

May 4/90

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, allow me again today to introduce to you, and through you, a group of students on behalf of the member from Rosthern who today is unable to be here due to the passing of his brother. And we express our sympathy to both the member and his family.

At the same time it is my pleasure to introduce a group of students from Osler School in Osler, Saskatchewan, 26 in number, grade 8 students in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by their teacher, Glen Osmond, chaperon Marilyn Tkachuk, and bus driver Don. And I'll look forward to meeting with the students at 11 a.m. for pictures and a short discussion. Would you join me in welcoming the students this afternoon.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Trew: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly two guests seated in your gallery, sir. They are the Saskatchewan chairman of the Amalgamated Transit Union, Helmut Sieh, and the Regina sub-local chairman, Gary Dawson. I ask the two gentlemen to rise and I ask all members to acknowledge their presence and welcome them in the usual fashion.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Simard: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to introduce a visitor from Port Coquitlam, B.C., who used to work in Saskatchewan and is here visiting with relatives. His daughter, Muriel Draaisma and his son-in-law, Chris Wattie, Mr. Speaker. And the gentleman is Mr. Nicolas Draaisma from Port Coquitlam, B.C. Would he rise please, and I'd ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome him.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, 35 students from the Holy Rosary School in Regina. They are accompanied by their principal, Clarence Demchuk and a teacher, Dan LaBelle. I hope the members enjoy the question period, and I will look forward to meeting with you afterwards to discuss what you've seen.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and

through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, some 40 students seated in the gallery opposite. These are grade 9 students, Mr. Speaker, roughly 20 from the Weyburn Junior High School in Weyburn and the other 20 are visiting students from Quebec from L'E pécole Secondaire St. Raymond, Quebec.

They're accompanied here today by their teachers. From the school in Quebec, Yvon Belle Rive and Jean-Guy Marcotte. And as well the teachers from Weyburn, Rick Wanner and Murray Sproule, and their bus driver Winston Bailey, I believe as well with them. I hope that they enjoy their visit here today to the legislature, that they find it interesting and educational. It will likely be entertaining. I know they have a busy schedule that precludes me from having a chance to meet with them. I as well hope they found their lost luggage, as I understand that it didn't make it yesterday. And I see it looks like it has today.

So would all members of the legislature please join with me, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming these 40 students and particularly our guests from Quebec, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Agreement with Cargill

Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan chamber of commerce in its meeting yesterday is quoted in the media today as saying that the government opposite here should not be funding such megaprojects as Cargill, but instead committing that money to aid the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan. And, sir, as you know, we've been saying the same thing for months now, that megabucks for megaprojects like Cargill is wrong.

My question to the Premier is this. Mr. Premier, in view of the fact that the opposition, the people, and now the chamber of commerce urge you to get out of Cargill, would you please tell us whether or not you're going to follow that logical advice or continue to bulldoze ahead.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I have with me this morning the front page of the paper from Moose Jaw that says that the NDP MLAs give qualified support for the fertilizer plant, and the NDP are not here this morning . . .

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- I raise this for the media, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP MLAs in Moose Jaw, support the Cargill fertilizer plant.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this has been going on on that side of the House on

almost every issue that you can find in the history of Saskatchewan. They'll say one thing in Moose Jaw, they'll say something else outside of Moose Jaw. The NDP support Rafferty in Estevan, but they're against it in Regina. They support the fertilizer project, Mr. Speaker, and say so on behalf of their MLAs in Moose Jaw, but the leader stands up in here and says he's against it. He passes a resolution in this House that says the federal government should pay \$500 million, and then if you talk to the NFU (National Farmers Union), he says, no, the provincial government should pay.

Mr. Speaker, they're on every side of the issue; one urban, one rural, inside and outside. Mr. Speaker, our position has been consistent. We plan to build, process and manufacture, and defend the farmers, Mr. Speaker, in Moose Jaw, in Regina, in Estevan, in Saskatoon, rural and urban, all the time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, it would be nice if the Premier addressed the question, but I guess I'm going to have to give it another try, Mr. Speaker, so another try.

Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. I want the Premier to know that no one opposes diversification, no one opposes economic diversification and jobs. No, no one does. Goodness knows, under your administration we need more of it with all the people leaving the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- And no one opposes the Cargill coming to the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- That's right, that's right. Nobody opposes the Cargill coming . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. The Minister of Finance should control his . . . or the Minister of Justice, I ask him to control his enthusiasm. I'm sure the media can hear what's going on.

Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was about to say that nobody opposes Cargill coming to the province of Saskatchewan. But I want to tell the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, if Cargill wants to come in to Saskatchewan, let them do it with their own money and not ours. That's our position.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Yes, just on that point. Now, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: how can the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan justify a commitment of \$370 million for Cargill, nothing for the farmers and the small-business people from the province of Saskatchewan who need the assistance as much, if not more, given these difficult economic times?

Why are you opening up the wallet for Cargill, the largest privately owned corporation in the world, and ignoring the Saskatchewan people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, we have now witnessed in this legislature a massive retreat by the Leader of the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan. He's backed right off. His NDP MLAs in Moose Jaw support the fertilizer project. And the NDP MLAs in Moose Jaw know that we own half and the company owns half; the people of Saskatchewan own half. And he knows it's an equity position, and he's backed off today, Mr. Speaker, as the result of the split in their caucus. We are now going to be asking the NDP MLAs in Regina if they're for this project or against it, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to take it to them and ask them. They're going to pick them off one at a time.

He's retreated. He wants Cargill coming in and he knows that it's 50 per cent equity, 50 per cent equity on the other side -- not a dime of subsidy, Mr. Speaker. And it was something else to see him retreat today in public. Finally he's recognized processing and manufacturing for the province is a good idea, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, the Premier's response, with the greatest of respect to the Premier, is laughable. This has been the position of the NDP straight across the piece. It's laughable.

And my question to you, Mr. Premier, is this again. I want you to answer to the Legislative Assembly and to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

If you won't listen to us, if you won't listen to the farmers, if you won't listen to small-business people, if you won't listen to the wheat pool, all of whom oppose this sweetheart deal of Cargill -- if you won't listen to all of those people, for goodness sake, why won't you listen to the Saskatchewan chamber of commerce which itself, yesterday and today says, you should be using that money for farmers and small business. Why don't you do that?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, the hon. member stands in his place retreating today, knowing that his members of the legislature support this project, the fertilizer project. He also knows, Mr. Speaker, if you go into Prince Albert, the NDP MLAs support Weyerhaeuser. But they state something else outside, Mr. Speaker.

If you go to city council in Prince Albert and if you talk to the NDP MLAs, they support the paper mill. But if you go outside, Mr. Speaker, they don't. If you go to Moose Jaw, the Moose Jaw guys aren't there, they support the fertilizer plant. And then when they raise it here, they say

no. Well, Mr. Speaker, they retreat in their own home towns; they retreat in Prince Albert; they retreat in Moose Jaw. And they know what the truth is. And then the leader stands here and questions every one of them.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time, at the same time, everybody on that side of the House, including all the people that looked at the wheat pool or other project people, or those in the chamber of commerce have said, balance the budget, Mr. Premier. Make sure that you increase economic activity. Mr. Speaker, we will.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Premier, I have a new question to the Premier, and this is my last question on this topic for this morning. Mr. Speaker, as you have heard -- as a preface to my question -- as you have heard here, the Premier has failed to answer the question that I direct about the Saskatchewan chamber of commerce, simply has failed to direct this, and he accuses us of changing our position.

Mr. Speaker, I have in front of me a photocopy of a Saskatoon Star-Phoenix newspaper story dated May 4, 1990 where the headline says -- I'm quoting from the headline -- "Schmidt promises new strategy." The PC government is about to unveil, according to the story, "A totally new economic strategy." And the story says, "Asked what has changed within the province to force a new economic strategy, Schmidt replied, the Premier just thought of it a few months ago."

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- So it looks as though there is some flip-flopping going on all right, but it's not on this side; it's on that side.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Now my question, Mr Premier, to you is simply this: what new economic strategy did you just come up with a few months ago? What flip-flop changes in economic strategy did you come up with? And would you be kind enough to say, could we at least be mercifully told that one of the changes in economic strategy is that you're going to cut out these sweetheart deals with these large multinational corporations and support the farmers of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I'll just make the point. The NDP MLAs in Moose Jaw . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Chairman, the NDP MLAs in Moose Jaw and Regina and in other parts of the province support the fertilizer project, and that's on the record now. And the Leader of the Opposition, then, calls it a sweetheart and says that he's against it, but his own MLAs support it, Mr.

Speaker, in both cities and across the province.

Then he says, well now he's against community development bonds. If he wants to ask the chamber of commerce if they support community development bonds because it means that you don't have to put up with high interest rates, you'll find universal support across the province of Saskatchewan for community development bonds, led by the chamber of commerce. The president of the chamber of commerce in the province of Saskatchewan last night whole-heartedly endorsed us backing away from high interest rates and allowing communities to build and diversify using their money and the province backing them in guarantees.

Third, I'll point out, Mr. Speaker, it was this administration that introduced bonds into this province: Power bonds, TeleBonds -- other kinds of investment, Mr. Speaker -- community development bonds. And he said, well for Heaven's sake it's a new idea. We've been doing it since 1982, Mr. Speaker, and the people have appreciated it. They've put close to \$2 billion into offers in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of Power bonds, potash bonds, and other investment instruments that we've designed that they didn't have the courage to do, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the Premier. If this economic strategy is so good, why is it that your minister of economic strategy says there's going to be a brand-new one unveiled in a few days, if it's so good? Tell me that.

But my question to the Premier is simply this: in this Star-Phoenix story, the minister says in the story, he says: "The new strategy which the Premier would announce on an appointed date," as Schmidt said -- and apparently has been just thought up of a few months ago -- is about to be announced.

Can you tell the House what date this new strategy is going to be announced and whether it unveils all of the old strategy, which is so successful, which you've been defending. Would you be kind enough to tell us that.

And also while you're on your feet, Mr. Premier, would you be also kind enough to say whether or not you endorse the minister of economic strategy's statement that says that those who don't believe in your old strategy, the statement that he says, "why don't the cynics just move to the Maritimes." Do you endorse that statement, namely the cynics being the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, now the chamber of commerce, the farmers, and the small people. Is that your solution, they should all move to the Maritimes? Do you endorse that too?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, you know even Allan Blakeney is moving back to the province of Saskatchewan. They're coming back, Mr. Speaker. You know and the province knows that the economic development strategy put together by our government in terms of processing and manufacturing, and

now community development bonds, Mr. Speaker, is one of the most innovative strategies that this province has seen and is being endorsed by the chamber of commerce all over.

Did you notice, Mr. Speaker, how quick he left Cargill? Did you know how he left it alone? He backed off Cargill because his NDP MLAs in Regina and Moose Jaw now support it.

Then he moved on to bonds and it's supported by the chamber of commerce, Mr. Speaker. And all over Saskatchewan, towns and villages and people are interested in and want to see community development bonds to protect their towns, to see growth and diversification. And he laughs, Mr. Speaker. Well we'll see. If the people support the community development bonds then the towns and the villages that he's abandoned, Mr. Speaker, will have a chance for the future. That's why it's supported by the chamber of commerce, and we're proud to initiate it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Lottery Tax

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I believe that I'd like to ask the members to just calm down and allow question period to proceed. Order. I believe that that applies to everybody. There's no point of anybody accusing another member of doing this or that. All members just calm down and refrain and allow the member for Prince Albert to proceed.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. And it has to deal with last year's economic strategy regarding the lottery tax -- or perhaps it should go to the former minister, since he was the one that led the charge of the brigade of the lottery tax.

Mr. Minister, you projected last year a revenue of \$26.5 million from the lottery tax. Would you confirm today whether you received -- was it \$5 million? -- how much money you received from it. Was it \$5 million? was it \$10 million? just how much was it you received in income from the lottery tax before you were forced to realize that this really was not a money tree for you?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- I may have to check this number for the hon. member, to be more precise, but it seems to me that the shortfall from our projected revenues on the lottery tax, which we obviously abandoned, I think the shortfall in revenue for '89-90 fiscal year was something in the order of \$15 million.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Mr. Speaker, new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, you tell me that you lost \$15 million in projected revenue. Clearly this

tax failed as a revenue source. It also failed the people in culture, sport, and recreation, because what it did is it did not live up to the projected income for them.

Would you confirm, Mr. Minister, that the revenues to Sask Sport were decreased by 18 million last year which resulted in a 20 per cent decrease in revenue to 1,200 organizations in culture, sports, and recreation in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Well once again I maybe can't be as precise as the minister in charge of Sask Sport could be, but if memory serves me right, once again I think for the '89-90 fiscal year, all of the group's funding was kept whole and that was because of some surplus that they had in the fund. But I could check that for the hon. member.

In so far as what the picture is most recently, I think the view is that there was a fair rebound in sales, and I think if you temper that with the fact that generally across western Canada with the economy being a little softer, sales didn't meet their predictions of a year ago even in places that didn't go for the tax. So there's a number of factors that have to be looked at in doing a reasoned evaluation of where that fund is today.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Final question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. Mr. Minister, we have a loss in revenue of \$15 million to the treasury. We have a loss to Sask Sport of \$18 million. That's a 20 per cent cut to 1,200 organizations. In addition to that they had to use up all of their reserves. Mr. Minister, could you tell me, how much did you pay your PC polling firm to give you this good advice?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- As I pointed out, the hon. member is wrong in some of his assumptions, Mr. Speaker. The funding for '89-90, as I understand it, was kept whole for all the groups. Yes, the revenue from that source was less than we expected. That was dealt with in last year's budget. And obviously this year, the thrust in this year's budget was outlined and tabled roughly a month ago, Mr. Speaker.

And we stand behind that thrust, Mr. Speaker, and that thrust, unlike the NDP who would vote against that budget, was no tax increases, Mr. Speaker, controlling internal government spending, and spending money on the important areas of health, education, and agriculture. And we stand behind that budget thrust, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan Commission on Directions in Health Care

Ms. Smart: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, emphasizing the importance of home care is one of the positive aspects of the Murray commission report on Future Directions in health care. The commission makes a number of recommendations that would strengthen our home care system.

Mr. Minister, the opposition, the people involved in the delivery of home

care services, and the seniors of this province have all asked you to give home care a higher priority, something you have so far refused to do. Can you tell this House if you will now be adopting the recommendations in this report?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Mr. Speaker, as I said to the hon. member's colleague the other day, the critic for Health, as we deal with this report and as we look at it, rather than get into the very specific recommendations that may be adopted or whatever, that we should give some time for those organizations to say, you know to give their responses. And as the member here from Saskatoon has noted, some of them have now been coming forward with their responses.

I think it's important to note that the first response from the NDP opposition was very much a negative response; and now in recent days, as the associations are coming out and acknowledging that it's a very comprehensive report and that there are some positive things in the report, we now have the questions like the one here.

Mr. Speaker, home care without question needs more emphasis. Home care without question received more emphasis in this budget. Home care this year, in this year's budget, received . . . the budget for home care is \$30.405 million, almost a 10 per cent increase, 9.5 per cent increase over last year in some difficult times. There is no question, though, that home care is one of those pressure areas and will continue to be as our ageing population dictates to a large degree health care spending into the future.

The commission's recognized that. I'm thankful that the members of the opposition have actually recognized the comprehensive nature of the commission's report.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Smart: -- A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Mr. Minister, the opposition has been talking about the positive value of home care for a long time, and you have refused to recognize that.

The amount in your budget for home care did not impress those who deliver the service. I remind you that Kathleen Morpurgo of the Saskatoon home care branch said that the budget gives home care even less flexibility than last year's budget and represents the same percentage of overall health care spending as last year's budget. Dr. Robert Murray said the commission was disappointed that the budget did not put more money into home care.

Mr. Minister, the message is clear. Home care has been and is underfunded. You don't have to review this document for months, Mr. Minister, to take the steps necessary. You just have to show the political will . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I'm going to have to interrupt the hon. member and ask her to get to the point of her remarks, the question.

Ms. Smart: -- Mr. Speaker, my question is very clear. Does the minister have the political will to implement these recommendations now? Will you address the problem of the underfunding of home care?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- My response and the response of the government to the commission's report, allowing people to have a chance to put their thoughtful responses forward on individual aspects of the report and on the wider commission report -- no question, that's true.

I hear the hon. member who it's noted is not asking the health questions as it relates to the commission report today, the Health critic -- I hear her chirping away over there.

But the interesting point on this, Mr. Speaker, is two days ago the Health critic on the opposition side was up condemning the report out of hand. That's what happened; that's what she did.

And now, Mr. Speaker, other members of the opposition will stand and say, oh here's a portion that's pretty positive. We better change our position here. Here's a point that's pretty positive -- adopt it now, and don't wait for five minutes. Adopt it right now.

Mr. Speaker, the commission report is comprehensive, as I've said. They've said some very positive things. They have identified some areas that need some attention. I have acknowledged here and elsewhere that home care is one of the areas with significant pressure, and we will be addressing home care as time goes on. And the province of Saskatchewan demands that, and they will receive that because of our ageing population, as I've said.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Smart: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the minister -- this is a new question -- I want to tell the minister that I am asking these questions because I am the critic for seniors' issues, and it is the seniors of this province who are deeply concerned about your underfunding of health care.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Smart: -- Mr. Minister, when you people came to government in 1982, you chose to sit on a project which had been developed to increase home care services across this province, and eight years later you're still sitting on that project. And all over Saskatchewan people are recognizing that home care is not getting the kind of attention it deserves from your government.

When are you going to stop hiding from this issue and address the urgent need for home care services in this province?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- The point should be very clear. As I said in my former

answer, Mr. Speaker, the first position was, scrap it; the next position is, maybe there's something we should be adopting here.

Dr. Murray himself said, when he was leading up to the release of the report and after the release of the report, said, look at this comprehensive report in its entirety, and we owe the people of Saskatchewan that very careful look at the whole thing. And when I say we owe the people of Saskatchewan, I mean all of us who are elected here in responsible positions, to act responsibly in looking at the whole report.

I say to the hon. member who's asking the questions regarding home care once again, home care is a pressure area; there's no question. Home care has received increased funding in this year's budget in anticipation of these kinds of things -- 9.5 per cent increase is no small matter.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Forest Week and Arbor Day

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've provided a copy . . .

The Speaker: -- Now I'm going to . . . I think hon. members . . . Member for Regina Elphinstone. Could we have the attention of the member for Regina Elphinstone. Now let us once more, as a group, control ourselves as members should and allow the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources to proceed. I think that's only fair.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. I started to say that I've provided a copy to this statement to the members opposite before question period.

It's a great honour to bring to the attention of the Assembly today that I have officially declared the week from May 6 to 12 as National Forest Week and Monday, May 7 as Arbor Day, Mr. Speaker.

Together with the Saskatchewan and Canadian forestry associations, Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources is acknowledging the special week and day to allow Saskatchewan residents the opportunity to recognize the importance of forests in their lives.

Arbor Day began more than 100 years ago, Mr. Speaker, as a day for school children to clean up their school yards and plant trees. The celebration of Arbor Day has grown over the years and the traditional tree planting has come to symbolize our connection with future generations and the need for conservation.

To make this point to school children across the province, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources has sent out more than 30,000 seedlings to students to be planted on Arbor Day. Mr. Speaker, to plant a

tree is to demonstrate our faith in the future and reflects our commitment to the next generation. It's a promise that today's children will inherit viable forests and a healthy environment.

Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources started a five-year, 50 million reforestation plan in 1988. I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that we are ahead of schedule, and after only two years have already put 23 million trees into the ground.

Another exciting initiative, which was just announced today by the minister responsible for SaskPower, is a greenhouse at the Shand power station. The greenhouse will use waste heat and carbon dioxide from the plant to enhance the growth of as many as 2 million seedlings annually. An announcement of this magnitude just prior to Forest Week and Arbor Day is truly exciting.

The provincial Arbor Day ceremony will be hosted on the south lawn of the legislative grounds Monday afternoon starting at 2 p.m., and I would like to take this opportunity to invite my colleagues on both sides of the House to join in this celebration sometime during the afternoon.

Saskatchewan forests should be revered, Mr. Speaker. They are an important part of our province as they contribute to the environment, offer recreation, and provide hundreds of jobs for Saskatchewan residents. Each member of the Legislative Assembly has been provided with a seedling, and I urge each and every one of them, Mr. Speaker, to plant the tree as a symbol of their commitment to the environment and healthy forests.

During National Forest Week, and particularly Arbor Day, Mr. Speaker, I urge the hon. members and all Saskatchewan residents to join with Parks and Renewable Resources and the Saskatchewan Forestry Association in recognizing the importance of forests to the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to first of all thank the minister for sending me a copy of his statement, and I also want to thank the minister on behalf of myself and my colleagues over here for the seedling. I believe it's a white spruce seedling. I want to thank you on behalf of my colleagues for that also, Mr. Minister.

And I also want to indicate that this most certainly is an important part of Saskatchewan's history, and that is Arbor Day and the planting of trees by the school students in this province, and also National Forest Week. It's a time to celebrate both of them.

Arbor Day and National Forest Week are becoming more important now, Mr. Minister, with the realization that if we are going to have a green planet and maintain a green planet, we are going to have to replenish the forest in this province. With that, Mr. Minister, on behalf of myself and my colleagues on this side, we want to support the statement that you have made this morning. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 21 -- An Act to amend The Education Act

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Education Act.

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

Bill No. 22 -- An Act to establish the Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to establish the Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 9 -- An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to this amending Bill, to section 46 of The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act. This section of the Act which has been in place since the original Act of 1973 is now being used by the federal housing agency, Canada Mortgage and Housing, for purposes that it was not initially intended. CMHC (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) have directed approved lenders with home owner mortgages insured under the National Housing Act to obtain personal judgements against borrowers in default in addition to foreclosing on the properties.

Section 46 has been given as the enabling legislation to do this. In November of 1989 a court decision regarding the first test case of section 46 upheld CMHC's position, and supported a very broad interpretation of The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation's Act by the lender. Our justice officials have advised all lenders and CMHC that the province has launched an appeal on the decision on behalf of the home owners effected.

Also, CMHC and lenders have been advised that the government is in the process of considering an amendment to section 46. CMHC has responded to our actions by readvising lenders to suspend seeking judgements on home-owner loans until the appeal decision is rendered.

Prior to the appeal decision, our government, Mr. Speaker, through this amendment is proceeding in a proactive fashion to ensure that no room is

left for CMHC to continue on its present course.

By narrowing the application of this section, those families and individuals having homes with NHA (National Housing Act) insured mortgages will once again be assured of being provided with the debtor protection legislation of this province. In view of this, Mr. Speaker, I expect all members to support this amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Smart: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak to this Bill as the critic for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. All members of this House are well acquainted with the economic crisis faced by Saskatchewan farmers. What is frequently ignored, however, is the severe economic crunch that is also a daily fact of life for Saskatchewan families all across this province.

We see this problem statistically and otherwise in the increasing number of business bankruptcies and foreclosure proceedings on businesses, farms, and homes. Often, Mr. Speaker, these situations have arisen due to circumstances beyond the control of individual farmers, business people and families. Over the years our province has experienced problems of this nature in the past, and the governments of the day have, from time to time, taken proactive measures to alleviate hardship, to protect individuals, and to protect, maintain, and enhance the economy of this province.

One of these measures, Mr. Speaker, was the passage by the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) of The Limitation of Civil Rights Act. And one of the unique aspect of this legislation has been to protect the rights of individuals and protect their financial position in the event of foreclosure actions by the banks or other financial institutions. In this instance the relevant section is section 2 of The Limitation of Civil Rights Act. In effect this section places a restriction on the right of the mortgagee of a home or other property such that they can only recover the unpaid balance through the resale of the mortgaged property. In other words, Mr. Speaker, if the value of the unpaid mortgage is greater than the value of the property sold, the mortgagee must accept the loss and cannot sue the mortgager for the difference.

Mr. Speaker, there were two exceptions to this. The first exception was The Housing and Special-care Homes Act, and secondly, The Saskatchewan Housing (Corporation) Act. In both of these instances, sections of those Acts exempted the protection of The Limitation of Civil Rights Act, because under both of these Acts the type of activity that was being undertaken, namely the construction of special-care homes, subsidized housing, etc., were not projects that would be applicable to the protection afforded under The Limitation of Civil Rights Act.

(1045)

This, Mr. Speaker, was the clear intent of these three pieces of legislation. It was clear at the time these Acts were passed by this legislature and clear to the lending institutions of the province for

years; for years, that is, until your friends, the PC Party in Ottawa, decided in the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation that the home owners in Saskatchewan should be responsible, personally responsible, for covering the financial institutions' risk and personally responsible indirectly for the economic problems in this province.

What happened then, Mr. Speaker, was that after foreclosure action had been taken against an individual, and the sale price of the property was less than the value of the outstanding mortgage, the CMHC initiated court action through various lending institutions to recover the full amount of the original mortgage.

This action, Mr. Speaker, was initiated by the Tory friends of the members opposite. And it was an act of capriciousness; it was an action akin to usury. It was an attempt, Mr. Speaker, to squeeze blood from a stone.

The first route they took was through The Housing and Special-care Homes Act, section 39, which read that:

Where a loan is made under the National Housing Act (Canada) or any former National Housing Act (Canada) and secured by a mortgage on land in Saskatchewan The Limitation of Civil Rights Act . . . shall have no application to the mortgage or to the rights and remedies of the mortgagee thereunder.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, single-dwelling units are not special-care homes, and yet action was taken against individuals, based on that legislation and specifically section 39.

To correct this injustice, that legislation was amended in August of 1982 to deal with that issue by adding the words "in respect of a special-care home or housing project contemplated by this Act" after the word "loan" in section 39.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the government opposite did not do a thorough review of the statutes when this amendment was presented to the House. Because section 46 of The Saskatchewan Housing (Corporation) Act* has, until this amendment is passed, almost identical wording to section 39 of the special care homes legislation I've already referred to.

The CMHC, the capricious* CMHC under good Tory managers searched the statutes, because in the past months proceedings were initiated against individuals using section 46 of the Saskatchewan housing Act. My colleagues on this side of House have told me of constituents who did in fact pay up. They didn't know they were protected, or they were not in a position to contest the claim of the financial institutions in court.

However, two such matters did go to the courts, and I'm sure the minister and officials are aware of those court decisions. The first case, First City Trust* versus Kim and Cindy Bell*, appearing on their own behalf, found in favour of First City Trust*. And that decision is now under appeal.

The second case involved First City Trust* and Woodland Properties*. In this instance, Woodland* argued that the spirit and intent of the Saskatchewan housing Act precludes single family dwellings and did not waive the rights of individuals under The Limitation of Civil Rights Act* in this instance. The judge agreed, and in doing so argued that the decision in the First City Trust* versus the Bell case was in error.

To correct this, we now have the legislation before us today. I am however very disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that the government opposite did nothing to correct this misuse of section 46 of the Saskatchewan housing Act* until this time.

They could have made representation to CMHC to stop this action; they did nothing. They could have intervened in the courts on behalf of the plaintiffs*; they did nothing. They could have amended this legislation last session, indeed in 1982-83 when section 39 of the special-care homes legislation* was amended, and they did nothing.

They did nothing, Mr. Speaker, until they had to. They did nothing to protect the interests of Saskatchewan families at a time when they needed an advocate. At a time of economic disaster and crisis these people were ignored. It's a shameful record, Mr. Speaker, and it is a well-known record. And in the face of this, they did not even make this amendment retroactive to redress the injustices that have been pursued by their Ottawa buddies.

The amendment before us, Mr. Speaker, does deal with the problem at hand. It will, we are satisfied, prevent this type of action by CMHC and other financial institutions in the future. For that reason we will be supporting this Bill. We do so, however, regretful of the nature of the failure of the members opposite to act more quickly on this matter and their failure to make this action retroactive. I will have questions regarding this legislation in Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker, but I adjourn the debate today.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure

Education

Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Rolfes: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, last night we didn't make as much progress as I had hoped we would, but I think it was worthwhile spending as much time as we did on SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) and the new concept that you people implemented in 1987 on SIAST. And I suppose we can debate it, as they say out on the farm, until the cows come home, and we'll continue to disagree.

But I don't think there's any doubt at all in my mind and the minds of many people that that was a retrograde step and that we will be suffering from that decision that your government made for many, many years to come. It will not, as the minister indicated last night, well, now that the kinks are out . . . I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, there are lots of kinks left in that decision that you made and the repercussions of that decision.

And I do hope for the sake of education that we will be able to address that problem. And if it's not your government, then certainly our government after the next election, we will address that problem. And that does not mean that we will go back to what there was before because I do think, as the minister indicated last night, we did need some changes to address the problems of the 21st century.

But having said that, those changes certainly can be made without the dire repercussions that happened because of the process that you people used with very little consideration given to what happened to the staff that were so drastically affected, and in many instances, Mr. Minister, as I indicated last night, I think where their future was shattered after having served this province and having served education for a good number of years. And, that is something that I think is unforgivable of a government and of the former minister of Education and I certainly want to put that on the record.

Mr. Minister, I did ask last night . . . I want to finish off on SIAST for today and then go into another area. That doesn't mean we're finished with SIAST, but for today at least, I want to address another problem.

Mr. Minister, I did ask last night something on the calendar, and I was hoping that maybe you would have an opportunity overnight to look at that and see if it's . . . It's not a major issue but it's an irritant, and I think to satisfy some of the people out there who drew that to my attention, I would appreciate very much if you could give me an answer this morning.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, the question was dealing with advertising that was being done in the calendar by the private vocational schools. The production of the extension calendar is the continuation of a long-standing tradition in Saskatoon going back to the days of the community college.

The calendar is part of the adult education brokerage function provided by Kelsey campus for the residents of Saskatoon and it provides a one-stop shopping service for adults interested in continuing their education. It reduces duplication efforts on the part of different agencies and confusion adults frequently feel when attempting to identify programs to meet their needs.

I would also point out that since this is advertising, there is money coming into Kelsey in that regard. Private vocational schools advertise as well as place course description within the calendar. They do so on a fee-for-service basis. In putting the calendar together, Kelsey campus officials meet with private vocational school operators to discuss the

program offerings that will be made available.

This provides an opportunity to identify areas where duplication of program effort can be avoided or where a private vocational school should offer a program because it does not exist at Kelsey; for example, business and secretarial studies.

The calendar provides a common meeting ground for all deliverers of adult education services in Saskatoon. As such it provides an effective vehicle for communication amongst agencies, reduces duplication of efforts, and reduces confusion on the part of the adults hunting for programs.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I'm fully aware of the history of the calendar, and I have no objection to the production of the calendar. In fact it was a very useful tool in the high schools when I was in - _ as I indicated last night -- in a counselling situation. We all looked forward to the calendar when it came out. That was not my concern.

My concern of course was that any private vocational schools that are advertised in the calendar, if they are contained in here, the danger is that people will accept that as being given the approval of the Department of Education. And I would hope that in the future, and we may address that problem when you put in your stricter regulations, that problem may be then addressed.

There is a problem, Mr. Minister, when the classes are advertised and then the students find out that, number one, the private vocational school that is offering that particular course is not providing qualified staff. And I will point that out this morning in our discussions on estimates. That was my concern last night. I have no concern over the calendar being printed. In fact I think it's money worth spent.

I hope that as we address the problems in private vocational schools through stricter regulations, that when classes are advertised for private vocational schools, the Department of Education will make certain that when students then register for those schools, although they don't have tacit approval, those programs by the Department of Education, I do hope that we look at those programs and say yes, they meet our standards and we wouldn't worry if students register into those classes. Can I get that assurance from you that that will happen in the future?

(1100)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, to follow up on my previous answer with regard to the advertising, I would just point out to the member opposite that the dollars gained from the advertising that the private vocational schools do, more than offsets the cost of the calendar, so that of course is good for Kelsey.

I would also point out that Kelsey also receives some 10 to \$15,000 from private vocational schools for registration. Again this is something done on a fee for service.

Now I understand your concern about the programs, and obviously that's a concern that we have had and the reason why we are going to address that in new regulations. But I would point out as well that the programs are approved by the Department of Education, the staff have been approved by the Department of Education in the private vocational school. But what we have to ensure is that the quality is there, the quality of the program.

So we feel quite comfortable, and I would feel quite optimistic that you will also feel more comfortable when you see the new regulations, that in fact we are going to address those problems and that when students see that there are courses being offered in the private vocational schools, that they can feel that they are going to have quality staff, there'll be quality programs that will in fact lead them to employment down the road.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Chairman, that's what frightens me, Mr. Minister. If you would qualify your statement by saying look, in the future we are going to guarantee through stringent regulations that this will happen, if you say to me, Mr. Minister, that you have been doing this, then I have some real fears. As I will point out later on this morning on private vocational schools, if your department has gone in and has examined the curriculum and has okayed the qualification of those staff members, and you're going to say you're going to continue to do that in the future but under more stricter regulations, then I have a very serious concern. And I hope you didn't mean that, by saying that we're doing it.

What you have been doing hasn't worked in many instances. That is the problem. And what we need, what we need are stricter regulations. And hopefully we can address the problems that presently exist. Mr. Minister, I don't want to get into that right now; I will address that problem very shortly. I want to finish off with SIAST this morning before I get into private vocational schools.

Again I want to reiterate, Mr. Minister, good, if you can make some money on advertising; that was not the problem that I was addressing. I was addressing the problem of classes being advertised in this calendar, and my problem simply to you was make certain that when they advertise classes in here that they meet the standards, the academic standards that you expect not only of Kelsey, but also of private vocational schools. That was the concern that I had, and I will leave it at that, Mr. Minister.

I want to, Mr. Minister, ask you some, very quickly, a few questions on the board of directors of SIAST. And these can be answered, I think, very quickly. Can you tell me from your 1989 annual report of SIAST, how many of the board members that are on the inside cover are no longer -- I think that's the shorter route to go -- are no longer members of the board?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- There are four people there, Mr. Chairman, who are no longer on the board: John Cross, Elizabeth Crosthwaite, Eva Lee, and Ray Meyer.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, am I given to understand that Mr. Fisher is still part of the board?

An Hon. Member: -- No, he isn't.

Mr. Rolfes: -- I didn't think so.

Mr. Chairman, would you tell me, Mr. Minister, what were the reasons for these people . . . there probably were a number of reasons. I know Ms. Crosthwaite, Elizabeth Crosthwaite, because she's no longer with your department, that probably would be the reason why she is no longer on the board. But can you tell me the reasons why John Cross or Ray Meyer or Mr. Fisher, why they are no longer on the board. Were they asked to leave? And while you're also doing that, can you tell me, have these people been replaced? And if they have, who are the new members of the board?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, John Cross was only on the board for the initial start-up period of it, and then a term was completed; he's moved on. He's very busy within his own company of Philom Bios.

Elizabeth Crosthwaite, as you know, is no longer with the department. Dennis Fisher resigned because of pressure of his work duties, as I understand it. Eva Lee, as you know, is no longer with the organization. Ray Meyer as well resigned, is no longer with the organization.

As far as the replacements, I can tell you that replaced on that board, Robert Wilson from Saskatoon, who was an employee at SIAST for many, many years, now with the corrections branch in adult education. Second one is Ken Stevenson from Saskatoon, a lawyer. It was felt that they wanted a legal person on the board, and Ken is the other replacement.

We do have a couple of other changes that will be taking place with regard to students. Ian Boire has resigned, I'm not sure whether he's completed his studies now or not in that position.

An Hon. Member: -- Ian?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Ian Boire, B-o-i-r-e. He was from Wascana campus. I'm not sure if he's finished his course now, but he has resigned and another student will be coming on very shortly, and we'll be announcing those before very long.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I want to ask a few questions about the administrative structure of SIAST. Can you tell me . . . as I indicated last night, there were a number of changes made over the past two or three years. In fact I believe about five dramatic changes were made in the administration. And that was one of the problems that the administration had because they would just get going in one direction and then somebody would decide no, that's not the direction we want to go; we want to change it.

Can you tell me, am I correct in saying that the present set-up is something of the following. On the top, of course, we have the minister who ultimately has to accept responsibility. Then we have the board directly underneath the minister. Then the president and executive vice-president. And under the executive vice-president we have three

vice-presidents or vice-principals -- I'm not sure if you call them vice-presidents or vice-principals.

Is that basically the set-up of SIAST administrative branch, or has that changed again?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's the make-up of the administration as I understand it. However I would point out that the position of president is vacant at the present time. I think that that search is going on fairly soon. I would think they'll be advertising in this week's paper. That was my understanding.

Bryan Dunleavy is the acting president. He is an executive vice-president. Harold Braun is the vice-president of finance and administration; and Wilf Hiebert is the vice-president of human resources. Chris LaFontaine is the vice-president of native services division. So there are those three vice-presidents. Now there is another vice-president of programming, but that position is vacant at the present time. That's the position that was held by Sharon Maher.

Mr. Rolfes: -- So there are four vice-presidents.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Four vice-presidents; one position is vacant. And Sharon resigned for health reasons, as you probably know.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Chairman, no, I did not know that. I knew that she had left but I didn't know the reasons for it. Mr. Minister, I did not get the fourth vice-president of . . . I've got the vice-president of program, human resources, and finance and administration. Would you give me the fourth one again and the individual involved?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The fourth position was Christopher LaFontaine. He has the status of a vice-president at the native services division. Now he is not in that position full time because he is also the head of the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, would you mind telling me in the last . . . ever since its inception, how many people, different people have held the human resources vice-president's job, and who were they?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, there have been three people. We don't have the name of the first one. I think the member opposite can recognize that most of us are new with this. We can get that for you. Then the second person was one Mike Roberts, and now Wilf Hiebert is in that position.

Mr. Rolfes: -- All right, Mr. Minister, if you can provide the other name for me I would appreciate that. Mr. Minister, I'm going to leave this area for now because I want to get into some other area this morning. But certainly this will not be the end of the discussion of SIAST. I believe in these estimates there are many other areas that I still want to cover.

Mr. Minister, I want to now turn to an area that has been of considerable

concern to the opposition over the last three years. Our concern was first expressed I believe by the member from Prince Albert back in 1987 to the then minister of Education, the Hon. Lorne Hepworth, and that was private vocational schools.

And I want to say from the outset, and I know I will sound somewhat critical and it is intended to be critical, and that is that the pace at which you people have addressed the problem of private vocational schools has been simply, I guess to say it mildly, has been a terrible response, has been a neglect of duty, has been simply a neglect to protect the people out in urban and rural Saskatchewan.

There are not only a few, Mr. Minister; there are simply hundreds of people, as I will indicate to you this morning, who have suffered because you people would not address that problem of private vocational schools.

In 1982, as you know, I believe we had 18 private vocational schools with attendance of about 1,800. Basically it was the Saskatoon Business College and Robertson that were providing . . . and there were some hairdressing schools who were giving cosmetology, but basically that was it.

I have no objection, Mr. Minister, to the increase of private vocational schools if they meet certain regulations. But I would like to indicate to you my preference however is that where possible and where feasible, programs that can be, should be offered in public institutions. We did I think an excellent job in the past and Saskatchewan's had an excellent record. And I think that what has happened since 1982 and since 1987 particularly, has been nothing less than scandalous in this province, nothing less than scandalous.

(1115)

And not only did the students suffer, Mr. Minister, but the people of Saskatchewan paid very dearly for that. It is not just a few millions of dollars that the people of Saskatchewan have paid. I estimate, Mr. Minister, that, I think -- and I'll use the term, rather conservative, in my estimation -- that we probably have poured down the drain somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$50 million to private vocational schools where courses simply did not meet the standards.

The certificates that those students have received have been useless. They have not been accepted by the industry out there. And, Mr. Minister, the quality of the program that had been offered is to say the least, horrible, just simply unacceptable. And you have done very little to try and address that problem.

Mr. Minister, I did have a look, and I appreciate you giving to me the interim report of your committee on regulations. I've gone through it. There are some good suggestions in it. I'm going to make some other recommendations and I hope you take them in the light in which I will give them to you. But I do want to say, Mr. Minister, that your committee, who I believe from the interim report have indicated that over the time that they have been appointed have had only six meetings -- have had only six

meetings.

I believe, Mr. Minister, that had you said to the committee, I want an interim report very quickly because we have a very serious problem out there. They could have addressed that problem very quickly had they turned to Alberta or turned to Manitoba, who addressed this problem a few years ago.

I have a copy of the regulations that have been put into effect in Alberta and I think they meet pretty well the bill that we on this side have said you should implement for private vocational schools. So I think had you been concerned or had you addressed the problem, as we indicated you should, you could have put something into effect very quickly to protect those people out there. But you refused to do so.

I still hear you say, Mr. Minister, I still hear you say that many of the schools that provide private vocational courses are doing a good job. I would like you to tell me this morning, other than the Saskatoon Business College which has a very good reputation, and the owner of that school is very concerned, very concerned about what is going on in the province, is very concerned about his reputation being damaged and his school's reputation being damaged by what has happened in Saskatchewan.

And I would like you to tell me this morning what other schools, with very few reservations that you may have, that you would recommend to young people. Would you recommend Robertson? Would you recommend Universal? Would you recommend CompuCollege? Would you have recommended a year ago Bridge City? Would you recommend the security one on Broadway in Saskatoon? Would you have recommended the Bible school that you had to close down? Yet I hear you say, Mr. Minister, time and time again, that on the whole, private vocational schools are offering quality programs here in this province.

And I want to know from you, Mr. Minister, now what are those colleges, those private vocational schools, which ones would you recommend to those students out there who don't know whether or not they offer quality education. They have to take your word for it, and when you say that many of them are good, which ones would you recommend to them, Mr. Minister, since you are the minister?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, the member opposite has raised a lot of different questions that I would like to respond to. Now he commented about the fact that there were only 18 private vocational schools in 1982 and some 59 today. And the reason for the increase of course is due to the changing times that we're in. When we recognize, and he'll know this as a former guidance counsellor, where it suggested that within the next 10 years that many of the jobs that we see today are not going to be in existence, 10 years from now. Some 50 per cent of the jobs at that time could be brand-new jobs.

Now the problem that we have is: how are people going to become prepared for those jobs? There's going to have to obviously be a lot of retraining that takes place. And the role of private vocational schools today has

changed. It's changing all the time, as is the role of our SIAST campuses. We have to be ready to meet the change. We have to be there to address the needs of adults who need this retraining, and you will find, I am sure, that in most cases that the private vocational schools can respond very quickly to changes in the market-place when we have demands for different types of services. They can change and respond much faster than SIAST can. When SIAST has its programs in place, it might take several months before they can bring about a change in their curriculum.

So for the most part, the private vocational schools are meeting that need. We also have to consider the fact that they offer, for the most part, short-term training, which can meet specific needs. And you talk about concerns that are out there, I recognize and I know of concerns that have been raised. And you want me to list off those that I would recommend, well it's not my policy or the policy of the department, certainly, to recommend any particular institution. We don't recommend that to students.

But let's keep in mind the fact that other than a few where we have had concerns raised, the balance of them, for the most part, are offering good programs, good programs. I can tell you that Bridge City is one that was not meeting all of the conditions, and you know what happened to Bridge City. We also know that there were concerns about CompuCollege and they are being addressed. But at the same time any complaint or concern that is raised with the department is investigated.

You want to have an idea of the number of concerns, and I would suggest to the member that you go and visit more of these private vocational schools, talk to more of the students, talk to employers that are employing them. And you made a comment here the other night too that I'll get to in a minute. Go and talk to the employers that are hiring these people. If these colleges are being approved by the department, and the programs are being approved, the certificates then are valid when they complete those courses.

Now there can be any number of reasons why an employer doesn't always hire people that go out. Just because they have a certificate in their hand doesn't mean they're going to get employed. Goodness knows, again, from your background in education, and whether you've been involved in hiring teachers or not, but you can have many teachers that will come out and can have equivalent qualifications with regard to experience and university degrees or whatever, but there are some that you probably wouldn't hire ahead of others. And the same thing can apply with people coming out of these private vocational schools. So just having the certificate doesn't guarantee that they are necessarily going to get a job. There are a lot of other things that you take into consideration.

Now let's take a look then at the number of concerns, and you mentioned the other day about a group of students that had met with you. Now I never heard from that group of students about a meeting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well that is not accurate at all. So the member from Saskatoon Centre sits back there chirping from her seat and saying things that are just not true at all.

We have responded to all of the calls . . . concerns that have come in, and I am quite happy to meet with those students. I told you when you brought this to my attention, I would be happy to meet with them, but I never heard from those students.

An Hon. Member: -- I wrote you a letter.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I haven't seen it.

An Hon. Member: -- Hand-delivered to your office.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- You did not have the students get in touch with me direct then about having a meeting with them. So I would be quite happy to meet with them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well you show me the copy of it.

The second thing: I indicated to you that any concerns or complaints that are raised by students or by others are investigated by the department. And let me give you an idea of the type of complaint that we have had so far. There have been in the last -- I'm not sure of a time on this; I would think over the last year, past program year -- types of complaints: school not registered -- there were three individual complaints that were received; misrepresentation -
_ 21 individual, three group; credits, exams, marks, schedule, concerns that were raised by individuals -- there were 24 concerns raised there; unprofessional conduct -- five individual; fee payment, refunds -- 31 individuals; quality of training -- 31 individual and three group.

And I know that we've got some things there that certainly need to be addressed and they will be addressed in the new regulations that are coming out.

But when you consider the number of students that are going to these private vocational schools, I would suggest to you that the number of complaints that we have had have been minimal. But anyway, all of those complaints that have been received have been followed up on. For 1988 we had 11 group complaints, 61 individual. For 1989 we had six group and 115 individual. And eight comprehensive evaluations have been conducted, which included the complete review in different areas -- quality of instruction, health and safety, employment potential, curriculum, advertisement and the general student satisfaction.

Four schools have had their registration restricted due to the results of a school evaluation and student complaints.

So they are followed up by the department as quickly as possible. Now you say well it takes a long period of time. Well let me just tell you a little bit about a college like . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Three years.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well three years. We're dealing with a pretty complex situation here and I don't think that if you look back on your own

record that you would have developed some of these things any faster.

There is a procedure then that is followed when a concern comes in and how complaints are addressed. All concerns or complaints are to be considered serious and require documentation and some form of follow-up. Now sometimes it's pretty difficult to track these students down. They might put forward a complaint and then to try and follow up and get more information from them is sometimes very difficult.

Concerns may be expressed to the department in many different forms, by telephone, by letter, in person, or a second person who passes it on, such as an MLA. The department procedure is as follows. Initial contact is made by the student at which time a request is made by the department to have all concerns documented and submitted. You have to keep in mind here that there are certain procedures that have to be followed because of the legality of some of these issues.

A follow-up is conducted if documentation is not received within one week, reasons determined. Upon receipt of the documented concerns, the school principal is contacted verbally or in writing. A written response is requested. Upon receipt of the school's response, review and discussion of concerns with school officials is conducted during an on-site visit.

And the fifth one, recommendations or solutions are determined, and parties involved are notified of their participation. So that's the procedure that is followed whenever a complaint or concern is sent into the department by whatever means.

So we are concerned about the students. We are concerned about the problems that they sometimes encounter. You're right, a good deal of money is going into these private vocational schools through student loans, some of which is Saskatchewan student loan money, and some comes from the federal student loan program.

(1130)

It's still meeting a need out there, and those people who are causing problems and are not following regulations, we are clamping down on them. And we have some pretty stringent procedures that are being followed right now with some of them in the province. So we're trying to address the problem, and the new regulations I think will go a long ways to doing more in that regard.

Mr. Muller: -- Mr. Chairman, I'd ask leave of the House to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Muller: -- I'd like to introduce a group of students from Midale, from the Premier's seat. They're grade 4 and 5 students; there's 24 of them. Their teacher is Anne Field, Beryl DeBruyne; chaperons and bus driver,

Sandra Holman and Norma Rosengren.

I would ask all members to welcome these students to the legislature in their normal fashion and I hope they enjoy their trip into Regina. I hope they enjoyed their tour of the legislature and I hope they have a pleasant journey home. I'll be meeting later with them, right after they leave the gallery.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure

Education

Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Chairman: -- Member from Saskatoon Sutherland . . . no, Saskatoon South. You've changed seats on me, sir.

Mr. Rolfes: -- It's much easier to . . . it doesn't take as long for the minister's response to come over here than it would over there. It's taking long enough, so we're trying to save some time here.

Mr. Minister, I do take very, very grave exception to your statement that I may have misled the House here in saying that you did not respond. I spoke to you verbally; I take this very seriously. I spoke to you verbally and I said that I would write you a letter, which I did that very day. I went to my office; I wrote a letter. I asked my secretary to take it to your office because I wanted you to be aware of it immediately. I'd signed it; she delivered it to your office. The letter that I wrote to you was on March 27, 1990 and it says the following:

Dear Mr. Meiklejohn: On March 24 I met with about 17 students who are/had been attending a private vocational school. They requested to meet with me because they were very concerned about the quality of education that they were receiving.

Some of these students had received a certificate from another private school. When they went into the market place they found out the business industry gave very little value to these certificates (they had received).

According to the students, businesses know that the standard of education provided by many of the private schools is considerably inferior to that offered by public educational institutions.

The students suggested that the entrance requirements must be strengthened and improved. They were very critical of the qualifications of the staff, and recommended that the staff should have degrees in the subject area that they teach.

The students were of the opinion that if the entrance requirements were

improved, and the staff qualifications were raised, then the certificates issued by the schools would have more validity with the business industry.

I thought it a pretty good recommendation. I went on to say:

The students also were concerned about the student debt load that they have inherited. With certificates that are virtually worthless and very few prospects of jobs, they are very pessimistic about their future.

The students have requested through me (and I want you to note that) . . . The students have requested through me to set up a meeting with you to discuss their future, their student loan obligations, and their concerns about private vocational schools.

The students would like to meet in Saskatoon at your earliest convenient time.

I would appreciate a quick response so that I can communicate your decision to the students.

This is sincerely signed by myself and that was sent to you on March 27. Today, Mr. Minister, we have May 4. I have not heard from your office. And, Mr. Minister, I am certain, and I will check again with my secretary who's been around for many years. And she told me that that letter was delivered and she personally took it up to your office. Now you said you did not receive it, and I am surprised at that. I will ask her again on Monday whether or not that letter was delivered, and I'm sure it was, as I know Betty and Betty's been around a long time. And when Betty says she does something, she does it.

An Hon. Member: -- Give me another copy.

Mr. Rolfes: -- I certainly will. But Mr. Minister, I take exception to the statement that you made that I don't deliver on my word, because I usually do and I don't . . . I take exception to that.

Mr. Minister, I do want to say that you had indicated yes, that there have been a number of increases in private schools. Mr. Minister, it has absolutely nothing to do with change. You know, if you had taken any philosophy classes -
_ and maybe you have -- Aristotle talked about change, and Aristotle by his theory of change proved that there was a first mover.

You know, change has been around a long, long time. And don't talk to me about, you know, you have to have these private vocational schools because of change. That is nonsense. What happened, Mr. Minister, is that your government went on the kick of privatization. And you couldn't do it fast enough to get rid of these public courses or the courses that were offered in public institutions and to get them into the private schools. You couldn't do it fast enough.

Consequently you had no regulations in place; you didn't have the staff in place to supervise these schools. And what has happened is that yes, you

have poured down the drain millions and millions of dollars of public funds through student loans that you have made available.

And not only, Mr. Minister, in the year 1988-89 did you give \$25 million, by your own statement that you gave to me, you made \$25 million of student loans available through Saskatchewan student loan and the Canada student loan, and many of these, many of these have gone to students who attended these questionable private schools where these questionable programs have been offered, who were issued certificates that were and are worthless.

Mr. Minister, when the students tell me it's not . . . You said before, well the member opposite, surely in his education he may have hired some teachers. Yes, I hired teachers. What I did look at was the certificate. And if they had a certificate from the Department of Education in Saskatchewan, I knew what standards they had to meet to get that certificate.

But, Mr. Minister, if that certificate had been offered by the Department of Education of Saskatchewan, and then I in my own mind said that's a worthless certificate, I wouldn't even look at it. I wouldn't even let the individual into my office to hire the individual.

And that's what's happening. When students contact the business people out there and say I have a certificate from such-and-such a private school, they don't even get a chance to be interviewed because the businesses are saying that's a worthless certificate; we don't recognize it. And that's the point that you were missing, that there are thousands of students out there who have certificates from these private schools but they can't even get into the door of the business. Not only are there students in debt to the tune of 10, 15, or \$16,000, but the public is out that money, as you will find out, or as we will find out when we're on that side, in two or three years hence when those loans are defaulted upon.

There are a number of students out there who simply cannot pay back their student loans because the certificates that they have received simply aren't worth the paper they are written on. So, Mr. Minister, that is the point that I was attempting to make, that they may as well not issue any certificate at all.

Mr. Minister, I do want to get into another area. But before I do so, I would like you to comment on that. What should students do when business laughs at the certificate they have, when business simply don't recognize the certificate they have? What should the student do? No jobs, some of them now on minimum wage, as I will refer to a little later this morning, and you're hassling them now through collection agencies to pay those loans back. Certificate is of absolutely no value to them at all.

Many of the students, Mr. Minister, who have taken courses, yes, they have employment, but in an entirely different area, not related at all to the program that they took because that program didn't mean a thing. The certificate is useless.

What is your response to those students when business simply laugh at the

certificate they have, they don't even want the certificate. And secondly, Mr. Minister, would you reconsider, since you're the one who has been constantly saying, and again saying this morning, that there are many private vocational schools out there that are doing a good job.

Would you tell the students at least, would you warn them, as the Minister of Education, which schools they should avoid and which schools are acceptable, because right now nobody knows, nobody knows whether its worthwhile. I mean, they come to me and say, well should I take such-and-such a course in such-and-such a private vocational school?

Many instances from my experience I say to them, no, don't. Save your money, because the course that is being offered and the certificate that will be issued to you will be worthless. I don't hesitate to tell them, because I'm not going to let those students be victimized, I'm not going to let those students be ripped-off by some of these fly-by-nighters who you endorse because you do license them.

And I want ask you, Mr. Minister, to comment on some of those things that I have put forward this morning.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, the member is rambling a fair bit, and I think he likes to generalize. I would ask the member opposite . . . and we hear a lot of chirping from the member from Saskatoon Centre talking about these bad schools, I would ask them to point out some of these colleges that have provided certificates to the students upon graduation that are not accepted by employers. I'd like you to do that.

An Hon. Member: -- Bridge City.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well Bridge City's not in operation any more either.

An Hon. Member: -- It was, and it issued many certificates.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Bridge City's not in operation any longer. But you talk about, like there's a whole bunch of these that give out certificates that are not valid. You give me examples of those because we don't have examples of those at all.

Now let me tell you something else. This is the member who's opposed to change; he's opposed to change quite clearly. I mean, when he starts talking about Aristotle for example, I mean surely to goodness, times are changing a lot more rapidly today than they ever have been in the past, even when that government was in power.

Let's look at something else, Mr. Chairman. The member opposite talks about regulations and the need to do something, do something a lot quicker. Where do the regulations come from that we're in the process of amending right now? Where do they come from? Well I can tell you where they came from, Mr. Chairman. They're the regulations that that party put in when they were in power back in the '70s. Those are the same regulations that have been followed all through the years and will be now, up until this

summer when we are making changes in them. So you're the one that brought in the regulations.

They were all right for you to use but they're not all right for us. I mean it's part of this double standard that you use in here so often. It's okay if the NDP did it but it's not good if the PCs are doing it today. So those are the regulations that we are changing today, Mr. Chairman. So let's just keep that in mind.

But I look forward to getting a list from you as to some of the certificates that have been provided to students upon graduation that are not accepted by employers. And you know as well that on the committee that's been looking at the regulations, that there are employers involved on that committee.

You also know that in the past that we have consultation with certain industries, and I would give you an example on a change that's brought about. The travel counsellor certificates, there were concerns in that particular area. And as of September 1, new changes were put in, changes that are accepted by the industry as a result of consultations with the industry and also some changes to the curriculum that were done with the travel association.

Now that type of communication I think is very, very important, and we have to ensure that that takes place in other areas as well, in the same way that there are advisory committees with regard to SIAST and some of the other post-secondary programs that we have in the province.

(1145)

Now I would also suggest to the member opposite, Mr. Chairman, that the quality of program is something that is addressed by the department. It's the department that approves curriculum upon reviewing it. The individual instructional staff of course have to be approved, student contracts, and facilities -- all of those things have to be approved. And the same regulations are being followed up until now that were followed when the NDP were in power.

So for the member to stand up and suggest that there are many, many of these certificates are worthless, is just not accurate at all unless he can show me otherwise.

We know that there have been some problems within CompuCollege, and those problems are being addressed right now with the department officials. Some changes have been suggested to them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, they didn't. They have been working on this since the first part of March, since the first part of March. There have been a lot of good programs offered there and students that have come out of there that have gone on to some very, very good jobs, I could suggest.

So it is something that we are going to address with our new regulations, and they will be out very shortly.

When the member talks about student loans and money that's going to the private vocational schools, I would suggest that we don't put any direct funding into the private vocational schools. And the member probably understands that; it's all through the form of student loans. And when students qualify and if the department has approved the programs and the staff, and the student qualifies, is there any reason why those particular students should be denied the right to go on and continue their education?

So there is a lot of money, I know, that's being spent by students at private vocational schools, but there are obviously needs that are being met, offerings that they feel they can benefit from. Maybe they can't afford the time to go and take the longer courses that are being offered at SIAST or going to university. So if there are concerns then that you have further, I think that we have to always be aware of that, and I welcome you passing them on.

Again, I think a comment that I made earlier, and you made mention about hiring teachers and the certificate that they might have or the degree that they might have doesn't always guarantee them a job. It doesn't always guarantee them what they want. I mean we have other reasons sometimes why employers will not hire a student coming out with a certificate from a private vocational school. There are other reasons. It may have absolutely nothing to do with the certificate that they've got. It could be to do with something else. So you've got to keep all of those things in mind as well.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, or no, I'd better not. Mr. Minister, I'm getting a little bit impatient with you deflecting some of the direct questions that I've asked of you. I mean, you're not that nai pive. You've been an educator. You can't be that nai pive. Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Then don't act the way you are right now, Mr. Minister. I indicated to you very clearly it doesn't help the individual if the certificate is not recognized by the business out there. Why issue a certificate as worthless?

I gave you examples. Bridge City for example was in the . . . Mr. Minister, let me tell you how scandalous your inaction has been, your department -- and not you, because you weren't there. But in 1986-87, by your own information that was sent over to me this morning, there was zero student loans given to Bridge City. In 1987-88 and '88-89, I believe, you gave over a million dollars of student loans were okayed for Bridge City.

You tell me one program offered by Bridge City that was accepted by the industry out there. And yet you okayed student loans to the tune of over \$1 million to Bridge City before you took any action. And the only reason you took action was because we on this side were burning the other minister, the previous minister, and continued to, and he finally had to admit that Bridge City was not acceptable.

Bridge City was licensed by your department. The individual obviously went in and okayed the curriculum, and then had to go back and re-examine the curriculum because it wasn't acceptable. You simply did not take any action.

I'm asking you again, Mr. Minister: when are you going to start to take some action, now, to stop the rip-off of these private vocational schools on the students that are out there? And when are you going to tell them which schools are acceptable to you, and which programs that they can take without any fear of having unqualified staff and curriculum which is unacceptable? Will you please tell us that now.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I know, Mr. Chairman, that the member opposite would like to take credit for the fact that any assessment or evaluation was being done at Bridge City was a result of his members raising it in the House, but I would point out to him that it was probably some six months prior to that that the investigation started. The first complaint came in from Bridge City back in December of 1988, as a matter of fact, and I think you raised it, or someone raised it in June.

There were steps that were being taken then at Bridge City to get a handle on what all of the problems were and you have to keep in mind that when you're dealing with a legally incorporated establishment such as Bridge City was, that there are certain steps that you have to go through in taking a look at all of the issues.

So I believe it was around March 16 that they were given the word that they could not enrol any more students because of concerns that had been raised and things that had been uncovered in the investigation. I think, as I recall it too, there was a very extensive audit done by a chartered accountant firm in Saskatoon which took a fair degree of time, and that information was necessary before the final steps could be taken.

And I recognize that Bridge City was not following the rules and there were some things happening there that could not be allowed to continue. They were not prepared to make the changes that we had requested, and it did become necessary then to shut them down last fall. And I suggest that that is the case that would be the end result with any private vocational school that wasn't following the rules.

Now one other thing though, I would point out to the member opposite, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that there was one program that I'm aware of in particular that was offered by Bridge City that I understand was quite successful, did provide students with something that was very worthwhile when they were finished, and that's the companion care program that they offered.

And as I understand it, there were people that went out from that program and got jobs. I couldn't tell you how many, but from the information I have, it was a popular course and it did lead somewhere, that they could go out and get jobs from that.

Now the steps, as I say, were taken down. It was found that it was not a financially viable organization. There were concerns, I know, with student refunds and the courses that were being offered. And the end result, as you know then, was shutting it down. And that's something that I think that we have to ensure is going to be the case with the new regulations.

They're going to be much stricter, as you can gather from the report, and you will have a chance to see the regulations before long.

You talk about the amount of money that was put through student loans there, and it was a substantial amount. But I'm sure that if you, when you see the new changes that are going to be taking place for August 1, you're going to find that probably we have the strictest rules that apply to student loans in the country, the ones that we have, in the country.

An Hon. Member: -- You don't know what you're doing now.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, that's what we're doing now. We've got them all ready to go. I mean there are no more student loans that we're concerned with at this time of the year, because students now are going to be gearing up for next year and looking at the moneys that they're going to need after the summer vacation. So these will be in place for August 1, and they are going to be very, very tight and will be the tightest probably that you'll find any place in Canada.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, those regulations can't come any too soon for me, and they can't be any too strict for me either. Because what we need to do, and you have a responsibility to see to it when you license a private school, that those private schools will provide the program that they advertise, that they will have qualified staff, and that their certificate when it is issued is recognized out there.

And that's what I like about Saskatoon Business College (Ltd.). He pays his staff the going rate of the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), and he gets qualified staff. You can't get qualified staff by paying them \$10 or less an hour. You're simply not going to get qualified staff.

Mr. Minister, my concern is this -- and it has been drawn to your department's attention, not just now, but a year or year and one-half ago, or two years ago -- that in some instances . . . I mean, these students tell me that a student that takes the course in the morning, who they take classes with in the morning, teaches that class in the afternoon, can't in my opinion be a qualified staff person. And they say this is happening right now.

An Hon. Member: -- Where?

Mr. Rolfes: -- I've talked to your department on it. I've talked to your officials on it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, CompuCollege. All right, if you want it, I'll give it to you. Mr. Minister, there are many others also.

Yes, the people over there laugh because they're not concerned about how students are being ripped off, but there are hundreds of them, hundreds of students who are being ripped off. And I just don't like your cavalier attitude over there, that it's all right for those students to be ripped off and we do nothing. We do nothing.

I wish you people had met with those 17 students. Seven or eight of those

students were single parents who were in a program and they had debts now of \$10,000, no jobs, certificate's useless. And when I asked the minister to meet with them, he can't give me the time of day. Mr. Minister, I am concerned about those students, and I don't know what those students are going to do.

I'll give you another example and for your colleagues opposite. A 45-year-old woman, been on welfare, exactly what the minister of welfare said last year of social services, we want to get those people off of welfare. She went to a private vocational school, no entrance requirement needed, she didn't have a high school education. She went into a bookkeeping course; they took her in; they said if you need a loan, we'll help you get a loan. She got a loan; she found out very early in the program that she couldn't do the program, and they simply told her keep on, no, no, you keep on, you'll catch on to what's going on.

(1200)

She finally stopped going and they phoned her and asked her to come back. And she came back; she got her total loan; she paid her tuition, and suddenly the interest seemed to fade. They no longer had an interest in this student, but she was now stuck with her loan. And this student, 45-year-old woman who is on social assistance now is under psychiatric care. Her car has been taken away from her because she can't make her payments. She's got a part-time job at minimum wage, and she's being harassed to pay back her student loan. How in blazes do you people expect her to pay back her student loan when she's working for minimum wage of 20 hours a week. It's simply not possible. She didn't get her certificate because she didn't graduate.

And I want to give you another example at that same private college. A single parent, one of those single parents. She was in the same program, bookkeeping. She found out that she simply couldn't do it. Again no prerequisites required; come on into the program.

They helped her get a student loan and she got it. I believe she got around 10 or \$11,000 as a single parent. And she quit the program and they again coaxed her back, this particular student. She did come back. She got a whole student loan; the tuitions were paid.

She realized that she couldn't handle the program so she quit; 40 per cent of the time she attended. They coaxed her back again, and they issued her a certificate. They issued her a certificate. And what happened? The Department of Education forgave the loan. She didn't complete the program. She tells me that she only attended 40 per cent of the time. The certificate she has is useless. Her loan is forgiven. The people of the province have paid 10 or \$11,000 of student loan.

But the sad thing of it is that this single parent who tried to improve her life won't have another opportunity because she has used up her remission, and she has nothing now. Now she can go back on welfare. Now she's got to go back on welfare and she has nothing to . . . there is no future for her.

And these aren't just one or two examples. As I indicated to the minister, of the group of seven, I think it was 17 students that I met with, seven or eight of them were single-parent mothers. And they said to me, look, the certificate we're going to get is not acceptable; what can we do? Should we withdraw from the program now? But they already had received their student loan; they had already paid their tuition. I said no, continue, continue with the program, and we will talk to the minister and see whether or not we can do something about it. This was March 27 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the member from Lloydminster says, give the names. I have the names here. But the minister can deal with them if he meets with the students. The students will gladly meet with him and they will give him their names.

So if the . . . The member from Lloydminster, it's too bad he's not the Minister of Education or the Minister of Energy and the Minister of Finance, because in this House he has all the answers from his seat. He seems to have all the answers. I say to the Minister of Education, look, I'm not here to paint a black, black picture, but it is serious . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes I know, but it is serious.

I want to impress upon you because I don't seem to be able to get through to you. I know you're going to go out there again and say to the media, well many of the private vocational schools are doing a pretty good job, and ignore what is happening in the field. And if you're not ignoring it, you certainly don't seem to be doing anything. So I'm asking you again, Mr. Minister: what are you going to do to address the problems of those students?

Mr. Minister, I think a Janet Sander, if I remember it correctly, wrote a letter to you which you answered. I think it was referring to Bridge City. I hope I have my facts correct in this; some time ago that I read the letter. And she said to you: Mr. Minister, what do we do? Bridge City has been closed. These certificates that we have received as students are worthless. We can't use them out there. We have now these huge debts. What do we do?

And I will paraphrase your letter, but I think basically you said: well, most students completed the courses and most students will be responsible for repaying those loans. That, Mr. Minister, I believe was basically what you said.

Now, Mr. Minister, by closing down Bridge City, you admitted that many of the courses that they were offering were unacceptable; the qualification of the staff was unacceptable. Otherwise you wouldn't have shut them down.

I don't think that you can now lay the blame and the responsibility on those students. You . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, but by saying that they have to repay the loans, you are putting the responsibility on them when it should be on your shoulders because you licensed them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh I hear the member from Lloydminster saying, they chose the school.

He licensed the school. By licensing it, he tells the public out there

that they have qualified staff, because he tells me that's what you do when the staff goes in. They must have qualified staff. You say that you okay their program. You told me that this morning, that that's what has to happen, and then you license them.

So you have to accept responsibility for those students who have incurred those debts. And I want to know, Mr. Minister, what are you going to do to assist those students who simply can't afford to pay back those loans because of the programs that were offered in Bridge City were useless and the certificates they have isn't recognized out there.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, a few comments that I want to make and a follow-up to something I said earlier about Bridge City. Just to point out that one of the programs, and I mentioned this earlier, about companion care. Now you can't generalize in all cases. You can't say that all private vocational schools are bad. You can't say . . .

An Hon. Member: -- I said Saskatoon Business College was a good college.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- There are many others too. But you can't say that every program is bad either. Now we know full well that when we talk about Bridge City as an example, they were not following the rules. There were a lot of problems with Bridge City, but you can't say at the same time that every program there was not good and that the training that the students got was bad.

And I'll give you that example again, the companion care program. This was a course that was reviewed by the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association and part of their approval process in here. You had the people who were instructing that program had to be registered nurses. Now how can you stand in your place and suggest that a course such as this was not a good course or that the staff were not fully qualified or that the certificate was worthless.

Now if you've got other examples, and I'm sure you have, then I want you to give me some examples where there have been students who have finished some of these courses, have been given a certificate, that have gone out and an employer said that this certificate is worthless; I cannot hire you.

There are always several factors that are taken into consideration when you're employing people, and it doesn't always apply to the piece of paper that they've got in their hand, and you know that.

But let's not generalize, because here is an example I'm giving you of a program that was very worthwhile, that was given by quality people, and the certification that they got from that program was something that they could take out and get a job.

Now you talk about the loans to single parents. The changes that have been made in the student loan fund have been targeted at single parents. And you can, I'm sure, raise, as you are, examples where students have got into some difficulty and maybe they haven't finished the courses or their courses haven't led them to a job and they end up then having to deal with

a student loan and wondering how they're going to pay it back.

But again consider the number of students that are on those loans. I mean, you can always pick out a few isolated cases, no doubt about it. But let's consider how many are being benefitted here.

The free assistance that was given out in 1989-90 is projected to be \$8.6 million. That was free assistance and it was targeted for single parents, the very group that you're concerned about -- a 264 per cent increase from what it was back in '85-86. The number of students benefitting from that, over 1,800 students.

Now there are always some cases . . . We can look at examples, Mr. Chairman, of students that are going to SIAST or are going to university, that for one reason or another run into difficulty and cannot always pay . . . they have difficulty paying their loans back, they have difficulty paying their loans back. But here is a clear example of how we are attempting to help single parents.

Now you talk about CompuCollege, and you suggest that the department is slow to act on some of the concerns that are raised. Well let me point out . . . the member has given me his letter and I thank you for that and I'll follow up on that. This was written on March 27. Well the investigation that was being conducted at CompuCollege went back into probably late January and February, went back into that. And those same students, the same students that you talk about here, would have been addressed by officials from the Department of Education in February, because the officials from the department met with all of the staff at CompuCollege. They also went into every class at CompuCollege and talked to the students and got ideas as to what some of their concerns were.

Now let me tell you some of the changes then that are taking place at CompuCollege as a result of that particular investigation. And this is as of March 12, which was back prior to your letter having been written.

Number one, with regard to mature admissions, an appropriate admissions test be acquired. Until a test and procedure is approved, no mature admissions are to be enrolled.

Secondly, a student contract. This was an issue then that was raised by students and by the staff -- student contract. A student contract shall be developed and approved to include the components as listed on the student contract check-list.

Thirdly, student admission. Upon completing the process of enrolling students, you are required to present to the department for review the following documentation: a contract of each perspective student, a course schedule indicating start and end date of each course, instructor for each course, verification of academic standing, schedule of courses within a program.

Four, program approvals. Within the next three months a program review will be conducted on all programs offered. And I think that we have to

consider that when an institution is licensed and programs are approved, there has to be follow-up to ensure that there haven't been changes within those colleges, that new programs haven't come on stream that the department may not be aware of. So it is essential that there be a program review, because those programs have to be approved by the department. And as a matter of fact there's been a freeze on all new programs since sometime last summer. So there have been no new programs at any of these colleges since that time.

Number five, instructor approvals. Instructors shall instruct only those courses for which they have been approved by the department.

Number six, instructor orientation and work-load. Adequate orientation for new instructors and new assignments are to be developed. Instruction time should not exceed six hours per day for any staff. The above will be reviewed by April 30, 1990. And that's just been completed.

The seventh one, student council. Revitalize the student council as a mechanism to address student concerns to the principal and counsellors. Fear of recrimination needs to be addressed.

And number eight, job placement statistics. You are requested to refrain from using all advertisements which describe the job placement workshop until sufficient evidence is provided to justify claims that the job placement officers have knowledge of the job market and assist graduates in finding and setting up job interviews; that the role playing will help graduates get a job now and that the job search program is one of the most intensive anywhere in North America.

I request that you review the operation's audit results and directives and prepare a written response outlining your proposed course of action by March 23.

Now I think, Mr. Chairman, we see that this is an example of the routine review that is done by the officials when concerns are raised, whether it's by students or by instructors, because we do treat all of these concerns or complaints very, very seriously. We understand the amount of money that is being spent by students in these colleges, and we understand as well the reason why they're taking the courses is to better themselves so that they can go out and get a job in the work place. So we do take all of these concerns very, very seriously and a very intensive review has been done. And I can assure you that if CompuCollege does not abide by the changes that are being suggested by the department officials that more serious measures will have to be taken.

And we fully intend to enforce the regulations, the new

Dregulations that are going to be coming in. And I can assure you that if the private vocational schools are not following the regulations and that there are constant problems, that in some cases it will result in licences being cancelled and the programs being shut down.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I want to let you know, just in case you weren't aware, that I contacted your office many, many times before March 27 regarding private vocational schools. This was a written letter that you had received from me because of the students that I had met with from CompuCollege. I don't want you to leave the implication that was the first time that your department or that your officials -- and they will verify this -- that I have been in contact with them on a number of occasions and so have my colleagues on this side of the House. So I am pleased to hear that you have cracked down on CompuCollege.

But, Mr. Minister, would you be able to tell me whether or not you have had similar complaints about unqualified staff and substandard programs being offered by Robertson Career College, and if so, what have you done to address those problems?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, with regard to Robertson business school . . . or college, I believe, a review was done last spring, spring of 1989. Enrolment was limited. There were suggestions made as to things that had to change. And the school complied with those suggestions and are still operating, but they are being monitored in the same way now that others are being monitored where a review has been conducted. So I would hope that things . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Both here and in Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Both in Saskatoon and Regina.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I met with a young student yesterday who was attending Robertson Career College. I will send the information over to you; I hope that you will keep it confidential. But I will send it over to you and . . . The story that is told by this individual, if one one-hundredth of what he says is true, then I think some action ought to be taken.

I know that it relates to more a specific incident, but to me it was . . . I don't know the student. He simply requested a meeting with me and the first time I met him was yesterday morning. But I will send the information over to you, and I think, as I say, if there's any credence at all in what the individual says, I think it warrants a further investigation here in Regina.

Mr. Minister, I do want to go back just . . . I have too many cases that I could go through. I may take some time next week if I feel up to it, I may go through a number of cases for you next week again on other colleges. But I do want to refer back to Bridge City because you said something that sort of left a question in my mind . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, it wasn't that bad.

Mr. Minister, you said that the companion course was a good course, and I don't know whether it was or wasn't. Would you tell me now if that was a good course, what made you decide to shut down Bridge City? If it wasn't lack of quality of staff, if it wasn't program, then what was it in Bridge City that forced you to shut down Bridge City?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I give you two main reasons why Bridge City was shut down. It was to do with the overall operation of it, and secondly, to do with the financial viability of it. There were concerns there with regard to the amount of money that had been put into the business, how much was required to maintain security for the students. The main concern I guess we had was for the students.

As I've indicated, there was one program there anyway that was good; there may have been others. I don't know how many they did offer, but I would suggest it was basically to do with the overall operation. There were suggestions that were made by the department that they were not willing to abide by, one of which was the number of mature admissions. I think that their mature admissions were up to somewhere in the neighbourhood of 90 per cent.

The new regulation will limit private vocational schools to 20 per cent of mature admissions. But some real concerns too, after the audit that was done by the accounting firm, that financial viability was just not there.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, Bridge City operated like a factory. Once you got into their office, or once you got into their building, you very seldom left unless you were signed up for a program. There is no doubt about that.

And what bothers me is that it took so long. How could Bridge City go from just \$2,200-and-some, one loan -- or is it two loans? -- one loan made to Bridge City in 1987-88, to go to over a million dollars in student loans the following year when the . . . I don't know, maybe we in the opposition only hear the complaints; maybe you people don't hear complaints. I would have thought that all the noises that were coming out of Saskatoon on Bridge City would have been ringing in the ears of the department officials and yourselves, and you would have said, hey, look, we better get in there. We better slow down the applications of students who are applying from Bridge City because there is no doubt at all that Bridge City spent a lot of their time in convincing students to take these programs and made absolutely certain that they received student loans.

Because they would . . . one of the first things that was done is the counsellor or so-called counsellor sat down with the student and worked out a student loan. Don't worry about your . . . no, no, don't worry, we'll get you a student loan. And in most instances they did.

I'd really like to know what was the success rate of Bridge City in obtaining student loans for the number of applications that were made to the department, and I'd bet it would be very, very high. I bet it was extremely high.

And I want to ask one further question. I want to know that, Mr. Minister, and secondly, I want to know, who were the owners of Bridge City? And have those same owners again applied to re-open a private school?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The main operator of Bridge City was one Dorothy

Prior. And there has been an inquiry with regard to trying to get into operation again, but we made the decision some months ago that we were not going to have any more new colleges being allowed to go into operation. Now anybody of course is free to make application, but we have a freeze on new programs and new colleges at the present time.

There will not be any new ones now under the old regulations. We're talking about the new scene now for private vocational schools, the new regulations will come in, and any colleges that come in there will have to abide by those new regulations.

And I would also suggest that one of the ways in which we are trying to address the concerns that you are raising is we're concentrating mainly on the cities when what we've been talking about here this morning and some of which we talked about before.

But I think too that we recognize that not all of the students that are coming into these private vocational schools are necessarily residents of Saskatoon or Regina. Some of them are coming in from rural areas. So I would hope that the thrust that we are making this year in regional colleges in expanding the services and the courses that they can offer, will help to take care of some of the problem that we've got.

Now recognizing as well that we are looking at increasing or expanding the number of first- and second-year university courses, but at the same time there are a lot of other programs that are offered through the regional colleges -- the adult basic ed. programs and literacy programs -- to help some of these students in their own local areas. So that should, I think, go a long way to alleviating some of the problem where we do at least have those students who are coming in from rural areas. We're really looking forward to that. With the new regulations I think that we are going to get the situation under control, and we're addressing all of these problems.

It takes time, too, when you've got a large number of students in some of these colleges. Just when you have a complaint that's raised, you can't just walk in and shut them down until an investigation is carried out . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know, but I'm saying this in defence of sometimes the time it takes for the officials to conduct their investigation. We've tightened up things a lot, I think, in the last while and maybe particularly in the last six months we made a lot of changes. I'd like to take credit for that in the same way you like to take credit for things you raise.

(1230)

But anyway, we've got to work together on it, and I'm going to be counting on you as well to help monitor the situation. If you have . . . Whether it's constituents or others that are raising concerns with you -- and as you say, sometimes they may feel more comfortable raising them with you than coming to the minister -- we would certainly welcome that. And if we work together on it, I think then we'll get the vocational schools to the point where we all feel that they should be and that students aren't going to be taken advantage of. And the taxpayers' money isn't going to be going

down the drain, as you say, that it'll all be money that's well spent.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I'm very pleased to hear you say those words, but I can assure you, Mr. Minister, I'll come down on you like a ton of bricks if you don't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . if you don't. And I have confidence in him that he will. And there have been some changes made, and I make no bones about it. I think some of those changes are due to the new minister. And I indicated to him last night that I think he does understand education, but I think he is moving a little too slowly for me, and in the meantime many of the students are suffering.

I know he's addressing some of those problems, but because it is a crisis out there with a number of students, we need to urge your department and urge you to move faster than what you have. I'd like to have seen those regulations in effect last fall, and I still, for the love of me, can't understand why they could not have been implemented much, much earlier so that we could have stopped some of the rip-off that is being taken place.

Mr. Minister, I did ask you and maybe the officials are still looking at it, I want to know the success rate of Bridge City. In their loan applications that were made, how many were okayed? And how many applied; how many were okayed? What was the percentage?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- It's pretty difficult to provide that information to the member, Mr. Chairman, because we don't track the applications. We know how many loans would have gone to each of the colleges, but we couldn't tell you how many people had applied to give you that kind of breakdown.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, if you had said you don't have them for individual schools, I may have been able to, but I do have from you the overall. I have that in a letter, I believe, on January 11. Let me read it to you.

My question was . . . or I haven't got my question . . . your answer to my question: the percentage of loan applications approved for private vocational school students over the last three years is 95.9 per cent in 1986-87, 93.1 per cent in 1987-88, and 96.2 per cent in 1988-89. So you have them overall. Do you not have them for particular schools? If you don't have, I can understand that, but I don't know how you could get the totals if you don't have them for individual schools.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the information I have is that we don't track the actual number of loans per school, or the applicants, but we do have the aggregate. We would know how many that there are, but we don't track the actual applications on a school-by-school basis.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I can accept that. I do want to, Mr. Minister, before I forget, I said earlier that there was a letter sent to a Janet Sander. A letter was not sent to a Janet Sander; there was a letter sent by Rita Archer to Diane Gauthier, referring to Bridge City. And just so that there isn't a misunderstanding. I do have a letter here from Janet Sander, but it's on another matter. But this letter was sent by Rita

Archer to Equal Justice For All, I believe it is, Diane Gauthier.

Mr. Minister, I want to turn now to another private vocational school and that is the Academy of Security Education. I believe you are quite familiar with that one, and that exits on 1808B Broadway Avenue. This, Mr. Minister, I am told is run by an individual named Brad Morin, M-o-r-i-n. And I am told, Mr. Minister, that the background of Mr. Morin is very familiar to the department over there. I'm told the officials know about his background, but his background is somewhat questionable.

And I was wondering, first of all, if that is known to the department officials, why would the individual, number one, be licensed to run a security school. And number two, Mr. Minister, I don't know if you're familiar with the story that was written by an individual who had very grave concerns about this particular school. And what he did was . . . it's the story: It's not the money it's the principle of the thing.

What the individual did, Mr. Minister, to see whether or not all the accusations he heard about the school were true, he made himself as unpresentable as he possibly could. He doused himself a little bit with alcohol and let his beard grow and spoke in broken English and presented himself to the school. The advertising, Mr. Minister, says that the requirements will be of a high nature, and if you read the advertisements you would be very impressed by the course that possibly would be offered. And the standards would be very high.

Mr. Minister, when the individual went to register, there were no questions asked about his background. There was no questions asked as to what his qualifications were, whether he had academic qualifications. He did indicate that he may have some difficulty in filling out the application form for a student loan. He was very quickly helped to fill out his student loan. And he managed to escape however before he registered.

The point that I what to make is that this particular school is not abiding by the rules and regulations that you people are asking of them. And I can verify this. A native student came in to see me just about a month ago and this native student had a criminal record. He was accepted by this particular school. My understanding is that someone with a criminal record cannot be bonded unless a period of time elapses. He was accepted. But this individual, Mr. Minister, a loan was approved by your department. The individual did not have sufficient money to complete the course; all he had was the loan. The loan wasn't sufficient, and he dropped out of the course. The point being, Mr. Minister, that this particular school apparently does no checking on entrance requirements and anyone can enter.

I was wondering whether some of these complaints had been drawn to your attention. If they have, what has your department done? Has it investigated this particular school? What actually are you recommending to Mr. Morin in order that he meets the standards that are laid down by your department?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, it's unfortunate that some situations like this maybe arise, but at the same time I guess that we have

to ask the question that, should we exclude students from any schools if they have a criminal record?

I guess that it's the responsibility of the school to notify the students though, if they're going into a security-type position, that their job opportunities may well be limited because of the fact that some companies have to . . . they do require bonding; some don't. But in those cases where bonding is required, some of these students then could be limited in their opportunities.

Some of the questions raised by the member opposite will be addressed in the new regulations, particularly as we look at the restrictions on mature admissions.

And with regard to the school that you're mentioning here, the Academy of Security Education I believe it was, this school has been investigated. There is no detailed review that's taken place because there really have not been a lot of concerns raised by the students that are attending that particular establishment.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I thought you would be extremely concerned that when someone would bring something like this to your attention, because let me read part of the advertisement to you from the security . . . can't make it out, the writing here. The school is the security education school, anyway, on Broadway.

And here is what they say for requirements of admission. Applicants must have a grade 10 or equivalent, must be 18 years of age or over, and they must be bondable. Mr. Minister, they must be bondable and be able to be licensed. That's the advertisement. Now I think your department should know that. I mean obviously one of the requirements is they must send this in to you. So they have this information.

But let me go on, Mr. Minister, and that's what concerns me. The course will run approximately 17 weeks; the classes will be for four hours each day with a break during that time. The entire course will be broken down into eight modules, each lasting two or three weeks. Examinations will be given, and by the way, no examinations were given to these students -- at least that's what they tell me. And an average of all tests plus marks for good attendance constitutes the final mark. Now I can appreciate good attendance, Mr. Minister; certainly those are required.

I want to turn your attention, however, to the goals that were set down, and I don't want to read them all because they're fairly lengthy. But it says, to help portray the three attributes that the school is trying to represent: ability, integrity, and discipline. Requirements of admission will be very rigid.

The individual I told you about, no requirements for admission were asked for. They didn't know what his qualifications were.

Students will be required to be bonded and licensed during the course, and a very strict student code of ethics will be adhered to. Academic

requirements will also be very high so that students will have no trouble with their writing ability as well as the basic community skills.

(1245)

This native student, Mr. Minister, this native student told me when he spoke to me, he said there was just no way that he could handle that particular course, yet he received a loan from you people and he was accepted by the school. A grade 10 education or equivalent -- this person didn't have a grade 10. Now he could, I suppose, get on the maturity criteria and get in in that way.

Mr. Minister, that is bad enough, but let me . . . Mr. Minister, I want to read to you . . . It's almost, well it's to the point where it's somewhat of a joke, but here is a particular individual writing about his experience, and this person wrote about these kids:

Bill, a kid from the wrong side of the tracks, had a brush with the law a few years ago, or a few years back, and did a few months in the provincial correctional centre. The only positive aspect of the stay was that he began the process of completing his grade 12 with the view to qualifying for a post-secondary training course. After finishing, he applied for and was accepted to the private investigation security guard program sponsored by a small private training academy which advertised a course on TV.

Like Joan, Bill applied for and received student financial assistance for the program. After his 39-week course, Bill and his buddies from the correctional centre found out that they didn't qualify for PI (private investigation) or security work because they have criminal records and weren't bondable. Bill thought to himself that it was a shame that the government loaned all that money training them for nothing. Some of his friends joked that many components of the course, including the alarm system lectures, would make it "a hell of a lot easier to knock over houses."

Mr. Minister, the point I think that this individual wanted to make was something has to be done with . . . I think the point is made without going on any further.

And what I wanted from you, Mr. Minister, is . . . these aren't the only cases that I have; I have a number of other cases. But the point that I wanted to make was, has this been drawn to your attention? Are your officials investigating this particular school to make sure that they live up to the advertisements that they put out, and live up to the requirements that you have set down so far, recognizing that we don't have strict regulations in place at the time?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, we recognize that the member has put forward in some cases, not maybe a fictitious case but an artificial one, but recognized the seriousness of what he's saying. And what we will do, we will assure that someone follows up on that next week and checks into it.

As far as the ad is concerned that was put out, sounds like a good place to go, that you can . . . you know, pretty high standards and all the rest of it. But we obviously have to assure that they are following their own guide-lines. So we will follow up on that next week. We'll have someone out there to investigate it.

And again I'd point out that I think when you see the new regulations, maybe -- I hope our expectations aren't too high for the new regulations, but they will in fact address some of the concerns that you have raised. But we will certainly follow up on that because this is serious.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Well, Mr. Minister, I don't want to leave the impression that these were artificial cases. These are actual cases. These are . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, both of them. Both of them were actual cases. But I thought it was very serious. I mean if they advertise this, I mean that's how people get taken in, because it sounds very good on TV; it looks very good in the paper.

And when they find out that the program isn't what the advertisements say, they get ripped off. And that's why I'm saying I think you and your officials have a lot of responsibility to see to it that when people advertise like that, then we got to make absolutely certain that they meet those standards because otherwise people like the ones I have mentioned will get ripped off.

Mr. Minister, we just have a few minutes left today. But I do want to turn now to those regulations that you have been talking about and we . . . Don't worry, that's not all the time I'm going to spend on those new regulations. I will go into those in much more detail next week and as you see, I've only gone through I think three files out of 15. So we got a long ways to go yet.

I've got a number of issues in post-secondary education that I want to address and some of them are the regional colleges and how you're going to deal with those; the universities; and that's a big part of your portfolio.

Mr. Minister, I've gone through the interim report, and I want to thank you for submitting those to me. What I am concerned about, Mr. Minister, is that it took all this time for those individuals to write that report. I'm not critical of the individuals. I don't know the individuals. In fact I don't even know who's on it.

But that report, Mr. Minister, could have been written -- I don't think I'm exaggerating -- it could have been written in one week's time, easily. They had six meetings. They had six meetings. I don't know where they went in those six meetings or what they did. One of the things that I would have done if I'd have been on that committee, I'd have said to myself, all right, where are we at right now with those regulations.

And what have some of the other provinces done in updating their regulations in private vocational schools?

One we could have gone through is the province of Alberta. And Alberta, I

think, lays out their regulations very nicely. I'm not saying that we should adopt all of the regulations that Alberta has, but certainly some of them sound to me like exactly what we have recommended some time ago.

Mr. Minister, for a long time now, we on this side of the House have asked you and your department and your predecessor to come up with some strict regulations as they pertain to private vocational schools. I can't lay my hands on it . . . oh yes I can, right here.

In 1987, December 8, 1987, that's about two and a half years ago, the then critic of post-secondary education, as I indicated, the member from Prince Albert, wrote to Mr. Hepworth concerned about the lack of regulations, stringent regulations for private vocational schools.

And he stated the following, Mr. Minister. He said:

There are several recurring concerns which the students want addressed. (That's back in 1987; and he said): One of them is competency of instructors. Number two, course standards. Courses are not recognized by industries. (Back in 1987.) Number three, clear statements and consistent applications of school rules. Number four, inaccessibility of equipment in certain courses. Number five, counselling sessions at beginning are more of a sales job than a counselling session.

And we've heard that over and over and over. And if you get into some of . . . if you get through the door, if they can get you through the door, their next pitch to you is, get them signed up. That was the job of the staff. And in fact, Mr. Minister, in one of the schools, in one of the schools, it is said that the staff were given a commission, were giving a commission to their staff for getting students registered in their schools.

Mr. Minister, I have, I believe, said on a number of occasions -- and I don't know whether I've written to you on it or not but you and I have certainly spoken about it -- and I have said a number of times, in the new regulations I want at least five things addressed. I want at least five things addressed, and I hope that you will do that.

Number one, I want some stringent entrance requirements set down by the Department of Education that all private schools must abide by and that when somebody applies they know exactly, if a grade 12 is required, a grade 12 is required. Except for the mature adults. I recognize that; we have to make exceptions there.

Number two, I want qualified instructors, and I would like to see, in most instances, at least top-notch experience in the field, and a journeyman certificate if we can. And those who are teaching math and English, that they have a teaching certificate would be required.

Number three, that program or course standards are approved by the Department of Education. In other words, you go through the courses, and if there are alterations made to the courses, they have to resubmit them to the department so that we know and students know that when they apply to this school, that it is okayed by the Department of Education.

Number four, I want certification recognized and accepted by the industry out there. Now we can't have 100 per cent assurance of that; of course not. But at least let's contact those people out there who will be employing these graduates, and make sure that the program that we lay down and the course of studies that we lay down are accepted by the industry and therefore the graduates will be, and their certificates will be recognized by the industry. I think that has to be done.

And number five, I would like to see at least you people giving some indication to the people who apply for student loans and people who apply to those schools, that there's reasonable opportunity to get employment.

I think it would be advisable by your department, when someone applies for a student loan who's going into a particular course, and if their opportunity for employment is almost nil, that you would indicate that to the individual. Not to say that the individual wouldn't get a student loan if they qualify, but at least they would know and at least you would put down the guide-lines for them.

Mr. Minister, I wonder whether you could respond to those. I know I haven't given you enough time, but there's three minutes left.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well just a short comment, Mr. Chairman. The member opposite talks about the time that it took to bring about these new regulations, and of course it's the policy of this government to use consultation, and that of course is what has been the case here.

This has been going on for about a year where the committee followed . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, but you're just talking about the meetings that the committee had. Keep in mind that the committee had to conduct a lot of interviews, do a lot of research with regard to all of the schools that were in operation, but they also reviewed all of the legislation that you have in the provinces across Canada, and a lot of the Alberta situation is going to be in our regulations.

Okay. So I mean when you say that it could have taken a week to write the report, granted, but the consultation took much longer than that. And we can talk more about that on Monday.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.