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Official Report of
DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
(Hansard)

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Morning Sitting

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The House met at 10 a.m.

The House in Committee of Supply; Mr. Dent in the chair.

ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF
LANDS, FORESTS AND WATER RESOURCES
(continued)

On vote 126: Minister's office, \$150,833 — continued.

MR. D.E. SMITH (North Peace River): It's a pleasure to continue the debate on the estimates of Lands, Forests and Water Resources. The matter that I want to raise briefly with the Minister this morning concerns the leasing of lands in the province mainly for leasing, improving and eventually acquiring title for agricultural purposes.

Because there was at one time a tremendous amount of potential agricultural land in the B.C. side of the Peace River block and in the Fort Nelson area, we have probably had more people apply for agricultural leases than in any other part of the province. One reason is that it is favourable to farming in that particular area; secondly, the land was available.

In the two years-plus since the NDP took office in 1972 I have been inundated with letters from people complaining about the treatment they have received from the Lands department respecting their particular leases. There would seem to be a policy — whether written or unwritten I'm not sure — on the part of the Minister (Hon. R.A. Williams) to use any and every excuse to cancel an agricultural lease so that the land will return to the Crown and the lease, if it is ever renegotiated, will be on a different basis. Mr. Chairman, this was never the intent initially, and I don't think that sort of reasoning should be part and parcel of the system in British Columbia.

From the Minister's own statements, I think it is well known that if he had his preferences and desires there

would be no such thing as land in fee simple in the Province of British Columbia entitling the owner or person residing there to own that land. I would like to recall to the Minister's attention that if it had not been for the desire of people to own their own property and farm on property other than that which was rented or leased there would not have been the development that we have experienced in the Peace River district respecting agriculture.

It seems odd to me that the government should use whatever technique is available to them to discourage development. That is exactly what your department has been doing in the past two years. Almost any excuse has been used to write letters to applicants or holders of agricultural leases to deny them or cancel that lease. I have numbers of letters from different people; they all complain about the same thing. It extends anywhere from a small acreage in Fort Nelson for a home site to leases on a section or two of agricultural land. Almost invariably these people are told by letter from the government that they have reconsidered their position and that they have not met the terms of their lease agreement, or the number of acres required under the lease agreement, or the number of acres required under the lease is not apparent from the latest inspection, and their leases will be cancelled forthwith. Is this the policy of the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources? Is he breaking faith intentionally with the people who have only one desire, which is to improve their lot and become farmers in their own right? It is a natural desire, I think, on the part of many people.

I would like to quote from a few of the letters that I have. I am not going to take up a great deal of time in the committee. I have one here from a man in Fort Nelson who acquired a lease for a home site. He went through all of the steps that are involved. He applied for a lease some time ago and was told by a Mr. B. Ward in the Lands department how to go about getting this lease. He went through those steps and was concerned that nothing was happening. He had a number of phone calls and conversations with Victoria. Every time he phoned they told him that things were moving along and they were progressing, and not to get impatient. Five weeks ago your department told this man that he didn't have to phone any more because he had filled all of the requirements and his lease would be forthcoming. The personnel in the department that he talked to said that everything was going through and not to worry about it.

This gentleman says he's made at least 20 phone calls to Victoria on this matter and each time he's been told: "Things are progressing. Don't become concerned. Everything is going along fine."

He had his approval from the Department of Highways and the Department of Public Works, in whatever respect they have authority in this particular instance. They were in agreement with his right to lease a home site.

He took it one step at a time as he was told to do by the officials of the Department of Lands but, lo and behold, two weeks ago, or about that, he received a notification from the Department of Lands that indicated he couldn't lease the land, that it was going to go up for public auction and that he'd have to bid for it if he wanted. Now this is after a period of months, years, and where he was led to believe that everything the department required of him was being done. Now he's told: "Sorry, Buster, you're going to have to bid for that home site and it'll go up for public auction." Why the change of policy, Mr.

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Minister? Why was the man encouraged to apply for land and then, at the time when he had gone to a lot of trouble and expense, find that he's going to have to bid for land that he thought he had a right to lease? He had been given every indication by government that they would honour their commitment to him?

I have another letter from a resident in Fort Nelson who has been told that his agricultural lease would be cancelled. Why? He failed, in the department's mind, to provide the improvements to the land that were required under his lease agreement. But there's where the conflict lies, because this man says: "I've done far more improvements than I was required to do by my lease. I haven't seen a land inspector around here since I started on this job. Yet I'm told by remote control from somebody in Victoria that my right to lease this property is cancelled."

Unfortunately, Mr. Minister, there are too many of these same types of problems occurring in the Fort Nelson and Fort St. John area. Time after time after time people are being put to excessive expense to prove to the satisfaction of your department something that the land inspectors should have been able to see in the first place, and

that is that in many cases the people involved have kept their end of the bargain and made the improvements necessary to maintain their leases.

The only question that I have to ask is: are the personnel of the Department of Lands carrying out instructions, explicit instructions from the Minister, indicating to them that their job is to find whatever means possible to prevent people from maintaining the land they have an agreement over, between themselves and the Crown?

There's also the odd case where the land in question, because of weather conditions, is subject to problems of maintaining the improvements. A number of people have come to me with the problem that because of wet seasons they were not able to complete entirely the number of acres of improvement they were supposed to do each year, and they have asked for extensions. At one time, if the case was legitimate, the extension was almost automatic — at least the first time that it was asked for — to give them a chance to maintain that property and to develop it. Now it would seem that the reverse is true and that if a person applies for an extension it's almost automatic that it's refused.

I think the Minister, Mr. Chairman, is derelict in his duty if he feels that treating people this way in any way adds to the stature of his department or helps maintain the economy of this province. These are not fly-by-night people that I'm talking about; these are solid citizens, Mr. Minister. They are people who want to have a place of their own and by their own sweat are prepared to work hard to get that and attain what they have perhaps thought about for a lifetime. I would say that it's time for the Minister to come clean with the people of the province. If his policy is to use whatever excuse is possible to cancel out leases on Crown land, then say so. If it's not, then it's time that he told the public of this province just exactly what his policy is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shall vote 126 pass?

MR. SMITH: No, Mr. Chairman. I put a question to the Minister. I realize the rules of the House say that he does not have to answer it. But I think that in fairness to the people who have agricultural leases and home leases in the Province of British Columbia, in Fort Nelson, in the Fort St. John area, he has an obligation to answer the questions I've put to him.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS (Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources): The answer is no. No such directives are given, Mr. Chairman. In fact, the job of the Lands department staff is to carry out the Land Act, and that's what they do. In fact, we've generally been liberal in terms of renewal of leases where there hasn't been full performance in these obvious agricultural areas where it's individuals involved and where different things can happen that would present performance that one could understand.

The leases I'm familiar with that have been turned down have clearly been non-performance and clearly questionable in terms of their agricultural use. One classic example that I recall is a lease that was granted by the former Minister, Mr. Williston, to one Ben Ginter on the edge of Prince George. It was clearly not an agricultural lease but rather one that had a tremendous urban potential as well as small lakes and so on on the property. I had no qualms about seeing to it that that was turned down because of non-performance; but it's only in special cases like that that I've been directly involved.

MR. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I'm not talking about land speculators or large industrialists. I'm talking about average citizens who come to me with their problems and write me or send me copies of letters that time and again have gone to the Minister or to the Department of Lands — to the attention of the director with copies to me. These are individuals who have leases on anywhere from a home site of a few acres or five acres to a quarter-section or a section of land — a section and a half sometimes — adjacent to property that they've already proved out. These are legitimate cases of people who seem to run into a continual roadblock from the Department of Lands as the situation now exists, respecting the fact that they haven't either crossed their t's properly or dotted their i's in a manner that was acceptable to the department.

I say to the Minister that I think he should review

that policy, because it's being unfair, grossly unfair in my opinion, to a number of people who have worked hard to get where they're at and are prepared to continue doing that for the sake of developing a farm for themselves and perhaps their family beyond them.

It would be different if it were an isolated instance that happens only on the rare occasion, Mr. Minister, but I can tell you frankly that I have more correspondence over this one particular problem than perhaps any other that comes across my desk. So it's not a rare incidence, an isolated incidence. It seems to be a matter of almost daily occurrence. I believe that the Minister should check closely into what is really going on with these leases and find out if for some reason the information that's channeled down to Victoria where the final decision must be made as to whether a lease is maintained or cancelled is in fact correct information, or why these people feel that the policy is not only against them but in many cases they're being harassed in their attempts to develop a farm or a home site.

MR. G.F. GIBSON (North Vancouver-Capilano): Mr. Chairman, just briefly at this stage I'd like to explore with the Minister his thoughts on the timing of resource development in British Columbia.

You know, Mr. Chairman, the Minister is a member of a party - and I think the pre-eminent member in terms of the ideological leadership question — that believes, in terms of resource development, that things should be left in the ground, for example, and maybe trees should be left on the hill, I don't know. That's what I'd like to explore with him. We have in British Columbia hydrocarbon resources which timing isn't really a question on. We're pumping all the oil we can; we're discovering all we can. On natural gas we have certain kinds of commitments, and on coal the development will go ahead as quickly as we can find markets, I presume.

But I want to ask the Minister particularly what his thoughts are on the timing of the development of our forest resources and one specific mineral resource, because it's become such a cause celebre and he is head of the Environment and Land Use Committee and he is the man who is probably giving the leadership in this area. I want to ask him why he feels that investment in British Columbia pulp mills can't go ahead more quickly. Why is it that we had an official of the Council of Forest Industries tell us earlier on this spring that B.C., with half of Canada's softwood reserves, has only \$168 million committed to expanding production in the pulp and paper industry in the three-year period to 1977 as against comparable spending of \$1.35 billion in Quebec and Ontario during the same period?

I'd ask the Minister if he agrees with sources in the forest industry that suggest there are six to eight viable locations for new pulp mills in British Columbia. Why aren't there some plans for those going ahead? Is this a matter of departmental policy — the discouragement of the industry in putting forward plans for new pulp mills? Or is it just a question of the industry being scared, of investors being scared of this government and not wishing to go ahead? What does the Minister think is the right timing?

Does he not agree that there is a lot of forest growth in British Columbia every year that is rotting rather than being productively harvested when it could be?

Then I would like him just briefly to tell us whether he supports the general theme of his party, that we are better to leave ore in the ground because it is not going to go bad, rather than take it out this year and next year to provide jobs for British Columbians, while development goes on in other parts of the world. Mr. Chairman, obviously, I am not going to go into that too deeply. It's in a different portfolio.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: And obviously, neither am I.

MR. GIBSON: I wish you would tell us a little bit about it, Mr. Minister, because a lot of us think that you're the guy who's really setting the policy in this field.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: You're wrong again.

MR. GIBSON: I don't think we're wrong. I think you're the guy who pulls the strings in that field.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the Hon. Member has to assume that the Minister is responsible for certain things

under the votes, and then just work on that basis rather than speculate as to what he might be responsible for.

MR. GIBSON: Well, we have to make our best guesses, Mr. Chairman, so we try and get some answers out of the man we think is calling the tune. I'd just like him to talk briefly about that anyway. But particularly, could he give some attention to that question of the six or eight pulp mills that we should be building in British Columbia?

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: I certainly think there may well be opportunities in terms of further pulp mill investment. I don't see it on the scale the Member does, at this stage. There are complications in British Columbia — the complications of tenure, for example, which we have inherited from numerous administrations, so that is one difficulty. The market currently is also rather soft and world inventories are building up considerably in some sectors of the

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industry. At any rate, I am rather encouraged; I think there will be development proceeding and the opportunities are there in some areas in the province. Detailed investigation is going on with respect to the feasibility and economic liability of those projects.

MR. GIBSON: Just a brief follow-up, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the Minister could identify some of those areas where feasibility studies are going on.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Not at this time, no.

MR. A.V. FRASER (Cariboo): A few questions to the Minister that weren't answered yesterday: Plateau Mills and its operation.

Specifically, to whom did you charge that 50 miles of road that was built from Plateau Sawmills or Vanderhoof south into the good area of the Cariboo? I'd like to know whether that cost was charged to the Plateau, or if it was charged to the Forest Service vote. I'd like to know the amount for 1973 and the amount for 1974, and what's budgeted for 1975 to continue this road and invade country that doesn't belong in the area for Plateau Sawmills' operation.

The Minister probably doesn't know about this, but I'm sure that his Associate Deputy Minister of Lands knows. The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District came up with a kookey plan to establish a Charles Cunningham Wilderness Area in part of the north — part of, I would describe it, of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District and the south part of the Cariboo Regional District.

Interjection.

MR. FRASER: Yes, it has the support of the Hon. Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Hartley) who is the MLA for part of this area, and I'm the MLA for another part of it. He supports this.

But what I want to say to the Minister is that I want to know where it stands. I think I know, from the letter that the Associate Deputy Minister wrote, that further studies are going on and, hopefully, the studies will take until about 1992, but there is a good chance these studies might end in 1975. In other words....

HON. W.L. HARTLEY (Minister of Public Works): That would be Social Credit speed.

MR. FRASER: Right. I would like to know what the Minister's feelings are on this because we're talking about multiple use, and this government talks multiple use then does another thing.

They are going to try to put this huge part of central British Columbia into a wilderness area which, again, has been grazing area for the beef industry for 150 years and still is today, although greatly reduced. So is the policy to eliminate the cow entirely and turn it over to the grizzly bear, the porcupine, the moose and the deer? I don't know how we are going to make a living in this country when it is all put up to, as I mentioned, multiple use. In effect, what you are saying is single use. I can tell you that the area I know, which is in my riding, this suggested area, is a

large, large area for grazing for the cattle industry and they are very alarmed about it, particularly when I think, again, all these brainy ideas are coming from the lower mainland.

We don't mind these people taking part in the good life we have in the interior, but we resent the fact that they set all the guidelines.

AN HON. MEMBER: Were you not aware of the public meetings?

MR. FRASER: I certainly am. I was certainly aware of the public meeting at Whiskey Creek about this. A lot of people showed up, mostly civil servants — no elected people certainly representing government I'm talking about. They proceeded to give a snow job to the citizens that pay the bills. That's what happened at that public meeting; we're getting fed up with this kind of nonsense.

HON. J. RADFORD (Minister of Recreation and Conservation): The ranchers supported it.

MR. FRASER: Where were you? You're the Minister involved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. FRASER: Where were you? You're the Minister responsible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Hon. Member address the Chair, please?

MR. FRASER: Let some elected people show up once in a while.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Hon. Member address the Chair, please?

MR. FRASER: Well, bring that Recreation Minister to order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The point is well taken. I would ask the Hon. Minister not to interrupt.

MR. FRASER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

So much for that. I want to talk about land

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inspectors for a minute. I think all in all land inspectors in the lands branch do a real good job. But I think another problem is that we haven't got enough of them.

HON. MR. RADFORD: How many did we have under your regime?

MR. FRASER: That's history; the record is all there. In any case, due to increased applications the Minister has now restructured this department. As I said yesterday, I'm happy about this; I hope it will expedite land applications. But I have reason to believe a freeze has been put on hiring by this government, including the hiring of additional land inspectors. I'd like this senior Minister of the government to comment on that fact. They are short of qualified land inspectors — field people, particularly, and administrative people. Is it true that there is a freeze in this department on hiring any type of personnel? If this is the case, how long is this freeze on for, and when was it put on?

The other thing I want to enlarge on a bit this morning is the serious chip situation — the oversupply in the province. I asked the Minister yesterday about shipping chips to Alberta. It's my information that they will take a limited number of chips, specifically at Grande Prairie, Alberta, and they'll pay \$18 a unit. This is certainly a lot better than burning them and getting zilch out of them and creating pollution as well. Or is it your policy to give

licences to pollute? You'd rather do that than sell some of these at \$18.

The problem is the timber bill we passed and in turn the Minister setting a minimum of \$35,000 a unit. Therefore I don't think the operators can accept this price or they're breaking the law. I asked this question yesterday and the Minister put on his roller skates and went around the mulberry bush on that one. I didn't get an answer; I'd like to hear what he has to say about that.

I also would like the Minister to make a note of this and ask him if he's going to take any disciplinary action against the Forest Service that went out there 20 strong to get Mr. Bennett's cattle and cut down trees in a provincial park and built a holding corral there. I think that's disgraceful that knowledgeable people in a large rural area would have to pick on an area that has been set aside for years for the enjoyment and use of the public. They could have gone 200 feet and been off this land and built the holding corral. I'd like to know how these decisions are arrived at. This has happened and I'd like to know what the Minister is going to do about this.

That leads me to another problem in the — I forget how you describe them — reserves for park purposes in forest land. I spoke last year on this. In my riding, particularly — say, from Williams Lake to Bella Coola — there's a beautiful area, the Chilcotin Plateau.

There's all kinds of reserve land there in the forest, but how does the public know about it? There's no sign whatsoever on Highway 20 designating that these are for park reserves — in other words, that they can be used by the general public. On that subject, I know that these things all cost money, but I don't think it costs a lot of money to put a sign up that it is a park area in a forest. I would also like to know how much money is designated each year for the development of this type of park.

Last but not least, I know that I'll get the old static as that's about the only response that you get to questions like this, but time moves on. I want to refer to abandoned forest roads — thousands of miles of them in the Province of British Columbia where they were authorized and built by a logging company. The timber is cut, the operator leaves and the road is there. Over the period of years — this again where the left arm of the Minister doesn't know what the right arm is doing — the citizens apply for land along these abandoned roads, and they are granted land applications by the Lands department on Crown land, whether it be for agriculture or a residential site. It usually happens while the logging is in operation. Then the logging ceases and the forestry department pulls out and so do the loggers.

Where the citizen thought that he had access, he finds out all of a sudden that after having lived there for five years he hasn't got any — it's not in the highway system. The Forest Service take their usual cop-out and say that they have no more to do with it because the logging is all finished. Is that the way to treat the citizens of our province?

This Minister's budget is spending \$144 million. Isn't there a few thousand dollars in there for maintenance of these roads? They don't want them paved, but they like them snow-ploughed in the winter and maybe graded once a summer. The forestry department has all this equipment. I might say that they do a better job, when it is working, than the Highways department's equipment. There is no question about that. The only trouble with it is that it doesn't work enough or in the right places.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: You don't want the empire extended even further, do you?

MR. FRASER: Other than the fact that these roads were all permitted by the prior administration, you were elected in 1972 and that wasn't yesterday. You haven't done anything about it. What are you going to do about it? Are you going to keep on saying no to these innocent citizens?

Another thing that you have done to these citizens is triple their taxes. So they are contributing something, but they have less public convenience than they ever had.

The other thing that comes under this Minister is

rural electrification. The next thing that they want is rural electrification. They apply to that conglomerate Hydro, which finds all kinds of ways to turn them down if they can't beat the money rap. If they haven't got the money, they come up and say that where you live is not on a properly gazetted road so you have to go to the Highways department and get them to gazette the road. They go to the Forest Service who says that they would be glad to get rid of it. So it goes to the Highways department. Of course, you know what happens then. They say that there is no way they are taking any roads over; they can't look after the roads they have. So we have another social problem — they can't get hydro.

It just compounds; one problem after the other, and it just rolls on year after year. Everybody in the Forest Service sits comfortably in their offices in the wintertime while there is six feet of snow. The directors of Hydro are in their posh offices while these people are shovelling the snow by hand, trying to get their kids back and forth to school. That's a disgraceful situation.

Don't say that I haven't tried to do something about it. I've tried right up to the district forester. He just laughs and says that they abandoned those roads a long time ago. That is wrong. There are hundreds and hundreds of miles of these roads in the province.

AN HON. MEMBER: How long ago Alex?

MR. J.R. CHABOT (Columbia River): Oh, go back to the Stampede Cafe.

MR. FRASER: Right. You go back to the Stampede Cafe in Lytton and see what Mr. Frank has to say about you.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's where he got bucked off a steer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. FRASER: At least he has nerve enough to get on one. That's more than you have.

Interjections.

MR. FRASER: Anyway, those are a few more problems that have been swept under that rug, Mr. Minister. It must be 10 feet now with sweepings that have been swept under it. I would like some answers this morning.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Regarding signs in recreation areas within provincial forests, we have been hiding our light under a bushel in terms of this programme, unlike the former administration. We have decided this might be the appropriate time to improve the situation. I'm glad that the Member endorses the idea because he will see many more signs in his constituency in the coming year. These will be green and white as well as orange and whatever the other colour is.

MR. FRASER: Not orange. Don't make them orange — that's an NDP colour.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: It does get confusing doesn't it?

I would like him to know that there will be 2,127 signs placed. I hope that the majority of them are in his constituency. As well there will be \$150,000 spent in this budget, in terms of this particular vote, in the Cariboo forest district for these recreational purposes in the forests.

Regarding the proposal of the Squamish-Lillooet people with respect to Charlie Cunningham memorial wilderness area — I have met with Mr. Cunningham in recent years and he was a strong advocate of the protection of key wildlife habitat. I think that the people of the region who knew him are equally concerned. But that proposal has not yet gotten to our staff at this level, however. It is something that will have to be reviewed by the Environment and Land Use Secretariat by the usual processes. If the Member wants to make a submission, or if other people with

ranching interests in the Cariboo want to make a submission, it should probably be done fairly soon so that all of the data is in and the attitudes and values of the people in the area are reflected before a decision is made.

MR. FRASER: The Environment and Land Use Secretariat.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Yes.

On the question of road construction south of Vanderhoof there were various studies by the Forest Service over the years. The conclusion of the technical staff was that the best orientation of the Kluskus area and the east Ootsa area would be towards Vanderhoof, and the road is being constructed by the Forest Service in relation to those earlier engineering and technical forestry studies. The amount of road....

MR. FRASER: Is it being charged to Plateau Sawmills?

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: No, it's a road being constructed by the Forest Service.

MR. FRASER: That's exactly what I wanted to know.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: There were 17 miles built,

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not 50 miles; but that's not too far off base for the Hon. Member.

Interjection.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: That's the kind of ratio that is an improvement over the batting record of the last year.

But 13 miles will be constructed this year. So those are the figures. Plateau Mills is undergoing a construction programme. The construction programme, the capital programme, of Plateau Mills is significant; it's \$6.6 million. It's being handled between Plateau Mills and British Columbia Cellulose, the Crown corporation, and everything....

MR. FRASER: Yes, I just want to see that next week. Public accounts.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Rots o' ruck.

The programme is ahead of schedule and is under estimate, and it's pretty well par for the course for these creative new corporations and entities that we have in British Columbia. Management is excellent. There is very good relationship with the construction crews. It's proceeding extremely well. It's not Yankee management. If we'd accepted what you people probably would have done, it would have been IT&T, which is something else again.

The manager of Plateau Mills grew up in the Rocky Mountain trench of British Columbia — Mr. Lucier.

On the question of staffing, I always find it difficult dealing with the schizophrenic comments of the opposition, on the one side arguing that we have too many civil servants, excessive staff, and on the other calling for more land inspectors.

MR. FRASER: Too many executive assistants, not enough proper civil servants.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Three.

The whole matter is a matter for Treasury Board and not under my jurisdiction.

MR. FRASER: Has a freeze been put on the department for hiring?

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: You'd have to check with the officers of the Treasury Board with respect to this.

MR. FRASER: Oh, You're the Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I would ask the Hon. Member to save his questions until the Minister has finished.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: The problem of Mr. Bennett that was covered yesterday is something that I indicated I would look into further. I haven't had full reports yet from the staff in that regard.

I think my comments about chips that were made yesterday are equally appropriate for today.

The question of abandoned logging roads is a problem in relation to rural settlers, but generally, where those kinds of alienations take place the buyer is made fully aware of the fact they don't have legal access, or maintained access to the site at least, so that it isn't really feasible to assure that kind of maintained access. British Columbia, I think, is the only province in Canada that meets all of the costs provincially of regional or secondary road systems. The logging road system is a tertiary system beyond that. So the maintenance of all these systems would be virtually impossible financially. But generally this is looked at very carefully now in relation to leases, and generally leases or alienations wouldn't take place where there wouldn't be maintained access.

The rural electrification question is something that we are sympathetic to and are prepared to review in terms of the formula.

MR. G.S. WALLACE (Oak Bay): Mr. Chairman, just one or two questions. I am very interested in the Minister bringing us up to date regarding one aspect of Can-Cel, and that is the plan he announced two or three months ago to encourage the purchasing of shares by the employees of Can-Cel. Questions were asked, I remember, in the House that the government had actually bought more shares — I think 272,400 shares — and the Minister mentioned yesterday that the 79 per cent ownership had gone up to 82 per cent, although at that time the Minister had previously said that they might be selling shares just to maintain 75 per cent ownership for the privileges which attach to holding at least 75 per cent.

Now it seems an excellent idea to encourage participation in ownership of a company by the employees. In fact, even the Tories think that's a good idea and have set some examples elsewhere by encouraging this. So I think the idea is sound. It relates to incentive, I think, and I would hope it would perhaps encourage a more stable management-employee relationship with hopefully fewer disruptions in the sense of fewer strikes.

I wonder if the Minister would tell us where his proposal is at. I have a clipping here going back to the middle of March saying that a decision would be made about the specific proposal for the employees in the near future. How near is near? I wonder if the decisions have been made.

The other question on the same subject is whether or not the government has any intention of continuing to buy shares in Can-Cel to the degree of obtaining 90 per cent of the shares so that, as has

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happened with Plateau Mills, the government would not be involved in paying federal income tax. We've commented in previous debates about the fact that this government claims that it is just being a competitor in the marketplace and they don't understand why private enterprise should perhaps be concerned about the government intrusion into the marketplace, but if the government concerned don't pay federal income tax, it makes it just a little difficult to compete on these terms. I understand that Plateau Mills doesn't pay income tax and I understand that Can-Cel does at the present time. But if this government were to continue to increase its purchase of shares from, I gather, 82 per cent, which the Minister said yesterday was the approximate percentage owned by the government, by buying another 8 per cent of shares, presumably it would then be excluded from paying federal income tax and the profit figures which the Minister was so proud of the other day would further increase. But it would be, in a sense, unfair competition to private companies which have to pay income tax. I'd like the Minister to comment on that.

The other more general area I wondered if the Minister could tell us about was the proposed committee of

this Legislature on forest tenure which was mentioned in the throne speech. The exact quote from the throne speech said: "Following a number of studies on the forest industry, my government will ask that a legislative committee to consider terms of reference for an inquiry into forest tenure policy in the province...." Of course, the number of studies, I think, which were referred to were particularly the Peter Pearse reports, which made the point that tenures really favour the large companies over the small ones, that more favourable terms apply. I gather that in relation to some of the large tract licences the terms are over a longer period of time and they are not subject to competitive bidding, and I gather that the Minister is in favour of finding out how perhaps a more equitable situation could be reached.

I wonder also if the Minister could tell us then whether he still means to set up this legislative committee, or is he reconsidering in light of discussions and suggestions that we go one step further and have a royal commission? I don't see that if we have one we need the other. I presume that the forest industry might merit a wide appraisal beyond just the tenure system. So I wonder if the Minister could tell us if, in fact, we are going to go ahead and set up this committee on forest tenure, or is it possible that we may take an even wider look at the situation by appointing a royal commission?

There are one or two smaller questions I would just like to ask, important as they are. I know the Minister was very concerned about what seemed to be a rather indifferent attitude by the federal government to the chlorine tank cars which sank in the Malaspina Straits. I'm not up to date on the most recent development, but I was trying to check it out last night and I notice that as recently as the middle of April there seems to be a rather cavalier attitude by the various party's concerned. The cars are owned by FMC Chemicals Ltd., and MacMillan Bloedel Ltd. own the contents of the cars, and it is said that they are not interested in financing salvage efforts although the cars have been located 785 feet deep in the water.

The spokesman for FMC Chemicals, and I'm quoting from his statement on April 9, said: "It would cost more to raise them than railcars and cargo are worth. As far as we know the Minister of Transport is prepared to let them stay as long as they are in deep water, and 785 feet is plenty deep."

Well, an interesting sidelight to this, it would seem to me, is that while our technology can put a man on the moon, it amazes me that we have had such a long drawn out, less than efficient search for these cars. They sank sometime in February — I can't recall the exact date — and it took many weeks to locate them, and now that they have been located there seems to be an avoidance of responsibility as to not only whether they are going to be recovered, but as to who is going to take the trouble to co-ordinate the effort, and who is going to finance it.

I wonder if the Minister could tell us who is legally responsible in this situation and what the precise danger is from these sunken tank cars which contain 340 tons of chlorine.

Another question involving money which I'd like to ask the Minister is in regard to arrangements made in Seattle as to the docking facilities for the Princess Marguerite. It was stated that the British Columbia government had agreed to pay \$25,000 for the car elevator at the Seattle docking facility, but I also read later on that that was a temporary arrangement and that actually costs might reach \$800,000 for a new docking facility to be installed at the Seattle pier in 1976. I wonder if the Minister could explain the whole question of why we are paying for something this year as a temporary measure and whether or not we're committed. Have we come to an agreement with the Washington state government to pay as much as \$800,000 for this elevator next year?

The last question I wanted to ask was this: The Minister made a very interesting policy statement less than a month ago when he stated that it would become government policy to allow local elected officials to have control over resource management. The Minister stated that B.C. would become the first province to have part of the natural resources governed by locally elected representatives. The first specific example that he referred to was the Slocan Valley. Apparently a committee of Slocan Valley representatives and officials of the resources department has already been set up.

This would seem to me to be a very definite change in direction in the management of local resources. We've

got municipal government, we've got regional government, and while I favour the greatest possible local input in relation to matters that can be handled locally, this would seem to be quite a substantial change of direction in policy. I've great respect for locally elected people on school boards and municipal councils but I see regional districts, for example, taking on more and more functions. As I've said many times in this House I'm not the least bit amused by their performance in the hospital field, certainly in this region.

While the Minister may want to be more specific, and I may be making some wrong conclusions, although I like the motive to give local people local control, I am wondering which elected local representatives he envisages as filling this role. Does he see them being another function of regional government? Or is there to be a separate, specific kind of elected official? Goodness knows, we're getting more and more of them all the time, Mr. Chairman. We've got community resource boards and we've got regional hospital boards and we've got regional districts and we've got capital improvement commissions. I just boggled a little bit when I read that here was the Minister suggesting that we should perhaps have one further layer of control, even as I say that it's a good concept to keep as much local input, whether it be in hospitals or local government or parks or what-have-you.

I wonder if the Minister could tell us one or two things. First of all, in the general concept who will the elected officials be? Will it be a new level of government with specific, separate elections held for that purpose, perhaps similar to the community resource boards? I hope not. I hope to God it isn't, but we might as well know the unhappy truth if that's the way it's going to be done. Secondly, does the Minister plan to proceed just on a very slow, specific basis from area to area?

Oh, the Minister is holding up one finger, which, I think, means that the Slocan Valley is the one and only at the moment. Does he intend to extend this if it's successful, or is this a pilot project?

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, the work is only in the Slocan Valley. That's essentially Slocan Lake and the New Denver area in the north and the southern part of the Slocan north of Castlegar. Slocan City is the main centre in there.

It's genuinely seen as an experiment at this stage; we're not moving that quickly in the area. I hope to get up into the region within the next month or so and hold discussions with local people. It's essentially been under the guidance of the assistant district forester in that region and is the follow-up on really quite a good study by a local group of people concerned about resource management in the valley.

I think that earlier reports were somewhat misleading, quite frankly, in that we see this as a single situation at this stage. We see it as very experimental. There are not that many regions of the province that are like the Slocan that are that readily defined. It's an area where the new people and the older settlers in the community have finally gotten together on a social basis. There has been real social conflict in the region in the recent past — that's been overcome. Part of the overcoming of those social conflicts has been tied to their joint concern about management of resources. We saw that as a healthy break in social conflict within the valley.

Interjection.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: They created a society that, I think, members could join for \$1 or something like that. They subsequently had an election of people from the society. But there was a full blanket coverage of the valley in terms of who wanted to participate. It's the kind of place where word of mouth is very quick. I think anybody that was interested had the opportunity to participate and vote. But that was really on the society basis. So that's really all that's taken place so far.

In terms of the actual make-up of a board, as far as I know that isn't finally determined yet. They've elected their own leadership within their society but the make-up of a board which might, say, comprise provincial official officials or staff and some members from their society isn't yet determined, as I understand it.

MR. WALLACE: Do you know the size of this?

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: They've elected, I believe, about 12 people, if my memory serves me correctly.

Again, that's just for their association but I think a comparable size is envisioned for the overall group. We regard it as very experimental. We see it also as a means of significant management changes with respect to the private tenures in the valley as well. So there would be a trade-off in the sense that these people would have some say in the management of the Crown lands and, in turn, the group would have some say over the management of the private land. So it would be a negotiated kind of approach in that basin.

[Mr. Lockstead in the chair.]

The Princess Marguerite. The dock in Seattle has been renovated. For those that made the trip, I think that the terminal facilities on the old pier are really excellent. The kind of modest renovations and so on have brightened it up tremendously and make it a

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nice kind of port of entry for the City of Victoria. But that is entirely temporary; it is for this year. We knew that when we moved into the project. The \$25,000 figure is correct, but that was regarded as acceptable in terms of writing off the cost over this year's volume of automobile traffic.

We want to carefully look at the automobile volume this year and revenues before we make a decision with respect to facilities on the new pier. The new Port of Seattle headquarters, which is an excellent new structure — I don't think it's complete yet — will become the permanent home in Seattle of the Princess Marguerite. So again, the next port of entry for Victoria from Seattle will become, in fact, the best terminal facility in the port of Seattle. It will become something of a shopping centre as well. So it will be an exciting place for the Marguerite to pull in, just as the Inner Harbour here will become more of an exciting place for the ship as well.

Our options are open in terms of whether structurally these other things will have to be done to handle automobile traffic. The decision has to be made by the end of this season to determine whether automobile movement will continue.

The question of the federal government. It's very tempting to discuss the federal government generally and some of our frustrations and some of the disappointments, particularly in terms of proposals in Vancouver, but maybe I will forgo the opportunity at this time. The chlorine tank car question: we have to rely on the federal transport and environment agencies since it is their jurisdiction. I understand that there have been tests taken by MacMillan Bloedel and the Canadian Research Council which indicate that there is no danger from these tanks in the location they have looked at. That is all the information I have at this stage.

The question of an inquiry, as indicated in the throne speech, has been reconsidered by the government. The conclusion is that because of limited time and other factors a different approach would probably be desirable. It would more than likely be, as the Member suggests, to directly consider a royal commission in the near future with respect to the industry.

On the question of Canadian Cellulose and the employee share system, there were near-final meetings just last night on this question with representatives of Canadian Cellulose. That is proceeding very quickly. I think that a firm announcement can be made in the next few weeks. I think the basics have all been resolved at this stage. The position of the government is one of endorsing the principle of employee equity in situations like this. I am pleased that the Conservatives endorse that principle. It may be too radical for Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to yet accept but wearing away on the stone it just might happen.

The 90 per cent question with respect to the public ownership in Canadian Cellulose is not anything that is being considered at this time. In fact, we would be cutting back our ownership within the corporation by establishing the employee equity system.

MR. H.W. SCHROEDER (Chilliwack): The Minister undoubtedly knows about the logging operation we have in the upper valley, which perhaps is not unique in the province but which does occupy a good percentage of the logging activity in our area. It is the matter of salvage logging. The operation is highly selective and it's one that

depends on the decision of the foresters as regards timber sales. In bygone years the timber sales have been in allotments of 600 to 800 acres. More recently these timber sales have been cut down to 100-acre allotments with a maximum of two timber sales per operation. We have something approaching 40 independents in our area employing something like 120 men. The operation revolves around the production of cedar products — shakes, shingles, et cetera. The operators have been in contact with me and let me know that they have potential sales of perhaps twice as much product as they can presently put on the market because of lack of supply.

My question to the Minister is whether or not he has had any indication from his chief forester that there will perhaps be a new look given to the allotment size because of timber sales that are available.

The forester will also let you know, Mr. Minister, that the operations up there have been efficient. There has been an impingement on the amount of wood that they can take out because of the 30 per cent grade regulation. They do have highly sophisticated equipment together with highly portable spar trees, et cetera. I'm wondering if the Minister is going to give consideration to extra allotments of timber sales, perhaps larger timber sales, so that these people can not only keep their operations in operation but can also meet an area where there still is a heavy demand for their particular product. It's an area of cedar products. I would like to know what the Minister has to say.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Certainly there is some review going on at the moment. We are prepared to look at possible adjustments in that area. At the request of the Hon. Member for Dewdney (Mr. Rolston) we have reviewed some of these matters. That's why some of the work is underway now. In addition, I think there were some adjustments in stumpage. Again, I think we can thank the Hon. Member for Dewdney, and I presume the Hon. Member for Chilliwack (Mr. Schroeder) has expressed some concern as well. The Member for Dewdney

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keeps looking after both sides of the river.

MR. R.H. McCLELLAND (Langley): Mr. Chairman, I'd like to bring up a few points about the problems being experienced by the farmers in the Nicomekl-Serpentine area of Surrey.

The other day in the House I asked the Minister what was happening in that area, if anything. The Minister indicated to me at that time that he didn't feel there were ongoing studies at the moment, or if there were he didn't know about them.

Interjection.

MR. McCLELLAND: Well, that's the indication I got.

The Minister referred to the Fraser River flood control programme which was turned down for that area last October — turned down for reasons of....

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Just on the point, Mr. Chairman, if the Member agrees, I'd just like to clarify the statement, if it is not clear.

MR. McCLELLAND: Okay.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: On the basis of the normal 200-year flood design, this would not qualify for federal-provincial sharing. What has since happened is that we're looking at modified design that would be acceptable, probably — certainly to the people in the valley — which would mean a lower capital cost. That work isn't done yet, but at least that is underway at the moment — to see if a modified programme, in fact, might be applied to the Nicomekl-Serpentine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Hon. Member continue?

MR. McCLELLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

That's good news, to some degree anyway. I'd just like to comment, though, that the study that was done regarding the federal-provincial sharing under the Fraser River flood control programme was a pretty surface study. When they turned it down, they turned it down purely for their own economic reasons. They said that the \$10 million cost was 10 times the benefit that would be reached, or something like that.

I don't know whether the Minister is aware, but there was never any consideration given of the potential benefit of future crop potential in that area. Nobody in the area was consulted in that study. The farmers weren't consulted. In fact, it was very embarrassing at the meeting that was held in Surrey when it turned out the Agriculture department wasn't even consulted. They were quite upset that nobody from the study had seen fit to come and see them and talk about it because they could have given some pretty substantial reasons for the programme going ahead.

I hope that programmes now being considered will not deal only with drainage because it's a far more serious problem than just drainage. I know that one of the Minister's staff has said that the priority would seem to be a drainage problem first and a flood control problem second. But that's not necessarily so, especially with the population increases in the area. The flood control problem is becoming a more and more serious problem because, as I've mentioned in this House before, as the uplands get stripped and black topped then the run-off becomes much more of a problem. So it is a flood control problem as much as, in fact maybe even more than, a drainage problem in the area.

Recently the Agriculture minister made a statement publicly that the government is definitely committed to do something in that area. Now I'd like to know what and when because there are 300 or 400 farmers involved in there who need that programme for their livelihood. I've mentioned this in the House before, Mr. Chairman, that it is the only area in western Canada that is capable of producing produce of the kind and quality the area does produce.

It has the potential, given the proper flood control and drainage programme, to double and triple its production. This means that the housewife in Vancouver, the consumer in Vancouver, will have a steadier supply of locally grown produce at cheaper prices. When the produce is available from that area right now, the price drops noticeably in the Vancouver market. I think that reason alone would be enough reason to make this a No. 1 priority project. For years people have been saying that something was going to be done in that area, yet nothing gets done.

In October, at the meeting in Surrey which I mentioned, it was said that the Land Commission would take a look at this problem and perhaps be the vehicle or the agency by which some kind of plan could be developed. Over the period of time since October not much seems to have happened. Mr. Runka of the Land Commission keeps saying that he expects further information from someone and that a meeting with the Surrey diking people will be held at a later date.

The diking problem is getting worse each year, and it's primarily getting worse because of this development in the uplands. The property is being more adversely affected as each year goes by and it should have been vital that something happened this year. But it's too late now because the diking work would have had to have started this month if there was to have been anything done. But certainly for the next year's growing season something should be done

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in that area.

As late as the end of May, first of June, the Surrey diking district, and others in Surrey, were in contact again with Mr. Runka of the Land Commission.

Mr. Runka said we would hear something in the next couple of weeks. That was April 21. Mr. Runka said:

"We hope to have further information available from the Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat on the Nicomekl-Serpentine basin in the next couple of weeks. It is our hope that this will also help form a base for consideration of the drainage planning for the watershed."

Again, Mr. Chairman, a reference only to drainage. I think the farmers are capable, probably with a little help, of handling the drainage. I don't think that is their main concern. They really want to see this government involved as well in diking and flood control, not only drainage.

So the questions that are being asked at the moment either of the Land Commission, of the environment and land use secretariat, or of the Minister or whoever is actively pursuing this matter — and I would assume it has to be the Minister's office — are: Does the government intend to take an active part in solving the problems of not only drainage but diking and flood control in that important agricultural basin? When will we have some news about an appraisal of those studies that are apparently going on now and have been going on for so long? Will any deliberations now take into account the cooperation of the Department of Agriculture, of the farmers in the area and of the Greater Vancouver Regional District?

Since Mr. Lane was the person who gave the commitment that the Land Commission would get involved, I wonder... I know that this is outside the Minister's jurisdiction, but I wonder if he could tell me whether Mr. Lane's leaving will have any effect on the outcome of the decisions that are made.

I want to impress on the Minister, Mr. Chairman, that there is a real urgency in this matter and it is getting worse every year. The possibility is acute that if nothing is done that land will revert to seawater and will go out of farm production, depriving British Columbia of the finest agriculturally productive area in western Canada, depriving us of what can rightfully be called the salad bowl of western Canada.

So, Mr. Chairman, I wish that the Minister would recognize the urgency of this and give us some commitment that we will see some relief in that area in the very near future.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't think much more can be said. I don't have a firm date for those studies. I would expect probably the next few months. That's simply a guess on my part at this stage. There has already been some \$2 million spent on the Serpentine-Nicomekl with respect to flood control, right at the King George Highway. I appreciate that there are these problems of upland owners and the fast runoff because of extensive urban development in the uplands. There is nothing to prevent a levy on the upland lands to share in terms of the programme on the lower lands. That takes place in other municipalities in the province. Chilliwack, for example, charges the whole municipality for diking and doesn't limit it to just one particular section, since they seem to think — and I think legitimately — that everybody benefits from the control.

The economic studies that were undertaken were undertaken by the federal government. It was their analysis and their analysis of the market for farm products that ended up in concluding that on the former capital cost basis the project couldn't be justified.

MR. McCLELLAND: But they never...

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Well, go after your local Tory, former Socred, or whatever he is, and....

MR. McCLELLAND: Oh, no, but you have to have some interest in that, too.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: True, but there is a problem of priorities that's pretty genuine. We have about \$14 million in the budget this year for that programme, the federal-provincial programme, and the federal people have been tightening the purse-strings with respect to that programme. We have been prepared to move as fast as is technically feasible with respect to that programme, but in fact the foot-dragging has been taking place at the federal level in recent months as a result of their Treasury Board directives and activities.

We are sympathetic to moving in this area. We have problems with the federal government, even in terms of those that meet all of their economic criteria, and the Serpentine-Nicomekl comes a long way from meeting those criteria. So the major areas on the main stem of the Fraser River are the ones that are proceeding. That is probably reasonable. There is a pull-back at the federal level with respect to this programme and we are going to have more discussions with them in terms of moving it along on the scale that we would like to see it move along.

Once material is available on this basis.... The Hon. Member for Surrey (Hon. Mr. Hall) and the Member for Delta (Mr. Liden) have also expressed concern, and the information will be available to all of the MLAs and parties that are interested.

MR. McCLELLAND: Mr. Chairman, just a brief

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follow-up. Would the Minister confirm that the studies will include not only drainage but some modified form of flood control as well? About the comment about the uplands paying, I agree that perhaps something should be done in that area, but it doesn't solve the problem at the moment. The Chilliwack thing doesn't really relate to this problem, because we are talking not only of the whole municipality but more than one municipality. It crosses the municipal boundaries if you take in all of the development in those upland areas. So it's a little more complicated than what might be happening in other parts of the province at the moment.

Perhaps the most obvious question and one I should have asked before it: is the Minister convinced and is the Minister committed to keeping that area in farm production? If so, then it's mandatory that something happen pretty quickly; if not, the land will go out of farm production.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: I don't think, Mr. Chairman, that there is much doubt that the government is in favour of preserving the agricultural role of that area. Certainly it's all within the land reserve. I don't think Mr. Lane leaving as chairman will affect any of the programmes. In fact, they have an excellent technical staff and the rest of the commission is fully familiar with the area, as I understand it.

MR. SKELLY: Mr. Chairman, I just have a few brief questions to ask of the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, mainly relating to particular concerns of my constituency.

The first involves the interdepartmental study that his department is doing in the Nahmint Valley near Port Alberni. We've had some excellent cooperation on the study from the company involved — MacMillan Bloedel. They've stopped logging in the area and they've provided some of their staff and some of their facilities to do a complete resource analysis in that valley. They've also been cooperating with various departments of government — the Forest Service, fish and wildlife branch, Department of Recreation and Conservation — to do a complete resource analysis of the area before their logging. It's good to see this kind of thing happening, as it never did happen under the previous government.

For those Members who aren't familiar with the Nahmint Valley of the Port Alberni area, it's an extremely beautiful watershed. It's been relatively untouched over the past many, many years. Many of the people in Alberni use it as a kind of recreational Shangri-La where they can get away from the noise, the smell and the activity in Port Alberni and escape to a beautiful lake and a beautiful river system that has fish, hiking potential and recreation potential that is unbelievable.

I think this Minister has implemented many practices that have met with the approval of people concerned about recreation and concerned about the environment based on his guidelines that were introduced on September 29, 1972. He has reduced clearcut openings, he has distributed logging so that there is less of an impact on watersheds, less of an impact...

AN HON. MEMBER: What's your question?

MR. SKELLY: I'm working up to the question, Mr. Member.

Interjections.

MR. SKELLY: ...less of an impact on the recreational and the wildlife and fisheries values of these watersheds. He has met with some opposition from companies as a result of this. But I think in the case of the Nahmint Valley he has received a lot of cooperation from the company in that area, mainly because the people of

Port Alberni value this area so much.

[Mr. Dent in the chair.]

As a result of the initiative of this MLA, we had a moratorium imposed on the Nahmint Valley for two years. That didn't happen under the previous government or under the previous Member for Alberni (Mr. McDiarmid), who didn't realize the importance of areas such as Nahmint or such as Nitinat. He felt that the only way you could get in there was with a chainsaw and an axe. As a result, he is practising medicine in Oak Bay now, I understand. The government did impose that moratorium. I appreciate the activity of the government in that area because it is extremely valuable for recreation and it is extremely valuable for fisheries. I am pleased to see a study is being done.

However, that moratorium is about to expire this summer if it hasn't expired already. I would like to know just what the Minister is planning to do now that these studies have been put together. Now that a lot of the information has been put together and collated, is the Minister going to allow public discussion in public hearings on the future of the Nahmint Valley and the Nahmint drainage?

I recall a few months ago writing to the Minister asking him to hire a landscape architect as a consultant in that valley as kind of a precedent for British Columbia. The Minister will recall our report on forestry and fisheries that was completed back in October, 1973, when the committee was empowered to look into the problems of streambank logging and streambank management. We recommended that in watersheds such as the Nahmint consulting landscape

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architects be hired to determine the shape and the alignment of clearcut openings in order to reduce the impact of those openings on the people who use that valley for recreation.

The Ontario government has published logging operation guidelines that were drawn up by landscape architects. I believe they are now in use in Ontario to make sure that the alignment and the type of clearcut openings that are done in Ontario don't have an adverse impact on people who use the logging areas for recreation.

I wonder just what the Minister has done with regard to retaining a landscape architect in that area. Also, as far as the recommendations of that forestry and fisheries committee report, what has the Minister done to see that landscape architects are hired throughout the various forest management regions of the province to make sure that the impact of logging is minimized on people who use logging areas for recreation and for fish and wildlife? I would like the Minister to answer that question.

MR. CHABOT: I just happen to have the answer.

MR. SKELLY: I'm not sure that you do, Mr. Member. Otherwise it would have come sometime during the past 20 years.

My second question has to do with the Ehattesaht Logging Co-operative which has been established in the Barr Creek area near Zeballos. Over the past several years the Ehattesaht Indian band has attempted to obtain timber in the areas which they traditionally consider Ehattesaht lands in the Barr Creek–Nootka Sound–Kyuquot Sound area.

After many years of unsuccessful negotiation with the provincial government, under Social Credit, when the new government came into power they were able to get timber in that area and they were able to set up a logging operation. The purpose of this logging operation is to support the economic and social development objectives of that band.

When they approached this government they presented a case for the timber. The proceeds were supposed to go into economic and social development. As a result, this Minister, who was receptive to their requests, provided a timber sale which was posted last year. The Ehattesaht Indian Band were the successful bidders on that timber sale,

and they have been operating in that timber for almost a year now. They made their first sale of logs in Vancouver, and they are at work on a clearcut opening in the Barr Creek valley this year.

From all the reports that I received from the Department of Indian Affairs and from the B.C. Forest Service, the work that the Indian people are doing in the Barr Creek area is of extremely high quality.

I would just like to read a letter from the director of the B.C. region. It is addressed to him from Mr. D.R.W. Britt, District Forester, Department of Indian Affairs, north and south Vancouver Island district. This is a summary of a report he has done on the Barr Creek logging operation.

"In summary I would like to mention one additional point. The physical aspects of this operation are impressive. But what is even more impressive to me is the attitude of the Ehattesaht workers. These men are putting up with living and working conditions that other loggers would never accept. They live in an old apartment in Zeballos without hot water; they make their own meals and pack their own lunches. They travel from Zeballos to Barr Creek daily in an old fish boat and a small speedboat. Then they have to walk about a mile and a half into the worksite. Union members would never show such cooperation. I am hopeful that the representatives from ARDA who have visited this operation can appreciate the effort these people are making.

"The lack of financing has not only put these people under a great deal more working pressure, it has substantially reduced the efficiency of the operation. Unless the B.C. Forest Service makes a special consideration, the co-op will lose a portion of their annual allowable volume because they are at least two months behind schedule."

I understand from my contacts within the federal government that the special ARDA application for the Ehattesaht Logging Co-operative has been approved by this province. It has been approved by the federal Minister of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, and it has been approved by the federal Treasury Board. But payment of funds is now being held up pending agreement by the province to the extension of the special ARDA agreement. I would like to say that, as far as I know up to this point, no agreement for the extension of special ARDA has been presented to this government for their approval. No agreement has been presented, yet funds are being held up by the federal government for this operation.

I would like to ask the Minister if he would be willing to make representations to the federal government requesting payment of the funds that were approved under the previous special ARDA agreement that passed all the approval procedures provincially and federally before the extension was required.

I think it would be a shame if the federal government forced a very successful example of Indian economic development into bankruptcy in order to prove a political point against this provincial government.

I'd also like to know if the Forest Service would

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be willing to permit some variation in the annual allowable cut if the federal government delays funding for too long.

My third question has to do with the villages of Tahsis, Zeballos. In both of those villages tree farm licence lands are included right inside the village boundary. This has been a hindrance in the past to development of those villages, development for housing, for parks and recreation and for other municipal purposes. It also limits the authority of the local government over the operations of the companies that are working within those tree farm licence lands. I would like to know if the Minister is willing to examine the problems being faced by those villages to determine whether tree farm licence lands should be excluded from municipal boundaries and just what he plans to do about those tree farm licence lands in the near future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Ehattesaht Indian band and the work they're doing in logging operations on the west coast of the island, I don't think there's any doubt that the federal report the Hon. Member quoted from is so. This is another one of the kind of unsung, unreported, important moves in terms of involving the Indian people in the harvesting and development of resources in British Columbia.

Most people are aware of Burns Lake. Most people, however, aren't aware of the kind of pioneering work that's been done by the Ehattesaht band. If it weren't for the actions of the Member for Alberni (Mr. Skelly), it wouldn't have happened; it's as simple as that.

The Member's concerned. He went through all of the difficulties with respect to the mixture and complications of tenure in the region and continued to pursue on behalf of these people an opportunity for them to take part in their own region and to create their own work with the use of public resources, and that in fact has happened with extremely difficult odds.

They've put up with work situations that most people in the province simply wouldn't put up with at all, and it's to their credit and to the Member's credit. In terms of the allowable cut, there's no question that the Forest Service will maintain the present level of allowable cut. The kind of difficulties they've had are certainly understood.

MR. CHABOT: Xerox 10,000 and send them to your riding.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Well, you know, you can say that, but I find that this kind of close work with the Indian people just hasn't been happening with the Members from the official opposition. It's the work like the Member for Alberni's (Mr. Skelly's) that is ending up in productive activities on the part of the Indian people.

The last time I was in the Cariboo, for example, I met with representatives of 15 Indian bands. It's a very long time since the Member for the Cariboo (Mr. Fraser) met with those 15 Indian bands. So that's just the pattern that...

Interjection.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Oh, very good, very good.

I happen to think that results are important, and where we're getting results is in Alberni, not in the central Okanagan Valley. Any results we're getting in the central Okanagan are the result of government activity, where they never had an MLA that worked for them for 20 years and don't seem to have one now. Now they're getting parks in the Okanagan that they never, never saw in 20 years of Social Credit.

Interjections.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: At last, at last, they're getting action from government in the Okanagan Valley in terms of preserving their amenities at long, long last. At long, long last some service in the Okanagan.

On the question of the Nahmint Valley, again the activities of the Member for Alberni spurred on the various resource departments to see to it that a more careful approach was taken in the basin. That in fact is what has been done. There has been considerable work with respect to the estuary, fish and wildlife questions, forestry questions and the like. As a result, we do now have a very good inventory base and data base to work from. This material certainly will be made available to the public, and we're certainly prepared to consider a public meeting to discuss the programme in that basin.

The Member for Alberni, as chairman of the legislative committee on environment and resources, in the past has urged the hiring of landscape architects to work with the Forest Service. We are prepared to accept the recommendation of the Member for Alberni, and the Nahmint will be the first basin that we use a landscape architect in.

With respect to the question of tree farm licences, inside the villages it's an extremely difficult problem, as the Member for Alberni states. Again this message has been brought home to me by the Member for Comox (Ms. Sanford) as well. The problems in Port McNeill and Port Hardy similarly are very difficult. The tree farm licences go right into the towns, and the towns are squeezed in terms of reasonable development land. Were it not for the incredibly one-sided agreements in the tree farm licences of the former government, we wouldn't have difficulties.

But all we can take back out of the tree farm licences is one-half of 1 per cent of the allowable cut with respect to the licences, and that's for roads, for power rights-of-way, for parks, for towns, for whatever public need there is.

The industry would argue that there should be compensation for getting back our own public lands from outside of the tree farm licence for such obvious things as roads, power line rights-of-way, ecological reserves or town expansion. That doesn't seem to me reasonable at all. That, I'm sure, would be something that any inquiry would consider in the near future with respect to the strengthening and giving more freedom to these towns in northern Vancouver Island, and throughout the province, that are frustrated because of these tenure problems right within their boundaries. I appreciate the questions from the Hon. Member for Alberni (Mr. Skelly) and I hope there are more in the same vein.

MRS. P.J. JORDAN (North Okanagan): I am sure that the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources does appreciate the questions from the Member for Alberni because it has long been established, both in this House and in this province at large, that that Member is nothing short of a mouthpiece for this Minister. When this Minister wants to fly a point and get a public reaction, it isn't done through his own mouth. He uses that poor little Member for Port Alberni who doesn't have the ability to recognize that he's being pulled on a string like a puppet, a puppet to statism...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MRS. JORDAN: ...that the people of this province are rejecting.

Interjections.

MRS. JORDAN: The Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources is incapable of looking the people of this province in the eye....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The Hon. Member for Alberni on a point of order.

Interjections.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Is it a point of order?

MR. SKELLY: It's a point of privilege, Mr. Chairman. As opposed to the Member who has just spoken, my mouth is connected to my brain, not to anybody else's.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's not a point of privilege. I would ask the Hon. Member to...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Withdraw!

MR. CHAIRMAN: ...frame her questions so that they deal with the administrative responsibilities of the Minister.

MRS. JORDAN: I must express some sadness at the tragic confession by the Member for Alberni in his last statement. I'm afraid I must confess that we have had our suspicions, but now they've been confirmed.

If you wish me to frame this in the form of a question, Mr. Chairman, I hope you will give the Member for North Okanagan the same latitude in this debate that you have given other people. I'd like to ask the Minister when he's going to use that poor, innocent Member for Alberni again. We know that it was the Minister's pulling of the strings of the Member for Alberni that made it very clear to the public of British Columbia that Crown corporations will receive special privileges in order to show a profit and in order to appear to achieve success. We find it just a little amazing and a little shocking that that Member isn't somewhat concerned about the role he's having to play before the public of British Columbia, because the public wants truth in government, they want responsibility in government. They don't want to be part of this Minister's programme of elbowing small people out of the market area and elbowing small businesses into bankruptcy in order that he can further his socialist dreams of complete state control in this province.

We recognize that he has this obsession with pushing around these little people and ripping off the average little businessman with his own money. It's a matter of great concern.

HON. MR. HARTLEY: What's your question?

MRS. JORDAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Public Works has finally woken up and asked what the question is.

I'd like you to refer back to *Hansard* of May 12, 1975, when the Minister was answering a question which I had previously put to him, and I'll repeat the context of my concern and the question. It does regard Silver Star Park, not, as the Minister thinks, Silver Star Mountain. Silver Star Park in the North Okanagan-Shuswap area was a park of a Class C nature, designated by the former administration many years ago with the purpose that the local people should develop recreational activities in the area with particular reference to skiing.

This has been very successfully completed. The skiing at Silver Star Mountain today is recognized as the happy child of every skier. No matter how

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proficient they are, they still recognize that Silver Star offers excellent family skiing, and is an area that most of them like to try once in a while. It has gained wide reputation as a family ski area because it combines ample opportunity for the novice as well as considerable challenge for the more experienced skier. It has been administered by a local parks board up until about a year ago, and it hasn't been without its problems.

But the problem that we face today is considerably more difficult than those we faced in the past, and that is that up until the interference by this Minister's designate, there has been a long, ongoing discussion between the Department of Recreation and Conservation, which everyone presumed did administer and was responsible for the parks in this province, and the North Okanagan Regional District.

There were one or two areas of contention, and one area of contention was that there were forces that work within the North Okanagan who wish to put extensive condominium developments in the park, and this was opposed by the majority of the citizens, and this now is agreed by the regional district as being an undesirable addition to the park for obvious reasons. Because of time, I won't go into them.

However, everyone was of the understanding, Mr. Chairman, that the negotiations had reached virtual conclusion, with the exception of drafting the formal agreement, that the lands would be turned over to administration by the North Okanagan Regional District, with the proviso there be no commercial development in the park, with the exception of that directly associated with skiing and that there would be an emphasis by the regional district to expand the opportunities for other activities in the park.

It has now come about, by rumour, from the Department of Lands, that there is to be a levy placed against capital investment in the park, nature unknown, of approximately 8 per cent. I pose this question to the Minister, asking if, in fact, it was a policy of the Lands department and if it would apply to Silver Star Park. On May 12, 1975, he said: "Regarding Silver Star Mountain, there has been no change in policy to date."

I bring this up, Mr. Chairman, because I find the Minister's answer most incomplete and inadequate for such a competent Minister. I feel that the citizens of the area and of the regional district have a right to know:

(1) Is there a policy evolving in the lands branch that is to be applicable to parkland in British Columbia, that when these lands are turned over to the regional districts for local administration, there will in fact be a charge?

(2) Is the revenue from that charge to be paid to the regional district or to the provincial government, and, if to the provincial government, which branch?

(3) Who is indicating and ordering that this levy should be made? Is it to be a term of condition with

particular reference to Silver Star, of the turnover of these lands to the administration of the regional district by the lands branch, and under what authority?

If the levy is to apply, on what basis is it to apply? Are these the capital assets of the public company that is in there now offering a ski service to the people of the area and the province as a whole? Or is it to be levied against the regional district for roads that have been built by mutual cooperation in the past and other works that have been done in the area, although they are relatively few?

I have no particular intent to defend the company, but I don't want to see them falsely accused. They have, and the citizens of the area will agree, provided a very valuable public service in terms of recreational skiing in our area, and the impetus of that company and the development of recreation in the winter in our area has done a great deal to balance our winter economy. Once again, this is one of the reasons why there has been strong concern because of the location of the park, just 14 miles from the downtown core, that the recreational aspects après-ski should take place outside the park boundaries.

If the Minister is levying this against the company, on what basis is he doing this? Has he examined their books? Does he consider them to be making an excessive profit? Is he aware that the chances are that this increased levy will fall upon the local skiers, and that Vernon has enjoyed, through Silver Star Park and Silver Star Sports, most reasonably priced skiing in terms of the cost of skiing in other parts of the province and other parts of western Canada and the United States? I assure you, Mr. Minister, that the families in that area will not look kindly upon any increase in skiing costs for the family to fatten the coffers of the socialist government.

I also wish to assure you that they feel that the skiing operation has served their needs, but they also do not wish to see, in the turning over of this class C park to the regional district any increase in their taxes for major programmes in the park.

I have a number of points I want to bring up. Would the Minister like to answer this one, and then I'll continue with my questions, with Mr. Chairman's permission? This is very important to the people in the area, and there have been conflicting statements from your department.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Yes, I would think most of the points could be covered under the numerous votes that follow. But with respect to Silver Star, I certainly agree with the Hon. Member that it is a very significant facility and that many of the local people have contributed a great deal to seeing it become

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what it is. There is a benefit to everyone. I've enjoyed it myself, and can vouch for that.

The question of transfer of land, however, at the provincial level is primarily the responsibility of the lands branch, so that while the Department of Recreation and Conservation has proceeded, I think, with the bulk of the work, the official transfer of the land is the responsibility of the Lands department. That's a matter that's under review.

As far as I am concerned as Minister there is no firm policy with respect to a formula regarding the transfer. I would be pleased to meet with the Member privately and with representatives of the groups from the North Okanagan who are directly involved should they request that. I think that might be the more productive thing to do in this case.

MRS. JORDAN: I appreciate the Minister's comments. I must gather from the Minister's statement that in fact the North Okanagan Regional District and the parks branch had not come to a point of agreement and it was merely a matter of formality in drafting the agreement.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Yes. Legally it is the Lands department's prerogative.

MRS. JORDAN: There will now have to be discussions involving the lands branch officially. I appreciate

the Minister's assistance. I will arrange this. I must say quite frankly that this is going to come as a shock to those in the regional district who felt they have been negotiating in good faith. It comes to a shock to me as an MLA when, having met with the Minister of Recreation (Mr. Radford), I was led to believe that this idea wasn't even entertained.

However, I will accept the Minister's invitation to make arrangements for a meeting very soon. I would hope that they could come down next week because there is a matter of urgency in this. There are works that must be carried on in that park in order to just maintain present sanitary standards as well as the skiing maintenance.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: We might discuss the date. I will be away from the House for a period but I would be glad to make it as soon as possible.

MRS. JORDAN: I would also assume from the Minister's statement that the department has been entertaining a policy whereby there will be a levy against provincial lands such as Silver Star Park, Class C provincial park, in one form or another when it is turned over to the regional districts. That is why I brought it up under the Minister's salary and not under the specific vote.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: I think that remains to be seen and I think that it could be covered under vote 128, which is where the normal Lands charges are made.

MRS. JORDAN: I'm glad to return the floor for adjournment of the debate but, Mr. Minister, if I discuss it under the vote I would like your assurance here in *Hansard* that if I touch on policy it won't be ruled out of order.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: Yes, as far as I am concerned.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Speaker, the committee reports progress and asks leave to sit again.

Leave granted.

The House adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

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