

May 3/90

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce on behalf of my colleague, the minister responsible for Social Services, who today is mourning the loss of his brother. I'd like to introduce on his behalf, a group of students from Martensville, who are accompanied today by their teachers, Ralph Epp, Loretta Bell, and Michelle Schaff; chaperons, Marg Peters, Twyla Stradecke -- is that right? -- and Alfred Kline. There are 71 students in total, seated in the east gallery, grade 8 students. I look forward to meeting with them at 3 p.m.

Would all members of the House join me in welcoming this student group today.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure today to introduce to you and to all members of the House, a group of 13 grade 7 and 8 students from the community of Dorintosh in my constituency, north of Meadow Lake. Mr. Speaker, these students are here with their teacher, Brent Zapshala; with four chaperons, Ron Bannister, Don Pevach, Joan Zuchotzki, and Bev Campbell.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, for those of you . . . and I don't think there would be anybody in this House who wouldn't know where Dorintosh is because it is the gateway community to the most beautiful provincial park in Saskatchewan, the Meadow Lake Provincial Park. And I don't think there's anyone here will disagree with that either.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to commend the teacher and the principal of that school, Mr. Joe Twidale, for the foresight that they've shown in bringing their students the distance that they came and to come to Regina, to come to the legislature to see how the process here works. And I'll be meeting with them in a few moments after question period for drinks, and I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming the group from Dorintosh.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you and to all members I would like to introduce 173 residents of Saskatchewan seated, sir, in your gallery and in the west gallery. These individuals are from literally all across our province, sir, and they come from all walks of life.

The one thing that brings them together, Mr. Speaker, is that three years ago they all saw life savings lost in the collapse of Principal Trust. And

these three years later they continue to look to their government to own its responsibility. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to greet these people of Saskatchewan who have come today to the seat of government.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you, and to other members of the legislature, a group from Saskatoon who are on a promotional tour to promote the Challenge Cup world class fastball and slow-pitch tournament that will be held in Saskatoon later on this year from June 28 to July 7. I think that Saskatoon has established a very fine tradition of the capability to host world-class events, and this is just another example of that.

And I would like to introduce the individuals that are with us today. Don Funk who is the chief executive for Challenge Cup -- they're seated in the west gallery; Bob Van Impe, past president, Softball Canada; Rob Scheller, national team pitcher, Team Canada; Rene Jule pé, Pride of Saskatchewan team, all-star Saskatchewan team; and Michelle Padd, the torch bearer, Touch the Torch ball campaign.

And I would point out as well, Mr. Speaker, that this world-class tournament is going to be hosting some 275 teams from eight nations with about 6,000 participants, highlighted by many international visitors including Eddie the Eagle, San Diego Chicken, the Hit-Men world slow pitch champions, The King and his Court, and an NHL celebrities team.

So there's no doubt this will be another successful event in the city of Saskatoon, and I would hope that members of the legislature and all residents of Saskatchewan will take the opportunity to participate in the tournament. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask you and all members in the legislature to welcome this group today.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- I, too, want to join my colleague from Saskatoon River Heights, I believe, or Mayfair, in welcoming the delegation from Saskatoon that is promoting the world-class tournament for fastball. We particularly want to welcome our good friend, Bob Van Impe, to the legislature. We, on this side of the House, have known Bob for a good many years and we wish all of the delegates who are here today much success in hosting another fine event for the city of Saskatoon.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Speaker, it's indeed my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you, the students from Montreal Lake accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Loretta Hall and Mr. Dennis Hall. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that Mrs. Loretta Hall is the first Indian woman in Canada to have her Master of Education in Administration.

And I would like to say a few words of welcome, Mr. Speaker, in the

language of Montreal Lake, which is Cree.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Federal Funding for Agriculture

Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture and it deals with what I can only describe as the latest example of political bickering between Regina and the Ottawa government and prime ministership of Mr. Mulroney over who should pay the \$500 million in cash assistance that farmers so desperately need. Mr. Mazankowski is quoted today saying of the Saskatchewan budget here, that, "It hardly shows that agriculture is at the top of the priority list for the province."

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this. What we now have is bickering between Ottawa and Regina, but that obviously isn't going to put seed into the ground for the farmers of Saskatchewan. How much longer do they have to put up with this political charade? What is your specific game plan to get beyond the political bickering, to put an end to it, and to hammer out an agreement to get that \$500 million needed cash for the farmers?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, in conversations with the minister and federal officials, they have acknowledged that we have over \$106 million just in the \$525 million seeding program out there, the \$20 million in interest rate subsidies, up to 79 million on production loan losses, and 7 million on the CAFF (counselling and assistance for farmers program) guarantees, which is 106 million that is just part of the budget that we have out there this year on the \$525 million loan program.

As I said yesterday, and I've said to Mr. Mazankowski, and I said this to the media today, all the ministers of Agriculture all across Canada, and I'm sure you'll find, and the hon. member knows that the four western premiers will certainly be on side in saying the federal government has traditionally taken the lion's share of the responsibility for interest rates and the price of wheat in international markets -- not the local farmer, and not the local province.

What we really need is solidarity in this legislature and outside the legislature to make sure the federal government knows that traditionally it is paid 8:1. Even in terms of the programs we come out with recently, it's been 4:1 or 3:1, because the province is not a country; we don't print our own money. In fact it is a federal government responsibility. So I've made that point clear. And as yesterday we had unanimous consent and a consensus in this House, I again ask, Mr. Speaker, we have a consensus in the House and nobody blink, so that in fact the federal government live up

to its responsibility.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- I have a new question for the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture. As I pointed out in my first question, Mr Mazankowski says that the provincial budget that the Premier engineered "hardly shows that agriculture is at the top of the priority list of this government," notwithstanding what the Premier has said there.

But nevertheless, listening to the events of the last few days and the bickering, it's clear to many farmers that this now has degenerated into becoming a political ping-pong game between you and Mr. Mazankowski and Mr. Mulroney, since the money is set aside in Ottawa and available and there for farmers and, sir, I would argue, was promised by you in the Speech from the Throne as a commitment on March 19.

So my question, Mr. Premier, is this: why don't you and Mr. Mazankowski put an end to what can only be described as a phoney war of words, and get that \$500 million to the farmers in cash right now? What's the real reason for the delay, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows because he's seen the budget here, we have in excess of \$400 million out and another \$500 million, and no province on a per capita basis has been prepared to even come close to putting that kind of money into agriculture.

Secondly, I point out to the hon. members, Mr. Speaker, and certainly to you, that if I don't raise the issue, then the opposition is saying, well, Mr. Devine or the Premier will not raise it. Then when I do raise it, Mr. Speaker, they say, well for Heaven's sake, you're arguing.

Well you can't have it both ways. We've got the federal government to deliver \$7 billion into Saskatchewan in the last four and a half years. We've come up with a billion dollars. We're saying that it's their responsibility to carry on to make sure that they defend the farmer on interest rates and the price of wheat and exchange rates.

And I'm going to argue for it. Other people are supporting me across the country. So all the provinces are saying what we're saying, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not going to blink. I'm going to stay the course and have the federal government make sure it defends the farmers in Saskatchewan and across western Canada.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. I'm glad to hear that he's not going to blink, but in the meantime, while he's not blinking, the farming community, of course, is suffering and suffering very hard.

Mr. Speaker, everybody knows in the province of Saskatchewan, certainly the farmers do, that in 1986, in the middle of a provincial general election that was going not so well for you at that time, you made -- you can laugh -- but you made a phone call in the dead of the night to the Minister of Agriculture and the Prime Minister at that time in 1986. And one phone call got a billion dollars. One phone call. In 1988, during the federal election campaign, the drought program was virtually announced the same way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this. Mr. Premier, isn't that the real reason behind the delay in the payment of this \$500 million from Mr. Mazankowski and Mr. Mulroney? Isn't that the real reason -- that it doesn't fit into the election timetable that you have set for this provincial government? And isn't the result that the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan, while you're refusing to blink, are suffering to the tune of \$500 million?

Why can't you two Tory governments and ministers put aside your political games and get that desperately needed \$500 million to the farmers.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I will remind the hon. member that -- and he raised it so I think I can pick up on it -- that when he lost his riding in '82, I didn't call anybody in Ottawa, and he was calling Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Chre pétien every day and never got a dime. Now that's the history of the NDP-Liberal combination. Not a single dime.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- And he lost his riding over that and the NDP lost, Mr. Speaker. I have called every year and I've campaigned every year and we've got \$7 billion -- \$7 billion, Mr. Speaker, as a result. I can look at the combination of things that he did and he never got their attention.

Now the farmers know that, and they won't forget that every year '82, '83, '84, '85, '86, '87, '88, '89, and in '90 we'll do the same, Mr. Speaker. We defend the farmers inside the House, outside the House, and when we call and when we argue and we put up a good case, Mr. Speaker, we have seen results. When the hon. member had the opportunity, he got zero, Mr. Speaker. He's ashamed of that. Fair enough, that's his record. I'll put my agriculture record on the line any day with yours, sir, and we'll watch and see what happens.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Principal Trust Collapse

Mr. Calvert: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. Mr. Minister, I have here a copy of the Ombudsman's report into the collapse of Principal Trust that was delivered to your government, sir, last fall. In this report the Ombudsman concludes that your government was negligent in its duties and that your

government has a moral responsibility to those who lost money through the collapse of Principal Trust. Mr. Minister, in this same report the Ombudsman provided a recommendation that would have compensated Saskatchewan investors and not put at any risk the Saskatchewan treasury.

Mr. Minister, I ask you today why you chose not to adhere to the recommendation of the Ombudsman put to your government, sir, and why you continue to betray these investors in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I believe, Mr. Speaker, that a court action has been commenced by at least some of the . . . I would be surprised if anybody is going to deny or laughing that I've made the statement that there's a court action because the very simple fact is there is a court action initiated by, Mr. Speaker, by at least some of the investors. And that matter, I gather, will be resolved in the courts, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, if we were to accept the minister's line of reasoning that we can't ask questions because something is near or before the courts, then we would have relatively a little field to ask questions on, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, the chairman of committees in this House made a ruling that that is not an acceptable excuse for ministers of the Crown not to answer questions on this question.

Mr. Speaker, I put my question again to the minister responsible, the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. Mr. Minister, in the province of Alberta the Ombudsman reported, the Government of Alberta acted on behalf of its citizens; in British Columbia the Ombudsman reported, the Government of British Columbia acted on behalf of its citizens; in Nova Scotia the Ombudsman reported and the Government of Nova Scotia pledged to act on behalf of its citizens. Only in Saskatchewan, sir, only in Saskatchewan does the Ombudsman report and ministers of the Crown criticize the Ombudsman and refuse to act. Mr. Minister, will you explain your refusal to act in light of the Ombudsman's report?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

The Speaker: -- I wish to remind the hon. members who are our special guests today, all guests are special, that we ask you not to participate in the House's activities.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- What I simply indicated to the hon. member, and I ask the hon. member from North Battleford to let me finish, that an action has been commenced by at least some of the investors, and I simply indicated that the matter would be resolved in the courts.

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister of Justice, the matter ought to have been resolved in this court, sir, in this court of your government. That's where the matter had ought to be resolved and it should be resolved soon.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister of Justice, you, sir, committed to me last year, you, sir, committed to me that you would provide me copies of correspondence between your government and the Government of Alberta to indicate that you were indeed pressuring the Government of Alberta to compensate Saskatchewan investors. The former minister from Kindersley, who's now gone from this House, committed that to me. I brought the matter to the attention of the current Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs.

Would you today, ministers -- because I've not received a shred of correspondence to indicate that you've been communicating with Alberta, ministers -- would you today provide correspondence to show that you in fact have been lobbying the Government of Alberta?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Well first, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member hasn't got that information, I'll apologize to him and get it to him as soon as I can get it to him.

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. Mr. Minister, you said those very same words to me about 12 months ago. Mr. Minister, I have not seen a shred of evidence.

I put my question to the current Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. Mr. Minister, you're now in charge, you're now in charge of the interests of the investors in Saskatchewan. Would you provide to this House, to myself, to this House and therefore to the public of Saskatchewan, the correspondence that indicates you are in fact lobbying the Government of Alberta for further support.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I said I would get it for the hon. member as soon as possible.

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, final question, and again to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs and I expect him to answer. Mr. Minister, there are 173 people gathered today in the gallery. They have come to this legislature, to the seat of government. Will you, sir, after question period, meet with these investors of the Principal collapse?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I've indicated to the hon. member that a court action has been commenced by at least some of the investors and the matter will be resolved in the courts. What obligation in the courts the province of Alberta may have, may also be determined in the courts.

An Hon. Member: -- Shame on you.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Saskatoon at the back says shame, Mr. Speaker. They're the same group, Mr. Speaker -- I'll tell you the shame.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- The shame, Mr. Speaker, that when this province believed it had an obligation on one particular company, Pioneer, the NDP said don't pay the investors a cent, Mr. Speaker. They can play politics with the people here and their lives, Mr. Speaker, but, Mr. Speaker, their track record is totally contradictory today and most people up there know that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a new question directed to the Minister of Consumer Affairs who refuses to answer these questions. But it'll go to the Minister of Justice if he persists in bailing out the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice knows full well that the circumstances on Pioneer Trust are totally different from the circumstances at Principal Trust where at Principal Trust the responsibility falls on the regulatory agency, the Securities Commission of Saskatchewan, which spotted this problem months before it took place, should have acted and prevented the collapse and the loss of savings for these people. You want to stop that lawsuit, settle the claim of these people who legitimately and properly invested. Why don't you do that?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, it is -- and the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am surprised does not know this -- that he has put his interpretation on the events, Mr. Speaker. There is a great similarity in the two events. When we had the prime responsibility for Pioneer, we undertook our obligation as a government to pay the investors no matter where they resided, Mr. Speaker. It is our view, that the same principle should apply in this case, that the province of Alberta should make full compensation to the investors in Principal, Mr. Speaker. They were the prime regulator and they have that obligation and we remain strong and firm in that position, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the Minister of Justice. He says that the responsibility falls on the shoulders of Alberta. I say that the Ombudsman, the very Ombudsman that you people appointed and this legislature also appointed, says the responsibility is yours. Why don't you follow the Ombudsman's report and pony up, as the other provincial governments have?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I have now said on a couple of occasions today that we believe that there is a fundamental difference of interpretation of the events and the facts, Mr. Speaker, and the courts will resolve that.

The matter has been . . . an action has been started and the obligations . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, you can ham it up over there; you can ham it up and play a little dramatics for the people in the gallery, Mr. Speaker. But in fact, to the Leader of the Opposition, in fact you should be taking the position that the province of Alberta is liable for this action and should make full compensation to the investors, Mr. Speaker. That is the proper course of action.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Justice. He says that we should be looking to Alberta for responsibility. That's the pattern of this government. When it comes to bailing out and helping the farmers of \$500 million -- look to Ottawa, look to Edmonton, look to everywhere except to the people who are responsible.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- You are the regulatory agency and you can solve that lawsuit. These are people who are seniors, who have invested thousands of dollars. It's your responsibility; please don't look to Ottawa. How about facing up to your responsibilities?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Leader of the Opposition, let me remind the Leader of the Opposition that we've seen his flip-flop evidenced again here today -- what he says in the country and what he says in the city, what he says in here and what he says outside. Because as a matter of fact a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said, stood up and wrote a letter to our . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I'm having difficulty, having difficulty.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- He said a couple of weeks ago that it was Ottawa's responsibility and that the province should, Mr. Speaker, ensure that it was Ottawa's responsibility to support and help our farmers. Today he's changed his mind, Mr. Speaker. He has flip-flopped again.

Let me say when we stand behind the people of this province, all of a sudden now you think that there should be a lower mortgage interest protection. He didn't even have it when he was minister, attorney general, wouldn't even support the home owners of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my

question to the Premier. I notice the Minister of Consumer Affairs won't answer, the Minister of Justice is being evasive, and the Premier is sitting there smiling.

This is a very serious matter, Mr. Premier, and I'd like to ask you: given that the Provincial Ombudsman released his report just this week and he made it very clear that one of the things he is upset about is that your government, the way your government has handled the Principal Trust affair.

Now, Mr. Premier, the job of the Ombudsman is to investigate the situation of people who feel wronged by the government or by the bureaucracy and to report to the legislature when he finds those complaints to be justified. Clearly the Ombudsman felt that way about your handling of Principal Trust, Mr. Minister. And clearly you chose to dismiss and to ignore his findings. For my question, Mr. Premier, what good is it having an Office of the Ombudsman if you choose to ignore him whenever it suits your purpose?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I believe that well over 95 per cent, and I believe it's closer to 98 per cent of the matters raised by the Ombudsman have either been resolved or whatever, that it's a very, very high percentage. To say that one or two disagreements with the Ombudsman position means that the Ombudsman's role is irrelevant is a less than accurate statement. That in fact, Mr. Speaker, we do have a difference and it will be resolved as the action instigated certainly challenges the resolution of that matter before the courts, and I believe that's where it will be resolved.

Mr. Pringle: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. What we're talking about here is Principal Trust, Mr. Minister, not the general report on this particular occasion. Mr. Premier, it is the job of the Ombudsman to find redress for citizens who have been aggrieved by government actions. That's what he's there for and surely you would agree with that. Clearly that is what he is trying to say in the Principal Trust case and you chose to ignore him.

My question, Mr. Premier, why do you feel that Saskatchewan citizens should have to take your government to court to redress a grievance already identified by the Ombudsman?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I don't want, and I'm sure the hon. member is not leaving the impression -- because if he is, he is wrong -- that the New Democratic Party, when it was in office, agreed with everything the Ombudsman said. And I can recall as a matter of fact, one inquiry into corrections at that time, a rather significant one, and to say that one agrees in all cases . . . The matter and the interpretation has been put forward by those advocating recompense, Mr. Speaker, before the courts. We have a different opinion. It is our view that the responsibility lies, Mr. Speaker, with the province of Alberta, and the courts will resolve that matter. I've said that, I think, rather succinctly a few times today.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Meeting with Principal Trust Investors

Mr. Calvert: -- Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, we have guests in our gallery today who have come from all parts of this province and they came in the hopes of having an opportunity to meet with the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. He would not stand up and answer questions in the House today. They don't particularly want to meet with the Minister of Justice, so my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, will you meet with these people who have come from all parts of this province today after question period? Would you do that, sir?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to clarify that the group, or whoever is their leader, has never requested to have a meeting with me.

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, I am now requesting a . . . a question to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. Will you meet with this delegation and this group of people from all parts of this province? I'm asking on their behalf, will you meet with them after question period?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Mr. Speaker, if the proper arrangements can be made to have that meeting, I don't have a problem with meeting with them.

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Minister, if I heard you correctly, you say you have no problem meeting with the delegation who are here today. Mr. Minister, I have reserved room 255 of this Legislative Building for that purpose, sir. Will you be there shortly after question period?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- I'll be there shortly after question period.

Ms. Smart: -- Mr. Speaker, I've listened to the responses today to these questions from the critic for Principal Trust and I'm really appalled. As the critic for seniors' issues, I'm going to talk to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs.

You have described this group of people who are here today, these 173 people, as a group. They are not an organized group in the way of having a leader. These are many senior citizens from all around the province who have lost their money. They are concerned. They are not taking part in this court action because they don't have the money for a court action. They are here because they're depending on you and on this government to see justice, and we have not seen justice here today.

I'm asking you on behalf of these seniors to do what you can to restore

their money for them and to see that justice is done. When you meet with them will you guarantee that you will take the Ombudsman's report seriously?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I would indicate to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that we do take it seriously but we do have a difference of opinion. We disagree with the recommendations and the report, and the obligation that is referred to in that report. And we believe, Mr. Speaker, the action has now been started, that the appropriate place to resolve the difference of opinion is the courts as so chosen.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 20 -- An Act to provide Access by the Public to Government Information

Mr. Pringle: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to move first reading of a Bill to provide Access by the Public to Government Information.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Minister, I had asked for some information regarding the grant increases to various school divisions across Saskatchewan, and I'm wondering if you have that information for me now.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I have the information. I'll send it over as soon as I get someone to take it over.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I wonder if you have either in whole or in part some of the information that I had asked for in public accounts. If it's not all ready I can appreciate that, but whatever you do have, I would appreciate receiving that. The rest we can still get tomorrow or early next week. I assume we'll still be in Education estimates next week.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the information that the member wants is not all complete, but we could give it to you tomorrow if that would be satisfactory.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, the problem I have is that I need some of that information for my line of questioning that I would like to continue, and I could delay the estimates till next week if that is more convenient for you. I've got lots of material so there's no problem in doing that. So if the information isn't here, I would possibly have to go till next week.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, we'll get that together and we'll give it to you later this afternoon. I understand you wanted it for this evening, so we'll get as much as we can.

Mr. Prebble: -- Mr. Chairman, just a very brief question to the minister. Mr. Minister, earlier in the estimates I asked you a number of questions with respect to loan forgiveness for students in universities versus private vocational schools. Can you indicate when that information will be available? Could you give it to us today?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I believe that the question that the member asked was, what percentage of
Dstudents who receive loan forgiveness attend private vocational schools and how does this figure compare with students at technical institutes and universities. And I would point out that the number of loans . . . 68.7 per cent of all forgivable loans go to students in public institutions and 31.3 per cent to students in private vocational schools.

Mr. Prebble: -- Well, Mr. Minister, I'd asked you for much more detailed information than that. You don't need to read it all into the record, but I'd appreciate you providing me with that written information. I asked not only for percentages, I also asked for the total number of students in private vocational schools who were getting loan forgiveness and a comparison of that with the total numbers in universities and technical institutes. I also asked for the dollar amounts of the forgiveness in each case, and I asked a number of other questions with respect to that, Mr. Minister.

Now I would be grateful if you could send that information over to us, please.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I have more of the information here. I thought some of it had been provided, but I'll be happy to send it over to you.

Mr. Goulet: -- Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I'd like to direct my questions of course to the minister. And these next series of questions will relate to Indian and Metis people in the province of Saskatchewan as it relates to education. So maybe the minister's staff could get ready for this series of questions.

Mr. Minister, there's approximately 70,000 treaty Indian people in this province and a large number of the students . . . a large number of the

treaty Indian people that are of school age in this province. And also, while a lot of them are taking their education in Indian Affairs schools or band controlled schools, approximately half of the Indian students are taking their education in the public school system and the separate school system.

The vast majority of them, Mr. Minister, are in the urban areas.

And also, Mr. Minister, there are approximately 50,000 Metis people in the province and there's a lot of Metis students, you know, throughout the province as well. And therefore it's very important. I think right now in, the most general sense, the estimated numbers are approximately 12 to 15 per cent of the population, and in some cases of course, especially in the North, the students will comprise 95 per cent of the population and as low as maybe 1 or 2 per cent in some other schools throughout the province. So these questions will relate to the issues of curriculum, language, and also the issue of racism.

(1445)

My first general comment is that since the early '80s there has been hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of reports. And I just had a look in relation to Indian-Metis people, and we've looked at the social studies task force report, of course, in '81 which dealt with the issues of multiculturalism and also of Indian-Metis people and the curriculum.

We also looked at the Directions report, and that also dealt with Indian-Metis people in education. We then had a . . . it relates Directions, a five-year action plan for native curriculum development in this province. And there was also an Indian-Metis curriculum advisory committee which is now called the Indian-Metis Education Advisory Committee in this province.

There is also an education equity report that was done by the Human Rights Commission which dealt not only with the issues of curriculum but also the issues relating to the involvement of parents. There is also a report called Reaching Out which was done in 1985. And the Reaching Out report also dealt with the involvement of parents, which was later done and a follow-up paper was done on the involvement of parents in the school system.

We also had the inner city drop-out study in 1985 which talked about over 90 per cent drop-out rate of Indian-Metis students. We also had a multiculturalism report in September of '89 which also dealt with education of Indian-Metis people in this province. And now we also have a report in 1989, the northern education task force report. So, Mr. Minister, there is definitely no lack of information as it relates to Indian-Metis people and education in this province.

As I said, about a few hundred thousand dollars or maybe even more than a million dollars has been spent in reports dealing with this very important issue. And one of the areas I want to start out with is the area of curriculum. Of course, curriculum is basically the background information

required for people teaching in the schools and there's always, in curriculum reports, basic statements of what needs to be taught in our school system and so on.

Now I'd like to find out first of all from you exactly how many positions are involved in your department dealing with the issue of curriculum as it directly relates to Indian and Metis people. Mr. Minister, I would like to know exactly how many full-time positions have you got working and how many people on part-time positions working specifically in the area of Indian-Metis people and the curriculum.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I can understand the concern that the member opposite has raised with regard to the number of reports, because I think it seems to be normal procedure for any government that's in power to develop a lot of reports on various topics and then really fall down with regard to implementation.

But I think, Mr. Chairman, that I can say that I'm very proud of what the department is doing. We realize that there is still a lot that needs to be done in that particular area, but I think that some of the action that has been taken is being looked upon very, very favourably and we are moving to involve more and more Indian and Metis people.

Now specifically, with regard to the number of people that you ask about. As I understand it, we have about eight in the South, and we have in the North, two that are full-time and two half-time. Now you have to keep in mind as well that there are a lot of others that are pulled in on advisory committees, as you have suggested, curriculum committees. For example, you mentioned about the Indian and Metis curriculum development team that's involved, and we've got a lot of work being done now in various subject areas; social studies, language arts, arts education, and science, and an awful lot being done with regard to teacher in-service.

I think one of the areas that we are trying to address and with a good degree of success, I would add, is getting more and more Indian and Metis people through our teacher training institutions. Because to me that is going to be the key in having good quality teachers within the class-rooms who understand the culture and in many cases can also speak the language. And I had the opportunity to see the success of that on my tour last fall, up in the north-eastern part of the province, up in your area.

So I think that's an area we have to continue to address in that we have more and more quality teachers who can work with Indian and Metis people. So I'm very pleased with what's happening, and I'll address more of these as you raise your questions, but I know there's more that has to be done.

Mr. Goulet: -- I would like to know, Mr. Minister, you mentioned that it's very important to deal with the culture and language of Indian and Metis people. As such, I would therefore like to ask you the following question. You said there was eight people working full-time in the South. I would like to know of those eight, how many are Indian-Metis people, along with the two full-time positions that you have in the North. And also . . . especially those two. I'm talking about the full-time positions. You say

you have 10 full-time positions. How many of them are Indian-Metis people that know the culture and the language of the people? I would like to know exactly how many of them are doing actual work in curriculum out of those 10 positions that you state? I would also like, Mr. Minister, to find out their names and what they actually do. Are you counting secretarial staff as well?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- As I understand it, 40 per cent of the office staff in the North are of native ancestry. There's a half-time person dealing with Cree language and a half-time dealing with Dene language. The other two: one with core curriculum -- the two full-time positions -- one with core curriculum, one materials development are non-native.

Those eight that are in the South, there is one that is native. And of those positions, two are full-time positions. The other six are -- or permanent employees -- the other six are secondments.

Mr. Goulet: -- So what you're saying, Mr. Minister, in regards to your statement on the importance of Indian-Metis culture and language, that you have one position out of eight in regards to your staff at the department. And you're also stating that, you know, that two full-time positions in the North are not Indian or Metis, but that they are only on the Cree language and Dene language positions which are half-time and not full-time positions. Is that not correct, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I would point out, Mr. Chairman, that the Indian and Metis educational policy group has really only been in a year now. And we are moving to have more native people involved in these positions and that would be our hope in the future. But for the present time those are the only natives that we have involved, other than ones that are . . . there are many people that are involved with the curriculum committees and developing the program, and I think that that's very, very important.

Mr. Goulet: -- I guess maybe the minister doesn't realize that he had a report on a five-year action plan for native curriculum development in this province and, as a minister, he should be aware of that document; and that one of the key issues of course has always been the hiring of Indian and Metis people. And the proof that you've put across today shows that there is very little Indian and Metis people in your department.

I would also like to add, Mr. Minister, that as I looked at the people who have worked in your department, there has truly been quite a few Indian and Metis people that have worked in your department. And just off the top of my head, I could name a few: there was a guy by the name of Ken Carriere that worked there; there was Ann Dorian that worked there; there was Sherry Farrell-Racette that worked there; there was Kenn Whyte that worked there; there was Gloria Mehlman that worked there; there was Maureen Johns that worked there, and there was other . . . and these are all Indian and Metis people that have worked there and they have left the department.

I also have other names of non-aboriginal people who worked there as well, such as Sidney Davis, Sheila Brass, Dan Russell, and Ken Horseman, and so

on. I guess the feeling I'm getting, Mr. Speaker, is this: that there's a lot of people who have worked in the department in regards to trying to make a better, I guess a better approach and on greater substance in regards to curriculum development in this province.

I've noticed that a lot of them have left, you know, the department, basically because they said there was a lack of resources in the department; that there was really no strong commitment by the department, by the PC government in getting curriculum development in this province.

While the reports were there, the implementation of curriculum was not there. Mr. Minister, you can give Chuck Childers a salary of \$700,000 a year . . .

An Hon. Member: -- 740,000.

Mr. Goulet: -- Well my member from Regina says it was \$740,000. You can give a salary like that to one person, and yet you can only hire possibly a \$40,000 job, an Indian-Metis person in this province for the whole province.

Why is it that in curriculum development, Mr. Minister, you will not put out more money so that the teachers out there can be able to work with the curriculum and a lot of your consultants might feel a lot better of handling stronger and better material as they go out in the field to do the implementation process as it relates to curriculum? Would you make a comment on that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I didn't realize Mr. Childers worked with the Department of Education, so I don't know why the member is even bringing it in.

Let's just put things in proper perspective here. The list of names that the member opposite has listed off, I know some of them personally, and they are certainly not Indian and Metis people. So I don't know why you're including their names with the list that you put forward.

I would also suggest that there has been a great deal done and is being done, and I would suggest as well that there is a lot more being done now than what was being done when your party was still in power. So just keep that in mind when you look at some of the things that are being done in your own constituency.

I would point out as well the number of community schools that we have going in our two major centres right now; well not just Saskatoon and Regina but other centres as well.

And you've indicated the large number of children that we have in our schools, not just in the North today but also in the South, and we have to address the concerns of those children as well; and the fact that we have some \$2 million going into community schools in the province, and they are doing, I think, a very, very good job. I have visited some of those schools, talked with the students, talked with the teachers, and a lot of

good stuff that's going on there.

I would also suggest that the native survival school in Saskatoon, which I'm also very familiar with, \$197,000 going into that. When you consider NORTEP (northern teacher education program) and SUNTEP (Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program) and the programs that are being offered there, as well as Indian and Metis education development program, there are all kinds of things that are happening. And this is action that has grown out of the concern and the commitment that this government does have to Indian and Metis people.

Now you aren't talking much about what's happening in northern Saskatchewan, and you mentioned about the northern education task force report. Now that, I think, is bringing about many, many positive changes in the North, and it's as a direct result of the input of the Indian and Metis people residing in northern Saskatchewan.

This is the first time, I think, that there really has been an honest effort whereby we have gone out into all of the communities in the northern part of the province and have involved individuals and groups to determine what in actual fact they do want and what concerns they have with the educational system.

Now when you consider that we've got several initiatives, several recommendations of the task force report and you, I would hope, have read it, there are many recommendations in that report and there are many good initiatives that have already been put into operation.

And some of them I would suggest, such as the Ile-a-la-Crosse high school re-entry program. There's a great concern in the North today about those students who left school and now realize that education is very, very important. And many of those people have gone back to school that have wanted to go back to school.

(1500)

We also have the northern Saskatchewan student awards program. This is something that is I think providing a good incentive to get more of the Indian and Metis young people to go back to school or to stay in school. And I think we all recognize the importance of education to these young people.

The native counsellor training program. This was another recommendation that was put forward in the report. Creighton School guidance counsellor project. These are all recommendations that were put forward in the report and have already been implemented.

The science literacy project with the Missinipe broadcasting. The Athabasca co-operative job re-entry pilot program. The parental involvement communications officer for Northern Lights School Division; the local board of trustees workshop for Northern Lights School Division. This is something that's ongoing.

The native art curriculum development project and the curriculum support co-ordinator. These are all recommendations, Mr. Chairman, from the northern education task force report that have already been implemented, and some of these are maybe of a short-term duration but others are ongoing, depending on the nature of the need.

I would also add that there are other initiatives that are going ahead or planned for this coming year, for 1990-91. Distance education initiatives for delivery of secondary science programs; native languages program developed. This is a concern that the member opposite has raised. Para-professional training for teaching support staff. School nutrition projects, that's another concern that you often raise. And the northern Saskatchewan interscholastic enhancement program.

Mr. Chairman, these are all recommendations within the northern task force report. So for the member opposite to criticize the government for not performing any action and just doing reports, I think that what I have just indicated points out the opposite, that we are indeed concerned and we are doing a lot to help the Indian and native people, not only within the North but throughout all of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Goulet: -- Just a small point to start out with. One of the key skills that we teach students throughout the province is listening skills. And it seems that the minister wasn't listening. When I introduced the names of the

Dpeople, I said Inuit and Metis people who have worked in the department. Then I added other names and I said, non-aboriginal people. So I'd like you to pay a little bit more attention in regards to the statements that I make.

And also the other point, Mr. Minister, the recommendations made in regards . . . the vast number of recommendations made on the task force report have been made before, time and time again in the most general sense. People have said right through the task force aspect, right from the Directions report, that we need to have changes in curriculum. That is not new. That we need to have curriculum relating to northern Saskatchewan in regards to the environment over there and in regards to the culture and language of the people over there.

Those types of things have been around for ages. And then you go off into saying how great things that you've done, and you mentioned native survival school.

That strategy was started with the NDP when the NDP was in government. When you look at the community schools programs in this province, that was started by the NDP government. When you mention SUNTEP and NORTEP, those were started by the NDP program. When you imply, let's say Gabriel Dumont Institute and stuff, those were started during the NDP years.

And here you've been in power for over eight years and all you can give me is another report; two reports in this past year, which would have cost you 100,000. For example, the cost of the report could have paid for two full-time positions for Dene language and Cree language in northern

Saskatchewan. And all you can afford is two half-time positions right now in regards to curriculum development in northern Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you do a little bit of politicking in regards to the great achievements of your government, you must start knowing a little bit more of the facts in regards to the history of education in this province, especially as they relate to Indian-Metis people. Maybe you need to ask . . . to meet with your staff a little bit more longer to give you a better briefing.

I thought maybe as a former superintendent in this province, you would have had a greater knowledge about the Indian-Metis issues, especially as you know them well where you were a superintendent in Saskatoon area. You would have known that a lot of Indian-Metis people were in the city of Saskatoon, etc.

So, Mr. Minister, I really feel that some of the ways that you've tried to answer questions are simply not adequate enough as far as I can see. And all you've said on the paper so far is you've hired one full-time curriculum position in regards to Indian-Metis person in the curriculum area.

I would like to follow up, Mr. Minister, in regards to the materials end of it. Last year I raised the point of the grade seven social studies textbook, and I looked at that textbook and I said at that time there was information of Indian people in there, but there was no information on the Cree from Montreal Lake or for any Cree, for that matter, in the province of Saskatchewan. And there was no information there about the Assiniboine and also the Sioux and also the Dene and the Sauteaux.

I would like to know, Mr. Minister, whether or not you've made improvements on that specific curriculum, that textbook. I realize that the new edition was supposed to be coming out. I would like to know, Mr. Minister, whether or not you have made corrections and paid due respect to the Indian-Metis people and the Indian-Metis history and culture of this province by making changes in the new edition, the new upcoming edition for the grade seven social studies textbook.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the member opposite likes to ramble around quite a bit, but I would point out to him that I have taught Indian and Metis people and worked with them and with students, and I have a pretty good understanding, I think, of some of the concerns that they have as it relates more to southern Saskatchewan.

I would also point out that he talks about the history of the NDP and what they did and all the recommendations that were made. And I would suggest that yes, there have been a lot of recommendations, but there wasn't a heck of a lot done either, Mr. Chairman.

He points out the fact that there were some programs started under the NDP, and yes, I would admit that he's absolutely right. But I would suggest to the member opposite, Mr. Chairman, that if he looks at some of those programs today and see how they have been improved and how they have been

expanded, that there is a significant difference between what those programs look like today in preparation for the 1990s and on into the 21st century.

One of the things, that we of course take pride in the fact that we do recognize change and that programs have to change for our young people. So we have done a lot, and I'll give him credit for the fact that some very good programs were started, but the commitment of this government is to continue those programs and expand them and improve them, and we will continue to do that.

With regard to the specific social studies text that you refer to, as I understand it, that is now being reviewed, and there are also changes that are being made within the social studies program. I know that here's where we do have to have a good deal of involvement with Indian and Metis people, and with other cultural groups as well, to ensure that the textbooks are meeting the needs and are in fact not being inflammatory to any of these other groups. So that review is being done with the particular one you refer to.

Mr. Goulet: -- Just to follow up on that review on that textbook then, Mr. Minister. Are you going to be therefore directly involving the Indian Metis curriculum education advisory committee in the process of the review on the grade 7 textbook? And also there was the Reaching Out document on the involvement of parents in the process of education, and is there any plan to involve parents as well because you mentioned in your previous statement that you felt really good about involving parents? I would like to know whether you're also going to be involving parents in that curriculum change process in the second edition of this social studies textbook then.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I would remind the member opposite that all of the curriculum committees have parents involved on them and I've also indicated that there are many Indian and Metis people involved. So the plan is that that would be continued and expanded I'm sure in some cases. So when I suggest that we're involving Indian and Metis, that many of those people are also parents.

Mr. Goulet: -- I would like to get a little bit more specific in the area of language, Mr. Minister. On languages other than English in this province, how many programs are out there? And the language that I mean is that there is French, there is Ukrainian, there's German, and other languages being taught elsewhere. I would like to know how much money's being spent in the area of heritage languages in this province in the school system, and then as compared to how much is being spent then on Indian languages?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I would point out to the member, Mr. Chairman, that the money that's spent by boards, the decisions are made by the boards. So we couldn't really give you an accounting as to how much money is spent for any particular language. We do know that in some of the schools in the North, for example in Cumberland House, that there's a fair bit being done in that particular school with regard to languages and a lot

of the teachers speak Cree as well as English. But as to how much money is being spent in that particular area, we wouldn't have that information. That's up to the individual board, depending on what their needs are.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, do you not feel, you know, with one of your later reports on Indian languages that came out that you were going to be supporting Indian languages development, do you not feel that there should be increased funding therefore in the board in regards to Indian languages in this province?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I know, Mr. Chairman, that when we visited some of the schools in the North that concern was pointed out that in some cases there is a shortage of materials that are in the native languages, and we had suggested that we have to work closely with other departments of education and other officials to ensure that we can get more of these materials available for our boys and girls.

With regard to direct funding that is going into languages in the North, for this year \$75,000 is being committed to language consultants, and that would be in Cree and Dene.

Mr. Goulet: -- So basically what you're telling me is for the whole province we have 75,000, because last year I understood that, you know, in regards to when we had the election in Gravelbourg there was about \$16 million that was presented to the universities of course, and there was a certain amount of help in from the provincial government as well on teaching not only French but also Japanese and German and many other languages of the world. And I know that there was one short program, you know, for Cree language in the summer time throughout that particular program.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, there's been a cut-back in the heritage languages at the federal level. There have been cut-back on the heritage languages program at the federal level. Relating to your goals, your new report on multiculturalism in Saskatchewan can now report to the minister's committee on multiculturalism. There's a section in there on education.

How much of the shortfall that we are getting from the federal level is going to be replaced by your government, Mr. Minister?

(1515)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- I think, Mr. Chairman, for the member to make comments about the amount of money that might be spent on second languages and what money is coming from the federal government, he fails to recognize the fact that we do have two official languages in this country and that there is a fair amount of money that is being spent on the delivery of services for French boys and girls.

With regard to the heritage languages in this province and what we in the department are doing, in November of 1988 a full-time heritage languages consultant was appointed by the department. And we also have a heritage languages liaison reference committee. And the department has initiated a

process for assuming responsibility for the delivery of all kindergarten to grade 12 in-school and out-of-school programs, Mr. Chairman.

So we are working on the task force report on multiculturalism and trying to do more of this within our schools. We have a contract with the Indian cultural college for \$48,000 to develop an Indian languages curriculum, that's for grades 4 to 6. And, we're presently advertising for a secondment position in Indian languages.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, getting on to another area, there was of course the education equity report, a report on Indian native education in Saskatchewan by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission which was tabled on September 1985 and there was a recommended plan of action. And basically what it states is that when Indian-Metis people exceed 5 per cent of the population, that there should be goals planned out for that particular board. And at that time it said that one of the first statements there was a statement of the number of students of Indian ancestry enrolled with the board of education at the time of the application for approval would be made.

And also number two, that a plan to hire over the next 10 years, qualified teachers of Indian ancestry so that at the end of the 10-year period the percentage of teachers of Indian ancestry employed by the board of education will equal the percentage of students of Indian ancestry enrolled in the school division, or will equal 9.6 per cent of the teaching staff or will equal a percentage of the teaching staff to be approved by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

Now, Mr. Minister, there's been approximately, at last count I think there was about 19 school boards, you know, that have had recommended action. There may have been another one to make 20 in the past while, and so on. What is your government doing now to try and get this more fully implemented throughout the province in working in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and fulfilling, you know, the intent of the plan of action?

What are you doing in working with the Human Rights Commission, and also the school board, in making sure that numbers of Indian and Metis people that are hired at the schools are improving?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education works with the Human Rights Commission. They're monitoring the situation as it is now. I would point out that it's not the Department of Education that hires teachers within school divisions. I know that many of them do have affirmative action committees or representatives. And I know that there is a move being made to have more native people within their staffs.

I would point out that within the North that approximately 25 per cent of the teachers are of native ancestry, and I'm sure that as we turn out more graduates from the programs that we have at our universities and with SUNTEP and NORTEP, that that number will increase. But right now it is at about 25 per cent.

Mr. Goulet: -- There was also another statement made on that plan of action. It said that, on part three of that report, it says parents of Indian ancestry should: one, actively seek positions on boards of education; and number two, where they reside on reserves, utilize the provisions of The Education Act to have their reserve designated as subdivisions, section 27(2)(b), or have a trustee appointed to the district board of trustees, section 124(1).

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, has there been any request in the past few years, since 1985, in that regard and has there been any action taken throughout this province? I'd like to know.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I would suggest that there are several boards in the province. I couldn't give you an exact number, but there are several school division boards that do have native representation on the boards. And this I'm sure has been very, very helpful. I know of one particular board that I work with now, has a representative on the board where a fair number of children that are attending the school.

So there are several of them in the province, but I couldn't give you an exact number. I'm sure that more and more boards are encouraged to do this. I mean I'm talking about the South. If you go to the North, I would think that you'd probably find that the majority of the representatives on those boards are native people.

Mr. Goulet: -- How many would you say, Mr. Speaker? You said that there was Indian and Metis people throughout the province. Approximately how many do you think on those boards and who have the same status as other elected board members in those boards? I'm not talking about advisory committees; I'm talking about actual board members in elected board positions, or designated at the same level as other board members who are elected.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- We don't monitor the number of boards that would have native representatives on them. I simply am suggesting to you that I know of a few that do have native representatives on there, but I couldn't give you a number.

Mr. Goulet: -- I'm just wondering in regards to the intent of the education equity report and the affirmative action strategy throughout the province in regards to school boards. Do you yourself, Mr. Minister, have an affirmative action strategy within your branch and also in the northern branch? Do you have a specifically registered affirmative action plan?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I point out for the member that we don't have a formal affirmative action group as such in the North. The goal there, as I understand it, is 50 per cent of the staff. We're now at 40 per cent. And there is also a move being made right now within the department here in Regina to also move in that direction.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, I'm very disappointed that you don't have an affirmative action strategy at the present time. I certainly hope to see that in this coming year, and hopefully that will be implemented. Because

one of the basics of racism in this province is also always economic racism, and having actual people in positions of let's say exercising development in curriculum, for example, is extremely important as we look forward into the future on development of curriculum.

I might add, also, Mr. Speaker, just a comment on common essential learnings and also in regards to the issue of racism. I think racism is probably one of the leading topics these days as we deal with a multiculturalism report and as we deal with the situation right across Canada.

And right now as we deal with the racism situation, of course most people are saying we have to deal with racism directly in the curriculum and not only deal with it in a vague way through multiculturalism. Now anti-racism has to be part of education. And I think that's a very important position that's now being taken by many educators throughout the world.

I would like to add also, Mr. Minister, that the common essential learnings add a very important aspect to the individualization of instruction. One of the major shortcomings of course on the common essential learnings was the area of group activity and group work where students and teachers had actually worked together in a group format.

And one of the aspects of looking at that as we deal with racism and as we deal with sexism, handicapism, ageism, that we need to be able to work with each other in a group activity in the class-room so that we can be able to deal with these issues as we move forward into the future.

Of course, that's not clearly stated, although in social studies you see a lot of group work and the social development of groups being talked about in education and so on, but never really a firm position in regards to having a strategy on group processes and group action in the class-room. I would like to hear a comment, you know, on that from you as we look forward . . . So I would like to hear you make a statement on that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that, you know, if there are examples of racism in any of our class-rooms, I think it's indeed regrettable. I think that what we have to be very conscious about, and we are within the department, is looking at materials that may in any way put down any particular group. So I would suggest to the member opposite that we do have a policy within the department to eliminate that. Materials are vetted very, very carefully by many groups to ensure that we do not have these materials in our class-rooms. So we have to be very careful with that.

I think as well, if you look at some of the things that are happening on SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) campuses, that they have also put forward a policy, and I believe that that's before the Human Rights Commission right now, and it's something that could maybe be used as a model for some other institutions. But we have to all, I think, continue to work towards eliminating any examples of this because it is indeed unfortunate.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, I'd like to make a general comment throughout the different questions I've thrown out, whether it's curriculum or Indian languages and so on. I think overall a lot of the educators that I've met up with are very, very concerned that an insufficient amount of resources are available for the teachers, whether in the implementation of existing policies and also the curriculum materials development end of it. They want important material, whether it's to fight against racism or to deal with the culture and language of Indian and Metis people in the province. That's been well stated, you know, for many, many years.

I would like to say that as a member from across here and I see your government . . . and I will reiterate the point. It may not be in this department where we pay Chuck Childers \$740,000, but it's your government and you are a member of that government that gives that money away to that much.

There is also a fact, Mr. Minister, that you are also part of the government that cut back the royalty payments on mining last year to the tune of \$7 million for the big corporations in northern Saskatchewan. Seven million dollars would have gone a long ways in dealing with curriculum development and also in dealing with anti-racist education and dealing with languages development in the North.

And also when I look at it, we have given . . . down south here we're giving \$65 million up front to another giant corporation in this area and we're guaranteeing them \$370 million. So you have a lot of money out there that you're providing for big corporations who don't really need the money. And at the same time you talk about free enterprise and yet you provide a support system for these people. But you will have only one position for languages development. You have only one Indian-Metis people in the curriculum division at the present time, and you can pay these tremendous salaries to big corporate executives and the corporations themselves, but you don't have the funds to be able to deal effectively with the issue of education.

(1530)

Many people and many parents, and many parents and many teachers that sit in this province say, look, we don't like the high drop-out rate. There's 80, 90 per cent of our children, Indian-Metis children in this province that are dropping out of the school system. They're being forced out of the school system because school is not such an exciting place in many situations. And a lot of that is, let's say the impetus is on individual teachers to make it exciting, basically because they don't have the proper tools to be able to effectively deal with the situation.

So, Mr. Minister, in regards to our few questions into Indian-Metis people, I wish as you look forward into the future, you as a minister who has been involved in the field of education, as you say, who says that you are very concerned about the culture and language of Indian-Metis people in this province, I hope you play a stronger role in the executive committee of your government to say look, we have to put more resources in these areas. One or two positions is simply not enough to make an impact on the life and

activities of Indian-Metis children in this province.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well you can talk about moneys not being available, for one thing. Maybe some time you should also talk a little bit about the money that was squandered by DNS (department of northern Saskatchewan) in the North and money that wasn't going to meaningful programs like some of the ones I've talked about here today.

Now you mentioned about the student drop-out problem, and I think that we've got some good things going in northern Saskatchewan and more that we're looking at in southern Saskatchewan as well, because this is a concern. We have far too many students that are dropping out of school before they finish high school.

But let me talk a little bit about the North and some of the initiatives that we've started. We've got a program there that's going on now. It's about a million dollars that have been allocated for this program, and again this is in response to the northern education task report. And this is going to have, I think, a very positive effect on the student retention. And a further \$500,000 has been allocated specifically to develop programs to assist northern youth to complete their secondary education.

Now we know as well of the many excellent programs that are being provided through the Northlands College to meet the needs of these students, once they leave high school, and to prepare them for jobs out there in the work place, and programs that are designed by Northerners to meet the needs of Northerners.

So I think that when you look at the programs that are there, and I'm sure you have looked at programs at Northlands and some of the good things that are happening in that part of the province, that they are designed to help the young people go out into the industries that are there. And I would suggest that Northlands College is one of the excellent examples that we have of how we can meet particular needs in specific regions of the province by designing programs by the local people, who are designed for the local people.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I would like to spend some time asking you a few questions with respect to the Teachers' Superannuation Fund and how your government has interpreted this fund and, in so doing, has betrayed the trust of the people and that of the teachers in Saskatchewan, and in so doing is going further than that, not only betraying the trust of the teachers who have put their money into this pension fund, but is also a threat to every employee in Saskatchewan who is having their pension fund administered by this government.

And I speak very specifically, Mr. Minister, about the concerns that have been expressed to you through the teachers' organization, the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), about \$175 million plus accrued interest, which come close to \$250 million, which your government has taken from the Teachers' Superannuation Fund since 1985. And I speak of course

as well, Mr. Minister, in addition to that, the \$10.4 million which you took directly out of the fund to pay out to allowances in the past year.

In order to address this directly, Mr. Minister, and specifically to point out to you what the difficulties are here, I want to ask you first of all the question about the fund itself and your feeling about the fund itself. When you look at the Teachers' Superannuation Fund, Mr. Minister, when you look at the fund and you look at the annual reports which relate to the fund, and I have in my hand the '88-89 report, and you look at the amount that's in the fund -- right now the amount that's in the fund, according to this, 1989, is \$733 million. And on a later page this annual report refers to, as did previous annual reports, to the amount that is actually outstanding in terms of unfunded liability. And the unfunded liability as of June 30, 1986 was \$1.278 billion.

My question to you with respect to this fund, Mr. Minister, is: is it the view of your government that this fund is sufficiently endowed to meet all liabilities? Or do you instead concur with the position put by the Teachers' Superannuation Commission that there is a large underfunded liability? And the amount that they state here is \$1.278 billion.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I think it's interesting that the member opposite should raise this. And he seems to have a different opinion about the \$10.4 million, I believe, that he suggested that it went . . . was taken and it went to pay teachers' pensions, because it's not too long ago that I heard his leader suggesting that this money had been taken and put into the Consolidated Fund. So there doesn't seem to be any agreement on where this money has gone.

And I get a little bit concerned with the amount of misinformation that is flying around with regard to the teachers' pension fund, and I would suggest to the member opposite that there is no danger of anybody who is on pension or will be on pension in the future, that the money is not going to be there to meet the commitments.

Now some of the information that you're putting forward here is really quite interesting, because when you talk about an unfunded liability, I would ask the member opposite, where was your government when you were in power that you weren't addressing that unfunded liability? You were simply allowing it to build up each and every year, eleven years that you were in power. You didn't do anything at all about the unfunded liability, to the point where it's now, I think, in the neighbourhood of \$1.6 billion, part of which can be attributed to your government when you were in power. And part of the reason was, Mr. Chairman, that during the 11 years that you were in, you never put one nickel into that teachers' superannuation fund. The only money that was going in there was what the teachers were contributing. You never put in one nickel and you allowed this thing to build up and build up and now you try and suggest that this government should be doing something to bail it out. Well we have done something to try and improve on this situation.

Today, if you stop and consider what this government has been doing as far as the Teachers' Superannuation Fund, we are following the same practice

that your government did, after the change in 1980, where the government was matching the teachers' portion of 6.5 per cent; 6.5 per cent is what the government was putting in as well.

And the same thing has been true, Mr. Chairman, with regard to any interest over and above the 7 per cent which was taken by your government as well and put into the general fund. It was not left. So for you to sit there or stand there in your place and suggest that we are taking money that we should not have been taking, the information that we have or that the Minister of Finance had that there is nothing wrong with what has been done.

I would also point out that this government was making overpayments for the majority of years since they have been in power since 1982 -- overpayments. And what happened in October of 1987 with the crash in the stock-market? The Teachers' Superannuation Fund lost something in the neighbourhood of \$19 million, and who made that up? Who made that up? It was made up by this government. Now we were making overpayments during that period of time. You talk about a \$10.4 million shortfall. I don't think . . . since you're a former educator and you have the report there, you should understand then that the end of the teachers' superannuation year is June 30, and we're not there yet. And it will be at that time, and once the audit has been completed, that we will know how much money has been short for 1989-90.

Now it's estimated that it could be in the neighbourhood of \$10 million, but you don't know that and neither do I.

The fact of the matter is that the government put in \$52 million for this present year and that the pensions probably amounted to, maybe 62. Neither one of us knows that.

But the fact is that the money that went to pay those pensions out, came out of the overpayment. It's not teachers' money. And we've got representatives in the teachers' federation suggesting it's teachers' money. It's not teachers' money. That overpayment wasn't teachers' money, it was taxpayers' money.

So the \$10 million came from there and it went to pay for teachers' pensions. There was not one nickel that went for anything else. And yet we know full well that some of the members of your party have not been saying that. They've been trying to suggest to people and scare people that the money is being taken out of there and being used for other things and that some of them are in danger of losing their pensions. And I think, Mr. Chairman, that's indeed unfortunate for those people who have worked long and hard in the educational system and then to have those kinds of stories floating around, that they may be in danger of losing their pensions.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Mr. Chairman, I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, that with one exception, one exception, that is that you told me that the unfunded liability is 1.6 billion, I don't believe a word of anything else you said. And I know that there isn't a teacher in Saskatchewan that believes a word of what you said, because you have completely falsified the situation, Mr.

Minister, completely falsified it.

Starting with 1980, Mr. Minister, starting with 1980, there was a new agreement. And I say to you, prior to 1980, yes, there was a different agreement between the teachers of Saskatchewan and the Government of Saskatchewan, a completely different agreement, completely different agreement as far as pension goes. That is, there was no concern about funding a pension fund at that time, and that is correct. That is it. There was no concern at that time.

The NDP government at that time moved to set up a funded plan, moved to set up a funded plan. There was no Tory government in place in 1980. It wasn't any Tory government that started setting up a funded plan. So get that straight.

Now, Mr. Minister, since that time, since 1980, the teachers' allowance, the money that's being paid out to teachers that have superannuated after that time is still being paid in the agreements. The old agreement still has to be upheld. The money still has to be paid out of the provincial treasury.

And when I talk about the money that you . . . the 10.4 million that was taken and paid for pensions, it doesn't matter whether you say it went through the Consolidated Fund and then to teachers' pensions or directly. Obviously it has to be paid through the fund. But it's one and the same bundle of money, so don't play with words with me on that pile of money.

What happened is, it had to go out to be paid for teachers' allowances because there wasn't enough budgeted for it and the pay-outs were greater than what was necessary.

Let's get back to the issue at hand though, that I'm trying to address here, Mr. Minister, and the issue here is this money over and above 7 per cent. Now I charge you with taking money which is an equivalent of \$175 million plus interest over and above the 7 per cent, starting in 1985. And I challenge you to give me any documentation, any documentation that shows that there was money taken prior to that time, over above 7 per cent, particularly when the NDP were in power. I challenge you to do that. You stood up and you said that there was money taken. You're trying to leave that impression. I challenge you to produce the figures and to show where that happened.

Mr. Minister, when you look at the report of the Provincial Auditor, 1986, this is where it was first brought to the attention of your government, 1986, this report. That was where it all started. Now you don't tell me that the Ombudsman would have missed something like that in the years prior. He wouldn't have missed that.

And that was when we brought it to your attention, to the minister's attention at that time, in 1987, that you guys were taking money from the teachers' pension fund and using that money for government purposes, whether that purpose was for paying the other teachers' pensions or anybody else's pension or any other government expense. But you were taking money

over and above 7 per cent. That's what you were doing.

Now would you confirm, Mr. Minister, that in this auditor's report, on page 68, that it says right here in 11.16: "I reported these matters to the Minister of Education in a memorandum of May 20, 1986."

(1545)

And what is it that he referred to? The matters referred to earlier:

The accumulated amount of moneys in excess of the minimum fund balance that is required to be maintained pursuant to subsection 14(1) on behalf of teachers who have not retired, is not taken into account in the calculation of the additional amount to be paid.

So there you go, Mr. Minister, there you go. Now are you going to take the Ombudsman to court for saying that or are you going to come up with figures or are you going to admit that you made a mistake?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, the member opposite asked for some specifics. And I'm just very happy to give them to him because I would point out that in 1981-82 that the investment income in excess of 7 per cent on the money that was in the Teachers' Superannuation Fund was \$15.481 million. So just so you can get it down, I'll go over it again -- \$15.481 million.

Now the amount of money that was contributed to the surplus was \$9,473,000. So maybe the member opposite could explain to this House and to me, where did the balance of that money go, if it didn't go into your general coffers? Just one example of what happened there.

I would also point out too that when you talk about the auditor, let's not twist around what the intent of that report was and what his comments were. The comments were more, and the question was more in line with whether or not the government was acting in accordance with the law when they allowed a surplus or an overpayment to go in there. That was the question that he was asking.

And the fact of the matter is that the government felt that they were acting in good faith by putting in those overpayments to try and address part of the unfunded liability that you people left behind.

So those were the two specifics, I believe, that you asked for; and a clear indication that your government, when you were in power, were in fact taking moneys over and above the 7 per cent interest that was accumulating on the teachers' payments.

So don't just start to tell us that this was happening after 1985. It was happening when you people were in power, and that money has been left in there. As you know, there are some \$123 million dollars, I believe, that was there in an overpayment, and part of that to try and address that

problem.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Would the minister table that documentation, please? I want to know exactly where he got those numbers from, where the audit is from. I want to know where those numbers were arrived at.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, what we will do for the member is get a copy of the annual report from where the information was taken. It has been tabled in this House, but we will find a copy of that report for the member.

I would also suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the process that is being done and followed today in calculating the requirements, the amount of money to go into the pension fund is the same process that was followed when the NDP were in power. So there hasn't been any change there. The officials with the Teachers' Superannuation Commission are following the same process that has been followed ever since 1980, when the new plan came into being.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- What annual report are you referring to?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- That will be the annual report ending June 30, 1982.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- The annual report of what?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The Teachers' Superannuation Commission.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Mr. Minister, when it comes to the pay-outs over and above the 7 per cent, I want you to take a look at the authorization for that. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, whether or not you agree that the authorization comes from The Teachers' Superannuation Act, section 18(1)(a) which states that:

The Minister of Finance shall cause to be paid into:

First of all, it says sufficient money to:

the Teachers' Superannuation Fund:

sufficient money, as may be required from time to time, to make it possible at all times to pay the allowances granted under this Act or under a former Act.

That you would interpret that as the amount of money that has to go to pay for existing pensions; that is anybody that may have gone onto pension prior to 1980 from the old fund. And that that's according to the old agreement. And further down, that:

18(1) The Minister of Finance shall cause to be paid into:

(a)(iii) any amounts that are necessary to maintain the Teachers' Superannuation Fund at the level provided for by subsection 14(1);

So I'm asking you to confirm that. Is your interpretation the same as mine that the first amount it refers to, keeping the existing pensions, paying the existing pensions, and the last one that it referred to, where he talks about building up the fund as of 1980 and onward.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the question asked with regard to the amount in the fund and what the commitment of the government is and what the commitment is by law. There has to be a minimum amount of money in the fund, and that amount of money has to be enough to ensure paying out all of those who are on the formula pension plan. So the government is keeping an adequate amount of money in that fund. No one has to be concerned about the end of the month rolling around and they're not getting their pension cheque. The government has to keep that money in there.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Well, Mr. Minister, we're trying to do here is establish a little more specifically about the future of the fund and not . . . I hope your government would at least be able to meet next month's payment.

Clearly what I'm after here, Mr. Minister, is the establishment of the fund and the sustainability of the fund into the distant future so that the teachers who are putting money into it now are sure that the money's going to be there into their year 10, year 20 of retirement, into the 1900s, 1920s, 1930s.

So let's just pursue this a little further, Mr. Minister, just so that you can understand. Under section 18(1)(3) it says that you're supposed to put the money into the Teachers' Superannuation Fund according to section 14(1). Then when you take a look at section 14(1), it specifies a little more specifically just how this money shall be put in, and it says there that under section 14(1) of The Teachers' Superannuation Act: "the fund shall at all times at least equal the sum of." Okay, "at least equal the sum of."

Now what does it say: "contributions made by or on behalf of teachers who have not retired together with the interest thereon". At least all of the contributions made on behalf of the fund; that is, on behalf of the teacher, I would assume that would be the employer through the government together with the interest thereon.

And then later on it says: "contributions made to the fund by the Minister of Finance." Fine. And then the third item says: "and also the teachers' voluntary contributions together with the interest thereon." So in each case it specifies quite clearly that the amount in the fund should at all times be at least equal the sum of the contributions on behalf of the teacher and by the teacher, along with the interest thereon.

The argument that your predecessor put when I asked him the same question as to what authorization do you feel you really have to take the money away over and above 7 per cent, he said, well you take a look at another section of the Act. And he referred me at that time to a section of the Act -- I believe it was section 55(1), which has in it mentioned the rate of pay-outs to teachers. It talks about teacher pay-outs.

Clearly it talks about teacher pay-outs. I could quote it for you word for word. And it tells you about what rate a teacher who ceases teaching should be paid if he withdraws his pension funds. Has absolutely nothing, no reference whatsoever to the amount of money that . . . to the previous section, to section 14(1) or to the build-up of the fund. It talks about an individual teacher and the pay-out.

So, Mr. Minister, you can see clearly why the teachers of Saskatchewan are, to say the least, somewhat upset when they see that year after year after year this money has been taken out to the cumulative total of \$175 million, add the interest rate to it, and the close estimate is \$250 million.

So, Mr. Minister, my question to you then is: is there any other reasoning that you could use or any other authority that you have -- that you as the government has -- that you can say that you have the right to take this money, when clearly it says in here, "the interest thereon shall go into the fund."?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, let me give a couple of figures to the member opposite. There is no question about the fact that there is an adequate amount of money in there to meet any of the demands by the pensions.

And I would point out that the minimum fund balance that would be required to meet all of the commitments for pensions, the people that are out there eligible for this, is in the neighbourhood of \$610 million. Now the actual amount of money in the fund is in excess of \$733 million. And the reason that that figure is considerably higher is because of the overpayments that were made during the 1980s into the fund.

And that was part, I think, of the question that the auditor was asking, too, was whether or not that should be going on.

Now the other comment I would make to the member opposite is this. That there is a court case now that is going to go ahead, and we know that the teachers' federation disagrees with the practice that has been followed during the last 10 years. It goes back to 1980, in fact, it goes back to when that party was in power as well.

So that case is going to the court to indeed establish whether or not what the governments of the day have been doing, including the NDP and the PC government, have been doing since 1980. So we obviously disagree. But right now it's going to be up to the court to make that determination as to whether or not what's been going on is legal or not.

The opinion that was given before is that it's all right to do this, but I'm sure that they had the same understanding when they were in power. But we will have to wait now until this goes to court and the determination will be made there.

(1600)

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Mr. Minister, with the difficulties and the frustrations

that the teachers feel over what's happened to their pension fund and as I've been talking about over the last few minutes, has been referred specifically to that money that's been taken over and above the 7 per cent.

Now in addition to that, there's one other issue here that needs to be dealt with, and that is the issue of funding for existing . . . for those teachers, or the pay-outs to those teachers who are right now receiving their pensions. And every year the government has budgeted a certain amount of money. Usually it's been through either the Department of Finance or Department of Education, and that money has been used to pay the teachers' pensions.

And it's been a long-standing practice. It's been the way it's been handled at least since oh, probably . . . the books that I've looked through just said '79, but I know it's been several years before that. But every year there's money being paid out to teachers' pensions and cost of living bonuses.

Now from time to time, the amount of money that was paid out to the Teachers' Superannuation Commission, I assume from the government, was at variance with the amount actually paid out to the teachers. In some years it was somewhat more, in which case the Teachers' Superannuation Commission added the money, I assume added the money to the Teachers' Pension Fund. In some cases, the amount of money forwarded from the Department of Finance was less, in which case the superannuation commission would ask for a special warrant or supplementary allowances, in which case the money was added.

Last year there was money asked for and received under special warrant of 18 . . . pardon me, this is for the '88-89 year. According to Public Accounts, under special warrants they received an additional \$18.7 million due to the shortfall, because there simply wasn't enough money there to pay out the existing pensions as per agreement.

I'm advised, Mr. Minister, that this year under the same conditions, similar conditions, that when the Teachers' Superannuation Commission applied for additional funds, the warrant was refused by your government -- clearly a break in precedence, clearly a break in precedence. And the money that had to be paid out for this for the teachers had to be used . . . the Teachers' Superannuation Commission had to go to the Teachers' Superannuation Fund that we were referring to before, the one that we're trying to build up over the years so it could be completely funded and independent, and over time perhaps it would be if all the money that was rightly belonging to it was put into it.

So in addition to taking off the 7 per cent, you actually refused the warrant, forcing them to go back to that fund for another \$10.4 million. Would you confirm that, Mr. Minister, and would you give me the authority under which you had to do that?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, the feeling is on the part of the Department of Finance that the minister has in fact . . . or the government has met all of its commitments with regard to the amount of

money that was put into the fund -- the minimum balance that is being maintained, the fact that also the 7 per cent interest which has been allowed in there, and the fact that the minimum requirement that's needed to meet all of the commitments is in the neighbourhood of \$610 million, and that there are over \$733 million in there. This was up to the end of 1989. So I mean that's changed for this current year as well.

The feeling was, because the commitment had been made and the law had been followed, that there was no problem with removing or taking the \$10 million to pay those pensions, and that coming out of the overpayment.

Now as I've suggested to the member, that this is the matter that's now before the courts, whether or not the government was doing something that was illegal or not. The feeling was, when this was done, that all of the commitments had been met, the minimum amount had been maintained, the interest was allowed for, and that the money could come out of the overpayment, which as I said earlier, was taxpayers' money, not teachers' money. But right now then, Mr. Chairman, what we will have to do is wait for the court ruling on that as to whether or not what was done was not proper.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Could you advise me, Mr. Minister, the authority that you used to refuse this special warrant, clearly it was a break in precedence, clearly it was a completely out of . . . not following any precedent that has been followed over the last few years. You had to have some authority. You had to have made some kind of a decision on it some place. You couldn't have just had . . . No official would just all of a sudden snap his fingers and say, well I think we won't do it this way. You had to have made that decision there somewhere.

What authority have you got? And do you not agree, Mr. Minister, that The Education Act requires that any amendments to The Teachers' Superannuation Act -- and I guess it would apply also to any applications of funding or funding changes to The Teachers' Superannuation Act -- should be as a result only of collective bargaining?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the authority of course certainly was . . . I think felt that since the minimum requirements or the requirements of the Act had been met, that there was indeed no problem with turning down the request for the special warrant and continuing to pay the pensions from the overpayment that had been built up. Now that of course is the question that's before the courts. At this point in time the STF says that this was not proper. The government took the stand that it was proper, so it's going to have to be resolved in the courts.

But I would point out as well, Mr. Chairman, that in the auditor's report for the year ended June 30, 1985, that one of his comments was that total funds available during the year, including invested funds, were more than sufficient to pay allowances granted, and as a result additional payments received from the Minister of Finance under this subclause totalling \$19,476,698 were not required to fund the payment of allowances.

So I think in actual fact what he is questioning here whether or not the

government was right in making an overpayment of in excess of \$19 million. So I think that there are some other questions that have to be resolved as well here within the Teachers' Superannuation Fund.

So we look forward to the decision of the court and getting some of this sorted out.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Minister, I want to talk about the Saskatchewan school drop-out rate. As you may be aware, last year in the legislative session we raised with the former minister of Education the problems identified in Dr. Randhawa's study which indicated that there was an extreme increase of dropping out among students in grade 8 to 12 in Saskatchewan schools since his last study which was done in 1980-81, I understand.

Now, Mr. Minister, the drop-out rate, as identified by Dr. Randhawa, indicate that there has been a dramatic increase in drop-outs in the province of Saskatchewan since your government came to power.

Mr. Minister, the former minister of Education indicated that there was going to be some ongoing work done in this area; that the study, according to him, might have had some problems. And I'm wondering what undertaking has been initiated by your department to study whether in fact school drop-out rates in the province of Saskatchewan have increased.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I certainly can share the member opposite's concern about the high number of students that we do have in dropping out of our schools today, but I think for her to try and blame that on the government is really a little bit unfair.

I think that we have to consider the fact that we've got a lot of different things happening in our society today that weren't there five years ago or 10 years ago. And she being an educator who was involved with special needs students, is fully aware of many of the problems that some of our young people are going through today.

So it is a problem that all of us have to continue to address. But I would point out that we are concerned about the drop-out rate, and we have taken some steps, taken some steps to try and alleviate the problem. And we have to work with all of the school systems in the province, and we have to work with the teachers' federation as well as LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents) and the trustees' association to try and overcome the problem.

One of the things that we did in the fall of 1989 was to hire a consultant to work with schools to try and counter the problem a little bit. The development of more appropriate programming in some cases, I'm sure she'll well understand, is the answer because in many cases students get turned off of the programs that are being offered, and as a result drop out of school. We're also taking a look at an international research effort that's being done by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in looking at at-risk students, and some of the steps that are being taken in other parts of the world to try and counter this problem.

We have talked earlier today about some of the initiatives that we're taking in northern Saskatchewan, direct response to recommendations put forward in the northern education task force report. And I would refer specifically to the program at Ile-a-la-Crosse where we have a re-entry program that will assist adult students to obtain a grade 12 standing.

We've also looked at scholarship program award systems to try and motivate some young people into staying in school a little bit longer. So there are things being done, Mr. Chairman, but we've all got lots to do if we're going to address this very, very serious problem.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, while it appears to me that you recognize that there is a growing problem in the province of Saskatchewan, all I can see that you've done is implement more study, Mr. Minister.

If you look at the grants that were sent to school divisions in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of your past budget, you will note that the increase, the average increase amounts to 3 per cent, which is less than the rate of inflation.

You will know, Mr. Minister, that the school is having to take on more and more functions as the result of some of the very serious problems that the people in our province are facing. And consequently, when parents are facing those problems, their children are.

Now it seems to me, Mr. Minister, that your answer or your response to my question simply is not good enough. We have seen a dramatic increase in the female drop-out rate in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Minister, according to Dr. Randhawa's study, there has been a 58.8 per cent increase in the number of young women that are dropping out of school.

And I wonder, Mr. Minister, what sort of strategy your department is looking at in terms of new initiatives in education to help retain females in the grade 8 to 12 school system. Because as you very well know, Mr. Minister, a majority of the poor people in this province are females. And why are they poor, Mr. Minister? They're poor because they lack an education. They're poor because the school system for some reason has failed them.

(1615)

And I want to know, Mr. Minister, specifically what strategies is your government adopting to ensure that young women in the province of Saskatchewan are staying in school, getting their grade 12, and then going on to further education?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to talk about that a little bit more, and I would point out to the member opposite that there has been additional money in the neighbourhood of \$7 million that have gone towards special projects related to drop-out prevention.

She mentions the concern about more and more females that have dropped out of school or are dropping out of school, and I was very pleased to be involved with the group that got the Mount Royal infant care centre going which I'm sure she's familiar with and I'm sure she's visited that centre, and a very successful, very worthwhile project.

And we need to consider, I think, more of these types of projects within the province. Because there we have young women who have children, young single women who want to stay in school and finish their high school. And through the introduction of that program at Mount Royal, I think it's had a very positive impact on the school. It certainly has had a very positive impact on the young women that are involved in the program, in that they are staying in school for the most part.

The success ratio has been very, very high. Attendance is very, very high. I would think as well from the information I have, that the marks of these young people are better than average in most cases. And these are people who are committed to staying in school and going on to further post-secondary education. But without a program like that, I'm sure that these young women would not still be in school. So that's a very positive program that has been implemented to try and address that problem.

I think as well, when you consider the fact that when we look at the after-care program that's going to be initiated at Marion Graham Collegiate in Saskatoon, that young people who've become involved with drugs and alcohol and end up in treatment centres, that there's a fair amount of support that they need after receiving treatment when they go back to their schools. And the project at Marion Graham is going to, I think, go a long ways to helping some of these young people integrate back into the regular school program.

So we have to consider that this is a pilot program and we have to monitor that and watch the success of it. But again, she will understand, I'm sure, some of the students that she's worked with in the past, that support programs of this nature are really, really important.

I think as well when you consider the additional moneys that we've put into the student loan program to assist, again, young people -- and you indicate about females, that there are a lot of young single moms -- and those who want to go on and continue with their education are getting a great deal of help through some of the programs that we have initiated.

So I think that there is a lot happening. She's made special mention of the Randhawa study as to the number of students that are dropping out of school. And I would point out to her that the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association questions some of the figures that Dr. Randhawa has come up with and feels that there needs to be further research done in that area. So I think we have to take that into consideration as well.

One other thing that we're doing is the changes with the student record system in that we are setting up a much better system to register students and to monitor what their movement are, where they're going throughout the province, and we can track them a lot better. And I think that this will

help to meet some of the concerns that are raised by the member opposite.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, what a lame-duck answer to a very serious problem that has occurred in the province of Saskatchewan. One day-care program in the city of Saskatoon . . . and as you probably know, Mr. Minister, once those children start walking, they can no longer go into that day-care program. There are young women in that school who have their babies in grade 10 and by the time they get to grade 11 their children are no longer eligible for care in that program, Mr. Minister. And so what do those young women do? They are then faced with the problems of day care and finding appropriate day care for their children. One program is not going to deal with the serious problems that are affecting young women in this province when it comes to high school drop-out rates. So one program's simply not good enough, Mr. Minister. There is a need for many more programs in the province of Saskatchewan in terms of day care in schools or around schools.

Now, Mr. Minister, you say that young people need support programs, support services, and I'd like you to pay attention, Mr. Minister. Young people need support programs, but with a measly 3 per cent increase in your budget, school boards aren't able to deliver the kinds of support programs that these young people need in order to stay in school.

The other day when the teachers were in the legislature, one of the questions I asked you was what were you going to do in order to put support programs into schools to assist teachers to do what they've been historically trained to do and that's teach. Mr. Minister, teachers are becoming social workers and counsellors and food banks and clothing distributors. And they are having to take on more and more functions as a result of a lack of support programs for young people.

And so, Mr. Minister, tell me some more. One day-care program's not good enough. What else are you going to do to support young people to stay in school in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I always get a kick out of the member opposite, Mr. Chairman. I am sure we could have day-care programs in every high school in this province and I am sure that she would still get up and say we're not doing enough. But she puts on a pretty act and I commend her for that.

I indicated the Mount Royal program, Mr. Chairman, because I was directly involved in that program and it's the one that I am the most familiar with, but I know of other programs that exist in the province as well. I am also fully aware of the concern that they have that now when the children are toddlers that there has to be some other way of providing services for them and meeting their needs. So we've got to continue to work on that.

But I would also point out the expansion and the improvement and services that we have within our community schools within the province. We've increased the numbers of them and I think that they're meeting a very, very special need, particularly in our inner-city community areas in the province. So that's addressing another type of a problem.

We've got programs here in the city of Regina as well, that are involved with meeting needs of young people who otherwise would be leaving school. We've also got a federal initiative right now, a stay-in-school initiative that's being put forward by the federal government. We are working very closely with them. We know as well, the day-care component that is being discussed and there are a lot more services that are needed.

And as I indicated, times are changing. The fact that you mentioned about teachers are expected to wear so many more hats today is very, very true. They have to provide a lot of the support for children today that in most cases in the past would have been provided by the homes, but in some cases today in our society, some of our old traditional values and strengths are breaking down and the teachers get left with having to provide those services.

So we have to look at projects such as we are with Social Services in how we can better meet the needs of some of these kids . . .

An Hon. Member: -- You need to do something now.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- And we are doing things now; it's just that the member from Regina Centre is not paying attention to what's going on around him, because he's got some excellent facilities as a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, right in his own riding that I think are going a long way to address specific concerns that his colleague is raising.

So there's lots happening, but we've got to keep working on it.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, you say there's lots

happening but you haven't given me any specifics in terms of what is happening. What is happening? Do we have more social workers that are going into the community? Do we have more counsellors that are going into the community? Do we have more psychologists that are going into the community? Do we have any drug and alcohol addiction counsellors that are going into schools? Which new day-care initiatives are you taking in high schools in the province of Saskatchewan? Are you conducting a study to see whether or not Dr. Randhawa's information was correct or incorrect?

I keep hearing that his information in terms of the school drop-out rate is incorrect, but I've never seen any evidence on the part of the provincial government to dispute that, any real research, Mr. Minister. All of the literature in North America indicates that high school drop-out rates are increasing dramatically in North America. All the literature indicates that all the high school drop-out rates for young females is increasing dramatically.

And so, Mr. Minister, I want you to be more specific. You can be bombastic and say, oh, there's all kinds of initiatives, but I want you to be specific and tell us exactly what those initiatives are, so that we can determine whether in fact your government is doing anything to address the problem of high school drop-out rates increasing in the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I've given some pretty good specifics, Mr. Chairman, but the member opposite isn't listening.

I would also point out, it's interesting that she should be asking if we're doing another study to see what is happening out there if we don't agree with the Randhawa study. I said that the members of the school trustees association did not agree with the study.

We know the problem exists out there. We don't need to do any more studies on it. We are doing many things in so far as helping some of these people. And I'd point out what's happening with shared services, the extra support services that are being provided in our school systems, whether we're talking about social workers in some cases, speech therapists, psychologists and others who supply support to families.

We know as well that there's additional money in the special education area this year in our budget to address problems that haven't been taken care of before -- speech and language problems. We know as well of the joint venture with Social Services to put social workers into the two larger urban centres to address some of these problems, and working with school systems and trying to identify some of the problems that do exist there and how they can better be addressed. So we can point out specific programs that are happening in the larger centres.

We can also look at rural Saskatchewan and the delivery of programs within school divisions and money that is being provided through special education grants -- a grant that has been increased this year -- and a change in some of the criteria so that it does encompass a larger number of students that have special needs.

So we know that there may be a need for many more social workers, psychologists, people who can provide support for families. And we can only do so much in Education, Mr. Chairman. We have to work along with the department of families and also the Department of Social Services to address some of these concerns.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, you've just generalized -- all these generalities in terms of what services are available, but you haven't been specific at all.

Mr. Minister, can you tell me specifically who in your department is responsible for policy initiatives in terms of high school retention rates? Who is it in your department is dealing with this issue?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The gentleman sitting behind the deputy, Mr. Ivan Yackel is the one who is responsible for looking at those programs.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Can you tell me what Mr. Ivan Yackel has done in the last year in terms of developing policy initiatives, broad policy initiatives in the province of Saskatchewan to deal with the horrendous increase in the high school drop-out rate in this province?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the official has been very involved with the working with school divisions at the grass roots level to identify more of the specific problems, and working with them to see how they can best be dealt with because all areas are different. Problems are different; areas are different.

Also a consultant has been hired within the department to work with teachers. We've also got a student retention council that is being set up made up of representatives from the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), the STF, and LEADS, and looking at the areas where students are dropping out, what grade levels mainly are involved, the reasons for their dropping out, and seeing how we can more specifically then address the problem with specific types of programs.

So I think that he's been very, very busy. This is only one of his duties of course in working with student retention, but I think that we've got a lot of good things going and we look forward to the problems being addressed in a more positive way, I would suggest, in the months ahead.

(1630)

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, is Mr. Yackel the director of social sciences and resource centre services? Is that his position? What is his position?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- He is the executive director of field support services.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, can you send me a new listing of your departmental officials and what their titles are in the Department of Education? Can you do that today? Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I'm surprised that it's taken you over a year to set up a retention advisory committee, and can you tell me when you plan to have this committee in place and who you plan to appoint to this committee?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, the committee will be in place by the latter part of June. The representatives on the committee will be from the usual groups involved with education: STF, LEADS, SSTA, as well as students on the committee. And those groups will be putting forward the names that they want on the committee, but there will also be other interest groups as well as students. And I think that's very, very important that we have students putting forward suggestions as to how the problem can be dealt with.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, can you tell me what interest groups are going to be represented on this committee? And can you tell me whether the students that you're going to be appointing to this committee are students that perhaps have dropped out of school for various reasons, or are we talking about students that are presently in school?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Two examples, Mr. Chairman, would be home and school, Indian and Metis. And also when you ask about the students, they

would in fact be students who have dropped out of school.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, I have here a report on curriculum development. It was a supplement to the STF bulletin, April 14, 1989. This is the latest information I have in terms of special initiatives on the part of your Department of Education, and one of the special initiatives that they refer to is student retention. And they say that many of the efforts that have taken place have been supported by the Educational Development Fund.

Mr. Minister, can you specifically tell me what initiatives have taken place by your government through the Educational Development Fund that deal with student retention? If you have that specifically written down, Mr. Minister, I'd appreciate receiving a copy of all of these initiatives that you say have taken place.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The money would be given to school boards and they would be the ones that are providing the programs. So I can't give you a specific list of them today, but we will get that for you because there are several in the province.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, can you tell me . . . what I am specifically interested in knowing is: all of the initiatives that have been undertaken by your government, through EDF (educational development fund) or through any other funding, in terms of getting services into school divisions to help students stay in school. So I want a list of, say, of all of the initiatives since Dr. Randhawa's study, which would have been done in 1986-87. Can you get that for me, and can you get that for me by tomorrow?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, it's going to take a little bit more time than to get it tomorrow, because I'm sure, as the member realizes, the grants that go out are unconditional. And what we will have to look at is scan through the information that has come back from school boards indicating where they are spending this money. So it will take the officials a little while to get hold of that, but we would hope to have it for you early next week. Soon as we can get it.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, are you saying that EDF funding is unconditional? Because my understanding is that in order to obtain EDF funding you have to put forward a proposal to the Department of Education, and then the Department of Education determines whether or not it's appropriate.

Now, Mr. Minister, in terms of this magazine article that I have that appeared in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation bulletin, it said that, and I quote:

The government, educators, parents, and the community must work together to help all children succeed in completing school. Towards this end the department is planning a province-wide effort to focus attention and resources on drop-out prevention and some of the contributing factors.

Mr. Minister, it's one year later. I want to know what your province-wide

effort is in terms of policy initiatives that have been undertaken by your department to prevent the drop-out rate in the province of Saskatchewan from sky-rocketing even more.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, one of the major changes that is taking place and the major initiative that is taking place is the development of the core curriculum. And we recognize that all of the students are going to be involved in the core curriculum and all areas of it. But one of the major concerns that we have and that's to do with the adaptive dimension. So that we ensure that children, regardless of what their ability level is or what types of learning problems they might have, that the programs are going to be adapted in such a way that they can benefit from them.

So now over the last year, it goes back longer than a year now, Dr. Gladene Robertson has been involved in working with the curriculum committees and on this particular aspect of them. So there is a fair bit happening. We have to keep in mind that all areas of the curriculum should be open for all students. But we recognize that some of them have difficulty; some of them of course have additional ability, and we have to try and meet the specific needs of all children. So there is a lot of work being done in that particular area and that's been going on for over a year. And that will continue.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, we have a supplement to the April 14, 1989, Saskatchewan Bulletin which is the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation monthly newspaper. Last year in early April, I believe, I raised in this legislature the results of Dr. Randhawa's study that showed there had been a tremendous increase in the high school drop-out rate in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now while there may be some people who dispute Dr. Randhawa's study, personally, Mr. Minister, I do not. I believe there has been a tremendous increase in the number of young people in the province of Saskatchewan that are dropping out of school.

Now you have undertaken a bit of a public relations exercise, Mr. Minister. There is an article -- your words, not my words -- saying that you are going to engage in a province-wide effort to focus attention and resources on drop
_out prevention.

Well, Mr. Minister, it's one year later and nothing has happened, Mr. Minister. Absolutely nothing. Young people in this province continue to drop out of school. All you have to do is go into downtown Saskatoon or downtown Regina or downtown anywhere and you will find that there are young people that simply aren't in schools. Our system, Mr. Minister, for whatever reason, is failing them -- our economic system, our social system, our political system.

And it appears to me, Mr. Minister, that there is no will on the part of the provincial government to address this issue. This is a major issue, Mr. Minister. Your predecessor talked about getting us into the 21st

century. We cannot get ourselves into the 21st century, Mr. Minister, if 45 per cent of the young people in this province are leaving school early.

I want to know, Mr. Minister, what is your province-wide strategy to deal with this tremendous problem of young people leaving school early?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, there have been a lot of changes, as I indicated, in the core curriculum program that are designed to address some of the problems the member is raising. And in particular I would point out probably the most critical area in our schools, and that's at the grades 7, 8, and 9 levels, because we find that in many cases probably this is where a lot of our young people will drop out for one reason or another.

I would point out the major change there is to do with the curriculum and health and guidance and the types of programs that are being developed to deal with a lot of social problems, to also deal with family life and to try and keep more of these young people in school.

So we've got to look at the general programs that are being changed, but we also have to look at the specific types of supports that are being provided in our schools. Sometimes we know that things are not moving along as quickly as we might have liked, but at the same time let's keep in mind that students haven't just started dropping out of school in the last year or two years or 10 years. We've always had some children that have dropped out of school for one reason or another, whether there were problems in their home, whether there were problems within the school, whether there were problems with getting along with the teacher, whether there were problems that they couldn't handle the program, whatever the case might be. There's any number of reasons, and that's been going on for a long time. But we have to continue to address those problems and we are attempting to do that just as quickly as we can, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Well you know, once again we have the minister talking about core curriculum. I understand, Mr. Chairperson, that core curriculum is going to take years to implement. This problem is of such a dramatic nature, Mr. Minister, that we don't have years to start addressing this problem. You say in this paper that there is a province-wide effort, a province-wide effort to focus attention and resources. I don't see the effort; I don't see the resources, Mr. Minister. I see absolutely no leadership on the part of the provincial government -- you, Mr. Minister, as the Minister of Education, to do anything about this problem of 44.59 per cent of the young people in this province dropping out of school. And that has increased, Mr. Minister, from 31.33 per cent in 1980-81. So nothing's occurred.

Now you also say that what we have to do is look at children in grades 7 and 8 and 9 and 10, I believe you said, in terms of the curriculum. That leads me into my next set of questions, Mr. Minister.

Tell me, where is core curriculum at in this province? How many of those subjects in those particular grades have now been implemented? How many pilot projects are there, Mr. Minister, and where are these pilot projects?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out to the member opposite -- and I'd be happy to send a copy of this booklet over -- that this is one of the initiatives of the department that has been designed to help students in going into post-secondary education. And I think we have to keep in mind we're not just talking people dropping out of K to 12, but we also want to encourage those that are going to go on to other areas.

And this booklet, Design Your Future, I think can be very, very beneficial. We've had a lot of very positive comments on it. And that students then become aware of programs that they need to take if they are going to go on to post-secondary education, and the fact that there are certain subject areas that they may have to take if they want to go on to technical school or whether they're going on into university. And I guess we have to keep in mind that students that are dropping out of school today. In many cases there's a wide range of ability levels. So we have to ensure that we're working with them and make them aware of opportunities that exist beyond high school and the importance of remaining in school.

With regard to the core curriculum and how far along we are with that, we are now moving into the second year of implementation of it -- a part of a 10-year project -- and a tremendous amount of work being done by teachers throughout the province. At the present time, or for 1990-91, we'll have some 556 teachers involved in pilot projects in the province.

So a lot of work that's being done in that particular area. Science, K to 6, will be into full implementation this fall. We have many teachers who are involved with different subject areas in writing curriculum. We've a lot of people that are seconded as curriculum writers, and I know that we were advertising not long ago for more of them.

But there is a lot happening in the core curriculum. One of the bigger problems right now is in-service for the teachers, and particularly in the common essential learnings.

So although we may at times feel that it's moving quite slowly, we can't move too quickly before teachers are ready to move into these new areas. And again it's a matter of changing in some cases the concerns that teachers have that we're now just expecting them to do much, much more, and the fact that we are looking at doing things differently. Not only the subject matter is going to be different but also the methods in which that material is going to be delivered.

So there are some subject areas that are already into implementation, others that are just in the process of being written. But as I understand it, everything is pretty well on track and we would hope that within the next eight years that the whole program will have been implemented into our school systems.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, are you prepared to send me the information in terms of where core is exactly at? I'd like to know which subjects have

been implemented, which subjects are being piloted, and when the other subjects are scheduled to be implemented or piloted. Can you forward that information to me in the course of the next day?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Yes, Mr. Chairman, we'd be happy to provide that information. We'll do it after supper.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, can you confirm that the funding for core curriculum has not increased this year over last? Can you tell me what the funding was for core curriculum in the year 1989-90, and what your projected funding is for core curriculum in the year 1990-91? And can you tell me what that money that is going towards core is going to be used for? Are we talking about teacher in-service or curriculum development? What exactly is the funding that your government has budgeted for core curriculum going to be used for in this coming year?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the amount for curriculum and special ed this year is in excess of \$10 million, and that's an increase, I believe, of over a million dollars from last year. But there have also been some changes within there as to the types of programs that are being funded. So there is more money in there than last year, as I understand it.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, can you confirm that the funding for core curriculum last year was \$9.469 million, that funding for core curriculum this year is \$9.469 million?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I would confirm that last year the amount of money was \$9,485,800, but this year it is -- and this includes the Directions initiatives -- is over \$10 million.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, if that's the case, then how much money is being budgeted for special education?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The special needs grant for the coming year, Mr. Chairman, is \$25 million and there's also another \$677,000 that's for the special ed branch and special education technologies project. They are the special ed clearing house.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, I'd like you to refer specifically to item 4 under Education estimates for 1990-91. Your budget for curriculum and special education is \$10,046,100. I'm asking you specifically, how much of that money is being used for curriculum development and how much of that money is being used for special education? And I want you to tell me how much of that money, how much money was spent on curriculum development last year and how much was spent on special education? That's what I'm talking about, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the total amount that I'll give you

is a little bit over \$9.4 million. That was for 1989-90. And this year you have curriculum and special ed rolled in together, that's in the department, it's 10.046 million. So there's an increase there I would suggest of -- what is it? -- maybe not quite \$600,000 in that area.

Now I would also point out when you're talking about special education, that keep in mind the special needs program grant. There's a significant increase in that particular area.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, as I understand the situation, you have not increased funding for core curriculum or curriculum by 1 cent. Now what you have done, Mr. Minister, is you have changed the way you budget things here. Last year it was called curriculum and evaluation; special education wasn't in there. This year it's curriculum and special ed. As I understand it, you spent \$9.469 million last year on curriculum, and this year you're spending \$9.469 million on curriculum. The \$577,100 which is the difference, is money that you're spending on special education.

Now, Mr. Minister, how much are you spending on curriculum this year? Not curriculum and special education, how much are you spending on curriculum and, Mr. Minister, alternatively how much are you spending on special education?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure now when she's talking special ed what she wants. We've got two figures here. The one is the special needs program grant which has increased nearly \$3 million this year. And otherwise within the department, it was \$677,000 last year. That is part of the \$10 million that I gave to you a little bit earlier.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, the point I'm trying to make here is that you haven't increased money for curriculum at all -- not at all. I'm not talking about curriculum in special education, I'm talking about curriculum. And yet, Mr. Minister, in your Minister of Finance's budget speech it says:

This is what the Core Curriculum agenda is all about -- an agenda for a changing world. That is why this Budget will provide almost \$10 million for the funding of Core Curriculum initiatives in 1990-91.

Where do we find this almost \$10 million, Mr. Minister? Is it in this item called curriculum and special education? If it is, Mr. Minister, exactly how much are you spending on core curriculum?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I can't give her a specific number right now, other than to say that in excess of \$10 million is going into that whole area. Now to separate out the core curriculum from some of the other changes that are taking place in curriculum, we can do that for you. We can have that for you after supper. We'll give you the exact figure, but it is still going to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$10 million that is going into curriculum, which also includes the Directions initiatives. So other than the special education which I know is specific there, and I indicated to you the 677,000, the rest of the money we could say is going for curriculum and the Directions initiatives.

Mr. Chairman: -- Order, order. Being near 5 o'clock the committee is recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.