

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, April 27, 1987 8:00 p.m.**  
Date: **87/04/27**

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will come to order.

**Department of Forestry, Lands and  
Wildlife**

MR. CHAIRMAN: The estimates before the committee tonight are the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, page 205 of the government estimates book. The authority for the program is on page 210.

It is customary that the minister responsible for the department make opening comments. The Hon. Don Sparrow. Mr. Minister, would you have some opening comments?

MR. SPARROW: Yes, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure for me to present the 1987-88 estimates for Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Our budget is down some 14.2 percent over comparable estimates in 1986-87. Last year our budget was \$190.5 million, and this year it's \$163.5 million.

I believe this budget reflects the efforts of our government to reduce the deficit while maintaining a very high degree of public service and resource management and protection, Mr. Chairman, my thanks go to my deputy minister, Fred McDougall, and his staff. Fred is in the gallery, and we would like to thank him and the staff for the very concerted effort they've put into meeting these objectives of doing more with less.

What are the highlights of the reductions? The fire suppression budget is down some \$9.8 million. We have a reduction in capital development: fisheries access sites, grazing reserves, range improvements, ranger stations -- a \$1.9 million reduction; a reduction in travel and hosting of some \$0.8 million, approximately 15 percent; a general reduction in the purchase of fixed assets of about \$1.3 million; again a general reduction in supplies and services of about \$1.4 million. As far as wage positions, there's an abolishment of some 55 permanent positions and 219 related wage project or contract man-years, for a total of some \$6.6 million, or about a 6.8 percent reduction.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, the objective of my department is to do more with less. Forestry, Lands and Wildlife has consistently reduced its operating costs over the last four years. At the same time, it's delivering some 80 new or enhanced programs.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to outline some very important and positive things that are happening in Forestry, Lands and Wildlife that we never seem to hear about. Let's talk about the forest industry development division. One of the most exciting industries in Alberta today is the forest industry. With the new technologies and the use of aspen resources, which are fairly good pricewise as far as our softwood lumber, the price is holding up. Demand for Alberta wood is good and strong; it's never been so high.

On Tuesday, March 19, '87, I announced that the forest industry had created some 1,000 jobs -- long-term, meaningful jobs -- in Alberta last year alone. The spin-off effect on the local rural economies is tremendous. In fact, the forest industry has a multiplier which is very high, and at least two indirect jobs are created for each direct job. So some 2,000 other jobs were created with only about a dozen projects that were under way last year.

We consistently hear, Mr. Chairman, the nattering from some opposition members about what's happening in Alberta with job creation, yet we don't really hear publicly about the good news in the forest industry and the jobs being created in many other divisions. More jobs are coming up in this industry as a result of the private-sector investment being encouraged by this forest development division, a very active division. Here are some of the examples of the recent projects that we've undergone in the last year. Pelican Spruce Mills: two new OSB plants at Drayton Valley and Edson. These two plants cost some \$100 million in investment, have created over 700 direct jobs, and now Pelican Spruce Mills is developing a new sawmill at the Drayton Valley site. Again, that adds some more jobs to it.

We're looking at other developments in that same area. Alberta Energy Company last year opened up its medium-density fibreboard plant at Blue Ridge costing some \$32 million and created some 60 permanent jobs. They also have just recently announced an expansion to their sawmills. From our reports that's another 32 long-term jobs. Millar Western Industries, Whitecourt, is in the construction of a CTMP pulp mill at a cost of some \$185 million, creating some 125 permanent jobs and over 240 seasonal jobs. This project also will be using aspen in its product, and we found another use in pulp and paper for our aspen.

Procter & Gamble in Grande Prairie: conversion of their kraft mill to utilize aspen. Some \$8 million is being spent there which will create some 50 new jobs. At Hinton, Champion Forest Products just announced the plant expansion of facilities. The plant will be costing some \$285 million in the creation of some 450 jobs. Also, some 350 to 700 jobs will take place during that construction phase. Weldwood of Canada: an \$8.6 million conversion of a waferboard plant to an OSB plant at Slave Lake. This secured 110 permanent jobs. In addition to the above, Mr. Chairman, discussions are continuing on other pulp mills, sawmills, OSB plants, chopstick factories, and other forest product facilities. More than 30 in number are being considered right now. Diversification of Alberta's economy is occurring within the forest industry.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, we're concentrating in the forest service division on resource protection and enhancement. With all the pressure on the forest industry and resources, what are we really doing to protect its long-term future? Alberta's record on forest management is the best in Canada. We are actually planting and regenerating more forests than we are allowing to be harvested, and we will continue to do so. We've had superb co-operation from the forest industry. As well, such facilities as the government's Pine Ridge nursery give Alberta the very best silviculture programs in the nation, and the rest of the provinces have recognized us many times for that over the last two years.

Our forest fire detention and response time is also the envy of the nation, Mr. Chairman. Our government has invested a lot of funding into developing I would say one of the most sophisticated fire suppression systems in Canada, and the dividends are

paying off in forest protection. Our commitment to long-term management of our forest resources will continue to be a high priority of this government.

Also, Mr. Chairman, the importance of fish and wildlife to all Albertans is important to this government. No one questions the value of our fish and wildlife resource. However, the competing pressures upon that valuable resource certainly make the long-term management very interesting. Our government is committed to the preservation and enhancement of the fish and wildlife resource. April 5 to April 11, 1987, was Wildlife Week, and 1987 was declared Wildlife '87. We are working hard with volunteer organizations to ensure that Albertans realize the importance of that fish and wildlife resource by doing something positive for its future enhancement. Our government is participating in many ways, from funding of the provincial Wildlife '87 organization to encouraging all members of the public to become involved in habitat creation and management. We're announcing and dedicating a series of natural areas and habitat protection areas. We're accelerating projects under the Buck for Wildlife program. We're participating with many other public events and groups to raise the profile of our fish and wildlife resource.

I wish to outline the efforts undertaken to enhance our fish and wildlife resource, Mr. Chairman, if I can take, a minute to talk about numerous projects within that division that are very seldom talked about. Buck for Wildlife has grown from a \$500,000 expenditure and revenue in 1973 to approximately \$3 million in 1987. This is one of the first projects of its type in Canada, again, and in '84 we were doing approximately 50 projects. During the last two years over 332 projects have taken place. A massive increase has taken place and will continue in an upward service factor. With that \$3 million going into the trust fund we shall be doing more projects.

Our fish stocking program: we've increased our fish stocking efforts substantially in the past couple of years. Last year approximately 9 million fish were stocked. With the commencement of the new Cold Lake fish hatchery this year we hope to triple that figure in the next couple of years.

Our wetlands for tomorrow program: we have an agreement with Ducks Unlimited to develop some 20 identified projects within the next couple of years. That group is doing many, many other smaller projects, but the major 20 projects -- we are looking at supplying the land, et cetera, and Ducks Unlimited undertakes the capital works on those projects. Tyrrell-Rush in southern Alberta was the completion of the first of those projects and has been opened. These 20 projects will cover over 865,000 acres of new, enhanced habitat that will be created for our migratory birds.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan: discussions are ongoing and the proposed plan calls for some 1.3 million acres of enhanced migratory bird habitat in Alberta.

The Ward Ranches project: the 5,300 acre ranch was purchased in 1985 and provides a very valuable habitat for pheasant, deer, antelope, and migratory birds in that Brooks area.

Our natural areas program under the public lands division: we have some 100 natural areas which cover some 189,000 acres of land and provide valuable habitat as well as providing protection to unique areas within our province. Many more natural areas, approximately 100, are under consideration, and some will be announced during Wildlife '87.

I would like to move on and discuss the Wildlife Act and regulations. This Wildlife Act and regulations has had massive

public input. What was the process it went through? Alberta was the first government in Canada to create a fish and wildlife policy. The fish and wildlife policies and principles were then discussed with the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council, then through a general public review, then to the passage of the Wildlife Act in '84, the development of regulations with the advisory council, public review of those regulations, and then finally the passage of the regulations and Act being proclaimed on April 1 of this year. The massive amount of public input was the highlight of that legislation. It's a very contemporary piece of legislation with many positive aspects, Mr. Chairman. We have now increased fines for wildlife offences; mandatory testing of first-time hunters; a better definition of wildlife, more easily understood than the liberated laws as far as possession and disposal of legally taken wildlife; improved captive wildlife regulations; and on and on the list will go.

Public lands: the major function of that division is to determine the suitability of public lands for various purposes. Some 62 percent of Alberta is Crown land. Currently we have some 80,000 land dispositions for grazing, cultivation, recreation, commercial, or industrial uses. The main objective of the lands division under this budget will be to maintain existing dispositions and also meet those future requests in the most efficient manner possible. The Crown grazing lease conversion policy has been put on hold pending a review of a committee of MLAs and public advisory members, and I'm waiting for that report to come to me.

Mr. Chairman, the resource evaluation and planning division is a planning organization of our department. We plan Crown lands through a process of integrated resource planning. We are conducting inventories on some six plans, we're starting another six plans, and we are continuing work on some 18 plans. Over the last few years we have been able to approve some nine major management plans throughout the province of Alberta, and the planning process is being accelerated.

How does a plan work, and could I give you a simplistic approach to it? Basically, government and interest groups evaluate the resources in a defined area. A plan is then developed which is designed to maximize opportunities while protecting the watershed and the environment. A draft plan is then reviewed by the public through the integrated resource planning process. All public concerns are then addressed, and the plan revisions take place. The plan is then approved at several different levels of government and becomes final.

Planning is something that's very difficult when you consider all the various user groups that we have to deal with: agriculture, forestry, mining, recreationists, oil companies, environmentalists, facility developments. We deal with over 100 different user groups within our total department. We have a good planning system which maximizes public participation, and other provinces are modeling their system after ours, Mr. Chairman.

In closing, as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, the objectives of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife for the past number of years has been to do more with less. This objective is being met and expanded. Some simple examples I'd like to recap: increased employment in our forest industry -- as I mentioned, last year over 1,000 direct jobs; the opening of two new Fish and Wildlife offices; many new positive public land policies; very successful Use Respect/Outdoor Observer programs; much improved response in time in forest fire fighting; new Wildlife Act and regulations that have come about; the creation of the forestry industry development division; and the opening of a

major Cold Lake fish hatchery this year on May 23. I issue all of you an invitation to join us on May 23.

During Wildlife '87 we are again increasing our Buck for Wildlife projects and our natural areas program. You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that I sent a letter to all members, and I will remind you of that challenge for all members to get involved in Wildlife '87. The positives go on and on, and at this point I would like to conclude and answer any questions.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before we proceed, perhaps the Minister of Transportation and Utilities might have a memo for the Chair. Hon. Minister, do you have an update on something that the Chair might be interested in?

MR. ADAIR: It's 4 to 2.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For Winnipeg.

MR. ADAIR: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Four to 2 for Lethbridge. [laughter]  
Hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives me some pleasure to get up and make a few comments on this department, I will, believe it or not, start out by trying to stress the positive, and then I'll get into the main part of my speech. [interjections]

We should stress perhaps that Wildlife '87 does not mean throwing parties, even if Lethbridge, Edmonton, or whomever was just referred to does win.

There are a few things that I am glad to see. One is expansion in the forest industry. There is no doubt that it's an important industry in this province, and there's no doubt that its careful, intelligent, and responsible management is required to make sure it's an important industry a few decades from now. If it is indeed going to be a fairly important part of economic expansion and diversification in the province, then we'd best look after it quite a bit.

A couple of specific points before I get into some general areas related to the department and the budget. From vote 1 I noticed one of the larger entries in the budget is something called automated information services, nearly \$6 million. I'm wondering exactly what kind of automated information services we're tapping into at that kind of cost, especially when I look at its being three times the amount of money that the department allocates under vote 2.6 for habitat development.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. member. Could we have order in the committee, please, with these various caucuses related to this department. Edmonton Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, much appreciated.

As I said, for those who may just have missed it, that habitat development is a mere one-third of the amount of money spent on automated information services. Likewise, a combination of wildlife management and fisheries management totals are not that much more than this automated information services and less than the entire administrative support services, so I'm wondering why that is so vital and so important to the department.

Under vote 3 I'm very concerned about an 81 percent decrease in the reclamation section of reforestation and reclama-

tion. If that reflects just an overall cut in the extent or number of reclamation projects to be started, I would be concerned. If it indicates a major project that was slotted for last year and is now done and that most other projects are going on as planned, it may not be as great a concern. So I'd like an explanation on that.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

Under forest protection and fire suppression the minister did note that there's been a great decrease in fire suppression, almost a 43 percent decrease. To some extent I might be even more worried about the mere 10 percent decrease under forest protection because that includes the areas of early detection and presuppression of fires. Under fire suppression itself, if a fire is going and we run out of that \$13 million, then there's going to be a special warrant passed and the money will be there to fight a fire. We won't let the province burn down simply because that portion of the budget was spent.

I would worry that in fact we make it more likely that we will spend that budget and need special warrants by cutting anything under the early detection and presuppression stages and that if as the minister claimed -- and after consulting with some people in the industry, I've no reason to doubt that we in fact do have just about the best early stage detection and prevention in the country. I would hate to see that cut at all because cutting that may cause much greater expenditures. I think we only have to look at the B.C. experience of the recent past where they laid off many experienced people, cut that section of their budget, and ran into ghastly and horrible problems in putting out fires that may never have gotten out of control if they hadn't been slashing instead of just cutting judiciously.

A couple of general concerns that I think do relate very much to the budget of the department because they will necessitate expenditures or are outlined in expenditures. One issue I brought up that affects habitat management -- and I've questioned it in the past -- is the McGrane Lagoon or the marina project that is going ahead there. What has puzzled me is the assumption of this department and the Environment department that there was only one place on all of Lac La Biche where any developer could have developed a marina, and that was in a lagoon that was very environmentally sensitive, very important for spawning of fish, very important in the surrounding areas' bird habitat, and some have claimed is in fact a bird sanctuary where bird habitat should never have been affected.

I was impressed that the project was stopped for investigation less than 24 hours after I complained to regional officials in the area. I've since been told that it is either progressing now or is going to be going ahead very soon, and I'm disappointed to hear that. A couple of questions on it. One, will the minister explain which department, either his or the Environment department, was responsible for the initial decision for it to go ahead? Because I've had conflicting stories from different sources as to who exactly made the decision, who thought it was good and who thought it was horrible.

I would also like to ask: is it true that one or more Wildlife officers were against the project, and if so, why was their advice ignored in making the decision? And here I'm referring to the newspaper article for which the reporter was soundly called a liar by the Minister of the Environment, and in fact, so was I. The Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife in his letter to me asserted that the *Edmonton Journal* admitted the article was inaccurate because the sentence wasn't finished. I felt com-

pelled to contact the reporter and ask about it. The reporter stated that it was in fact a word-for-word quote taken from a tape-recorded interview, that the accuracy had been checked several times. The reason it is fairly disjointed was that the writer did not want to revise for grammar and make it look better -- absolutely word for word -- and it was not the only place in the interview where that official said that he personally disapproved of that project going ahead in that place. So it's clear that at least that particular individual thought it was not a good idea.

Also, the writer said that she was not aware of her newspaper or any person at the newspaper retracting the article or any portion of it. She was not willing to retract or admit that there was any inaccuracy or anything misleading in it. So now I'm wondering which was correct, the article and the statement as quoted or the minister's letter and the Environment minister's accusations?

Also, I would like to know if the minister has checked and determined whether or not the McGrane Lagoon and the surrounding area is a bird sanctuary that was established by the federal government and then turned over to the provincial government with a caveat that they maintain it as a bird sanctuary, and if so, how the kind of destruction to the banks that was done by the developer where the bird habitat would be could have been allowed to go ahead.

I would also like to know if the minister's investigation indicated what I saw indicated: that the developer did violate his work permit quite extensively in the bringing in of fill. As I read the work permit, there was no mention of any permission to bring in fill and deposit it on the banks. The swamp area that was filled in represents the space between the low-water mark and the high-water mark, and during high-water times a lot of that fill is going to wash in, cause siltation. There are going to be problems with the fish habitat as well. So I can see a lot of problems in the future, and in fact in his letter to me the minister indicated that he could see some problem there and committed his department to helping alleviate that problem.

If the developer did exceed his work permits, I'm wondering what charges, if any, will be laid. I've come to expect that the Minister of the Environment will talk bravely and then not press charges against polluters. I'm hoping that's not the policy of the forestry department as well, and if this person did violate his work permits, then I would like to see whatever can be done about it done through the Forestry, Lands and Wildlife department.

The minister indicated in his letter that the decision to go ahead was based on the lack of public input. If the minister has interviewed people in the area who are concerned about the present location and asked their opinion of the advertising done by whomever -- and again, I'm not sure if the ad was written by the Environment department or by the developer. Some correspondence I've gotten indicates that in fact the developer was told he should advertise, and therefore it seems to me logical to assume that it was the developer who worded the ad. The ad stated that the project was on lot 55, Hudson Bay Reserve. Everybody in the area knows that Hudson Bay Reserve is a lot of land in town and that it in fact has a perfectly suitable location for a marina. That's why nobody complained. Because they figured: "Well, that's no problem. Why bother? You know, what's to complain about?" As soon as they saw where the work was going ahead -- even a commercial fisherman who lives four lots away was astounded that this was what was termed Hudson Bay Reserve in the advertisement in his local paper, and he was appalled that

the Forestry, Lands and Wildlife department would allow the destruction of that spawning area. That will affect his livelihood, because in the long term a reduced fisheries habitat there is going to be detrimental to commercial and sport fishing.

So I would hope that the minister is going to look into that advertising from that point of view and confirm who exactly worded it. Check with the map. When I was in Lac La Biche, I looked at the map of the area, and the Hudson Bay Reserve is very clearly marked on the town map and very obviously a considerable distance, some miles, from the actual location of the marina itself.

I'm also somewhat concerned that the department has fostered the belief that those who are against this location are against having a marina for Lac La Biche. I'm merely against having a marina that may be in the single most environmentally damaging and, as some residents have said, the single stupidest location that could have been found on the entire lake or certainly within easy boating distance of the town of Lac La Biche. I'm in fact quite happy to see Lac La Biche getting a marina; I just think they could have found a much better place. So I'll be interested in hearing the minister's comments on that.

I have some concerns about the outfitter/guide policy. There were some good parts in the overall Wildlife Act. I in fact am in favour of testing of first-time hunters to see if they know the difference between a moose and a deer and so on and so forth. Some of the performances I've seen in the bush would indicate that there are a lot of hunters, some of them quite experienced, who may not be too sure of that as well. First-time hunters might be even worse. Certainly the hunter hunting on my grandmother's farm one time was surprised to see a local hunter mistake him for a moose or deer or something and shoot at him seven times as he hid behind a log. So I could support the idea of testing for first-time hunters. [interjection] It came very close to his ear. He thought it was a good thing that the guy was only a mediocre shot.

But within the outfitter/guide policy I do have some serious concerns. One of my greatest concerns is what I would call near-intimidation tactics within the industry. People have had it made very clear to them, or at least they've told me it's been made immanently clear to them, that if they speak out against the policy, they can forget about getting an allotment when the policy goes through. When the review committee decides who will get allotments -- and they'll all be eligible; I agree with that. But they won't all get the permits and the allocations. They'll just all be eligible, if the review committee sees fit to give them one. One of the ways to make sure you aren't eligible to get one is to criticize the policy publicly.

I'm wondering exactly how many allotments there will be. If the minister can't tell me exactly, then approximately -- will it be 1500; will it be 300; will it be 45? -- some figure that could help me differentiate whether it's in those ranges. I'm wondering along with that how many of the permits will be issued. They are related to wildlife management units. I'm wondering how many permits and allocations will be allotted, initially at least, to each wildlife management unit. As I said, I know that every licensed guide will be allowed to apply for one. I'm wondering how the decision will be made and whether or not it's being made clear to people that in fact talking out against this policy will help them not get one of these allotments.

I'm concerned about the review committee itself, and I've a number of questions about that. The figures I got -- and I would welcome the minister to correct me if any of these have changed since I got the figures. The latest statistic or handout I had from

the minister was that the review committee would be made up of 15 members. I've heard that it was expanded to 17. As I looked at this committee, I could see that it was handpicked so that nine out of the 15 would agree with the minister no matter what he said, which means that his policies are not likely to be outvoted by it.

I was concerned about a number of things, and that is that the Alliance of Independent Alberta Guides and Outfitters, which has now in excess of 100 members, has one representative on it, and six more associations of guides and outfitters and trail riders and so on has a total membership . . . [interjection]. I missed one. That's where one of the other people came in. Thank you, Rocky Mountain House. They represent just barely 100 members, so that in fact they represent fewer members in their associations than the one who has not yet had a person named.

I'm concerned that the minister presumes the authority to veto the appointment by an interest group or an association. If, for instance, the Alliance of Independent Alberta Guides and Outfitters wants to nominate and elect Gordon Burton as their representative, where does the minister assume the authority to tell them they picked the wrong person, which according to Gordon Burton happened? Also, he had previously been appointed as the alternate to -- I believe that would be -- Janet Trimble, outfitter at large, should she not be able to fill the office or come to meetings, and was then unappointed from that as well. Now, he has been a very vocal opponent of the policy. I'm wondering why the minister did not see him as a suitable representative for the Alliance of Independent Alberta Guides and Outfitters.

I'm also concerned about the alliance's assertion that Hank Peterson, who was the alliance's representative, was on their instruction removed from that position but that that removal was not made official and therefore he represented them, even though it was against their express wishes, for some months, so that certainly the largest group had a person on there who they felt did not represent their interests and was representing the official line of the minister more than they wished.

I'm concerned that I've heard accusations that some or all of the names submitted by the Alberta Fish & Game Association were not deemed suitable and that Ken Steinhauer of the Indian Association has had trouble with his position on, if not this one, certainly the advisory committee previously.

Another concern I have concerns a member of both the review committee and the previous advisory committee, that person being Russell Thornberry. I will mention again a comment he made in a letter in which he directly contradicts an often-made statement of officials of the department. He said that the Alberta Whitetail Outfitters Association

is not concerned with a large membership because we know that the government is planning to eliminate vast numbers of guides and outfitters in the near future through changes in the laws.

Now, he was on the committee chaired by, I believe, the M.L.A. for Rocky Mountain House, which drew up the policy, even though a letter that was sent to a guide by the government said that it was not a government policy; it was drawn up by guides, by the industry. [interjection] Pardon? Well, the problem is that I've seen so many tracks thrown out on this particular issue that it's just, you know, which one of a dozen different tracks should a guy follow today? In any case, I'm concerned about that, and I'm concerned because guides who have been worried about his representation have checked a couple of details.

I would ask the minister to at least commit himself to check-

ing these details to ascertain whether or not they are true. They are assertions made to me by guides. Now, the policy states that anyone who is going to have an allotment -- that's an allotment of sheep tags, an allotment of moose tags, whatever this all boils down to -- must be a Canadian citizen. Now, according to them, Russell Thornberry was born in Texas and Immigration in Ottawa and Calgary has no record of him becoming a Canadian citizen. In fact, one of them even had a friend who had checked through the RCMP, and he isn't even registered as having an Alberta driver's licence. Now, I would ask the minister to at least confirm to check this, because if that is true, one of the major architects of the policy and one of the people who is going to review who should get an allotment should have his allotment taken away because he lacks one of the criteria of the new policy. So I would really like to hear a confirmation from the minister that he will definitely check into that.

Another problem I have with this is that one of the major justifications of this whole overturning and revamping of an industry is that it's an industry out of control, and that in fact is taken from a handout from the government revised March 12, 1987, Background and Problem: "Guiding and outfitting operations are virtually out of control". That was the justification for this. Now, if an industry is out of control and the members need to be controlled, then it would certainly seem to me that putting virtually all of the power that is being vested in this review committee into the hands of representatives of the industry that is out of control lacks a bit of logic. So I would be interested in hearing the minister's comments on that.

I have another problem, and that is that this review committee of guides and outfitters is going to decide who gets allocations or allotments in the outfitter/guide permits and licences and everything else that goes along with it. Who's going to review their application? Who's going to review Russell Thornberry's application? Who's going to review Dave Simpson's application? Is Dave going to review Russ's and Russ review Dave's? Is the M.L.A. for Rocky Mountain House going to review them all, or the minister? I'll be interested to know, because I have some concerns, especially if it turns out, as some have accused, that there will only be 70 or 80 of these outfitter/guide licences given out eventually. I have some concerns that about nine of them will be decided on by people who get them.

And of course, if they are deciding who gets which area -- because anyone who hunts knows that some areas are good and some areas aren't, that in some areas you're taking people on a tour of the wilderness and in some you're taking them out to shoot an animal, hopefully, depending on how shot-out an area is and so on. Well, does that mean that the review committee, or at least the guides and outfitters on it, will get first pick of the best areas? I can see some real conflict of interest for them, and I'm wondering how that's going to be resolved. Of course, in view of my contention that the minister has handpicked this committee carefully, I suppose he knows exactly how they will handle that problem, in fact.

I think there are some really severe implications to what this particular policy is going to do to the industry. The reduction of competition -- and I've said a number of times how much joy I take as a socialist who feels no shyness in saying that publicly, a moderate and reasonable socialist, and how much I enjoy getting up and defending competition and free enterprise in an industry that represents some of the most independent free enterprisers in the province, that being guides and outfitters, and they want to remain independent.

Now, some of the questions and answers in this government handout indicate that in fact guide A may be able to sell his allotment either to a brand-new guide who's never been in business -- which is the only way a new guide will be able to get in business, to buy one at whatever the price has escalated to -- or he can split it up and sell it to two guides already operating in that wildlife management unit, as long as he doesn't increase the number of guides in the wildlife management unit. It says nothing about as long as he doesn't decrease them, just as long as he doesn't increase them. So we could in fact see very quickly, if some of these outfitters have enough money -- and if they're backed by foreigners, they may not have much trouble with that -- where not only could guides divvy them up so that we end up going from three to two to one guide in a wildlife management unit, but then he could sell out to a guide who operates in the neighbouring wildlife management unit. So we've gone from six to one in two wildlife management units. I can see that as being a very serious problem.

I just mentioned the possibility of foreign financial backers. I have some very serious concerns about that, and I've brought them up. I think they could cause some severe problems for the department in the future, because I'm wondering what mechanisms the minister is putting in place that will make sure that foreigners cannot control these allotments by presenting themselves as merely financial backers and booking agents combined and getting 90 percent of fees paid as a booking agent fee, which would give them virtually all of the financial gain and total control and booking privileges, even though on paper in some office in the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife nothing will say they own it.

Now, I'm also concerned because the minister, when I questioned that in the Legislature, said that an investigation had been done and in fact there were no grounds to indicate that Ken Trudell had bought an allotment of sheep tags from George Ostashek using Ferlin Koma as more or less of a front company. Yet Stan Webb, an enforcement officer with the department, is, or at least was as of April 8, in the middle of an investigation, and that was some time after the minister had said an investigation had been done. I'm pleased to see that there's more than one investigation or that the investigation is ongoing. I would certainly like to know where it's going, what progress has been made, and what use Mr. Webb may have made of the tape of the phone conversation I'd mentioned in the House that I did make available to him at his request. I felt it only a fair and ethical thing to do.

Another concern I have, and we're getting close to the anniversary of the issue becoming an issue, is forest spraying. Nearly a year ago during the election campaign, when the public had come to expect politicians to say almost anything on almost any topic as long as it sounds good to the group being addressed, the Premier, who was hoping to be re-elected as Premier, in the Yellowhead riding led a group who had a petition against forest spraying or using herbicides in the forest industry to believe there would be a moratorium on forest spraying until public concerns had been answered. They have not been answered. The number of letters I'm getting on the topic indicates that a lot of people have concerns. [interjection] Only three minutes? My gosh, I didn't think I'd get through even 15 minutes. There are still concerns there. The Premier said there was no moratorium. I had even Conservative people say: "Well, we felt there was a moratorium. We told our constituents, and now there is none, and spraying is going on, even if it's research." They were embarrassed. I was just angry; I

didn't have to stick up for it.

A lot of these herbicides have been licensed in the States, and then the American research has been trusted in terms of licensing them in Canada. They've never really been tested in circumstances I would trust. Certainly Roundup is one of those where 18 of their tests were in fact classed by the EPA as being invalid, and only 10 of those tests have been repeated in any measure, so I have some concerns about that.

I guess I'll end with a comment about a tour, and this field trip for the advisory council should be coming up soon. It was mentioned in the *Journal* this weekend about a field trip -- as a teacher, that term appeals to me -- for those on the advisory committee. I'm wondering if there will be one this year as there was last year, if Mr. Steinhauer's evaluation of the tour was at all accurate, and if the price was accurate, approximately \$100,000, or if that's one of the things the minister has wisely chosen to cut in this year's budget. Because if he's chosen to cut that, I would certainly see that as being an expendable expenditure, one that we could well do without. Certainly Mr. Steinhauer felt it was one we could well do without.

And on that note I will await the minister's responses.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the minister wish to respond, or would you rather hear from some other members, Mr. Minister?

MR. SPARROW: I could respond briefly and then . . . Mr. Chairman, we have quite a number of concerns we were shown. Undoubtedly, you can see why the public of Alberta does get misled numerous times, because of the massive misinformation that my opposition friend likes to delve into and get himself into the gutter. I will try to stay out of that gutter.

The automated information systems was a valid question. The LAS system provides a much better service now that it's automated. He was comparing the \$6 million to other parts of the budget. The mineral revenue accounting systems collects over \$1 billion a year for this government, and the major portion of the increase is here. This is under the Minister of Energy. It also shows up in vote 1 under my department, as 75 percent of the cost of our joint departments show up in vote 1 in my department.

With reference to habitat development, though, the \$2.6 million figure that he asks about, you have to remember, Mr. Chairman, that our Buck for Wildlife fund is a trust fund. It has some \$5 million in it, and this year alone we will be spending some \$3 million from that. We also have funds for habitat enhancement projects that come through the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, and many, many clubs and organizations are obtaining funds for wildlife purposes through that process.

With reference to reclamation, very definitely in the years gone by we did a terrific number of recreation reclamation projects under the Public Lands Act and the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act. The government has completed some 982 projects encompassing some 1,335 hectares at a total cost of some \$3 million over the last few years. Over three-quarters of a million dollars has been spent on reclaiming old industrial and mine sites on over 300 hectares of land, and over half a million dollars has been spent on reclamation of old road accesses and trails throughout the province. This amounts to an average of about \$300,000 per year for 10 years, and we must remember that over \$2 million was spent in the first five years, when the bulk of the work was done. Since then we have continued to spend about \$200,000 a year, and today's budget re-

flects the maintenance mode that we are now administrating because all the major work has been done. So the drop in that area is going to a maintenance-type budgeting.

As far as forest protection and suppression, yes, protection has dropped down. Our budget last year was way over. Last year we spent about \$14 million, and that's roughly the amount that is in this year's budget. Our suppression is one of the best in Canada and will continue to be that and very definitely concentration will be kept on that category.

With reference to the McGrane Lagoon that was mentioned, very definitely that is a local community project. The local community and municipality is in charge of the planning in that area. The road that caused all of the problem is on private land, which is planned for through the planning process that takes place in most communities. The project has had very minimal impact as far as our department is concerned, but very positive co-operation has come from the developer. We find that the developer has come forward and co-operated wholeheartedly with our department and upon request stopped the project until the concerns that were asked about were addressed. The Minister of the Environment has answered your concerns in a letter. I understand my department has also answered many of your concerns on that project by letter and the details that you've gone into on that specific issue.

We on this side of the House basically believe in the private sector being allowed to come forward with projects, and there are many locations on Lac La Biche that could supply services like that. But I'd like to bring some of the positiveness of that project Mr. Chairman. It is, as I said, on private lands. The developer has committed to go away above and beyond his duty. He will be breaching an access road on the south end of the lagoon and replacing it with a bridge. He will be dredging a canal from the lagoon into the marsh area in line with that bridge, and he is also verbally considering making contributions to fisheries habitat enhancement or a development project associated with Lac La Biche.

These are very positive when we consider that no net loss philosophy was placed on the fish habitat on that project and I think it's very commendable that some of the citizens of our province come forward and do things like that after being severely and unjustly criticized after going through the proper processes to obtain a permit. And I'm sure the Minister of the Environment could add and go on, because the permit that you were referring to is issued by the minister. Very definitely our staff had input that took the local people's wishes into place and tried to make sure that the least impact to the fishery took place, and we'll continue to look at maintaining the fishery and the habitat for that fishery.

With reference to the outfitters and guides policy, some very strong statements were made. To our knowledge, Mr. Chairman -- but I will check -- the chap mentioned is an Albertan as far as we are concerned. I will ask my department to check on that if he believes there is a problem. It's one of the reasons why we have the policy. Then during the implementation process each and every guide in this province will be asked to fill out forms that can be checked. Those forms will be checked by our department and then the total implementation process will be reviewed by the committee. That committee will also then be able to review any complaints that individual guides wish to bring forward, so it's primarily going to be a review committee. Our department will be doing all the checking and processing that will be necessary, and the review committee will be the committee that looks at individual complaints, along with re-

viewing the total allotment system. I'm sure we could go on and on, Mr. Chairman, about a future policy that has a lot of work to be done on it.

Very definitely, I think, there's a gross misrepresentation of the facts when you start talking about a group that has 100 members and all the rest have 100 members put together. I've asked for that membership list and can't obtain it so it sounds like it's a fictitious thing. That particular organization has changed its representation with our committees three times in the last two years, and people seem to continuously stop being a member of it so I guess it's what day of the week you have, or maybe that's the total they've had since the start.

With reference to your question of the secretary-treasurer, very definitely the four names were brought forward by that alliance, Mr. Chairman. The new president was chosen to be their representative and is their representative and attended the last meeting. The review committee is in process and working with my staff and with representation. And I should say that for maybe the first time, the representative is a very sensible individual -- I've met him personally -- and the review process and committee is working and working well.

With reference to the out-of-control and booking agents aspect, I'd like to just make sure, Mr. Chairman, that one of the objectives of the plan is definitely to protect the resource. Number two is to make sure the opportunity of hunting for Albertans is maintained, and number three is to make sure the operation of the outfitter and guide industry in Alberta has an opportunity to grow and to control the problems. We've had -- and I'll give you an example. One member that we have had a problem with has had more than 15 charges against him, and they've removed his licence in B.C. for five years and Saskatchewan for five, and I understand they could end up with extradition. If he wants to move into the United States, he would end up with jail charges. That 1 or 2 percent of society in any group gives the whole industry a bad name. I would suggest that our member sort out and take a look at the information being given to him, because very definitely the illegal activities that have been going on in the province are going to come to an end, and very definitely we're going to make sure that every guide or outfitter that was legally doing something in the last five years will legally be available to get into the new system. I can't help but stress the aspect of the word "legal" in that term.

Mr. Chairman, with reference to the forestry spraying, here we go again with misrepresentation. I don't know whether I want to take up the House's time again regurgitating the facts. Letters have been given to the groups who were involved. Very definitely one specific project was stopped. I was the minister of the day and asked it to be withdrawn because not enough public information or no public meetings had taken place in the Hinton area. The only projects that were -- and they were talked about in this House last August and announced by the Minister of the Environment who approves all of the applications, discussed them last August. Most of the applications that were approved last year were primarily in our department. None of them was aerial spraying, all ground application. Most of the projects did not get done; they will be finalized this year. Most of them are of an experimental nature, and it's very important that we carry on that experimentation and make sure that we utilize with care the herbicides that are necessary to that industry.

With reference to a member of his party who just recently wrote a letter to the editor of the *Journal* about a field trip supposedly costing \$100,000, I asked my assistant deputy minister

today if there was any fact to that. He said that that's just gross misrepresentation; the field trip does not come any place near that. Many, many of the other committee members were very, very satisfied with that trip. We're asking them for viewpoints throughout the year on fish and wildlife and integrated management planning aspects and the developments that take place throughout the province. Each year a field trip is taken to a different portion of the province in order to allow the advisory committee to have firsthand information on the many, many activities that are going on, and it's been carrying on for quite a number of years. Unfortunately, I have not been able to take the trip at the same time as that committee, but I'm sure other members that are in this House have, and I would hope that that type of educational process with our public advisory members can carry on. It is a very worthwhile project.

Mr. Chairman, I think I've covered the majority if not all of his concerns. If I've missed any, I'll try to check my notes and readdress the issue in a few minutes and let someone else have an opportunity to ask some questions.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:           The       Member       for  
Vermilion-Viking.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister. It gives me pleasure tonight to address the estimates of the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. I'll congratulate the minister for his positive attitude in the last months in dealing with a lot of unrealistic and unreasonable types of attitudes out there in the public to some of the processes that are ongoing right now.

MR. TAYLOR: Democracy is an awful thing.

DR. WEST: We'll get to you later.

A 14.2 percent decrease this year is showing a great deal of fiscal responsibility. When I look at \$163.5 million spent in this department and look just at the department of fish and wildlife as generating out there \$1.2 billion worth of business in this province, I think that even in that small amount on fish and wildlife, along with lands and all the other incomes and generation of jobs, this is a good value for our dollar as far as Albertans go in this province.

This department -- and I see some of the people working in the department -- is a lean machine when it comes to efficiency out there. I have personally been involved in working with the minister and with the department in some areas, and I find that they are most co-operative, and like I said, they're running a lean machine. What they get out of the staff they have is excellent.

I would like to talk about the nonresident big game outfitting and guiding policy. I have some points regarding this policy. Within my constituency is found some of the best white-tailed deer hunting on the continent. Hunting is a major form of recreation for many of the constituents and many of the hunters who live in other areas of the province. It also forms the basis for the livelihood of the guides and outfitters who live and work in the area. Moreover, wildlife and the right to hunt are an important part of our Alberta heritage. And I think encompassed in that statement I just made lies the basic principle behind this policy, and that is to maintain this resource for Albertans, to create an industry that generates dollars through tourism and activity not only for those coming into the province but for Albertans here at the same time.

Over the years there have been a number of stresses imposed

on our wildlife, including habitat destruction, harassment, and overharvest. Each of these is being addressed. The integrated planning program, referral of resource development proposals to Fish and Wildlife staff, and habitat enhancement are conserving and improving wildlife habitat and reducing harassment. Harvest by resident hunter is controlled through the hunting regulations and even more sophisticated inventory techniques. So you see that our resident hunters are being controlled by regulation.

But there is an area that has remained as an outstanding concern in the regulation of the guiding and outfitting industry. At the present time the province does not license the business entity. It has no knowledge of how many businesses there are, where they operate, or what their resource dependency is. Moreover, operators are able to move any place at any time on any scale without due regard to resident interests or other businesses which are already in the area. This has to be stopped. Any government or department that would allow this to continue into the future would be doing a great deal of harm to future generations of Albertans in this industry. Overexploitation of the resource is occurring in certain areas because of this problem. Residents' use of the resource is being compromised in situations where we have no effective means of dealing with the amount or location of the nonresident use. Without exception, resident hunters, landowners, and the outfitting and guiding industry agree that the problem is serious and requires correction through urgent changes in government policy as required in legislation.

I have been active, as well as the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House, in the development of a new policy to address these issues. This work has also involved members of the guiding industry of Alberta, the Alberta Fish & Game Association. The draft policy was reviewed and amended by the forestry and natural resources caucus committee and subsequently sent to all guides for review. The proposals have been endorsed by both the Alberta Fish & Game Association and the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council, which comprises some 25 organizations in this province, key individuals elected by the people throughout the province. You would think that they could make a very complete decision on this, and they have.

It's been going on since 1972. If you can imagine, the first drive for this, to manage the wildlife in this province, was started in '72, and we're advancing on it in 1987. It's high time that we get this under way. The policy pursues, as the minister just said, three objectives. The conservation of the resource, the management of the resource, the wildlife in this province, for generations to come. Secondly, an accommodation of the resident use of the resource. Through this policy that the minister has brought forth, we want to see that Albertans have their fair share in the future. This is a protection of the resident hunter, not the taking away of his rights. Number three, maximizing the economic return from the resource to the nonresident outfitting and guiding industry.

The policy achieves these objectives through certain means. Number one, it establishes a process whereby resident hunting and nonresident hunting -- that's tourism -- harvest allocations are explicitly established and periodically reviewed. Every four years they are going to be looked at and these licences are set out for five-year periods. Number two, they establish criteria that will allow for all active guides and outfitters currently in business to be eligible to enter the new system. What fairer could there be? Can you imagine going back to May 1980 and going up to December 31, 1986, and allowing all people in the industry at that time to apply for a licence? Now, that's a six-



year period.

Number three, licensing the business entity that contracts the hunter and provides the guiding services. It's going to increase the quality of the hunts in this province. It's going to attract those people to come back to this province that have had bad experiences, because we will have quality licensed outfitting/guiding services in this province. Number four, it establishes as a part of the licence the type and the amount of the nonresidents' hunting which can be provided and its location. Therefore, it manages it. It manages it from year to year under data that Fish and Wildlife have in their offices and makes sure that we only take that allocation that will make sure that the species continue for years to come.

Number five, providing that the licence can be transferable in order that economic consideration can have increased impact on the industry. What fair system is that? We allow them to apply over a six-year period. We put it into a viable business entity that has criteria of quality control, and then in the future we ensure that that continues by giving them transferability of those large operations and that input of costs. It happens in all industries, but we're so adverse to hearing that private enterprise and the management of our industries can be both coupled together in this policy. We ensure that tourism and the spin-off dollars to Albertans forever will be protected under this policy. I believe that new policy puts guiding and outfitting on a secure business footing while ensuring long-term conservation of the resource upon which they depend.

I have two questions for the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife related to the implementation of this policy. The first is the nonresidents' big game outfitting and guiding policy will come into effect on January 1, 1988. What steps are being taken to ensure a proper transition to the new policy that will minimize disruption to the guiding and outfitting industry? Number two, what special budgetary allocations will be necessary to carry out the transition to the new policy, and are these being accommodated in the current budget? There are going to be some costs involved, and I'd just like to know what's been set aside for the implementation of this policy.

I'll take a few more minutes here. I think I would like to talk a little about the fish management, the department of fisheries in the province. They're doing quite a tremendous job, and again it goes into the same concept as the policy I just discussed. I think it works directly towards income to Albertans through the development of tourism not only for those people coming from outside the province but those people that move around within this province.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

The department of fisheries has developed the Cold Lake fish hatchery, which will take our stocking capacity in the province from approximately 9 million to 10 million fish up to around 36 million, as the minister has indicated. That, which is north of my constituency at Cold Lake, will be opening on May 23, and we certainly will try to be there. But that in itself will increase the potential of that northeast quadrant. That area up there in northeast Alberta has a potential beyond any. There are hundreds of lakes up there, and with this fish stocking capacity we're going to increase these fishing access sites, and it can do nothing but wonders.

The Minister of Tourism is here. I would like to put in a jab, saying, "Let's get that northeast quadrant." We're always talking about all our pictures with mountains and everything, but I'd

like to put a drive in for the northeast quadrant to ensure that we get that opened up, because there's tourism up there beyond anything. If you're going to quadruple, go from \$2.5 billion to \$10 billion by 1996, we're going to have to have the northeast quadrant opened up too. Right now we've gone from 80 to 150 fishing access sites up to probably 300 to 400 at the present time. We're really moving in a good direction. I'd like to see that.

The other is the new sports fishing regulations, and I would just like to comment that it was brought in to manage the stock in that area with new catch and possession limits, new minimum size limits, and bait restrictions. But there is one area -- the alternate closure system for streams in the Eastern Slopes is one, but also the change of the different fishing seasons. I want to make a comment on behalf of the Member for West Yellowhead constituency here tonight. He is not here and he asked me to bring this up to the minister.

The change in zone 4 was taken this year. From June 16 the season on sports fishing was open to August 31; that's midnight on the 31st. What happens is that the rest of the different areas were open from June 16 to November 1, and his point of view is that the length was extended in areas that have high-pressure areas, such as Kananaskis, Waterton, and Pincher Creek. They have good accesses, better accesses than he has in zone 4 at Hinton or Grande Cache or Edson. He believes that this has decimated the tourism there by shutting it down, especially at midnight on the 31st. It's before the long weekend, and it's going to cause a lot of concern out in that area. I don't know whether this slipped by, but every town council out in that area, Mr. Minister, is really concerned that that be looked at, and if there is anything that can be done immediately, because it's part of that tourist area, they would appreciate it out there. They don't seem to have any other concerns about the other sports fishing regulations. They seem to be within line.

One thing that was stated, again in regards to that, is that if there are problems with overfishing at spawning times, which is probably the reasoning behind closing these earlier . . . They were thinking that if there are 374,000 anglers -- and it's growing; I mean, I could see us doubling that some day -- if you increase the licence fee from \$5 to \$10, simple arithmetic shows you that you could probably develop increased fish hatcheries with those funds in order to stock those streams that you're going to take too much out of at those times. So one is a trade-off. To increase the tourist industry and keep it viable, we could probably turn our resources back into more stocking and increase the fish hatchery capacities.

All in all, I look to the department of fisheries as really increasing our potential. There's about \$180 million at the present time being pumped into Alberta's economy because of fishing alone in the tourist industry, and I can see that if we quadruple it through the Minister of Tourism's direction, we can take that up over a half billion dollars easily.

So I congratulate you and the department on their initiatives to this extent. I could go on and on, but I'll leave you with that.

MR. SPARROW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will answer the questions asked. I guess it's important to look back and make sure that the members, especially the new members in the House, know the history of outfitting in the province of Alberta, and that's caused some of the problems we've have. We should have reviewed the policies sooner. In 1971 there were no basic controls on sheep outfitting in the province. Approximately 50 percent of the resource was being taken by outfitters, and Al-

bertans were losing an opportunity to have experienced hunts. A sheep outfitters' policy was put in place in '71, and allotments were given out to the outfitters in the business of that day, and it was known as the sheep outfitters' policy. That policy was updated in 1984 and approved in '85. At the same time, because of concerns of other outfitters who could not get into that sheep outfitters industry because there are only approximately 80 permits being issued to some 20 or 23 outfitters, the big game outfitters policy was very necessary to look at more than a thousand guides and all of the other outfitters that were in the business and wanting to create, as the member said, a very viable outfitting and guiding industry.

They were concerned themselves about the abuses within that industry, which very definitely have been showing up by some members of the public who know that this new policy will very definitely make sure that in the future the legal aspect of running their business will be looked at and we will know and keep records on each and every outfitting and guiding business and try to assist them wherever we can. But we're going to point out very loud and clear that the rules and laws of the fish and wildlife Act and regulations shall be adhered to. Breaking of those rules can not only give us the opportunity with the increased fines to get at some of the problems that had been taking place, but we can also remove the outfitter's licence.

You mentioned what steps are being taken to ensure a proper transition to that policy that will minimize disruption. The only thing that will be taking place this year will be the sheep outfitters policy. The allotments are transferable in that category, and any transfers would be reviewed by the new committee we've been talking about that's set up and going. The fish and wildlife division is also developing a process whereby the transition and allocation of nonresident hunting licences will be handled smoothly. The draft process has been presented to the outfitter guide permit review committee for their review and approval, and in this way the representatives of the guiding industry, Alberta Fish & Game, the Indian Association, the Metis Association, and the public member have had an opportunity to look at that process.

The same committee will also advise me on ongoing administration of the policy during its implementation once it comes into effect, including licence appeals, performance considerations, eligibility, and licence transfers. The initial allocation of all nonresident hunting licences hopefully will be completed by this fall, giving industry the necessary time to advertise and book their hunts for the 1988 season when the new allocation and licence are issued. The division will make the transition to the new policy, including allocation of the nonresident hunting licences. That will be reviewed by the review committee. By the fall of this year we will accomplish this work without any increase in budget. We hope that the division will be able to meet its goals through the general streamlining of our operations for more effective delivery and through some of the adjustments of program priorities in other programs. So there should be no increased budgetary expenses caused by the policy that is anticipated at this time.

I'm aware of some of the concerns on fisheries management. I think it's important that we talk about and the members know about the fish management program that was effective April 1. In 1985 and '84 and going back as early as the mid-70s, this Legislature had select committees on commercial fishing looking at the recreational and commercial fishing industry. Three or four reports have been written over the last number of years, and finally in 1985 we finalized a policy for the commercial

fishermen and for sport fishing changes. Those changes went through the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council and were discussed very broadly throughout the province and for the last 12 to 16 months have been in Ottawa because we only administer the regulations. Our ADM in charge of fish and wildlife is the chief fisheries officer appointed by Canada to administer them. That came into effect April 1.

The specific problem you have identified is most likely caused by an earlier closure. The policy was expanded to allow better opportunities and to allow the fish in streams to have an opportunity to increase. The main closure till June 16 is because of spawning season in most streams. In that area, in zone 4, I believe the Dolly Varden has a fall spawning season and most likely the early closure compared to other areas that you've mentioned is because of the spawning season of certain species in that area.

I have to admit though, Mr. Chairman, that it looked like we're actually hurting one area of the province. Throughout the province the basic policy in sport fishing on the Eastern Slopes has been changed from a process where in the past every second stream was opened every alternate year, and with this new process every stream will be open this year. We will have catch-and-release involved throughout the Eastern Slopes for various sizes, and we've closed the seasons for spawning, trying to give the fish as much protection as we can. We're getting a lot of very positive comments from the fishermen throughout the province on that method. I guess the success that came from the increase in fishing opportunities in the Bow River in Calgary because of the catch-and-release process that was put in there some years ago led us to make these further decisions to go more towards catch-and-release to give Albertans and fishermen visiting our province in tourism more opportunity to catch and release those fish that he does not need. We encourage all Albertans to use that catch-and-release wherever possible.

I'm sure my staff were listening, Mr. Chairman, to the suggestion of fees going from \$5 to \$10. I hope you would bring that to the Provincial Treasurer's attention, because normally if that fee increase took place, it would go to general revenue and the hatcheries may not get built. So what you're suggesting is loud and clear, and I would love the opportunity to look at additional hatcheries in the future.

We are ahead in a lot of ways. The federal minister of fisheries, Tom Siddon, is coming up to the opening of our fish hatchery at Cold Lake, along with the minister from Saskatchewan. Again, I would like to invite any member of this Legislature to that opening, as I think we as Albertans should be very, very proud.

We're going into walleye enhancement, and massive ponds are there for the rearing of walleye, which we haven't been able to do in the past other than in very small quantities. But above that hatchery, we'll be glad to talk in future years to my colleagues to try and locate more funds for more fishery plants in other parts of the province.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before we proceed, members may be interested in final scores: Edmonton over Winnipeg by two goals, Toronto over Detroit by one goal. The hon. Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for that information.

I'm not sure whether we're into a sort of blitzkrieg by the

government here with the minister. I think I'm the second speaker in the opposition, and we've gone an hour and a half on the estimates, which speaks fairly highly of democracy if indeed we're going to be closed off at the end of this session, because I think many people wanted to speak on Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. If this government does disappear from the face of the political life of this province, I'm sure one of the reasons will be the way they try to muzzle criticism when it comes to the discussion of the budget by filibustering by the ministers. Now, I don't think it's anything that enhances your reputation or does any good for you. [interjections] If some of the small minds at the back end want to say that, that's fine, but some of you ministers try to but most don't. I would wonder too -- some of the back-bench information there congratulating you for being fiscally responsible this year for cutting the budget. I wonder if he would go so far as to say that you were fiscally irresponsible last year for spending so much.

But let's get on. I've given you a couple of kicks, and I would pass on another one. I notice our veteran communist fighter from Calgary McCall isn't here. I would have wanted to know how the picture of the Russian bear on page 2 got by, but maybe the minister could take that over to him to find out just what happened. On the other hand, he may be lurking in his office now trying to get rid of any decorations in red and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Order please. The hon. leader knows that in *Standing Orders* we do not refer to members' attendance in the House.

The hon. Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay. Speaking now with respect to compliments, I do compliment them for the ecological habitat and the creation of ecological parks, habitat parks; he mentions 230 of them. Those are indeed welcome news. Up to now I always thought the minister's idea of a wilderness was a Safeway parking lot without yellow stripes, but if he is going ahead with an ecological habitat of 230, I think he's on the right track.

About replacing trees, which this government makes much of, I agree, and you should be complimented on the fact that reforestation is now a major item with the department. However, I think we have a lot of catching up to do, and I would be interested if the minister has any figures to show whether in fact we are going to be able to replace every tree we've cut in the last 50 years in the next five years, 10 years, or whatever it is. To say that we are replacing more than we are cutting begs the fact that this government and the government preceding it did little or nothing for some years, so it will be very interesting to hear.

As far as fish stocking, there again, as a fisherman I am very interested to hear that. Apparently you haven't taught them yet to follow a Liberal red lure, because my success hasn't improved that much, but maybe it could.

With respect to Ducks Unlimited and Tyrrell-Rush Lake, again I compliment you for what you're doing in the wilderness areas, but it does puzzle me how Stirling Lake escaped your net of improvement. Maybe it was too close to people, and doing such a good job of keeping that as a nature park embarrassed you, and you thought you had to have one sewer in southern Alberta open for the public to see as sort of a recreation, but there doesn't seem to be any reason for the question of Stirling Lake being left in the mess that it has and now in a sort of limbo.

The other opposition party I think touched very well on Lac

La Biche. Lac La Biche has a history of being mistreated by both the environment and wildlife departments, particularly the case of Field Lake, which lies just out of Lac La Biche, one of the great historical lakes in the portage, long before the railroad came, of people traveling across Canada. It's been allowed to turn into a cesspool. I would challenge this department to take on the Minister of the Environment and try to bring back Field Lake to its original pristine quality, where fish could be caught and where we could swim and actually take a drink without having to go down to the public health nurse to see whether you're going to survive. So I would challenge the minister, and as a matter of fact, I would challenge him in a number of areas to take on the Minister of the Environment, and I will come back to that.

Speaking on the grazing lease thing does bother me, the conversion of grazing leases. You mentioned your policy on the very first page: it is easier to convert grazing lease lands to more productive agricultural uses. Well, first of all, they're easier to convert something that belongs to the public to private ownership: not the kind of words you like to hear from a right-wing, left-wing, or middle-wing government. If anything, it should be harder to convert to private use, and yet you stand up and brag about it being easier to convert. I think maybe the word should be "to subvert" the use of Crown lands to the use of private initiative.

You make the interesting statement of more productive agricultural uses. That again is a judgment factor that I'm not sure the government is supposed to be able to make. In other words, I think it should be opened up to the public and public hearings as to what is more productive. I've seen through the years of working with this government, the prior government, and many other governments around the world that their interpretation of what might be more productive -- whether it's in a harbour or whether it's an oil field or a gravel pit or a bit of farmland -- quite often is entirely different from what the public would think if they had a chance to have input in hearings on it. In other words, secrecy and politicians together give a bad combination or formula, you might say, for self interest rather than public interest. I would think it behooves this government to do the best it could to open up that.

So while the new policy eliminated the need to post notices on leaseholders' intentions, no change was made in the criteria for deciding whether land was suitable for conversion. Well, that's nice to hear, but we'd like to see that set in a public meeting, not in an annual report that comes out once a year.

We go on a little further:

One of the key benefits expected from the new approach is an increase in the amount of arable land under cultivation and thus a stronger agricultural industry.

I'm sure those farmers are having trouble getting rid of the product that they've already grown. Those farmers that are already worried about the federal government, provincial governments having enough money to go around and make acreage payments: are they going to be just overjoyed at the idea of a mass conversion of new land in other areas of this province? Here again, it sounds to me very similar. I don't know if the bureaucrats are sitting or standing behind me, but it sounds very much like a self-made project by some of the bureaucracy rather than any checking with the public as to whether indeed we need to open up some great new amounts of agricultural production.

Now, let's go on a little bit further. It says on page 13 on that same issue, Mr. Chairman:

The lands must not be subject to erosion or be required

for watershed protection, key wildlife habitat, recreation, parks, subdivisions, [must not be for] forestry purposes or access to other public lands.

Holy smoke, if you pardon my getting a little religion inserted here, Mr. Chairman. That's a fantastic list, yet it's going to be decided by a closed committee, out of sight. If anything calls for public input, it should be all these questions -- major questions. If the government had asked, "Well, the only thing we have to consider is whether to grow barley or not," I could say that possibly the minister and his department are competent and able to do it without offending the public sensibility. But to put on it "subject to erosion," "required for watershed protection," "wildlife habitat, recreation, parks, subdivision," you're taking on everything that even God wasn't able to do in six days -- possibly in 10 -- resting on the seventh. To me it sounds like there's a terrific load or a terrific responsibility being taken on by the government for no real practical reason when the public could be giving some of the input.

Let's go on a bit further, Mr. Chairman, and here again I come back to page 11. On page 11, about half-way down the column, he mentions: "the need for interventionist forest management is acknowledged." Well, that's a mouthful for a Conservative government. I don't know how that slipped by; it could have been written in red ink here. But "for interventionist forest management is acknowledged" -- well, I agree.

"Including the use of chemicals, when professionally controlled." Now "the use of chemicals when professionally controlled" has got to be, I think, one of the biggest disaster areas, Mr. Chairman, that any department faces today. It's not only the use of chemicals, but I believe last year in spraying a forest all the spraying jobs except one were done by this very government. Then we have another minister on the other side of the bench that seems to be just as remote. These two ministers seem to be as remote from each other in deciding policy as where they sit in the House.

We've another minister over here, Mr. Chairman -- and I won't mention whether I see him in the chair or not -- that sits there and asks this House for a million dollars for mosquito control, after this minister has gone out and poisoned the network and got rid of the birds that eat those mosquitoes. We get this type of rat race that's going back and forth. What does this minister have to say when he talks about wildlife management, when he knows that power line companies go up and down the road allowances of this country not only cutting down the brush when they're maybe 25 feet or 20 feet short of the power line -- no possibility of reaching the power line even in maybe 15 to 20 years of rapid growth -- but then on top of that, they spray the road allowances with chemicals and then put it into the rate base and ask us to pay another 12 or 15 percent on top of that: spray the road allowances with chemicals in order to try to make sure that the growth does not come back.

This is a minister -- there is a minister there in charge of wildlife. I would suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that wildlife has very little chance of surviving under the poison policies he has, not only of clearing road allowances but then for spraying. There again, I think that the minister is antediluvian. I'm not sure if that's *Beauchesne* or not -- antediluvian -- but I'll take a chance on it. He exhibits an attitude that was widespread in 1939, and it's about time that he came down to earth and realized the government should be -- if they're out there in charge of wildlife and management -- trying to protect it rather than trying to kill it. And then bragging because he's putting out hatcheries and other plants to renew the very wildlife that he has

managed to kill off, throwing the fish back into streams that are being fed from river drainages and from surface soils that have been highly polluted with pesticides and fertilizers.

May I move on a bit, Mr. Chairman. This minister I believe is in charge of surface waters and subsurface waters. He's not in charge of oil, but he's in charge of gravel, sand, limestone, surface waters, subsurface waters; in other words, very much like that old Bible thing, he makes the waters flow. Now, this minister has had a deafening silence when the ministers of energy and development use surface waters for reclaiming oil from the subsurface when we have over 2 million barrels a day of our fresh water disappear down well bores, never to be used again as fresh water. This minister has a strange silence, and I've heard no comment on that.

What is this minister doing, Mr. Chairman, about the idea of maybe asking these people to drill and get fossil water or sulphur water or saltwater? As a matter of fact, as one of the leading proponents in Alberta of discovering saltwater, I'd be able to donate my time quite freely to him and tell him where he could locate a lot of water that's unfit for drinking that could be used by industry, if industry cleans it up for industrial purposes. But there's a strange silence on that.

Let's go a step further. How about the water table? I would like to hear what this minister is using to make sure that our water table doesn't turn out to be as a great many of the water tables now in west Europe are. You can't put a well into a water table in a great deal of Germany and France because they have fertilized and an excess use of fertilizers now seeps down into the water table. These are areas that we want to pass onto our youth. I see a glimmering of the 20th century, Mr. Chairman, peeking through occasionally when he suggests fish hatcheries and restocking of game. But to put them back in an environment that is being rapidly poisoned by the lack of activity of him and the Minister of Environment under the excuse that we have to exploit what Mother Nature gives us, is not a very comforting thought indeed.

I have a couple of other interests I'd like to talk on. I don't know whether to give the minister any time to answer or not, Mr. Chairman. I get the same old record played over and over again about free enterprise and they're doing the best they can. But I have some questions. For instance, why is wild fur production in the minister's department, but tame fur -- now if anybody can call a tame mink "tame," I don't know. Why is fur farming over in the agricultural area and not in the wildlife area? Why is he just handling wild fur production?

Maybe the minister could also answer what the need was for the expansion of wildlife offices and warehouses up in Fox Creek -- they tell me for a cost of over \$300,000 -- when before that warehouse was built with all its great facilities, they were able to rent facilities for around \$10,000 a year. There is some thought that maybe some of the facilities that the minister has built recently in the last couple of years in Edson, which is one of the constituencies mentioned in the west Yellowhead area, are fit to be used as if they were designed by the architect of the West Edmonton Mall, they're so luxurious and so grand. In other words, I believe there is a great deal of expense that's possibly been wasted in some of the semipalatial offices that seem to have been opened up by the department as we go around.

That, Mr. Chairman, I think, without trying to go over . . . Oh, I wanted to close on one issue. It was the hunting licence issue, if I may take a moment. I believe that the exclusive setting out of hunting privileges is a retrograde step, similar to New Brunswick, who set out salmon fishing rights or the fishing

rights along rivers similar to the game hunting permits that we find in Europe. And although you make a very quick argument that it solves a lot of the heavy traffic of maybe going by some hunters' areas and it helps guarantee the hunter from abroad to come in to be fairly sure of a regular method of hunting, it does overlook a couple of areas.

First of all, I'm very concerned, as native affairs and aboriginal rights critic for the Alberta Liberal Party, that that portion of our peoples have been overlooked and left without a chance to move in here. Because to say, "Well, they can acquire the licence too," fails to notice that these people rarely have the type of money and contacts that they could go out and buy or take rights to an area to hunt.

Secondly, if they say: "Well, okay. They can't become the major hunter; they can't become an outfitter. They can still guide and work for the outfitter." There again, Mr. Chairman, I think it's a rather irresponsible attitude to some of our native people who have traditionally depended on a certain amount of guiding and taking people out. They could easily be squeezed out.

Thirdly, in criticizing the hunting policy or giving exclusive hunting rights to different areas, Mr. Chairman, is the concern I have of the old analogy of the camel's nose and the tent. I spent a great deal of my life in the Middle East, and once the camel gets his nose in the tent, you can be pretty sure all four legs and two humps will be along not too long behind. I suspect that here, now with the idea of exclusive hunting rights, it won't be long before we have exclusive hiking rights, exclusive fishing rights, exclusive photography rights: any other thing that it is possible to make exclusive be licensed. The only hunting licence I like to see issued here would be for the provincial Tories in the next election.

But, Mr. Chairman, I feel that this is certainly a retrograde step, not one that a democratic society and many of our forefathers that immigrated to this country . . . I like to brag that at least a good percentage of my forefathers were here to meet them when they immigrated. Nevertheless, the fact of the matter is that many of them come from western Europe to escape the regimen and the idea that exclusive areas were set out to be exclusive. Now admittedly, it's only for foreign hunters, but the camel's nose again, Mr. Minister. It's only for foreign hunters this year. After the next election, hopefully, it could be maybe for local hunters too.

So the whole idea is that we're starting something that I don't think is necessary. If we were worrying about licensing hunters and if we're worried about training hunters, that could have easily been done, so that my NDP friend's grandmother's hired man wouldn't have had to hide behind a wagon. Actually, I found from years of living outside that the best way to convince a person you're not a moose is to shoot back.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SPARROW: I have to take offence with the opening remarks of the learned Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. His first comments were about the massive abuse of the Legislature by certain ministers. I've spoken longer tonight than in the last year put together. I have to wear earplugs each and every day during question period to listen to my learned friend, and it's time he learned and listened to some of the facts that go on in a good operation of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, because we listen to the irresponsible questions all day sometimes, and I'm glad you have to get a little taste of your own medicine, sir.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon questioned our refore-

tation and asked whether or not we have a backlog over the last 50 years and what we are doing about it. There is no backlog, Mr. Chairman. Our province in Canada has done away with that backlog. Everything that's been cut in the province since 1966 has been reforested. The last two or three years, with the help of the heritage fund, the majority of any sites that were not reforested or needed to be readdressed because they were not a good catch have been readdressed, and reforestation is at the very tops here in Alberta. If you ask any other province in Canada, they can vouch for that, that we're the model in the Canadian forest industry. Everyone would like to be at our levels.

Your remarks may be true for many other provinces, because they do have a backlog, and there's a massive amount of work to be done there. Maybe the learned Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has been watching the CBC, because I've seen quite a number of documentaries on reforestation, and they always skip but never say anything about Alberta. So if you see one of those again, pick up your phone and ask them to tell the public of Alberta what we're doing, how good we are here in Alberta, and set that model for the rest of Canada.

With reference to Stirling Lake, Mr. Chairman, we're working to resolve a problem there. I have to give compliments to our member that has been working very hard. Jack Ady has done a lot of work with the community there, and we're almost to the point where a solution has been worked out. We strongly feel that a lagoon and the Stirling Lake project are compatible. Ducks Unlimited have approved that compatibility for using the same area for those two purposes. We're working with the Raymond Irrigation District on the water supply and are hopeful that the matter can be resolved to the satisfaction of the municipality, the irrigation district, and Ducks Unlimited on that massive project. I would like to be in a position to make announcements in this House very shortly on a good project going forward with Ducks Unlimited in that area.

With reference to the lake at Lac La Biche, I'll take note of that. I personally don't know of that specific lake you mentioned, but I'm sure my staff will make note of it, and I can get back to the member and give him some information on that specific issue.

He then went on to talk about the conversion of grazing lease lands and converting public land to private land. If you read the policy, Mr. Chairman, the policy is for the conversion of a grazing lease to a cultivation lease. All land in the province of Alberta for many, many years that went out through cultivation leases always had tied to it the option to purchase, because good agricultural land has always been felt by the government -- not only this government but the government that had been ahead of us -- that agricultural lands should be owned by the private sector, and the costs should be that way. So the options are tied to it.

You mentioned the committee and took some shots at the committee, Mr. Chairman. I think the committee was well balanced. We have members from the public on it, and I'm waiting for their recommendations. But I think it's important to point out that public hearings were taking place throughout the province by the ECA. A lot of massive public input was put into those, and one of the reasons we did get into the conversion of grazing lease lands to cultivation lands and cultivation permits was that one of their recommendations was that we should take and convert those lands and utilize public lands that cost the least, not only to the farmer but to the public at large and to our government, and convert those lands into usable arable lands

for agricultural purposes prior to opening up new lands at very much higher costs.

If you look in that report, there's a chart that shows and lists a whole bunch of different ways of converting or bringing on and improving lands for production. So there was -- and that's where the original ideas came from of allowing the land to be converted from grazing leases to cultivation leases, because there was no cost to the farmer. It was at no cost to the municipality and it was at no cost to this government, because access was there, the roads were built, and the land possibly should have been put out as cultivation leases or homesteads originally. On the other side of the coin, each of those proponents I just mentioned had the opportunity for increased revenues. In most cases the farmers' revenues went up eight to 10 times, the county or MD's revenues went up five times, because of the taxation increase between grazing and cultivation leases. Also this provincial government's revenue went up eight to 10 times if it was just converted to a cultivation lease, and it went up massively if we sold the land. And the revenues very definitely are needed in this time of restraint.

Mr. Chairman, I take offence on behalf of my staff. I think the honoured Member for Westlock-Sturgeon took a shot at the committee when he was talking about a committee, but the work on the individual conversions is done by my staff -- the judgments. They're professionals. They're out there in the field. They do know the difference between recreational lands, parklands, and habitat lands, and the numbers of leases that have been -- and I should just give the House an idea of the numbers that were turned down. More than three times as many were turned down as being approved. I think that staff are very, very well trained, and I take offence at saying that those decisions are made behind closed doors, and that type of reference is made to a committee of my staff that do the work. Where you were thinking of something else, I'm sure, but very definitely the types of lands that would be converted in northern Alberta where those conversions have taken place, that work has been done very, very professionally.

With reference to the use of herbicides on public lands and the comments about the mosquito control. Mr. Chairman, the mayor of Leduc comes out every year and says, "Our mosquito control program is just as good as it was last year." In that case, they don't do anything. I can assure my learned friend from Westlock-Sturgeon that his friend the mayor of Edmonton spends a lot of money spraying mosquitoes and kills a lot more mosquitoes than I do in forestry, because we use a different type of herbicide and we're not looking at killing mosquitoes. We don't use aerial spraying, as some of the mosquito spraying is done.

With reference to herbicide use, though, we're proceeding very, very cautiously. Ground application, as I said earlier, is the only method we're using. The ones done last year primarily were legitimate research projects. Prior to even those going forward, local input and public meetings are held, and only approved chemicals from Alberta Agriculture and Canadian Agriculture are used. Public notification is also used on all permits issued in the local area prior to doing any work. Other provinces throughout Canada have utilized the herbicides to assist in forest management in a lot larger way than we have, and we're walking very, very slowly on that issue.

With reference to surface waters and subsurface waters, Mr. Chairman, that very definitely is the responsibility of the Minister of the Environment. As an oilman, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon should have got in the field and had to apply

for those applications, and he would have found out that it's not my department that issues permits with reference to control of either surface waters or underground waters. If he would like to take up those issues with the Minister of the Environment, I'm sure they have a very good program and it's very closely controlled under his department.

As far as the history of wild fur production and fur farming and why it is in Agriculture, it's been treated as an agricultural opportunity. Anything under captivity -- the same as, I guess you could say, some of the other types of activities like buffalo herds that have been domesticated -- has been treated under Agriculture, and we're primarily zeroing in on wildlife in the wild in our department and the control of that wildlife.

With reference to the size of various warehouses, unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to go to the communities you mentioned. We have cut back in this budget very drastically on new construction of warehouses, one of the major cuts that has taken place primarily through Public Works, Supply and Services. You will not see as many government warehouses because of that, and we will continue to rent in very many, many communities.

With reference to the hunting licences -- and most of your comments I think were made towards the outfitting and nonresident use of licences -- I want to assure the member that for the first time in the big game outfitters' policy very definitely 80 percent of all big game has and will be set aside for Albertans in the future. That assurance has never been given. This policy gives Albertans and the average Alberta hunter that surety. Up to 20 percent can be used for nonresident licences for the tourist industry and the outfitting industry, very definitely.

You went on about exclusive rights of hunting. This policy will definitely not give any exclusive rights to any specific land areas. It is not like the block system that was used in B.C. where specific areas and exclusive rights were given to individual outfitters. The policy and the review committee will make sure that even with the salability and transferability of those hunting privileges, no exclusivity will take place throughout the province. The policy is designed to make sure that a fair opportunity to have outfitters provide services at a competitive rate in an area will take place where several outfitters will be working in the same territories.

With reference to other guides, class C guides, the policy has been expanded. There are many, many of our Albertans that have used that. It's almost doubled the number of people that a class C guide can take out. As I said earlier, any guide that legally was in the business of taking people out in any place between 1981 and '86 will legally be eligible for a permit under the new system. And if they were just guiding and working for someone else, if you read through clause 2.4 of the policy, they will be able to be eligible for any new permits that are distributed if they meet the criteria that is in item 2.4 of that policy. So there is that opportunity for other guides to get into it in the future, along with buying out other outfitters.

Mr. Chairman, I think I have covered most of your questions. If there are any other members wishing to ask questions, I would gladly answer them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to cover three areas in the debate on the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife tonight.

The first one: in looking at the department's budget we see

an overall reduction of some 14 percent, and yet I have to wonder why it is that the minister's office has escaped the budget knife here. There's no reduction in his office or his deputy minister's office. I wonder why it is that the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife couldn't follow the example of the Minister of Tourism, for example, who had a reduction of 17 percent in his minister's office. To me it seems that it reflects perhaps an attitude that we're going to cut everybody down at the bottom, and the people at the top of course are spared. And I think, Mr. Chairman, that that really is not showing any sort of fiscal leadership.

The second area I wanted to talk on is on this question of the grizzly hunt, Mr. Chairman. In our offices we have been getting hundreds and hundreds of letters from people in this province, from around the country, and from outside of the country who are concerned about the slaughter that is going to take place in Alberta regarding the grizzly bears in Kananaskis. I would like to ask the minister to explain for Albertans, if he would, if this hunt has started now: how many permits have been given, how many animals have been killed as of yet, how many orphan cubs or dead females have been found, and if he can explain to us why it is he is going through with this policy despite such widespread objection to it on the part of Albertans. In fact, of all these hundreds of letters in our office we've only got one that supports that particular policy, and the writer's an outfitter who is on the review committee. All the rest were opposed.

I know that many people around the province have written letters, like one person who wrote to our Premier and a copy to the various ministers. He said:

I write as a Conservative and an outdoorsman to urge you in the strongest possible terms not to issue permits for the proposed slaughter of 25 grizzly bears of Kananaskis Country.

I could go on, Mr. Chairman. There are hundreds of letters like that, and I just am puzzled, as many of us are, many Albertans are, why the minister is proceeding with a policy that has no support in this province.

The third area I would like to put to the minister this evening is regarding his department's policy in terms of leased properties in various parts of the province, and in particular I use the example of the Marten Beach area of this province, where a number of Albertans have taken out in good faith in earlier years parcels of land, lots in the Marten Beach area, have built cottages and so on, and have recently -- just this year, in February in fact -- received letters from the department under the signature of J. Roberts, Special Land Dispositions Section, indicating to them that the department is now going to come up with a new policy.

After these people have leased these properties from the province in good faith, built their cottages -- improvements have been put in at their own expense -- now the department is sending these people letters indicating that the rents on these leases are going to be increased by 25 percent per year for the next at least five years and perhaps more beyond that. In fact, the letter says specifically that the rents are now going to be increased from the current rent of \$114.67 per year to over \$400 per year.

That's an increase of almost 350 percent in five years. There are a lot of people who've got those properties who, as I said, leased them from the department in very good faith, and they're now being gouged -- I would say is the word to use here -- 25 percent a year for at least five years plus more in the future. This is really I think grossly unfair, and I think the people in this province and particularly the people who have taken out these leases with the department deserve an explanation for that.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for St. Paul.

MR. DROBOT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to ask the minister a couple of questions on the new guiding policy, but he waxed so eloquently that he answered even before I had a chance to ask.

Not being a hunter, I didn't realize there were so many people back home who looked at this policy very favourably. I must commend the minister and his department on the foresight in developing this policy, as it will enable the government to better control and conserve our wildlife resources, ensure the accommodation and protection of resident use of all hunting resources, and it will bring about the economic return that guiding and outfitting operations bring to the tourist industry of this province. All of these factors are important to the future of our resources and to stabilizing and controlling the guiding and outfitting industry for everyone's benefit.

Mr. Chairman, I realize there are many programs in forestry, in pasture development and wildlife, habitat programs involving community organizations, clubs, and interested individuals. The hon. minister has explained things very well. I can only say on behalf of my constituents that the policies are well accepted. The constituents are quite capable of separating the wheat from the chaff.

Thank you.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, unless there is a very great urgency to hear more comments this evening, I would move that the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you all agree with the report and the request for leave to sit again?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

[At 10:13 p.m. the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

