

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Thursday, July 20, 1989 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 89/07/20

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

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. members please take their places. Order please. It is now 8 o'clock.

head: **Main Estimates 1989-90****Forestry, Lands and Wildlife**

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have with us this evening the minister of the very active Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. We're happy to welcome him to our midst this evening to present his estimates, which can be found commencing at page 203 of the main book, and the elements are to be found at page 83 of the elements book.

The hon. Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Mr. Chairman and Members of the Legislative Assembly, it's my pleasure to present the 1989-90 estimates of the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. I'd like to say that the budget I'm about to present addresses the need of fiscal restraint but at the same time reflects areas of my department that require additional funding support. I believe this budget demonstrates a commitment and determination to enhance and protect Alberta's natural resources and to stimulate economic growth, diversification, and a prosperous economic growth for our future.

Before I present the estimates, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to pay a compliment to my former deputy minister, Fred McDougall, who was an excellent deputy and made a tremendous contribution to the people of this province. His hardworking staff I compliment as well. I think the whole department is here tonight, sitting under the able leadership at this time of the acting deputy minister, Cliff Smith. I thank them for their hard work for the people of the province of Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to report to the Legislative Assembly that the budget for the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife represents a strong endorsement of conservation, protection, and continued sound management of Alberta's renewable natural resources. The fundamental theme, the foundation of the budget, is balance. It's a balance between conservation and development, a balance between alternate options for land use in Alberta's public lands, and it demonstrates a balance between the immediate demands of the present and the challenges for the future. We're living in extremely complex times. Perhaps the era we're living through today is the most complicated in our history. It's the most challenging, because the decisions that we make today will determine what our future will be, and there'll be no turning back. We've reached a point of confrontation with the future. We can no longer assume that our most likely future will just be the continuation of what we are doing now.

The new goals are survival goals; they embrace equality of our environment, our economy, our communities, and our cul-

ture. They're people goals, whether we refer to this generation or to the next. The fundamental truth that's the common thread that runs through is what we learned in high school chemistry, and it remains true today: matter is neither created nor destroyed. Everything we use is a product of the planet, and everything we do with it produces a by-product. It is a recognition of these simple truths and how we apply them that will set the course that we'll have for the future.

Our world is changing, Mr. Chairman, and those who fail to keep up with it are going to be left behind. But there's always, always resistance to change, and it's the anxiety over change which produces irrational behaviour that opposes that change. It becomes really a competition, really does. We see the evidence of that daily in this House, because there are those who cling to the 1960s horse-and-buggy mentality, and they cling to the past notions. But the past is not an acceptable vision for the future.

Mr. Chairman, our government's vision of the future is based on a clear understanding of the necessity for change and the courage to invent that change and invent a positive future that's both desirable and attainable. The future as we see it must safeguard our environment, sustain our renewable resources, develop economic stability, create jobs and address the need for better education, health care, cultural security, and social comfort. Those are the things which most concern us. We must preserve the dignity and the health and the welfare of the individual in our communities and our society. I must say that Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife has taken a leadership role in challenging these issues of the future by creating a positive and an attractive climate for sustainable development of our forest industry and initiatives that work towards economic diversification.

The estimates that I present tonight, Mr. Chairman, reinforce my department's commitment to conservation, to safeguarding our environment, to continuing the practice of sustainable development of our renewable and our natural resources and the preservation of our wilderness and the welfare of our wildlife. To those whose vision is broad and well-informed, I think they are worthy, and I think they are achievable goals.

So far, Mr. Chairman, I've used the words "sustainable development" twice. It's one of the new catchphrases of today that has crept into common language by many people. It has a nice ring to it, so a lot of people are using it. For most people, sustainable development means development, simply development, but that's not true. In fact, the term "sustainable development" bridges everything that is important to us: how we survive, how we function as families and communities, how we cultivate the economy, and how we leave the planet. Sustainable development is a process of change in which the use of resources and the direction of investment and the resource industry development, the orientation of technological development, institutional change all have to be in harmony, all in harmony to meet both the current demands and the needs of the future.

Let me simplify it even further, Mr. Chairman. Consider that portion of our forest resource that's available for development as a bank account. By applying the principal of sustainable development, we can draw indefinitely on the interest while leaving the capital intact. We draw for today at no risk for our options for the future. Our children and our grandchildren will have the same resource, in fact a better resource, and they can make their own decisions at some future time. Sustainable development means our development is economically sustainable, socially attainable, culturally sustainable, and environmentally

sustainable. Each is part of the same equation that I talked about, and each one of them is equally important. This is the formula on which our economic diversification initiatives and our forest industry developments are based: concern for the environment, concern for the quality of life, concern for the strengthening that's needed in many of our communities. Strengthening of our families and our individual health and well-being are all equal parts of that economic decision formula, just as real interest rates are on borrowed money. No one of these partnerships is compromised at the expense of another. They can't be, because if they are, we lose. This is the foundation of these estimates and our government's vision for the future, Mr. Chairman.

My department's initiatives have created a timely framework for the private sector to explore unprecedented opportunities of development of a world-class forest resource here in Alberta. We are creating opportunities for real growth and development for our communities and new jobs for Albertans and new industries as well. I'm excited about the possibilities and the opportunities these initiatives will bring to all Albertans, and I'd like to offer some details of my department's program for the endorsement and the approval, of course, Mr. Chairman, of the Assembly.

In line with fiscal restraint my department has allocated its funds accordingly by placing emphasis where it's most needed and where it will be most effective. The success of the industry development initiatives can be seen in those projects already on stream and those currently under construction. A number of the additional projects have been announced, and some are awaiting environmental approval. If all of those projects move forward to completion, approximately \$3.5 billion will have been expended in capital construction and invested in Alberta, and some 12,000 new direct and indirect jobs. Mr. Chairman, that clearly, clearly ranks as a major success by anyone's standards.

Important secondary benefits are being realized through the expansion and creation of support industries. There was a recent example in an announcement by Du Pont of Canada to construct a manufacturing plant in Alberta that will supply western Canada's chemithermomechanical pulp industry with hydrogen peroxide. All across Alberta there are engineers, there are fabricators, there are skilled tradesmen, and they're developing new skills and knowledge in an industry that will enable them to compete anywhere here in Alberta and even out in the world and other regions of Canada as well.

Alberta's developing a base for continued growth as a supplier of forest industry technology to the world. That's important, Mr. Chairman, that we do that, that we have those skilled people here and that they remain here, and we can expand out to the rest of the world. When jobs really eliminate the need for government assistance to the unemployed and to their families, when increased revenues from personal and business and industrial taxes and the indirect benefits of the forest industry development are all considered, the potential that's there for economic and social stability and our long-term prosperity is really immeasurable.

And we're giving nothing away. The people say we're giving something away. We're not giving anything away, Mr. Chairman. We're gaining future security for our people and for our communities. We've made a few concessions, and we've taken some risks, some minimal risks. We've supported only those projects, Mr. Chairman, that are environmentally sound and viable. We have limited government financial investment to

the lowest possible levels. The infrastructure assistance that we've provided has done much, I think, for northern Alberta. It's valuable in development because we're a landlocked province. We don't have a seaport at Banff. We're landlocked. There are projects that locate here that need that infrastructure assistance, but the region where that infrastructure assistance goes in northern Alberta has a key component for the future development of northern Alberta and its communities. They're good deals, Mr. Chairman, and they represent a sound investment and they're providing windows of opportunity for Albertans to participate in a world-class industry.

In addition to diversification initiatives the Alberta Forest Service devotes a tremendous amount of effort towards ensuring that our forest conservation programs continue to improve and that our forests continue to flourish and are abundant and sustainable, and they're diverse. For instance, the Alberta Forest Service will work closely with industry in the establishment of some new regeneration standards. We're having discussions with them. Those new regeneration standards will enhance the growth performance and, I think, make a stabler future. We have the most sophisticated forest fire suppression and protection system in North America. In fact, they're coming here to look at it. They want to use us as an example. In the budget estimates provided, there's a boost to that reforestation activity with the transfer of \$1.942 million from the Department of Transportation and Utilities to the Alberta Forest Service. These funds fall under the public lands development program and are designated for reforestation and intensive forest management, and that'll be added, Mr. Chairman, to the \$6.2 million program base as designated for reforestation and intensive forest management.

Mr. Chairman, there are significant new program enhancements as well in the fish and wildlife enforcement and management, and that's a clear signal to anyone of our government's support for our wildlife resource. Our newly prepared strategy comprises a five-part wildlife conservation initiative. This strategy includes components that are designed to combat poaching, which is a major concern for all of us, to improve land management, to increase wildlife awareness, to enhance fisheries management, and to manage nongame species. We're working to move our programs beyond the narrow bounds of just hunting and fishing and developing an increased awareness of wildlife conservation in Alberta among all Albertans, so they understand that the nonconsumptive users have to enjoy it as well.

The anti-poaching campaign centres on improved monitoring and enforcement through hiring of additional field staff, improving public awareness, and the outdoor observer program. We're going to be looking at introducing regulations -- I'm looking at them now -- to prohibit hunting along roads in sensitive areas. I think that will help, along with a 1-800-POACHER number now that makes it easy for citizens to call in about suspicious activities. We don't want all of them to be Sherlock Holmes and running around, but we want them to help us monitor and be ready so we can get things under control. A key component of this initiative is the implementation of the district Fish and Wildlife enforcement and public service enhancement program. Phase one of that program will add 14 new enforcement positions, including 10 Fish and Wildlife officers, to the departments. In total that three-year program will create 52 new permanent enforcement positions, an increase over 43 percent over the '89-90 staffing levels. Now, they criticize and say: "That's

not enough; you should have more. How can you have that few people patrolling all of this province?" Well, it's not possible. That's why we need the 1-800-POACHER and all citizens have to take some responsibility for looking and protecting our wildlife.

The land component of the strategy focuses on developing increased participation of landowners and wildlife conservation activities. There is an expansion of a landowner habitat program and introduction of a multiyear waterfowl management plan. We've been losing far too much habitat. We are working on it now, and we must work even harder to get involvement. There is going to be some functions and some activities this next winter. They are going to donate the money to increasing habitat in Alberta. That's what we need as well. We need far more activities from the private sector to get involved.

Our Buck for Wildlife program continues to generate interest and involvement from all sectors. From 1973 to the present the fund has expended \$20.2 million, while attracting \$22.2 million from all other sources combined. I think that's a mutual benefit to wildlife habitat, and it's expected to continue to augment our efforts to develop fish and wildlife habitat second to none across this province.

The third component of this strategy, Mr. Chairman, is a wildlife awareness program, and that component is targeted at improving public awareness of wildlife issues through an information campaign to Alberta schools. When it goes to the schools, of course, it will also go to the general public. That initiative includes the introduction of a native resource management assistant program, which will provide occupational training and practical experience in renewable resource management to Alberta's natives. I think that program recognizes the role that the aboriginal people have in renewable resource management.

The fourth component of the strategy is fisheries management. This initiative includes the development of fisheries management strategy, improvements to fish hatcheries, and stocking programs. We remain totally committed to the protection and the development of Alberta's fisheries. We've had some trouble the last year with what's called an IPN virus. That has affected our stocking programs to a certain degree. We'll overcome it. I compliment the fisheries staff for the excellent work they've done in trying to meet the challenge of that.

The fifth one, Mr. Chairman, and the final component of the management of nongame species, centres on the implementation of a protection program for nongame wildlife. The key component of that program is the restoration and enhancement of nationally endangered wildlife and the protection and management of habitat of endangered prairie-land and parkland species.

So as you can see, Mr. Chairman, the department is taking a firm stand on the protection of wildlife and is actively taking steps to ensure that this resource remains an integral component well into the future. This year our public lands division has refocused its budget on several key elements aimed at meeting some immediate needs. There is \$150,000 in the budget for reclamation of 56 hectares of land in the Poplar Creek gravel pit -- that's the Syncrude lease area -- as its supply of aggregate is nearing completion. The government is obligated to provide an alternate source of aggregate for industry and residents in Fort McMurray, and the Susan Lake deposit will be developed, and that will have a cost of \$305,000. I'd like to say, Mr. Chairman, that as a direct result of Wildlife '87 initiatives there are 21 new natural areas, which bring the total now to 113. In order to meet

the department commitment to designate new sites, the enhancement program funding, there's another \$100,000 needed in that particular program. In order to satisfy the numerous concerns relating to management of public lands, the division has allocated \$64,000 to effectively communicate public lands management programs and initiatives and responsibilities to the public.

As well, there's an increase of some \$300,000 to the land related information systems, and that'll allow us to proceed with work on that particular system. I encourage anyone who's interested in something that I think is one of the most important initiatives that Alberta can make -- it is the LRIS or land related information system -- for all our communities, whether they're urban or rural, whether you're in the utility field or even if you're in real estate. It doesn't matter where you are, that system is not only going to revolutionize things in Alberta --and it's already under way, and we're working with the private sector to make it work -- but we're ahead of everyone else right now. We're far ahead of them, but if we don't continue to move, we'll get behind. Why is it so important to be ahead? Because if we are, the companies from Alberta will have exportable technology, and they'll be able to play the lead in other provinces, in other states, and in fact even in other countries. This is one I've had some difficulty to try and get enough funding to flow into, because it affects the land titles system, affects everything in this province but gives us a tremendous leg up on some technology that's totally environmentally clean and important and needed everywhere.

One of the things I should say about the LRIS system: there's a tremendous duplication right now. If I could make it simple for you, we create maps. Well, the day you create a map, you do something different, the map is obsolete, so you've got to generate a new map, and it's always obsolete. There are so many departments and the private sector that they generate duplicate material at all sorts of extra cost. Once this system is in place, that will be eliminated. It'll be updated by the minute, so when you ask for something, you've got it. We will save on paper as well, and I think that's a tremendous benefit as well.

Mr. Chairman, this government remains committed to the balance between conservation and development and the balance between the present and the future. You will note the budgets for fish and wildlife conservation and forest resources management have increased 7.8 percent and 6.2 percent respectively. Those increases reflect the commitment to renewable resource management and conservation while at the same time respecting the fiscal responsibilities of government. As I stated at the outset, Mr. Chairman, wise resource management includes placing into proper balance the objectives of today and the strategy and goals for the future. Simply put, our job is to eliminate uncertainty and guarantee options.

Mr. Chairman, I might miss some questions tonight. I might not get them all answered, but I give the undertaking that we'll go over *Hansard* very carefully, and anyone that doesn't get questions answered, we'll make sure that we circulate a package with those answers to all members of the Assembly.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your time, and I now look forward to the comments and the questions from the members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the minister for his opening comments and to say that I've en-

joyed the conversations I've had with the minister over the last several months. I find him to be very good at providing information that's requested where the government allows him to do that. He doesn't make promises that he doesn't fulfill, and I appreciate that very much as well.

The minister made some comments about sustainable development which I would like to pick up on because I think there's an awful lot to be said about how we make the Alberta economy a more sustainable type of economy. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to realize that much of our economy is based on digging up and shipping out nonrenewable resources. Just by the very nature of that type of activity it can't be considered sustainable over a long period of time. The other day in his estimates the Minister of the Environment referred to sustainable development as a buzzword. This minister referred to it as a catchphrase. I think both of them may have some difficulty understanding that a whole lot of things have to change if you're going to make economic activity sustainable over the long term. I would like to address most of my remarks this evening about sustainable forestry because I think forestry does have the potential to be a sustainable type of economic activity over a long period of time, but only if we manage it very carefully and only if we take steps to ensure the long-run productivity of that resource.

You can harvest a forest on an exploitive basis, or you can do it on a sustainable basis. There's a very great difference between them. What we have to determine before we launch large-scale logging operations in the northern third of the province is how various management practices in the forest influence the long-term health of the forest ecosystem. I think that's the type of debate that we should be having in our province before these developments go ahead. We could end up in the situation like the province of Ontario, where they're spending \$30 million on a royal commission which is, in fact, an environmental impact assessment on their forestry operations after the fact. We could end up doing that 20 years down the road, spending \$30 million trying to figure out where we went wrong, or we could spend some time trying to figure it out before we go ahead and harvest the resource. What's at the bottom of all of this is making sure that our ecosystems are kept stable and productive in the north. The forest ecosystem is a dynamic extension of the forest over a period of time. Obviously trees die, trees are harvested, and that doesn't kill the forest. There's something underneath it that keeps the forest going. I submit that that's the sort of thing that we as a society have to come to terms with early on in the forestry development game, before we make mistakes that we're going to regret.

We've had a lot of discussion about forest management agreements. I'm not going to repeat the 10-point indictment that I made the other day, but you can certainly read it in *Hansard* if you want to. It begins with the forest management agreement, followed by a critical document called a forest management plan. A forest management plan is a document prepared by the companies. In fact, I'm quoting here from a letter written by Fred McDougall, a former deputy minister, written to the editor of the *Calgary Herald*. A forest management plan:

must be prepared by the Company and approved by the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. [It] must describe the long term forest management goals and objectives of the Company and show how they will be met.

Now, I think that's the kind of thing the government should be doing on behalf of the people rather than the forest company

coming forward and developing a plan on how they're going to manage the forest.

The question of what is a good or bad management plan is, of course, specific to each ecosystem, but we do have to, I think, establish in public policy some principles that will make it possible. One of the critical ingredients in long-term forest productivity is soil. Fourteen of the 16 essential nutrients of plant life come from the soil. The soil itself is the connecting link, of course, between generations of forests. Some forest practices, especially the practice of windrowing, where you pile the slash and burn it, has the effect of removing nitrogen from the soil and may in fact harm the long-term productivity of the forests. Short rotation type of forestry, which I think we're into in Alberta, doesn't allow replacement of nutrient soils over a long period of time.

Ecological diversity is the second major principle of sustainable forestry. If you lose the old-growth forest -- and the public policy of the province remains getting rid of all of the old growth first -- you lose important forestry habitat, habitat for wildlife. There's the creation of, I think, additional wildfire hazard; you know, the fire suppression activity. Often cutting the old growth is put forward as a way of cutting down the potential for forest fires; that's what foresters apparently believe. But the experience is that plantation stands of forest burn faster in wildfires than old growth does. In fact, there's sometimes a greater danger involved in the plantation model of forestry than there is in a more diverse ecosystem, and I think genetic diversity is a very important principle as well. When you grow millions of seedlings from highly selected breeding stock, you lose some of the genetic diversity in the forest. I think these three principles have to be built somehow into the public policy of the province in relation to forestry; that is, conservation of forest soils, ecological diversity, and genetic diversity.

I received a letter not long ago from a fellow named John Mahon in Edmonton, who writes of his experience. He says:

As a person who travels a great deal throughout Northern Alberta, I have strong reservations about the statement that prompt reforestation of harvested areas is mandatory in our province.

The Swan Hills area in particular comes to mind first. If this is an example of "prompt reforestation," then the Alberta Reforestation Program is a [big] disgrace. These are areas which have been stripped clean for --dare I say years? -- and still don't appear to have been replanted.

I think this citizen, who gave me permission to quote his letter, is experiencing what an awful lot of people do when they see some of the logged-over lands in our province.

According to Dr. John Drew, who was formerly the director of reforestation and reclamation, Alberta has 190,000 hectares, or 1,900 square kilometres, of forest land removed from production because the reforestation is inadequate. The minister has mentioned wanting to increase standards. I'd like him to specify what those standards are going to be. If we're going to go to free-to-grow, I support that very much, and I think that has to be included, again as public policy, for all of these forestry operations. So why don't we have a kind of free-ranging debate in our province about how we're going to manage these forests? If we're going to have free-to-grow, why don't we have that out there? Why don't we have that type of discussion?

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

It's the sort of thing we got into in question period earlier today. I noticed that the Minister of the Environment included timber harvesting in the terms of reference for the Alberta-Pacific forest project at the insistence of the federal government -- I will admit that -- dealing with the effect of timber harvesting practices on Indian reserve lands. When I asked the minister about it, he appeared to indicate he didn't want to be involved in it. He still doesn't feel that we need to have any type of environmental impact assessment in the forestry operations. I say it's absolutely vital that we do that so that we can ensure that these forests are going to be managed on a sustainable basis, so that we can ensure that we'll have the type of reforestation standards that include free-to-grow. I believe that not only do citizens in our province want to have that type of environmental impact assessment on forestry operations, but they're entitled to it as well, because they are, we all are, the owners of that forest resource.

It's not at all difficult to structure an environmental impact assessment on forestry operations. I'll give you a list of some of the issues that are being dealt with in the Ontario EIA. It's called Forests for Tomorrow. They're dealing with public education, improvements in forestry data bases, public participation, changes in forestry practices towards environmentally sound goals, which I've referred to, regeneration, buffer zones, pesticides, recreational and aesthetic values of the forests, a commitment to implement an integrated resource policy, forest employment opportunities, fair allocation to medium and smaller operators, limits on piecework pay, the use of more labour-intensive operations, moratorium on further FMAs until environmental impact assessment hearings are completed, enforcement of environmental standards, full public scrutiny of current and future wood supplies, mechanisms for protecting native rights to land use. These are all the issues that Ontario is looking at in terms of their environmental impact assessment in forestry, so you can't tell me that we don't have something to talk about in terms of an environmental impact assessment in forestry.

You can have all of your management plans, you can have your interdepartmental meetings, you can do all of the things that you do under forest management, but let the people in on the process and let them discuss and debate the principles according to which these forests are going to be managed. That's the message. The federal government has got the message. They're insisting that that be done with respect to Indian reserve lands. What's wrong with the rest of Alberta that we can't have that same type of discussion and dialogue in a structured environmental impact assessment format? I don't mean coffee parties, open houses, things like that. What's wrong with us that we don't deserve that type of assessment?

The issue of old-growth forests is an important one. It hasn't received a lot of public attention to date. When I was up in Grande Prairie recently, I met with the Procter & Gamble people, and they showed me their forest management plan, the document I referred to. Now, I just had a few minutes to leaf through it, but I did notice that the company develops an annual allowable cut. Theoretically, that's the amount of fibre that's produced in the forests that they control in a year, and they are allowed to cut that. That's a sustained yield basis.

Then they've got another factor they add, which is the factor to get rid of the old growth. If they've got too much old growth, the public policy, they told me, is to eliminate the old growth. So they increase their annual allowable cut according to their

forest management plan by this additional factor to cut down the old growth. Another one of the many letters penned by Mr. McDougall to the editor of, this time, the *Lethbridge Herald* makes this point:

Under Alberta's strong forest management program, old forests situated on lands designated for timber production, will be managed on rotations of 80 to 100 years. We are then able to harvest trees before they become susceptible to losses to insects and diseases.

If it's not fire, it's insects and diseases -- any excuse to cut down the old forests. That's the policy as explained by the deputy minister.

Now, it turns out the old-growth forest -- and I'm quoting right now from a paper by Dr. Jim Butler, professor of wildlife and wildland recreation, department of forest science, University of Alberta:

Today old growth forests are recognized as being essential to ecologically healthy forests, and they are one of the principal environmental issues concerning forests today in the world. Old growth forests are important to owls, woodland caribou, wolves, martens, fishers, woodpeckers, and many birds which nest in cavities in old growth trees. Wood warblers are a classic example of little considered old growth dependents. The majority of birds that you encounter when you walk into a northern forest are wood warblers, and many of them need -- absolutely need old growth forest, especially old growth coniferous forest. Birds like Blackburnian warblers, Black-throated Greens, Bay-Breasted warblers, and Cape Mays, and others need old growth.

But our policy in Alberta is to eliminate the old-growth forests. I think it's part of having an ecologically diverse ecosystem. I think it's an important part of our tourism industry. When we promote Alberta abroad, what do we show? We show pictures of old-growth forests and lakes usually; that's what we show. We don't show the public policy that says that we're on a tear to eliminate these things.

So I think, just summarizing this part of my remarks, we should have an environmental impact assessment into these forestry operations. We should learn how to emphasize ecological sustainability, biological diversity, in the maintenance of our forest.

I'd like the minister, if there is time, to comment on the discussions with Parsons & Whittemore. I understand we've got another pulp mill potentially on line in the High Level area. The minister was good enough to send me a speech by George Landlegger, I think it is, the chairman of Parsons & Whittemore company. After reading the speech, I think the minister should feel lucky that he has an opposition in this province, because Parsons & Whittemore would probably like to have all of their financing guaranteed by the provincial Treasury. They would probably like to have all of the forests privately owned by themselves, because they think they know how to manage forests much better than the public does. They also think that our wages are too high and that governments are too much prone to supporting workers in labour/management disputes; hard to believe, relating to this particular government. I'd like him to comment on the state of negotiations with this company, especially given the open sesame approach that they would like to take towards the provincial Treasury.

I'd like to make a few remarks on wildlife. I do feel that the minister's wildlife conservation strategy constitutes several steps in the right direction. I'm pleased that the budget estimates have more money for wildlife officers to help try to crack the poaching problem. The statistic I've seen is that one in 100

incidents of poaching is reported, and maybe one in five of those results in any type of prosecution. So, you know, our battling average right now is somewhere around two in 1,000 in terms of catching the people who are involved in poaching. Poaching has become very big business. It's as lucrative, and in some cases more so, than drug trafficking, but if you're caught poaching, the penalties are nowhere near what they are for drug traffickers.

A bear's gallbladder is worth some \$500 in the Orient. Apparently you can sell bear paws for about \$500 each, and the claws from the paws are worth about \$100 each. So from one bear, if you take the gallbladder, the paws, and the claws, you've got \$4,500 and a carcass by the side of the road somewhere. I know, and I'm sure the minister knows, there's a serious problem with poaching of black bears in this province. There were reportedly two suitcases of bears' gallbladders in the Air-India flight that went down, worth some half a million dollars on the black market. Antlers of elk are worth a considerable amount as well. I don't have the current prices, but in 1987 they sold for \$70 a pound, so an elk carrying 60 pounds of antler is worth about \$4,200 on the black market. And I think we've got a problem here, because with the 1987 Wildlife Act we've created legal markets for wildlife parts. It becomes very difficult for enforcement officers to control an economy in which you have legal markets for these parts.

I've looked at some literature, and it's absolutely clear that the economic value of wildlife is in the wild. I mean, hunters pay enormously for the privilege of hunting. I'm sure that if you calculated it in terms of dollars per pound, if you take the cost of four-wheel drive vehicles, food and drink, services purchased when they're out traveling, along with game calls, dog biscuits, hunting boots, boats, camping gear, spotting scopes, ammunition, et cetera, et cetera, the impact is very big on the economy. I think there was one study in Wyoming that said the average animal in the wild creates a thousand dollars of income in that particular state. We have a very valuable resource in the wild which was almost wiped out once. In fact, I was surprised to learn that the last native elk in Alberta was killed in the 1930s, that the resource has been restocked. We came very close to wiping out all of our wildlife in North America in the last century. It's been brought back very slowly.

There are many people who are fearful that this game ranching industry creates more potential for poaching, creates economic incentives for poaching, and certainly there are a lot of people who seem to believe that there are large amounts of money to be made in this field. I know that people in that industry are supported by the farm credit stability program, for example.

And I would like to know what the minister is going to do to further protect our wildlife not just from poaching but from some diseases which may result from importing of wildlife for these game ranching operations. I'm told there's some concern about bluetongue, which would be deadly to our cattle industry if it ever got out there, and brainworm, which could be devastating to the wildlife population. I think we have to pay a lot of attention to how it's possible to have game farming, game ranching operations and still protect our native wildlife resource.

I also would like to comment on and ask the minister a question about the winterkill at Utikuma Lake in the northern part of the province. Utikuma Lake is a 60,000 acre eutrophic lake which was basically devastated by winterkill this year. I think there's close to 100 percent kill in that lake. Twenty percent of

Alberta's Whitefish harvest was wiped out, along with a primary source of income for the people who fish in that area, primarily Metis and Indian people. I've talked to a number of local fishing people who say that their pleas over the last year to increase the harvest in the face of what they took to be dangerous conditions were ignored by the department. They also feel that the extent of monitoring on the lake was inadequate. I understand that there was very little testing done between October and I think it was March or April, when the winterkill was discovered. I wonder if the minister would indicate if he's reviewed that situation, if he's satisfied that everything possible was done to provide opportunities to do a salvage harvest on that lake if nothing could be done to prevent the winterkill.

I also think we have to look at the situation of the people who are involved in essentially an agricultural type of industry, fishing. They've lost their livelihood due to climatic circumstances, which is certainly beyond their control. I'm not suggesting it's within the minister's control, but I wonder if the government is considering any type of provincial assistance for the people who have lost their source of income through this mechanism. Certainly we support farmers when they have this kind of problem. I wonder if there's any assistance contemplated for the people who fish for a living, and in view of the fact of the loss of 20 percent of our Whitefish harvest and the loss of livelihood of the people who fish for a living, why the government treats one group of food producers, farmers, one way and a group of people who fish for a living, who happen to be Indian people for the most part, a different way, if there's no compensation that's planned.

So, anyway, those are a few issues that I would like the minister to deal with, and I thank him for his attention.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: I was going to wait till the end, but you never know when I'd like to take on and answer some of the questions. I compliment the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. I find him good to work with and objective in his thinking.

The reforestation that the hon. member mentioned. We're in fact the only province that is computerized on that. If the gentleman wants to come in and tell us what location he's talking about, we'll bring it up on the computer and we'll tell you who cut it and how it was reforested. No one else can do that. We can do that here, and we're happy to do that because there will be answers for that particular instance.

I have to say that when you talk about reforestation standards, maybe we should have some debate. Yeah, I wouldn't have any difficulty with having debate. But, you know, I always believe that a little bit of knowledge is dangerous. I'm not a forester. I didn't take four years of university training to become a forester, and I have to rely on experts. I'm a pretty good pilot on a twin-engine airplane, but I couldn't fly a jet, and I wouldn't try and debate with somebody the different things you'd need to fly a jet aircraft. But I think to have a tour of some of the reforestation areas that we're doing and go over those forest management plans which you talked about which do have public input opportunities: there is one thing that we could do first. Then if you want to have a debate, I think, sure, we could have a debate. I'd rather have a debate after getting all the information and having the knowledge of what's happening out there than have the debate first. I'd be happy to work with you to do that so that we can come out with always the best reforestation standards in the world.

When we talk about old-growth forest, we're not cutting all the old-growth forest in Alberta. I wouldn't support that. In fact, in the Alberta-Pacific forest management agreement that we're negotiating now, there are a number of areas that have old-growth forest that will never be cut. There are other areas. Nature has a way of taking care of it. Most of our forests here aren't that old because they were fire burned. Nature has a way that trees die, and when they die, with the material that's on the ground, they're susceptible to fire. When they get old, they're susceptible like people are, like we all are, to disease. You can either let that wood rot, or you can use it. But you're absolutely right: there are a number of species that need old-growth forest, some of the four-legged animals as well as some of the birds.

When we talk about not sacrificing anything, that's extremely important in doing that, just as important as setbacks on lakes and the setbacks on streams and how things are done to make sure the patterns of wildlife movement -- so that the annual operating plans can take that into account. If wildlife have moved to a certain area that was in the plan for cutting, that could be changed because of some wildlife concerns there are in the area. That's a flexibility that needs to happen there with respect to a forest.

Reforestation standards that we have here in Alberta are extremely high, and we want to make sure that we're planting the best seedlings and we're getting the growth. In some areas it's very difficult to get growth restarted. One of the problems we have is that we have competing vegetation, and that competing vegetation -- we don't allow herbicides, so without herbicides we're not able to get the regeneration started properly with hand tending and some of the other things. Now, we're not talking about aerial application of herbicides, just ground application. We should look at that and review that, because it doesn't make sense to me in all situations to use herbicides. It doesn't make sense not to use some in certain circumstances, and I think we have to be realistic in that approach.

Parsons & Whittemore is one company that's looking at the northern part of the province, and they are an excellent company in many ways. I'm not going to debate the merits or the negatives of the company, but they are a company that either builds mills for others or they build them themselves. If they were to come to Alberta, believe me, they're going to live by our rules, not by their rules. They'll live by our rules. They'll meet our reforestation standards or meet our environmental standards. If they're not prepared to do that, they have no business being here. They know that those are the rules. They wanted to have a look, and they wanted to spend a fair amount of money to have a look. [interjection] Pardon.

MR. McINNIS: Did they get their loan guarantees as well?

MR. FJORBOTTEN: I don't know about that. All they're looking at now is the resource itself. They will survey that resource, and they'll spend a lot of money doing that. They wanted to make sure not that I didn't give the area to someone else, but that I didn't fragment the area by doing something between now and December while they're spending that kind of money to do it. Then they'll come forward with a proposal, or they may not come forward with a proposal; I have no idea. I don't know what kind of a mill they're proposing or anything. It's one initial step that has to be taken. We surveyed as well as the Forest Service. I mean, we're from Missouri as well. I mean, the company's going to try and hide some wood. They're

going to try and get more wood. Their surveys show less wood than what there really is there, so they know they've got a little flexibility.

We don't leave them with the extra wood. We make sure, and that's part of the negotiations. In fact, when a mill locates here, they don't get all the wood. Weldwood at Hinton got all the wood for the first mill. This last negotiation they got 70 percent of the wood, not 100 percent. They have to buy the chips and buy the residue, because why burn that and why waste it? Why have a resource that grows and just waste that? The pressure is on them. We can put in for reforestation free-to-grow standards, but that's an added cost to the industry. You don't dump something. You don't change the rules midstream. One of the things when a company locates -- I don't like people surprising me, and I don't like surprising anybody. If you make rules, I expect them to live by the rules and we must live by the rules. Now, when we do those standards, we're going to increase those standards, and I believe we have to. It's an extra cost to the industry, and we want to have those discussions with them, and also make sure that those standards are the best.

When we talk about Ontario, I think if you look at Ontario standards today and what's happening in Ontario and Quebec today, and you look at Alberta, and you look at what they're going to end up with if they get through the mess that they're now in and trying to go through the process they're now in, which isn't without its problems, believe me, when they come out with the final result, I'm willing to bet you it won't be much different than what we already have in Alberta. Because if you look at their standards today and look at the standards that they have -- look at British Columbia. British Columbia, in fact, is cutting more wood now than they're growing. We won't allow that to happen. Sustainable development means that you only can cut what you can grow. That's extremely important. When we compare ourselves with other provinces and stuff, we've got to make sure that we're playing apples to apples and not to oranges or something else.

Poaching: I really think that's a serious concern. I don't think it's as serious here now as what it is in some of the U.S. states where a lot of the information is coming from. There are some people who have good meat businesses going in Alberta by poaching. I also think that animal parts is an area that has to be looked at. I'm reviewing that as well. That's something I think isn't a problem yet, from all the information I've got, but could be. The area of poaching -- we had a fellow go out and break all the rules. He went out and broke them all. He skinned an animal in a park, out of season, and did everything else. Most of them were never reported, never reported. And you're right; it's a very small number that are reported, but we can't have a Fish and Wildlife officer in every park or in every spot. We have to rely on people. Something as blatantly obvious as doing that, you'd think someone would report it, but it wasn't. We're working now with Crime Stoppers and others to try and get to the bottom of some of this stuff. I mean, it's an area that you can do all you want with hunting regulations and let poaching go on like it is, where about half the number of deer that are killed legally in Alberta are killed illegally -- you can't have that nonsense continuing on over there while you're trying to manage by hunting regulations. It doesn't make any sense. So that's an area that we certainly have to work on.

The comments on game ranching and the comment that it creates more poaching. That's a debatable point, depending on who you listen to. I'm not taking one side or the other. I take

the side of the resource in Alberta. I won't allow anything here to happen that's going to jeopardize our natural resource of our wildlife. If you listen to the game farmers, 90-some of them in the province, it actually reduces poaching because of what they're doing. They have facts and figures to back that up. We have the border closed now to elk. That upset some of them, but I think it's a risk to our wildlife. And I'm not allowing -- until I'm absolutely satisfied there's no risk, I won't change. There's also a risk of a red deer hybrid getting involved. You know, we can't allow anything to jeopardize our wildlife resource, neither poaching nor anything else. But neither should we get up in arms screaming about something until we're absolutely sure, in a commonsense way, that it's balanced.

I'm also responsible for some wild horses. I didn't know that. There are still some wild horses in Alberta. Everything started out being wild somewhere. But wild horses: I don't know where they are and where I could catch them, but I suppose they're out there.

I'd just make one final comment about the fish harvest. The fish harvest at Utikuma Lake was a serious winterkill. Utikuma Lake is one area that the Member for Lesser Slave Lake has raised with me continually. It's a shallow lake, and it's been one of the most productive lakes in Alberta. But you might be interested to know that 76 lakes are known to have had extensive or complete winterkill of fish this last winter, 76 lakes. You can monitor, but you can't monitor often enough. The criticism could be: "You should have monitored more. You should have let us take more fish out." Well, the problem we've got today is that we've got a lot of commercial fishermen and we've got recreational fishermen. The commercial fishermen just want a little more and a little more. They're always pushing our people to get more. And the recreational fishermen say, "Well, you're giving it all to the commercial ones, so there's nothing left for us." It's a competition for the resource that we have to deal with.

Now, there was a select committee report on fisheries done, and I'm going to read that report. Also, I'm going to work with, in particular, the northern MLAs who are involved. It's an issue that we're going to have to deal with, because this whole area of fisheries is one that's important. Commercial fishing's important to Alberta, within reason. You have the commercial fishermen, you have the Metis fishermen, you have the native fishermen, the recreational fishermen. We're trying our very best, but it's not without its problems.

The dissolved oxygen and the decaying vegetation in a lake is what causes winterkill. When you have a severe winter and you have an ice buildup where the sun can't get through, you have all of those factors taken into account. It's always easy -- like I always say, Adam told God, "It was the woman you gave me who made me do it." Everybody wants to blame someone else for something. Well, there's no blame. I mean, we're all in this thing together, and I think if we work with a commonsense approach, there's enough resource for all of us, if we use it with respect.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to congratulate the minister on his direction of this portfolio. I always find him very, very forthcoming and sincere and willing to make every effort to assist in my efforts. But also

he exudes a real commitment to what he's doing, and while I do not always agree with him -- in fact, seldom agree with him, it seems -- I certainly do respect him. And I would like to make this statement which I reserve for very, very few Conservatives -- one of his colleagues I've already mentioned it to -- and that is that there are times when I actually believe this minister is nice enough to be a Liberal and conducts himself in that way from time to time. [interjections] I know the rest of them would like me to extend that compliment to them, but I just can't do it in all . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: The kiss of death.

MR. MITCHELL: Exactly. We may have finally got to him. [interjections] I would like to be able to continue, actually, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

I would like to begin by addressing the issue of forestry management agreements. I'm concerned with the process by which they are negotiated, the timing relative to construction by which they are completed, the lack of open public input, those kinds of issues.

The forestry management agreement issue is, I believe, an issue of huge environmental, ecological, land-use planning significance. I think that goes without saying. But to emphasize the point, I would like to state for the record that the forestry management agreements contemplated for Daishowa and for the Al-Pac projects will involve, it is my understanding, as much as 15 percent of the entire land area of this province. That is an area one and one-quarter times the size of New Brunswick. In addition to simply handing a great deal of the management of that massive area of land to private-sector interests, we are in fact handing that kind of authority and control to foreign interests. That's not to say necessarily that they are bad or good, but it is to say that this has implications for our control over our own land, our own land-use management.

I guess a corollary of my concern in that regard is that the bulk of the product that will ultimately be produced by this resource, the resource contained within these forestry management areas, the pulp, will be shipped outside the province with tertiary manufacturing and refinement being done elsewhere, along with the quality jobs that that kind of manufacturing activity involves.

These forestry management areas and the industrial conduct within them will have a huge environmental impact. It simply cannot be denied. Clear-cutting techniques, I think, will be used -- are being used -- and it is widely known that they are not as reasonable and careful as they might be. I remember recently reading a manual of the forestry department, a manual that I think was written in the mid-1930s or the mid-1940s; I'm not certain, but it's very old. In fact, it was brought to me by a constituent who saw it in a library being thrown out and asked if he could have it. It says very, very clearly in that document in the earlier years of the evolution of this department that clear-cutting simply should not be done. At stake here, as a result of issues like clear-cutting, herbicide use, taking away trees at certain points in their cycles, and the difficulty with reforestation, are some critical and huge environmental issues.

My concern is that we know very, very little about some of these issues. I rely now for some of my comments upon a paper that was prepared by Dr. Jim Butler, professor of wildlife and wildlands recreation of the Department of Forest Science at the University of Alberta; I would like to give him credit for some

of these points. We know very little about complex forest ecosystems. We haven't done the research, we haven't been able to find the findings that require us to draw some of the conclusions that I think may be essential to managing these forest areas properly. Without that kind of knowledge of these complex forest ecosystems, we simply do not know how to manage them. This is how complex it can get, particularly with respect to the regeneration of mixed wood forests, some of which are at stake in several of these projects: aspen and spruce forests. These are the two main species, as we all know, as you know, Mr. Minister, in the boreal forest. All of a sudden the technology for producing pulp from aspen has emerged, and so we're rushing to implement that, to use this resource that heretofore has been considered nothing but a weed.

At the same time the technology for regenerating the kinds of forest within which aspen are found, these mixed woods forests, hasn't caught up to the technology that can utilize this aspen to produce pulp. I believe that to be the case. We may be rushing headlong into the utilization of these resources without knowing, in fact, how to regenerate these kinds of forests, given that aspen and spruce are at different cycles. Compounding this problem is this. Dense, old spruce is, of course, of extremely high value. It therefore goes first. Aspens take some time to hollow out with rot, but they do hollow out, I understand, after 20 or 25 years. It's at that point that they are no good, particularly to a pulp mill, and so the way to handle that problem is to cut them down before that period where the rot takes over. However, once they've begun to rot they are an extremely important feature of habitat for certain kinds of wildlife, wildlife that needs, on the one hand, dense spruce and also needs rotted aspen as habitat: both those features. What happens then is not only do we begin to cut or harvest these trees in a way that damages habitat, important habitat for many species, not only does it happen that we damage both features of their habitats -- spruce because of its value; aspen because we have to cut it before it becomes no good to the pulp mill -- but we also don't really know that we can regenerate those kinds of forests, at least to the best of my knowledge.

Old-growth forests, of course, are an issue in this ecological profile as well. I listened to the minister this afternoon say something that I'm not certain he really wanted to say in answering a question, and I know in the heat of the battle in question period some of us -- not so often on this side, of course -- say things we wish we hadn't. But I would like to remind him of that. He said, in answer to a question from the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche: would it not be better to have 40-year-old lungs than 120-year-old lungs? That is a question that has not in fact been answered, I would understand, by students of forestry management and the evolution of forests. I think it's not a statement we should take as a given. Certainly old forests are an issue in these areas in the north, and they in turn create an issue if they are not managed properly for a variety of very, very fragile and important species, amongst them owls, woodland caribou, wolves, marten, fishers, and woodpeckers.

Despite these issues, despite these and many other environmental issues about which we maybe don't have sufficient information, we don't have proper environmental impact assessment for these forestry management areas. You know, we've been very critical, of course, of the minister's counterpart in Environment. There are times, when I look at him lurch and bumble from issue to issue in establishing an environmental impact assessment process, that I'm reminded of the statement by Indiana

Jones in his first great adventure, as events were getting extremely intense. Somebody asked him, "What are you going to do next?" He said: "I have no idea. I'm making this up as I go along". At least the Minister of the Environment is attempting to make something up as he goes along. I am not certain we can say the same about the minister of forestry in his approach to environmental impact assessment for forestry management areas.

I have a number of concerns. First of all, I do not see provision for adequate public input into an assessment of these areas. The minister has said that there was a general study done. I'm not at all certain that a general study is adequate, given the complexity of environmental issues and the sensitivity of many of the ecosystems that are involved. I am also very concerned that the approach to environmental impact assessments, the timing of them with these forestry management agreements, runs counter to a very firm promise -- and I emphasize the word "promise" -- made by the Minister of the Environment and made by the minister of forestry in this House at various times, and that is that we will ensure that every environmental approval is in place before we allow the construction of those projects. I believe that the ministers are splitting hairs now, because I think what they are saying on the one hand is, "We will ensure there is environmental approval for the plants, the plant sites themselves" -- and that's the traditional environmental impact assessment; for example, the one that was done by Al-Pac -- but they are not saying that all the environmental approvals will be in place for the forestry management agreements before construction starts.

I believe that is a direct contradiction of the promise that has been made in this House many, many times by these two ministers. Construction should simply not start until we have adequate environmental impact assessments, and they should go beyond simply the two points that I have made: timing and public hearings. They should, of course, be comprehensive. They should be done objectively, not by the company but in fact by the department, hopefully by the Department of the Environment, paid for by the proponent. They should be geographically comprehensive. They should consider a variety and a complete range of environmental issues.

Another serious omission, I believe, in the department's planning process with respect to the environmental considerations of these forest management areas, the impact that their use will have potentially on boreal forests, is that there seems to be no contemplation of a boreal forest wilderness reserve. I would think that that is particularly important at this time, that such a reserve be established in the north. It should be at least the size of two townships to be of relevance and to be of importance from the point of view of conservation and preservation.

Thirdly, compounding the potential environmental problems is the potential for herbicide use, and there are some questions about the government's commitment or lack of commitment to this. I wonder whether the minister could clarify some of this for us. Apparently a member of his department has been quoted as saying that, yes, herbicides will be used on reforested blocks, that it's being considered at least now. All we're told is that these areas won't be massive. But we can't find out what their location is. I wonder whether the minister could reveal what the location is. Secondly, it's not clear where this herbicide use will fit in to overall plans. I wonder if the minister could give us some indication of where he is going with that. And thirdly, there seems to be some lack of co-ordination between the Environment minister and the minister of forestry on this issue. Re-

cently the Minister of the Environment's office said that herbicide application is not being contemplated, at least the non-research application. I wonder whether that is consistent with the plans of the minister of forestry.

Fourthly, despite the fact that wildlife habitat and therefore wildlife management and management of that habitat will, I think, be a very, very important issue in these forestry management agreements, and despite the fact that there are huge tracts of land that will be comprised of these forestry management areas, two very important sections of the department relevant to these issues, wildlife and habitat management, are being cut back. It seems to me that that may be inappropriate at this time. I'm referring to votes 2.2.3, Wildlife Management Planning; and 2.5.4, Habitat Assessment. I wonder if the minister could indicate whether he feels he can handle the implications of this forest utilization in these areas and their impact on wildlife habitat and management.

There's another issue that I think I would appreciate the minister commenting on, what its status is, what his department's consideration of it is. Apparently, there is some suggestion now that deforestation can result, of course, in enhanced or exacerbated runoff into rivers and that this may in fact result in higher mercury concentrations in rivers. The danger of this may be proportional to the width of buffer zone left along the edges of rivers. But I would like to know what the status of research and so on into that issue in the department is, and whether he could bring me, at least, up to date on that.

This is related, of course, to the forestry management areas, and it's related to a broad consideration of environmental impact assessments. There are jurisdictions that look beyond simply environmental considerations, as they should. They look at social impacts and they also look at economic opportunity costs. Social impacts, I think, are very important for at least one segment of our population in these areas --and many more probably --and that is the native peoples. I know you have a member from one of these areas who is very concerned about that. But again, as I said this afternoon, I am concerned that he is approaching this with rose-coloured glasses and he is not in fact advocating what he should be advocating for his people. His people, yes, do need economic development opportunities. But they also, more than perhaps many of us, have the land and the environment as a very, very important and integral part of their culture. If he is sincere about defending their interests, those interests have to blend economic opportunities with the preservation of their cultural and heritage opportunities, and I am concerned that the social impact on the broader forestry management area, the social implications for those native peoples, may not have been considered as they should have been.

The second consideration in this regard is economic opportunity costs: tourism as an alternative. I believe tourism hasn't been considered appropriately: the trade-off between developing these forests for pulp mills and other forestry projects, at the same time losing the opportunity to promote the wildlands as a tourist attraction. I believe it goes without saying that in very short order in the world there will be very few wildland places and spaces left. Alberta still has an abundance of those, and in the long run --and perhaps not the too long run --these areas will become hugely valuable resources as tourist attractions on an international scale. It is very important.

Two things: one, that we are prepared to manage those properly; and secondly, that we do not jeopardize them by an afterthought, Johnny-come-lately kind of obsessive pulp mill

development that may in fact, in the long run, result in a net job loss. Tourism, I would like to emphasize, employs 9 percent of our labour force. Tourism is the third-largest economic pursuit in this province, with this government's own projection to have it at a \$10 billion gross product by the year 2000. My concern is that it may be a case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing, and I think there may be a classic reason why this has occurred.

I believe there is a section of this department that is out of place, and that is the forestry industry development section. This section should be congratulated, I guess, for its enthusiasm. I believe it is a division of entrepreneurs who have set out to establish a reason for their being, to establish something for them to do, and have couched that, and not entirely wrongly so, in the benefit of economic development for this province. My concern, however, is that this may not be co-ordinated adequately with departments such as Tourism, with departments such as economic development. Therefore, with the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing, we may experience in the long run a net job loss because we are destroying, jeopardizing important wildland recreational opportunities and tourism attraction opportunities, which while valuable today, will become only increasingly valuable over time.

These kinds of considerations, social and economic trade-offs, should be considered in a properly structured environmental impact assessment which would result, if appropriate, in approvals that would be given. Before they are given, construction could not commence. My concern is that construction will commence and that we will be hooked, and hooked and hooked more and more, until such time that if we did find something that was irreversible and irreparable, we could never tell the companies to stop.

All of this relates to the issue of land use management, and I remember being told recently of a statement by the minister of parks who, in what might be considered a responsible and reasonable approach to taking over a department, initially said they were putting a freeze on parks development until such time as he had been able to become comfortable with the issues at stake and understands what would be involved in expanding or developing his parks vision. That's admirable on the part of that minister. But it's like Wayne Gretzky taking off the pads because he's sick and tired of wearing pads. He's going to get hurt. If this parks minister is going to stop his parks development, then that freeze has to be put in conjunction with a freeze on other kinds of land-use management. I'm referring to forestry area land-use management, because that can encroach and that can limit opportunities for parks development once the minister of parks finds out what he's doing and decides to move. Briefly stated, we can't have one without the other. If he's going to freeze, then I would ask that the minister of forestry freeze as well.

Revenues to the department. There are two critical areas, and probably more, but two at least that I would like to address. The issue of stumpage fees was raised in the House the other day. The minister, I'm sure, is aware of our concerns in that regard. I would like to emphasize that this disparity, which seems difficult to understand -- annual gross revenues to Alberta-Pacific will be in the order of \$300 million for the sale of their pulp at today's prices; at the same time, revenues to the Alberta government will be in the order of \$7 million or \$8 million -- seems to be a tremendous imbalance. There are implications for free trade, of course, that we could be countervailed,

and that much of what we're trying to do with these plants will be put in jeopardy. I am also concerned in that regard.

If I can divert for one moment more about economic considerations: whether the minister has, in fact, analyzed the economics of these pulp mills, one, in absolute terms and, two, in the context of the huge impact the multitude of pulp plants he's developing in this province will have on those markets. My understanding is that pulp prices are higher than they have ever been. Generally speaking, that means they have only one way to go and that is down. It may be that this government's obsessive approach to creating more and more pulp mills will, in fact, exacerbate or precipitate the decline in that market. It may be that in the long run, with the huge commitment of funds, loans, loan guarantees, infrastructural commitment, we will be placed in a position of having to carry industries because we haven't adequately thought through the economics. Could the minister please tell us what studies he has done to demonstrate the long-term economic benefits and viability of these projects on this scale, given world markets today and his projections for world markets in the future?

A second area of revenue that I'm concerned about, second to stumpage fees, is grazing lease revenues. I have got information about grazing leases which I would like the minister to, one, confirm and, two, comment on: the revenues to government versus the income to the leaseholder. One, Pipeline Grazing Association: size, 47 sections. The annual income to that association is \$284,000. The annual fees paid to government through lease and land taxes are \$20,944. The annual profit which we literally hand these people, it would seem, therefore is \$263,000. Could the minister confirm those figures, please, and justify them if it is possible?

Number two, Drowning Ford Grazing Association. Some of these backbenchers should be listening to this, because this is not good fiscal management. It must be frightening to that gentleman over there. This is great business, though, I'm sure. It would be enough to make a backbencher want to retire so he could get one of these grazing leases, or maybe two of them. Drowning Ford Grazing Association: size, 70 sections; annual profit from oil and gas leases, which we literally hand that association, \$175,000. XYZ Livestock Limited, one individual: size, 27 sections; profit per annum, \$100,590. We hand that individual that profit. One block of separate leases in southeastern Alberta: total annual revenue from oil and gas operations is \$402,000. These figures do not include compensation paid for the establishment of a well or payments made for the pipeline right-of-ways and seismic permits. Now, we can add up those four cases. We would come to a million dollars that we are handing to people in profits over and above what you receive as a government in revenues.

I raised a concern with the minister of parks the other day. I probably should have raised it with you, and I will raise it with the minister of forestry. That is concerning the mining of yuppie ice cubes, if you can believe it, at the White Goat Wilderness. May 2, 1989: Alberta's Forestry, Lands and Wildlife -- undoubtedly, this has been sought out by the entrepreneurs of the forest industry development section in their enthusiasm -- has provided Ice Age Company with a miscellaneous permit to allow it to mine glacial ice from the Cline glacier in the Big Horn wildland recreation area for the upscale restaurant trade. The interest restaurants have in ice cubes is that they sink to the bottom of the drink. Therefore, I suppose they have a certain appeal to drinkers, because it's heavy ice. It's been packed in the glacier.

There are many, many wildlife and ecological considerations in getting this ice in and out, but it also seems to be something that is unnecessary and goes contrary to the minister's department's own policy of these kinds of prime protection zones. The statement was made that in the early '70s the prime protection zone designation would safeguard this area. Clearly, it isn't. Could the minister please tell us why he allowed that to happen?

Wildlife preservation. Poaching and its relationship to game ranching is a concern of mine. I'm concerned, just as an aside, with what the Premier said about it in Stettler. He said there is no game ranching in this province. Of course there is. It's been allowed by legislation. It's been encouraged by the Department of Agriculture, that said in January of 1987 that the term loan assistance program was available for game ranchers. Recently there was an auction of antlers which attracted foreign purchasers. The minister is right in saying there are questions about whether or not that encourages poaching by placing a value on wild animal parts. I would ask that the minister not proceed with haste in this regard but convince himself and us about whether or not in fact game ranching does enhance and increase poaching.

I'm concerned about fish harvest problems. I believe that in Cold Lake there are such problems. I would like the minister to comment on that issue and comment on the marketing of fish in this province. I believe there is a marketing co-op, but fish are sent to Winnipeg. I'm just looking for information on that.

Finally, fixed assets. This is probably easy. There seems to be a huge increase in the purchase of fixed assets by the department. I wonder if the minister could just give us some detail on what that would be.

Thank you.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, I think I'll answer some of the questions briefly. For some of them I'll have to get the information and get it back to the hon. member.

One of the comments I'd like to make is that, you know, you can study things to death. You can be a professional student, where you don't actually have to go out and do anything. I mean, there comes a time when a decision has to be made. And I encourage all members to take a forest management agreement and go through it totally. Pick one, go through it, and pick out anything that you think is weak in the process.

Maybe at this point, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to just take the opportunity to spell out clearly what happens to a project when it comes to Alberta, how we got them. We got them for two reasons. Number one, we established a forest industry development division, because you know and I know that when you approach government, they say, "Well, that's another department" or "You've got to talk to Fred" or "You've got to go talk to George." When you've got a one-stop shop, the forest industry development division would work with that company that came forward. After we went out and toured the world with our brochure and said, "Listen, we have a resource here and we're interested in developing it," no Albertans were coming forward. There wasn't anyone from here coming forward, and there was an opportunity here to maximize the use of a resource. So the forest industry development division was established to do that.

The companies then came and had a preliminary look. They read the brochures and came and had a preliminary look. We took them out and showed them different areas of the province. We asked them intensively what their intentions were. What kind of mills were they looking at? Were they looking at a pulp

mill? What were they looking at? Once we did that and worked that through, we said, "The resource in this part of the province is the proper resource that you should be looking at." For example, why a kraft mill at Athabasca instead of a CTMP mill? Because there's a lot of balsam poplar in that area. A CTMP mill can't use it; a kraft mill can use it. There's demand for kraft in the world. I mean, what is kraft? It's bleached; it's white. We're generating all this paper we use here, and that's bleached kraft pulp that we're using. You might find it interesting that I'm trying to get recycled paper usage in my annual report this year. Now, that's a great step, but I think others could look at that as well. But we don't have enough recycled paper in Alberta.

Anyway, I want to get back to my little story here about how we step forward with a company. We assess it closely to find out: is it a good company, is it a viable company, the processes it intends to use. And the forest industry development division works with them to make sure that takes place, that we take those steps. Then they must meet with the Department of the Environment and negotiate. I don't sit in on those negotiations. They negotiate with the Department of the Environment. Those negotiations are extremely tough, because our standards in Alberta are extremely tough. They negotiate with them, and once they sign off that they can meet all the standards, that the equipment they're going to use is the right equipment and it's viable and all those factors are taken into account, the Minister of the Environment signs off on it. Then if they need anything as far as infrastructure, we discuss that with them. Because we're a landlocked province. We have disadvantages. Most of the pulp mills in the world are on tidewater; we're not. So there are disadvantages there we have to work with. So we work with companies to develop that. They negotiate with the department of transportation, the department of economic development if it's on rail, and we try and get CN and CP to do something. They haven't done a darned thing to this point except be prepared to run it after we get it built. But they're not prepared to do that, and you can't have a mill like that without having rail.

After all those things are done and completed, we say, "Fine, now you have approval to proceed to an EIA" --not approval to build but approval to proceed to an EIA. They've met all of Alberta's criteria, which are the strictest in the world. In fact, the criteria they're going to use in Europe in 1991-92 that they're talking about we have exceeded now in the Daishowa agreement. Then if new processes come on -- part of the agreement -- if new processes come along that it can be more environmentally safe, they must put in those. But we can't find out today, read it in some magazine and say, "You've got to put this in." I mean, it's got to be proven technology. They have to order the equipment. They have to do that. You have to leave the time frame for them to do that. That was the negotiations the Minister of the Environment had recently with Daishowa. It was to do that -- there was new technology --and to get that implemented. That will be a continuing process.

They also work with our forest industry to find out if the wood supply is there. They've got to make sure that wood supply is there. Of course, they try and get a little extra wood and we try and make sure they don't have quite enough. I don't know what the percentage of Daishowa and Alberta-Pacific is of the percentage of the province. But that isn't the whole area. There are quotas for small operators in that area; there is a wide variety of other things in that area. But when you have a major project spread over that large an area . . . And if you drive out

there and have a look at the woods, there are open areas, there's muskeg, there's old-growth forest and all of that. So you have to consider that you need a fairly large area, because less than 1 percent per year of that area would be cut. It's not all going to be cut. In fact, if you cut a tree today, it'll be 80 to 100 years before you get around to cut it the second time. It's not going out and clearing the whole area. That just doesn't happen. After all those things are done, if they meet their environmental impact assessment on the mill, then they can go ahead.

Now, the forest management agreement is the umbrella agreement, and as you read through it, you'll see all the standards and everything it has to meet, plus it has to file a 10-year plan, plus it has to file annual operating plans that have to be approved. And why do we make them do it? Why do we tell them to do the environmental impact assessment? Because they have to do it at their expense. Alberta-Pacific held over 70 public meetings in the local area out there with respect to that mill. I mean, we can have a process that goes on and on, but it has to end sometime. You say, why don't we have more secondary processing? We're shipping all of our pulp out. Well, that's a concern. What do we do? Do we leave the trees here and do nothing, or if we've got a chance to ship, do we ship?

In both Daishowa's and Alberta-Pacific's case in particular we've got a paper machine committed to the project. Now, if the project is delayed and delayed and delayed, the economics of the paper machine fall off. We could lose the paper machine. So the secondary jobs you are talking about that come with it are in jeopardy because of delays. Because we all know that when you build a project, you go and arrange financing. You arrange drawdowns. You arrange marketing for your pulp, because you don't want to have all the pulp. All of a sudden one day your mill opens and you haven't got a customer; you want to commit some of that. You also have to make commitments for equipment, because in your construction schedule it might take you six to eight months to get a piece of equipment. So you schedule that, and when it comes you pay for it. When you have that scheduling, it's all done, you've met all the criteria and you're prepared to upgrade as the environmental standards are improved, you go ahead and make those commitments. Well, we can't put that in jeopardy because of something that might be hearsay or what we might think.

I want to make a quick comment about clear-cutting. You can't compare us to B.C. Now, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark didn't compare them, Mr. Chairman. B.C., for example, their clear-cutting -- they have steep slopes and very high rainfall. In Alberta on slopes that are that steep we would not permit cutting. We don't permit cutting, and they regularly do that in B.C. Our tree species here are basically the same age because of fire burn that we've had. So how are you going to go in and selective log something that's of the same age? If you selective log, you end up by having areas where you have blowdown because of that. And we have smaller cutblocks than they do in British Columbia. Their landscape cutblocks we take in site. All those things are taken into consideration. The formation, the watershed is taken into consideration -- the setbacks from rivers; on roads when you drive down, what you see. All of those things are taken into account, and that's in their annual operating plans. The public has the opportunity to have input into that.

We talk out here that we should protect more of our forests. Well, I've always agreed that we always should protect more of our forests, and if I find my piece of paper, I'll be able to ex-

plain it to you better. There were some comments made that every province should save at least 12 percent of the overall area as protected. Well, let me share something with you. If you take under legislation in Alberta -- that's national parks, provincial parks, natural areas, forest land use zones, provincial recreation areas, Willmore Wilderness Park, wilderness areas, bird and wildlife sanctuaries, forest recreation areas, and ecological reserves -- 10.45 percent. Under protected reservations we have ecological reserves, natural areas and recreation areas, and proposed provincial parks: another quarter of a percent. Under military reservation, 1.29 percent. Under protective zoning, Eastern Slopes, prime protection, critical wildlife zoning within the integrated resource plans and outside the Eastern Slopes -- you take all that into account and that's 3.52 percent, or 15.5 percent of the areas already protected.

You said a couple of townships . . . The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark said, "Protect a couple of townships." I want you to know that there's more than that protected in the Athabasca project. Because it's . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: But then you have to go in and mine ice cubes.

MR. FJORDBOTEN: Well, let's not jump to ice cubes yet. We're still dealing with lumber. You're jumping around here now. We'll stay with what we've got. We've got that protected more so -- and there's some old-growth forest in that Athabasca region that will be protected.

With complex forest ecosystems --I mean, I'm not a professor at the university. I don't know if what the comments that were made by one person . . . I believe if you don't like an opinion from one lawyer, go find a different lawyer and get an opinion until you like the opinion you get. I mean, you can do that with some of this other stuff. You can always get a different opinion as well. Habitat, you should know, is increased by our logging practices. I mean, walk out into some of our forests and look at the size of the logs. They're just like this. They're eight-inch logs, 10-inch logs. How much vegetation is down below that? By proper reforestation and the standards we establish, we'll have big logs, and until it's grown up, there's that forage there for wildlife that it needs as well.

When I mentioned this afternoon about 40-year-old lungs and 120-year-old lungs, we were talking about the greenhouse effect. I say the greenhouse effect is something we should seriously consider, with acid rain and the other factors that are happening. One of the things that breathes that carbon dioxide is trees and plants. My comment was that we are helping to fight against the greenhouse effect because there's more oxygen generated from a growing forest than there is from a mature one. And which would you rather breathe with, 40-year-old lungs or 120-year-old lungs? That was my comment about what it means with the greenhouse effect.

Adequate public input. I believe firmly in public input into projects. But I believe the public input that should be there -- at some of the meetings that were held, hardly anybody showed up. The opportunity was there, and that's what we have the responsibility to provide. But there comes a time when you finally have to say, taking all that information, that this is the decision.

You raised two things with respect to my estimates -- one, 2.2.3. That is a 26 percent decrease as it shows in the estimates, and those funds were reallocated to Commercial Wildlife Man-

agement resulting from reorganization of activities. We've been trying to streamline and cut down some things so the actual dollars there are not eaten up by administration and are more effective. So that was reallocated. The other one that I believe was raised was 2.2.4, and that was an 11.5 percent decrease. That was also reallocation of funds in Habitat Management Administrative Support due to reorganization activities within Habitat Management. I'd be happy to provide more on that, on how it was reallocated, if you're interested. But it's not an actual decrease, because I agree with the hon. member that those are areas that need to be enhanced, not decreased, because we can't have this activity going on and not have that.

With respect to mercury, I can't answer the question. I'll get back to the hon. member on it. I'll read *Hansard* and try and get the information.

The other one was about tourism. As Minister of Tourism, I was the one that said we could hit a \$10 billion industry. And I think the Minister of Tourism is doing an excellent job of trying to work that, with destination resorts and everything within Alberta. I fully agree that there's far more that can be done, and that's also recognized in the forest management plans we've done. There has been input from those other departments in recognition of that. Because in northern Alberta particularly there are a number of lakes that I think have tremendous tourism potential, and we don't want to jeopardize that in any way. So that's something that I think has been clearly identified.

Now, we'll get around to the ice. Glacier ice mining got a miscellaneous permit to mine glacial ice on Cline Glacier. It's 120 kilometres west of Rocky Mountain House and is in zone 1, Prime Protection Zone area, under the Eastern Slopes policy. Under that policy there is flexibility. Resource potentials and opportunities for development are identified with a view to assisting in the economic progress of Alberta. The plan is sufficiently flexible so that all future proposals for land use and development may be considered. This one was considered, and it met all the criteria. They were very stringent criteria. They couldn't have any wheeled vehicles. They had to be dropped in by helicopter. They had to get a permit from the Minister of the Environment, and they're going to have to get another one from him. Whether or not they'll be successful, I don't know. The flight path of the helicopter had to be worked out with wildlife officials to make sure it wasn't affecting anything. They couldn't leave anything in there as far as camps and things like that. There was a specific time frame for taking it out. They're out of there now, and they have to get a permit again for next year. They may or may not be successful through me, and if they get one from me, they might not be successful from the Minister of the Environment. It's one area we want to make sure we're not jeopardizing.

The comment about game ranching: no, there is not game ranching in Alberta. I'll explain that. There is game farming in Alberta, not game ranching. Now, I know you can say it's a fine line. But I'm a farmer, not a rancher, in my own right. Game farming is when you raise animals for breeding stock. Game ranching is when you sell it for meat. We have no meat sales in Alberta from game farms. So until we do, and if we do -- I don't know -- we have game farming. So they have the sale and trading of animals and have auction sales, but it's for breeding stock only, not for meat sales. They of course are asking for that. But I stand with the animals again and our wildlife concerns in Alberta. Our natural wildlife must be protected in any way.

The other comments on the grazing reserves: I'll be happy to dig out that information. The hon. member raised specific cases with me, Mr. Chairman. I'll be happy to review that, and I'll get the information to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You've heard a call for the question. Are you ready for the question?

The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be reasonably brief. First of all, I'd like to congratulate the hon. minister of forestry for his reappointment. I know you are a very capable forestry minister, and we have confidence in you. I know you can do the job for us.

One of the things I'd like to clear up with Blues Junior to my far left from Meadowlark: we have not only forestry projects in northern Alberta. Like we campaigned on in the last election, we have economic diversification throughout the province. In that particular area, along with the forestry projects, there are also tourism projects. In fact, he wouldn't know because he probably doesn't read the paper, but tomorrow we have a meeting with a group -- the president of that group is a native person from that area, from northern Alberta -- on a \$30 million tourism project for that area. The proposed project will be within 15 miles of the pulp mill site. That's how much confidence we have in our forestry management, our social planning, and environmental management. We can diversify this province if we plan it and manage it the way we're going. I know that for a fact.

I'll go to my speech a bit now. I commend this government, the forestry department in particular. We have the most advanced forestry department in North America. We have the most experienced staff, that are admired by other provinces, and that goes right down to the forestry superintendents and their staff in those little offices we work with in our northern communities. They're very, very experienced.

The best reforestation programs. Adjacent to my community, Calling Lake, in the Athabasca-Lac La Biche riding the forestry department in the last eight years reforested over 20,000 acres of land and employed mostly all local people while they were doing that. We have the best nursery in North America, a Smoky Lake project. Zarusky is very familiar with that. We're looking at expanding that in the future, I believe. It's a darn good project.

We have the best fire protection program going. I live 130 miles north of this city. We could have a thunderstorm go through there at 4 o'clock in the morning. By 5:30 in the morning forestry could land within 20 feet of where the lightning hit and put out that fire: in an hour and a half. Now, if we can't be proud --even the opposite members, you should be proud to say: "This is our Alberta. This is how advanced and how good we are." But they won't do that, because it's successful.

Most important is that this forestry department has the ability to attract new industry and expand the existing industries. I'll just go through some of the industries that are coming in: Alberta Energy Company, Alberta Newsprint, Daishowa Canada, Millar Western, Procter & Gamble, Northern Forest Industries, Alberta-Pacific. Now, if that's not diversification, if that's something we can't be proud of, well, there's something wrong with us. Alberta-Pacific alone in my constituency is very, very,

very important, probably more important than a lot of people can understand: how important those forestry projects are to both my riding and Pearl's riding in northern Alberta. We have some communities in there that have up to 4,000 people with 80 percent unemployment and underemployment. We've searched for the last 30 years as to how we may put these people back to work. We've trained. We have training programs. Somebody was worried about how these people are going to be trained when these projects come on stream. We're training people now and have no place to put them because there are no projects. But we will have them. We will have those projects.

These initiatives are necessary; they're very necessary to get our people off welfare. I know that going through the north through the campaign, traveling through Slave Lake, the native people are sick of being on welfare. The welfare system has been around for over 35 years in some of those communities. People are sick of the system. I know that one way we're going to get people back to work where they want to be --and they deserve it -- is the forestry projects, the tourism projects we're pushing.

Somebody was worrying about local hiring. Blues Junior there was worried about local hiring. He feels nobody will be hired locally. Well, we have a responsibility. As a candidate for that area, I'll guarantee you that the companies will hire as many local people as we can produce, because they've agreed to it. I have confidence in them, and I have confidence in our province that we will train through our training programs, train the native people locally and put them on these jobs.

The other thing that was mentioned earlier today was the pulp mill. Alberta-Pacific will only create 400 jobs at the pulp mill site, 600 jobs in the forest industry. What about the spin-off jobs? There are going to be thousands of spin-off jobs, and we'll ensure that those spin-off jobs go to local people also.

I have some concerns also. The forest management areas I have concerns with. I'm working on those with the forestry minister along with a company that's proposing to come in that area. The small sawmill operators' concerns haven't been completely addressed like they should be. I know that within the next month or two with the way we're working on the project, I'm sure we will satisfy their concerns. Trappers have concerns, and we're working on that.

The Indian reserves were mentioned: how come we include our Indian reserves in our forest management area plans? Well, they're a federal jurisdiction. The Indian reserves don't want to be included in our plans. Why should we include them in our plans? They don't want us. They have their own planning.

The quota system is one thing I do have a concern about. In the past the quota system has not worked as well as it could, I believe, for the smaller operators in the area, the smaller communities. A lot of the quota systems were centralized in places like Slave Lake, for an example. Timber moved from the rural native communities: we're trying to address that issue, and it looks really good. I believe that at the rate we're working, we will be able to address that issue and very soon.

I believe also that we need to look beyond Alberta. We complain about Alberta and the problems with the environment, the problems with economic diversification. We should have a little comparison. I'd like the forestry minister -- if he can't do it tonight, later on at least -- to give me some information. Run a comparison between Alberta and Sweden, for an example: the population in Sweden, the land area in Sweden, forested area in Sweden, number of mills they have and types of mills, and even

their environmental standards and their plans for environmental management in the future. I'd like to have those.

I feel and I'm confident that our economic diversification plan is working. Of course, the opposition members don't want to see it work. That's why they have all these issues. Junior Blues there mentioned that he's worried about animals and birds. Well, I'm worried about animals and birds too, but when you have thousands of people unemployed, we have to create jobs. We will create jobs, and there will be places for birds and animals to live also. We guarantee you that.

I'd just like to close off to say that we have, I am proud to say, the best forestry department in North America. We have the best staff, and I know for a fact that the forestry department is going to play one of the key and major roles in the economic diversification of our province.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to keep my comments to the minister tonight brief in the hope that I can get a straightforward answer to my concerns. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's opening comments about not clinging to the past and the necessity for change and that we have to adapt to the necessity for change and move with change when it occurs. It's all very nice to hear. I'd like to know, then, how it is that his department spokesmen have responded in a certain way to a recent court ruling in High River regarding the access of the public to grazing lands.

The minister will be aware that Judge John Robbins very recently, within the last several days, has ruled that a grazing leaseholder can't legally erect signs or warn anyone who might come onto the grazing lease to stay out. This comes as a result of a court case surrounding someone from the Eden Valley Reserve who, I believe, shot an elk on a Crown grazing lease under lease to a private citizen. I think a lot of people have welcomed this decision in that it reaffirms that public lands belong to the public, the public has every right to use them, and that the leasehold is just that: it's a leasehold. Grazing leases are what the name suggests, agreements which allow ranchers to run stock on the land and nothing more.

But immediately the response of one of his department's spokesmen in Calgary said: "Nothing's really changed at this point in time. The ruling is meaningless at this level because it's only one man's opinion." Now, I don't know what it is that employees of the Alberta fish and wildlife division are doing considering a judge's ruling in this province as simply one man's opinion, but I would hope that's not the attitude of this minister and the attitude of this province. After all, if change has occurred as a result of this court ruling, then we shouldn't be clinging to the past.

Of course, there's always the appeal process, but I just point to the example of his hon. colleague the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. Another judge in this province has ruled unconstitutional the use of seat belts. I understand that in the interim the enforcement of the use of seat belts in this province

has effectively been put on hold as a result of that judgment until the appeal can be heard. I would certainly hope that the least we could have from this government and this department is respect for the hon. judge's opinion --not only his opinion but his judgment -- until, if it's taken to an appeal, that appeal is heard and a further decision is rendered. But at least for the interim I would hope that the minister will clearly state to the House tonight that it's the opinion and the policy of his department to accept the decisions of court judges in this province.

Thank you.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I'll make a quick comment on that. The whole area of access/trespass is one that's a contentious issue, and it's one that is now presently and has been for the last year or so worked on intensively between the Fish & Game Association and the Alberta Cattle Commission.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

The right of the public to have access to public lands is a contentious issue, but you must remember that there are areas of public land that are set aside as ecological reserves that you maybe have public access to. But you don't have public access to use motor bikes on some of it; you don't have public access on horses on other of it. There are rules. There are public highways, but that doesn't give you the right to drive down the wrong side of the highway. There are rules, and I believe you've got to live by the law and live by the rules.

There was a court case rendered in this particular case. I'm not going to make any comment about it because it's my understanding that there likely will be an appeal. Until the appeal has gone through, I think I'll reserve my comments.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, a few comments related to the department of forestry. I want to discuss briefly a project in my area. The owners of the project have been to see the minister and talked to the minister about the ability to get to and get the use of a forestry allotment for their sawmill and post plant near Medicine Hat, in Dunmore. One might wonder: well, what are we talking about a sawmill and a post plant in the middle of the prairies for? But this is an operation that's been in existence for 20-plus years, and recently, totally on their own, this father-and-son team spent a considerable amount of money, somewhere near half a million dollars, on an ultramodern pressure-treated post plant. Because of the product they are putting out, they have a problem now with supply. Because of a top-grade product, their market is growing. People are asking them for that product. It's filling a market. It's being produced in the area where a majority of it's being used. In that part of Alberta and southeastern Saskatchewan where there's a lot of ranching country, the majority of the product is being sold, pressure-treated posts.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

To the minister. I would like to remind the minister that along with the large wood product plants we've talked about in the last few weeks in this Legislature, there are other small operators that are trying to do small things. I sincerely hope that with the overshadowing that these large projects have gotten and the coverage they have gotten and everything, we haven't forgotten about the small producer, the small guy trying to do a

thing that -- what he needs from government is access and help in achieving access to a forestry allotment. In many of these cases the small operator isn't asking for a lot of money to build his plant. They are willing to do that themselves. It's the supply of the raw product to go through that plant. As I said, I sincerely hope the minister hasn't forgotten about these small operators that are in existence all over the province that are trying to do things to create jobs in small numbers, but nevertheless steady jobs: five, 10, 15, and 20 jobs. We need to look at that, especially now in view of the problems we've had with other industries in that part of Alberta. I would appreciate the minister's comments on that.

The other thing I would like to talk about is grazing leases and the assessment or the charge on grazing leases. I wonder if the minister has given consideration to reviewing the method in which the charges on the grazing leases are -- that's relating to the productivity value of those leases. If memory serves me right, the allotments were set a number of years ago on a per cow/calf unit of carrying capacity. When it was set, we were talking basically Angus/Hereford cross cattle or Angus cattle and Hereford cattle, and now we have a lot of the crossbreds. They are a lot bigger animal, they eat a lot more grass, and I sometimes wonder about the carrying capacity, in that the very vast difference in the size of the animal -- if it isn't time that we should re-examine those carrying capacities to see if, indeed, they meet with the standard of animal that's on that carrying capacity at the present time.

I would very much like to get into the argument that I heard from the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark relating to the giveaway, as he puts it, for those that have grazing leases, that have wells on them, but I remind members that the amount paid to the lease operators for severance and inconvenience -- the Crown gets a certain amount for that allotment, and if the Crown hasn't changed their negotiations for what they charge the companies, you know, maybe the operators have been better negotiators in order to achieve more off the well site rental. If the province is looking at something, we should look at renegotiating our allotments there rather than criticizing others for what they've been able to accomplish.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff. He's done what an excellent MLA should do in representation with Dunmore Wood Preservers. He's had them in to see me a couple of times, and the department's working very closely with him to try and accommodate him. It's difficult. He relies at this point in time on some of the park wood. And the expansion plans that he has, I compliment him for that.

But I want to make a comment quickly about the small operators. Let's not have any illusions about that side either, because the operators across this province have historically . . . What they've done is they've gone ahead and built a sawmill, they've come to us about the wood, and they said they were going to build such and such a size sawmill. But they didn't. They built a much bigger sawmill than they said they were going to, and then they came back to us and said, "You're not giving me enough wood for my sawmill," which was much bigger than what they said before. They always fudged that a little bit. Let's be realistic as well. They've had the feeling that all the wood in the world was out there and they could just expand and come to the Forest Service and we would hand them more wood. But now with the commitments that are made and the proper utilization of that resource, that isn't the factor anymore.

They're not going to be able to come and twist the MLA's arm every time they want a little more wood for their sawmill. They're going to have to get out and hustle a little themselves. They'll have that opportunity with the large operators and the pulp mills to be able to go in there and have some access to wood that they wouldn't have gotten any other way, but they're going to have to work a little bit. That's going to make it a little tougher for them to do it, but I think that's only being realistic.

With grazing leases the question is: are we going to review? Yes, we're going to review, but let's use the factors we have at hand. When I was Minister of Agriculture, we had a select committee that gave us a report on surface rights, and the select committee's recommendations on what happens on grazing leases with respect to well sites and everything is exactly what is in legislation today. It wasn't something that a minister decided; it was a select committee of all members of this Legislature that made that decision and made that recommendation. The formula that's used on grazing capacity -- you've got to remember that they just don't have the right to turn as many cattle in there as they want. They're told exactly how many head they can put in there and what that carrying capacity is, because there has to be enough forage left for wildlife in the area as well. So they're under very strict controls about how long they can graze, and it's inspected to make sure they're not overgrazing and are practising proper husbandry with the resource.

But in answer to the hon. member's question, Mr. Chairman, yes, we are reviewing it. It's an ongoing review. I intend to put some effort into it. It likely won't be this year, but I hope that by next year, when Alberta-Pacific and the other projects are under way and I get some breathing space, then we'll have the opportunity, maybe, to put some effort into some of these other things.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the committee rise and report and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

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

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report, those in favour of the report, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would just advise members of the Assembly that the business of the House tomorrow will be to deal in Committee of Supply with the estimates of the Department of Health in committee.

[At 10:14 p.m. the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]