

2:02 p.m.

Wednesday, October 31, 1990

[Chairman: Mr. Ady]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the meeting to order and welcome the Hon. Peter Trynchy, minister of Occupational Health and Safety, along with his department officials.

Prior to moving to the formal part of the process, we'd recognize those who may want to read recommendations into the record. Are there any? If not, we would invite the minister to introduce his government officials and then make whatever opening comments he might choose, and then we'll move to questions.

MR. TAYLOR: Just one informational point of order. When is the last time you can read the recommendations in? Can they be delivered up till 4 o'clock tomorrow afternoon?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'd like to read them into the record tomorrow afternoon in the last session, preferably at the beginning of that session.

MR. TAYLOR: At 4 o'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At 2 o'clock. Does the member have a problem with that?

MR. TAYLOR: I don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Mr. Minister.

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon, lady and gentlemen. First of all, I would like to introduce the people with me here. On my far right is Marlene Gibb, executive assistant to my office; the next one is Dr. Lynn Hewitt, director of planning and research; my managing director of Occupational Health and Safety, Dr. Hugh Walker. Then we have Hilary Lynas, heritage grant program administrator, and Frank Testin, heritage grant program research officer.

Mr. Chairman and members, the history of Occupational Health and Safety through the heritage fund has been a 10-year operation. It's in its 10th year now, and as of March 1990, \$8.7 million have been spent. The program started originally with \$10 million, and this year, 1990-'91, we will have about \$1.2 million for new projects.

The fund was set up at the outset to prevent work injuries and illness and to promote occupational health and safety throughout the province. We have received 511 applications, and of those 186 have been approved. The breakdown of the approvals is: 57 percent of the projects were educational; 40 percent were for research; 3 percent were for conference projects. There was an independent evaluation done in 1986 and again in 1990, and it was confirmed that the programs through this fund were necessary and valuable to the workplace.

This program has developed new strategies and materials to prevent work related illness and injuries and has increased the number and expertise of individuals trained in occupational health and safety. If you were to turn to page 6 of the annual report which was distributed to you - and also you have the update, the summary report; I believe it's October 1990 that was delivered to you - you would find that there were 125 completed projects; 159,000 copies of reports, booklets, and video tapes are in circulation; 38,000 workers, employers, and health and safety

professionals have been trained in 29 different courses; and, of course, a number of other examples as you look through those two documents.

There have been three innovative awards from this \$50,000 program, the Heroes program. This program has now been presented in 32 different locations; 45,000 people have seen it, and they've been pretty well across the province, from Ponoka to Innisfail to Lloydminster, Drayton Valley, Jasper, Grande Prairie, and a number of places. As a matter of fact, as late as last night, October 30, they were in Peace River. We have the program ending on December 4 and 6 in Camrose. So it's really been circulated. For those members who have seen the Heroes program, I'm sure you'll agree, and for those that haven't, I would encourage you to make sure you get to see that program, because it's very, very beneficial to our young people. Students I have talked to that have seen it really have taken an interest in some of the things they've seen. Ninety percent of the people that have seen it have been, of course, teenagers, and it's now been booked until 1991.

The Alberta Vocational Centre has received some \$22,500 for video and printing material explaining WHMIS. It has been developed for workers who cannot read English, so it's in symbols. That's been a program we've had.

Eighty-two thousand, nine hundred dollars to the University of Alberta to upgrade their system for protective, quality work garments where there might be heat, fire, or explosion in the workplace.

In summary, the programs impacted on reducing illness and injuries in the workplace. The program will continue to work with industry, labour, postsecondary institutions, communities, and others to find effective ways and solutions to health and safety problems in the workplace.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to be brief to allow you the opportunity for questions, and I'm sure we have some questions. I'd be glad to answer them, and in bringing these people with me, I'm going to make sure they earn their pay, and we'll let them answer the questions today. So with that we'll move to any questions you have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

I'd just remind the committee that it would be appropriate to put questions to the minister on the Occupational Health and Safety heritage grant program. That's the issue before us today, the funding for that program. Hopefully, we can focus our questions specifically to that.

I recognize the Member for West Yellowhead, followed by Calgary-Foothills.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome the minister and his staff to these hearings on the heritage trust fund. We're getting close to the wind-down and just getting into the deep of it, actually, tomorrow. This minister, of course, is well known especially to labour in this province, and I bring greetings on behalf of them to the minister.

The annual report has some \$10 million in it, Mr. Chairman, and the stats and results indicate that oil, gas, and forestry appear to be probably the most important for funding. They have had substantial decreases in their claim rates, forestry with some 42 percent, and oil and gas has had a decrease of some 54 percent since 1985. I am not clear whether that is a decrease in the amount of people that work there that caused this, or is it, in fact, a decrease of the overall employment of those industries? But there appears to be no reference whatsoever to farmers

except on page 14 where the annual report gives some \$5,250 going to Hanna, and some portion of that, in fact, is going to farm safety. I was wondering if the minister or his department perhaps is not taking the accidents on farms seriously, and will they be putting as much funds towards farm safety as they do to other industries in this province?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, in respect to the oil patch injury reduction, yes, I've met just recently with the people from the oil patch, and indeed the numbers have reduced dramatically. It's not because they're not working; it's because they've been more in tune and they're more aware of the accident rates across the province. They've assured me that it's not because they're not doing as much in the field; it's because they're more aware, and they themselves, chief executive officers of the oil companies, have taken a great interest. It might have been as a result of my comments to them one day in Calgary, where I suggested that if they didn't reduce their injuries, I might change the Act to have the CEOs spend the first 10 days in jail. I think they got the message. So my information as of two weeks ago when I met with them was that they are reducing injuries and will continue to stay on top of it.

As late as yesterday afternoon I was in Drayton Valley talking to some oil patch people, and they were very concerned with the regulations and the toughness of their own organization forcing them to comply with certain regulations before they could be hired. They wondered if I could relax those regulations so their own organizations wouldn't be so tough on them. I said no, I couldn't do that, and I wouldn't do it. So I'm sure the hon. member can accept and appreciate that the oil patch is working towards injury reduction.

In respect to farmers, as the hon. member might be aware, farmers are not under the Workers' Compensation Act – they can accept it voluntarily – so we don't have that much to do with them. Certainly if there's a way we can assist the Department of Agriculture, where a lot of it is being done in respect to farmers, we'll be glad to do it. We have a program that we've developed on pesticides and herbicides. I'd like to ask Hilary when I get done to explain it. We have a video that's been developed in conjunction with a number of organizations for the farm industry, and we're working in that direction.

2:10

As far as having something for farm machinery accidents, we are not involved in that now. There might be a place for us, but when you look at farm machinery – and I've said this, and I'm a farm dealer and I'm a farmer – and when you buy a new machine, all the shields are in place. About six months later, or a few days later after use, you can see that the shield is off the side of the combine because it's easier to grease, it's easier to adjust, and they don't put them on. That's not something we can change; it's the farm community themselves. I've done it myself. On my combine you have a stone trap, and if you have to get at it, you have to take a shield off to put it back up. If it trips on you three times a day, you take the shield, you set it aside, and you continue combining, but you have to be very careful. Yes, there's a need for more awareness, not just in agriculture but in all industries in regards to injury reduction. If there's a role we can play with Agriculture – and I say with Agriculture because that's their main role – I'd be glad to do it.

Hilary, did you want to just say a few words on pesticides for us?

MS LYNAS: Okay. At the beginning of this year we gave a grant to Abraxas Communications Ltd. They have produced a videotape called *Basic Safety for Pesticide Applicators*, and it's just recently been completed. The grant that we gave was part of the cost of the project. There was funding provided from other sources, other government departments as well as private companies that either manufacture chemicals or employ pesticide applicators during the summer months. The videotape covers things like protective clothing and wearing breathing masks, and it's very practical, directed to workers. Alberta Agriculture did participate in reviewing the script and has informed us that the material covered in the videotape is useful for farmers. They are acquiring 10 copies, which they will make available at their research stations and throughout their libraries. They believe they can use it for training their own staff as well as for on-farm demonstrations and that kind of thing. It will be available to the district agriculturalists.

MR. TRYNCHY: It will be made available to all field men and DAs across the province, so it'll be where the farming community can have ready access to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Supplementary.

MR. DOYLE: My first supplementary, Mr. Chairman, was actually to do with pesticides and herbicides; however, I did feel that the minister of Occupational Health and Safety was responsible for the occupational health and safety of all people of Alberta.

The budget also includes utilities and their use of pesticides and herbicides; that's my understanding. Having worked in the industry of utilities for many years, I can't help but mention the fact that in the safety of the use by the employees of the power company, they're not allowed to handle or have in their occupation any Tordon or any of those types of pesticides or herbicides that are used for killing brush or trees and stopping their growth. However, the companies that do the work for the utility companies have to go out and spread the Tordon and other pesticides and herbicides for weed and brush control and do carry those in their trucks. As recently as two weeks ago I saw some vehicles parked with these boxes of Tordon pellets in front of a hotel at approximately 2 o'clock in the morning. It would be their residence while they're away from home. I would hope or perhaps ask if the minister and his department would clean this up, that these boxes of pellets, pesticides and herbicides, cannot be left out overnight to allow citizens and other people to take them off those vehicles. I would like to see that they were safely secured in some place where nobody can get to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the question, though.

MR. DOYLE: My question is: will the department, Mr. Chairman, because they fund these safety projects under the Occupational Health and Safety heritage grant program, take some steps to make sure that these herbicides and pesticides are kept in a safer area?

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, I don't know, outside of putting a policeman behind every truck. Firstly, I think the Department of the Environment has to issue the permit for all those

chemicals to be used under power lines. It's not Occupational Health and Safety. Our concern is with the workers themselves. Yes, we are responsible for all workers. I don't know what the hon. member was trying to get at when he said he thought the minister was responsible for all workers. We are, but there's a certain degree where we stop.

In respect to the Tordon and all that, they have to get an Environment permit first. I would hope that the Department of the Environment would make sure that these chemicals are locked up for the evening and not sitting on the backs of trucks. So the message is there. We'll make sure that the Minister of the Environment reads *Hansard* and suggests that these people that buy these chemicals for use on road allowances or wherever keep them under lock and key.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Final supplementary.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final supplementary has to do with the Occupational Health and Safety budget. Seeing as how the minister has agreed that he's responsible for the occupational health and safety of all people in Alberta, if we turn to page 11 of the annual report of the heritage trust fund, I would like to point out that the government through another department has made special homes for people with special needs. However, if you look at the electrical wiring in that particular house, it is against the Electrical Protection Act to have an electric plug installed in that manner. I would hope that the minister of Occupational Health and Safety would see that these houses are checked and the wiring done properly.

MR. TRYNCHY: That's not our department, you know.

MR. DOYLE: Safety is.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, the electrical branch does the permits, allows that, and they inspect the houses. Occupational Health and Safety does not inspect the houses where the plugs are. But we hear the message, and we'll make sure that the people that issue the permits are made aware of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Calgary-Foothills, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to welcome the minister and his department and thank them for coming before the committee again.

Last year the committee recommended that the grant program go into some research in conjunction with AADAC on the use of alcohol and drugs in the workplace. I'm wondering if the minister could tell us how far we've gone on that recommendation.

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you very much for the question. It is something that we're looking at very, very seriously.

I want to table with you, Mr. Chairman, a study that's just been done recently in Toronto – the copy is October 17 – on drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace. We are in the process now of talking to the people that did this study, and also we want to meet with AADAC ourselves. We have funds available. If we can find some way of getting the answers to the kinds of questions we'd like answered, it'll be useful. The study done in Toronto doesn't give us a very clear picture of the kinds of results they've obtained that would be that useful to us. I don't

know how you would ask a person their habits of alcohol and drug abuse and expect to get a fair answer. Who do you ask and how do you get it? So before we endeavour to move in that direction, we will be consulting with AADAC in the next few weeks to see if there is something we can do together. We will also ask them – and we'll be doing it ourselves – to talk to the people in Toronto that have done this study.

So I would like to table this, Mr. Chairman, so that you might be able to pass this out to the members so they can have a look at it. Read this and just see how difficult it is to get the kind of answers you'd wish to get in regards to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Supplementary.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As part of an aid, possibly, have you considered dealing with some of the corporate bodies, like Alliance for a Drug-Free Canada, that have been touring the country and the corporate sector to try and analyze the effect of alcohol and drug abuse on the work force not only for the safety of the worker but for the lost time that's involved with the problem of addiction? Because there are several bodies that have been going across Canada in the last two years gathering statistical data as to the very extent of the problem and the nature of the problem in a co-operative effort to try and combat the problem. I'm wondering: do you have statistics at all that would indicate whether we have a problem in our work force of 5 percent, 10 percent, 15 percent, or are we focused on a particular industry, and do we have any feel for the extent of that problem within the industries?

2:20

MR. TRYNCHY: We don't have any figures in respect of the percentage of alcohol and drug abuse in the workplace. If the hon. member has some names of somebody that's done surveys across Canada, I'd sure appreciate getting those names to us so that when we talk to these people, we talk to everybody that's done something so that we don't have to, you know, plow the same ground. I would then like to see us sit down with AADAC and see what we can gather and what they've got, put it together and see if there is some way we can work together by having AADAC do it, not us, and we would fund it through this program. As I've said, we have some funds available, but we don't have any figures that would show that there's 1 percent, 5 percent, or 10 percent alcohol and drug abuse problems in the workplace, and nobody has come forward to tell us.

It would help us if somebody said, "Look, at this company, at this location, 10 percent of our workers are into drugs and alcohol." That would help us, and we might be able to do a survey there. Nobody does that, so it's difficult for us to go to your shop and say to you, "How many of your workers are involved in alcohol and drug abuse?" You might tell us where to go quite quickly, because you're the one paying the shot. It's a touchy thing. How do you ask a person about their habits? Just how far can you go before you're told where to get off? But I'd sure appreciate any information from any member in respect of who's doing it, or who has done it with respect to a survey or a study, and we'd tie that together with what we've got or what we're going to get and what AADAC has and what they're going to get and see if we can move forward. We'll have Dr. Lynn here add to that.

DR. HEWITT: I just wanted to mention that in the fatalities that we investigate, we do check the toxicology results, and in approximately 10.7 percent of fatalities, we do find alcohol

present. These are work-related fatalities, and in about 4.3 percent of those fatalities this would exceed the .08 level. But what we don't know from these results is whether alcohol played a role in the accident that led to the fatality.

I know that AADAC estimates that approximately 5 percent of the general population has a serious problem with alcohol, and if we looked at the work force based on that figure, perhaps around 60,000 to 65,000 workers would be expected to have a serious alcohol problem, but we don't know where they are.

MRS. BLACK: As a final supplementary, Mr. Chairman, just as a note on that, there are several companies that are now going through a drug testing process within their own corporate structures for their employees' benefits.

The Heroes program has been very successful, and I think it's a real feather in the department's cap, that Heroes program, but I'm wondering if the type of things that are in the Heroes program couldn't be made available to go into the companies through their employee relations groups and expand that into employee relations within corporate structures and with labour movement groups.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, a very good suggestion. I don't see why we wouldn't. The Heroes program was designed for teenagers, but I see no problem with it being moved to a corporate sector. If they would request it and we have it available, I don't see why not. I really don't. I think if the corporate sector would become involved, what they should do is develop a second Heroes program and help us along, because we just have the one package, and do it that way and use it. Have you seen it yourself? It's related really to teenagers, but I don't see why not. It's a super program.

Dr. Walker.

DR. WALKER: We have exhibited to parts of the corporate sector at various trade association shows and meetings of corporate people, so there's certainly a general awareness of it. We haven't solicited entrées into single corporations to show it at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, followed by Lacombe.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister and his staff: I'd like to follow up a bit on pesticides, not only agricultural but use by the utility companies and the MDs. You have in your literature, as already pointed out by Madam there, a nice brochure on pesticide applicators. I think there's quite a bit more to that than application when you realize that for farmers out there particularly, their largest source of information comes from tax-supported advertising put in by the major chemical companies. This is the major source of information on the effects of the petrochemicals. You realize also that the farmers, unlike most people that pollute, if you want to call it that, are the first ones to suffer from it. In other words, it doesn't go up the chimney and come down until it's in Saskatchewan, or you don't dump it into a river like major polluters do. Agriculturalists are the very first to suffer if they use it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, you've got to move to your question.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, this is fairly necessary to set up the

background. I can hear the Member for Lacombe belching again, but nevertheless if he will contain his gas for a minute, I would like to get to the point. The point is this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'd appreciate it if you would get to the point.

MR. TAYLOR: Is the group thinking of funding an educative 45 or an hour and a half, whatever it is, VHS that you have here to show the effects of different chemicals on the environment, not only on the crop but on the environment and the people and so on; in other words, educating the farmer to the effects of what the chemicals are?

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, I don't think that's a role for Occupational Health and Safety, to show the farmers the results of chemicals. That is a role of Agriculture. Our understanding is that they'll be using our videos and our information, all the stuff we have, for that purpose. I would hope that the field men and the DAs throughout the province in meeting with farmers as farm representatives certainly would do that.

MR. TAYLOR: In all due . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your supplementary, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Yeah. I think I found you're washing your hands of that in saying that's up to the Department of Agriculture. Well, there's a great deal of danger caused by overuse of pesticides and maybe the wrong use of pesticides. Let's go on though, seeing you say that you don't think that's your responsibility, a little bit further then.

One other area where I've noticed a great deal of fallout lately is the question of health hazards to those living within 150 to 200 feet of high-voltage power lines. Now, that is more a city thing than rural, but nevertheless we still carry most of our power in Alberta on towers that come over and close to residences, school yards, and so on. Is there any research being done by your department to see whether or not incidence of cancer is actually increased for those people living or working within a couple of hundred feet of 10,000 volts or more?

MR. TRYNCHY: I'm not sure if we have. Dr. Walker, are you . . .

DR. WALKER: We're not doing any research on our own about that. We're aware of the issue that you raised. There is national and American investigation on that issue and there is a high-profile study of children in Denver that raises the suspicion very strongly that there is some hazard, but that's not research we're engaged in. That requires very large samples, very long-term follow-up, and it's more appropriate for a national research undertaking than an Occupational Health and Safety one.

MR. TAYLOR: You may be aware, just as a point of information, that a school board in Texas . . .

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MR. CHAIRMAN: Is this your final supplementary, hon. member?

MR. TAYLOR: No; I'm going to stick to the students.

A school board in Texas was recently awarded \$3 million in damages against a power company for lines across the school-yard.

So you're not researching long-term pesticides; you're not researching high-tension power lines. Let's go on to something else then. The whole question of apprenticeship, I believe, Mr. Chairman, is under this minister. There is an argument . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, that's not part of the grant.

MR. TAYLOR: One moment. I'm sure you've got many of these letters that I have. There are some trades that feel that the shortening of the training period this department is condoning for trade apprenticeships is, indeed, dangerous. In other words, by shortening the apprentice period, you're in effect negating the whole safety program here. How do you account for the left hand out here trying to educate people to look after themselves and the right hand there allowing trades to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, your question's out of order, the reason being that the apprenticeship program does not fall under any part of the Occupational Health and Safety heritage grant program.

MR. TAYLOR: Point of order. The apprenticeship training program does not fall under this, but safety training of apprentices falls under this. In other words, the safety training of the individual falls under this, not the training of the apprentices. It's subtle, I know; nevertheless, it's there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very subtle, very subtle.

MR. TAYLOR: He's here to answer the question anyhow, so let him try. It's not going to be a problem.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member has so many letters – I haven't received any. If he's received some letters and hasn't forwarded them to me, he's not doing his job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That's your final supplementary.

We'll recognize the Member for Lacombe, please. [interjections] Thank you.

MR. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Have we got a Member for Westlock-Sturgeon here? I haven't heard him all day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. MOORE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd like it if the minister could advise us on the criteria used for deciding on grants under the health and safety heritage grant program. What criteria are dealt with that you decide on, and what grants get it and what don't?

MR. TRYNCHY: We have a special committee that does that, so I'm going to let Dr. Lynn here go through it for you. Go ahead.

DR. HEWITT: The kinds of criteria that we use are: first off, does the application address an important problem, a problem that could be solved either through research or through delivery

of some educational program? The priority areas for funding are fatal and serious injury accidents, small business, barriers to communication in terms of getting a health and safety message across, chemical and biological hazards, and the oil and gas industry. This last year we added one new priority area, which was new workers, which would include both new entrants to the labour force and individuals who are changing jobs into other high-risk areas. We have a grant steering committee that looks at applications and receives comments from expert reviewers on the topic of the application, and they then determine whether the application should be modified or recommended for funding or rejected. They use the priority areas as a gauge to determine the importance of the problem. Their recommendations then go forward to the managing director and then to the minister.

MR. MOORE: Supplementary, Mr. Chairman. I gather from what your comments are that there is no priority given to, say, drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace over a safe community project in some town. I think drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace should have a considerably higher priority when it comes to granting funds over a safe community project or some of these little – well, I wouldn't call them Mickey Mouse, but whatever.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member makes a good point. In the first number of years our duties were to try to reduce injuries in the workplace. I think we've come a long way with the programs we have funded. It's now time to have a look at the kinds of things he talks about, and at the outset I mentioned what we want to do. I think we should be moving into the workplace in respect to alcohol and drug abuse, and we'll be doing that with the special funding we have set aside, if we can see that it's going to give us some results very shortly, through AADAC. But the committee that looks at these things is made up of members from labour, from the public, and from employers. As Dr. Lynn mentioned here, they then review all the applications, take the ones that we feel are most beneficial to the present workplace today, and recommend them for funding. That's the way it works.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, just to follow up on that, I'm looking at a status report here, and I notice you categorized the various areas. Now, we have several under back problems, and we know that's a major area of complaints with workers' compensation. However, research into back injuries is all on the one subject, yet we have several projects there on it. We go to forestry, construction, and so on, all independent research projects going their merry way. Now, I think this is a lot of duplication in here. Has any thought been given to saying we have so much money for back injuries and all these various interested groups join in one project and put their funds in there rather than do their own separate little thing? I think we would have a greater amount of funds available and the results would be better. The other part of the question is: is there any thought to co-ordinate the results? After we have all these people out running around doing their own little research project and they each come up with their own little finding, does anyone ever co-ordinate them and come here with what we did with all these so-called subcommittees, for lack of a better term?

MR. TRYNCHY: Yes. Very good. We have asked different groups to give us results in their findings in respect to back injuries, and from those reports – whether there are three or five or 10 – we then sit down and take a look at all the input to see

if there's correlation of all the information and come up with what we think is reasonable.

I'd let Dr. Walker comment further, as he's been partly involved in that.

DR. WALKER: Well, we've asked industries to work in a safety program together. In the oil and gas industry we've approached the five major associations and required them to work together to develop an industrywide safety program. We've provided assistance to them in doing that, but basically we've said it's a program they have to develop and work on and work on across the industry. So we'd see that as an example of a pooling of resources by a particular industry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, followed by Lloydminster.

MR. JONSON: Pass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ponoka-Rimbey's questions have been asked. The Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Oh, thanks, Mr. Chairman, and to the minister. The question I have is on the annual report, and maybe you could just tell me a little more about it. It has the town of Hanna as making its community safer for workers and their families by becoming the second Safe Community in Alberta. What does that entail really?

DR. WALKER: The Safe Communities program is a program wherein we seek to have a community, a city focus on all aspects of safety within the community. So we certainly seek to have them work at occupational health and safety, but also, to give it an overall focus in the community, fire safety, traffic safety, playground safety, home safety. It's based on a successful model in North Bay, Ontario, where the community had quite spectacular results by developing this program and getting various groups interested in it. We've been a supporter of this because health and safety in the workplace has some resources and professional people associated with it whereas some of the others are quite short of resources. So we felt it useful to provide that leadership, and we feel there's feedback from other types of safety into workplace health and safety.

2:40

MR. TRYNCHY: I might add that the amount of dollars we provide to these communities – the first one was Red Deer and I was involved in that, and then we had Fort Saskatchewan and now we have Hanna – is very limited, and what we do is try to get the community with its volunteers to promote safety year-round in that community. It's so reasonable when you spend \$5,000 and get the whole community involved. It's safety in the home, in the playgrounds, in farm machinery, the whole thing. Hanna is a farm community, and we hope that when they come up with their results, it will help us set some standards for other communities. It's just one way of us getting more value for the few dollars we have in regards to safety in rural communities.

MR. CHERRY: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

I was just going over the status report also that my colleague beside me here from Lacombe was addressing, and I'm just wondering – and this is just a general question – what is the role of government today? I look at the town of Hanna and all these programs we're putting in here. Do you really think people have

to think for themselves any more, or is government going to do it?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member . . .

MR. CHERRY: It's a general question. I'm not picking on anyone or anything like that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, are you suggesting that perhaps funding from this fund we're discussing today is too generous and too broad and it's doing too much for people? Is that the focus of your question?

MR. CHERRY: No. I'm actually saying: what do people themselves . . . Let me rephrase it then. Are we taking away the initiatives of people who think for themselves and the government's coming in to override each individual today? I just ask that question as a general question.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, as I listen to the questions asked, I guess this committee itself can come up with a recommendation, because I hear from one member a lot different things than I hear from the second member and the third member. So I wait with bated breath to get your report on saying whether we should continue and which way we should be going. So you have a chore ahead of you, members. Please provide me with the information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I would once again like to go to page 36, the capital projects division statement of amounts expended.

Under the heading "Recovery of amounts expended in previous years," the minister will see a notation: Occupational Health and Safety research and education, \$26,000. I recognize that's a comparatively small amount in the context of the sums we've been discussing over the past two weeks, but I'm curious as to the source of that \$26,000 recovery.

MR. TRYNCHY: You're looking at the annual report? I don't have one here. Now that's a question that . . . We've recovered some funds? Maybe if we could see the annual report, we could just sort of . . . You're looking at page 36 under Executive Council?

MR. PAYNE: Page 36, capital projects division statement of amounts expended, the bottom portion of the page devoted to recovery of amounts expended, the third entry, Occupational Health and Safety research and education. I'm just curious whether your department has got a user fee going, whether you're selling some of your research publications. I'm just mildly curious where that money's coming from.

MR. TRYNCHY: We've got the answer for you.

DR. HEWITT: If, when we award a grant, there are funds that are unexpended, then the recipient's required to return the funds to Treasury, and it actually does not come back to the heritage grant program but does go into the general heritage fund. I

don't know what the project would be, but I suspect it's somebody's remittance from unexpended funds.

MR. PAYNE: Well, that's a refreshing exception to the normal practice. Ordinarily grant recipients . . .

MR. TRYNCHY: We will endeavour to get to this committee . . .

MR. PAYNE: Oh, that's fine.

MR. TRYNCHY: . . . the company or firm or whatever it is that amounts to \$26,000. But those are unexpended funds.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, if I could refer the minister now to page 22 of the heritage fund annual report. In the photo caption associated with the Heroes program, we read that there's a "multi-image media presentation utilizing real-life heroes." I'd like to tell the minister that I think that's a very worthwhile concept. There's no question that teenagers are more receptive to the example and, indeed, the teachings of role models than they are to other members of the community, certainly politicians. I'm curious, however, as to the time and effort committed by these role models, these "real-life heroes." Are they, in fact, paid an honorarium or a fee for their time, or by and large is it a charitable contribution on their part to the program?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, the first one I saw was in Calgary. I did see the role models and they were students. I'll tell you that really awakens the children that the students are talking to. I'll have to ask somebody else to find out. Most of them are volunteers, but we do pay their expenses, and I'll be corrected here shortly. We pay their expenses to travel. If, say, it's a young Calgary lad traveling to Peace River, we'll pick up the tab for that. I don't know if we pay anything beyond that. Maybe somebody can help me.

DR. WALKER: At least one or two of the role models are people who have been injured and are staff members of the University hospital's Injury Awareness and Prevention Centre. So they would be receiving funds as part of their job but not explicitly for those appearances.

MR. PAYNE: My final supplementary, Mr. Chairman, flows from the initial question of the Member for Lloydminster, and it has to do with the Safe Communities program. I wonder if the minister could give us an indication as to the level of interest or take-up in that program by the major urban centres, notably Calgary and Edmonton.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, the member raises a very good question, because when you look at the rate of injuries in Calgary and Edmonton . . . I'll just give you an example in the work force: the Syncrude plant has an injury rate of 1.7 percent; Calgary has 4.9 and Edmonton 5.2. So certainly they should be asking for something like that or else get involved in some other programs. But we have not had a request, to my knowledge, to become a Safe Community. I'm sure if they wanted to, we'd be glad to sit down with them and go over it to see in what way we could work with them.

But we've started in Red Deer, and that's worked really well. We moved to Fort Saskatchewan; now we're at Hanna. It's a continuing program; I hope it never ends. When we get the analysis back of how Red Deer makes out, hopefully we can use

that and provide that information free of charge to the councils of Edmonton and Calgary and see if they could put it in place.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Three Hills, followed by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, the questions I had in mind were partially responded to as a result of the first question today that related to agriculture. I think the minister may be aware that there is some work going on in the province right now with respect to various chemicals. I know the farm organizations as well are interested in the evaluation of their membership and the approach to potentially being licensed or whatever, the need for some very definitive information on how to handle chemicals, what will happen in the environment with the chemicals they're using, and so on. Is this, as well, part of . . . I'm looking at page 3 of the status report on the heritage fund investment dated October 19, 1990. I'm looking at page 3 of Pesticide Safety for Industrial Applicators. How is this program, or maybe an offshoot of it, potentially going to involve the work presently going on in agriculture? That was partially responded to but not in a wider sense.

2:50

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, all this information - the video, the booklets, all that - will be made available to field men across the province and also all the DAs, and that's where we get involved. It's been put together by Agriculture and chemical companies, as our young lady here explained to you just a few seconds ago.

Now, I am not sure we covered what you were asking for, but when it gets to all the field men in the Department of Agriculture and the DAs, we would hope that they would use it in their winter meetings when they talk to farmers. I'm hoping that we can make it available to those that sell the chemicals, such as the grain elevators and chemical depots throughout the provinces, so they would pass this out with their chemicals.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I was wanting to address the broader chemical issue, going beyond pesticides. There are many other kinds of chemicals, obviously, that if used improperly would have an adverse effect not only on the person who is applying a chemical but on the environment as well. It's often difficult in that it's not exactly an Environment question; it's not exactly an Occupational Health and Safety question; it's not exactly, precisely, an Agriculture question. I'm wondering if thought is given to some co-ordination and extension of going from just pesticide safety to the broader safety with respect to many chemicals that are used in agriculture. Can it be related to programs in other occupations?

MR. TRYNCHY: The WHMIS program takes over all chemicals, and it's a federal program that is adopted by all provinces. I would hope that whoever buys the chemical has a WHMIS on every can. That's available now, that you become more aware of it.

We don't get involved with the farming community when they buy chemicals. I'm not sure how we could co-ordinate with Occupational Health and Safety, Agriculture, and Environment in this respect. If you have some ideas on how we could do it, I'd be interested. Our responsibility stops with the health and



accident of a worker. If there's some way we could assist Agriculture and Environment through the WHMIS and make it more available in some fashion or else do a number of things, we'd be glad to hear some of your suggestions.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. I guess I possibly have to do more research myself. I just felt that there may be some generic information that's coming out as a result of the pesticide safety program that is applicable on a wider base, and the public, rightly so, has grave concerns about duplication of efforts. I guess I wondered whether that had been thought of, and certainly I will think about it, if the minister is challenging, and make some recommendations with respect to that.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member would look at page 32 of the summary report, recycling and disposal of chemical waste, there's \$301,000 that has been provided for some of the things she talks about. If, upon reading this and other information, she would get back to me with suggestions on how we could co-ordinate this plus other things, I'd be glad to hear from her.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question concerns the working relationship of the Occupational Health and Safety heritage grant program division with AADAC. I note on page 2 of the report that the group has been working with AADAC on a project "to determine the extent and causes of alcohol and drug use, the effects on occupational health and safety and the workplace." They've been working directly with AADAC. I wonder whether the minister could give us an update on the progress of this project and whether, specifically, he feels that a project of this nature would be undertaken more effectively if AADAC were replaced or subjected to the creation of this duplicate bureaucracy called the Alberta family life and drug abuse foundation. I mean, are we going to gain anything from having this duplicate bureaucracy, from your point of view, or can you work just as effectively as is necessary with . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, you've really reached around the corner with that one.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member [inaudible] questions we're responsible for, we'd probably answer them. Unfortunately, he wasn't in the Chamber when I talked about this very thing, so I would just suggest to him that if he'd read *Hansard*, he would know exactly what I've said, and that answered his questions.

MR. MITCHELL: It did not, I'm sure. How do you know I wasn't listening? I don't think it was answered in any event. So you're saying that you do agree with the creation of a duplicate bureaucracy for AADAC and that that would be fine from your point of view.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's not at all what the minister said. The minister gave you an entirely different answer than that. Would you please move to your supplementary.

MR. MITCHELL: I note on page 22 of the status report dated October 19, 1990, that a report is given on a multidisciplinary

assessment of low doses of hydrogen sulphide, and I quote from page 22:

The researchers reported that H<sub>2</sub>S alters several neurotransmitters and the densities of two kinds of cells in the brain. Other findings include a higher proportion of difficult or delayed births among the exposed pregnant rats, temporary changes in some metabolites and brain and liver activity and so on and so forth. I wonder whether the minister leaves a report of this nature at the level of academic exercise or whether he is motivated by these kinds of findings to take them up aggressively with the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Energy to ensure that policy measures are undertaken to counteract the kinds of effects that a study of this nature suggests could be occurring on people who live in the vicinity of gas plants.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, the reports, the summary that is done, all these recommendations that are provided in this document are then circulated to other departments for their information and for their action. I'll have Dr. Hewitt answer further in respect to that. Then maybe I'll get back to answer the first question in regards to AADAC, because I think the hon. member should be briefed on what he missed.

Dr. Lynn.

DR. HEWITT: These researchers had been carrying out a program of study to look at the chronic low-dose effects of hydrogen sulphide and basically concluded that there were some at extremely low exposure levels when they exposed mice. This is one set of research results. These people are now looking for additional funding actually from a variety of agencies to set up a centre for neurotoxicology research, and that kind of additional confirmatory research would be necessary before we could really look at revising occupational exposure limits or whether we could actually change programs and services based on the results of studies with mice. So we think they've done some very good background and basic research, but it needs to be taken a few steps further before we could actually extrapolate to real life situations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Final supplementary.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, my final supplementary for this set of questions, because I have others.

Will this grant program be funding subsequent studies and the follow-up that these researchers are interested in undertaking, or will it just be allowed to dangle?

MR. TRYNCHY: This heritage fund grant program will be funding programs that are submitted to a committee that would review all the programs. As I mentioned at the outset, there were 511 proposals put forward, and we funded 185, I believe it was. They will recommend to the managing director and then the managing director will recommend to the minister, whoever that person is, to provide the funds for whatever they feel is essential to health and safety at that time. So I couldn't say yes or no, because it's not up to us to decide what comes forward. The applications go to a committee; the committee reviews all the applications and then recommends certain of the projects to the managing director.

3:00

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
The Member for Edmonton-Centre.



REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am really glad to have this opportunity to discuss these matters today. Certainly preventing injury in this province should be one of our most major goals in the health care field. The cost to the system of people who have been injured either on the job or in other places is immense. I think every effort needs to be made along these lines and others to get at the root causes of so much injury and to reduce that and to get people on with a much better way of living.

My questions bear on Edmonton-Meadowlark's in a sense as well. With this being applied research, we want to know: how does the minister see the actual implementation of the results of some of these research projects in changes in policy, changes in behaviour, and get that applied sense that it's not just studies that are going to be left on the shelf but rather get to the workplaces themselves? For instance, have there been studies here which have really impacted on the minister's own need for, say, a greater number of inspectors per workplace as a kind of way to target worksites that need to have better inspection and better control and a more aggressive way of reducing injuries in those particular workplaces?

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, Mr. Chairman, when the studies are completed, they go to a number of places. I understand that the studies are provided to Workers' Compensation, and they take the information they have here and put it to their use. Also the occupational health inspectors use this information when they do their inspections to make sure that if there's a hazard, they make the workplace aware of it. Workers' Compensation has used a number of these recommendations in their documents. Look at the welding safety videotapes that we provided, 140 sets and over a thousand manuals. Because of this report we then went out through Occupational Health and provided this to the workplace. There's just a number of these things, and as I mentioned at the outset, there are thousands and thousands of booklets and documents that come out from the recommendations of these reports that we put into use. Whether it's a chain saw operation method, chemicals, drilling, back injuries, or welding, all of those things are put into booklets and made available to the workplace, yes.

REV. ROBERTS: I guess my point is that we need to go beyond just booklets and printed information and videotapes. Through these kinds of studies and results how can we better equip you as the minister to go, then, to wherever you need to go and say that we need to have more inspectors on the worksites, that we need to have more penalties in terms of deterrents for employers not obeying certain known safety practices which we have a videotape about, and that we need to actually get the changes made even if that means having to impose certain fines or certain other deterrent fees? What has really impacted on the minister in terms of the changes he sees that still need to go on for a policy decision with respect to, say, inspectors and deterrent fees?

MR. TRYNCHY: It's interesting. We have the fines increased tenfold. Just last year I increased the fines from \$30,000 to \$300,000. I think it's working well; as a matter of fact, I believe it is. Yesterday I was at a workplace at Drayton Valley, Weyerhaeuser, where I talked to the safety committee, and they have all the information. Workers, employers, and supervisors all gather together and go over all this material. They're the ones that are going to make it work. I asked them, "Would a policeman standing here make you do anything different?" They

said, "No." They don't need policing; they want the information. They'll talk about it and do it themselves, and that's the route we want to go. We want to get that information to the workplace. We want to make sure that workplace takes that information, sits around the table – the worker, the supervisor, the employer – and makes sure it's implemented. That's the only way it'll work. If the worker and the employer don't get together, it'll never happen.

REV. ROBERTS: Like the Medicine Hat incident that we know about.

My last question I think is one that also plagues me quite a bit, and I just don't know quite if the minister or others have gotten at studies which really look at almost the psychology of people who engage in self-damaging behaviours.

MR. TRYNCHY: In which?

REV. ROBERTS: Self-destructive, self-damaging behaviours, like perhaps people who seem to be either accident-prone or tend to really be involved in drugs and alcohol in the workplace. Now, this has come up to me because despite the laudatory remarks around the Heroes program, which I've seen and I think is a very laudable one, it was also pointed out to me that that program does not get at young teenagers who in fact want to go out and drink and drive and in a sense have a psychology of just wanting to be violent to themselves and to others. The program is nice; it's played in the high schools. All the girls come to it who aren't involved in that in any way or some of the nice, new-age guys might go to it, but the people for whom it really could be of benefit are still the ones that either don't get to it or don't pay attention to it. So I just want to throw it out in a general sense. No matter what we try to do, I think that unless we look at addictive behaviours and self-destructive behaviours that some people just have for some unknown reason, whether it's in the workplace or other places – are there studies which have gotten at why that exists and how we can better target messages to those people?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, I'm disappointed that the hon. member doesn't think the Heroes program is any good. I'm disappointed that he would say that it's not getting to the people it should. I thought it was, and it should be. If he has a suggestion on how we can improve it and how we can get to those people that he says aren't receiving those benefits, I'd like to hear his recommendations. I think the Heroes program is a super program.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, you speak to the department of surgery at the Grey Nuns hospital.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. [interjections] Order. The question's been asked and the response has been given. We'll move to the Member for West Yellowhead, followed by Calgary-Foothills.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, did I hear myself called?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, my question was in regards to the distance learning programs that were funded through this program. I was wondering if the minister could respond as to whether the educational consortiums around the

province have access to this program. Are they using this program to train those people in the educational consortiums around the province?

MR. TRYNCHY: You're suggesting the consortiums . . .

MR. DOYLE: The distance learning programs that were funded through this program, the videotapes for distance learning: are those used in the educational consortiums around the province?

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, I would hope so, but I'm not sure. Can you answer that?

MS LYNAS: Yeah. I'm not sure which programs would be used. I know they're all available to those educational consortiums. For example, one in distance learning is the occupational health nursing certificate, and that is one that is run by Grant MacEwan. They have the ability to grant a certificate, and they are the only ones offering that particular program. However, it is available to anyone throughout the province.

MR. DOYLE: My first supplementary, Mr. Chairman, would be in regards to the taxi driver safety training program. I had some concerns last year in regards to things that were happening in the taxi industry. I was wondering if the minister's programs have helped accidents from happening in the taxi industry in the recent 12 months.

MR. TRYNCHY: We provided a number of dollars for that program. We had an announcement last year. The taxi industry looked at it. The taxi board was invited to comment. The taxi drivers themselves like it. The Edmonton Taxi Cab Commission has now made it mandatory for their drivers. The Calgary Taxi Commission has not made it mandatory but will subsidize the drivers the cost of training. That program was announced in June of '89, \$146,000. To my understanding some taxi drivers applaud it, and I've talked to some, and some say that they're not interested in the shield behind them. So it's something for taxi commissions themselves. We will not be dictating to them. The program was made available to them, and I would recommend that the companies that have a concern would go ahead and implement what they have to to make sure that drivers are safe.

3:10

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Final supplementary.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, through to the minister. My final supplementary would be in regards to page 15 of the annual report. It has to do with the health and safety Worker's Health Centre, \$315 contributed to that for a nurse to attend a conference in Banff. Is this a start to a full commitment from the minister to make sure that the health and safety Worker's Health Centre is kept open?

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, maybe the member is not aware, but we've just announced a project that's been approved, \$65,000 from this fund. It got my blessing here just a few weeks ago. Certainly I'd like to see it continue, and that's why we've put in a \$65,000 grant towards the Worker's Health Centre in Edmonton.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman; I was not aware.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
The Member for Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Coming from the oil industry, I've noticed in your report that the incidence of injury in the oil industry has decreased substantially over the last few years. I'm wondering if this could be attributed to some of the studies that have been done on the fireproof clothing and the safety clothing at the well sites and at the plants. Have you been able to track any relationship between the studies that were done through the grant program back to the industry directly?

MR. TRYNCHY: I really don't think it's in respect to fire-retardant clothing that we have less injuries. I believe the whole industry is just more aware of injuries and is working towards reducing injuries. When I talked to them, as I said, two weeks ago they were very concerned about the workplace. They've gone so far now that when they hire a contractor on their site, they ask for the contractor's accident rates, his work performance, and everything else they can. As I said yesterday, a contractor asked me to talk to his own association to reduce those requirements because they're having troubles getting the jobs now. So I believe the oil patch itself is just really taking a serious look at injuries and has gone, I think, a long ways towards hiring good people, making sure they look at the records of the contractors they hire, and if those contractors are safe, they'll be accepted.

That's where it's coming from. I don't believe you can pick a certain thing, whether it's fire-retardant clothing or whatever. They spend more time now teaching their employees. I guess they do the tell, show, and do: tell the employee what to do, show the employee, and then do it with him or her. So that's working well. I'm sorry I can't be specific on what's doing it.

MRS. BLACK: As a supplementary, the other day when I arrived in Edmonton, I passed a construction site. As I was going by, I noticed a sign that said that you had to have a hard hat on and safety goggles and a headset. As I walked by, I noticed that the fellows were breaking the rules. So I stopped and went up to these fellows and inquired as to why they were not obeying the rules of the site, as to where their headsets and safety goggles were. They looked at me in a state of shock, and I said, "Well, if you are not going to obey the rules, maybe you should not be on the site, because you could end up hurt." The foreman came over, and we had a little chat. I'm wondering if maybe more people need to take an awareness, to stop people if they aren't capable of reading the signs or are not prepared to do that, to take a hard line with employees. I'm wondering if in all of these studies you've ever thought of doing a study as to what the responsibility is of the employee on the worksite.

MR. TRYNCHY: We haven't, but I've been to jobsites, and you're right on. I thank you for helping me out. You can tell them next time: "I'm from the government. I'm here to help you. Put your hat on." That'll help.

I spoke to 600 workers on a construction site in Calgary. I went through the process, and I said that the employee has a responsibility. They have a responsibility to themselves, and they also have a responsibility to their colleagues. I went so far as to say: if there's a colleague on the jobsite that's going to cause injury or death to you or themselves, you know, they

should be removed. They agreed with me. That's something that we have to instill in the minds of the employees themselves, but we have to make sure that the employer is on side and will talk to these employees. That's the only way you can do it. I don't care if you have a thousand policemen on site. If the employee and the employer do not care about safety, it's not going to happen. You have to have both: conscience of injury and working together.

MRS. BLACK: Well, Mr. Minister, I would say that I have been on sites where . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I believe you've had your three questions.

MRS. BLACK: No, I haven't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, I stand corrected. Please proceed.

MRS. BLACK: I've been on sites where there have been awareness programs between the employer and the employee. In fact, seminars have been in-house within companies. Old Fred will say: "Well, I've done it this way for 20 years, and I'm not about to change. Who are these young whippersnappers coming in with new ideas? Who do they think they are?" I'm wondering: through your research connections, have you found a mechanism anywhere, aside from threatening to fire someone for not abiding by the rules, that someone has done some form of study that can really enforce this issue on employees to obey the company rules, aside from firing them?

MR. TRYNCHY: We haven't done a study on it, because when these proposals come forward to the committee, the committee is instructed to pick the ones that will do the most good to reduce injuries. So we haven't gone that route, and I wouldn't be asking the committee to change their thinking.

I think that's something you and I and everybody in this Assembly can talk about to our own constituents, as employers. You know, I'd ask this question: how many times have you been into a shop in your constituency as an MLA and looked at what's going on? I do a lot of that. I probably do it now because of my portfolio, but I used to visit people. Go into the body shops and have a look around and talk to people yourselves. If you don't have the boss man – whoever that person is; he or she – involved in thinking safety, it doesn't get down to the worker. As the Member for Lloydminster said, you shouldn't look to government to do everything. We have a responsibility ourselves as MLAs, as employers, and as employees to work together, and the sooner we do it, the better off we're going to be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, followed by the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First with respect to corporate funding that may or may not be used for helping you put together training films that you've done, have you tried to access corporate funding to help defray the costs of some of the training films you've put out? If you have, what was the result?

DR. WALKER: In terms of training films that we might make ourselves or through the grant program, we ourselves don't seek corporate funding up front. Heroes, though, would be a situation where the sponsor generating Heroes sought money from us and from other centres, including corporations. But we ourselves have not sought corporate money to participate in training film development.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, if we have documents, we do sell some documents to other jurisdictions and recoup some funds that way.

MR. TAYLOR: I see.

The second is in a relatively new area. I'm sure certainly the Member for Calgary-Foothills, in the oil and gas industry, would know about it. It appears that mining of tar sands is another method of moving the sand out. That gives a whole new set of safety – besides plain mining, they're mining a volatile substance like heavy oil. Is there a research program or anything being done in the occupational safety department to try to seek out ahead of time what may be of danger to the workers, not only the physical danger but the chemical danger of mining tar sands?

3:22

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, as I mentioned at the outset, at Syncrude their accident rate is 1.5 percent, whereas the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton are around 5 percent. So they have a very good record. I don't know if we have any information in respect to what else we're doing in the heavy oil sands in mining.

MR. TAYLOR: Maybe I didn't make my question clear. If I may, it wasn't the tar sands open pit mining; I'm talking about where they drive a shaft down and send out drifts like you would in coal mining. That's a new type of removal of tar sands oil.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For clarification's sake from the Chair, I believe the member is referring to the Underground Test Facility carried out by AOSTRA.

MR. TAYLOR: But I think it's going to be a thing of the future quite a little, and I'm just wondering if they've done any research on the safety hazards that would come up.

MR. TRYNCHY: Unless they're different from conventional drilling – and the hon. member would know probably better than anybody if they're different – I don't know whether they would be. What other research programs would we have to have? What's the difference between what the hon. member's talking about and conventional drilling? That would help me. Is there a difference in drilling?

MR. TAYLOR: It's like coal mining. But coal is solid; the tar sands move a little. Also, there are fumes that come off tar sands. Even though it's heavy oil . . .

MR. TRYNCHY: Is it steam injection?

MR. TAYLOR: No, no. This is the actual mining. They go down and mine it just the same way you would take out coal: take the sand out and then treat it up on the surface. I would think it's an idea that maybe you should look into some, because it's a whole field that I think is going to catch on.

The last question, then, is just an add-on to the Member for Three Hills.

MR. MOORE: Did he lose you, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm having a little difficulty with the count, hon. member: what counts as a comment and what counts as a question. If your comments were tallied up, we'd be way high. But please proceed so that . . .

MR. TAYLOR: I just have some questions. One was corporate funding, and the second . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just please proceed.

MR. TAYLOR: . . . was on mining, and the third supplement is to add on to the Member for Three Hills, who brought it up very well, and I think the minister answered it well too. He said that there appears to be a no-man's-land between Agriculture, occupational health, and Environment as to the effects, both physically and environmentally, of the use of chemicals: pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Would the minister agree to take it upon himself to rectify this thing and maybe bring these three departments together to see who is going to do the educating of the farmers, as the Member for Three Hills so well pointed out?

MR. TRYNCHY: I don't think I've ever made the comment that there's a no-man's-land there, but I'll review *Hansard* and see.

MR. TAYLOR: A no-person's-land. I'm sorry.

MR. TRYNCHY: I'll review *Hansard* and take the question from Three Hills and the supplement from Westlock-Sturgeon and see if we can put something together that makes sense, because I'm not so sure I understood the last supplement as well as I should have.

Getting back to the mining of the oil sands, now I understand it's a shaft, not a drill hole, so now I understand the hon. member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to make a comment on the investment in '89-90 of \$1 million and, as of March 31, 1990, a total of \$9 million. I think we should look at that truly as an investment and not an expenditure, because I think what we're doing here is saving a lot of dollars in the future for the province, the federal government, and also the employers and the employees. Let's look at that as an investment.

On the other hand, I believe we need to look at a system that will give some responsibility to the employee also. I've been an employee in the construction field for 10 years. I've been careless myself, and I know some of the attitudes that were out there at the time. They may have changed now. I think that if we're going to provide a public education program, there are a number of areas we should look at, and one is: we should have a public campaign to ensure that some responsibility lies on the employee also. I've personally heard employees that I've traveled and worked with say, "Look, I'm not responsible to my employer until 8 o'clock in the morning." And I say: "No. As

long as you're employed by the employer on a full-time basis, you're responsible to that employer." I would actually see people where they could go till 4 o'clock in the morning and then go to work at 8 o'clock and cause a lot of accidents. I don't know if that goes on today, but I know when I was in that field, that went on. I personally experienced it.

The other area I think we need to look at . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, you need to move to a question.

MR. CARDINAL: Okay. My first question, then, to the minister: are there any moves taken to give more responsibility to the employee to be a responsible employee?

MR. TRYNCHY: I don't think that's a mandate of this fund, Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned before, and I think the comments in *Hansard* can be read again as to just how I responded to that question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe the hon. minister has responded to a question very like that.

MR. TRYNCHY: Dr. Lynn Hewitt will add to that. Go ahead.

DR. HEWITT: I think that several of the projects recently funded pretty clearly focus on both the employers and workers within a particular industry. The focus is on getting both to work toward adopting safe work environments and safe work practices. These would include the University of Alberta occupational health and safety research program, which is looking particularly at hospitals and changing work environments and practices in hospitals, working with both employers and workers, and the University of Calgary looking at small business and finding what the best strategies are to influence the behaviour of both employers and workers to move toward a better health and safety record in small business. The Worker's Health Centre one is another that's aimed at small business, and again it's targeting both employers and workers and attempting to change the behaviour of both.

MR. CARDINAL: Okay.

My first and only supplemental. I know that most employees and most employers are responsible and try their best, but there are cases where there are some abuses. Are there any programs coming in the future that would give some initiatives for an employer - you know, some rewards for a good record of accident prevention?

MR. TRYNCHY: We have a number of awards that we present now through Occupational Health and Safety, and I've been involved in a few of them. When they have X number of hours accident free, we do reward them with recognition. I don't believe it would be proper to reward them financially. They get that reward through their assessment in compensation. If they have fewer accidents, then of course their assessment goes down.

We do recognize them, and I think it's important that we continue to recognize those employers and employees that look after themselves. We have the Wise Owl Award for employees if they wear their goggles. We have the Hard Hat Award if they wear a hard hat. There are a number of ways we recognize these, and we have to continue doing that. The member is so right that we have to work together. As I said at the outset, the employee and the employer must be on the same wavelength

if we're going to reduce injuries, and they have to talk together, whether it's at the table or in the coffee room or wherever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, I've listened to the minister today, and I get an uneasy feeling that somehow this program is not perhaps all that high in his priorities or that somehow he doesn't have a particularly aggressive view and position on it. On the one hand, he may tell us that it's important, yet he says: well, we mail out the results of these reports to different departments, and we expect that they would read them and follow up. On the other hand: we can't pursue and ask for research into specific areas which may be of a concern to us; we wait for research proposals to come to us. I'm wondering whether this minister has ever taken one of these studies or one of these findings, decided in his mind that it's a problem he wants to solve, and gone aggressively after some department or some policy change to see that it is solved. Or does he just sit in his office and sign memos to send out information?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that your question? Thank you.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member across the way gets all puffed up. Certainly I look at the documents, and there's a number of them that we've acted on. Maybe the hon. member should spend some time, come down to my office, and we'll sit down and talk. Maybe I could educate the hon. member somewhat.

MR. MITCHELL: Or maybe you could discuss it here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. TRYNCHY: Yes. I'd like to do that.

When was the last time he called my office to see if something that he's concerned about was brought to my attention? In the last year and a half he hasn't done it once. If he has a concern that I haven't addressed, he should get on the phone or come down and see me and say, "Look, Mr. Minister, here's something that I think you should be aware of." If he would do that and then I didn't do it, he could sit there and condemn me. Until then he should do his job.

3:30

MR. CHAIRMAN: Supplementary.

MR. MITCHELL: I thought I was asking for that list of initiatives right now.

My supplementary, Mr. Chairman. On page 2 of the annual report of the program it says on the bottom righthand corner that, for example, "Awards to the forestry industry beginning in 1984 resulted in" - and this is what I'm focusing on - "the development of extensive training materials and courses for workers." Does the minister charge a company that would utilize this material in its training program for this material, or does he loan it? I would argue that these companies have an obligation to train their workers and that they should be funding that training and not us. I can see us developing the material, yes, but I think we should make an effort to have this funded by the company. Is that the case?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Chairman, before I answer that question. He asked in his previous question if there was anything the minister has done that he thinks is useful or does he just sit in his office and sign letters. Well, let me inform the hon. member that small business is a concern of mine, has been since I've taken this portfolio on. It hires 90 percent of the workers in the workplace; it has 45 percent of the accidents. We've initiated a pilot project. I would like it if the young lady would take this - it's three documents that we have developed for small business - and give it to the hon. member so he can see what we've done in respect of small business. I'd like to table that for the hon. member.

In respect to charging for documents, we do not charge industry. We provide the information to industry and we insist they use it, but so far we haven't charged for it. I don't know if that's what we should be doing. If the hon. member suggests we should, we should have a look at it. But I think that if we're responsible for safety, government should make this information available. I hear from one source, "Make it available to us so we can use it; get it out to us." Then from another source I hear, "Charge for it." I don't know. I'd like to have the committee be clear on that: do I charge, or do we present it after it's been done from the people's funds? I guess we've charged the people of Alberta by funding it through the heritage fund; \$10 million has been paid by Albertans. Now if they suggest we should sell our material, that's one thing. I don't think we should. I think we should make it available and insist that the corporations, the workplace, or the employers use it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Final supplementary.

MR. MITCHELL: I've long had a concern that this program is on a short fuse, that it's three-year funding, and who knows if it's going to be funded again. There are many things under the heritage trust fund which have indefinite funding. The Alberta heritage medical research program is funded by a foundation that has been directed to ensure that it doesn't encroach upon its capital and allows its efforts to be ongoing into the future. What's the minister's position on this three-year funding arrangement that his government seems predisposed to pursuing? Would he, for example, think that a recommendation for a foundation to fund this kind of research on an ongoing basis would be more appropriate?

MR. TRYNCHY: It's interesting, Mr. Chairman, that this committee recommended last year that we go for three years, and now he's suggesting that's wrong. That's what I thought I heard. It was written to me, so I've implemented to my colleagues, to cabinet, a three-year proposal, which is before Treasury Board now. Now, is the hon. member saying he wants to turn back the clock and change his mind?

MR. MITCHELL: We vote as one on this committee. I'm sure the minister knows that.

MR. TRYNCHY: I don't know; it came from the committee. If you want to change it to a 10-year program and make it an endowment fund - that's what I've suggested: it should be an endowment fund. If you listened to my speech in the House when I talked about the Occupational Health and Safety grants program, I recommended that we take so many dollars and pour it into an endowment fund so we're just using interest. It's clear,

my intentions. Now, if the hon. member didn't hear or hasn't heard it, I'd like to inform him; that's what I've said.

MR. MITCHELL: That's great.

MR. TRYNCHY: Good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Chair has no further speakers. We'd like to thank the minister and his department officials for appearing before the committee and for the information they've given to us today.

I'm sure it's been enlightening and helpful.

I'd now like to recognize the Member for Lloydminster for a motion for adjournment.

MR. CHERRY: I move we adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? All those opposed? Our committee stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning when the Premier will appear before the committee.

[The committee adjourned at 3:37 p.m.]