

May 30/90

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: -- According to order, I have examined the following petition and I find it to be in order: of certain residents of the province of Saskatchewan praying that the Legislative Assembly may be pleased to urge the provincial government to reverse its decision to relocate the Saskatchewan Liquor Board store from its present location in the Market Mall to a new location on 8th Street, Saskatoon.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, some important visitors from China and their Canadian hosts.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you Mr. Chen. He's a professor of hydraulic engineering, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. With him is his wife, Ms. Wu, associate research professor and head of the geotechnical division, China Academy of Railway Sciences, Beijing, China.

Accompanying them are Del Fredlund, head of civil engineering, University of Saskatchewan; and Wayne Clifton, senior principal, Clifton Associates Ltd. Mr. Clifton is the president of the Association of Professional Engineers of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the guests are standing in your gallery. I ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure today to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly, 22 grade 8 students from from Allan School, Allan, Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they are sitting in the west gallery. I'm meeting with them, Mr. Speaker, for pictures and drinks at 2:30 and we'll be also having a time of questions and discussion. I'm looking forward to that.

Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied today with their teachers, Mr. Reid and Mrs. Field; and chaperons, Mr. Larry Sommerfeld, Mrs. Kushinski, Mrs. Pederson, and Mrs. Mikelson; and also the bus driver, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Don Armstrong.

I wish to thank this group for coming in. Since I've been an MLA in '78, there's been hardly a year that Allan high school hasn't been represented, or the Allan School, and I think it's incumbent of them and we thank them very much.

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking all members of the legislature to welcome this group and wish them a good day here and a good trip home and thank you all, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce some students on behalf of my colleague, the member from Rosemont. Mr. Speaker, I introduce to you and to my colleagues in the legislature, 80 grade 5 students in the east gallery, from McLurg School in north-west Regina. They are accompanied by three teachers, Verna Taylor, Ann Wood, and Carol Grant.

I look forward to meeting with them after question period, Mr. Speaker, and to hopefully have an opportunity to discuss some of the issues that are important to them. I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming this fine group of school kids from McLurg.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to join with my colleague from Arm River in welcoming the students and teachers and others here from the Allan School. I had a very good working relationship with the people in Allan School for a number of years, and I believe that the students are here today probably would have been in grade 5 when I was still visiting the school. Allan School has been a leader in many different ways, Mr. Speaker, and continue to do so. Some top scholars coming out of that school, leaders in dry grad programs, and many other programs, a program for the gifted. And the last time that I saw some of these students and Mr. Reid was at the creative problem solving bowl in Saskatoon last week. And as I understand from Mr. Reid that that was a very successful venture.

So I would just add my words of welcome to the people from Allan here as well, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure again, as I have every year, to introduce some students from my constituency, Wilfrid Walker School. Mr. Speaker, these youngsters are from grade 4 and 5, they number 23, and they are in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to add that this is a bilingual class from Wilfrid Walker School, and they are accompanied by Marcel Magotiaux, he is the teacher; and the chaperon is Mrs. Anderson. So I want to wish them a nice visit to the Legislative Assembly. I'll have an opportunity to speak with you in a few minutes. Meanwhile, enjoy yourself, enjoy question period, and I'll be talking to you later.

Meanwhile, please welcome these students to our Legislative Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you a group of grade 12 students from Stanley Mission in northern Saskatchewan seated in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, they're accompanied by the teacher, Mr. John Tarves; and chaperon, Martha Roberts.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome them in their own language, the language of Stanley Mission, which is Cree, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Federal Funding for Agriculture

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, yesterday we saw your lack of commitment to Saskatchewan farmers. Despite your call for \$500 million from the federal government, besides the call for \$500 million pay-out from the farm groups and the opposition, and besides your statement in the Speech from the Throne that you had a commitment, we now, farmers now have \$5 an acre payment -- about half of what was called for and about half of what was needed.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: where is the rest of the money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, yesterday we met with the farm organizations to discuss some aspects of how we should handle the payments that are going to be coming from the federal government. And I believe that in any occasion that I've dealt with the federal government and I've seen as a producer -- any Government of Saskatchewan deal with the federal government -- I believe that facts and figures point to this Premier's role and his record has shown to the province of Saskatchewan and the agriculture community that he is up and away the best agriculture Premier we've ever had in the province of Saskatchewan's history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- Well, Mr. Minister. A new question, Mr. Speaker. Farm groups, the opposition, and indeed your government all agreed that \$500 million was necessary. But it wasn't the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool that negotiated; it wasn't the National Farmers Union or the wheat growers who negotiated. It was your Premier who negotiated. It was your Premier who negotiated with Ottawa and failed to come up with the commitment that was supposedly there. He failed to deliver on a promise that he made to Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is: what possible excuse can you or any

other member over there offer the farmers as to why you're such abject failures.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, if our record is an abject failure, then what is theirs?

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that through the years that we have worked together with the various organizations in agriculture there has not been, to this date, the unanimity that was evident in the room there yesterday in regards to the kinds of things that we have done. I could provide for you the record that the Sask Wheat Pool said that they were prepared to stand behind the Premier in his discussions with Ottawa. The Regina chamber of commerce -- the Regina city council, excuse me -- said the the same thing, the SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) said the same thing. All the people are starting to recognize that here sits the best agriculture minister in the Canadian history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- A new question, Mr. Speaker. If you're so confident, Mr. Minister, why doesn't your confident Premier call an election and find out what the farmers think about this whole situation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- Mr. Minister, you told the farmers of Saskatchewan you had a commitment from the federal government and that cash would be in hand by spring seeding, in time for spring seeding. Yesterday you were saying that the payment was expected in late July at the earliest. All this time lost, all this grief of uncertainty that farmers are suffering, Mr. Minister, this is the amount of money that was on the table for the last two months. How do you justify playing your political games, how do you justify the time lost, and how do you justify manipulating the lives and livelihoods of Saskatchewan farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, when the Premier made the observations about \$500 million at the pool convention last fall, we had nothing committed by the federal government. The Premier took that observation made by the Sask Wheat Pool and took it to Ottawa and and said, look it, we need to have some money for our producers who are having a problem; will you help us? And what have they done? They have promised us \$240 million, and that is significant more than what we started with when we were discussing with the Sask Wheat Pool their options earlier on this year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, in 1985 your Premier promised a long-term stability program. In 1990, we have seen nothing. You, by way of motion in this legislature, had big plans -- \$500

million this spring, \$400 million this fall, a billion dollar contingency fund. And what do we have? We have \$5 an acre, no long-term programs, more ad hoc-ery, and more political gamesmanship on the part of the government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- I ask you, Mr. Minister, why would any farmer in this province have any faith in your pronouncements or your ability to negotiate in the light of what's happened?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, over the years we have contended for the agriculture sector of this province in many different ways. We have dealt with issues that I can recall as a producer of grain, livestock. All through the history of the '70s and the '60s and into the '80s, I farmed under those conditions, and I believe that this Premier and this Minister of Agriculture are the best again that the province has ever had. And his negotiation skills with the federal government far exceed any of the skills that they demonstrated.

And I can also recall during your term of office, the prime minister of Canada coming to Regina, Saskatchewan and throwing the wheat in your face and telling you to go sell it. And what did you do? I'm also going to tell you what he did in Salmon Arm. He told you what to do with your agriculture policies. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not demonstrated by this Premier anywhere across Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

#### Executive Compensation at SIAST

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Speaker, we have just witnessed the abject failure of one minister and I want to direct my question to the Minister of Education, and hopefully he can provide us with somewhat of a better answer for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, my question concerns the science and technology institute, SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) as it is called. I have before me, Mr. Minister, a print-out listing executive salaries, perks and compensation for a 10-month period last year. The total compensation package was \$741,000. Since during that period of time, SIAST averaged eight top executives per month, that works out to \$9,300 per month for each top-level executive.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you how you justify \$9,300 per month for each top-level executive at SIAST, and at the same time you demand that students have to pay an increase of 10 per cent in tuition fees? Mr. Minister, I want to you explain this misplaced priorities to the people of Saskatchewan, and particularly, the young people of SIAST. Would you explain that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe when the member opposite provides me with the same information that he seems to have from the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, I'll be prepared to look at it. I'm not prepared to accept the information that he's providing here today in the same way that he provides . . . has provided information in the past.

He's totally inaccurate in so many things that he brings into this House. He talks about exorbitant expenditures for the corporate offices. He talks about exorbitant expenditures with regard to honorarium and expenses for the board. So Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared to accept the information that the member is putting forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the minister. Mr. Speaker, the minister doesn't have to take my word for it. What I present to him are order in councils; what I present to him are documents of the government, not mine. These are your documents, Mr. Minister, not mine.

Mr. Minister, I have a new question for you. Yesterday, Mr. Minister, you will remember we discussed the problems that St. Peter's College was having and how the Benedictine Fathers, who run the school, are afraid of its future, and in the letter that I tabled in this House have indicated that they may have to close . . . consider the closing of St. Peter's College because they cannot deal with the \$100,000 deficit.

I want to know, Mr. Minister, have you been in contact with the Benedictine fathers since yesterday and have you explained to them that you could wipe out their \$100,000 deficit by the one month payment to your top executives at SIAST? Will you make that . . . make a commitment today in the House, if you have not been in contact with the Benedictine fathers, that you will do that shortly, and tell them that it's not the lack of money but it's wrong priorities and misplaced priorities by your government that has caused the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared to accept for a minute that the executives at SIAST are earning any more accordingly than any other institution.

With regard to St. Peter's College, we are in fact in touch with St. Peter's College today. And the fact of the matter is that . . .

An Hon. Member: -- They couldn't even get a meeting with them.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- And the member from Quill Lake says they couldn't get a meeting. The fact . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. The Minister of Education is answering.

It's difficult if the hon. member continually interrupts.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the intent in the letter that we received, and I did receive a copy late yesterday afternoon, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that it had been indicated there'd been several requests for meetings with me. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, we have not received any requests for meetings with me. I would be very happy to meet with the people from St. Peter's. So that certainly is inaccurate.

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that in checking some of the figures on the grants that St. Peter's College has received, that all of the figures were not accurate as presented. The fact of the matter is that an additional grant was made to St. Peter's College last year to address some of their problems.

Another fact, Mr. Speaker, is that the policy of the payments or the grants that go to St. Peter's College and to other affiliated colleges was changed back in 1988. It's no longer based on a per pupil basis. I would think, Mr. Speaker, that the people at St. Peter's College understand that.

We are talking to them today. We're aware of the situation and we will continue to work with St. Peter's College in the same way that we'll work with all of the other affiliated colleges in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the minister. Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat disappointed that the minister for the second time has accused the Benedictine monks at St. Peter's College of being dishonest when they indicate in their letter that they have requested a meeting with him and were unable to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister a new question. Mr. Minister, I have also before me here a cancelled cheque dated February 2, 1990 to pay the Saskatoon Ramada hotel \$2,921 for a three-day goals and planning workshop, and then eight days later a further consultant's bill of 4,638 for something completely different, a planning and goals seminar. And I have also here a cheque to pay about \$1,000, a cancelled cheque to register the assistant to the president at a management course in Manhattan this January.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. The hon. member is presenting a rather long question which provokes a rather long answer. Obviously members on both sides of the House get rather upset and I suppose you have a point. But keep our questions reasonable; keep your answers reasonable.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this. This totals close to \$10,000 . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Now the other problem is that the gentleman is interrupting vociferously hon. members and we can't hear the question. Now if the members will just settle down and stop throwing recriminations

about who's being loud and who isn't, the reality is that members are interrupting the member from Saskatoon South. That's the reality. Please put your question.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, these cancelled cheques are sum to a total of almost \$10,000 for senior executives, and my question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: how can you justify expenditures of close to \$10,000, in addition to all the other expenditures I've already indicated, for top executives, and then have SIAST plead poverty and ask the students to make up these huge expenditures and the deficit that has been caused by these expenditures?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I find the comments of the member opposite just really appalling. For a member to stand in this House, the member to stand in this House and discredit the type of work that is being done by the people of SIAST . . . Mr. Speaker, I would ask why doesn't the member also raise issues with regard to the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, the workshops that they have, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and any other of the groups that are involved in education in this province?

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we enjoy in this province is the fact that our universities and SIAST are autonomous bodies responsible for their own offerings to the students, also the programs that they offer, also the workshops, the opportunity for inservice. Now why this member chooses to stand in this House and continually have personal attacks, day after day, on the board of SIAST, on the president of SIAST, on the chairman of the board . . .

Mr. Speaker, I would point out, just to show how this member likes to stand up in this House and give misinformation, not too long ago, Mr. Speaker, he indicated that some \$132,000 was being spent by the board on travel and lodging and on honorarium and all of these things, when in fact, Mr. Speaker, the amount was \$70,614, not 132,000 as he indicates.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the people . . . Mr. Speaker, I want to simply remind the people of Saskatchewan that all the documents that I am quoting from are government documents. They are not my documents; they're all government documents.

Mr. Speaker, I have listed in this House, I have listed in this House expenditures by top executives of close to \$1.6 million -- \$1.6 million to top executives appointed by the government. We have a deficit at SIAST of \$1.9 million. And what does this government do? Instead of cutting back at the executive level, they are asking students to make up this deficit. I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, when did you decide that SIAST should become a corporate body to serve the executive members that you appoint and not the students of this province? When did you decide that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, the member can stand there and whine and wail all he wants. The fact of the matter is he is not quoting from government documents. He is not quoting from government documents. Let's make that perfectly clear. He's talking about documents that he may have received from SIAST, which is not a government document.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the SIAST board of governors and administration, I think have clearly demonstrated that they want to be more efficient. There have been cut-backs with regard to the staff at SIAST. There have also been some changes and reorganizing done within administration within the four campuses. So they are making an effort.

But if the member is suggesting that there should not be workshops or inservice for any of the people involved with SIAST, Mr. Speaker, or with education in general, I certainly do not support that in any way whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

#### Agreement with Weyerhaeuser

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the minister of the Crown investments corporation. Is the minister aware that in 1989 the Weyerhaeuser corporation of Tacoma, Washington, reported a profit of some \$377 million? In the same year, it claimed it could not pay the people of Saskatchewan the \$10 million in dividends it owes this province, nor any of the principal on the purchase price of PAPCO's (Prince Albert Pulp Company) assets, because it had a cash flow problem, Mr. Minister. Will you confirm this, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Mr. Speaker, what I can confirm is that Weyerhaeuser is meeting the terms and conditions of the agreement that was negotiated with the province of Saskatchewan, unlike the allegations that were made in this House by that member last week, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you never even attempted to answer the question.

But a new question, Mr. Minister. And the question here is not whether or not Weyerhaeuser is living up to the terms of its agreement; the question is the competence of a government which would draw up such an agreement which would allow this forest giant to not pay any of the money it owed the people of Saskatchewan, even in a year in which it had a profit of \$377 million.

If this is not a sweetheart deal, Mr. Minister, could you tell this House how many other Saskatchewan residents are allowed to make that kind of a

windfall profit and not have to meet their financial obligations to this province? How many of our farmers, Mr. Minister, do not have to meet their obligations because they have a cash flow problem? They most certainly don't get away with it.

And how many of our citizens with mortgages and have a cash flow problem, but cannot defer their payments with the 8 per cent interest that you give Weyerhaeuser from Tacoma? Would you explain this to the House, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- As I recall, Mr. Speaker, in part of the ongoing history of the economic opportunities that Weyerhaeuser is creating in this province, as I recall history in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, three very large and thick documents outlining just about everything possible that could be outlined relative to that deal, was tabled in this House. And somehow it's taken the hon. member two or three years to read through those documents, Mr. Speaker. Or maybe he hasn't read through them, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that Weyerhaeuser is involved in a very, very successful undertaking in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. I don't know why the hon. member continued to attack this company. They are providing jobs and opportunities. They're providing taxes, income tax from their employees. They're an excellent corporate citizen. Their educational and retraining program there is probably second to none.

Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the hon. member is driven by pure petty politics. He can't describe Weyerhaeuser in any other way other than using words like he used last week, multinational; this week, forest giant.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is the NDP are against economic diversification and development in this province. They're against creating job opportunities, Mr. Speaker. They're against having value added to some of our raw products, whether they be our forest products. They're against those kinds of jobs and opportunities and the standard of living that it brings to the communities of this province like Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

And I think this kind of cheap attack, we've gone on long enough in this House with that kind of attack.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you talk about educational opportunities, and the Weyerhaeuser corporation will not hire an individual in this province unless they have a grade 12 education. They're imposing their values on our citizens of this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- I have two narrow supplementary questions, Mr. Minister, and I'd like you to answer those questions. Has the Weyerhaeuser corporation paid the \$63.5 million dividends that it owes this province? I

ask you that question as a supplementary.

And the second supplementary question: of the \$236 million capital, how much money has been paid to the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Mr. Speaker, what Weyerhaeuser has done is turn an operation that was bleeding the farmers and the taxpayers of this province to the tune of \$91,000 a day, it's turned it around to something now that is injecting \$45,000 a day into this province's treasury, Mr. Speaker. That's what's happened with Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. I challenge that hon. member to a debate in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and let's get the facts on the table relative to this deal. Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. Put his money where his mouth is, Mr. Speaker, that's what I say.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Speaker, I ask another supplementary question. I'm only going to ask you one supplementary this time, Mr. Minister, because I asked you two and it got you confused. I'm going to ask you one supplementary question. Mr. Minister, how much of the \$63.5 million that Weyerhaeuser owes this province in dividends has been paid to date?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the terms and conditions of the agreement are being kept, Mr. Speaker. The terms and conditions of the agreement . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- The terms and conditions of the agreement have been kept, Mr. Speaker, in spirit and in law, Mr. Speaker. And I'll tell you what -- there's a hidden agenda over there. They either want to nationalize this thing again, buy it back for a dollar. I say they should come clean with the people of Saskatchewan or quit the personal attacks, Mr. Speaker. That's the issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Speaker, another supplementary. Mr. Minister, you haven't answered one question that I asked you today -- not one question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- All you have done today is got up and rant and raved in this House and you have never answered one of the questions. I am going to ask you once more, Mr. Minister, another supplementary. Is there \$10.5

million still owing on the dividends from Weyerhaeuser to the province of Saskatchewan for the assets of PAPCO?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Mr. Speaker, the key question here is -- has the agreement, have the terms and conditions of the agreement been met, Mr. Speaker? That is the simple question, and the simple answer is yes, contrary to the allegations and accusations, the cheap allegations and the cheap accusations made by the hon. member in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. If he has some difficulty, I challenge him to go to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and make those allegations on the front steps of Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker. That's what I challenge him to do.

The question is, has this created jobs, has it created opportunities, has it created money for the provincial treasury . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Hon. members come to order; all hon. members come to order. The member for Saskatoon Nutana, would you come to order.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 31 -- An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984.

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

##### Bill No. 32 -- An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Local Government Election Act.

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

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 29 -- An Act to amend The Crown Minerals Act

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise and move second reading of The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 1990.

There are several main measures incorporated into this Bill. One provision will provide the minister with the explicit authority to enter into agreements with other governments on the sharing of information having to do with the enforcement of taxation legislation. By sharing information, Mr. Speaker, our respected governments are better able to ensure that taxes and royalties are collected in accordance with our Acts and regulations.

Legislative amendments are required to provide the authority for entering into such agreements. In the absence of the amendments, confidentiality provisions of The Crown Minerals Act would preclude such sharing. The proposed legislation will require that the shared information be kept confidential by the government receiving the information and it'd be used only for the purpose of administering taxation legislation.

Another provision of this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, will ensure that the powers of the regulations under this Bill will supersede any unitized oil and gas agreements or Crown leases that specifically identify lease rental rates. Some Crown leases and unitized agreements, Mr. Speaker, contain clauses outlining royalties that were in effect at the time they were entered into without provision for making changes when royalty structures or rates change.

This Bill will also place a ceiling on the maximum amount of compensation that can be received by a company whose oil and gas rates were acquired by the Crown in 1974.

The Bill will also provide authority for making changes to the mineral titles of such lands to correct . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Now I'm going to ask one or two hon. members to refrain. You've been carrying on a constant dialogue between you. We're having difficulty hearing the Minister of Energy and Mines, and let's pay the minister the courtesy of allowing him to speak without constant interruption.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said before, the Bill will also provide authority for making changes to mineral titles of such lands to correct errors and omissions in the process of registering title to those rights which were occurred in 1974.

A major portion of this Bill will allow the Crown to transfer to the rightful legal owner, title to certain mineral rights which are currently the subject of cumbersome trust arrangements.

These trust arrangements arose from events dating back to the 1940s and 1950s, Mr. Speaker. Numerous individuals sold their mineral rights to certain companies in return for shares in the companies, and a trust certificate entitling the holder to a beneficial interest of one-quarter or one-fifth were issued. Hundreds of these mineral titles were eventually surrendered to the Crown because the companies were no longer interested in developing the properties and they did not wish to continue paying the

mineral rights tax on those particular properties.

Currently, with the exception of the trust interests, the Crown owns the rights to these surrendered lands and would like to lease some of them for development. But because of its role as trustee for the owner of the trust certificates, it is unable to proceed in situations where the owners of the trust certificates cannot be located or where their agreement to the terms of a leasing arrangement cannot be obtained.

The Bill which is before the Assembly will allow the Crown to conduct a search for the owners of the trust certificates and to convert that trust certificate into a full legal title when they are located. This will remove the Crown from the current role of trustee, and the Crown will be free to pursue the leasing of these particular lands.

In circumstances where the owners of the trust certificates, Mr. Speaker, cannot be located, their share of any revenues from the mineral lands will be held for them for up to 10 years. If at any time during that 10-year period the owners of the trust certificates identify themselves, they will receive the amounts collected on their behalf, as well as the appropriate legal title.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 1990.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that the Bill was just received and tabled in the House very recently, I want to adjourn the debate and allow for my colleague, the member from Regina North West, to review it, and he'll have words to say on the Bill later.

Debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 28

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Schmidt that Bill No. 28 -- An Act respecting Investments by Saskatchewan Residents in Support of Community Diversification and Environmental Protection be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

(1445)

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 48

Mr. Chairman: -- Would the minister introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me today are, beside me, Lorne Kovack who is the acting secretary of the Northern Affairs Secretariat, behind Lorne is Alison Stickland who is the assistant secretary, and behind me is Brian Goffin who is the La Ronge branch manager.

Item 1

Mr. Van Mulligen: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, in the last session of the legislature, there were a number of amendments passed with respect to The Northern Municipalities Act. And even if northern municipalities are not a jurisdictional interest of yours, certainly they must be an interest of yours because it affects northern affairs and northern interests.

My question to you concerns an apparent problem with this Act which now prevents northern municipalities from participating fully in economic development initiatives as anticipated by the Act. And I wonder if you have any comments to make today on this problem with the legislation and how it affects northern people?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Mr. Chairman, legislation, I believe, is forthcoming from the Urban Affairs department. Certainly I can't speak regarding the timetable for that, but certainly we'll be supporting the improvements to that legislation when it is introduced in the House. I can't speak for the Minister of Urban Affairs regarding the timetable for that legislation.

Mr. Van Mulligen: -- No I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman, that the minister himself would not necessarily have the details on the timetable of any legislation because again I recognize that that's clearly within the realm of responsibility for the Minister of Urban Affairs.

I did want to ask you however, if you've had any discussions with people in the North respecting the Act, the fact that there was a problem with it and how it might have affected economic development initiatives in northern Saskatchewan, which I don't need to tell you as the Minister for Northern Affairs certainly as a matter of high priority and a matter of great concern if not grave concern, given the economic conditions in northern Saskatchewan in many of the communities. I wonder if you can relate to us the level of concerns expressed to you by people in northern Saskatchewan on this important matter.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Certainly I don't think I have any argument with the statements made by the member. I have spent a lot of time in the North and we have consulted, had dialogue with these people. There's no question that there's a concern for their economic, I suppose, progression. They want to do it . . . I know that they want to do it for themselves and we certainly support their independent look at being able to do things for themselves. I know organizations such as the north-west municipalities association is a

big proponent of this type of philosophy. And certainly I will be encouraging and working with these people in all economic projects that they may request my assistance on.

Mr. Van Mulligen: -- Can I then ask, Mr. Minister, if you've had any specific representations from people in northern Saskatchewan to express concern about the fact that the kinds of opportunities that were outlined in the legislation last year now seem to be denied to them, notwithstanding the fact that there are supposedly some amendments coming. Can you relate to us any specific representations that you've had from people in northern Saskatchewan to express concern about this matter?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- To my recollection I have never had any direct inquiries regarding the legislation. Certainly I've talked to different groups within the North regarding specific economic projects and, you know, we've thrown things around. But regarding the legislation specifically, to the best of my recollection, I don't recall anything specific in that way.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'm sorry for the lateness in sending that letter across. I will ask you a question on the contents of that document.

But I first want to start by asking you, in the supplementary estimates, if you could explain the extra expenditure of \$392,000.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Mr. Chairman, in relation to the question, I would explain to the member that in October of 1989, a separate budget was set up when I became the minister in charge of the secretariat. And as result of that split, we received from the economic development vote or budget, \$222,900; and also we received an incremental increase of \$87,700. As well, we had a cost allocated to us of 81,400 which is 50 per cent of the SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) costs, which would come, I believe, to your figure of \$362,000.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, could you indicate what that money was for from the economic development branch? Was it just for general revenue for your department?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Yes, the complete vote was in that department. Of course up to October 3 all the costs to that point were deducted from that allocation and the remaining allocation was transferred to this . . . we'll call it to the department on an individual basis.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could indicate some of the activities, the major activities -- not all the activities of the northern secretariat -- but some of the major accomplishments that you were involved in, or your department, in the last year.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Mr. Chairman, to just briefly mention some of the activities of Northern Affairs, I think the one that comes to mind foremost is just the great relationship and the vision that the north-west Saskatchewan municipalities association has, not only within themselves but with government, as they attempt to forge ahead economically in the North.

It's a group of young people who are really trying their best to make progress in the North, and I certainly wanted to remember those people in my statement.

We as well facilitated the Cumberland House settlement and development agreements. We transferred the farm and 50 per cent of the current assets to the Ile-a-la-Crosse Economic Development Corporation.

(1500)

The Gary Tinker run in which I had a little part to play, not so much of an economic thing, but certainly a morale booster to the North. And I was really quite honoured to work with the Minister of Health in welcoming Gary Tinker to Regina. We also had the honour, the Minister of Social Services and I, in a visit to the North to Buffalo Narrows to attend a banquet in honour of Gary Tinker, and he was honoured by his peers in the community. Certainly a highlight of my work in the North, my visits to the North.

We've also encouraged many, many tours by ministers and MLAs to all parts of the North over the past two years, and we received many, many accolades from the people of the North in saying that it was nice that we took the time to visit and to listen to the people and to socialize with them, go on tours, see the North. Certainly it was of mutual benefit; it was a learning experience for me as well as many other MLAs and ministers that were up there. And as well certainly appreciated by people of the North.

Another one that comes to mind that we worked on was the construction of the La Loche road and we were glad to -- though we're not active as Northern Affairs Secretariat in the actual construction of it -- it was certainly our role to facilitate a lot of arrangements in that project as well. Those are some of the projects that I've been involved in since I took over the department in October.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. If the member from Weyburn would, in question period, would answer the questions. He sits from his seat and bellows away but, Mr. Chairman, all through the question period today, never answered one question. And he knows full well why he did not answer.

An Hon. Member: -- Let's have that debate then. Let's get it done.

Mr. Thompson: -- To the member from Weyburn, we'll have that debate just as soon as you call an election. You call an election and we'll have that debate. We'll let the people of Saskatchewan decide whether it was a good deal or a bad deal. We'll let the citizens of Saskatchewan decide that.

Mr. Minister, we'll get back to your estimates now. I want to thank you for that information. I most certainly appreciate the fact you do go up and see what's happening in northern Saskatchewan and socialize and meet with the citizens up there. And we have a lot of young individuals who are on town councils now and they need the support of government. And I'm pleased to see that you were up there for the dinner for -- not Jerry Tinker but Gary Tinker, Jerry's son. I know he most certainly appreciated

the fact that you were there.

But, Mr. Minister, I want to . . . and you indicate that you transferred the farm at Green Lake and you're involved with the farms in northern Saskatchewan. I wonder, and I'll be specific now, if you could indicate how much money the government received for the farm at Silver Lake and who was the individual group that purchased the Silver Lake farm?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Though we certainly facilitated some of the negotiations in that transaction, I would like to inform the hon. member that the actual transaction is with the Department of Agriculture. And we just don't have those, either the figure or the name, available. You would have to get it through the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Thompson: -- Mr. Minister, being the minister in charge of the northern secretariat encompasses you being available to all concerns in northern Saskatchewan. You deal with the walk-a-thons, and you deal with the town councils, which is municipal affairs. And you yourself are the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources. You cover everything in the North pretty well. When you're up there, you are the Minister of Northern Affairs which is not just one particular item, so I . . . and I realize you do not have that information, but I ask you as the Minister of Northern Affairs if you would provide in writing with the name of the group or the individuals who purchased the Silver Lake farm, and the amount of money that was paid by this group and the terms that they had for purchasing the Silver Lake farm at Green Lake.

Mr. Minister, I know you're not the Minister of Agriculture, but when you're in northern Saskatchewan you become the minister of Urban Affairs, as you indicate. You've been out on the highways, the road to Fort McMurray, so you become the spokesperson for Northerners through your ministry to all departments. And I would just ask if you would provide that information for me.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I have certain concerns, and I want the member to know that I always want to co-operate with members opposite and certainly answer their questions, but it would be very imprudent of me to obligate another minister with that type of information. I wouldn't even wish to make a statement on it being available or not being available. That is not the issue. It would just be imprudent of me to obligate another minister to release information which he may or she may or may not want to do. And I just have to accept that position.

Mr. Thompson: -- Well, Mr. Minister, I'm sure you would not release that information without the consent of that minister. I know you better than that. And I just ask you if you would consult with the minister in charge and, if you can, provide me with that information. And if you can't, then just let me know one way or the other.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Though I would still first of all suggest to the member that he may wish to make a direct inquiry to the Department of Agriculture, but notwithstanding that answer, I have no problems in asking on your behalf if you so wish that I do that. And I will suggest to you

now that we have no problems with asking for that information on your behalf if that is your wish.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. That information would be to myself, but I have many constituents in northern Saskatchewan that you have responsibility for and they are concerned about this, and I want to know. So if you would just . . . if you can provide me with that information, fine; if you can't, then just let me know.

I now want to turn to . . . I'm going to cover some of the items that would be under your ministry under Parks and Renewable Resources as you cover that northern area. And I want to bring to your attention the letter that I passed over to you from one of the band members, Elmer Campbell from Dillon. And I just want to go down to the last paragraph, the conclusion, and Elmer Campbell indicates that the cost . . . I just want to put the whole paragraph in Hansard, Mr. Minister, and I'm quoting from a letter from Elmer Campbell who is a councillor for the English River Band, the Buffalo River Band at Dillon and it's dated May 25, 1990, which I have turned over a copy to yourself, Mr. Minister:

The conclusion that will be gathered from the information from the fire cache concerning men and equipment cost on that fire versus the stand-by crew, will be that the stand-by crew is a money saving program and is worthy of being re-instated.

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

And as you know, Mr. Minister, there's been a major fire in Dillon, in the Dillon, St. George's Hill area in the last week, and that is where your department, sir, has cut off the stand-by crews that were there for two years, and I had asked you if you had considered reinstating them.

And now we take a look at the fire that we have just encountered up there which started in the garbage dump at St. George's Hill and jumped the highway and turned out to be a major fire. When I was up there last Friday, there was 128 men on there, not including the aircraft and the fixed-winged aircraft and the helicopters and all the other equipment. So this has turned out to be a very expensive fire that had that crew that you laid off, Mr. Minister, been in place, there would have been no fire.

So what they're asking for, the band at Dillon, and I've asked you before and I'm asking you again, Mr. Minister -- and I don't expect you to answer that today -- but my question to you and my request is that you give consideration to reinstating the stand-by crews that you released. Because you just have to take a look at what's happened in the last week and the tremendous cost that has been incurred which would not have taken place had those stand-by crews been in place. So I just ask you if you would consider reinstating those crews or take a serious look at that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I would like to thank the member for the letter. I of course, as he suggested himself, did not have an opportunity to review the facts that are contained in the letter. And I'm not suggesting that it

isn't correct. I'm just not . . . I can't tell you the circumstances regarding the manpower situation and just who was brought in to fight that fire -- if it was a regular crew or if it was stand-by crew from somewhere else or just what the situation would be.

But I would thank you for the letter and certainly get back to both yourself and Mr. Campbell, the councillor, with a reply to this letter. Certainly I will obligate Parks and Renewable Resources to do that for you.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I want to ask you a number of questions and I think that you probably will have to provide me in writing with the answers to these questions. You're going to have to check them out. I just want to ask you those questions.

And I'll start off with domestic fishing licences that we have in northern Saskatchewan. And this is for individuals who live in northern Saskatchewan who have always used a domestic licence. And they get the licence through your department to get fish to feed their families, and in some cases individuals will have that and they will not only provide fish for their own families but they will do that for their grandmothers and grandfathers and senior citizens alike.

It's always been used and it's not a policy that drains the lakes. It's just, they put one net in, or some of them just put a few floats in, or a few yards of net I should say, so that they can catch enough fish to eat. Depending on the time of the year they may just need three, four floats. A net has 50 floats in; that's a hundred yards of net. And if it's at a time of year when the fishing is not that good, then they're allowed to put in a hundred yards of net, which is 50 floats.

And now the policy seems to be changing. I don't know if it's changed locally, but I had a call from an individual from Ile-a-la-Crosse yesterday who has always had a domestic licence. That individual not only provides for his young family, but he gives fish to his grandmother and his grandfather, individuals who need that fish to supplement their diets.

Not only that, Mr. Minister, but it costs a lot of money to live in northern Saskatchewan. The price of the goods and services are just so great compared to what it is in Regina or what it would be in Shellbrook or Meadow Lake or places like that. And whenever they can use the fish from the lakes, which they've used all their lives, and now there is . . . some of the individuals up there will have a job. And some policy or policy maker within the department has indicated that if an individual has a job, well then they no longer can take advantage of that fish that they've used all their lives, and their fathers and grandfathers have.

(1515)

Mr. Minister, I would ask if you would, through your department, through Northern Affairs Secretariat, and to your other department that you're also minister of, if you would look into that problem and specifically in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And if the policy is changing where Northerners are no longer allowed to use a domestic net to feed their families, then I would

ask you to take a serious look at changing that back.

And I give you a good example of why it should be, over and above the examples that I gave you prior to this: the high cost of living in northern Saskatchewan. But in all our northern communities we have individuals who have treaty rights. And under their treaties, they are allowed to fish for food. So an individual living right beside each other, one being a treaty and one not being a treaty, the treaty can go out and can fish under his treaty rights, a domestic net; whereas the other individual who has always had these rights, goes up and gets a domestic licence, has had that right taken away from him. And that creates friction also.

And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, in the specific cases in Ile-a-la-Crosse, if this policy change has taken place, if you would reconsider changing that policy back, where the individuals who require domestic licences, who have had domestic licences in the past, will be able to continue to use a domestic licence for fishing for their own personal use.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- As the Minister of Northern Affairs, I will endeavour to bring it to the attention of the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources, and we'll get back to you with a reply on this issue.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, and I trust that you will do that.

I now want to just touch on another item that you'll have to get back to me to, Mr. Minister, once you sit down with yourself and decide which way you're going to go on this. And that is you've had correspondence from the Sled Lake area regarding the beaver dams that have interfered with the spawning grounds of the fish in Saskatchewan, specifically in northern Saskatchewan.

More and more this is becoming a serious problem, Mr. Minister. I was first made aware of this about four or five years ago by Tom Laliberte and Narcisse Merasty -- Tom Laliberte coming from Dore pé Lake and Narcisse Merasty coming from Sled Lake, which you have correspondence from Mr. Merasty, indicating that there was more and more beaver dams blocking the spawning grounds for our fish.

And I think, as you take a look at what's happening in the fur industry right now, there's just becoming too many beavers. You take a look at the way they destroy the forest around our lakes and our rivers and our streams. And if you look at the dams that they're building up and you talk to the individuals who have been there for years, and they indicate that it's a serious problem with the beavers regarding spawning grounds. They totally disrupt those spawning grounds. And if a fish does get in there and spawns and is lucky enough to get out, the young fish that are hatched, they don't get out. They end up dying in those rivers and streams in those spawning grounds.

I've noticed it myself where beavers have dammed up rivers and ordinarily you would go there in the spring and they would just be crawling with

jackfish and pickerel and mullets, and that's no longer happening and you'll see that the beaver dams are doing this. And those individuals up there with a lot of experience and a lot of years under their belt indicate that that is the problem.

Another problem, it's coming now loud and clear, is from Beauval, and that is the beavers are damming up the rivers and the creeks that are running into the Beaver River south from Beauval down towards Green Lake. And I would just ask you, Mr. Minister, through yourself and your departments -- pluralize that -- if you would look at that seriously and consider the fact that we have to take some steps on these beaver dams or we're just going to have a lot of our spawning grounds that are gone. And to hatch those fish down South and replant them up there will never, ever work. We have to make sure that those spawning grounds are protected.

And I would just ask you, Mr. Minister, if you would take a serious look at that.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Certainly I'm not aware of the facts and the circumstances, but if they are as you describe them, they are serious and should be checked into. And certainly we will bring this matter to the attention of the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, and I'll now turn over to my colleague from Cumberland.

Mr. Goulet: -- Yes, Mr. Minister, when I'm reading my Estimates of the Northern Affairs Secretariat for this year, 1990-91, I notice that at the bottom it states that:

Expenditures for the vote Northern Affairs Secretariat were included within the vote Economic Development and Tourism in 1989-90. The 1989-90 estimates have been reallocated to reflect the transfer of this expenditure to the vote Northern Affairs Secretariat in 1990-91.

Now I notice that the expenditures are relatively overall the same. I notice in administration, it's gone up from 465,900 to 480,000. And then I notice that drop in the property management from 162,700 to 80,000 and the program expenditures from 628,600 to \$560,000.

I was wondering, Mr. Minister, when it shifted from Economic Development and Tourism, whether or not there was any major shift in regards to what Northern Affairs Secretariat was doing and whether or not it was doing much the same thing as before? Has there been any changes in regards to what the Northern Affairs Secretariat does? And if so, could you let us know?

Maybe, Mr. Minister, before you get into the aspect of the changes, maybe give us an overview on exactly, for the public, an overview of what the Northern Affairs Secretariat actually does in regards to programming?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- And that's a good question because I think the programs for the North are very important, and I agree there should certainly be no reduction in the programs to the North, and there certainly

aren't.

You asked me what I consider a very important question and that is some of the purpose of the Northern Affairs Secretariat. And I could start by giving you sort of the straight answer as it comes from the objectives and purposes of the secretariat, and I think you're probably aware of most of them. But if I could just quickly summarize it to say that we co-ordinate, promote, develop, and implement policies of the government designed to posture and advance the general development of northern Saskatchewan, and to ensure that the Government of Saskatchewan is advised as to the views of residents in northern Saskatchewan respecting the delivery of programs and provision of services in northern Saskatchewan.

I suppose I sort of see myself as being -- with all due respect to the MLAs of the North who I certainly have no reason to make this a personal reflection -- but I sort of visualize myself as another MLA of the North, if you would take that the right way, in sort of interacting with . . . and I know you weren't in the room a little earlier when I discussed it with another MLA, some of the things that I was involved in my short term in the North.

I could quickly bring to your attention things like the north-west municipalities association, which I've had numerous meetings with now. The transfer of the farm and 50 per cent of the current assets to Ile-a-la-Crosse Economic Development Corporation. The just great, great feeling we had in supporting Gary Tinker and his walk to Regina and his very valiant efforts; and how after that he was recognized by his community with what I considered a very large banquet, well attended by the community. The Minister of Social Services and I had the honour of attending and making a presentation on behalf of the government.

We're involved in, oh, things like facilitating the La Loche road project. We don't do it directly, but we do it, you know, other departments do it and we kind of facilitate it.

So I think to summarize it, I just sort of see myself as sort of being an MLA of the northern residents.

Mr. Goulet: -- So basically the role of the minister therefore is like an MLA role which then you deal with any issue of development in regards to northern Saskatchewan. I mean that's my understanding of your statement and also your very initial comment, of course, in regards to the objectives of Northern Affairs Secretariat in promoting and co-ordinating development, you know, of the North.

Now probably one of the major issues in the North in regards to the whole area of economic development has been the issue of employment. I noticed in your comments you didn't make any statements in regards to mining, although we know that of the approximately \$1 billion that is taken out from the North every year, you know, the vast majority of that is in the area of mining.

We look at, about a couple years ago we had about \$700 million worth of

uranium production. And I looked at SMDC at that time and they had made \$112 million, you know, profit in those two years before the privatization scheme took place. So one of the major issues, major points of contentions for the North has always been economic development and jobs. So I want to look at the issue of jobs and ask a few questions in relation to the jobs aspect.

In the late '70s, many of the people said yes, we will agree to development in the North, providing we have consideration for the environment, providing we have consideration for people in regards to jobs, and providing that there is a training component in regards to the development.

(1530)

And as I reviewed the situation, it was very, very difficult for me as an MLA to really discern and really make out from a developmental position exactly how the North was developing in regards to the issue of jobs. You know, I would raise questions once in a while with the mining issue, and I will get a little bit of a report, and I would get a list of workers that were working at a particular mine at a particular time in a particular month.

I am wondering, Mr. Minister, what you have come out with at this time to deal with the issue of jobs and mining development in the North. What is your present policy and what kind of statements can you state to the Saskatchewan public today as to where you're at; whether you've made significant improvements, you know, on a year-to-year basis since the government has been in power and where we're at, where are we heading right now in that old area of jobs for people in northern Saskatchewan as it relates to mining?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- In checking our statistics regarding the northern people, Northerners employed within the mining industry, our information suggests that that figure is growing gradually. Through the last 10 years it's gone up. We certainly will never be satisfied. We'll encourage it to go higher.

But it has reached the point now where our statistics tell us that 35 per cent of all mine employees are northern residents. And we're extremely optimistic as new projects would come on stream that the Northerners will continue to be a part of what you suggest has to be their economic growth.

And I as the Minister of Northern Affairs will certainly be encouraging each of these projects as they come along. I will actively lobby them so that the Northerners are very much a part of the labour force of future projects in the North . . . future mining projects in the North.

Mr. Goulet: -- I guess, Mr. Minister, I was really concerned about the issue of jobs. And I think we've studied it many times before in this legislature, that jobs are extremely important for everybody in the world. I mean it forms not only the basis of a person's identity in respecting what they do on a daily basis . . . But when we look at the record, you know, for northern Saskatchewan, we're looking at 50 to 80 per cent

unemployment in the communities of northern Saskatchewan. And although the official record may not be that high, the fact is that we have only a certain amount of the people working, you know, from the North. So we know it's an extremely . . . it's way too high, you know, whatever statistic that we present.

And we know also that for the people, as I travel around each community, it's . . . unemployment is really a devastating experience. I see and I've talked quite often about the suicide rates, you know, climbing in the North, and my point has always been one where the suicide rates are directly related to the unemployment rates in the North. When you looked at the research reports, whether you look at the First World War period or during the Dirty Thirties or in the modern era, and you look at the research, most of the research will point out that for every 1 per cent rise in unemployment, you have a 4 per cent rise in suicide rates because it's such a devastating experience for people to take away their means of livelihood as you go in.

Now this becomes an even more . . . it even becomes to be one of a paramount problem for the North because the unemployment rate is so high. And, you know, while people complain of being squeezed out of trapping and fishing in many ways by tighter and tighter regulations for them, the alternative, which is jobs for many of our youth growing up and for many of the middle-aged who are unemployed right now, is not growing fast enough.

And one of the things I'd like to find out from the minister because the new minister now in charge of the North . . . It's been very difficult for the people to get proper records. During the early days when the Northern Affairs Secretariat was formed you were supposed to get, you know, according to the Key Lake report with the Human Rights Commission, there was supposed to be at least monthly reports in regards to how we were supposed to . . . how we were doing in regards to their jobs.

And later on the Northern Affairs Secretariat function in that area was diminished or knocked off, or at least it was never really strengthened. It was as if the role of the Northern Affairs Secretariat was no longer there in that particular regard in making sure that we not only have a monitoring function, but being capable of saying, look, if we can't do it that way, then let's put it in the lease agreements.

And many of these things came out in the lease agreements. We needed to employ 50 per cent of the people in Key Lake. We needed to employ them 60 per cent after two years. And these were put in as legal documents, because people said in the long history of the North since the development took place in mining, you know, from the early '20s, that you needed to have some document to be able to say yes, we are doing something about it; and yes, these are not only abstract documents, that these are real people that are getting jobs from this and that community.

So I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, are you in favour of, number one, providing greater access for the documentation to the public at two levels, one, the level of general statistics, you know, to be published monthly as to where we're at in regards to employment rates on this and that mine in

northern Saskatchewan, and stating how many people are working from what community?

I know it will be difficult to do the latter part in regards to this and that community, but as being the third MLA, as you said you were, and from MLA to MLA then, I would say, would you be prepared then to provide me with the documents. You know, since we've had better records from about the '79-80 period, could you get those records for me on the months of January and the months of June, those people that were working at the mines from northern Saskatchewan? Could you provide that document on a year-to-year basis from about '79 to the present?

Mr. Minister, the reason why I ask you that is this: it would help me and it would help you look at where we're heading. And we could know which communities we've served in the past and which communities it shifted to later on. And in all due fairness to all communities, we know that we are not only servicing three, four communities, we're servicing all the communities. So that type of information would be very important for you in regards to planning, in your planning function.

And I was wondering if you would be able to provide those documents, you know, for me -- you know, the yearly document since January, the generalized statistics in January and July on a yearly basis. And on those years . . . on those months, to provide me with the names of the people that were working in those mines from northern Saskatchewan. And then we would have the evidence and then I would no longer be asking questions.

And if this was regularly done, then all we would be doing is raising questions about this and that community. But every year since I've been an MLA since '86, I've been raising this question. And every year I get a generalized, you know, percentage -- you know, whether it's 25 per cent or 26 per cent or 28 per cent, or today you throw out a figure of 35 per cent.

So I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, are you prepared to provide me with that information of the people that work in the mines from northern Saskatchewan, with the specific names of the . . . and the communities they come from, because that was the original goal of the development in the North in the late '70s and '80s, and I want to see whether or not you've changed your policy on that. Would you be prepared to provide that type of information, Mr. Minister?

(1545)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- First of all, in just a general way, I wanted to certainly reaffirm my support for the general employment programs of the North. And I certainly want to say that it was obvious to me that the people of the North want to work.

Now you've narrowed it down to the mining situation. But I think we could broaden that statement and say that, you know, they are looking for jobs just in any economic project that is a possible . . . either developed by industry such as mining companies or as well economic projects that could be put together by people of the North themselves. And so just generally

that way, I don't think you or I have a problem with supporting that type of thing.

Regarding the surface lease agreements, they call for, the surface lease agreements call for human resource agreements with the Department of Education. This information is provided on a confidential basis. They report those employment statistics to Education and are made public from time to time, but are released by them, not by us. And really it is up to the . . . the onus is not on us to release that information; it is an agreement between Education and the mining companies to release that information to the public.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, I'm actually very appalled with your statement. Because initially, when the whole thing came about in the late '70s and the early '80s, those were supposed to be public documents. Now you're telling me that those are secret and confidential documents in regards to the fact that only the Education minister and the mining company can access.

I mean, the reason for people saying yes to development was for them to find out whether or not their people were working there. What you're telling me is that you, as a minister in charge of the North who is supposed to co-ordinate and promote development, doesn't even have the capacity to do that because you don't even know what the information is. That seems to be what you're telling me.

All I'm asking you is for very basic information, the number of people . . . . And I very deliberately did not add forestry and wild rice, etc., because I knew that it would be difficult to get all that information. So I deliberately narrowed it down to the field of mining because those documents were more readily available because of the system that was in place already by the late '70s.

And so I'm asking you again, Mr. Minister, as a minister . . . I mean you can always talk to the Education minister, or you could always ask him for the information. All I'm asking you is that whether you as a minister will take it upon yourself. To be able to promote development in the North, you need information as a minister. Will you be able to get that information and provide it to me?

And again, the specific information that I would like is, every January and July I would like to know how many people are working from northern Saskatchewan in those mines, and that's all I'm asking for. I'd like their names and from what communities they're from. And that documentation should be there because initially there was always supposed to have . . . according to the human rights agreement initially, those documents were supposed to have been tabled on a monthly basis, and then a yearly report done.

Now I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, whether or not, in light of the . . . . And the other thing that you mention, Mr. Minister, maybe I'll deal with that in a following question. So I will just ask you, will you provide for me the information on January and July of every year since about '79 of the

people who are working in the mines from northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I would suggest to the member that the general information that you sort of talk about, I believe is available. I've got a real problem . . . in fact I don't think it could be done because of agreements that are in place, to give you specific names and addresses of people. That's the part I referred to as being very confidential records of a mining company.

But I would invite you to write a mining company and possibly ask them for that information. If they wish to release it to you, we really have no problems with that type of thing. But for me to suggest that I can get it for you, I don't think that's possible.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, how can you promote and co-ordinate development if you don't have the facts in front of your hands? All I'm asking you is asking how many . . . See, if you're proud of the people that are working in the mines, then you should know the names of the people. You have to be able to at least deal with real people from northern Saskatchewan, from real communities. That's what I'm asking you. I'm asking you to provide that information.

The excuse that you make that the mining companies cannot give out addresses and so on, is a phoney excuse. I'm not asking for the person's address; I'm asking for the person's name and what community they're from, from northern Saskatchewan. I'm not asking for their address; I'm asking for their name and where they're from. I was able to access that type of information before, and all of a sudden this government becomes closed, very secretive.

Mr. Minister, you've had new agreements in 1988. So I'm going to ask you one more time: why don't you provide that information? I mean you should be proud of your government's record on employing people, but right now you're keeping everything secret. All you're saying is the mining companies, the big mining corporations can hide everything from the people. Why don't you just utilize your role as a minister and say, yes we'll provide you with that information; we're proud of the government's record and here it is. Why don't you do that, Mr. Minister?

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I have to inform the member one more time that our surface lease agreements and our human resources agreements both call for confidentiality regarding that information and we are just bound not to release that information. And it's not a case of wanting to or not wanting to. We're just bound by contract not to release that information.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, I'm going to have to report back to my constituency and say the PC government simply will not review . . . Year after year you make tremendous statements of all your concern about jobs and people in northern Saskatchewan. All of that is phoney nonsense, complete boloney, because you will not provide me with the information of the specific people that work at the community level. You have absolutely

no pride in the people from northern Saskatchewan and their fight for real jobs in real mines in northern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- I mean what we are asking for is general historical information so that we know where we are going; so we're not coming here every day and asking a minister like yourself and say, oh, I don't know anything. We're a secret government. Only the big corporations determine exactly what type of information is required. We can't even provide you with the names from certain communities of people.

I find that absolutely amazing that in this day and age that you will not provide that information. And yet the trust of the people in development, the real reason why they wanted to partake in development is so that one of the main reasons was jobs. A few years later a PC government, all they can say is, oh, secret -- this is all confidential information.

These people are there and proud of their work. They want to be on record that that's where they're working. And I am really appalled as a new minister that you can allow this type of nonsense to continue. I thought that you would come in as a new minister and say, yes, we are proud of doing these things; yes, we are proud of our record employment, that these are the people that are there.

But yet what I see is again the same secret agenda of the PCs -- the secret agenda that we cannot give access to the people in regards to the information that they require on the historical record of northern Saskatchewan. That is the type of thing that you're telling me, Mr. Minister. I am really, really appalled with the fact that you will not present me with that information.

And also one of the other things for information. In 1988 when those new resource agreements came in, the ones that you give an excuse for to shift in to the educational process, well those are new. That's a new argument you're making. So why not provide me with the one then from '79 to '88 because that excuse you're giving me is a very new excuse. The resources agreements that are transferred to education were '88.

And I might tell you one other thing, Mr. Minister, that is appalling about those new resource agreements. When those agreements were made in '79 to '81 and when the discussion took place, people said we want employment of 50, 60 per cent at the mines. And they said we want to respect the people that live in northern Saskatchewan. We could use six months residence in northern Saskatchewan to be able to get a job, and people said no. We want people who were born and raised in northern Saskatchewan to get those jobs because the unemployment rate of 80 to 90 per cent in certain communities was where it was occurring at the community level. They wanted to get those jobs.

They were saying the suicide rates are too high on our youth. They're killing themselves because they have no future to look forward to; that the drug and alcohol problem is climbing and the government simply doesn't

care. So the point that was made, Mr. Minister, is this: they said, look, we want to hire people in northern Saskatchewan who have lived in the North at least 15 years or half their lifetime and they were of Indian ancestry.

Because legally, Mr. Minister, under the human rights Act, you could not define a Northerner unless you had the three situations under the Human Rights Code, which was of Indian ancestry, women, and the handicapped. And one of the things that I look at is this, Mr. Minister. That was a standard we used.

In 1988 you changed the standard. The new standard says that the Northerner is anybody who goes to live in northern Saskatchewan for three years. So your statistic of 35 per cent is according to the new standards that you set which is three years. And I find it very strange, Mr. Minister, whether or not that is even legal. I wouldn't think that according to the human rights Act your definition of a Northerner would be legal. You could be challenged by the mobility clause of section 15 of the Canadian constitution, basically because you could not have geographical-type hiring under a concept of Northerner unless they were of an affirmative action basis under section 15 of the Canadian constitution, as it is then transferred under the Saskatchewan human rights Act in Saskatchewan.

Therefore the initial definition of Northerner, being a person 15 years and half their lifetime and of Indian ancestry, was the standard that was raised at that time. Now you have a new standard which says three years and anybody. There's also another clause in there that says 10 years, but the real standard that is used is a three-year one.

So I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, in that regard, could you give me at least a general statistical evidence on January and July without the names from the beginning of '79 to '80? Provide me with the general information utilizing two systems: the 15 years and half your lifetime and of Indian ancestry system; and the one that's new, that's the three-year clause. Could you provide me with that evidence, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Chairman, I ask leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure to introduce a group of students from grade 5 and 6 school . . . or ages 5 and 6, from the Cowessess community recreational centre at Grenfell. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce their . . . or Mr. Chairman, they're in your gallery, seated in your gallery.

There are 27 grade 5 and 6 students accompanied by their teacher, Mr. John Pollock and Mrs. Eleanor Agecoutay -- I trust I pronounced it right -- and Mrs. Sandi Delorme.

I would like to invite the members of the Assembly to welcome the students,

and I look forward to meeting them in a few minutes for pictures and some refreshments and possibly try and answer any questions they may have. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: -- Why is the member from Wilkie on his feet?

Mr. Britton: -- While there is a break in the action I would ask permission to also introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

Mr. Britton: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce to you some students from Handel on behalf of my colleague, Mr. Baker. They are from Handel school in Handel, and they represent grades 6 to 12. And, Mr. Speaker, we will be meeting with them a little later for some refreshments and some questions in the Speaker's boardroom.

The teachers, Mr. Speaker, is Rick Burton, Owen Sebastian. Chaperons include Carolyn Glessing -- I hope that's right -- and Bernie Heintz and Joy McFarlane-Burton. Their bus driver, Mr. Chairman, is Gordon Cey.

And we will also be having some pictures, and I want to welcome them here. I would like to wish them a very interesting visit and a safe journey home. Handel, as you know, is very close to Unity, where I live, and I would ask you to welcome them in the usual manner.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

##### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Northern Affairs Secretariat Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 48

Item 1 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Mr. Chairman, I would like to inform the hon. member that regardless of what percentages -- and you can always play with statistics -- but there has been, the fact remains that there has been a steady increase in northern employment over the last 10 years in the mining field.

The matter of specific names of individuals are still a matter of . . . well they're matters of private agreements as part of our surface lease agreements and our human resource agreements. That information is just not released. Some general statistics of course are available.

I think to prove that we are committed to helping the people of the North and their participation in mining projects, certainly we could go to the mining companies and ask them to exactly what type of statistical information they would provide for us that may be of some benefit. But I

would commit myself only to asking them to provide that on a voluntary basis because of past agreements.

But there's no question. I certainly want it to go on the record as saying that we are committed to a greater percentage of northern employment in our mining industry. We are confident that as new projects come on stream, that the Northerners will be a very, very important part of the labour force of those projects. Training programs are provided, both through education and also through the mining companies themselves. I mean, in talking to the mining officials, there's no question that they want to be in a very sincere partnership with the people of the North.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, I find your comments to be extremely disappointing. I thought that we had a new minister who would take a new role on and be sincere about his job. I thought you had a certain amount of integrity in being able to deal with the issues that relate to your job, which means the whole question of development in the North and more particularly the question of economic development and jobs. But I come here to raise only one question of information: to find out what the historical record. And here you can stand up and tell me absolutely nothing. How in the world can you plan anything if you know nothing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1615)

Mr. Goulet: -- If you don't know absolutely anything about the people in those communities, how can you say, yes we're good on the question of employment. Employment means real people, real communities. We can't go on and on and bring in new statistics with very, very different standards. We had standards that high before; your standards are way down low now in regards to the definition of a Northerner, and it's even suspect legally.

But the fact remains even all of that you should still be able to provide me with the information. A democracy requires information. A democracy requires these things.

The secrecy that you state in regards to blaming the big companies -- what you're saying is that the companies demand absolute secrecy from the people and the companies are therefore not interested in democracy. That's what you're telling me. You're telling me that the people who come and mine in the North do not have a democratic interest at all in regards to the employment of people in the North. Because you yourself as a minister cannot do a proper job as a minister of promoting and co-ordinating development unless you have the information. What you're telling me is you don't have it. So I am extremely, extremely disappointed.

In other places of your government when we have asked information, the historic record is very, very straightforward. Whether it was GigaText, you were hiding facts, you were hiding corruption, you were hiding mismanagement; when we want information on \$370 million you spend in regards to Cargill, everything is secrecy and cover-up.

This is the type of government that you as a minister are perpetuating in regards to northern development and I am extremely disappointed. I think all you are worried about is the give-aways. The fact that you are privatizing SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) and now that's Cameco -- that's all you're interested in. All you're interested in is bending over backwards for the big corporations. You do not consider even the people as real people in the North. I think that that is absolutely appalling in this day and age.

I would also state that back in 1985 the Northern Affairs Secretariat said, hey -- after all the criticism that was heaped upon them -- they said we will have a northern development advisory committee formed and they said this northern development advisory committee was a first form of Consensus Saskatchewan. They appointed people from northern Saskatchewan to talk about the involvement of people in the North and to co-ordinate the development of the North.

But this government only used that thing . . . And I remember one leader saying at that time, they said, hey, what the government needs is not another hearing board, what they need is to really listen to the people of the North; what they really know is to start acting on the questions of employment, start acting on those issues of providing information to the people. That's what the people are saying in northern Saskatchewan. So when you look at the Northern Affairs Secretariat and also the northern development, you did away with that. You didn't even involve people in the formation of it; you didn't even involve people when you knocked it right off. You don't even have a system of advisory capacity now. The only thing you now have is ConSask. The first ConSask of northern Saskatchewan people would speculate and maybe even say it was the Northern Development Advisory Council.

I knew that there was good individuals that were involved in the Northern Development Advisory Council, but the impact was minimal, and that was the expectation of the people in the North because this government has treated the North from a very colonial viewpoint. They don't give them, provide them information. They don't provide them the documentation; everything is secret. The whole colonial mentality of your government, you know, really shows through in this line of questioning that I have.

And the other issue that I was going to try and get into -- and because of time I just want to mention it -- Mr. Minister, we talk about subsidies to the North as part of the development strategy. We provided about \$14 million to the uranium companies on a royalty tax roll-back in the past couple of years. Now what people said is at the same time that you had a royalty tax roll-back on the big corporations, which amounted to about \$14 million, you were able to take the subsidy away for fishing. The people who do fishing were making a little bit of money in regards to pickerel and also in regards to sturgeon, but you completely took away all that subsidy, and you only left it for the other fish such as whitefish which doesn't, you know, sell as well as pickerel and sturgeon.

So what you did was you took away those subsidies. But you tend to subsidize Cargill Grain to the tune of \$370 million. And yet you will

force people off the places where they fish and where they trap with stiffer regulations and the demise of subsidies. You even still subsidize liquor, whisky, wine, everything, beer in northern Saskatchewan and you took away the food transportation subsidy in northern Saskatchewan. And this is the type of operation that you're having in northern Saskatchewan.

And you have the gumption to come and tell me that they have integrity, that . . . So I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, since you're not going to give me any information, whether or not at least this one thing that you might do. Will you as a minister stand up for the children and the families of northern Saskatchewan? Will you stand up in this legislature and say, yes, we will bring back some sort of food transportation subsidy for the people of northern Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- Will you do that, Mr. Minister? Will you proceed to do that? And I don't want the usual argument of increasing the welfare rates of 25 per cent . . . of \$25, which only buys, you know, four quarts of milk in one month. I don't want that argument. I want to know whether you will have a proper food transportation subsidy, seeing that it was brought out in the health care task force. Will you at least minimally do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I would just briefly like to respond to the member. I, first of all, was interested to hear his endorsement of Consensus Saskatchewan, and that was important to hear, and I appreciated hearing that from the member. He also referred to the matter of integrity, and that concerns me a lot because that's an important trait that we all try to maintain as best we can.

And integrity, sir, integrity works two ways. I told you on two different occasions that we have an agreement, or we were bound by agreement that we couldn't release that information. So I'm not suggesting that I'm holding it back on some sort of a sinister plan. We are bound by an agreement not to release that information.

We are continually striving to employ the people of the North in the mining industry. And as I suggested, as more and more projects come on stream I'll be the first one to be at the door of these mining companies suggesting that the Northerners must be a very important part of their work force. And I ask you to join me in supporting that type of a . . .

But to get into an argument about the statistics, and one or two particular statistics, I can't see the merit of it. As I suggested we can ask, but it's not the most important thing. The important thing is to get the people of the North working. That's the most important thing.

I would like to . . . you asked me a direct question and I think, sir, you deserve an answer, and that's regarding the food subsidy. I would like to inform you that in the recent directions in health care recommendations, that they suggested that that be reviewed. And I would suggest that for the moment we wait and see just what comes out of those discussions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- We've heard promises providing records for people in the North. What we've seen today is that the promise was not forthcoming. People want to know information of the North, of their own people working. They're proud of their people working in these mines. They want to know, but you will not provide that information. I would say as a minister you shouldn't get down on your knees in regards to the corporations that's doing lease agreements. You should demand that the people in the north want jobs. And they want jobs. You should also make a demand that next time you sign a contract that that information is available for the people of Saskatchewan. Will you do that in the next contract and make sure that that information is made public, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- I would inform the member that certainly I will take his advice and recommendations under consideration.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 agreed to.

Vote 48 agreed to.

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Economic Diversification and Investment Fund  
Vote 66  
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Item 8 agreed to.

Supplementary Estimates 1990  
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Northern Affairs Secretariat  
Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 48

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 48 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Kopelchuk: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to take a moment first of all to thank my officials for not only their work with me in estimates but also their work throughout the year. They are very valuable and dedicated career people and I appreciate their dedication and professionalism.

I would also at the same time -- though we get into the odd debate -- I do notice certainly a sincerity, especially from the two members of the North, regarding issues of mutual concern, and I want to assure them that together we will work to help the people of the North. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to take this opportunity also to thank the minister and his staff for the information that they've given us today. And we most certainly will be looking forward to the answers to the questions that we proposed to you. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1630)

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Family Foundation  
Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 31

Item 1

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce my official, Dan Perrins, who is the president of the Family Foundation.

Mr. Pringle: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to join with the minister in welcoming Mr. Perrins to the Assembly. I have a very high regard for the skill of this gentleman and I assume that he will do a good job at keeping the minister out of trouble. He's got a big job on his hands, but I've got a lot of regard for him.

I would like to first of all thank the minister . . .

An Hon. Member: -- He hasn't an enviable job.

Mr. Pringle: -- Yes, it's not an enviable job, but good luck.

I'd like to first of all thank the minister for the letter that you sent me on March 20 outlining your responsibilities, and I'll talk a little bit later about those, Mr. Minister. I recognize as the Family minister that you've got very, very broad responsibilities. I recognize that there are many major challenges to your position; that there are rapid changes in society and that there are many complexities that our families have to deal with; that there are no easy solutions; that your job as Family minister is very tough. And so at the outset I want to acknowledge the magnitude of the responsibility that you're faced with.

Now having said that and giving allowances for the very difficult job that you're involved in, I want to say, Mr. Minister, that I'm going to be quite critical, quite critical of the record of this government as it relates to families, as it relates to young people and seniors. And I'm going to be constructively critical, and I'm going to be fairly critical of how you've carried out your responsibilities to date. And I hope that you don't take that personally and that your feelings aren't hurt as they were a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. Minister, I'll make a few comments and then I have a series of questions for you. I hope we would all agree that families which exist in . . .

Mr. Chairman, I would wonder if the member from Weyburn would allow me to make some comments. We'll get to the Finance estimates, which is quite another story, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I'm sure we agree that there are many kinds of families -- traditional families, single parent families, blended families -- that very few of us likely in this House are not affected in some way by a variety of new family configurations that exist in the community in our families.

And I think that one of the strengths in Saskatchewan has been that our families have been the backbone of the province of Saskatchewan. All of us look to our families for support. We look to our families as a source of nurturing and growth and a sense of security. And families are a place of acceptance and love for all of us. And I think all of us would agree that, given the importance of the family structure in our society, that we need to do as much as we can, government and communities, to be as supportive to families as possible. And I know that you agree with that.

I know that you also would agree that our young people are very precious, that the young people are our future, and that they have a right to opportunities. They have a right to grow and develop and they have a right to pursue their dreams and goals. They have a right to look for some hope, to look forward to the future with some hope.

I know you would agree that our senior citizens, which you're the minister for, our senior citizens which are growing in number and percentage of the population are also an important part of families, that our seniors built this fine province, and that they are demanding to have a continuing voice in decisions which affect their lives. Seniors as well need financial security, and they certainly need resources. And maybe most important of all seniors are wanting to be independent as long as possible. And I have many, many seniors in my constituency, in fact a very, very high concentration of seniors in my constituency. And a lot of those people are very dear friends and I know that you value the contribution that they have made.

I would like to suggest, Mr. Minister, that Saskatchewan young people today, Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan seniors, are living in times of increasing economic stress and in times of . . . living in times of increased social and psychological stress. And I would like to look at a few of these developments for a minute, if I could.

First of all, in terms of the increasing economic stresses on our families -- and I think there are many indicators that demonstrate this and you will be aware of them -- the first one I'd like to take a look at is the poor performance of the Saskatchewan economy as it impacts on families. And I know that you wouldn't deny that the economy of the province has been in difficulty. And I would suggest, which is clear to most people of the province, that that has been increasingly the case during the 1980s.

I think we saw today, despite the minister's good faith and his personal integrity, there really is no government plan to deal with economic development in the North, particularly involving Northerners and people of

aboriginal background, in terms of an economic plan.

The minister was not able to articulate any economic development plan for the North today, and I think that that is very sad, given the high unemployment rate there. And I will be asking you some questions on that later, Mr. Minister, in terms of your . . . what consultations and what advice you have given to the minister responsible for northern development.

Mr. Minister, in terms of the poor performance of the Saskatchewan economy, we know that over the last six or seven years, consistently, our economic growth has been below the national average. In fact, during the last two or three years, we have had the poorest economic record of any province in Canada. And I would hope that the Minister of Finance from Weyburn, instead of chirping from his seat, would look for ways in which to provide financing for job creation for young people and for Saskatchewan families, and would not make light of this very tragic situation of unemployment and out-migration for our people.

So unemployment, of course, is a major problem in the province where we have created only an additional, on the average in the last four or five years, 3,700 jobs per year -- as I say, the lowest performance of job creation of any province in the country. Now this is public information, and I know you're aware of that.

We've consistently, during the 1980s, have had an unemployment rate of anywhere from 8 to 10 per cent and higher in Saskatoon, which is my home town. We know in the North that unemployment is near 80 per cent. We know that in Saskatchewan, youth unemployment is right now over 17 per cent -- double, almost double the general average. We heard today again that in the North youth unemployment is somewhere around 90 per cent.

We also heard today there is . . . we know that there's devastating poverty in the North, and we were looking for a commitment. My colleague from Cumberland was looking for a commitment today from the minister of northern development that we would reinstitute the food subsidy so that northerners would not be starving. And that commitment was not forthcoming, and I will be putting that question to you, because I assume that as Minister of Families, with the high poverty rate in northern Saskatchewan, that you're concerned about that.

In terms of the economic performance, Mr. Minister, out-migration since 1982, we have a net out-migration from the province, of some 62,000 people. Well that's equivalent to the loss of 62 communities the size of Carnduff, Saskatchewan, which is my home town. And that's the kind of impact we're talking about.

That out-migration, Mr. Minister, has been tearing families apart in the province. And I know that you are concerned about that. With out-migration, we're continuing to export our future, Mr. Minister. We're losing our tax base and we're losing, in many ways, the brightest minds of young people and young families from the province.

In 1981 we had 21,000 people unemployed in Saskatchewan. Today we've got

42,000 people unemployed in Saskatchewan -- exactly double. Now you know and I know that the situation would be much higher if it weren't for the fact that 62,000 people have left, net out-migration, who would be added to those unemployment stats.

We know that since 1982 -- again this is your information -- that the youth labour force has dropped by 20,000 young people; 20,000 fewer young people in the labour force today than there were in 1982.

We know, Mr. Minister, that in 1987, 1988, 1989 we set new records in the province for personal and business bankruptcies, small business bankruptcies. We know that in 1989 and since you've become minister -- 1990 I mean, 1990 -- the trend is even up 27 per cent over 1989, which was a record level of business bankruptcies.

And you are the minister. And I will be interested in what kind of advice you gave to the Minister of Labour and Employment and the Finance minister regarding support to small business, because there was no evidence of that in the throne speech or the budget.

In terms of the performance of the Saskatchewan economy, we now have got the highest per capita debt in all of Canada. And the interest charges alone, as you will know, on that debt represent the third largest expenditure in the recent budget that you people brought down.

We know that we now have the highest tax rate, family tax rate. Talk about putting pressure on families. We have the highest family tax rate in all of Canada, Mr. Minister -- 1,500 new taxes per family, an average family of four, since you came to power; 1,500 a year, that's per year, and I won't go through the litany of taxes. But that's roughly the economic picture as viewed by public records and as viewed by the vast majority of Saskatchewan people.

And one has to ask, Mr. Minister, why the Saskatchewan economy in the 1980s has performed at such a terrible level. And I want to say that, right off the bat, I'm going to acknowledge that we've had a drought; I'm going to acknowledge that we've had low grain prices; and I'm going to acknowledge, the Minister of Health, I'm going to acknowledge that there's been international subsidy wars. I'm going to acknowledge that, and I'm not minimizing the impact of those.

But I'm also going to say that you people, you people have dismantled the mixed economy in the province. You people have done that. You people have privatized whether or not it's made economic sense -- which it hasn't done on almost every case. You have essentially given away our assets. You have given away future assets that would affect the ability of this province to recover from the financial mess, from the 12, 13, \$14 billion debt that we're sitting in. You people have given away those assets.

You people dismantled the department of co-ops. It's you people that won't fund the centre on co-op studies at the university. It's you that haven't recognized that in the mixed economy that co-ops have been an important sector in that three-engine approach to . . . which has been very

successful over the years in Saskatchewan. And since you came to power in 1982, in terms of the overall economic pie, the co-op sector has lost 7 per cent of that economic pie.

And that isn't surprising because basically one of the first things you did is you phased out the department of co-ops and served a pretty strong signal that the co-op sector didn't fit into your plans. You people supported deregulation. You people have supported erosion of the wheat board, and you people have supported the free trade agreement, talking about this great market that we were going to have and all these jobs that were going to be created. And in fact many, many jobs have been lost since that agreement, Mr. Minister.

(1645)

And you people are the ones that have been involved in these high risk, putting up all the money, high risk megaprojects, as we found out today in question period -- putting up all that money which has not been paid, putting up all those . . . giving away all those assets in Weyerhaeuser when they're not even paying. They're not even paying us any dividends from the profits they make -- 300-and-some million dollar profits and couldn't even pay \$10 million in dividends. You people are the ones that struck that deal, Mr. Minister.

And what you've done by doing all of these, making all of these decisions, Mr. Minister . . . I know you don't like to hear this and you're getting impatient, but sit and listen because I'm going to talk until I'm ready to sit down. What you have done is that you have put Saskatchewan young people, Saskatchewan farm families, Saskatchewan families and seniors in a very vulnerable economic position. That's the situation that you've put this province in.

Mr. Minister, in this area the Saskatchewan public is very forgiving, Mr. Speaker, but this is the area -- the way you have handled the economy -- is the area in which the Saskatchewan public is the most concerned about you.

In sum, Mr. Minister, you people have mismanaged the economy of the province which has caused incredible unemployment and incredible poverty. Well I hope you're not denying that we've got incredible unemployment in the province. We've got incredible poverty, we've got business bankruptcies, and we've got record out-migration. Now surely you recognize that that's a major problem in the economic systems. I know you blame poor people but I'm going to come to that later.

Now there are many examples of other areas where you have mismanaged the economy, and I will only mention one, but there are many examples. You people, since 1982 . . . Our oil revenues alone have lost some \$2.4 billion -- money that used to come to the treasury of the province, money that could be used for health care and education, money that could be used for taxes so you wouldn't have to tax ordinary families and place more stress on them. That's the single most important thing you've done to devastate families in Saskatchewan is the way that you have mismanaged the economy.

Now I would say, Mr. Minister, that as Family minister, if you are not advising the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Human Resources and Labour and Economic Diversification, or whatever his reorganized title is, on how to turn that situation around, then you'll be missing the opportunity that you have as Family minister because you can see the impact of these failed economic policies on families.

Now there are other measures, Mr. Minister, that have been placing increasing economic stress on families and I would like to talk for a minute about the farm crisis. Again, as I acknowledged before, we've had a drought and we've had low prices.

However that has not been the only answer, Mr. Minister. In eight years, eight years of this government with a Premier being the Agriculture minister for many of those years, and five years with your PC buddies in Ottawa, the PC Prime Minister, you people have brought in no policies to support farm families. You've brought in no policies to deal with long-term income stabilization programs. You make commitments that you weren't able to keep, like the \$500 million that was supposedly coming from the throne speech, that we never got.

You've not dealt with farm debt. You have not dealt with land transfers. You have not dealt with policies that would allow for land transfers despite promises in 1985 to do all those things. With a Premier of the province being Agriculture minister, you've not dealt with any of those. All you've had is ad hoc programs year after year after year while farmers wait and go into debt further. And all you gave them in the budget was more debt. And so you have not dealt with the agricultural situation.

The Premier's 1978 or '79 article where he supported large corporate farms, basically is what has happened. Being the Agriculture minister he has been able to make sure that by design that that has happened as we've lost a thousand farm families per year since 1982. So as the Premier, going back to his 1978 or '79 article where he promoted larger farms, he's been able to ensure that that's happened.

Now as a result we've got more farm stress. We've got legal actions against farmers, foreclosure actions against farmers initiated by both the federal and provincial governments. They're the biggest culprits in terms of the foreclosures on farms and putting stress on farmers. We've got young people leaving the farm. They're actually leaving the province. And in fact what has happened is that the policies of this administration have accelerated the depopulation from rural Saskatchewan. The overall consequences being a devastation on the family farm, the unit in the family farm -- devastation economically, psychologically, and socially. And as a matter of fact, there hasn't even been a recognition of that in terms of some of the support groups who can't get help from the government to support farm families.

The third thing I'd like to talk a little bit about in terms of the stress that the policies of this administration have put on families, has been the restricted and inadequate income support programs for families generally. Now Saskatchewan has a proud history of supporting her families; we've got

a proud history of providing income supports. And during tough times particularly throughout our history, we have come to the aid of families who needed that kind of support.

What we've seen by your administration, during the tough times when families need more supports, that's when you've cut the supports to families. And I won't go through all of the list of all of the cuts that were made to family support agencies in 1987-88, '88-89 year, but basically since this administration came to power, the purchasing power of people on income assistance, financial assistance has dropped some 35 per cent.

You've frozen the family income plan for three years in a row. And I know there's a \$10 increase per child this year, which I appreciate. But there's been a three-year freeze despite the fact that the inflation rate and the cost of living has substantially gone up.

You people cut the native court worker program, phased that out, despite the fact that our northern jails are filled with a disproportionate number of native people. Our Pinegrove jail is filled with almost 100 per cent women. You people cut out the native court worker program.

Now we have got the highest . . . for a while we had the second highest rate of family poverty. Now I understand we've got the highest rate of family poverty. And I mention this, Mr. Minister, because when you became the Minister of the Family we had the second highest poverty rate. Now we've got the highest rate of family poverty.

And so it's clear where you say back in one of your articles here, that I'll talk a little bit about later, that you're going to have significant influence in cabinet. That's what you said when you got your appointment. And it's clear that we have slipped to the situation where we have a higher rate of families living in poverty in Saskatchewan than any other province. And I would say with respect, Mr. Minister, that that has to reflect on you and how you've carried out your responsibilities as Family minister.

We've got 64,000 children living officially below the poverty line in this province. That hasn't improved since you became the minister. Seventy per cent of all working mothers in Saskatchewan live below the poverty line. The national average is only 56 per cent. So again, we're well worse than the national average, Mr. Minister. We've got 42,600 families in Saskatchewan who live in poverty, officially live below poverty. Again, that has not changed in the seven or eight months since you've been a minister.

Mr. Minister, regarding food banks. The minister who chatters from Weyburn might be interested to know that in 1982 we did not have a food bank in the province. Today we have 12 food banks in the province, Mr. Minister. And I might say again, that since you have become minister there have been two more food banks -- two more food banks. Carlyle, the new food bank in Carlyle has started up since you've become minister; a new food bank in Melfort since you've become minister.

Let's take a look at the food bank stats for a minute here. For example .

. . Mr. Chairman, could I have the floor please?

Mr. Chairman: -- If we could . . . there's only a few minutes left, if we could just continue, I think things will run a whole lot smoother.

Mr. Pringle: -- Thank you very much. I appreciate having the floor. Mr. Minister, the food bank stats. Now I know the Minister of Finance doesn't want to hear this because this reflects on his lack of leadership as the Minister of Finance in bringing down that budget that did not alleviate this poverty, Mr. Chairman.

The food bank stats in Saskatoon, my home town -- in 1989, 28,000 people were fed from the food bank. Now this is based on a CBC program of . . . the director at the food bank from May 24, on CBC radio, and she says that these people are pensioners. Now you told me . . . you've said in this House, Mr. Minister, that pensioners have never been better off than they are today. But the director of the food bank in Saskatoon is saying that the bulk of the people coming in for food are pensioners, single parent mothers, and teenagers. That's what she's quoted as saying and I'm sure you have access to that story.

But she also says that people are coming in devastated at having to ask for food. She went on to say that 2,900 families per month are being fed by the Saskatoon food bank. That 50 new families . . . oh, the minister from Yorkton wants to know where's she getting the figures from. Fifty new families per day are additional families going in to use the food bank. And she says that these people are in desperate straits and they're living in poverty. So what's happening, Mr. Minister, again since you have become the Family minister, the trend is going up, not down, which says something to me about your impact on your colleagues and your ability to help deal with the poverty situation.

The food bank stats for Prince Albert, again the trend is going up. 1986 -- I know this is painful for the government -- but 1986 in Prince Albert, 8,200 people had to use the food bank; 1987, 11,000; 1988, 12,000; and 1989, 14,000. The trend is going up. It's getting worse. The poverty in Prince Albert is getting worse.

Regina food bank stats. I won't review the details of the Regina food bank stats, but I can tell you, from 1986, '87, '88, '89 is the very same, the stats are the same as they are in Prince Albert and Saskatoon. The number of children using food banks, the number of families using food banks is continuing to increase -- doubling -- doubling in Regina since 1986. During this term of your government, the number of people using foods banks in Regina has doubled.

So, Mr. Minister, you're losing ground on the fight for poverty. You're going in the wrong direction -- \$740,000 to fight poverty. So you're not dealing with the situation. There's no question about that.

Now, as I said, prior to 1983 there were no food banks. Now there are 12, with new ones opening every day.

Education. What's happening in education? Now we on this side of the House view education as an investment in our students and our young people. In education, again this province has had a proud tradition. We've got universities that are known across the nation and internationally in terms of their research and the quality. Years of underfunding by this government have resulted in an education system where in this last budget we've spent the lowest per capita of any province on education. This is from a government that says it's committed to education. We've spent the lowest percentage of our budget on education of any province in Canada -- of any province in Canada.

We have quotas for the first time under your administration. We've got shifting cost to municipalities. We've had cuts to special education programs, Mr. Minister, and we've got a 50 per cent increase in high school drop-out rates since 1982 -- a 50 per cent increase . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That is true; that is a 50 per cent increase.

(1700)

The technical schools, again, Mr. Minister, we've got waiting lists. You're the people that fired the instructors back in 1986-87. You're the people that don't allow people at Kelsey, who were in apprenticeship programs because of the economic situation we're into, to gain a placement so that they can go back to school after their experience. They don't have that opportunity.

As we saw today, you're too busy spending money on office refurnishing and remodelling and executive salaries and travel to provide . . . and then you cut back on the instructors and you cut back in the spaces, Mr. Minister. That's what you're doing in the technical school program. So there are many . . .

Mr. Chairman: -- Order, please. It being past 5 o'clock, we'll rise and report progress.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.