the workplace and, I

think, accidents caused by the abuse of certain things, such as alcohol and drugs, including prescription drugs. There's no reference in the report at all to any study given or carried out in that regard. Mr. Minister, could you comment as to your views on where your preference would be as to some either research project or activity related to safety in the workplace concerning alcohol and drug abuse?

DR. REID: Yes, I'd like to make some remarks in regard to that, Mr. Chairman. The Member for Lethbridge-West, as usual, is getting close to my basic interests after some 30 years in the practice of medicine involving a lot of industrial medicine at the pulp mills and in coal mines. There is no doubt about it that a considerable percentage of the absenteeism which affects individual families' earnings and the accident rate in industrial activity is related to substance abuse. I myself would be delighted if somebody would come forward with the intention of doing a project to see what can be done about this. We're aware of the problem. The difficulty is: what are the answers?

If it were possible to achieve the utopia where these effects were brought down to zero in relation to the workplace, either in absenteeism or in industrial accidents, it would have a significant effect. There have been various estimates made of the number of accidents and the amount of absenteeism that is related to substance abuse, and they're probably all inaccurate. Those who are being pejorative tend to exaggerate the effect; those who may use the substances involved themselves tend to minimize the effect: that's human nature. But there is no doubt about the significance of substance abuse in this field. I would be delighted to have a project brought before the selection committee. I think this is a very useful use of the funds, and would be. The main expenditure of those funds, to my mind, should be addressed at the practicalities of reducing accidents and occupational disease, and certainly anything that can be done in relation to delineating and answering the problem of substance abuse would be well worth while.

MR. GOGO: A final supplementary, Mr. Chairman, to Dr. Reid. We've seen a dramatic shift in work habits in Alberta over the last quarter of a century. Many here in the capital, certainly those who work for government, are in sealed buildings with air-conditioned offices. Many claim that the recycled air and so on tends to result in many types of ailments that result in a tremendous — or "dramatic" may be the term — increase in the last 10 to 15 years in temporary illness. I don't know whether that's factual or whether it's not. I do know the great craze to end smoking within those buildings is probably going to have an effect of one kind or the other. My prediction would be there'd be more germs caught and more sick time because of no smoking. However, the minister obviously would disagree with that.

Mr. Minister, could you comment, based on your judgment because of being the Minister of Labour and being well aware of sick time, both permanent and temporary, whether you would think there'd be justification for doing a comparison between those people who work in airtight buildings with recycled air — I'm talking now really of the Alberta working population — and those who work in outside jobs where they're not exposed to the same type of problem. Would you have a preference to do a study in that area?

DR. REID: Well, again, Mr. Chairman, the selection committee are at the mercy of those who put forward proposals. It is not their job to go out and find the proposals; it's a matter of en-

couraging people to put in proposals, and the selection committee can then look at them.

The problem the hon. Member for Lethbridge West has mentioned, of the closed building syndrome, is partly a reaction to the so-called energy crisis, and there is no doubt about it that just as we may have oversealed domestic buildings — residences — we may have oversealed office buildings. It's not the sealing that is the problem; it is that perhaps the air exchange requirements have not been upgraded enough. It does cost money to heat or cool the incoming air, and for that reason there may have been a tendency to recirculate air rather than bringing in fresh external air to the extent that should be done. The same thing applies, incidentally, with houses. Any house built to the so-called R2000 factor qualifications, any house of that nature, by specification has to have an air exchange system, usually with a heat exchanger, so that the exiting air helps to warm the incoming air. That helps to cut the energy requirements in the incoming air. In the R2000 program that is mandatory; it is not mandatory in other residences.

But even if a house is not built to the R2000 factor, with the modern use of vapour barriers and sealing the cracks, the requirement for an air circulation system with preferably a heat exchanger perhaps should be made mandatory. But that is in the general safety services division of the Department of Labour. The Building Code will be reviewed in depth in the next two years prior to the 1990 or 1991 reissue of the Building Code, and perhaps that's the place where it should be addressed, both for domestic buildings and also for commercial buildings. Certainly the air exchange system in a house should be no better than the air exchange system in an office, nor should it be any worse. Having looked at the air exchange requirements for operating rooms and the exhausting of anesthetic gases from operating rooms, perhaps that's the kind of standard we should be applying to other locations where people work.

MR. GOGO: Thank you.

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

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to congratulate the minister on his new appointment as Environment minister.

I'd like to start off by — I know we did do a tour of the irrigation districts, and one of the questions we were quite intrigued about was the fact that in the irrigation headworks and main irrigation systems improvement, in which we have invested so far \$362 million, we have not had any federal government involvement in the funding aspect of that improvement. We find, for example, that the Saskatchewan government has received over \$10 million in the last few years for irrigation headworks improvement and irrigation systems as well as signing a new \$100 million development program which will involve irrigation development as well. Is the minister planning to meet with his federal counterpart very shortly to negotiate such a joint funding for the improvement of our irrigation headworks and the main irrigation systems in Alberta?

DR. REID: Well, Mr. Chairman, a couple of points. First of all, in the five and a half weeks since I became minister, there has not been such an opportunity arise. I've been busy doing other things that were perhaps a little more urgent. While it is true that federal contributions are always welcome, since many agricultural projects are related more to provincial areas of

responsibility, such as water management is in this case, one would be leery of accepting perhaps \$10 million in a total outlay of some — what would it come to altogether? — roughly \$560 million. If the \$10 million was accompanied by the imposition of federal requirements that might indeed add much more than \$10 million to the total cost, that would not be cost effective for the taxpayers of Alberta nor indeed of Canada. One always has to watch what goes with the contribution. This is a system that was developed in southern Alberta for the benefit of Alberta farmers, and I would be very cautious about accepting \$10 million if it had strings attached to it that might change the nature of the program and its emphasis. As I said, this is not only a system for irrigation; it is to provide needed municipal water supplies and industrial water supplies. If a federal contribution meant that those two items had to be deleted, that would be unacceptable in southern Alberta.

MR. PIQUETTE: But the minister misses the point. We've been complaining in Alberta for a number of years that we're not getting our fair share of federal money for regional economic expansion, and very definitely irrigation is one of the priorities the government has put very high on their agenda.

In terms of the history of Alberta, prior to the Alberta heritage trust fund getting involved in the improvement of irrigation headworks, PFRA used to be a partner in that. Are you aware whether in the past number of years the province basically has decided not to ask the federal government for participation with perhaps no strings attached? What is the history behind this whole development that we are not seeking federal government participation?

DR. REID: Unfortunately, Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, I can't go back more than six weeks ago. It is true that the government is making conscious efforts to make sure it gets the financial benefits that accrue to other provinces for the people of Alberta. In other words, Albertans are paying their fair share of federal income taxes and federal corporate taxes and therefore should get their fair share out of any programs that are paid by the federal government. That's a given in any circumstance. On the other hand, I would be leery of accepting a very small contribution to a \$560 million project if attached to the contribution were strings that would seriously affect the program or change it from what Albertans want.

MR. PIQUETTE: But not really knowing without really negotiating, it's hard to predict what are the strings attached. With a federal election under way, wouldn't the minister think it would be very appropriate at the present time to meet with his federal counterpart and now announce some type of 50-50 partnership in terms of using federal money to help us with the irrigation headworks improvement in Alberta?

DR. REID: Well, I'm not at all sure that during election campaigns is the time to be discussing long-term projects such as this. I have no objection and probably will in the future discuss it with whoever the federal minister responsible may be after the election. But those discussions will be predicated upon the Alberta program being delivered according to what Albertans want, not according to some priorities the federal government may have elsewhere in the country. That was the warning and the provision that I was putting upon the remarks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask a question that has to do with the Oldman River dam. I understand the financing for that dam has come out of general revenues. However, when we toured this site, it did seem that the dam is integral, in some sense, to the projects in the Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District and the St. Mary River Irrigation District. So my question is: really, how integral is that dam to those projects, given the possibility of other alternatives such as smaller storage areas along the streams that support those irrigation systems?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair will just again point out that when the Oldman River dam came up in last year's discussions, as it did, it was agreed by the committee to put it off till the end of our time allotment on the basis that we would come back to it if the other questions had been answered. But perhaps the minister might want to make a quick comment on this.

DR. REID: Yes. Mr. Chairman, in answer to the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn's question, I think in my remarks I mentioned the fact that of the 50 percent that is available to the province of Alberta of the total flow in the South Saskatchewan River basin system, we currently divert some 17 percent. If one looks at the Oldman River basin component of the total South Saskatchewan basin, a very significant percentage — over 50 percent — of the flow in the Oldman River goes down that river system in a very short period of time which does not coincide with the requirements for irrigation. It is ahead of the requirement for irrigation, in July and August in particular. So that water goes down the system and is part of the 83 percent that flows through to Saskatchewan. It cannot be contained by any other catchment system. Therefore, the retention of that water at the Oldman dam — and it is essentially a retention system — will to some extent increase the effectiveness of the rest of the systems based on that river basin. The actual percentages I don't have at my fingertips because I don't have the responsibility for building the dam.

But the whole purpose of such retention systems as the Oldman River dam is to try to keep more of the 50 percent which is Alberta's out of the total flow in the South Saskatchewan system. By retaining it in the Oldman River system where the greatest need occurs — in that basin and in the Bow River basin — it means that the percentage of the water from the Red Deer segment of the basin is going to contribute its fair share of the 50 percent that must flow through to Saskatchewan.

MR. PASHAK: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer, and I think that's still one of the major areas of the debate nevertheless, that the Oldman dam itself might not be the only system of catching the water that's going through the Oldman River itself, that there might be other possibilities. But, in any event, I think that's a matter of dispute.

But I'd like to ask a second question, then, that would have to do with the waters that go into the irrigation systems, particularly from the Bow River. As the minister is aware, there is a former oil refinery site that wasn't properly cleaned up, I suppose, and there was runoff from that site that had the potential for entering the Bow River. There's another site in Calgary that's upstream of that at an old Gulf refinery site. I asked questions of the former Minister of the Environment as to the degree to which hydrocarbon emissions from those sites were being monitored — that is, emissions that might be going into the Bow

River — and there was no monitoring that took place. My question to the minister would be if he has any intention of monitoring emissions from these old refinery sites to ensure there's a good quality of water that flows into the irrigation canal systems.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Forest Lawn is showing a great deal of creativity in dragging these questions into relation to the trust fund report in front of us. I'm not sure if he's referring to the irrigation projects or the land reclamation progress. But perhaps, again, if the minister wants to offer a brief comment on that, we could please come back and focus in on the four areas under capital projects and the one area under occupational health and safety, heritage.

DR. REID: I think perhaps, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn is using his expertise as chairman of another committee to develop the relationship to the quality of irrigation water, but be that as it may.

There's no doubt about it, Mr. Chairman, just briefly, that Albertans en masse, the whole 2.3 million of us, have a tremendous regard for the environment. We have a concern about air quality and water quality, and we have a great concern about cleaning up the problem areas that have resulted from previous activity. There is no doubt about it that future activity will not be allowed to do some of the things that were done in the past.

In relation to the two refinery sites and also the wood treatment facility at the west end of downtown Calgary, those situations have got to be cleared up before they become a problem in the Bow River. There is a program now developed to deal with I think it's the Esso site at the east end of downtown, and the other ones will have to be addressed. Whether monitoring is the right way to do it — I personally feel the best way to do it is to deal with a situation, not to monitor its progress.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn try for one from three at least?

MR. PASHAK: Okay; I'll try to get one that's acceptable to the Chair, and that has to do with policy regarding these recreational uses of lands adjacent to the irrigation canal. I'm particularly concerned with that stretch of canal that leaves the Bow River in the heart of downtown Calgary and flows along, actually, the east side of the riding of Calgary-Forest Lawn, and whether the department would be interested in and support the development of that land that's part of the Western Irrigation District for recreational purposes.

DR. REID: I'm not sure that the hon. member is addressing the right body in that case. You're referring to the main canal from the weir in Calgary to the irrigation district?

MR. PASHAK: It flows through . . . If I may, Mr. Chairman, yes, it's the . . . I did say the east side of Calgary-Forest Lawn; I meant the west side. But in any event, it's the canal that leaves the main weir on the Bow River in Calgary. It flows parallel to the Bow River for a few miles, and then it swings eastward to Chestermere Lake and then water leaves Chestermere Lake via a number of outlets and gets into the irrigation . . .

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think all I can do is give the member assurance that when I go myself to look at the total system for which I'm responsible, I will be looking at the Calgary weir

and the canal. Obviously, if there is some additional use that can be put to it at reasonable cost, that's a valid concern. The primary responsibility I have is, of course, for the canal and the headworks, not for recreational uses thereof. I did mention recreational use of the water bodies, but usually recreational use is controlled either by the municipality or by the Department of Recreation and Parks if there are facilities around, storage lakes and things like that. But it's one I'll make sure I have a look at when I'm in the district.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Vermilion-Viking.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Reid, congratulations on your new ministry. It looks like you're coming up to speed fairly quickly.

My area to discuss is in land reclamation, and I must take my hat off to the department for jobs well done throughout the province. I've had several in the constituency, and they do a beautiful job in cleaning up these sites that have been left for years and years. I understand that some 1,100 sites to date have been reclaimed, but there are some questions that come up from the public out there. They wonder whether the department or this government has any direction on approaching the privately owned sites that are on private land which to date have not been reclaimed. There are many used-car places where they've torn cars apart over the years and left them, some areas on the approaches to communities, that are a complete mess sitting there. Now, I know the individuals may not want to clean them up, but can the Department of the Environment through this fund approach the private sector and work out a program whereby they can reclaim some of these in the future?

DR. REID: It's a tempting proposition, Mr. Chairman. On the other hand, we have the basic provision that where identifiable, the polluter should pay. I think that's a given all across Canada in every jurisdiction. It certainly came to the fore at the recent meeting of the ministers who belong to the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers in Winnipeg.

The ongoing problems that exist in many parts of the province from commercial and industrial operations: surely it is reasonable that those who have profited from those operations should leave the land in a useful state once they are finished. There are, however, some circumstances where the corporation or the individual that has performed the commercial activity is no longer in business, is not traceable, and in some cases that goes back many years. In those circumstances, then, a land reclamation program has been available for some nonmunicipal locations. The old used-car lot and the old wrecking yard perhaps would be a new use of it; I don't know of any that have been done in the past from it.

The difficulty is that one can continue to expand the program for every possible occurrence. I think one has to remember that to a very considerable extent industry in Alberta, in recent years when this has become noticed as a problem, has been very co-operative in cleaning up old sites and in dealing with them. There have been some exceptions certainly, but by and large industry has realized its responsibility and has followed through on it. I think we should all make the effort as individuals, as corporate citizens, and collectively; we should all make the effort to make sure we leave this province in at least as good condition as we found it and also address some of the old problems that exist. And that's the nature of this program: it is to do collectively what we cannot do individually, and I think it's worth

while on that basis.

DR. WEST: Yeah, it's a tough area, Mr. Minister; I agree. It was directed more to those individuals that are resisting under their property rights, the old British rule that you're a king of your own kingdom. They refuse to clean up areas not out where the gravel pit was in the middle of nowhere that we want to clean up but right on the main entrance to some of our communities. I guess it's got a double-edged sword, this one, but I would certainly like to see if we couldn't probe these people some way to get reclamation. But they refuse to clean up, and we're back in the middle of nowhere cleaning up something, and right out in front of our tourists on our traveled highways are these god-awful sights.

The second question would go to the chemical container aspect. I know it's not a direct line of reclamation, but you are cleaning up a lot of old garbage sites that have a lot of chemical containers in them, and you do a great job of cleaning them up and sorting out the materials. Where do you take those containers now, and how do you dispose of those chemical containers? Have you tried to join that in with the ones that are out there being collected at collection sites now on a recycling campaign? So I'm sneaking in the back door, but I'm saying: how are you handling the chemical containers through reclamation of the old sites, and how do you project those into the reclamation of the ones that are being collected?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Vermilion-Viking is very correct when he's sneaking in the back door. I mean, he's really stretching to try to bring that program into the trust fund report. But perhaps, in fairness, a brief comment, Mr. Minister, and then we can perhaps come back to the report.

DR. REID: I would hate to say that Barry is spreading the infection, but I think that's what he's doing.

Mr. Chairman, seriously, the difficulty the Member for Vermilion-Viking is addressing is, I think, related especially to pesticide and herbicide containers. These were mostly metal in the past, and the reclamation of them was in some ways more simple because of that. We are now in the era of plastic containers. They come in very large numbers, and when stored in big stacks, mountains, they are probably 98 percent air and 2 percent solid material. We have currently got a group going around the largest deposits of this nature and shredding and pelletizing them, which enables them to be put into a much smaller volume.

The current intent is that that plastic material should be recycled. The difficulty is in getting rid of the last residues of the chemicals, which tend to leach very slightly into the surface of the plastic, whereas they don't leach into a metal container. My understanding is that very small quantities of this material can make the plastic unsuitable for use as, say, plant pots or something like that, for obvious reasons. The other alternative would be to dispose of them by incineration at Swan Hills, but it would be preferable that we find some valid use for the plastic once it has been shredded or pelletized and bagged.

I would add, Mr. Chairman, that in recent discussions between the departments of the environment in the three prairie provinces, where of course most of this problem arises, and the manufacturers, it looks quite promising that we may have the manufacturers agree that part of the responsibility for manufacturing and selling these chemicals is to reclaim the containers. That will deal with the situation in the best way possible.

DR. WEST: Thank you very much. That's the type of direction we'd like to see.

One supplemental left?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Final supplementary, yes.

DR. WEST: The reclamation of old sites — and I had one out in a town called Minburn, for example; I use a real issue. We cleaned up the dump site excellently. Local garages there for years used the dump site to dump their used oil into. When I went out and gave the plaque to the mayor, who ran the local garage, he said, "You know, it's fine to use the heritage fund to clean up the province, but now I have a problem." He said: "I have all these 45-gallon drums full of used oil. I have no place for them now, because I used to put them in the sand up there in the dump." He said: "What will I do with these now? Take them out on the side road and put them in the ditches? Or does the heritage fund have a solution for that problem they've created?" I just throw that out because that's real; sometimes we go and do an excellent job in cleaning up something, but we've left it up to the public will to dispose of something.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, this was not done under the heritage fund. The concept of reclaiming used oil was an ongoing one and was based primarily on recycling. There are two entities, Hub Oil and Turbo, who have been rerefining used oils. A large part of their market for the rerefined lubricating oil has apparently been lost. I understand that the railroads were a major market, and they have gone to using new lubricating oil rather than rerefined oil. I haven't yet talked to the management of CPR and CNR, but maybe that's the answer. But the system does not have much storage capacity built into it, and when the market for the rerefined oil dried up, we had a flood of oil in the system which is now backed up to the 45-gallon drums that the hon. member is talking about.

It's unfortunate, because in the case of used oil it is eminently rerefineable. The rerefined oil is as good as the original oil once it has been rerefined, and it should be reused, but currently there does not seem to be an adequate market for it. The problem is the storage facilities. There were some volunteer groups who were collecting it and selling it; there were others doing it on a more commercial basis. Because of the lack of storage capacity within the system, the problem has now backed right up to those entities, and obviously it's something we must address. It cannot be used in its raw state or should not be used just as a dust suppressant, because there are contaminants in the used oil in some cases. The burning of it can produce problems as well. We obviously have to look at finding a better market for rerefined oil so that the system will unplug at the downstream end. That's the answer.

DR. WEST: I thank you for that. I'm sorry to bring it up if it isn't a heritage fund thing, but in the small rural communities it does become partly related to it, because they are not large enough centres. With a hundred people in some of these little communities, they don't have the volume to move on to larger centres that are rerefining and that sort of thing. So they were actually using these dumps for that purpose, and we have reclaimed them. I appreciate your answer and your knowledge in that area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Well, Dr. Reid, in getting to the research projects under occupational health and safety, I've always had a concern on all these research projects we have in the various departments, and this is only one indicative of the concern. I'd like to know how you select these research projects. Have you got a committee that does it? What's the process for selection?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Lacombe, there is a committee that makes those decisions and makes recommendations as to which applicants should be accepted and which should be rejected. That committee was originally made up of representatives from government departments, when the project first started in the early 1980s. In 1985 there was a change and four so-called public members were put on to that selection committee. It's called the grant steering committee. Those four public members were selected from the membership of the Occupational Health and Safety Council, and it's my understanding that the same four members of the Occupational Health and Safety Council have been on the committee from 1985 onwards. There may well be other members of that safety council who would appreciate being on the selection committee, and indeed one of the things I will be looking at is the makeup of that grant steering committee. In some cases the people selected by the Workers' Compensation Board and the other departments have not changed either, although the individuals may have moved to some other responsibility within the department. Obviously it should be the appropriate person who should be on the grant steering committee, and that's something I'll be talking to my cabinet colleagues about in the near future as far as the department appointees are concerned. As far as the representation from the Occupational Health and Safety Council, I think I'll be speaking to the chairman of the council about the members on the grant steering committee who come from the OHS Council.

MR. R. MOORE: I'm glad to hear, Mr. Chairman, that there are people from the public sector, and hopefully that represents the employers that are involved here so they have input into some of that firsthand knowledge of where their problems lie.

The question then comes. We do these research projects, and there are usually academics involved, and they complete the study. I'd like to know about the knowledge transfer from the researchers back to the private sector, where it impacts on the people involved. What is the process there? We know that the research is there. We pay the money; they do it. But I'd like to know if it's getting back down to the people, where it's utilized. I have a hunch that in a lot of cases if you looked at it — because there's a lot of theses, different people using those funds writing doctorates or masters' papers and putting them up on the shelf afterwards, and we don't really see the benefit down at the people level.

DR. REID: It is true that some of the projects are carried out by academics, Mr. Chairman, but not all of them. There have been some carried out by groups such as the Canadian Organization of Small Business and others, implement manufacturers' associations, and people like that. Even where the research is carried out by so-called academic groups, at the universities or at Lakeland College or wherever it may be, they are items that the grant steering committee have felt are useful and necessary.

At the top of page 14 of this book, the annual report, on the right-hand side members will notice systematic assessment of

protective clothing for Alberta workers — in this particular one we are looking at, in particular, fire-retardant clothing for those working in the energy sector. There are lots of rumours and misconceptions, perhaps, floating around about such clothing, and we need to know before we apply rules to the use of such clothing that, first of all, it retains its fire retardant qualities through repeated washings, after being exposed to a multitude of oils, drilling mud, solvents, and everything else. It's not just the washing process. We also need to know that it is indeed just as durable or almost as durable as non fire-retardant clothing. Now, one might well say that one has never seen a hand on a drilling rig in a new pair of jeans, and it's true that they usually are in a pretty tattered state of affairs, but fire-retardant clothing must be reasonably durable to be useful. If it's not, then it won't be used.

On the other hand, looking at that same aspect, obviously on the occasions where fires may occur in the energy industry, the basic effort should go to reducing the fires. But when they are performing certain specific activities in high-risk locations or where there is a high risk of fires, then fire-retardant clothing would certainly help to minimize the severity of the burn. It would probably become a flesh burn rather than a third-degree burn, and I can assure you that makes a tremendous difference to the end result. But that's a very practical program. Although it's being done at a university, it has a very practical end point in relation to the use of fire-retardant clothing. And that's a good example of what is being done currently, because that project is still under way — a very good example of what can be done under this program.

MR. R. MOORE: Just a comment on that last example, Mr. Chairman, if I could. That's exactly what I have in my own constituency, people looking for this exact information on fire-retardant clothing in the oil industry. It's ironic; it may be that we've been sitting waiting quite a while for that answer, and we're doing research on it. When is this project going to be finished? Have you any idea, Dr. Reid?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I suppose this is a classic conundrum of doing research. If one is going to do it, one should do it properly. Those of us who were associated with the development of the Heritage Foundation for Medical Research will remember that we tried to get away from the concept of publish or perish. That's the concept where one has to produce a report every year in order to get the next year's money. What happens then is that the whole project gets slowed down by the process of publishing interim papers. The corollary is, of course, that it must be done properly to be worth while, and I would far rather see the report, when it comes out, be based on valid work rather than just trying to meet a deadline. The matter is of considerable importance, and it should be done properly. This is not a matter of issuing a grant and saying, "You must have your report in on September 30, 1988." It's a matter of saying, "Yes, we think this is a valid project." This is what the grant steering committee do, and therefore it should be done properly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the minister or, perhaps more important, his officials a question or two about Pinepound Coulee in southern Alberta near Spring Coulee. I understand it's . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Which coulee?

MR. GOGO: Pinepound.

We had the opportunity of touring that, and Mr. Thiessen may indeed be the person to answer the question. I understand that because of environmental standards with headworks, unlike some other projects in this province there is an insistence by Environment that a mixing plant be established on-site to mix the concrete, although in reality I believe it's common knowledge that Alberta Environment has used Lethbridge mixing plants to travel 50, 60, 70 miles away and still fall within the guidelines of Alberta Environment. Mr. Minister, I don't want to be unfair to you, because this may be detail, but it's of great interest to me and certainly to my constituents. Could the minister or his officials, Mr. Chairman, respond to what the added costs would have been to the Pinepound Coulee project to establish an on-site mixing plant?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, this is a new one. I haven't had any information at all about this particular mixing plant. I understand that Jake Thiessen has got some.

MR. THIESSEN: Well, Mr. Minister, I am quite familiar with the project that the hon. member has questioned. I don't have the exact difference in dollars. I would say, though, that where quality control is very important on a structure such as the Pinepound Coulee siphon and where the structure is under approximately 25 to 30 pounds per square inch pressure at the bottom of the structure — quality control is important. Therefore, especially when the work is done during the winter months and at varying temperatures and conditions, it is better to have the mixing plant on-site. That is, quality control is more assured. It's similar to a major structure such as the spillways on major dams and so on, where the mixing plant is typically on-site. It's easier to control the quality of the final product by having the plant on-site. I think that was the main reason for specifying in this case. While it would have been possible to haul the ready mix a greater distance, the concern was for the final end product.

MR. GOGO: Supplementary, Mr. Chairman. I understand, Mr. Minister or Mr. Thiessen, that the added cost was about three-quarters of a million dollars. I'm not quibbling one way or the other, but I understand there was substantial cost involved in doing it. I guess what Mr. Thiessen is saying is that in view of the standards required for that type of project, that cost is justified. If so, I as a member of this committee accept that.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Thiessen, is the Pinepound siphon on target for completion, or have there been unusual delays due to the quality of workmanship?

MR. THIESSEN: Yes, Mr. Minister, through you to the question. The project is on schedule, and it will be operational for the next irrigation season.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask my first question as a follow-up to the questions by the Member for Vermilion-Viking and make the observation that if the province indeed was committed to dealing with the problem of waste

oil, they might consider requiring all provincial vehicles to use recycled oil.

But the minister in his response to one of those questions mentioned the Hub Oil site in the city of Calgary as a place that refines waste oil. I know that's an older plant; there's a lot of spillage that has occurred around the plant. In addition to that, not far away is a landfill site that is owned by the city of Calgary, and there are rumours that at some point in time PCBs were stored there and covered over. Currently, PCBs are stored there under fairly secure conditions. In any event, there's also a large holding pond there that takes a lot of the runoff from city of Calgary roads, and that runoff could contain hydrocarbons from waste oil.

There's also the possibility — and some engineers have talked about this — that the groundwater in that area flows towards the irrigation canal, and so hydrocarbon contaminants, other chemical contaminants, could be entering the irrigation system that way. To the minister's knowledge are there any studies that have been done to look at the flow of groundwater in that area and to monitor the quality of that water?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of any specific groundwater studies in relation to the Hub Oil plant. I do know that we've issued an emission control order to Hub Oil in relation to air emissions and the difficulties the member is probably well aware of in relation to odours from that plant. That air quality control order has been issued to attempt to mitigate the problem of odours. I don't know if there's any word, that any of my staff know anything about groundwater monitoring in relation to the Hub Oil site.

MR. MacNICHOL: Mr. Chairman, if I could just answer that. The directions our staff have now are that when they investigate any sites, whether it's Hub Oil or any other site, and if there is suspicion or evidence that there's a possibility of contamination, investigations are carried out right away. The rule also is that the owner has to take the lead role. But we move in if he doesn't and if we think there's a possibility of contamination.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, I can only assume that as a result of the exhaustive tour we had down south and the excellent overview you gave us at the beginning, there are no questions left as it relates to the matters before us. But perhaps again a supplementary on the topic from the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: A supplementary, but I'd like to change directions a little bit, Mr. Chairman, and move to the report on occupational health and safety and the heritage grant program. I must say that I think this is a very worthwhile expenditure of public funds, to support projects which will provide solutions to high priority occupational health and safety problems.

I'd like to turn to page 18 of the report, the section that deals with organization design and petrochemical accidents. We're all aware of the number of serious and fatal accidents that have occurred in the last little while in the oil patch, and I again applaud that studies were done — and I'll just quote — that have ... identified several structural, organizational and managerial weaknesses which emerged before, during and after the incidents.

As the minister pointed out in earlier comments of his, it's one thing to monitor and to do studies; it's another matter to take action. I think it's clear, probably from these studies — al-

though I haven't read them. I'm not sure if they're available publicly. If they are, I'd like to see them. But in any event, I do know that a lot of the accidents are caused by untrained, uncertified personnel. I'd like to know if and when the minister is planning to issue more than just guidelines, but regulations that would perhaps require training of oilfield service personnel, perhaps some kinds of certification for, say, battery operators. I mean, that would be one step. But just in general, Mr. Chairman, I'd like the minister to give us some idea of what action he contemplates taking that would minimize fatal accidents in the oil fields.

DR. REID: I'd be delighted, and it may take a period of time to give my answer. First of all, the recent accident rate and fatality rate in the oil industry is unacceptable, I think, to every Albertan, not just those who are directly involved in the industry but to everybody else. When there have been, I think, at last count 32 fatalities, of which 20 have been in the oil industry, at the worksite in Alberta this year, obviously there is a problem that has to be addressed. The industry itself has put together a task force that has brought forward a report which I think has already been accepted by most of the associations in the industry and which I anticipate will be accepted by all of them in the near future, dealing with accident prevention and safety. That's a new initiative by the industry, I think, under some pressure from my predecessor.

I myself have already spoken to the Canadian Petroleum Association; the independent petroleum producers association; SEPAC, the small producers; and the oil drillers association. I still have one group to talk to about the situation. I have explained to them that it is unacceptable and that they will have to change. They are currently almost at the stage of agreeing to an additional levy on their workers' compensation dues to pay for the operation of PIT'S, the petroleum industry training school. In other words, they are willing to pay for the operation of that facility.

One has to remember that the industry has gone through a period of turmoil now since the early 1980s, the first downturn to do with the program that caused so much trouble — and I won't go through it once more — imposed by the federal government, which, as we know, took a lot of the financial steam out of that industry. The national energy program had a lot of unrecognized spillover, and one was in the safety factor in the oil industry because of the lack of funds. There have been subsequent insults of a financial nature related to oil prices. There have been, as a result, some fairly rapid ups and downs in the industry, and many of the experienced people in the drilling industry in particular left that industry and probably will not return to it. For that reason, there is a need for a more formal training system, and the industry recognizes it and is willing to pay for it through their workers' compensation assessments. That I find most welcome, and it is probably the best answer.

The answer is not more regulation and government inspectors; the answer is training and acquiring experience and know-how, and for the individual operator and the associations to develop a concept of safety consciousness. Based again on my past experience in the paper industry, the logging industry, and the coal mines, there is no doubt about it that the key role in accident prevention is that the chief executive officer, president, or owner of a corporation, depending on the size of it — the head honcho — has to take a direct interest in the safe operation of their particular commercial enterprise. Once it gets across that

the head of the organization is directly interested, it is remarkable how people at the middle management and supervisory levels become much more conscious of safe operations. In other words, if the concept is, "Yes, we are going to make money, but we are going to make money safely," and that is emphasized to every employee from senior management down to the person on the drilling rig floor, there will be a change. I have the assurance of the chief executive officers and presidents, large and small, that I have spoken to that they are going to get involved.

MR. PASHAK: Well, I would agree with the minister that the carrot is certainly preferable to the stick, but I mean, after what we've witnessed in the patch, I guess it's just a question of different opinions as to whether that stick is necessary now.

But in any event, I'd like to ask a question that the minister may want to refer to the Provincial Treasurer. I still have problems with this whole business of considering \$10 million — and it's worthwhile money; I'm not questioning that. But listing it as an investment: again, it doesn't square with my understanding of what the term "investment" means. I understand that it's included in the deemed assets of the heritage trust fund. So I guess my question is: why take heritage trust fund money, spend it here when there's no hope of directly recovering that money in any sense — because how are you going to sell, you know, these occupational health and safety studies? Why not just recognize it for what it is, a legitimate expenditure, and have it come out of the General Revenue Fund?

DR. REID: Well first of all, in regard to the comment that was made following my last answer, I can assure the hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn that I offered some sticks along with the carrots. I'm not prepared to discuss those because they were private meetings. But I indicated quite strenuously that the present situation was not acceptable to Albertans and therefore to the government.

The matter of whether this is an investment and deemed asset I think is a matter of opinion to a large extent. Much of the information that is obtained, from the research component in particular, is good information that is available. Now, we choose not to sell that information. It's more important that it gets out to everyone involved rather than to make it into a commercial operation, in which case I suppose you could get into what the accountants call cost-effectiveness studies. We don't need any of those because here we are talking about injuries and deaths and illnesses. Surely it is one of the best investments that we could make out of the heritage fund if we can reduce accidents to the irreducible minimum, whatever it may be, and if we can as far as possible eliminate occupational illnesses. I think it's a classic example of an investment in the future of Albertans. The philosophical discussion about whether this is valid under the heritage fund or in the General Revenue Fund I think I'll avoid because we could take all day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No further questions at this time? If not, Mr. Minister, again I want to thank you on behalf of the committee for being with us this afternoon. I appreciate that you were also able to give us a hand on some of the questions that perhaps went a little beyond the borders of the trust fund annual report. But we do appreciate it, and thanks as well to all the people from the department who joined us this afternoon.

On that note the Chair recognizes the Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: I move we adjourn. I have a question, but

I'll take it up with the minister later. His door is always open to us, so I'll take advantage of that.

then, until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

[The committee adjourned at 3:31 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much. We stand adjourned,

