

May 10/90

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure

Education

Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Rolfes: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, when last we met, discussing the estimates for post-secondary education, I think we had finished to some extent the discussion on SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology). And I want to review just very briefly what I felt were some of the points that I wanted to make in the estimates, particularly in SIAST and in private vocational schools, but I'm going to do it very briefly.

Mr. Minister, as far as SIAST is concerned there are a number of questions that I could ask about SIAST and certainly the corporate body. I know you have the information about the exorbitant expenditures of SIAST and the waste of the money by the corporate body. We will pursue this at some other time, not this evening, but I do want to some time discuss with you, Mr. Minister, the waste of public funds by the corporate body. And that is a fact, and I know you are aware of it.

Just simply, the movement from Wascana to Saskatchewan Place, and now to Innovation Place in Saskatoon, has cost the taxpayer close to a million dollars. And the resignation of the president and the resignation of some of the other individuals, severance pay, certainly travel expenses -- they've been very large, very large. And as I say, some time I do want to take the opportunity to discuss those things with you, but I don't want to spend the rest of the evening on that.

I do want to, Mr. Minister, finish off on private vocational schools, just ask you a few questions on that area, and then I want to go on to some other areas.

Mr. Minister, as far as private vocational schools are concerned, I want to ask you . . . First of all, Mr. Minister, I want to thank you for agreeing to the meeting with those students next Monday. It's unfortunate, Mr. Minister, and I'm not laying any blame here, I want you to know that, it's unfortunate you can only meet at 10 o'clock in the morning because many of those students will be at class. Some of them are going to be out of class in order to meet with you, but I still expect that there will be a fair number of students there.

They think it's important, they think it's important to meet with you, and in my letter, Mr. Minister, I had indicated a number of questions that they want to have answered from you. I hope that you will look at that letter and be prepared to answer some of their questions.

I do want to, Mr. Minister, on their behalf, now put the question to you, and that is: what are you going to do for those students -- and they're going to ask you this question as they asked it to me, and I'm not the minister. I said that the minister will have to answer it for you. What are you going to do for those students who honestly believe that they have been victimized where they thought they were getting a program and a certificate which would lead them to employment? They find, for example, Mr. Minister, I'm sure that they will tell you this: that in many instances that staff were not qualified; the program as advertised was not the program that they got, and the certificate finally that was issued was a certificate that isn't really accepted.

And, Mr. Minister, you did ask me the other day, who is it out there that is saying that those certificates are worthless. One of them, as I indicated to you, were the businesses out there, but there are two other groups. Unemployment insurance of Canada have indicated to some students that the certificates are, from their opinion -- will not open the doors for them for employment. And secondly, Canada Manpower -- Canada Manpower has serious difficulties with some of the certificates.

And so my question to you, Mr. Minister, is simply this. What are you going to do . . . what will be your answer to those students who will say, Mr. Minister, we feel we've been victimized, we now owe thousands of dollars. Are you prepared to forgive those loans because we were victimized because you did not institute stricter regulations and did not police those private vocational schools the way you should have?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, let me say at the outset that I am looking forward to meeting with the students. I don't know what happened. I just wanted to comment on the letter that you indicated that you'd had your secretary deliver to my office. No one in my office received that letter. So whether she got lost on the way or not, I don't know, but I'm just indicating to you the reason for the delay. But I am looking forward to meeting with them.

When you talk about the concerns that they have and concerns with regard to student loans, I would point out that the programs and the staff are all approved by the department. They're all approved by the department. You've indicated that in some cases, the certificates are not accepted by business. Now I will want to discuss that with the students because I think we'll probably have to look at each one individually.

I think for you to suggest that the courses that they took weren't necessarily valid in that they couldn't get any jobs with them, now you and I both know that there are often several reasons for people not being able to get jobs. And it has absolutely nothing to do with the certificate they've got in their hand. So . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well, you can say that it is, but I want to meet with the students and find out exactly what the case is, because we have many students that go through these vocational schools, private vocational schools that are getting certificates; they are going out and getting jobs and not everyone certainly gets a job. And I'm sure that you often talk about Saskatoon Business College which has a very solid reputation.

An Hon. Member: -- I said so.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- I know you did. But at the same time I point out to you that there are probably students from Saskatoon Business College that sometimes, even though they've got that certificate which is very valid, cannot get jobs.

So I am saying this to you, Mr. Chairman, to point that the fact that the student does not always get a job doesn't necessarily mean it's the certification that they've got from the course that they've taken. There could be many other factors, and those are the things that I want to talk to with the students.

Now with regard to the student loans, these students have taken out the loans, they've gone through, taken the courses. They understand the rules when they apply for these loans. You know as well that there are cases where a lot of these loans are forgiven. So I'm going to have to take a look at this certainly in more detail. I appreciate your raising it, but I don't think we can always just generalize that every student situation is the same.

So after I've met with them, then maybe you and I can discuss it a little bit further. But you know as well there are changes in regulations; there are changes in the student loan program that are coming. But after I've met with them then you and I could discuss it further at that time.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I expect more from you. I expect more from you, and please, please listen to what I say. If the certificate is not accepted by the industry for certain programs, if that certificate, Mr. Minister, is not accepted by the industry out there -- and there are programs offered by CompuCollege, there are programs offered by, for example, Bridge City. I want to give you an example. And your letter to those students of Bridge City, you said, well you completed the course therefore you have to pay your loan back.

Now, Mr. Minister, you yourself knew. You closed it down because they were not following your regulations. And in many instances, Mr. Minister, if you have approved, if your department has approved those staff with the lack of qualification that they have, then it's even more serious. It's even more serious, and you should accept even more blame. You should accept even more blame for those students now receiving certificates that aren't acceptable out there.

I think you have an obligation to those students. They entered these programs because they felt you had licensed the school; therefore the program must be good; therefore the staff must be qualified. And I've indicated to you, in some instances the staff were not qualified. The program wasn't what it was advertised to be, and the students were victimized.

All I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, I think you should have a little more sympathy for those students who were victimized by those private vocational

schools. And I would hope that on Monday you would have a sympathetic ear for these students because I tell you again, Mr. Minister, some of those students that you will meet with are single parents. Yes, they'll complete the program they're in, some of them will, others won't. But even if they complete it . . . the students told me: I know I'm going to end up with a certificate that's worthless, and secondly, I have given up my opportunity for forgiveness of another loan in a worthwhile program. That's where they find themselves.

But I've gone over and over it, Mr. Minister, and obviously you and I are going to disagree. I would just hope that you would see that your department has to accept some of that blame. They did not take action when they should have. Why did it take so long to shut down Bridge City? Goodness, we go in the records into the House here . . . How many times did we talk to the former minister about Bridge City? And no action was taken and many students were victimized. Sure you finally shut it down, but many of the students had already gone through their program and have now huge debts that they can't afford to pay back, and they're being hounded.

I just had another phone call at supper-time from a person who was victimized, another person who was victimized. And she's simply saying to me, look I can't pay it back. They haven't got the jobs and there's no way of them paying it back.

Now, Mr. Minister, I'm going to leave that particular area. I want to ask you one other question. Mr. Minister, in your new regulations that you were going to put forward, first of all my question to you is: can you tell me -- I've indicated to you last time the four or five things that I think must be in. Can you assure me tonight that those four or five items that I have put before you, for example, stringent entrance requirements; qualified instructors, and I would prefer if they had a degree in the area that they teach or at least have a long-term training and service in that area; that the program or course of study, it must be approved by the department; and that certification would be recognized and accepted by the business people out there; and lastly, that before you will okay student loans or a program, that there's at least some opportunity for employment out there, reasonable opportunity. That's one of the questions I want to ask.

Secondly, Mr. Minister, can you assure me that if some private vocational school breaks your regulations by either false advertising, not having a qualified staff, will you make sure that there is an appeal board set up for students, so that the private vocational school will be held accountable for the total tuition fees that have been paid by the students. Will you make sure that mechanism is in place?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, firstly let me check with the hon. member. I understood that the students that I'm meeting with were from CompuCollege.

An Hon. Member: -- No, they're from a number of colleges.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Okay. Well you talk about Bridge City College.

The fact of the matter is, when you talk about some of them and whether or not they were in the companion care program, I don't know. That's why I'm going to have to meet with them and find out what programs they were in, which colleges they were from, and what their individual concerns were. Because we can't generalize on some of these programs.

(1915)

Now you were getting after Bridge City and the programs that they were offering, but at the same time, we talked about the fact that the companion care program was done by registered nurses. The program had been endorsed by the registered nurses' association and the certificates that they were getting . . . I'm sure the program was certainly a bona fide program. They had qualified staff and I would think that the certificate that they were getting in those cases was very valid. So just don't generalize.

There are some programs, I'm sure, that students get into that there aren't always as many opportunities when they're finished as in others. But as I indicated to you, I will get more information from the students. Obviously I'm not prepared to buy all of the arguments that you're putting forward. And I will listen to the students. And I appreciate you raising that with me.

Secondly, I point out as well that each student that signs up to take a program from a private vocational school signs a contract with that particular private vocational school for a particular course. And if there are complaints or concerns that are raised at any time to us, there is a follow-up. And if it's found that there are problems where the contract is not being met, then the students are entitled to refunds, and this has been standard practice.

So we will have to ensure that these students have followed up on any right of due process that they have as to whether or not were more refunds that they should have been receiving or whether there were some remissions on student loans that they should have received that they didn't. But we can't do that until we have all of the detail.

Now with regard to the new regulations, I thought I went through all of this with you last day, so I don't know why we're wasting time with it again. You asked me those same questions . . .

An Hon. Member: -- No I did not. Never mentioned appeal board.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, prior to the appeal board. But you asked me those same five questions, I think again . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The answers are in Hansard from when you asked last day, so I would just like to save you some time. I indicated to you that all of those concerns that you had raised were in the new regulations. All of those concerns. Now, what we're just checking on here right now is with regard to the process.

Let me give you some of these again then. Requirements of private vocational schools. In every private vocational school the following is

required: every instructor is qualified by experience or training or both by being at least 21 years of age and possess a Canadian university bachelor degree in a subject directly related to the subject to be taught, or an equivalent degree from a university other than a Canadian university with 12 months occupational experience in the subject to be taught. So we're tightening up, I think, a lot on the restrictions with regard to qualifications that they have to have -- be a graduate of a recognized educational institution in a subject directly related to the subject to be taught and have one year occupational experience in the subject or vocation to be taught.

Now, I'm sure that in some cases, they're not all going to need a degree, it's going to depend on the course that they're going to be teaching; be a graduate of a private vocational school registered under this Act and have one year actual occupational experience in the vocation to be taught -- have three years actual occupational experience in the subject to be taught. These are all things that will apply, notwithstanding section 13(1), the deputy Minister of Education may approve the employment of any instructor at a school who in the opinion of the minister or representative is proficient in the subject or vocation to be taught.

Now I can see that being the same that would apply as you know in days in the school systems where you might have had someone with an ARCT (Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto) degree for example in music was, along with the other university courses that they had been taking, might have been given a professional B certificate which entitled them to teach certain courses or at certain grade levels. So we can see some of the things happening here the same.

So there are going to be a lot of restrictions with regard to who can teach. The length of programs will also have to be clearly stated, the number of programs and specific location, and the number of students who may be enrolled in the program under one instructor or in a given school, so there is going to be some tightening up in that area.

The only one that I am wanting to get for you here and that's the right of due process and I would assume that that is going to be part of the new Act. If there are concerns that students are raising, that there is going to be a process that will be followed, so you may want to go on with another question and we can see if we got some more specifics for you on that.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I don't want to correct you, but last day I broached this subject on the requirements at 5 minutes to 1. I remember you indicating to me, hurry up because you wanted to speak to it, and you took one minute on it and we adjourned. We did not go through this. I don't want to spend very much more time on it, Mr. Minister, because I have a lot of other things that I want to cover. I just want to let you know that we did not go through this last day.

Mr. Minister, the due process or appeal mechanism, if you can get that for me some time this evening I would appreciate that. It doesn't have to be an ironclad agreement. I want to know where you personally stand on it.

Do you think that that's a good idea that the students should have an appeal mechanism in order that they can say, hey look we've got to have some way or somebody to appeal to?

And it can be a three-person board. It can be somebody from the private vocational schools, someone from your department, and maybe somebody from the public. And let the students have a . . . and these people can meet three or four times a year or whatever, when there are sufficient number of cases that they can handle. It doesn't have to be a long drawn-out affair. But I simply wanted your opinion on whether or not there should be some due process for the students to be able to appeal to.

But, Mr. Minister, I want to leave that area because I have other things that I do want to cover this evening, unless you're prepared to make a statement on that now.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I certainly agree with what you're saying about an appeal process and there will be an appeal process, and that will be to the Department of Education where a concern is raised. It could be raised I would assume by a student, or in some cases it might be raised by an instructor in a particular college. So there will be an appeal process in place.

Mr. Rolfes: -- I just wanted to make comment. Mr. Minister, I hope it isn't just to the department because sometimes they have some reason to defend the position that they have taken previous. So I hope that there's some other mechanism that they can appeal to.

I don't want to spend any more time on that, Mr. Minister. I do want to turn to provincial libraries, and that I believe does come under your jurisdiction also, Mr. Minister. And I know you have also received the letters that I am privy to from the various people from various sectors of the province as far as funding for all provincial libraries is concerned.

And, Mr. Minister, I'm not here to debate whether or not your funding is at a level it was when we were the government and whether you're doing better or worse than what we are. I'm not here to argue that. What I am here to . . . is I guess on behalf of the provincial libraries, to say to you that we can't continue, we simply can't continue to do the level of funding for provincial libraries that we have. And I think you will agree with me that the grants to provincial libraries since 1986 have gone up less than half a per cent. They went up from 5,568,440 to 5,590,900 in this year's budget. And that of course you know was a severe cut-back in 1987 when their budget was cut by about 10 per cent.

Mr. Minister, what I want to impress upon you is this -- and I want to discuss this in connection with distance education -- you have said that we have to find different modes of providing post-secondary education, particularly university education, to people in rural Saskatchewan. I don't necessarily disagree with that. But I don't think on the one hand you can say that you want to have distance education out there, and then not make available to those students the kind of resources they need in order to get a good education. It's not sufficient to just have it done by

television.

And here again as I indicated I think to you some time ago, I think it was in question period, your cut-back on SCAN (Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network) -- now SCAN is not a bad mode to use in distance education if that's the direction that we're going to go. And in fact, Mr. Minister, if you look at your report on SCAN -- it's not yours but it's the minister responsible for Sask Telephones -- he states in here, Mr. Minister, very clearly, that SCAN is going to be the main mechanism that they are going to be using for distance education. And I believe that it replaced STELLA (Saskatchewan Tele-Learning Association) that was in existence before. You're going to use that as your main mode of providing education in rural Saskatchewan, and yet you cut it back by one and a half million dollars this year.

How are we going to provide this education in rural Saskatchewan if we cut back, not only in the libraries that they need out there . . . And the regional libraries -- from the letters that I have received, and I'll read from some of those this evening -- have clearly indicated they're going to have to cut back on the hours that they are open. They're saying they have half the volumes that they should have, according to the Canadian library standards. They can't hire qualified staff because the salaries that they are paying simply won't attract the kind of staff that they think they need in order to run their libraries.

Mr. Minister, if we are going to go in that direction, to say to the universities, hey look, we're going to take off your hands the first and second year students, to a large extent, from rural Saskatchewan, then I think you have to convince your government to provide more funding for libraries, which have not received adequate funding. I think you will agree with me on that. And secondly, I think you're going to have to have another look at SCAN and how you are funding it. Mr. Minister, I would appreciate a comment from you on what I have said so far.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- With regard to libraries, firstly let's separate out, possibly, the different libraries. I fully realize the importance of the regional libraries and the public libraries, as such, within communities -- wherever -- whether it's in urban or whether it's in rural areas, and the importance of them. And I think particularly when the economic situation is such as it is that there's a much higher utilization than there would be when the economic times are good because in many cases that's the entertainment that people will have, is what they get from their libraries.

On the other hand, when you take a look at what's happened with our grants and compare, and I'll get to the other type of libraries as well, I know that we need to put much more money into our libraries, and we look forward to doing that as soon as we have a little bit better economy going for us. But I think in all fairness, when you look at what our situation is in Saskatchewan, I think we can take consolation from the fact that our per capita operating grants in Saskatchewan are still considerably higher than any other province in western Canada.

When you look at Saskatchewan, \$5.54 per capita being spent on public libraries; Alberta, \$4.91; Manitoba, \$3.03; and British Columbia at 2.50 -- now I think that we're doing pretty well under the circumstances. I know I've met with the library boards and groups from around the province. I think I met with all of the different groups. We've had some very good discussions. I certainly realize the tremendous service that they're providing, and that they are doing the best that they can, and that their resources are stretched to the limit.

And we've been very fortunate too with the number of volunteers that we've had. We've been very fortunate with the support that we've had from the rural municipalities and the urban municipalities because they support these libraries as well as they can too.

So we're going to have to look at doing more, certainly, as more money becomes available.

Now with regard to the other type of library that you talk about, and that's in conjunction with the regional colleges, and what libraries would be needed to facilitate the students that are taking more first and second year university courses. I think that with the increases that we've made to the regional colleges this year . . . and I don't disagree with what you're saying. If we're going to have more university courses out there we've got to have more resources for them. I would think that the regional colleges then should now, with the additional funds that they're going to have this year, be able to provide more of those resources that the students are going to need.

And I look to the time when we can have a greater utilization, a greater sharing I suppose too, in that some of the materials that we would utilize for some of these courses could be also used more in our high schools for some areas. So I think we have to look at those opportunities as well, but I don't disagree with you that we do have to ensure that those resources are there. And I would suggest that the regional colleges are aware of that and will be addressing that as they develop more and more of their programs. So with the new money I would expect them to be putting some of that money into more resources in providing these classes.

(1930)

Now when you get to the SCN, the old SCAN as it was, this is not the end all as far as the distance education; this is only part of the delivery of services to rural Saskatchewan. We're going to find that there are still many of these courses that are going to be taught by people going out into the field. And even though there are some cuts, let's keep in mind that there are a lot of these sites out there that are already in operation. So it's maybe a matter of slowing down the number of sites slightly to help take care of some of this, but it's not the end all. It's only going to be part of the delivery of services to, whether it's northern Saskatchewan up in Athabasca, or whether it's in rural areas, or wherever the case might be.

We do have as well another \$100,000 for distance education, the

universities, provision of some of these services. So they're all going to be utilizing it.

If you consider again that the two universities were able to provide a toll free telephone service, an extra librarian to locate the resources required, and pay for the cost of handling the books and materials which were shipped to the various regional colleges around the province -- they did all of that with \$100,000. So the services were increased substantially, and we see that as being very, very beneficial to rural Saskatchewan.

Let's also consider the correspondence courses that are being offered in rural Saskatchewan, and that's all tied in with the distance education. So I think that we're developing a pretty good system. We recognize there have to be more resource materials in the regional colleges, and they are going to have to identify the needs there and then respond to that need.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I would not want it to be understood that I agree with you on distance education, that that's where our emphasis ought to be. I do not. But I don't want to get into that right now. I will make a longer statement on that and more discussion of that a little later. I want to concentrate on libraries right now.

Mr. Minister, I guess maybe I don't quite understand how you see the regional colleges. Are you saying to me that the regional colleges are not going to use the regional libraries as much as possible? I hope I didn't misunderstand you. To me that's setting up a whole another system that we don't need. The point that I wanted to make was: if you're going to provide education out there, then I think you have to provide more funding to the regional libraries so that they can provide the resources for those students who are taking the post-secondary education out there. I don't want you to take from what I've said that I think now you ought to set up separate resource centres in the regional colleges. I hope wherever possible they can combine them so we can save the dollars. But I do want to, Mr. Minister, I do want to say to you that in 1987-88 the former minister made a big point of, by the way, a big point of SCAN. He thought that was the . . . well I suppose cat's miaow to distance education. Obviously you don't quite agree with him on his emphasis and that's quite all right. I would expect that you are probably more correct than he would have been in education.

Mr. Minister, he did talk about automation. And I think I have to agree with him on automation, that if we're going to provide an efficient system, then I think the libraries have to be a lot more automated. I want to know how are we getting along in automating the library system in Saskatchewan.

And secondly, Mr. Minister, this is not quite with automation, but is there a . . . have we given any thought at all to a Saskatchewan library card that can be used by people throughout Saskatchewan. All they have to do is use this plastic card and put it into their machine and they could use it throughout Saskatchewan. So have you given any thought to that?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well let me clarify with you about the regional

colleges and the need for resources. And I indicated that they will have to identify the need because of the courses that they're using. But they will be carrying on with the same idea of using the regional libraries but they will have to identify what the needs are going to be. So no, we're not going to be setting up an additional system.

The SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network), of course, as I said, is only part of the delivery of distance education. It's going to get it into a lot of areas that may not be accessible through the regional colleges. So I think we've got to work together on all of these different things.

When you talk about technology then in the libraries, we do have the two, Chinook and Wheatland, that use computers within their headquarters and have for some time. Other regional libraries use Envoy or fax to communicate with each other and with the provincial library.

And we've talked quite a bit about this with them. I know that all of them are anxious to get more computerization into their systems, and we've asked them to provide a plan as to how we can phase this in and how we can look at it, whether it's a long-range project. Obviously we can't do it all in the one year, but I think that we want them to come up with a plan as to how this can be brought about. So we have to keep moving in that direction because it does cut down a lot on the efficiencies and can make their libraries just that much better.

With regard to the library card that you're talking about, this would have to be a decision by the library boards because they each run their own operations. So whether or not they wanted to go to a common card of some kind, they would have to get together on that and make those decisions themselves. We won't be making that decision for them.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I hope I didn't leave that impression. What I wanted to know from you: has there been some discussion? Obviously if they're going to go in that direction, there has to be a discussion with you and your officials on how they're going to implement it. Is there going to be some finances involved in making sure that this can take place? Mr. Minister, all I want to do to draw it to your attention, and I'm not going to pursue that in any detail.

Mr. Minister, I know you probably have read the 1989 report, that brief that was submitted to you as the minister. I don't think you were the minister at the time but you may have -- this was February 1989. No, you weren't the minister at the time, but I'm sure you must have read it. And I just want to draw to your attention on page 3:

Funding is the top priority for all libraries. Financial support for libraries in 1986 was reduced.

The reduction in 1987 of library grants by approximately \$700,000 presented library boards with the necessity of making difficult decisions regarding the level of service to be provided to patrons.

As library boards prepare their 1988 budgets, the "bottom line" which was

advocated in June is reiterated. S.L.T.A. (Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association) asks that the government restores all grants to the 1986 level!

That was in their 1989 brief. Mr. Minister, I want to draw to your attention to the brief in 1990. And on page 3 in 1990, there is a resolution that has been carried unanimously, and in it they say:

WHEREAS the Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association represents trustees from all libraries across Saskatchewan; and

WHEREAS the public library systems in Saskatchewan are currently being funded by the Province at a level lower than the Provincial Grants provided in 1984; (Mr. Minister, this is 1990. The grants are lower than in 1984) and

WHEREAS a substantial increase in library grants is crucial if libraries are to maintain their vital role in providing essential information and services to the public.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association vigorously lobby the Provincial Government for increased grants for libraries.

Obviously, Mr. Minister, they weren't successful. They weren't very successful or else you didn't hear them.

In one of their briefs, I'm not sure whether it was '89 or '90 or some correspondence that I received, they referred to funding that at one time was at 60 per cent -- provincial funding at 60 per cent -- today it's at 42 per cent. And, Mr. Minister, we can't continue to go in that direction if we expect a first-class library system out there to help the students, those that you say will get their post-secondary education through distance education. We can't do both.

I wonder if the Chairman here could ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to stay out of this unless he wants to get on his feet. Mr. Chairman, I will refer also, a little later, where they have a resolution asking the present Minister of Education to stop the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs from passing a resolution which would hinder them. I will bring that to his attention a little later.

Mr. Minister, what they are saying and what I am saying on their behalf is that if you want to go in that direction, then you've got to back it up with some financial resources. They need it in order to have a first-class library system. And, Mr. Minister, on page 4 they go on to say that "the Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association urge the provincial government to make a firm financial commitment to library automation." On page 5, Mr. Minister, in their 1990 brief, they go on to say the following:

WHEREAS the Goods and Services Tax proposed by the Federal Government would result in consumers and libraries paying a nine per cent tax on the price of books, magazines and other materials; and

WHEREAS this tax would impose a financial hardship on public libraries which are providing an important educational and recreational service.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Annual Meeting of the Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association urges the Government of Canada and the Honourable Michael E. Wilson, Minister of Finance, to eliminate the Goods and Services Tax on books, magazines and other reading materials.

I'm not certain, Mr. Minister; I've not followed the GST (goods and services tax) that closely. Has the minister, the federal minister, exempted these items from the GST tax, and what presentations did you make to him? So there are several questions that I want you to answer for me.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, certainly we understand the concerns that the libraries have in the province. And as I indicated, we've had several meetings with them and they have pointed out the fact quite clearly that they all need more money. But I think at the same time they understand why there isn't more money available at the present time with the economic situation such as it is. And we're going to have to live with that. We have to live with that.

People out in rural Saskatchewan and a lot of the people that are on these boards, they know better than most of us, you and I living in the city. They know a lot better than we do about what the economic situation is out there, and they understand that when it comes down to the priorities and where money is going to be spent, whether it's going to go into health care or into schools or whatever, that they're going to have to get by with their 2 per cent increase this year. But it isn't that we don't believe in libraries, we do, but it's just that we can't give them any more for the current year.

(1945)

Now you have to keep in mind, too that there are a lot of services that are provided through the department; the operating grants aren't the only assistance that they get. We've got a lot of people that are involved in the department that are assisting those libraries. Just to give you an idea as to some of the things they help out with. They co-ordinate, in the department the officials co-ordinate all the loans between library systems, and that's some 70,000 titles each year. They answer reference questions which cannot be handled within a regional, city, or northern library; that's some 6,000 reference questions they would have each year. They loan blocks of materials, non-English language, talking books on cassette, and large print books to libraries, some 150,000 annually. Catalogue new books, etc., bought by regional and northern libraries, that's another 40,000 annually. And they maintain union catalogues of books and periodicals owned by public, government, and special libraries in the province. So the operating grant that they get isn't the only assistance that they get from the government. They get a lot of support from the officials within the Department of Education.

Now your last question with regard to the GST, keep in mind that I

understand about 50 per cent of their operating expenses are salaries, so they would not be affected. But in so far as materials are concerned, we understand that there is the option now would be for a 50 per cent rebate, but I think some of that is still being negotiated.

So right now, we can't say for sure if that is going to be the case, but that's the information to date. But negotiations are still going on so there could, in fact, be an increase in the cost of the materials that they would be putting in because of the GST. So we certainly want to . . . We're opposed to that and we would want to see this exempt and that's why negotiations are going to continue. But at this point, who can say how successful we're going to be.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Now, Mr. Minister, two things: first -- and I'm not going to get into this -- I'm sure, Mr. Minister, if you and I honestly sat down and forgot about our politics and went to the budget, we could easily find 15 or \$20 million that would be much better spent on libraries and education than what it is being spent on right now. I'm sure we could, but those decisions, you and I aren't going to make them. And we could do that, and that is what's bothering a lot of people, that they see new programs coming up and new money being found almost on a weekly basis by the government, which is announced -- not by you, I agree, but that's maybe where I have some criticism. Some of the other ministers seem to be finding money.

Mr. Minister, you didn't answer my question. I asked you: did you, did the department itself make presentation to the federal minister or through your own Minister of Finance, did you make presentation to the effect of getting exemption, for provincial library materials and books that they will have to purchase, from the GST?.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance is the spokesman on these particular issues with regard to the GST and I would hope, as a former minister of Education and responsible for libraries, that he would be very much concerned about this tax going on to library materials. So I will be following up on that with him to ensure that he is taking that to the table and doing some negotiating on it. So I will take that upon myself to ensure that he is doing that for us.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I have a number of letters that I could read to you from the Weyburn area, from the Moose Jaw area, North Battleford area. All are saying that unless funding is substantially -- and that's the word they used -- substantially increased, the quality of the library service in Saskatchewan will deteriorate rather drastically.

Mr. Minister, I want to just ask you one further question. Can you comment on what stage the negotiations are in, or has it been resolved, the salary negotiations in the North Battleford library? Has that been resolved? I know that they have written to the Premier and I know you have received a copy of the letter. Could you comment as to what stage that is at and whether or not there's anything that you can do in using your good office if it has not been resolved, to resolve that dispute?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, as I understand it's not North

Battleford, it's Lakeland regional library where negotiations are going on. This is their first contract, and this is between the employer and the employees. It has really nothing to do with us. And the fact that it is their first contract, as I understand it, it is taking a considerable amount of time.

So to tell you how it's coming, it's apparently not settled yet. But I couldn't tell you whether they're close or where they are because it's really nothing to do with us.

Mr. Rolfes: -- But, Mr. Minister, it does have something to do with you. One of the main reasons, or the main reason that they can't sign a contract is that they don't have the money. And they simply say, look, it's your underfunding that is causing the problems that they're having in negotiating a settlement. And obviously you . . . I assume that you answered their letter that was written to the Premier, of which you got a copy. I would assume that because you are the Minister of Education and you got a copy of their letter that you would have answered it.

Also, did you not respond to their concerns, Mr. Minister, of which they made you aware?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I would disagree with the member opposite when he says that it's because they don't have the money for it. I mean otherwise, let's take a look at Southeast in Weyburn, they've settled; they got the same increase in grant as Lakeland. Palliser in Moose Jaw they've settled, and the fact of the matter is that these are older, well-established libraries. And you've got Lakeland, this is their first contract; they're taking a little bit longer. So two of them have settled out of the seven and we expect that the other ones will probably be settled as time goes on as well. So the lack of funds, as you say, or a shortage in their grant is not the answer as we understand it.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I was hoping that I wouldn't have to spend all that much time on this. Did you or your officials not read the letter? I mean, it's very clear that Joan Bunce makes that a paramount issue in her letter, where she says, look, we can't pay the people the kinds of salaries that they are requesting and that they should be paid. I mean they simply can't do it. And all right, maybe in some other areas the municipalities are paying more. But I don't think you can just simply say, well that's got nothing to do with me. It has everything to do with you. Had you been able to provide them with a 5 or 6 per cent increase in their library allotment this year instead of the 2 per cent, or less than half per cent over the last five or six years, they may not be in this predicament.

Mr. Minister, let me remind you that I believe, if I remember correctly, they have not signed an agreement since 1985. I think that was their last agreement. They've only received less than half a per cent increase in their grants from the provincial government and that is why they can't sign an agreement.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I would simply reiterate that Lakeland is not being treated any differently than anybody else. All of

the other regional libraries in the province have settled their contracts. This is a new contract for Lakeland Regional College as I understand it, since they were unionized. Now the discussions are taking longer than probably they would have hoped, but again, it takes two sides to negotiate.

And their grants are in the same proportion as anybody else's in the province, and the others have been able to settle. Since this is the first contract it's taking them longer. So, I mean, as far as the letter is concerned, yes, certainly I've read it, but at the same time there will not be any more money. So they are going to have to sort that out themselves. The grants are the same; it's the same proportion, provincial versus the local moneys that they get. And other regional libraries have been able to get by with that. And we would anticipate that Lakeland eventually will have it resolved as well.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Well, Mr. Minister, it's just too bad that everybody else is just so incapable of functioning. And it's everybody else's fault but the Minister's. Many of the others, Mr. Minister, indicated very clearly to you that if they don't receive substantial increase in funding, the library system is going to suffer very badly. Mr. Minister, it's right in their brief. It's in their brief. Now read the briefs; at least you could pay them that courtesy.

Mr. Minister, I don't want to spend any more time on it. I want to go to another area. You also received a letter, and I hope I can have a little more sympathetic ear on this one. It's a letter written to you from Lois Nelson of the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan. And I again, I don't want to spend that much time on it, not because it isn't an important issue. What I want to ask you: have you got an individual or several people in your department that are looking very seriously at what can be done for the learning disabled people for post-secondary education? I'm not just referring to universities, but I'm referring to SIAST and private schools and also it will be the regional school. And this, Mr. Minister, is not just people with learning disabilities, but people with all kinds of disabilities, emotional disabilities, physical disabilities, and whatever.

I know you received a letter of February 26, 1990 written to you, and in it -- I could go through it but I don't want to spend the time on it -- but they are asking a number of things. One of the things that they are asking, that there should be a human rights code of Saskatchewan that gives the disabled a right to education, and then they go on to explain it.

I'm just wondering, have you addressed many of the issues that they wrote to you about in February 26? Have you met with them or have your officials met with them, and what can they expect from your department in moving into this particular area?

(2000)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm certainly aware of the concerns that the member is raising and I know that it's been raised for some time now. There have been some programs, I suppose, tried in the

past. But what we have been doing within the department -- we have an advisory committee on this that has looked into the concerns, meeting with, working with the University of Saskatchewan, I would assume the University of Regina as well, also the SIAST campuses, and identifying the needs that are there with regard to assessment and with regard to programming. And I know that the University of Saskatchewan is anxious.

Things are moving ahead. But at the present time, the report has been written, it's now in the second draft stage. And what we will be doing is looking at the report and the recommendations that are within it and then going back to these different groups, the universities and SIAST to take a look at how we can work together in implementing some of these recommendations. So we're aware of the concern. The question is going to be then looking at the recommendations and how we're going to address the problems.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, when can the learning disabled association expect . . . what's your timetable?

You've said that a report has been written. Do you mean a report written by the group that you have set up in consultations with the post-secondary institutions? And if there is a report written, is there any possibility that I could have a copy of the interim report? More specifically, Mr. Minister, what I want to know: does the report come to grips with the suggestions that they make in the letter they sent you?

For example, will the learning disabled be included in setting accessibility standards in post-secondary education? Number two, will there be provided psycho-educational assessments for many of these people with disabilities? Number three, is there any way that the report comes to grip with meeting the day-to-day needs of disabled people? And they can be many, they can be many from psychological to physical and social. Number four, will the report come to grips with providing in-service for faculty from which the learning disabled will take their classes? And lastly, number five, they want to know what kinds of resources are there to provide for advocacy for this particular group.

Mr. Minister, what I really want for this group -- and they've asked me to get back to them, and this has been some time now that I have talked to them -- I've told them that I would want an answer from the minister. And I would like to have a timetable from the minister and I'd like to be able to go back to them, through Hansard of course, and by speaking to them as to where the department is at and where the minister is at as far as coming to grips with the problems that exist and when can they expect some concrete action.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm very familiar with the association that the member is talking about, and Lois Nelson. I would point out to him that Wayne Adair, who is the former regional co-ordinator, special ed., in the North Battleford region and has a lot of background in special education, is the one that has been involved with the committee, the one that's writing the report. I've had some discussions with him with regard to the concerns. And I haven't seen the report yet, but as far as

timetable, we are expecting it to be done, at the very latest, by the end of June. This is information you could pass on to Lois if you see her before I do.

I would assume, certainly, the things that you're talking about, the LD (learning disabled), they're obviously going to be included in here. I think that the major concerns that we're dealing with are those with learning disabilities and the problems that some of these students have when they go on, when they leave our K to 12 system and end up in our post-secondary institutions. And I think that this is an area that I have a personal concern about because I think we have to start looking about special needs people from kindergarten right on through into the post-secondary.

Because I think in some cases now what happens, when they leave our K to 12 system, we lose them for a few years and then they show up some time later, maybe in university or maybe in SIAST. So we've got to work to overcome this problem and this gap. I think in some cases too the information . . . You talk about assessment. There's a lot of assessment done on these people when they're in the K to 12 system, but in some cases I know that that information isn't passed on when they move on to a post-secondary institution. And to me, for us to want to go through all of this all over again . . . I know that reassessments are needed from time to time, and you know that as a former counsellor, but I think at the same time there's a lot of testing information that should be passed on from the one institution to the next.

So we have to ensure that that sort of thing is being done.

But again at the same time, there is other assessment that needs to be done, again as you would know from your counselling background, with regard to people moving into areas where they do have definite strengths. And that may, of course, be done at the SIAST campuses or, of course, if they're at university, then we have to take a look at other ways in which they can be assisted because there are some of these people that may not be able to learn by reading, but it isn't because they haven't got the ability. I'm sure that we both know of students that have gone through university with a severe learning disability but have come out with a degree, have done very, very well because they've had the appropriate support while they've been attending classes, whether it's someone taking notes for them and explaining things to them or they're using a tape recorder or whatever the case might be.

But we are moving ahead in that area. SIAST has applied to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Association for an education equity program which will also assist to deal with some of these concerns that you're raising. But we are moving along on that and we want to have some firm idea by the latter part of June then as to what we're going to be doing.

We should obviously then too be having a lot of discussion with the Saskatchewan Association for Children with Learning Disabilities and working with them. And I would think that the committee has been involved with them. I would hope that they've been involved with them as this

report has been written. So I would be surprised if they haven't.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, certainly from my experience, a lot of assessment is, has, and is being done from the K to 12. I want to tell you that when I was in the field, there was a lot of co-operation with post-secondary institutions and we met regularly with the psychologist and psychiatrist from the U of S in Saskatoon; we had not regular meetings, but certainly periodic meetings with the people from SIAST.

So we did have that kind of rapport. And I don't disagree with you that that information should be passed on because it's very costly to do assessment again and again when you have the results readily available. But it must also be remembered that once you leave the secondary school and you get entirely into a different environment, that sometimes reassessments have to be done, and what they are saying -- and I know you don't disagree with me on that -- is that we have to make resources available for these people.

What happens, Mr. Minister, is that when resources are very scarce, these people are on the bottom rung of the ladder; they are not given the priority that they should receive. And I'm not being harsh on the institutes now because they just don't have the funds and when you start dealing with disabled people on a one-to-one basis, it becomes very, very costly. And consequently, because they are underfunded, these people are shunted aside and they don't get the service that they should have.

Mr. Minister, can any one of your officials assure me that in writing up this report or doing this study that members of the disabilities association have been involved in this study and also in the writing of that report? And if they have been, who are the individuals?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- I'll answer the latter question first. With regard to input, the department approached 20 advocacy groups including the SACLD, the Saskatchewan Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, and as well, there were written briefs sent in by nine other groups. So there's been pretty fair representation from around the province.

Now with regard to what's happening in talking about resources. We currently spend over \$2 million on vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons, the VRDP program, and that includes learning disabled. This current year, as I understand it, 173 students at university and 305 at SIAST that are being assisted. So this includes money for special services including assessments. And some of those specialized assessments that you mentioned, where new information is needed and for an entirely different area, not necessarily an intellectual assessment.

So there is a fair bit of money being spent then on these particular people. But we've got to ensure that we haven't got some that we're losing or missing out on, and this has grown substantially. I'd point out too, that since '84-85, for example, that the number on VRDP programs (vocational rehabilitation for disabled persons) has grown from 503 to 846. So we've got a lot of people and these are ones in the post-secondary institutions that have been able to benefit from this particular program.

So we are doing a fair bit, but we've got to ensure, and I'm sure we will after this report is finished because of the input from so many different groups and individuals, that we should have a pretty good idea as to the types of needs or services that there are out there. And we will be able to better address them then because of that input. So we should know that, as I said, within the next month to five or six weeks.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, how much of that money if any comes from the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- 50 per cent comes from the federal government.

Mr. Rolfes: -- I just didn't want you to leave the impression that that was \$2 million spent by the provincial government.

Anyway, Mr. Minister, I want to . . . We could spend a lot of time on that particular area. One of the things, Mr. Minister, when I was the Minister for post-secondary education, one of the concerns that the federal government always had was that they were not getting sufficient recognition for moneys spent in post-secondary education. So I'm just giving Brian Mulroney and his troops a little credit for spending some money in post-secondary education -- not enough, but they're spending some.

Mr. Minister, I want to now turn to regional colleges, but more specifically before I go to regional colleges, to junior colleges. Mr. Minister, as you know you were invited to a symposium in September I believe, last fall in Melfort, Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh yes, yes you people were invited. But your position was vacant. As it was in Saskatoon, Mr. Minister, the member from Melfort did bring greetings at noon hour but there were no questions directed at him because he said he only had a few minutes. He had to be away.

And I can understand why you didn't want to be there, Mr. Minister, but I do want to know your position and the government's position on junior colleges in this province. We know that some of the other provinces have gone in this direction. We know that there is a proposal has been put forward by the members of the . . . or pardon me, it's a proposal for a Saskatchewan junior college system prepared for presentation to members of the provincial cabinet, and this was presented to you in January 17, 1989. I know you weren't the minister at the time, but you were certainly a member of cabinet.

I want to know what your response is to that presentation and where you stand in the whole area of junior colleges for the province of Saskatchewan. Is that the direction that we should be going, or is that your intention as far as regional colleges are concerned? Is it your hope and desire that regional colleges will develop into junior colleges, or where do you stand on the whole area of junior colleges for the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well I can tell you quite clearly, Mr. Chairman, we're not looking at junior colleges in Saskatchewan, and I think that really what we're getting down to here is a title that's used. The term that we're using in Saskatchewan is regional college because we feel that that more appropriately covers the type of programming that is necessary in rural Saskatchewan.

You've indicated that junior colleges have been tried in other provinces and very successfully, but I would suggest too that even in the province of Alberta, they don't any longer call them junior colleges. I think now they call them community colleges. So again, the service that's being delivered isn't going to be determined by what it's called. So regional colleges is the title that we're using in Saskatchewan.

With regard to the Melfort conference, there was a good reason why I wasn't there. This was something that I received word on very late and had another commitment, but I would point out to you that we were represented there by Chris Stuhr, principal at Cypress Hills Regional College. He was there as our spokesperson and as someone who has a fair bit of experience in dealing with regional colleges.

And I can point out to you as well that I have met with the Melfort group on two or three occasions. I know Dub Henderson, one of the people up there very involved with it, quite well, and that I worked with him in the department for four years up there.

But at the same time I don't think that there's really that much difference in the goals and objectives that we have. I think that we're not talking about taking an area and buying 10 or 20 acres of land or whatever, and establishing another campus as such, where you're going to have not only the college facilities but also residential facilities. That's not what we're looking at.

I think that you know as well as I that we have some very large facilities around this province that are not being fully utilized, and I think for anyone to suggest that we're going to go into any community and build completely new facilities when you've already got some that are not being fully utilized, that would be a total misuse of funds.

So we want to take a look at each area in the province with the regional college board, and some of them have presented very, very good five-year plans as to the type of direction that they want to go -- the expansion of university courses, also a greater number of vocational programs, along with the adult basic ed. programs and the literacy programs.

So I think we've got a lot of excellent services being provided. But there was some disagreement, I know, with the Melfort group and others in the province as to what should be happening.

But I think we can achieve the same objectives in taking a look at each one. Each area is different too I would suggest. When you look at the Swift Current area for example, their needs in that area are somewhat different than what they would be in Palliser, or not necessarily Palliser

but in Carlton say in the Humboldt area, or in Cumberland, and if you go out to Parkland in Yorkton. So we have to look at each one individually.

Now we've got a lot of good things happening. There's a lot of excitement in the group right now with the increased budgets that they have as to some of the things that they are now going to be able to do. We've got good people like Jim McHugh from North Battleford who is the head of the regional colleges in the province.

And I would point out, by the way, that he attended that symposium in Melfort as well. He's head of the trustees' association and, as I understand it, participated on the panel. So I think we had good representation there, and people that have been very directly involved in the provision of programs through regional colleges.

So we're looking forward to a lot of good things. We'll work with the Melfort people in trying to address their needs, and it's just that we're not going to be calling them junior colleges and setting up special campuses as such. There was some disagreement in that particular area.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I'm glad you asked the last sentence because my question was, you had said all along, I don't think there's very much difference between what they requested and what we want to do.

Let me tell you, Mr. Minister, that they were disappointed that there was not a cabinet minister there. It's quite different from having an elected official. There were a number of your officials there from various community colleges. I had a conversation with many of them and I know many of them personally -- many good people; I'm not arguing with that. But that's not what they wanted; that's not what Melfort wanted. Melfort wanted a cabinet minister there who could answer some of the policy decisions for them. An official can't do that. An official carries out your policy. They can't say that the government is going to do this or the government is going to do that.

And Mr. Hodgins was there. Mr. Hodgins was there to give a greeting at noon hour. He spoke for about five minutes and that was it, but didn't accept any questions; He was busy to go somewhere else. And that's fair enough; that was fair enough. But he had his lunch and he left -- and I think he was well fed. But he didn't . . . I must admit I don't think we got our money's worth . . . And I'm not saying that being serious about it, but it would have been nice if he could have stayed or a minister could have been there to answer some of their questions. That's what they wanted. I'm not being critical of the officials that were there.

Mr. Minister, what I . . . I'm glad you did answer or put in your last sentence where you said we're not specifically going to set up campuses. Because that's what Melfort wanted. And in their brief, I'm not sure what cabinet said to them and I'm not privy to it, but they very clearly asked for.

We envision a junior college that would have a strong presence in the community. Having a campus as its base would foster a sense of pride in

the students and faculty.

I made a suggestion, Mr. Minister, at that time that we ought to have a look at post-secondary education in this province, vis-a-vis do we want junior colleges? Do we want regional colleges? Do we want to offer a three-year or four-year degree program in rural Saskatchewan through various campuses?

And I suggested that we set up a committee under the auspices of Dr. Leo Kristjanson who I know is very familiar with rural Saskatchewan and is certainly familiar with education in Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, that resolution was passed unanimously and I had hoped that maybe you would take that to heart and act on that particular resolution that was passed.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you: you say that you feel that there are areas out there that will offer a five-year university program, or have submitted to you a program for a five-year university degree. I think that's what I heard you say. And if that is true, would you mind telling me in what areas they will be offering these programs? Secondly, if that is not true, then ignore that, Mr. Minister, but tell me: do you foresee in the next few years, your regional colleges offering a degree program, let's say in arts and science or in physical education or in education. Do you foresee that? Is that the direction that you are giving to regional colleges?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- We're not looking at degree programs. We're looking at first and second-year only at this point. But that what I had suggested to you what was a five-year plan as to where they want to go over the five years as to the different courses they're going to offer. No, not a five-year degree program or anything like that.

We know that other provinces are looking more at that. B.C. is just gone to that, as you know. In the last year, I believe that they have three of their colleges now that are granting degrees. I think another one is going to be added this year. So they're having a fair bit of success with that, but I think we got to walk before we can run. So I think we have to look at increasing the number of courses, first and second-year university, the same with SIAST. But we got to make sure that we can have that mesh then, so that these students can take those courses and that they will work right in with what's being done on the home base.

Now again with regard to Melfort, let me point out to you that -- and I can understand what you're saying about it's always good to have a minister there -- but I did make a point of going to Melfort and meeting with those people on an individual basis and listening to them and discussing the concerns with them. But at the same time, I don't think that it would be wise for anybody to be looking at putting a lot of additional money into bricks and mortar as such, if you've already got facilities that are sitting empty or not fully utilized. I think that we've got to look at more money that can be put into staff and programs. I know that some have suggested the idea of mini-campuses.

Now there's a little bit a difference there. And I think that you could see . . . And I'm not just sure how much space is still available at

Melfort, but I know some of the larger comprehensive high schools -- and Melfort was one of them, quite frankly -- were built for maybe a thousand or 1,200 students, and we're sitting there with maybe 6 or 700 of them.

Well I think that there's an opportunity to utilize more of that space then, and maybe it is a matter of, maybe it's a matter of a mini-campus that is set up, where you do have your post-secondary programs along with the secondary. And in some cases you can have a wider offering then. You could beef up some of those shop areas and do more vocational programs.

Again, you talked earlier about resources in libraries. I think that there could be a lot of work done in that area, but it doesn't mean establishing a total new junior college, separate free-standing campus. Let's do it with the facilities that we've got. And I know that others are wanting to do more of that sort of thing, and that will meet their needs. And I think that's what our main concern is.

You said you wanted another study done. Well, keep in mind that the former minister of Education had many, many meetings and a lot of consultation around the province prior to the reorganization of SIAST and the regional colleges. And the one thing that was coming across quite clearly from rural people was that they wanted greater access for their children. They wanted more first and second year university courses available in rural Saskatchewan, and a greater opportunity in so far as vocational courses were concerned.

So that can be provided through the regional colleges that we are looking at now. And with new money and more money and a difference in the mechanism by which they're funded, there is much more that can be done.

I think, quite frankly, when I talk about different areas and the way that they have to examine their own needs, Northlands college in La Ronge is the best example that we've got in the province, I think, where specific courses are being provided to meet specific needs. And I'm sure that the member from Athabasca would agree with me on that when he looks at the programs that are being offered up there. They are designed by people in the North for the jobs that are out there and the specific training that they need. And I think that that's something that we can use as a model for more of our other regional colleges in the province. And it does point out that everyone of them is unique and different, and they have their own special needs and let them then work to developing programs to meet those needs and we'll work along with them.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I don't want to -- let me make it categorically clear -- I don't want you to carry on the kinds of discussions that your predecessor had. That's not discussions. He did more harm to post

_secondary education than any minister in the history of this province, in the history of this province. The harm that he caused by the method that he used in changing post-secondary education in the technical schools is unforgivable. It was scandalous, Mr. Minister.

I don't want you to support your predecessor, because that's not the kind

of consultation that anybody would like to have done again in this province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh, I didn't know he was here but I'm glad he is. Yes, I've said this to you before and I'll say it again. The educators in this province were very, very pleased when you left that particular post. They weren't very pleased when you got Finance but I'll tell you they were pleased to get you out of Education.

(2030)

And they had high hopes for this present minister and I'm willing to give him another chance. He didn't fare very well in his first budget . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh but you didn't, you fared very poorly. You fared very poorly. Very, very poorly. I did very well. And, Mr. Minister, you want me to outline how well you did? Two per cent for libraries when the track record was less than half a per cent for five years. You call that good? I don't. I don't call that very good, Mr. Minister.

Let me give you another one -- 2.9 per cent for universities. Two point nine per cent for universities, you say that's good? When inflation rate is almost 5 per cent, you say that's good? Mr. Minister, I'd be ashamed. I'd be ashamed. I'd be ashamed to say that you were successful. No, Mr. Minister, you did not do well. You did not do well and neither did education do very well by you.

But as I said, we're hoping that you will have more clout in cabinet next time around, if your Premier doesn't call an election. If he calls an election you won't have to worry about it; we'll take care of it. The members on this side will take care of it.

But I'm telling you, Mr. Minister, and you know you did not do well. You're doing your best out there to try and defend the budget that you've got, but when you see the type of mill rate increases from kindergarten to grade 12, when you see what's happening at the university when our president of the U of S has to possibly cancel colleges -- as we will get into it a little bit later -- don't tell me you did well. You didn't. You did very poorly.

And I'll show you very shortly your government's record as far as operating grants is concerned. By your own annual report your operating grants to universities is scandalous. You know what it works out in the last five years, Mr. Minister? -- 1.8 per cent per annum.

An Hon. Member: -- No.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Yes, in your own report. Well I'll show it to you very shortly in your own report. Mr. Minister, you fared very badly. But at least, Mr. Minister, I think you understand education. You spent 30 years in it; you should understand it. What I want to know, Mr. Minister, is in your regional colleges -- and this is some concern to the universities -- are you, or can you guarantee the universities that should you get 500 students in your regional colleges this year and another 500 next year, how will the universities be able to take care of those students when they come

into the university on their third year? Dumping 500 students let's say into the universities suddenly, how are they going to accommodate those students? Now you might say, well we're not going to have 500. Well if you're only going to have 100, then I think you misspent or misallocated a lot of money.

And before we get into that, Mr. Minister, can you tell me what success excluding Prince Albert -- if you want to include Prince Albert then give me the figures separately for Prince Albert -- but excluding Prince Albert, what success have you had in first-year and possibly second-year courses that were taken by students in regional colleges? Don't give me the number. I want the number of students, but I also want the number of courses because many of them may have only taken one course or two course or a half a course. I want to know the total number of courses and the number of students.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Now, Mr. Chairman, I think that when the member talks about the fact that we didn't do that well as far as the budget, I think \$888 million for education and an increase of some \$47 million is pretty fair considering the economic times. Now I've told you before we can always use more money, but you're not prepared to accept reality, the fact that the economic times are tough. So let's take a look at that.

Now you ask about the number of courses and the enrolment in the different regional colleges. Well Carlton Trail had 13 courses, 150 enrolment; we've got Cumberland, 15 courses, 106 enrolment; Cypress Hills, 40 courses, 289 enrolment; Lakeland, 2, a total enrolment of 15 there, that must have been the satellite; Northlands, 6 there, 37 enrolment. We're talking university now. North West, 17 with an enrolment of 226; Parkland, 42, 450 students; Prairie West, 26 courses, 172 enrolment; Southeast, 50 courses with 350. So a total of 211 courses and the enrolment of 1,795 students.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, would you tell me what those 211 courses were mainly in, what areas. Two hundred and eleven courses -- I'm not quite certain what you mean by the course. Could you provide for me -- maybe you could send over here -- a listing of the courses that students were taking. Were they psychology courses? Were they English courses? Were they history courses? Were they sociology courses? What courses were they? Are you saying courses or classes?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Classes.

Mr. Rolfes: -- You're saying classes. Okay. Could I have a breakdown of that, a list of that. I'd like to see it. Mr. Minister, while you are at it, could you tell me how many students will complete their first year -- in other words will have five classes -- and how many this coming year, a good possibility will be completing their second year and the university can expect to see them on their doorsteps next year.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- We don't have a list of the courses. We could probably try and get that for you. By courses, I mean the classes that are being offered on each of these campuses. Nor could we tell you how many are completing first or second year because of the way that the courses are

being offered right now. This is one of the reasons for changing the mechanism by which they are funded because up until now it's not always been possible for students to do any long-range planning because they have never always known whether or not a course was going to be offered. It depended on how many students were enrolled in it. So if there weren't enough students, even though the course might have, or class, might have been in the calendar, it wouldn't have been offered because it wasn't going to be paying for itself.

So all of the students are registered with the university, and we would have, I think, quite a time trying to find out all of the numbers of courses that they take and also whether or how many are finishing first or second year university. But I think from here on in, there can be much closer tracking of it, because now as they change -- we've changed that mechanism -- they're now going to be offering more programs. It will be possible; students will now be able to look at the calendars and say, well, now if I can take these courses or classes this year and these next year, they can now be prepared to take a full year each of those two years.

So it'll be much easier for them to track, but right now the only thing I could give you would be the different classes that have been offered through the SCAN network. If you want that information, I have it right here.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, I wish you would check with your officials again. I don't believe what you said to me, I just don't believe it.

Your department . . . No, let's run through this. You tell me that so many classes have been offered -- 211 classes. You knew exactly how many students were in each of those courses at each of those colleges. All they had to do then in each of those courses is write behind it whether it was English or history or sociology or psychology. When they've tabulated, then they knew exactly how many students were in each of those courses. So when they tabulated it, they would have to go through the courses.

I just don't believe when you say that you don't know how many English classes, for example, were given. How many students have taken first-year English? How many students have taken a senior English class? I mean, if they did the tabulation, as you indicated to me, they must know exactly the courses that were offered and how many have taken various courses. I mean I just don't believe that.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, let me point out to the member that all of these students have to be registered at the university. All that the regional college is doing is offering a brokerage service.

Now when I give you these numbers . . . I said that we don't have that here. What we will have to do, and we can do that for you if you want, we will contact each of the regional colleges and find out how many English courses -- or psychology, or whatever -- they offer. We don't have that information with us. We are simply able to tell you the number of courses that they had and the enrolment. If you want that information, we'll get it for you but we don't have it here tonight.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Okay, Mr. Minister. I can understand you may not have it at your fingertips. But, Mr. Minister, I find it somewhat difficult to understand how you can tell me that we have . . . And I didn't write the figures down, but hypothetically let's say we have 22 in Parkland took so many courses; we have another 42 in North Battleford took so many courses. Now where did you get the numbers from in Northlands College, for example, if they didn't calculate how many were in each of those classes?

They know; they've got those figures; they have to have them. And by knowing if student A has taken four classes or five classes, we know he or she has completed the first year. And if they've taken 10 classes, we can pretty well ascertain that they have finished their second year and will be on the doorstep of the university this year. And I would think that the universities would want to know how many students have completed, or will have completed next year, their second year of university. Of the 1,795, will 1,000 have completed their second year next year? And can the universities then expect a thousand students knocking at their door wanting to get into third year university? Surely we must have thought of that, of the impact of regional colleges . . . courses offered at regional colleges, and the impact it will have on the universities. What are we going to say to those students when they apply to get into university in their third year? Sorry but you can't get in; there's no room; we have quotas. Where are they going to go? Surely there must have been some long-range planning on this.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, the member's going on and on here about something that is just . . . well he just has to stop and think for a little bit here. I've already indicated that these students are registered with the registrar on the campus.

Now let's take the University of Saskatchewan. They know then which ones of these students are in first year or second year. I mean it's part of their total count. So it isn't that there's going to be a surprise here; they're not going to know how many are going to be coming on campus here in third year or whatever the case may be. They know how many are there.

Now the courses may change from time to time, or from year to year, in the regional college campus. They don't offer the same ones every year. I've already indicated to you that we can contact each of these regional colleges and find out whether they have English and psychology, or math, or a German, or history, or whatever. I told you we don't have that information here now.

(2045)

But I point out again that these students are all in the computer. They're registered by the registrar at the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Regina. So they already have that information there. It's simply a matter of the regional college then acting as a broker to deliver the service. Instead of it being delivered on the campus, it's delivered in the regional college. So I don't know what you're making such a big thing out of this for when they're already in the computer, by the

register. It's just that they're not taking the course on the campus; they're taking it in the regional college. I've indicated to you that I will endeavour to get those courses for you, but we don't have it here tonight.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, it's strange how you always put a different inflection on the question I asked. I never asked what the future programs were. I did not ask what the future programs were that these students were going to take. I simply asked you, how many students took English; how many took sociology; how many took history? That's the past tense, Mr. Minister. I didn't say, how many will take English; how many will take history. I never asked you that.

An Hon. Member: -- You weren't listening.

DMr. Rolfes: -- Yes, I was listening. You're the one that wasn't listening, and that's why these estimates are taking a long, long time. If you simply answered the questions that we ask you, we could get through with these estimates.

Mr. Minister, the reason I'm asking these questions is because the universities are concerned. Would you mind telling me how are the universities going to accommodate these students for third year when they show up at the university. How are they going to accommodate these students? I know they know how many programs they have taken, but how are they going to accommodate them when they all show up at the university?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that if you take everything into consideration that there may be some slight increase at some point, say, third year, but that may not necessarily be the case. These students are all in the computer, put in by the registrar. They know how many are in first year, second year, and third year and so on. I think we know as well that there are students on campus that may drop out in the first and second year. They're doing that now.

I think as well that if we consider what Saskatchewan's population is, that we have been seeing an increase in the number of students, but I don't see that that is going to continue, Mr. Chairman. I mean, surely to goodness with a population of a million people that we have in the province, we must be nearly reaching our plateau as to the number of students that are still going to be going on to the campus and using those facilities.

So I think that when you consider that we are working together with the universities, with the administration, and with SIAST and the regional colleges, these are the types of issues that they're going to be dealing with, if in fact they see that there is going to be a problem. But I don't think that right now that we have to be seriously concerned about it.

We do have a planning committee right now that consists of all of the different institutions, and I'm sure that these are problems that will be resolved because they're going to be aware of what's happening. They are going to see if there are large increases. We're not sure at this point how many more students we're going to have on any of the regional colleges

on their campuses because of some changes that we're making. But I anticipate that there will be several because some of those rural young people now will have access to taking these courses where otherwise they wouldn't have that opportunity if they had to go into Saskatoon or Regina and pay the high amount of money for their living expenses. Now they're going to be able to live at home and take those courses. The committee will deal with those types of concerns as time goes on, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Yes, Mr. Minister, you sure will, just like you dealt with the quotas at the U of S on Arts and Science. We didn't have quotas. We didn't have quotas when we were the government. As I will indicate to you very quickly, Mr. Minister, why they have to have quotas is because your operating grants are so low -- 1.8 per cent per annum over the last five years.

Mr. Minister, you may not be concerned about it, but when I met with the officials at the U of S, that's exactly the concern that they had. What do we do with the third-year students that will come into the U of S from the regional colleges? That was a concern that they had. And they simply said to me that, well what will happen is that many students will be denied. Maybe not, I mean it will be on academic standing. So that means that those students who want to come in, and many of them, Mr. Minister . . . because I don't think the drop-out rate is very high in first and second year at the university -- it's not that high. And the dean of Arts and Science will tell you that. I mean, Mr. Minister, look at, "U of S Arts, Science quotas expected to remain," and follow-up is, "Quotas are to remain indefinitely."

And I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, they are concerned. They don't have the money, they don't have the staff, they don't have the library facilities, they don't have the space for these extra students . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now look, you had eight years to address it and you didn't address it, and you knew what the projection figures were at that time. Right across Canada the projection figures weren't that high. You could have dealt with it and you didn't.

Mr. Minister, I want to turn to your annual report on education, and you say that I am wrong on my figures. Well if I am wrong you better have a look at your annual report of 1988-89, Saskatchewan Education. And I want you to turn to page 63 -- I mean this isn't my report -- and table number six. Table six says grants to universities, 1983 to 1989. Mr. Minister, those were your budgets -- those were your budgets.

Let me just read out to you what the operating grants were. And it's not the capital grants that they're concerned about, and certainly because they needed \$160 million over the next five years at the University of Saskatchewan. The Regina campus needs a lot of money for capital, as my members pointed out to you the other night when I wasn't here.

But, Mr. Minister, I want to indicate to you in 1983-84 that operating grants to universities were 126 million-and-some-dollars. In 1984-85, 132 million; in 1985-86, 139 million; 1986-87, 143 million; 1987-88, 143 million because you didn't raise it at all. And in 1988-89, 149 million.

And, Mr. Minister, that works out to an 8.4 per cent increase. Over five years that's a 1.68 per cent increase per annum for your operating grants.

That is what you have offered to the universities and that's why they're in trouble, and they'll tell you that. Now you can't tell me that over those five years that the inflation rate was only 8.4 per cent. That's the problem that . . . And I said to the minister last year when he brought in his enhancement fund: oh, this was the greatest thing since sliced bread. But the universities knew what he was up to and we knew what he was up to and your government was up to.

And that is because you didn't want to include it into the base funding. And when I asked the minister, will it be included in the base? Well, he says, we're thinking about it, we're thinking about it. And your department, Mr. Minister, promised the university, your department officials promised the university if they carried out certain conditions that that enhancement fund would be included in the base. Oh yes they did. Oh yes they did.

Now I have no reason to believe that the officials at the U of S aren't telling me the truth. I have no reason to believe that they're not telling me the truth. They lived up to those conditions, and then it wasn't included in the base. Had you included in the base, Mr. Minister, your base for this year for the universities would have been about 153 million. And then if you'd have added on 3 per cent, you'd be up to about 155 or \$156 million. Now that's the problem, Mr. Minister, that we're having with universities, is that you have not addressed the operating grants adequately, and our universities simply can't continue. That's why we have quotas, and that's why over a thousand students, who otherwise would have been eligible for post-secondary education at our universities, didn't receive that education. Many of them went to other provinces. Others just simply didn't take it. And you have denied those students the opportunity to educate themselves and to contribute to this province by having a university education.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, your government's priorities are all wrong. And you can't tell me you don't have the money because you do have money for the Cargills. You do have money for the Pocklingtons. You do have money for the Weyerhaeusers.

And as I pointed out to you the other night, if Weyerhaeuser was paying the going rate today over the 30-year agreement that you signed with them, they would have paid another \$432 million. And, Mr. Minister, what we could do with \$432 million for our universities! We could do a lot. So you have the money but you've got the wrong priorities; that's what the problem is.

Oh you got lots for your selected and privileged few, but when it comes to the young people of this province, when it comes to the operating grants for our universities, you don't have it. You had another example today with WESTBRIDGE. We had an example last year in GigaText -- millions, millions poured down the drain. Cargill, \$38 billion in expenditures, and we have to -- a province of Saskatchewan, our budget is miniscule to the budget of Cargill -- and we have to subsidize a multinational corporation

of Cargill?

Don't tell me we don't have the money. You just have set the wrong priorities, Mr. Minister, and I think it's time that you take your responsibility a little more seriously. You go into cabinet and you fight for the young people. You start fighting for the universities. You start fighting for the educational opportunities for our young people in this province so they don't have to leave and seek their opportunities somewhere else. If you can't do it, then give the job to someone else.

(2100)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, we just hear the member running on and on again telling a whole bunch of statements here that are just not accurate, not accurate one little bit, not prepared to accept that at all. He talks about Weyerhaeuser and he talks about Cargill and all the rest of this. Nothing can substantiate that. Cargill, the government isn't giving Cargill any money. He keeps rambling on and on about this. He's not prepared to look at the facts. And he raises things like GigaText. I don't hear him talking about Nabu and the \$7 million or whatever that you've put in there. Never even created one job. I don't hear you talking about Golden Acres Motel, Moose Jaw. How many million dollars did you squander away on that?

For every one that you give me I'll give you another one -- for every one of them. So you sit there and you talk about all of these different things. I'll give you an example for every one that the NDP blew a whole bunch of money on, and hey, what about that? Yes, you had the problem, yes, you left us the problem. What were you doing with all the money you were putting into potash mines? Why didn't you put more of that into education? Where were you then?

When you talk about space at the university, well I'll tell you, capital funding to the University of Saskatchewan, this year alone \$48 million in capital. All right, let's talk capital. Let's talk operating. You said here a minute ago that if this government had . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well you said here a minute ago now . . . Do you want the answer or not? I mean are you just making fun here and asking questions . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm going to give you operating.

Now let me just tell you here what you're trying to mislead everybody here again. You said a few minutes ago that if the enhancement fund had been included in the base grant, okay, and then taken the 3 per cent over and above that -- I'm going to point out to you how bad your mathematics is, okay? -- you said that they would have been better off. Well I'll tell you . . .

An Hon. Member: -- I did not.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Yes you did.

An Hon. Member: -- I did not.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- You said that if . . .

An Hon. Member: -- You check Hansard.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well we'll check Hansard. You said that if they added the enhancement fund to the base grant and then took that and took the 3 per cent of that this year, they'd be better off. You said that.

So let me tell you what the real story is, Mr. Chairman. The base grant, Mr. Chairman, this year is 3 per cent; base grant is 3 per cent. But I would point out to the member opposite that the enhancement fund this year has increased by 21 per cent, 21 per cent. It's going to be divided between the universities and SIAST and the regional colleges. But it's increased by 21 per cent.

So let's take a look at the whole picture here. You wonder about who's . . . I'm told that the 21 per cent is the increase to the universities -- 21 per cent just to the universities, not SIAST, not the regional colleges, 21 per cent to the universities.

An Hon. Member: -- In the enhancement fund.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- In the enhancement fund. Well now how can you tell us then that if it had been added to base budget and they took the percentage over and above that, it would have been more? I'm telling you that it would not have been the case at all.

Let's take a look at what's happened to the operating grants to the universities. From 1975 . . . Well let's take 1982 on up to 1991 -- increase from 117 to \$162 million in grants. Annual percentage increase has gone up substantially over the period of time when you people were in government. So there has been a very large increase as far as the operating grants, increased by 5.5 per cent after inflation -- 5.5 per cent after inflation.

You look at the amount of money that has gone into the College of Agriculture building in the last couple of years and a substantial amount that's going into it this year. Now that was something that the university were after you people to do for some 25 years and you never did anything about it at all. So maybe if you'd done something like that when the cost would have been considerably lower and when the university was asking for it . . . So you beat on the government of the day because we aren't doing all of the things the university asked for. Where were you? You weren't doing it in the '70s when economic times were a lot better than they are today.

So our commitment is very clear. Certainly the universities would like more money, but we're giving them as much money as we can now in comparison to what the taxpayers can afford to pay. But the capital that we're giving to them, and the operating grants, are considerably more. You haven't made any mention at all about the University Renewal and Development Fund -- \$125 million over five years. Why don't you talk about something like

that? A tremendous amount of capital expenditures have gone on on the campuses.

Now granted, I am fully aware of what the University of Regina wants. I know that the students want their own student union building and that the fine arts building is something else that's very badly needed. And as soon as we can move on those areas, we will, but with the URDF . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Lots of money for everything else.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well if we want to use your terms, which are not based on any fact whatsoever -- you're opposed to fertilizer plants; the members from Moose Jaw aren't. You've got two stories for everything.

You talk about Weyerhaeuser. I don't think that you had any paper mill built up in Prince Albert when you were in power. You don't want diversification in this province. Where is increased money to come from for education unless we get into more of this manufacturing and processing? Where is it to come from?

So you don't want to talk about those things, but that's what the people want in this province today. They want more manufacturing and processing because it's through those industries that we are going to have the revenue we need in the future to provide more grants for universities and regional colleges and SIAST and to the K to 12 section.

Mr. Rolfes: -- This is becoming rather enjoyable, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, it's quite logical isn't it that if the people really want what you are giving them today that you should be at 15 to 18 per cent in the popular vote -- 15 to 18 per cent maximum. And you say that people want what you are offering. Mr. Minister, anybody can build if you supply all the money. Anybody can build if you take all the chances. Anybody can do that.

I'll give you a good example of the hotel here in Regina. Anybody could have built that hotel if someone signs an agreement for eight-year lease for \$12 million. That's how you're wasting public funds. That \$12 million . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, a lot of people could have built that hotel. I mean who couldn't build a mill in Prince Albert if you give them concessions and interest rates alone of \$432 million. Meadow Lake, exactly the same position.

And, Mr. Minister, Cargill. Why do you have to subsidize Cargill? Not only subsidize them in the building of the plant but subsidizing in the selling, marketing of the fertilizer. Oh the poor Cargill. Of course I know why they're doing it. I know why they're doing it, because Cargill . . . you look at the contributions Cargill has made to that political party. Thousands of dollars from Cargill has gone into that political party and the same thing with some of the others.

Mr. Minister, you say that I haven't been honest. Mr. Minister, you say that I haven't been honest with the operating grants. I want, Mr. Minister, I want you to turn to page 63 and tell me, are those figures

correct or aren't they? Mr. Minister, would you answer that question. In table 6, are those figures correct? The operating grants went from 126 million-and-some dollars to 149 million-and-some dollars in those five years. Are those figures correct, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if we could bring a TV I could watch in the meantime. I could watch some of that hockey game.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the table is accurate there in so far as what it says, but it doesn't include the whole story. The operating grants are probably accurate, yes, but it doesn't include enhancement fund which would have been also . . . that went into operating. The capital grants, you don't have all of the information there on that. Operating grants increased then from 131 million up to 173 . . .

An Hon. Member: -- That's not operating.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- What is it? Oh that's the total of 126 to 149 then. I would assume that's accurate.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, would you also admit that that is an 8.4 per cent increase over five years in operating grants to the universities?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, again I think that we have to consider more than an operating grant. I mean, what you have there is the accurate picture of whatever that percentage is, but I think at the same time, you can see why the enhancement fund then was introduced the following year to address some of the specific concerns. It's not in here, no, but it came in the following year. And the reasons are obvious why it came in: to address some of the specific pressures that the university campuses had at that time.

But I don't think you can necessarily divorce the operating grants from all of the capital grants because there is a tremendous amount of money that was being spent there. If we'd taken the same stand that your government did and hadn't built anything on the campuses, well sure there could have been an awful lot more money for an operating grant, but then you would have had the buildings falling down too.

An Hon. Member: -- They are falling down.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well there's been a tremendous amount of money spent in the last eight years, partly because you weren't doing a heck of a lot about it when you were in power. So you could have been building new ones. You didn't do anything for College of Agriculture. Why didn't you do that? I mean when you look at \$92 million going into one building, one building, certainly that could have been added to the grant. You didn't do anything about the administration building. That's been in trouble for many, many years. You never addressed it. So I mean don't just isolate operating grants. Let's take a look at the whole picture and all of the money, taxpayers' money that is going onto those campuses.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, you will admit then that over five years, from

'83-84 to '88-89, your government operating grants to universities was 8.4 per cent of an average per year of 1.68 per cent. A point that I want to make and a point that the universities make when I meet with them is: that's why we're in trouble. We have gotten further and further behind as inflation eats away. We didn't even get inflation, not nearly the inflation rate.

Mr. Minister, I want you now -- and if you don't agree with these figures you can work them out for yourself. In fact I want to turn this over to the minister so that he can look at it himself. The operating grants from 1975 to 1991, these were the operating grants. Mr. Minister, let's turn to those. In 1975-76, 23.4 per cent, that's when we were the government, Mr. Minister, 23.4 per cent increase; 1977, 14.3 per cent increase; 1978, 10 per cent increase; 1979, 9.6 per cent increase; 1980, 7.6 per cent increase; 1981, 8.5 per cent increase; 1982, 12 per cent increase; 1983, and this was the '82-83 budgets and the last one before the government changed, a 17 per cent increase.

(2115)

Mr. Minister, you add up those averages. And what has happened since the government changed? And here's what happens: operating grants, '83-84, 7.7, 5.3, 4.2, 3, 0, 2, 2, 3. Well, Mr. Minister, what I'm saying to you is, and my figures are out slightly . . . yes, but they're not out very much, and if you want to, do your own calculations. Do your own calculations and you will find that the universities are simply saying to you that you have not provided adequately for them in operating, number one. So they cannot accommodate those students who should be eligible for university and who were eligible in the past.

It is a well-known fact that those students who graduate from grade 12 with a 65 per cent average function well at the university. This year students only with a 73 per cent average can get in, not because the others can't function at the university, but because of the lack of funding by your government of operating grants to the universities is why they are denied entrance to a university.

And, Mr. Minister, the people out there don't buy it. We don't buy it that you don't have the money. You simply have the wrong priorities -- you simply have the wrong priorities. You could cut out \$10 million in partisan government advertising. You could cut out 10 million of your 17 million that you spent last year, and no one -- no one -- would suffer, except maybe your ego and your particular party, your image. But the people of Saskatchewan would benefit because that \$10 million you could use for universities.

As I said to you before, if you and I sat down, forgot our politics and went through that budget, we could find millions of dollars -- millions of dollars for universities which you simply haven't provided.

Mr. Minister, those figures I have given you come right from your annual report. Mr. Minister, I also want to ask you . . . I see a new future minister of Education. Well he may do all right, who knows? Never know,

he hasn't done very well in Agriculture lately, but that's shadow-boxing . . . no, from somebody that has been involved. That shadow-boxing will have to stop soon, Mr. Minister. Soon you're going to have to quit that and come through with that money that is sitting in Ottawa, and your timetable, yes, your timetable will have to change.

An Hon. Member: -- Mazie's quitting.

Mr. Rolfes: -- No, Mazie isn't quitting.

An Hon. Member: -- He's giving up.

Mr. Rolfes: -- No, he didn't have . . .

Mr. Chairman: -- Order, order. The debate from across the floor isn't adding anything to what's going on in this House this evening, so I'd ask the members to allow the member from Saskatoon South to put his question.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, we could have finished a long time ago if I'd get some co-operation from you. Mr. Minister, had you simply said to me right from the start, yes, you are right in your figures, we could have been on to another topic. And look, these are your own. And what the universities tell me, Mr. Minister, and I meet with them also as the critic in the opposition, they tell me that they simply cannot provide all the programs they presently are.

And I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: what mandate, what mandate do you expect of our universities? Are they to continue with the traditional mandate of providing all the activities and offering all the programs they presently are, or are you saying to them, Mr. Minister, that they must cut programs and cut colleges? Is that what you are saying to them, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, we're not suggesting to the university that they cut programs, and I would hope that any cuts they have to make would be minimal, but they'll make those decisions. And I talked to the president of the University of Saskatchewan yesterday or the day before and certainly aware of some of the current concerns.

But, Mr. Chairman, I want to answer the question here that the member has put forward about the grants and changes, and he's making his argument about the small increase that we've had over the years. But let me point out that in spite of the difficult times that we've had, since from 1981 to 1989, that operating grants were increased by 5.5 per cent after inflation. Now . . .

An Hon. Member: -- 1981, sure you're including two big years of ours.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- All right, but you're being selective. You wanted to pick certain years, all right. I mean, you want to distort everything. Now just listen.

I've said then that 5.5 per cent after inflation. Now in comparison in

much richer times, after inflation in the last seven years that your government was in power, grants increased by .5 per cent, .5 per cent.

Now let's take a look at something else. Let's take a look at something else. You wonder about why these grants aren't increasing. The farmers' income today -- and that's still our main industry in this province -- the farmers' income today is 43 per cent of what it was 10 years ago, 10 years ago. We've also seen the price of uranium probably come down about . . . It's probably about a third of what it was 10 years ago. The price of oil hasn't done all that great. What's the price of potash in comparison?

So when you look at those four main generators of revenue and consider what has happened during the last 10 years, is it any wonder that we haven't been able to increase the grants any more than we have. I'm surprised, really, that there hasn't been a large cut in some areas. I think we've been doing pretty well, but it's been coming about because we've had to change priorities and we've had to have deficits. But I think that there are things that we're pretty fortunate . . . Certainly I would like to see more money for the universities. We fully understand the important role that our universities play in this province. But I would also point out to you that this is not a problem that is unique to Saskatchewan when it comes to funding at universities.

Now I got a copy here of the changes that are taking place in the province of Alberta. And you like to talk so much, or your colleagues do, about the number of young people that are leaving our province and going to Alberta and B.C. because they're going to get jobs. Let's take a look at what's happening in Alberta. This is a province where their economy is considerably better than ours, but university fees, they're going up 15 per cent at the University of Alberta, 15 per cent. And let's take a look at the fact that they're cancelling 900 course sections and laying off some 27 people this year, a lot of support people. And there are other positions that they've been vacant and they're not going to be filling those positions.

So now I'm sure that you could take a look right across this country and see that the same thing is happening on all of the campuses. Tuition fees are having to go up to try and meet some of the increased operating costs. They're all asking for more and more money, but even in the province of British Columbia you're finding that tuition fees are going up substantially. And I suppose that their grants are larger than ours, but I'm sure that the universities are saying, we want more. Well when is more going to stop, Mr. Chairman? I mean we give as much as we can, we give as much as we can . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, sure, I mean he comes back with the same old rhetoric, same old rhetoric, but no idea about building in the province so that we can ensure that we're going to have more money for generations to come as far as education.

So I point out, Mr. Chairman, the reasons why we cannot increase the grant substantially more than we have. But when you compare our record to their record -- when the economic times were considerably better -- our record will stand up against theirs any time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: -- It'd be a joke if it wasn't so serious, Mr. Minister. I want to tell the public out there a couple of things before we get to that. Mr. Minister, if you took the 432 million that you have subsidized to Weyerhaeuser, the 20 million you gave to Pocklington, and the 64 million -- and not to look at the guarantees that you made to Weyerhaeuser -- you've got over \$500 million. I want to tell the public: \$500 million that they are giving to three corporations. That money they could've used for universities. And I'll tell the public that's why they don't have the money . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, that's why you're at 15 per cent. That's why you're at 15 per cent.

It's interesting to see how the minister wants to use the figures of the previous government -- of our government -- he used three figures for operating grants when we were the government. One was 8.5 per cent, one was 12 per cent, and one was 17 per cent. He used those and threw them into his figures.

Of course it'll boost your figures. You said 1981. In 1980-81 it was 8.5 per cent; 1981-82 it was 12 per cent; 1982-83 it was 17 per cent. Mr. Minister, I did some quick calculation while you were talking. And when we were the government from 1975 to 1982-83, you know what the operating grants went up by? 102 per cent for an average of 12-point-some per cent. You know what the inflation rate was, Mr. Minister? The inflation rate was 9.6 per cent average, 9.6 per cent average. Oh, he says,

Terrible. It's not so terrible, Mr. Minister, when you look at they were getting over 3 per cent per year more than inflation and, and, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, let me tell you that when you're giving them 1.6 per cent, pardon me, 1.8 per cent per year, when inflation is around 5, well I'll take ours any day, Mr. Minister, any day, and so will the universities, so will the universities, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I want to tell you that you did very poorly, and you might as well admit it. You haven't got the clout that you'd like to have in cabinet and that you should have, that you should have.

An Hon. Member: -- How do you know?

Mr. Rolfes: -- Well, if you had the clout . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, Mr. Minister, I want to tell the people the minister says he does have the clout. Well obviously, Mr. Chairman, I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan then this minister is not protecting education, then he is not sticking up for education in cabinet. He says he has the clout. Then why did he get less than inflation for education? Why did he manage to only get two point some per cent on operating grants for universities? He doesn't have the clout. He doesn't have the clout.

Mr. Minister, you didn't fare well; you didn't fare very well. And that's why, Mr. Minister, you got a tough time or the universities have a tough time to try to meet with you because you can't defend the budget that you are providing. You just can't defend it.

Mr. Minister, I have a number of other topics that I want to get through tonight yet. I want to ask you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh,

we'll be back; we'll be back on this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .
No, no, I got tomorrow and next week. We got tomorrow and next week. If
we don't finish, we'll go the following week. We'll do the following week.
And if you interfere, we'll do it the following two weeks too . . .
(inaudible interjection) . . . No, I haven't taken my clubs out yet.

The Minister of the Family says I have a tee off time Monday at 2 o'clock.
Well I'm not a cabinet minister. No, we have to do our work here and we
can't tee off.

Mr. Minister -- I'd love to tee off -- Mr. Minister, I want to ask you a
question. Last year we asked the then minister of Education about a
contract that was signed between the university and WESTBRIDGE in building
a WESTBRIDGE building on the U of R. I'd like you to tell me the progress
of that building, where it is at, and what the funding arrangements are
today?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, we're not providing any money for
WESTBRIDGE for the construction of the building in the research park.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, we must be on the different building then.
WESTBRIDGE, a year ago it was reported in this House that WESTBRIDGE was
building a building on the university campus for computers. Is that
correct? Is that building going on and what is the funding arrangement?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The project is well under way. Maybe you need to
go out and take a look at it. It's well under way. But we're not
providing any funding for that; that's an agreement between the university
and WESTBRIDGE.

(2130)

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, can you tell me, since you provide the funding
to the university, what is the arrangement between the university and
WESTBRIDGE?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that the
University of Regina is constructing the building and have a lease
arrangement with WESTBRIDGE for it, so we're not providing any money for
that. As I understand it, the leasing arrangement that they have would pay
for the building, I think, within about 10 years or so.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, what was the original arrangement made between
the University of Regina and WESTBRIDGE? I want you to think seriously on
this. What was the original arrangement, and has that arrangement changed,
the financial arrangement there was between WESTBRIDGE and the U of R? Has
that original arrangement changed? And if it has, what is it?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, the agreement there with WESTBRIDGE,
that's all with the University of Regina. We're not providing any funding
for that. As I understand it, the university is putting up the facility
and they are leasing it to WESTBRIDGE. And as I understand it, the
agreement is such that the building will pay for itself over some 10 to --

I think maybe -- 12 maximum years. There was some minor change that was, I think, made in the overall plans that they could accommodate their head office out there, as well as the computer facility that they're putting up. But that's the only change that has been made. So it's nothing to do with us, other than the fact that we have to give them approval to borrow the money to put up the building. So I mean, that's the only involvement that we would have. But the deal is between the University of Regina and WESTBRIDGE. So the board of governors and the administration have approved that arrangement.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Minister, was that the original agreement that you would . . . I assume that you're guaranteeing the loan. Are you guaranteeing the loan?

Mr. Minister, I have before me an order in council. And the order in council simply says this: that -- it is section 63 of The University of Regina Act -- provides as follows: the board shall not incur any liability and so on. You're all familiar with that. Section 67.1 says The University of Regina Act provides as follows:

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The board shall not incur any liability or make any expenditure exceeding \$500,000 . . .

And then it goes on to say that:

It is desirable and in the public interest to repeal Your Honour's Order 901/89, dated November 1, 1989 which approved the expenditure by the University of Regina of an estimated cost of \$8,200,000 to be shared by the University of Regina and Westbridge Computer Corporation for the purpose of constructing a building in its research part which Westbridge Computer Corporation will lease from the University of Regina.

Number four goes on to say:

It is desirable and in the public interest to modify the funding arrangements for the University of Regina for the construction of a building in its research part to be leased to Westbridge Computer Corporation in which Westbridge Computer Corporation will consolidate its computer operations and will resolve in positive interaction between the two organizations.

The estimated cost of the project is \$10 million, not 8.2 but \$10 million, which will be the responsibility, Mr. Minister, of the University of Regina. Now there's quite a difference. Let's go back to paragraph three. It says in paragraph three:

. . . an estimated cost of \$8,200,000 to be shared by the University of Regina and Westbridge Computer Corporation.

Four says it will be paid totally by the University of Regina, but don't tell me that the original arrangement hasn't been dramatically changed.

Now I asked you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well that's not what

you told me and I asked you to think about it very carefully. And again you said that the original arrangement had not been changed. Well we'll go to Hansard and we'll find out what you said, Mr. Minister. It goes on to say:

The undersigned has the honour, therefore, to recommend that Your Honour's order do issue pursuant to section 67.1 of The University of Regina Act:

- (a) repealing Your Honour's order of 901/89 dated November 1, 1989 which approved the expenditure by the University of Regina, the construction of the WESTBRIDGE building at an estimated cost of \$8.2 million to be shared by the University of Regina and the WESTBRIDGE Computer Corporation;
- (b) approving the expenditure by the University of Regina of an estimated \$10 million for which the University of Regina will be responsible for the purpose of constructing a building in its research park which WESTBRIDGE Computer Corporation will lease from the University of Regina.

Mr. Minister, I asked you very specifically, was the original agreement changed, and you said no. And I said, Mr. Minister, think about it carefully, that it was my understanding that the building was to be shared. In other words, the University of Regina, through the Government of Saskatchewan, was to pay out \$4.1 million. Now the university is paying out \$10 million, an increase of 5.9 million and WESTBRIDGE is paying nothing. You mean to tell me, Mr. Minister, that that wasn't a dramatic change to the original agreement between WESTBRIDGE and the University of Regina? That is the question I had originally asked you; your answer was no.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll go through this again on one condition -- that the member is going to listen this time to what I said.

An Hon. Member: -- Oh you read Hansard tomorrow.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- I'll read Hansard again tomorrow. Mr. Chairman, maybe I'm going too fast, but this was a deal that was brought to the board of governors at the University of Regina and they thought that this was a tremendous deal. The administration thought this was a tremendous deal and I think it's a tremendous deal. The fact of the matter is that WESTBRIDGE has a deal with the University of Regina for this computer building. Now the original cost they had estimated was \$8.5 million.

An Hon. Member: -- Eight point two.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, 8.2 then. The difference is immaterial, as you'll see when I go through this. The idea was that the University of Regina is going to put up the building. They have a lease arrangement with WESTBRIDGE. Okay?

An Hon. Member: -- How much was WESTBRIDGE going to put in?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- WESTBRIDGE aren't putting anything in.

An Hon. Member: -- How much were they, originally?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Nothing. The university is putting up the money. The university is putting up the building. They are going to lease it to WESTBRIDGE. Within 10 years the plan is that that building will be paid for. It will pay for itself. At the end of that time the building will belong to the University of Regina.

Mr. Chairman, the member isn't listening now, would you get after him or something there?

An Hon. Member: -- Don't get smart. You got caught.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- I'm not caught. No, I'm not caught at all.

Mr. Chairman, I want the people of Regina and the people of Saskatchewan to hear this because this member is just totally out of line.

Let's take a look at the deal with the University of Regina. They are going to put up a building that WESTBRIDGE is going to lease back from them, and that over about 10 years this building will pay for itself and it will then belong to the University of Regina. No cost to the taxpayers of this province, no cost whatsoever. I think a terrific deal.

Now he wonders about the change. And I indicated, yes there was a change and I told you what it was. I told you what it was. The change came about because the decision was made that WESTBRIDGE now wanted to combine the two facilities and move their head office down there. All right?

An Hon. Member: -- You never said that.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- You're the only one in here that didn't hear it. The idea was then, Mr. Chairman, that they would move their head office into that same facility and that would mean that they needed more space. So they came back with a request to increase the amount of money that they had to borrow from 8.2 to \$10 million. The plan is still there, that this building will pay for itself over 10 to 12 years, and the lease arrangement that they have with WESTBRIDGE -- at that time the University of Regina is going to own this building; no cost to the taxpayers whatsoever.

The board of governors feels this is a tremendous deal; the administration feels it's a tremendous deal; and it is a tremendous deal, Mr. Chairman. If they can put up that facility, which is housing all of that research equipment and the benefits that that is going to provide for the students at the University of Regina, I think that that is a tremendous deal. And in the end result, after the 10-year period, the University of Regina will own that building paid for through the lease arrangements that they have with WESTBRIDGE.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member opposite feels that that's a bad

deal, I fail to see it, and I'm sure that the people of Regina, the people at the university, and the people in the province of Saskatchewan would disagree with him very strongly.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, the problem was that you didn't tell the truth. That was the problem. Yes, didn't tell the truth, and you can check Hansard, Mr. Minister.

I asked you very specifically: was the arrangement changed, the original arrangement changed. Your answer was no. You can't tell me, Mr. Minister, that when the original arrangement was for \$8.2 million, shared equally by the University of Regina and WESTBRIDGE. Each was to pay \$4.1 million and suddenly we change the OC (order in council), we repeal the original OC and the University of Regina now pays \$10 million, an increase of 5.9. You can't tell me that that original agreement wasn't dramatically changed.

An Hon. Member: -- We can't tell you anything.

Mr. Rolfes: -- No you can't because . . . no that's why you're sitting way over there and you'll be out very shortly. Mr. Minister, I asked you very carefully to consider your answer, very carefully to consider your answer. And you again repeated that the original agreement had not been dramatically changed. Not only was it dramatically changed, it was repealed, and a brand new agreement was signed whereby WESTBRIDGE paid nothing for the cost of constructing the building. They went from 4.1 million to zero and the University of Regina through the government -- of course the government is providing the money -- is paying \$10 million, from 4.1 to \$10 million.

Mr. Minister, the problem was that either you weren't listening to the question I asked you, and I asked you twice, or you just didn't understand. But you did not give me that answer when I first asked it. You did not answer that way. And you read Hansard tomorrow and you tell me that you answered the way you did the second time around. Because you got caught not knowing the answer and you should have checked with your officials first.

Surely you should have remembered that you signed the OC. You signed it and you should have been able to tell me, yes I signed the OC and we made different arrangements where WESTBRIDGE now will pay nothing towards the construction of this building and the U of R will pick up the total cost.

I don't know whether it's a good deal or a bad deal; that has nothing to do with it. What has everything to do with it is that the original agreement was changed dramatically and WESTBRIDGE is paying \$5.9 million less than what the original agreement was agreed to. Isn't that right, Mr. Minister?

(2145)

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, as I recall it -- and I'm talking about the latest OC where the change was made -- the request that

came back was for the University of Regina to have permission to borrow the \$10 million to go and put up this building, and WESTBRIDGE has a lease arrangement with them. This was a request that came from the board of governors and from the university administration. The arrangement is that WESTBRIDGE, WESTBRIDGE is going to be paying the full shot for the construction of this building through the lease arrangement.

Now not to my knowledge was there a change that WESTBRIDGE was going to put in. We can check that. If you've got the OC there . . .

An Hon. Member: -- I've got the OC right here.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The original OC? Well the change that came back, the request from the University of Regina, and the government is not putting any money into this whatsoever in spite of what you are saying. They came back for permission to borrow the \$10 million because WESTBRIDGE now wanted to move their office over there, and this additional cost, going from the 8.2 to the 10 million, is now built into the lease costs, the lease arrangement.

An Hon. Member: -- But the original deal was WESTBRIDGE paid 50-50.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well the difference of WESTBRIDGE . . . I'm not sure if that's what . . .

Mr. Chairman: -- Order, order. If the member from Saskatoon Nutana wants to ask questions, certainly she can rise and be recognized and she then would have an opportunity to ask questions of the minister. I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that whether the money was being put up front and the original agreement was changed, it's now written into the lease with the University of Regina. The fact is that it remains a good deal for the University of Regina because they're going to get that facility after the ten-year period of time. WESTBRIDGE will be paying for the whole thing through the lease arrangement that they have.

But this is not something that the Government of Saskatchewan has put forward. This came from the university board of governors and the administration -- Dr. Lloyd Barber, very supportive of this. This is not something that was initiated by the government.

I still firmly believe this is an excellent deal for the University of Regina, not costing the taxpayers one nickel. They will recover the total cost of that building and they will get the building after a ten-year period of time, Mr. Chairman.

So whether the original deal was changed . . . the only understanding that I have of any change that was made was where I increased it from 8.2 to \$10 million, and I've indicated the reason for that. And I think that's a very good deal for the University of Regina, not taking one nickel of taxpayers' money. The government is not involved in that; it's a deal between the

University of Regina and WESTBRIDGE.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, that was not my question. I want you to check Hansard and see what my question was and what your answer was.

My answer was, was the original arrangement changed on the WESTBRIDGE building at the University of Saskatchewan? You said, no. And I asked you then to consider it very carefully, because I had the OC here and the original arrangement in the OC says \$8.2 million shared equally between the University of Regina and WESTBRIDGE. That to me means each one will put in \$4.1 million for the construction costs. You repealed that OC. Then it was brought forward that the building will cost \$10 million and the U of R will carry the total cost of that building. I don't care what the lease arrangements are. I didn't ask you that. I was going to come to that after.

My question to you simply was, was the original arrangement changed. The answer was no. And I'll tell you, if you think that you can change it from 8.2 million to 10 million, and the first where it's shared equally, and the second where the U of R picks up the total cost for the construction, and you as a minister can answer, no it wasn't changed dramatically, then there's somethings wrong with our English language. There's something wrong. And I had asked you to consider it carefully -- your answer. And, Mr. Minister, I'm having it xeroxed so that you can a look at the OC.

Mr. Minister, this evening we just have a few minutes left and I want to turn to the U of S. Mr. Minister, at the senate address by Dr. Ivany, just last week I believe, May 4, he said the following, Mr. Minister, and I want you to listen carefully. He said:

The operating grant that we received from government falls far short of the requested amount. Specifically, we requested an increase of 8.4 per cent, approximately 10 million, which we described as a needs budget to enable us to return our budget trajectory to a healthy state. What we received was a grant increase of about 3.6 per cent, which leaves us nearly \$6 million short.

In the short term I have proposed and our board has approved a budget which provides for a deficit of approximately 2.5 million for the 1990-91 fiscal year. To continue this pattern would, however, be irresponsible, particularly (and here, Mr. Minister, I want you to listen) in the light of the fact that when allocating the current budget the government did not make any statement of support about our mandate. From this I am interpreting the budget message, albeit unstated, is that our university must reduce its array of activities.

So the president has now set up the president's committee on renewal. And Mr. Minister, it seems that there has to be some very drastic cuts at the U of S. And I hear that they're thinking of cutting total colleges in order not to have a deficit for next year or the year after. I know it takes a while to cut the colleges because there are a lot of commitments to staff.

But what I really want you to answer for the university: is your government

anticipating an indifferent role for the U of S and the U of R because of the underfunding that you have provided? Are you sending a message to them by saying to them: look, you have too many programs, you have too many colleges, cut back? If we can't provide services, let's say, for example, in pharmacology, can't provide it in law, or we can't provide it in medicine, cut a college. Those students will have to seek their education somewhere else.

Is that what you're telling the university, that we can't afford the array of activities that we've had traditionally, and are you telling them to cut some of those activities? And if so, Mr. Minister, I know you won't tell us which ones, but it would be sure helpful to the university if they could have your support in which ones you want them to cut.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for sending a copy of the OC over with regard to the WESTBRIDGE change, and again a misunderstanding maybe of what I was referring to as far as the change was concerned and what you were talking about.

The request came back from the University of Regina that they wanted this change made. So they obviously have a new lease arrangement with WESTBRIDGE that now takes into consideration the fact that they are putting up the building by themselves and not having the cost sharing, as you would suggest here, that it was going to be \$4.1 million. That's what I would understand from the wording here.

But that was their request, so they obviously have a new leasing arrangement whereby they are going to increase the lease and they are going to recover all of that money within that 10-year period of time.

Now, when you talk about the University of Saskatchewan. I've had several discussions with Dr. Ivany at the University of Saskatchewan, and I think that when we consider the fact that Dr. Ivany has recently moved here from British Columbia where their economy is substantially better than ours, that for him to be making a suggestion that they have an increase of 8 or 9 or 10 per cent, I think it was indicated to him at that time when he was suggesting that, that that was out of line with the present economic situation in Saskatchewan, out of line.

The next thing that I would suggest as well, that is that the government, the Department of Education do not make the decisions as to what programs are going to be changed or cut or whatever at the university campus, and you know that. The administration does that. The underfunding, well, farmers have been underfunded too, so is business, so is business . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well, sure, well where are they going? Where are they going? They're going to provinces like British Columbia and Alberta where, Mr. Chairman, they diversified some time ago. They maybe have their fertilizer plants and their paper mills and their pulp mills and bacon plants and meat processing plants. Now they have all of those. But the member over on the other side, Mr. Chairman, doesn't think we should have any of those operations here in Saskatchewan.

So the University of Saskatchewan administration are reviewing their

programs. They will have to make that determination if in fact there are some that can be cut back. Maybe there are some that are now redundant. Maybe they can be changed. I hear stories from, in talking to faculty, where they've got equipment that they've purchased on campus, expensive equipment that hasn't even been taken out of the crate. One would question then, why was it bought? Maybe that's a waste. I understand too of some other cases where special facilities have been constructed, haven't even been used. And one has to wonder then too if there isn't some mismanagement of funds within some of the colleges on the campus. So those are the things that the administration are going to address, Mr. Chairman. At any rate, I would hope that any changes are going to be moderate, but as I pointed out earlier, the problems at universities -- that's not unique to Saskatchewan.

We see today, for example, Mr. Chairman, what is happening at the University of Alberta in a province that has an economy that is some substantially better than ours where they are having to cut back on their programs, where they've increased their tuition fees by 15 per cent, and where they're going to have to be cutting some staff. Those are decisions that the administration is making, Mr. Chairman.

The university administration in Saskatoon are going to have to also review their programs and take a look at what changes can be made. At this point or to this point, we have not had any request from the University of Saskatchewan that they run a deficit. Whether or not they're going to be doing that or whether they're going to be able to manage it, that's something that we'll have to wait and see, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, that's an easy cop-out for you, but it's not so easy for the University of Saskatchewan. And I have talked to President Ivany also and the administration at the U of S and the U of R, and I know there are some very difficult decisions are going have to be made. And all I think we can hope for is that before those decisions are made that an election is called and we have a new government in place that will look at the priorities in a different manner than what you people are.

I can assure you that the U of S and the U of R can and will get additional funding so that those students who are eligible to go to university will be able to go. We will get rid of those quotas, and we'll give additional money in operating grants to those universities so that they can accommodate those students who are eligible.

Mr. Minister, what you are doing is you're off-loading onto the universities and onto the university students. The university tuition fees will have to increase at least 30 per cent over the next three years, and that means that there will be a denial, because of lack of funding, to many eligible students to get post-secondary education in this province. Mr. Minister, even if they could afford to go, they can't go because there isn't access; there isn't access to the university.

Mr. Minister, I am told that when they submitted their budget to you, your department said to them, what they had to consider was zero to 4 per cent -- even though that was totally unrealistic, from your department's point

of view, in saying to the universities that they had to live within zero to 4 per cent, that they couldn't consider anything higher than that. That, Mr. Minister, I think, is being irresponsible on your part, particularly on your part, and on the part of your government, to put the universities in that predicament and then to have the audacity to say to the universities, now it's up to you to make the decisions -- oh we're not asking you to cut, but we're not going to give you sufficient money to continue with all the programs that you have had in the past. That, Mr. Minister, just doesn't wash. It doesn't wash with the public; it doesn't wash with the universities.

Mr. Minister, as I had indicated to you the other day, you had \$22.2 million for student loans for many private vocational schools, many courses which were worthless. Many of those dollars could have been going to students who were eligible to go to university. That's where the dollars should have gone. Again, no you had to go on your privatization kick and make that money available to private vocational schools, to students attending private vocational schools. And is it any wonder, Mr. Minister, that we don't have sufficient money for the University of Saskatchewan and University of Regina so that our students can get quality education.

We haven't even looked, Mr. Minister, at the libraries at our universities. And where, Mr. Minister, do they compare in Canada? They are about 106th or 107th compared to many of the other libraries at the universities in Canada. That is what has happened because of the lack of funding and the wrong priorities that your government has instituted in the last seven or eight years that you have been in power.

(2200)

Mr. Minister, I wish that you would sit down, you and your officials, with the president of the U of R and the president of the U of S and work out a long-range program for those universities so that . . . Mr. Chairman, as long as the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster's going to interfere, I will stay on my feet and I will talk. If that's what he wants to do, fine with me. If members opposite want to interfere with these estimates and not let us carry on, that's all right with me. But, Mr. Minister . . .

Mr. Chairman: -- Order. Being 10 o'clock the committee will rise and report progress.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:03 p.m.