

June 11/90

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of 12 grade 7 and 8 students from the community of Makwa in my constituency, west of Meadow Lake. Mr. Speaker, the students are here today accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Charles Stein; by two chaperons, Mrs. Eleanor Stein and Mrs. Warner.

I would just say to all the members, I know that many of the members here will know the distance that it is from Makwa to Regina and I know that the students here will be looking at some of the other points of interest around Regina. I believe Mr. Stein and the administration of that school are to be congratulated for seeing the benefit of bringing grade 7 and 8 students to watch how their government works and to undertake the trip of the distance that they have.

So I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here. I'll be meeting with them for a few minutes after question period today.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have the pleasure of introducing to you and to all members of the Assembly, I believe approximately 180, seated . . . I think they're spread out in all three galleries today, 180 representatives from the 1990 Saskatchewan housing authority conference. They represent housing authorities from the far south, Mr. Speaker, to the far north and of course from our western border to our eastern border. Mr. Speaker, the conference is currently running here in Regina, and it will welcome over 1,000 delegates from right around the province. Today I would ask that all members in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, join me in welcoming these volunteers, their staff, and their partners to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to on behalf of the opposition join with the Deputy Premier in welcoming these fine folks to Regina. I hope they enjoy the city and their conference, and I hope that they have a very safe journey home. Welcome.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Privatization of SGI

Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). Mr. Minister, it seems clear that few are buying your idea and your pronouncement that the only way to save SGI from demise is to privatize. In fact, Mr. Minister, I want to make it clear that in a survey done of the employees of SGI and released to the public today, it's clear that even the employees in the corporation, who would have a clear understanding what is needed in terms of making the corporation go, are in fact . . . the vast majority of them are opposed to privatization. In fact the survey shows that only 10 per cent of all the employees who were surveyed indicated they supported your idea of privatization.

In light of the fact the majority of the public are opposed to privatizing SGI, that the Premier has said that he would stop privatizing until the public supports him, how do you square that today in light of the fact that the employees also are opposed to privatization, that you continue to push ahead with your right-wing agenda on privatization.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Mr. Speaker, it is not my economic advice that SGI be expanded. It is the advice of experts world-wide who understand the insurance business.

Now asking the employees is very important, but when you asked the employees, did you ask the 200 employees who are no longer there because the company has shrunk? Should we go look for those 200 who have lost their jobs over the last few years because there wasn't enough business there? Should they have an opinion? Should we go out and ask the people of Saskatchewan if they would want one of the 100 new jobs?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- The opposition agrees.

Let us all go out -- let the opposition as well -- let us all go out and ask the people of Saskatchewan how many of them would want one of their children or themselves to be in one of those 100 new jobs if you expand the company. See how many would be opposed to that. I would expect that 100 per cent of the people of Saskatchewan think it's a good idea to expand SGI.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Minister, there are few who would make an argument opposed to expanding the corporation. In fact, we all agree with the idea of expanding SGI. The question here is privatization. What has been proven over and over again is that Crown corporations can expand beyond the boundaries of Saskatchewan without privatization, as has been done in many cases.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Minister, you refer to the down-sizing of SGI and I want to make one thing clear -- that blaming the lack of employees or fewer employees on loss of business or lack of market share . . . I just want to refer to you and to update your memory, because you seem to have selective amnesia on the subject, but in 1983 your government set about to cut jobs in SGI. At that time the market share in the general insurance was 52 per cent when you cut those 200 employees. After that the market share dropped from 52 per cent to 38 per cent. So get your facts straight, Mr. Minister. The result in market share was not a result of anything that was done in terms of down-sizing the employees. What is done here, Mr. Minister, is you are carrying out privatization against the will of the people.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I must interrupt the hon. member. I'm sure he realizes his preamble was getting extremely lengthy. It's much more debate than a question, and I ask him to put the question.

Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Minister, I want to ask you the question very clearly and simply. Will you admit that the job loss at SGI are not a result of shrinking market but are as a result of a policy decision by your government and now you're trying to defend it by privatizing the corporation? Is that not the fact?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Mr. Speaker, the answer obviously is no. You can't pay people to do nothing and you can't do something in other provinces if you are an insurance company that has nothing to do in other provinces. I mean the members opposite do not understand.

You know, look at state insurance companies, state-owned insurance companies. Have you ever seen the East Berlin insurance company do business in Saskatchewan or anywhere else? Have you ever seen the Warsaw insurance company do business here? No. But you've seen the London insurance company and the Zurich Insurance Company do business here because they are world-wide, privately owned by many citizens insurance companies.

So I mean, for the members opposite, wake up. This is 1990, this is not 1932. Will they wake up? This is not 1917, this is 1990. And if you want to do business in the world, you have to do business by the world's rules. What we're talking about here is SGI staying in Saskatchewan for ever as it is, selling us our auto plate insurance. And we are talking about a general insurance company that can do business across the country.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Minister, your answers get more and more absurd as we go along.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Minister, I want to say to you that it's clear

that the corporation can expand outside of the province without being privatized. Everybody agrees with that, everyone knows it -- with the exception maybe of yourself. So let's get that clear that it can expand outside the boundaries of Saskatchewan.

What is also clear, Mr. Minister, is the public is opposed to privatization and now the employees, 90 per cent of them, are opposed to privatization. Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, why are you continuing on with your plans to privatize when it's clear that it's not needed to expand outside of the province and that the majority of people in the province are opposed to it? What can be the explanation other than being politically driven and your right-wing agenda? What is the reason?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Mr. Speaker, the NDP agree that the general insurance company should be expanded beyond the borders of this province. They had a study done in 1981 that said it should be done. They agreed. Then if it was possible to do it, why didn't they do it? Silence from them. They laugh. They scoff. Why didn't they do it if it could be done and should be done? Because it should be done and they wouldn't do it because of their ideology. They wouldn't get off their ideology and do what is good for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, I also have a new question to the minister responsible for SGI and it concerns a change in SGI that I would like him to explain to the House today. Mr. Minister, some while ago I went to renew the licence on my car and I made the cheque out to SaskAuto because you, sir, told me that's how I should do it. You put SaskAuto on all the literature, you told people to answer the phones of SaskAuto, you put up all the signs, you put it in all the literature.

I made my cheque out to SaskAuto. Mr. Minister, the clerk at SGI said: rip up your cheque; make it out to SGI motor vehicle division. Mr. Minister, you spent thousands of dollars creating SaskAuto and now it's been wiped out? And Mr. Minister, it looks for all intents and purposes that we have one integrated company again in SGI. Now considering your plans to privatize SGI, how do you explain this reintegration of Sask Auto and SGI?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- The explanation is elementary, Mr. Speaker. The opposition, the people of Saskatchewan and this government want to keep SGI and that's exactly what we're doing. So if people pay their money to SGI, they should not be surprised. It's going to be there for ever. We're talking about expanding a general insurance company which could have a new name, SGI world-wide, or whatever you might want to call it.

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Minister, another new question regarding SGI. Mr. Minister, in 1989 -- I have a copy of the annual report here -- SGI made a profit of \$22.7 million. You've talked about the need to add

capitalization to SGI. What did you folks do with the \$22.7 million profit? Well you took \$20 million of that profit into your own general revenues to continue your spending and waste and mismanagement, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, how do you explain your comments regarding the fact that SGI needs to be capitalized, and yet robbing the company in this way to pay for your own mismanagement and waste?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Mr. Speaker, there was one way that SGI could do business world-wide without being licensed in other provinces and that was, during the time of the NDP, by reinsurance -- buying the insurance of other companies that were retailing the insurance around the world. And the NDP did that and SGI lost its shirt, and it didn't pay a dividend because it didn't have a profit for over 10 years. It's just in the last two years that we've finally made this general insurance company profitable and now it is starting to pay some dividends. But left in the hands of people who don't know how to run a business it could end up being a liability again.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, here we have a company that was profitable to the tune of \$22.7 million. Your own annual report describes it as a vibrant company. Now you say it's on the ropes and it must be privatized. As part of your privatization agenda I submit, sir, you've rolled together again the general insurance side and SaskAuto.

Sir, a very specific question: is it your intention to privatize SaskAuto, the auto division of SGI?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- No, Mr. Speaker, SGI will be there for ever.

#### STC Tendering Process

Mr. Trew: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier of Saskatchewan and it speaks, Premier, to the way that your government does business. The head of Motor Coach Industries in Winnipeg is concerned about the tendering practices used by Saskatchewan Transportation Company in the purchase of Eagle buses. Specifically they wonder how MCI (Motor Coach Industries Ltd.) could have been underbid, how Eagle could be exempted for duties on the buses, and how they could obtain special permits not at the time available anywhere else in Canada to run overlength buses.

The chief executive of MCI had written to you, sir, to ask that the bids on the buses be made public. Did you comply with that request, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- What we have here, Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks

obviously, Mr. Speaker, there have been issues relating to the purchase of Eagle buses, those buses which are now on the roads in Saskatchewan and are serving the public of Saskatchewan. There have been questions surrounding the purchase of those buses related to some other court activities going on in Texas.

Mr. Speaker, there are competitors in the bus business -- very few, I might add -- and the MCI that the hon. member refers to is owned, as I understand it at least, is owned by Greyhound Canada; Eagle buses in Brownsville, Texas is owned by Greyhound Corporation. There are very few competitors in this business, but from all indications, the competitors will have various points of view as it relates to what the opposition and others have characterized as a very unfortunate circumstance.

So all I say to the hon. member is that in the long-going investigation of the purchase of Eagle buses, that is going as it relates to charges laid against two individuals, there will be a good deal that will come out in the inquiry that's been put out, and we should leave it to the inquiry to deal with all of those issues.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Trew: -- A new new question to the Premier, if he could bring himself to such mundane items as open and honest and fair government. Mr. Premier, MCI's chief executive officer, a Ronald Hogue, stated and I quote: "It's just not right to know what the hell the bid price is on public funds." In that Mr. Hogue is 100 per cent correct.

Given the cloud of suspicion, Premier, which now hangs over operations at STC, don't you think that your government is obliged to make that information available, and are you prepared to do so now?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be inappropriate to comment on purchases of buses, whether they be from Eagle or MCI or wherever, and the transaction that took place between Eagle because of the circumstance I outlined earlier.

Well I would say this though: we did not buy, since our coming to office, we have not bought new buses from MCI. MCI buses were purchased by STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) over the past, but at no time, as far as I understand it, at no time were buses bought since this government has come to office. Under the government, the former government, the NDP government, there were MCI buses purchased by Saskatchewan Transportation Company.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Trew: -- Mr. Speaker, since the . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. It seems that there's a couple of other people who'd like to be asking and answering questions. Perhaps they'll

get their opportunity. Now it's the member for Regina North and perhaps the minister for STC, perhaps.

Mr. Trew: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I will direct this question to the minister for STC, since the Premier does not want to get involved.

Minister, Mr. Hogue claims that a meeting was set up to discuss those very tendering of these Eagle buses, and it was cancelled at the last minute by STC. Can you confirm, Minister, that this happened? And can you tell this House why it happened, why the meeting was set up and then cancelled at the last minute? And are you now willing to meet with Mr. Hogue to discuss this very important issue?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Mr. Speaker, what I will confirm, and it's what I believe to be the case, is that during the course of the inquiry that's now under way or the various processes that are under way as it relates to the purchase of buses by STC, all of the truth will come out as it relates to the relationship between STC and Eagle, and STC and MCI, going back over a number of years. All of that will come out. I'm confident of that.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Trew: -- New question to the same minister. Minister, it seems to me that the questions raised by Mr. Hogue are serious, and they relate of course to how STC does business and speaks directly to the concerns raised by Saskatchewan people in this matter.

Can you tell this House, Minister, whether or not those concerns have been dealt with . . . have been dealt with specifically in the Ernst & Young report that you are hiding from the people of Saskatchewan? And further, will you give the House your assurances that the judicial inquiry into STC will hear and deal and speak to these very issues?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that we are not hiding the Ernst & Young report. He continues to say such things. You stand in the legislature and say that the Ernst & Young report is being hidden. It is not.

The hon. member knows full the Ernst & Young report reported directly to Mr. Justice Brownridge in the inquiry, and that's as it should be. And there is no question that that is as it should be. The member stands in his place and says that the questions raised by whoever the executive of MCI are serious questions and on and on, and according to the way he asked his question.

I would say yes, they may be serious questions and for that reason -- if for no other, but for that reason -- all of those kinds of questions will be answered by the inquiry that is ongoing in the province. All the questions related to this matter, all the questions related to the

purchasing, the purchasing practices not only in the recent past, but in some distant past as well will probably come to light during the inquiry. It will be very interesting for Saskatchewan people to see.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Trew: -- New question to the minister. Minister, the bids were submitted, not only by Eagle Bus of Texas, not only by Motor Coach Industries of Winnipeg, but also of Prevost just out of Montreal in Canada, the province of Quebec.

Now there was three companies bid on that. Will you clear the air? Will you release publicly the bid price, the terms of the conditions? It's not just between MCI and Eagle. There was in fact at least three companies bid. Clear the air, release the bid publicly. Will you do that?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Mr. Speaker, the only appropriate thing to do would be to take the course of action which I have taken to this point and which we will continue to take. And that is we will refer all questions of this nature to Ernst & Young who have reported through the inquiry of Mr. Justice Brownridge. All questions related to the transactions will be referred to that inquiry. If the member has other questions he would like to refer there, I invite him to do so. In fact, he has a responsibility to do so. And that will be where it is dealt with, Mr. Speaker, because that is the appropriate place for it to be dealt with.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

#### Cargill Plant Natural Gas Supplies

Mr. Solomon: -- Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for the Crown investments corporation and it concerns your plans for the Cargill fertilizer plant. In the June 7 Leader-Post, Kerry Hawkins, president of Cargill Canada, is quoted as saying that the natural gas to be used by this plant might come from Alberta and not necessarily Saskatchewan, depending on the bids.

Mr. Minister, how does that square with the statement by your Premier at his February 7 press conference where he is quoted by the press as saying, and I quote: "A plant is expected to be the major customer for Saskatchewan natural gas producers and will spur gas exploration and royalty payments to the province of Saskatchewan."

Mr. Minister, is this plant going to benefit Saskatchewan natural gas producers, or is it going to benefit Alberta natural gas producers?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- First of all, Mr. Speaker, it's nice after eight long years to finally have someone from the opposition talk about natural gas in this province. It is a well-known fact that through the efforts of this government that the deregulation process took place which allowed Saskatchewan gas producers to develop the resource and get into that

market-place.

It's a well-known fact that Saskatchewan natural gas producers will have a built-in advantage as far as supplying the fertilizer plant at Belle Plaine because of distance and the infrastructure that's available to them. It's always been said that this particular development would be on an economic basis, that the fertilizer plant at Belle Plaine would produce on a commercial basis for not only Saskatchewan but indeed North America.

And it's been well seen by most everyone, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan natural gas producers have been very competitive in other market-places. And one only has to look at the core market in Ontario which Saskatchewan producers have made significant inroads in to know that Saskatchewan producers certainly understand the economics and will be there. And naturally I expect that most of the gas will be supplied by Saskatchewan producers.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: -- Mr. Speaker, the minister stands in the House and responds for the minister responsible for the Cargill project and contradicts Kerry Hawkins who's president of Cargill with respect to the purchase of natural gas. I would remind this minister that the people of Saskatchewan have put up \$369 million in this project and Cargill is putting up \$65 million. As the senior partner in the developments, the government of Saskatchewan should be dictating the terms and not Cargill. The government should be doing all that it can to ensure that Saskatchewan producers, and not Alberta producers, as Mr. Hawkins states, are given precedence.

Mr. Minister, I ask you: have you made that position known to Kerry Hawkins? Have you made the position known of the Premier and the statement you just made known to Mr. Hawkins or have you not?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- Mr. Speaker, natural gas in the province of Saskatchewan brings in some \$40 million in royalties for people here, and just a few years ago that figure was almost nil. And I think it's at the encouragement of industry by this government, with rules and regulations, that has allowed those types of royalties to flow back to our province.

So for the member opposite to say that there are no economic spin-offs to this province is not true, Mr. Speaker. This particular plant and the quantities of natural gas we'll use will amount to nearly 10 per cent of what is produced in this province at present. Saskatchewan producers have shown that they are amongst the most competitive producers in Canada. And given this type of opportunity for 18 billion cubic feet of market for their natural gas, I would think, Mr. Speaker, given that past record, that they will be in there supplying natural gas to the Saskatchewan Fertilizer Company.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: -- Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Energy and Mines. The Premier said that there was some assurances that Saskatchewan producers would have first crack at this gas and we'd be the recipient of royalties as a result of that. Mr. Minister, you've said in this House that the Saskatchewan producers will benefit.

How come Kerry Hawkins says that it will go to the lowest bidder which may be Alberta natural gas producers? Why haven't you some assurances in writing from Saferco and from Cargill that Saskatchewan natural gas producers will indeed be the benefactors of the consumption of natural gas?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition can't have it both ways. For months they have stood in this House and accused the government of having a sweetheart deal with Cargill Grain corporation. What the member opposite is proposing would in fact be a sweetheart deal. Saskatchewan producers have a natural advantage. They are closer to the plant than any other gas producers in Canada. And if one understands the transmission infrastructure in this country, that is a built-in advantage.

We have said all along that this will be a commercial plant. The gas contracts for the Saskatchewan Fertilizer Company will be on a long-term, mid-range, and short-term basis, the same as any other industrial user in the province of Saskatchewan, knowing full well that those Saskatchewan producers are closer and therefore have the advantage in bidding on those types of contracts.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 42 -- An Act respecting the Legal Profession, the Law Foundation and the Law Society of Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Legal Profession, the Law Foundation and the Law Society of Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 43 -- An Act respecting Police Services

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Police Services.

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. 7 -- An Act to amend The Intestate Succession Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Intestate Succession Amendment Act, 1990. The Intestate Succession Act sets out a statutory scheme for distributing the estate of a person who dies without a will. Where a person dies leaving a spouse and children, the spouse receives a preferential share of the estate before the balance is divided between the spouse and the children. The preferential share was last raised from 10,000 to 40,000 in 1978, and since that time inflation has decreased the value of this amount to the point where it is necessary to increase the preferential share again.

The Bill before this House will increase the preferential share to \$100,000 with respect to estates of persons who die after this Act has passed, and I am confident that together with the proposed The Dependants' Relief Amendment Act, (1990) also currently before this House, that these Bills will update the legislation relating to provisions for both spouses and dependants upon the death of an individual.

I'm pleased to move second reading of an Act to amend The Intestate Succession Act.

Mr. Shillington: -- Mr. Speaker, we want to consider this Bill in the light of the minister's comments. It may not be the most controversial Bill. It is, however, very important to those who actually rely upon it and we want to review it, and I therefore will beg leave to adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 8 -- An Act respecting the Survival of Certain Causes of Action

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, this proposed new legislation will bring a logical and consistent approach to the law relating to actions that are commenced or continued by or against an estate.

Essentially this reform to the law will clarify a confused and irrational area of the law in this province. Existing inconsistent approaches in The Trustee Act lead to arbitrary results depending whether or not an injured person with a cause of action relating to the injury substantially dies as a result of the injury or from another cause.

If a victim dies from other causes, the estate may recover both financial and non-financial losses suffered by the victim. However, if the injury itself causes death, the estate is not permitted to maintain the action at all.

The proposed legislation is based on recommendations of the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan. It substantially follows the uniform survival of actions recommended by the uniform law conference of Canada and existing

legislation in Alberta and the maritime provinces.

This new legislation provides that an action will survive the death of the victim whether or not the death resulted from the injuries inflicted by the wrongdoer. In such an action the estate will have a claim for only the financial losses of the deceased, such as wage loss and cost of care. Damage for such matters as the pain and suffering of the deceased are considered to compensate only the person who suffered and thus cannot be recovered by the estate.

Also, an estate will not have a claim for the lost future earnings of the deceased. As a result, these damages which consist of what the deceased might have earned during the course of his life, had he not been injured and not died, can only be claimed by family members under The Fatal Accidents Act.

It is anticipated that this new legislation will be applicable to only a few cases in any year. However, for those cases, this reform of the law to establish certainty, consistency, and fairness in the approach to actions by or against estates should be viewed as a significant improvement.

I move second reading of An Act respecting the Survival of Certain Causes of Action, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Shillington: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, at the conclusion of my remarks, I'm going ask for leave to adjourn the debate.

On the face of it, this amendment would appear to be innocuous and probably beneficial. It does however, as I say, have a very significant effect on those who are actually caught up in it. Given this government's track record and this minister's track record in particular, we want to examine it with the greatest of care, as we've learned to do from this particular minister.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 21

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn that Bill No 21 -- An Act to amend The Education Act 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.

#### Bill No. 27

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hepworth that Bill No. 27 -- An Act to amend The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act 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.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Women's Secretariat  
Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 41

Item 1 (continued)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Deputy Chair, on Friday when we left off on these estimates, there had been a concluding question by the hon. member from Saskatoon Fairview, and he had wanted to know to what extent we were involved in education processes to do with the status of women and also what kind of outreach activities that the secretariat might be involved in. And I briefly wanted to give the member that information today, and he may very well have some questions at a later point in time.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I had stated somewhat earlier in beginning these estimates that the focus would be on education and outreach, if you want to call it that, but mainly on education for the secretariat over the next year, 1990.

Some of our educational processes have been within Dgovernment and some outside of government. The secretariat distributes about 6,000 Focus news-letters -- that is the title of the news-letter -- to women and also to organizations. Themes have been a variety from focusing on the tourism industry to the family; post-secondary education to small business; to women in management, senior citizens, the elderly. So it has been fairly wide in topic, Mr. Chairman.

The information provided to in-school use, high school namely, has been something called Focus on Your Future and it is geared to girls about 75,000 grade 9 to 12 students. That went out in February, and I believe they also look at it in the month of May to grade 7, 8, and 9, and the publication of Focus on Your Future goes out then also, Mr. Chairman.

Presentations to students have been made and are being offered to elementary and high schools throughout Saskatchewan. I believe that the target group, first of all in getting in the door, is to speak with the teachers and with the guidance counsellors and perhaps student council. These focus on explaining the future of Saskatchewan's economy, the participation of students in that future, whether they be male or female. Obviously the emphasis in this case is towards the young woman that is close to completing high school and what she may be looking at in terms of her options for the future.

I guess the one underlying message that is carried out through this

news-letter and through any kind of a message, whether it comes from me or from the Saskatchewan Advisory Council on the Status of Women, would be that staying in school is a must in keeping your options open as a woman. Because I think given today's society that in fact there are many more options than what there used to be, and that young women are going to have to consider the range of career opportunities that are there and available for them.

(1445)

They have also been involved in producing an eight minute multi-image video presentation which too assists students in their career preparation. We have participated, Mr. Chairman, on the student and career development curriculum advisory committee to the Minister of Education and the provincial co-ordinating committee on counselling and career development. Along with the Seniors' Secretariat, we have participated in the development and strategy meetings to discuss the area of women and ageing.

We've presented seminars on the labour market, job search techniques, and interview skills to the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, the Faculty of Administration classes, and the aboriginal women's council and their economic development conference.

We have been members of the interdepartmental steering committee on family violence which took place some years ago and continues on, assisted with the national consultation with the federal government. And, Mr. Chairman, we were a member of the working committee on child sexual abuse. We also chaired the working committee on the family violence which developed a strategy to address family violence in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, those are only a few of the outreach activities and the educational program. And as I said earlier, I believe that was the question that we had left off on on Friday with the hon. member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Simard: -- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, in your remarks last Friday you had indicated that women felt isolated from the women's division. That's the division that was there prior to 1982.

And I just want to quote to you from a brief prepared by the Saskatchewan action committee, I think in April of this year, the Saskatchewan action committee being an umbrella organization for many women's organizations across the province. And this brief states that:

When the women's division existed, women's issues were visibly dealt with by government. The division had a budget to produce pamphlets and booklets on all manner of issues of concern to women, and these resources were widely available and were well utilized.

The secretariat develops very few resources aimed at the average woman and it lacks visibility in the women's community. If it is visible at all, it is seen . . . (And I think this is crucial because this is what you were accusing the women's division of being.) If it is visible at all (talking

about the secretariat now), it is seen by a select group of women -- professional women, women entrepreneurs -- but not by the average woman in Saskatchewan. Its glitzy publications don't speak to us.

It goes on to state:

That the demise of the women's division was a grave error. (That's talking about the 1982 pre-Tory division) Since it was abolished, women's issues in this province have not had as high a profile. SAC (Saskatchewan action committee) wants the women's division revived.

And that's coming from an organization that represents many, many women from across this province. They are in effect saying that ordinary women, the average Saskatchewan woman, is isolated from the Women's Secretariat.

I also want to pick up on your comments that the emphasis should be on education -- or the secretariat's emphasis will be on education. Well I think the goal of targeting young women is very laudable. I do think education is very important, and I'm pleased to see that the secretariat is considering that area as one of the major areas in which they should be working.

But I also want to say for women across this province who may not be . . . who are already in the labour market, who already have families and may not be considered young women in your target group, that the key to their survival and the key to their success in society is economics, Madam Minister, economics.

And what these women need is an adequate minimum wage, is pay equity, affirmative action in the job place, and it's economics, Madam Minister, that is the key to women attaining equality in society. And I realize that by making education an important aspect of your policy, that that's what you're trying to achieve for young women growing up and coming into the labour market. But for women who are already there, we also need immediate strong measures to overcome the economic poverty that so many women are involved in in this province.

I want to point out that the division has . . . the budget with respect to . . . As I did on Friday, I want to point out once again that the budget for the Women's Secretariat, from 1982 the women's division had \$886,400 and in 1990, \$539,600 -- a substantial reduction, Madam Minister. And in fact from 1989, I believe this year's budget is \$20,000 less.

Now I think that is an indication of the priority that the Tory government gives to women's issues, which is that the agency that's responsible for promoting women has been cut back some \$20,000 this year. The staff has fallen from 18 to 7.5. I think that's a dismal record, Madam Minister, that we have only 7.5 people in the Women's Secretariat today as opposed to 18 in the women's division in '82.

And we've also seen cuts in other areas that affect women substantially, cuts such as to the school-based dental plan that saw over 200 women dental therapists fired and out of work . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well

some 400 dental workers, but out of the therapists I think there were 200-and-some.

Cuts to social service that have seen women living in poverty in untold numbers, in numbers that we have not experienced since the Great Depression, Madam Minister.

A freeze on minimum wage for years that also heightened the poverty that women were facing across this province.

Cuts to public health nurses, twinning of public health regions that have increased the burden to these working women.

Cuts to the Human Rights Commission that is responsible for enforcing the rights of women for making sure that discrimination in the province is reduced and eliminated. And all these policies, Madam Minister, have affected women across this province.

And we know that the majority of women are working and most of them are working out of economic necessity. Most of them are working because they have to work -- because they have work, Madam Minister. And yet we see women being ghettoized in low-paying jobs in what we traditionally label as women's work. And therefore in other provinces pay equity in being implemented to redress the historical undervaluation of women's work -- and this undervaluation being most unfair to women.

And in addition, Madam Minister, the secretariat should be concerning itself with the pressing need for high-quality accessible day care in this province -- affordable day care for our children and our working parents.

And we also have to consider the problem of women in need of protection when they're fleeing violent situations and the lack of such protection in many areas across this province.

So yes, Madam Minister, there must be an emphasis on young women and on education, but there also has to be an emphasis on the economic situation of women across the province.

Now you stated that your emphasis was on young women, Madam Minister, and I therefore want to get into the issue of teen pregnancies because that affects many of our young women across this province. And you know and I know that teen pregnancies in Saskatchewan are amongst the highest across Canada. Yes, they are decreasing in the upper-age group, but they are actually increasing in the lower-age group, Madam Minister. And that causes grave concern to all citizens across this province. So, Madam Minister, I would like to know what the secretariat is doing with respect to the issue of teen pregnancies and with respect to education in our schools on this issue.

And also, Madam Minister, as you know, birth control pills are no longer covered under the drug formulary to the extent that they were in the past. And we've related incidences in this House where women, not just . . . not teenagers now, I'm talking about older women who have been unable to obtain

birth control pills and as a result have found themselves pregnant.

So, Madam Minister, I would like to know what the secretariat's policy is and what the secretariat is doing with respect to the issue of teen pregnancies, with respect to the issue of birth control, with respect to the issue of education in our schools, and with respect to making birth control pills available to all women across this province who are in need of such. Thank you.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Deputy Chairman, I want to make it very clear to the hon. member from Regina Lakeview that in talking about the women's directorate or the women's bureau or the Women's Secretariat as it goes through various changes -- changes that are often brought about because of changing factors in society -- that at no time have I made a critical judgement of the women's bureau. In fact, what I did was recognize that what was set up and the issues of the day back then was probably appropriate for the time that it was in.

What I've also said is that the issues have become much wider and have moved away from the main issue back in those days, which was pay for equal work. I think that one has to be very mindful of the changes that take place in society. And while one can work very hard to effect those changes, I don't think that I would ever assume or presume that changes aren't taking place out there without any involvement from you or I or any other member in this Assembly.

When I talked about isolation, it was isolation of some other factors. Family violence is not new to society in the year 1990 or the year 1980. Family violence was involved. Granted, we didn't talk about it as much publicly as what we do now.

Career counselling, perhaps we know more today than what we knew in the past, but it was an issue back then. I had two girls graduate from high school in 1978 and the issue of being female and the options available to them . . . But there was not an emphasis in terms of counselling, career options, or materials coming out of the government-wide system directed towards young women in Saskatchewan.

The issue of violence is another one. The issue of elderly women in poverty and who has access to pensions; they were there. Granted, they had not taken the profile that the equal pay for work of equal value did.

And again I go back to it being appropriate for the time but in fact the issues were becoming much wider and to be dealt with. And those women, quite frankly, that were interested in talking about having access to pensions were talking about family violence and preventive methods, talking about career counselling, student loans geared to the single parent, recognition, recognition from the officials and from the politicians and from the post-secondary institutions that in fact a single parent, be it male or female -- the reality is most of them are female -- are going to have a heavier work-load in getting through their work at a post-secondary education institution. That's the reality.

Well those issues had to be dealt with too, and that's why I say in the context that the issues became much broader and had to be dealt with on that basis.

(1500)

Mr. Chairman, in looking at other issues, the member raises teen-age pregnancy. The Women's Secretariat sits on various interdepartmental committees, the family being one of them, along with the Department of Health. And it has not been raised by itself as an issue. There's no doubt that the statistics can be alarming if one just looks at the bottom line on the statistics.

What I find more alarming than that is to take those statistics apart and look at some of the core groups that are affected more than others. And I think that's where some work has to be done along with the education system.

I would never recommend that the Department of Education or the Women's Secretariat or any other government department dictate what those programs should be. I firmly believe that parents have to have a say in that at the local level, and that includes school teachers who day in and day out work with those young women and those young men.

I would also not support a program to be put into place that only delivers a message to teen-age girls. It takes two. And I believe the message has to be along with the teen-age girl, to the teen-age boy. Perhaps the message should go even broader than that in terms of the family, how the family can deal with this.

So while we have not been involved specifically in dealing with just teen-age pregnancy, we do sit on various committees where we can have some input and where we can make suggestions that various departments take a look at these areas in order to be addressed.

I want to go back, Mr. Chairman, to one thing the hon. member has said, and that is about the financing. And she reserves or bases her judgement on the financing that the Women's Secretariat is getting. And yes, it is true that the secretariat, if you compare it over the years with just the bureau or the directorate, there is a drop there.

But I would ask her to look at the government programs right across the budget area. And let's start with the year 1981 to 1982. The total amount specifically targeted for women, the total amount of women's programs was \$8.7 million. The '90-91 estimate showed 24.9 specifically to women's programming, and that women impact.

Now the budget obviously impacts on both male and female, but these are areas like the Department of Health, breast cancer screening, the family violence issue, transition houses, the Department of Justice on enforcement and maintenance, student loans geared to the single parent, day care, the grants within the day care system. So it's gone within eight years, from \$8.7 million to 24.9. And while it is not targeted into one agency or one

department, that is across government, and I think that is a reasonable amount.

Ms. Simard: -- Madam Minister, with respect to the issue of teen-age pregnancy, I agree with you that any education program has to have parent participation, parent input, and parent involvement, and the government shouldn't be dictating what the program is. And of course we never suggested that. And I know you weren't indicating that we had, but you wished to make that point. And I agree with you on that point.

However, I think that because the statistics are so alarmingly high, and whether we break it up into groups or not, the fact of the matter is, is we have a problem in Saskatchewan. And teen-age pregnancies is a major thing that contributes to the economic poverty that many women face, because many women don't go on with their education. It also contributes to the poverty that many children face in Saskatchewan, because their mothers aren't properly educated in order to provide them with a good standard of living.

So there's no question this is a problem. It's not just the pregnancy, it's the whole life-style that's created as a result of the pregnancy, and what this does to women and their children, Madam Minister. And therefore I think this is something the government should give priority to.

Now I've raised this in the legislature, not just this year, but last year as well. We've talked about this before in the legislature. And I've urged the Minister of Health to make it a priority, but I still haven't seen evidence of the fact that this is being made a priority. And I believe it is a key, just as education is, because this is part of the education process, it's a key.

Now with respect to Ontario, Madam Minister. Ontario has had a great deal of success with their program in reducing teen-age pregnancies. In fact I believe they've reduced teen-age pregnancies by approximately 20 per cent as a result of a 1986 study that I had looked at. Over that same period Saskatchewan reduced teen-age pregnancies by 7 per cent.

Now I'm wondering if the minister is familiar with the Ontario program and if so, whether she has been looking into the possibility of taking the good portions of that program and implementing them in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, we do in Saskatchewan, as the hon. member probably knows, have at least three schools who have some support services for teen moms. I think all three are on site of the school. If not, they're still supported at least away from the school. And of course that is done through Social Services.

The preventive mechanism . . . and I have not talked specifically with anybody out of Ontario or with the Minister of Health about this Ontario model. Now the Department of Health may have very well looked at it. But I will give you my word to undertake that and have a discussion with the member for Meadow Lake or the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. Madam Minister, I

also want to talk about teen-age pregnancy in the province of Saskatchewan. And I do this in the context of someone who has worked for many years with young girls between the ages of 13 and 20 who were in the situation where they had become pregnant and they were attending the school that I was either a teacher at or the principal of.

It seemed to me, Madam Minister, we've been dealing with the whole issue of Saskatchewan's extremely high rate of teen-age pregnancy since the '70s. In fact, Madam Minister, I have been dealing with this issue since 1977, so it's been some 13 years.

In fact, this issue, Madam Minister, encouraged me to get involved in the political process because I was seeing what was happening to young women in the late 1970s where they would become pregnant. They weren't in a position to continue their schooling, and there were no alternate programs for those young people other than some very small programs that might have allowed three or four young women to continue their education.

Madam Minister, in the province of Alberta for some time there has been a program called TERRA, and TERRA exists in the city of Edmonton. It is a school specifically for teen-aged women who are either pregnant or have small children. It's a place where they can continue their education. They have support programs in terms of social workers. They have psychologists, counsellors, as well as day care. And this has allowed literally hundreds of Edmonton girls to continue their education.

Now we have some variation of that program, for instance, in the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina. We have one program funded by the Catholic school board in the city of Saskatoon, and we have a day-care facility at Mount Royal Collegiate where a few young women can continue their education because they have access to day-care facilities. The difficulty with the Mount Royal program is that the only children that can attend that day-care centre are children that are infants. Once your child begins to walk you are no longer able to have your child continue to attend the day-care centre and you have to look for some alternate facility or program, day-care program. In the case of the Catholic School Board situation in the city of Saskatoon, they do not have a day-care centre on site, and I'm aware of the Balfour program in the city of Regina.

Madam Minister, my colleague, the Social Services critic, the member from Saskatoon University, and myself had a press conference a couple of weeks ago where we called on the provincial government to have more day-care facilities available for young girls who wanted to continue their education because we thought it was absolutely key to have that kind of support, and that the day-care facilities should not only be available for young women with infants, but it should also be available for young women with toddlers.

Madam Minister, there are some policies in your own Department of Social Services that cause me a great deal of distress. And one of those policies, Madam Minister, is that if you are a young girl under the age of 17 and you're at home with your family and you have become pregnant or you have a small child, your family may be in a position where they are not

very wealthy, not very well-to-do, and in order for you to go to school they may have to try and find some sort of day care for that young girl's baby. And they simply can't afford it.

Now if that young woman moved out on her own and got onto social assistance, then she would be in an apartment, she would get some financing from the Department of Social Services, and she would also be eligible for the day-care subsidy. But her family income if she stays at home, may not allow her to be eligible for the subsidy.

And it seems to me that we have some policies in the Department of Social Services that force young people out of their family home into an apartment, which can be a very isolating experience, if they want to continue their education. However, should the Department of Social Services wish to give that family a bit of support, i.e., some financing or funding for day care, that young girl could continue her education.

And I've raised this issue with the Minister of Social Services, past minister and present minister I believe, and we still have not had any resolution of that particular policy position of the Government of Saskatchewan.

So in essence, Madam Minister, I have two questions. Is the Women's Secretariat working with the Department of Education and the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services to try and get support services into schools and into the community so that young girls can continue their education?

And the second question, Madam Minister, is the question of whether or not the Women's Secretariat would be prepared to go to the Minister of Social Services and see whether this policy decision could be changed so that young girls who are pregnant or have a child, who wish to be at home with the support of their families, might be eligible for some funding from the Department of Social Services for day care for these young babies.

(1515)

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- The member from Nutana raises some interesting points and questions that quite frankly have been around for a long, long time and I suspect some of them will remain for a long, long time because of the . . . I guess one of the questions that society will have to grapple with and that's the question of the age of majority at 18.

And I recall even back in my school board days dealing with young women within the school system, pregnant, who continue going to school. The support services aren't there. They're underage and they're living at home. I mean you know all the reasons as well as I do.

And I know from my year as minister of Social Services in looking at the question on welfare reform and where people fit in and when you should pay and when you shouldn't, it was very difficult to come down with a clear answer on how this is going to be addressed. That's not to say that there isn't room for addressing it and in fact finding some solutions. I don't

know that you are going to please everybody, and the purpose of the exercise should be recognized right off the bat that you can't please everybody all the time. If you do, you probably are going to end up not targeting it to where that greatest need is.

The secretariat has been working on the working group that is chaired by the Family Foundation and this is where this will come up in terms of a co-ordinated government policy, whether it's to do with the public health nurse, the social worker, counselling, and of course the education system that the young woman would need. Our views will be expressed there and it will be seen as one of trying to find some answers, even a beginning to it.

And I think over the years, many, many years we've gradually made some gains on it. I think just simply the acceptance that these young women should stay and finish their high school education is a pretty big gain in itself. Now recognizing all the difficulties if she has kept a child along with that, then I think that is the next step.

And in part, that's beginning to be addressed. But admittedly, there's a long, long way to go. And I'm not sure that you're ever going to get a totally satisfactory solution that is going to cure all the ills on it. Mr. Chairman, I think I've probably addressed the points that she has raised.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, I raise this in the context of social policy as it pertains to young women who become pregnant. And as you know, Madam Minister, the large number of people, women in the province of Saskatchewan that are seeking therapeutic abortions are teenagers. And I raise it in the context that if we are to give people a real choice in terms of continuing a pregnancy, which I believe we should be doing, then we have to, Madam Minister, have social policies in place that support a real choice -- not a choice only of abortion.

And it seems to me that governments who hold a pro-life view in terms of that issue, then have to put in pro-life social policies so that you don't have a situation where young people are in a position where they continue a pregnancy, but they don't continue to get a good education, and they continue a life of poverty for themselves and their children. And so I think in order to deal with the issue of teen pregnancy, we have to deal with it in the context of prevention obviously, and I think that we haven't done a very good job of that. And I know that that takes the school and parents and government working in partnership to develop a proper prevention strategy, but we also have to do in the context of social policy that supports young people when they do make a decision to continue the pregnancy.

And what I find so frustrating, as someone who has been an educator and as someone who is now a politician, is when I have a parent come to me or a young person come to me and they are 15 or 16 or 17 years old; they want to continue to go to school, but the family simply doesn't have the resources to pay for day care. What that young person will get is the family allowance of \$30, and they may get the family income plan of \$100, and

that's \$130 for that young baby and that young girl. And obviously for families in the province of Saskatchewan, particularly in view of how difficult it is to make a living these days, that's simply not enough money.

So I raise this question in the context of having a holistic approach in terms of policy to this matter, and I also raise it from the perspective that if you look at the Randhawa study that was done by Dr. Randhawa at the University of Saskatchewan, he looked at school dropout rates from 1980-81 to 1986-87. And while I recognize that there are some people that don't accept that study, what that study clearly showed was a dramatic increase in the number of young girls dropping out of school. In fact, young girls are dropping out of school now more, more so than young boys. Young boys seem to be staying in school where that certainly wasn't the trend in the past, and young girls are dropping out. Now I don't know why they're dropping out per se. We have no research on that; that is substantive. But I suspect one of the reasons is because of pregnancy; one of the reasons also may be because of drug and alcoholism -- drug and alcohol abuse; and another reason may be that they simply are starting to face some of the social pressures that young boys do.

So I raise it in that context, Madam Minister. I know you can't solve it on your own, but I really do believe that government has to take a look at the whole. We do have a tremendous social problem in this province and I think it means that the Women's Secretariat in conjunction with the Department of Health, Social Services, and Education has to develop a strategy to at least begin to address this serious social policy. With that, Madam Minister, I'll turn it over to my colleague.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, just a few comments. On the issue of drop-out, I will have to go back and review the 1985-86 study that you refer to. What you've said totally is opposite of what I have been led to believe out of various studies on what some term early school leavers, as opposed to drop-outs; in fact from oh, 1978, 1979, 1983, and I believe another one in about 1985 now, which is a different one than you've referred to. And in fact all of those show where females were less likely to drop out than what some of the males were, for economic reasons.

And the other thing that it showed, females that were dropping out for teen-age pregnancy reasons in fact were more encouraged and more likely to take a look at the option of staying in school and getting some support services to finish that grade 12 component, even with the baby. So I noted with interest the 1986 study, and I'll have a look at it.

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I want to ask you a few questions about a proposal that was put in by the community of La Loche. And in 1988 that was the year that they assumed that they would be getting their development in La Loche and it was called the Sekwi child care and teen parenting centre, which was going to be incorporated into the Dene High School in the northern village of La Loche.

And, Madam Minister, I join with my other colleagues in expressing the concern that we have today in Saskatchewan with teen-age pregnancies. And

I see this in northern Saskatchewan in the majority of the communities, and to me it is a very serious situation and a situation that has to be tackled by all levels of government.

In La Loche we talk about different agencies that have been working with this group, and included in that is the federal government with Indian Affairs, as there is a number of treaty children that go to the Dene High School in La Loche.

In 1988 -- and I want to quote from the Department of Social Services, Madam Minister -- and this is from a Donna P. Young, director of the day care branch, and this was to the principal of the La Loche High School, Mr. Ralph Pilz. And in closing, he says:

Announcements regarding program development and changes are expected in the near future. Your proposal is on our waiting list and will be considered when funding for new spaces becomes available.

And I have statistics here, Madam Minister, which have been presented to the Department of Social Services to the economic development branch and to the northern secretariat and would be available to your department, just to indicate how serious the problem really is in those communities.

There was a lot of work done. The community of La Loche, the local school boards, the teachers, the social workers in the community -- and I have documents all here in the package -- they were all working towards this proposal. When they thought that they would be next in line and were sort of guaranteed that that proposal would go ahead, and then came the announcement on Friday, September 16, 1988.

And I'm quoting, Mr. Chairman, by the Hon. Ray Meiklejohn. He announced that the funding was going to go to a new centre in Mount Royal Collegiate in Saskatoon. Well certainly this was upsetting to the citizens of La Loche. And at that time they were told that they would most certainly be the next ones in line.

Today that has not happened. I was up there the other night to a graduation, Madam Minister. And I see situations where I was talking to a mother in La Loche, who is a mother of a teen-age parent. And she indicated to me -- and she has a fairly good job -- that she was going to leave her job next year so that young mother could go back to high school. And had that program been in place, most certainly she would not have to quit the job. And that's the economics of the situation right there.

There's not many jobs available in La Loche. And here we have a situation where we have a teen-age parent and now the mother has decided, well I want that daughter . . . and they all want their children to go back to school and they all want them to finish grade 12 and to continue with their education, and that is so important in society today.

But some of the statistics that you look at in the northern communities . . . . And I will not make these public here today, but if you want any of these figures I most certainly can provide them to you, Madam Minister, going

back to 1974. And I think you will realize that the problem is very serious.

And I would just ask you, Madam Minister, through your department, if you could use your good offices to convince the Minister of Social Services and all the other funding agencies that are involved if they would once again take another serious look and meet with the high schools and the local school boards and the village councillors in those northern communities to see if they can work out this agreement and get some funding in there so that we can provide for day-care centres so that these young mothers can finish their education and take their place in society the way that they want to do and so richly deserve. And I'll just let you comment on that, Madam Minister.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, I am well aware of some of the issues as it pertains to teen moms -- teen parents; some of them are dads -- in La Loche and, in fact, right across northern Saskatchewan. I had several opportunities, in fact, to visit the North in my days as minister of Education, and I had some, quite frankly, very open and good discussions with several communities regarding programs where the community should be involved; how much; who has the final say, the parents or the school board; that type of thing.

(1530)

We also had some related discussions with the Northern Lights School Division back in those days and I know that the Department of Education has continued to look at requests as they come in, all under the broad policy of

Dgovernment policy of addressing that issue.

I don't disagree with your observation about the need in La Loche in terms of the number of people that are there, the statistics. I have not seen any lately but I know that the statistics used to be fairly high. That alone would indicate need. I think if you were to look at the isolation of the community as it relates to other services elsewhere -- travel, transportation, travel -- there may very well be a whole list of reasons in terms of La Loche.

I do not have the status report of individual projects, whether it's applications or projects that might be in a phase one, phase two, going through the Department of Education, so I cannot tell you today where that one might be, or in the Department of Social Services. But I will undertake to speak with both ministers as it relates to La Loche, but I think more importantly as it relates to the criteria that these projects are looked at.

Like I would not assume that Mount Royal got theirs, as you might, because of the minister. I think the numbers and the urban situation probably gave you more numbers overall, and the kinds of services that the board would have in place which would probably be much larger than what the Northern Lights might have as it relates to La Loche. So I will give you a commitment to undertake some discussion with them on the criteria and what

factors are taken into consideration when approvals are given.

Mr. Thompson: -- Well just a comment, Madam Minister. And I appreciate the fact that you will take this up. But Mount Royal was a pilot project, and most certainly the figures . . . and I will pass you on those figures over to your side. In Mount Royal we're dealing with 22, the number is 22. And that's in the Star-Phoenix of September 16, 1988. And I wasn't talking in any political terms. You indicate that there was some political reasons why it was put in Saskatoon.

But I just want to say that I believe that was a pilot project, and the first one of it's kind in the province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm not sure if it is the first one of it's kind. But I think it was a pilot project for Saskatoon.

But most certainly there was a lot of work. The community of La Loche and all the agencies that I had indicated had done a lot of work in preparation to get it into their communities, and figures will indicate -- when you get the figures that I have sent over -- that they are quite high in La Loche, and that applies all through the North. And statistics will show that also.

But I didn't want to give you any idea that I was talking in any political terms or accusing the minister, the present Minister of Education, of anything political. It's just that I'm indicating to you on behalf of the folks up in the Dene High School and in La Loche that they most certainly need that facility. And I would appreciate it, you know, if there is some movement on that.

Ms. Simard: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, just to conclude the discussion then on this issue. There were a couple of other points I wish to make and that is that the Tory government has cut back funding to Planned Parenthood, which is an organization that we know has done a considerable amount across this province with respect to education, sex education, and so on, to groups of individuals as well as within the schools.

This government has cut back on the availability of birth control pills to young women and older women, people who . . . women on low income in particular who cannot afford the \$125 deductible and the 20 per cent thereafter. And I understand that public health offices have also, in some cases, removed birth control literature from their display area and the material that they make available to women. Well I think that that is regressive.

I believe that those policies are not forward-thinking policies. I do not think that those policies do anything to help solve the problems that we are facing in Saskatchewan. And although I didn't expect a great deal from the member in Melville with respect to that issue, I do from you, Madam Minister.

And I would like to see you taking a front-line position on this, insisting that we have a proper education program in Saskatchewan with parent

involvement and parent control. I want to see you leading the way with respect to proper birth control counselling and the availability of birth control pills to the women in Saskatchewan, and proper public health education programs with respect to women. So I guess I'm expecting quite a bit out of you, Madam Minister, as compared to the former minister responsible for women in this province.

I want to get into the issue with respect to poverty that women are facing across this province. There's absolutely no question that women are over represented among Saskatchewan's poor, and there are a number of reasons for this of course.

There's something like 70 per cent of minimum wage-earners are women, Madam Minister. And 60 per cent of families led by women live in poverty, 60 per cent, Madam Minister. And 40 per cent of men default on their court ordered, child support payments to date, Madam Minister. And we have one in four children in this province living in poverty, and children are poor because their parents are poor. And if 60 per cent of the families led by women live in poverty, then those children are poor as well too, Madam Minister.

Now as I understand, since 1981 there's been a 30 per cent loss in the purchasing power of a single parent with two children living on social assistance. And in 1988 a single woman's entitlement from Social Services would have put her at only 41 per cent of the poverty level.

Madam Minister, women will never be equal partners as long as governments refuse to make sure that they have a living wage and refuse to integrate them into the economic structure in this province on an equal basis.

I think one very revealing statistic about women shows that a woman who divorces a partner, Madam Minister, stands to see her family income decreased by 73 per cent. Her spouse on the other hand stands to improve his standard of living by 42 per cent. And I know that we do have the enforcement legislation now, and there is an attempt. The officials at the enforcement office are working very hard to enforce maintenance orders, and it is improving, but about 40 per cent of men still default in their payments. And that's too high, Madam Minister.

Now aboriginal women, and I wish to say something about aboriginal women, are the most economically disadvantaged of any group in our province. They face double discrimination, Madam Minister, in employment, and as a result, only 40 per cent of native women work in the paid labour force. They face institutional racism on a daily basis and they face discrimination which is built into justice, education, social services, and health-care systems.

And elderly women in Saskatchewan are much more likely to be poor, Madam Minister, than elderly men. In 1985 Saskatchewan women, aged 65 to 69 years, had a total income of 10,806 compared to 21,292 for men in the same age group. Because the majority of women do not have employer-sponsored pension plans and because many have had low levels of income during their working years, most of them can't afford to put money away for retirement. It's as simple as that. And the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, Madam Minister,

does not address the needs of the women who need it most, and that is the women who can't afford to contribute to the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

Now social assistance is another issue that we have talked about at length in this legislature, Madam Minister: a 30 per cent loss in purchasing power for a single parent with two children since 1981. In 1989 this single parent family would be eligible for about 950 per month, but to be living at the poverty line, the family would need 1,600 per month, according to Statistics Canada. At the present rate the family would then be living at 60 per cent of the poverty line.

In 1988, a single woman's entitlement stood at 41 per cent of the poverty line. Her income level would amount to one-quarter of the average Canadian income for an unattached individual.

And as a result of this, Madam Minister, what we have witnessed is the emergence of child hunger as a major political and social issue in Saskatchewan.

Now I know that you've heard these arguments repeatedly in this legislature by members from the opposition. And my question to you, Madam Minister, is what is the Women's Secretariat doing to improve the financial and economic status of Saskatchewan women? I know, Madam Minister, that you're dealing with education for young people, but what are you doing for those women who are presently in the labour force, living under the poverty line, and who have children who are living in poverty as well?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, I don't know that my outlook is as pessimistic. When I think of the young women, or today's generation of both young women and young men coming out of high school and those that are in their early 20's, I see I think, a real opportunity that in fact women in the future, and men, are going to have equal footing with one another.

And I look, for example, at some of the faculties within the universities like commerce being one of them, vet medicine, medicine -- doctor not just nursing, but going for their medical degree. I look at the number of women lawyers, the number of young women that are going in for law degrees.

Now granted there's a few areas within the universities that are down or not as good as they could be -- engineering being one of them. It still appears to be somewhat difficult, whether it's not enough young women in the high school system taking a look at the mathematics and the sciences, I suspect that's part of it and some of the counselling that goes with it.

But when I take an overall look at the universities and the other post-secondary educational institutions, I see a lot of women that are opting for what used to be considered predominantly male arenas. And I think over the next several years that in fact that is going to make a difference as to what the economy looks like, how much women are making, who's running what, including within the political arena. If a lot of young women are going into law you will gradually see a lot of them moving into those areas down the road.

And I think that is as it should be; that it is an evolution that takes place and that evolution in a co-operative fashion is done by both young men and young women. I see a lot of young men, including those within the school system and just coming out and new young fathers, taking very much a more active part in the direct raising of their children than perhaps what happened 30, 40 years ago, or for that fact, even 20 years ago. It was simply considered to be, in most cases, the female role, and I see a lot of that changing.

As it relates to women and poverty today, I would like to go over some of the areas that in fact address women and poverty in Saskatchewan. You know that we have the Saskatchewan income plan which is a supplement to the old age pension and it provides a monthly assistance to seniors receiving the federal guaranteed income supplement.

We have the Saskatchewan Works and Saskatchewan skills development programs providing education, training, and work experience to those on social assistance. Wage earners with dependants are subsidized through the family income plan, child care subsidies, and the Saskatchewan assistance plan. The maintenance enforcement program it's interesting to note, and this is not just an impact directly on female, but I recall when I did the legislation several years ago there was a young gentleman sitting up in the gallery with a couple of children, and he was the first one in the office to fill out an application form. And I found that interesting. He had four children and he was the single parent, and now he was going to do something about the issue of enforcement and maintenance.

(1545)

But it's interesting to note that since March of 1986, 14.5 million in fact has been collected. And what we have is

about 1.28 million being deposited to the Consolidated Fund for social assistance clients.

So while it appeared to be slow in getting off and a waiting-list in order to get your maintenance going, they have been a little speedier than what they were in the beginning.

You also know that the minimum wage come July 1 is going up to \$5. And while I would not profess to be able to manage greatly living on \$5 an hour, it is a movement. So over six months it will have gone from 4.50 to that \$5.

Of course the senior citizens' heritage program that was introduced in 1986 does in fact assist seniors that are living within their own homes and also gives a smaller supplement to those in public housing. A great many of those senior citizens living alone, in fact, are women.

The Saskatchewan Pension Plan also gives Saskatchewan residents that opportunity. And I'm realistic enough to know that the opportunity on that today is not as great as it will be 10, 15 years from now. But indeed it is a start.

So I think all of those combined with some other government programs to do with women in business, it's interesting to note Saskatchewan is no different than right across Canada: about 49 per cent of people in small business are women. It's also interesting to note -- and this statistic has been with us for about, oh, 7, 8, 9 years, maybe 10 -- that women are starting businesses on a ratio of 3:1 over the male and being successful at it, in the small business.

Now there's a whole host of reasons for that, one being that perhaps it's been suggested in this computer age and technology that the men are going on to do greater things and the women are concentrating in areas of small business, whether it be retail or the service industry. But I think it's a very positive sign that in fact they are becoming the owners, the managers, and taking a degree of control within their work place.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of women in poverty is one that needs good discussion right across Saskatchewan and within communities, and it should be an ongoing discussion. There's no doubt that when we've looked at the issue of senior citizens in poverty, that one has a difficult time in suggesting that to give support services would be not fair. In fact, just the opposite is true: that it becomes a point of fairness and society willing to support and help.

There are some other areas, and I have told the member before that over the course of the past several months and leading up to the next few months we would be taking a closer look at some issues like pay equity and the different definitions of them, including the system that's in Manitoba and the one in Ontario, both not without their problems. And I suspect no matter which system you put into place, it's not going to be perfect.

I think the Public Service Commission has made a reasonably good start in looking within itself and its various government agencies to do with how they are rating some of their managers, particularly the middle managers, because that's where a lot of women are within the Public Service Commission. And I will look forward to further discussion with the executive director of the Public Service Commission, along with the minister.

Mr. Lyons: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if I may have leave from the Assembly to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Lyons: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly here, 22 students from W.J. Berezowsky School in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, some people may ask why a member from Regina is introducing people from Prince Albert, but Mr. Lautermilch has asked me to make the introduction. Mr. Lautermilch unfortunately is not able to attend here today to the Assembly. He's meeting with the directors from Tacoma,

Washington, of Weyerhaeuser corporation, as well as the management group from Prince Albert.

The 22 students here are from grades 5 and 6, as I've said, from the W.J. Berezowsky School. They're accompanied by their teacher, Howard Finan; and their chaperons, Colleen Lief, Leona Pidborochynski, and Hilda Spicer.

And if I may say take a minute, Mr. Chairperson, this particular school has a certain affection in Mr. Lautermilch's heart. His daughter Rae Anne attended the first kindergarten class at W.J. Berezowsky School in 1979, and she was awarded the keys to the school as part of the first graduating class. It was a symbolic key that she accepted on behalf of the students at the class. And like Rae Anne, I'm sure these students are a credit to their community, a credit to Prince Albert. And I'd ask all members to welcome our guests in here today from Prince Albert in the usual manner.

I'll be meeting with the students and their chaperons in a very few minutes for pictures and for refreshments in the members' dining room, and I look forward to answering any questions that they may have. I'd like to welcome all the students and their chaperons here today.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Women's Secretariat  
Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 41

Item 1 (continued)

Ms. Simard: -- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, you refer to growing numbers of women as doctors, engineers, lawyers, and so on, and I simply want to make the point that it's a very small percentage of the population that actually gets to university.

And that's good. Like, I think that's good that now in the College of Law we have almost 50 per cent women and in the College of Medicine we're getting close to that as well. I think that's good, but we have to remember that when we're talking about these occupations we're talking about a very small number of the population. And I'm not sure what percentage of the population goes to university, but I think it's probably under 10 per cent of the population in Saskatchewan.

So although that's indicative of a change in society, it does nothing for those women living in poverty; it does nothing for women who do not go beyond grade 12. It doesn't speak to the economic issues and the general condition of women. It doesn't speak to that.

It's the same with affirmative action. I think affirmative action is crucial. It's important to get women in management positions but it's also important to implement a pay equity system so that women who do not make the management level have equality in the work-force as well. And so when

we're talking about equality of women, I believe we're talking about equality of women in ordinary jobs, in traditional jobs, Madam Minister, not in non-traditional jobs, because it's such a small percentage of people that rise to those particular jobs.

And we're here to deal with the problems that are facing all women regardless of their socio-economic status in society. And that's where we talk about real equality for women. And that's why I say the issue of equality has to do with economic and financial status within society.

The number of engineers we have who are women is not a measure of equality for ordinary women. It is good. We want that and we want to strive for that, but women should not have to enter non-traditional jobs in order to be paid a fair living and an adequate wage. And I simply want to make that point with respect to your comments.

I also want to comment that the child-care subsidies have not increased since 1982, Madam Minister. You point to child-care subsidies; you point to maintenance enforcement. And we are making some progress in the area of maintenance enforcement, but there's still 40 per cent of men who default.

And, Madam Minister, it's also important to note that there are women who don't even get to the point of getting a court order to register it in some cases, simply because they can't afford the legal fees to get there. And I see women like this on a regular basis, who come to me and tell me that one of their biggest problems is fighting the legal system. And they have difficulty going through the legal system and paying for lawyers and becoming involved in the legal system. So there's a huge gap with respect to services in that regard.

And I agree it applies to men as well as to women, but the fact of the matter is it's mostly women that find themselves in that situation. But it should apply equally to all people who find themselves in this situation, but is women who are most probably there.

And with respect to the minimum wage, yes it is going up, Madam Minister, as a result of the mayor's task force report here in the city of Regina. I understand some measures were taken as a result of that. But, Madam Minister, these people have been living in poverty for several years, and we've been raising it in this House. That's hardly the action of a government that takes women's concerns to heart.

And with respect to hungry children, because I believe that when we talk about matters that concern women or women's issues, children are very much a part of that. And I want to comment on hungry children because how can mothers go to bed at night and have a good night's rest when they know their children are going to bed hungry?

And I'm looking at a Star-Phoenix article January 15 where Ed Bloos says, from the food bank . . . wishes they'd look into their own neighbourhoods, talking about world hunger. He wishes that Canadians would look into their own neighbourhoods at the growing number of youngsters going hungry. Some of them are so hungry they tear into their food hampers right in front of

him. Others wait until they're outside, then gobble bread on the porch. Can you imagine the description of that in Saskatchewan in 1990? Still others, sometimes waifs just starting school, wander in alone and nervously ask if they can have something to eat.

I've had teachers call me up and say Johnny can't study because at home all they have is a can of beans and that's for eight kids, Bloos says.

In Regina thousands of children wake up hungry and go to bed hungry each day. Some line up outside their schools in the bitter winter cold at 7:30 in the morning to wait for breakfast. And at noon they race to a Social Service agency for a hot lunch.

After school, some youngsters rely on places like the Rainbow Youth Centre for a nutritious supper.

The mayor's report, the article goes on to say, describes babies being rushed to hospital in convulsions because their formula has been watered down, and children losing 25 pounds over the summer because there are no school programs giving them lunch. And this is a description of living conditions today in Regina and across Saskatchewan in other communities.

And I say that this is a serious problem and it has a great deal to do with the economic status of families and with the economic status of mothers, because many of these families are single families led by mothers.

And that's why it's so crucial for the Women's Secretariat to be looking at the economic status of women in Saskatchewan, of women who are already in the labour market, because that's where we're going to solve a lot of the inequality that already exists in this country.

I also want to refer to the fact that the gap between the rich and the poor is, according to all evidence and statistics in the province, widening, Madam Minister -- statistics in Canada, widening. And I again I'll refer you to a November 2, 1989 Star-Phoenix article in which it is stated that the number of middle-income jobs is shrinking but jobs are increasing at the two extremes of the job market: "high-paid positions and minimum wage low-skill jobs, the council report said." That's the Economic Council of Canada.

The average Canadian worker has had no after-inflation growth in earnings since the mid-1970s, and as a result, families have only gotten by because more married women are entering the work force. If families with heads aged less than 65 had to depend solely on the husband's earnings, there would have been almost no growth in real after-inflation family income between 1973 and 1986, the council report said.

The contribution by husbands to the average family income dropped by 5 per cent during that period, but there was a whopping 46 per cent increase by other members of the family.

The point being that what we're seeing across Canada and in Saskatchewan is a growing gap between the rich and the poor. And women are in many cases the victim of this growing gap.

The article also makes the point that women are working because if they weren't, many, many more families would be in dire straits in this country. And that's one of the major reasons why women are flooding to the work-force.

Questions were raised in this legislature, and there's an article on April 10, 1990 with respect to the family income plan. You had stated that the family income plan is helping women. Well this article points out, Madam Minister, that in effect changes to the family income plan reduce the chances for a university education for hundreds of MLAs, because these payments are now being deducted in calculating the amount of income for the purposes of social assistance benefits, Madam Minister.

So I believe that there are many policies in place in this government, or lack of policy in this government, that have actually increased the problems that women are facing; that have led to the huge numbers of women living in poverty; that have led to the huge numbers of children living in poverty and children going hungry.

And I think it's imperative that the Women's Secretariat takes a very strong and firm stand from the point of view of women and their family and their children with respect to the issue of poverty. There is absolutely no excuse in this province that we have numbers like that, Madam Minister, absolutely no excuse.

And I know that you want to do something about it, and we want to do something about it. And I think that this is a role that the Women's Secretariat could play that is crucial to the social development of Saskatchewan people. It's a role that the Women's Secretariat should play, and I base that on the premise that real equality for women -- and I don't just mean the women who are doctors and lawyers and engineers -- I mean, the vast majority of women in this province, all women in this province. The secret to equality for women is economic status, and we should be working in education with our young people. But that's a small part of it. We've got to move to those women who are already in the labour force and working in the labour force, Madam Minister.

And I therefore would like to get a commitment from you today that you will -- you have heard our concerns -- and that you will be pursuing this issue with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Social Services and with the Premier and that you will do everything in your power to convince them that measures have to be taken to correct these problems. Thank you.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has covered a lot of areas with her comments, and I won't attempt to address every one of them. But let's for moment talk about economic status particularly as it relates to equality. I guess on one hand I would agree that the degree of equality oftentimes is dependent on the economic status.

Having said that, I would suggest . . . and I know that I have met a lot of women that have been in a position to be able to make the decision to stay home and raise children. And there are some that would perhaps question in fact what their economic status is. They in turn also would probably tell both you and I that they have a degree of equality. They made these decisions; it was done in conjunction between husband and wife or in the family context. And I think that's very true; sometimes it may be the male that is going to be staying home, and there will be one income earner and that will be the wife.

What a lot of women tell me when it comes to their equality, it in fact is being in a position to be able to have those choices and those options, that every door should be open for you as a woman as it is, for example, for the member from Regina Centre. You're both lawyers. You've both gone to university for the same length of time, and that in fact any door that would ever open to him as a male lawyer, if you so choose to take that route, they should also be open to you. A lot of women would see that as equality.

An Hon. Member: -- Well that's part of it, Pat. That's . . .

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- That's right. That is only part of it, and there are many other parts to it as well, as we both know.

When looking at the issue of education and as it relates to the economic status, I would never suggest for a minute that all you need is a university education, but I would suggest that in this day and age, any young woman in high school should first of all look at finishing high school; and secondly, look at post-secondary. Now post-secondary is more, or can be more, than university. It's something different. It could be in the trade area, it can be in the service area, it can be financial management, it can be a whole host of things. It is not necessarily university education.

DI think the statistics will show you that in fact more and more students through the '80s were in fact graduating from high school and opting to go on to post-secondary education. There is still a lot of gains to be done and a lot of room to move in in terms of the numbers, both male and female, that in fact do go on to post-secondary and finish with a course or a degree or a diploma of some kind.

The issue of economic status as it relates to pay equity. I think in looking at the Ontario system and some of the controversy that has gone with it, on one hand it has put the pressure on government, and I believe that's good, to look within its own house and to put the systems in place. On the other hand, I believe by moving it out and to the private sector, they have in fact created some misunderstandings and a lot of turmoil, perhaps needlessly. I don't know, but that's something I would want to look at within the private sector, the small business.

Quite frankly, I don't think the large corporations have a difficult time with it because I think many of the . . . at least the successful large corporations over the past several years have put into place affirmative

action programs, either formally or informally, and have taken a look at some of the equity issues as it relates to women.

The biggest impact of course comes when you get into the small-business side, whether it be the commerce side or the service side, and I believe that's where there is some misunderstandings in the models that I am aware of in other provinces in Canada. And that's unfortunate because what it does is it sets up an adversarial position right off the bat. And when you're going through kind of an educational public process as it relates to pay equity and equality of women, it doesn't do the issue any good to have it debated in controversy.

We have within the Saskatchewan government looked at . . . The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has given approval to the government's voluntary employment fairness, and of course that used to be called the employment equity plan, and this applies to out-of-scope entry level and non-permanent employees and positions in the public service.

And while that does not address the issue that you raise of women within the labour force at the low end of the scale, I think it is important for government to begin within its own House first, and I think that when they do programs like that they do them well; and that that will in turn serve as a role model for the other sectors within society. And I think that's necessary, in terms of any kind of major kinds of program changes that one is going to be doing.

I think in this issue of pay equity, and I know the member will disagree, I think in total you cannot ignore the term, the market-place. Now that is not to say that that has to take precedent and that must be first and foremost up front. I do think in looking at . . . And I take city hall, for example, or perhaps even government services, where you may very well have garbage collection versus the secretarial -- garbage collector paid much higher.

And so you look at that and you say to yourself, well the secretary had to go to school after grade 12, deals with technology, has the responsibility for machines worth thousands and thousands of dollars, directs paper flow, often directs people, including ministers and other people, to be on time and other factors.

The degree of responsibility, I think, is what we get into in questioning. And I don't have any difficulty with that in terms of, within that work place you are going to compare the secretary's level with what the garbage collector is getting, say within the Legislative Building. I think your discrepancies would probably be much greater if you were to even look perhaps outside of government in some of the sectors.

I think it all comes back, and I know I'm probably sounding like a broken record, but I still come right back to the issue of education. As you know, in the pay equity programs there is a component of education. There's a component of skills, there's a component of the responsibility required, and several other factors. But I still come back to the issue of education.

And while I talk about education in the context of today's generation and the young women that will be the future leaders of tomorrow, I think it's important that in fact that emphasis be put there. At the same time there is still room to move to ensure that elderly women are recognized and that the resources are responsibly given out.

And I look at things like the Saskatchewan income plan. I look at issues like enforcement of maintenance. All of those are important. But I still believe that the major thrust, if women are ever going to get down this road that we call equality, is going to be on education. And it is simply the tool that is going to give them and the rest of society to have that option in making choices.

Ms. Simard: -- Madam Minister, with respect to the issue of pay equity, I agree that education will provide women with the tools to make a better living, but I still think it's important to note that women earn less than men regardless of the level of education that they achieve. Less than men. And that's where pay equity comes in.

Regardless of the level of education, I think it's about women with university degrees earn something like 57.9 per cent of men with degrees earn. Okay? But I mean women with university degrees often earn a good living. I mean they should still be earning equal pay for work of equal value.

But at the lower income levels, we're talking about women earning poverty wages, Madam Minister. And that was the point that I wanted to make, and that we have to reduce the gap between the upper income levels and the lower income levels. Instead of devising policies that contribute to the gap, we have to try and reduce that gap.

(1615)

Now women are paid something like 66 per cent of what men are paid. And according to the information we have, the wage gap has actually been widening between men and women in similar jobs, Madam Minister. Eighty-five per cent of working women -- 85 per cent -- earn less than 20,000 per year, compared to 51 per cent of men who earn less than 20,000 per year; 15.2 per cent of males earn over 40,000, while 2.6 per cent of females earn over 40,000. And families headed by women are two to three times more likely to be poor, Madam Minister. And those are the points I wish to make.

Now you had talked about pay equity and the problems with the market system with respect to pay equity. And this is a very common argument that's often put out. It's based on the mistaken assumption that the market-place is free and unmanipulated, and that as long as it's allowed to operate unhampered everything will turn out all right.

But the free market, Madam Minister, is one of the biggest myths in our society. Far from being free, it is constantly being manipulated by government policies and laws that sometimes limit it and sometimes sustain

it. And we can give you examples of that -- wage controls, for example, minimum wage, health and safety laws, government subsidies, tax breaks to big business, for example. And so, you know, it becomes sort of a ridiculous argument.

And I know you weren't taking it to those extremes because you qualified that by saying that wasn't all of it. But to use the free market as an excuse for not implementing pay equity is a red herring, Madam Minister, along with many of the other myths like: women only work for pin money, which isn't true. We've illustrated today that women work because they have to work in the majority of cases, that the wage gap is widening between the rich and the poor, and if women weren't going to work, many, many more families would be living under the poverty line in Saskatchewan and across Canada today.

I believe that the implementation of a pay equity plan is long overdue in this province, Madam Minister, long overdue. And I'm going to ask a very pointed question because I know the minister has said that they're reviewing it, that they're reviewing it and looking into it, but there's some problems with it. Of course there will be problems with it in other jurisdictions, and there will be problems when we implement pay equity. It won't be perfect, but we'll learn through trial and error.

But it is a key, Madam Minister, to moving women and men towards a situation of equality. And it will help women, not only with high education levels, but also women in the lower income brackets. So I want to know whether this government will implement a plan of pay equity, at the very least in the public sector, before the next election.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, in looking at the issue of pay equity, I find it interesting that the member . . . and I don't know maybe you have worked it out and figured out if you were to take pay equity, and as you know pay equity and as I think I know pay equity, what in fact is the impact on Saskatchewan.

Interestingly enough, you know, it only addresses approximately one-quarter per cent of the wage gap, a quarter -- one-quarter of the wage gap -- and looking at today's statistics, that Saskatchewan women earn 67.5, that's about 8 cents. So I guess what it . . .

An Hon. Member: -- It's a start.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Yes, it is a start.

But I would also like to think that perhaps if we have taken a look at those who are presently into it and they are still monitoring their weak points, perhaps there's a way of doing this so that the wheel is not reinvented and so that we have fewer mistakes and fewer difficulties than what we saw happening with Manitoba, and in fact even in Ontario. I think it would also be useful to have a look at a couple of places in the United States that Ontario in fact looked at.

Now having said that, there are some things in looking at pay equity that we in fact have taken a look at. One being that pay equity just right up front by itself only takes care of about one-quarter of that wage gap. It also addresses only women versus men's pay rather than a compensation fairness for all.

And that's what we would like to look at as opposed to simply setting up this women versus men. The work of only some men and some women in any one organization is evaluated and that's the system as Ontario has it now. And I am of the view that it would be worthwhile to review in fact something a little broader than that.

I guess the other question -- and I don't have any answers -- it's a question in my mind, it has to do with gains that are made by women. Whether it's pay equity or something else, can in fact be eroded by the future collective bargaining system. When you're talking pay equity, like I've often asked myself, how come it has not been introduced at the bargaining table? And I go back to my days bargaining, for example, with the local school boards. And I always found it interesting to note that high school teachers for a long, long time had had prep time. Elementary teachers did not, at least in my system.

And I found it interesting to look at the history, and it's true. The history of high school versus elementary was male versus female. Now that's going back a lot of, lot of years. But nevertheless, the prep time, study time has been built into the system for just as long, you know, even when you and I were in high school.

So today when I look at the system, it sends some signals. And they're not signals that all of us necessarily agree with. But they also are difficult to overturn overnight, in terms of the resources and, quite frankly, in terms of some attitudes that are there.

It is our intent -- you've asked me specifically on the pay equity -- I've told you before it is my intent to continue over the next several months to look at the system within Ontario and Manitoba. And I will be looking at something that addresses some of the points that I just raised as opposed to doing only one-quarter of the wage gap. Those other areas that I have concern with, I have encouraged the Public Service Commission to carry on with their in-house that they are doing with their out-of-scope people and eventually take a look at the classifications elsewhere. That will carry on.

I will also be looking for some discussions with the public including with various groups that I deal with whether it be urban affairs, municipalities, local housing authorities, chamber of commerces that I meet with. There will be other groups too, and that will be done over the course of the next several months into the fall.

Ms. Simard: -- Madam Minister, well at least you're looking into the matter. Two years ago when I discussed the issue of pay equity with the member from Melville, he didn't even know what it was and didn't understand

it. So there has been some progress. At least we are looking into the matter.

But I want to say this: it's not simply a question of pay equity. That's one aspect of it. We're talking minimum wage, an adequate minimum wage. We're talking about affirmative action. We're talking about education of young people as you have said you're emphasizing. We're talking about human rights legislation and a Human Rights Commission that can enforce anti-discrimination laws. We're talking about social assistance levels. It's an entire package, Madam Minister. And it's important that all these matters be looked at.

But women are urgently asking for these changes to be made. They're getting sick and tired of waiting. They've had the briefs. They've had the commissions. Many of these recommendations have been put forward since 1975, and they want to see change, and they want to see it now, Madam Minister. And so I want to impress upon you the urgency of these matters.

Now I want to get into the area of family violence at this point and also the Swift Current case of the young woman who was sexually assaulted, Madam Minister. And I would like to know, because the government has obviously decided not to look into the matter, what your opinion is of that government decision.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, that rests with the Department of Justice and it will in fact be . . . The minister has already given, I believe, the hon. member a response a couple of times in the House. And if there were any further inquiries to do with that case, I simply would have to ask her to refer it to Justice.

Ms. Simard: -- Madam Minister, do you agree with me that the message that this sends to young women across this province, to all women in this province, is that they shouldn't be reporting cases of sexual assault because they may in turn get charged themselves? Do you agree with me, Madam Minister, that that message is out there loud and clear to women across this province?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't know if I would base that statement on one particular case. I do not know all of the details of the case and I suspect the member doesn't either. I think what we can agree on, that in fact there are times, and many times where the court system, access to the court system has in fact appeared to a lot of women to be very difficult in terms of not only getting their voice heard, but knowing how to access the system.

For example, you know, on the issue of enforcement of maintenance, and like how do I go about doing this. A lot of women simply don't know and don't know who to contact in getting those things done. I think when it comes to areas like assault and the question of sexual abuse and other matters, if they should so end up before the court system, there is still a large hold-over from the past where in fact women feel, rightly or wrongly, that perhaps it's wiser to say nothing, to let it go; it'll go away; it won't bother me any more. I don't have to deal with it in a public manner. I

won't be questioned or scrutinized for past activities that have nothing to do with that particular case.

I think we agree that in fact there is still a large perception amongst many women in society that those kinds of discriminations and unfairness do in fact take place within the court system. I think it's incumbent on both of us and all of us to be dealing with those people not only within the court system, but within society, particularly those women and families that find themselves facing a court system in those kinds of situations.

I think the idea of more women as lawyers, more women on the benches, in fact has given greater opportunity for equality within the court system, but we're a long way from where that is 50 or close to 50 per cent. That's a positive thing for the future, but it does nothing for the perception that some women feel today towards the court system.

(1630)

Ms. Simard: -- Madam Minister, I don't see this as an issue of accessing the court system. I see this as a victim who went to the police and made some allegations and turned around and got charged herself for having come forward and made these allegations. The judge clearly said in that judgement that he believed her testimony. And this did not warrant an inquiry? Well I think that's appalling, Madam Minister.

And you're quite right. There is a large perception by women that they are not going to be fairly treated in this kind of a situation, and the Swift Current case is an example of that. And I think you should have been standing up and fighting that one on a public basis for women in this province. The message was, this was acceptable, Madam Minister. And we never heard from you nor the member from Maple Creek.

And as far as I am aware, this is the first time in the history of Saskatchewan that a woman has reported sexual assault and turned around and was actually charged herself. And I think that's unacceptable in a fair and democratic society. And I would like to know whether or not this government is going to reconsider that position, Madam Minister, after you have an opportunity of telling the Minister of Justice how appalled you are with his decision.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, if the member had've been listening, she would have heard that I talked more than just access to the court system. I can only  
Drestate what I did before -- that if she has any further inquiries as to an inquiry of this case than that must be taken up with the Minister of Justice.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. Madam Minister, that answer is totally unacceptable. You, Madam Minister, are the minister in charge of women's issues in this province. This, Madam Minister, I would suggest to you is not just a judicial issue, this is also a woman's issue.

We have a case where a young woman in the city of Swift Current, the city you represent, is a victim of a sexual assault. She goes to the police. The police lay charges against these young men. The charges are withdrawn and then this young woman is charged. This young woman goes to court, Madam Minister, and the judge dismisses the charges against the young woman.

There are many people in this province that have called for a judicial inquiry into what led to these circumstances that this young woman was charged. Nothing from the government. Absolutely nothing. Nothing from the minister responsible for women. Nothing from her. Nothing from Maple Creek. A woman minister. Nothing from her.

Well, Madam Minister, these young men are still out on the streets of Canada or the United States, some place, and nothing, absolutely nothing has happened to them. Now what does that say to the women of this province. That sends a very clear message that you keep your mouth shut or you will soon be charged and in court.

Well, Madam Minister, that's totally unacceptable, and I want you to tell this House why you didn't have anything to say on this matter. The women of Saskatchewan want to know what your position is. Should women who go forward with these kinds of allegations, find themselves in a position where the charges are dropped against these people? They are charged; the charges are dropped against the young woman and she's just sitting there. The people who victimized her or who allegedly victimized her are out on the streets. Is that acceptable and is that the message your government wants to send to the women of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, I will not comment publicly on this case as it relates to the young woman and her family and the other factors of the case that were involved. I will not do that. I will also not at this point or before, did I attempt to run any kind of interference within the justice system. If I have a concern, then it was and has been, and any future ones will be raised with the Minister of Justice. That does not mean that I have to jump up on a soap-box and do it in a public forum. Now you may take that exception to that. I accept that. I chose to do it in that manner, but I will not do the other as you suggest.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Well, Madam Minister, I gather that you did talk to the Minister of Justice and I don't want you to put any words into my mouth. I was not saying that you should interfere with the judicial process before this situation got to court. Obviously that would be unacceptable to the people of Saskatchewan to have a cabinet minister interfering with the judicial process.

But that, Madam Minister, is not what we're talking about. What we're talking about is a case where that was thrown out of court. The judge believed the young woman's testimony. People called for a public inquiry. Nothing has come from your government. And the young men have not yet been charged. Now that, Madam Minister, is unacceptable to a great many of us in this province. It's unacceptable; it sends a bad message to the women of this province.

And as a minister, as the Deputy Premier, as the first woman Deputy Premier in our province, which many women are extremely proud of, I want to know, Madam Minister, what is your view on this? Is that acceptable that women get charged when they make allegations or go to the police with allegations of victimization; it gets thrown out of charge and nothing happens to the perpetrators. Is that acceptable as a principle, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, I can only state once again, I will not comment publicly as it relates to the young woman and this case.

I think on the broader issue, Mr. Chairman, of how women are dealt with within the court system by lawyers, both male and female, that there is a lot of room for improvement. It also has to do with the issue of why a woman is believed and what takes place in her past. There is a whole range of issues there.

I do not know all the details of this particular case. But on the principle of women and within the court system, that matter in fact has been raised with the Minister of Justice. And I believe that if the Minister of Justice were to feel any indication of any wrongdoing, whether it be on the part of prosecution or other factors, that the matter would have been taken up with. And I believe that the matter does in fact rest within the Department of Justice. And the minister responded very capably that day to the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Simard: -- Thank you. Well, Madam Minister, let me tell you that there are many women across this province who are very upset with the lack of action on the part of this government. And I hear from them on a regular basis. And they don't feel the issue should end here. They don't feel it should end here.

It is clear in the judge's judgement that he believed the young woman, and there was question about the veracity of the two young men. And we want to know why charges haven't been laid at this point. If the minister doesn't want to proceed with a provincial inquiry, what about criminal charges?

What I want to get into at this point is the issue of family violence. Now back in 1984, your government made great pronouncements on family violence. In fact I think you were the minister then for the Women's Secretariat and you indicated that wife battering was absolutely dehumanizing. But in '88-89, we had 256 families turned away from the Saskatchewan Interval House and 142 families from Regina Transition House and 62 from North Battleford. And we've seen operating budgets that simply have not kept pace with inflation and therefore there has in effect been a cut. We see that there are some areas in rural Saskatchewan, in northern Saskatchewan, where there aren't shelters and there should be, Madam Minister.

And I understand that in 1983 there was a committee established on the issue of family violence, and I believe this committee has not issued a report since 1986. And with respect to the progress of the justice system with respect to domestic assault, I understand a study has been done and this study has not been released, Madam Minister.

So would you please advise at this point whether or not the committee established by the Women's Secretariat in 1983 to co-ordinate and chair an intergovernmental committee on family violence has had any reports since 1986.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, it was in fact 1983 when the Government of Saskatchewan established the steering committee on what was called wife battering at that time. The committee consequently was renamed and its mandate expanded in July of 1984, which is probably the one that the member from Regina Lakeview is referring to.

At that time the mandate was expanded to reflect concerns and the government's desire to look at all aspects of family violence. The Department of Health, to do with the emergency room services; the justice system; the education system, teachers in fact many times being able to identify and sometimes not identify those children who are having a very difficult time in living in violence. So it cut across several government departments and agencies.

The steering committee was set up in fact to provide interdepartmental co-ordination of services. They've had a lot of workshops, a lot of meetings, plus through the Women's Secretariat they are involved at the national level. And it is here where there is a deputy ministers' working committee, that in fact discussions have been ongoing for the past two years. And the final report is being done but is not released yet. And that will be the next one of the reports to come out where we've had some involvement with.

I want to comment about in fact where we've come from and to on this issue of family violence. And I think that too, in the acceptance, or more importantly, the public recognition that family violence, wife battery, in fact is a problem in communities. For example in my community up until a few years ago we didn't talk about those kinds of things. I would suggest the same thing perhaps in places like Melfort, Estevan, smaller communities where previously there had been absolutely no services close by. You either had to go to Saskatoon or Regina, and then I believe P.A. and Moose Jaw.

(1645)

And I think there was a recognition where the public was ready to talk about in these smaller communities that yes, family violence was there; yes, it needs to be talked about. And the community has to be involved in coming to the solution for it, not alone, but in fact in partnership -- responsibility at all levels of government and within the community itself. As you know, we have gone from about a little over \$1 million in terms of the expenditure on transition houses, to 3.5, 3.6 million. And while it could always be more, and the argument could be given as to why -- very difficult to argue against -- the reality is that there has been some substantial increases.

Along with that, to the safe shelters and the transition homes, I think one

has to take a look at, for example, the crisis nursery in Saskatoon. I know I look at the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) here in Regina and the Isobel Johnson centre, and I see those as recognition for the recognition of the problem and for the recognition that indeed the services do need expansion.

So I think some substantial gains have been made, Mr. Chair. I would be the first to tell you that they are the kinds of gains on an issue that I would prefer not to have to deal with and not have to recognize as being part of our society. The reality is, it is; and it must be dealt with.

So I would hope some of that information is of benefit to the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Simard: -- Thank you, Madam Minister. I want to make the point that the funding for the transition houses, once again has in effect amounted to a cut because it has not kept pace with the rate of inflation. I want to make the point that families are being turned away on a regular basis from the transition houses, and there are not adequate homes across the province.

I want to make the point also that there doesn't appear to be any real analysis of the judicial system and that sentences are still coming out that don't adequately reflect the fact that battering a wife is equivalent to battering another individual, Madam Minister. And I think that Crown prosecutors need specialized training with respect to handling situations involving batterers, and sentencing for batterers should once again be dealt with by the Department of Justice. I want to make that point with respect to violence, that we need a lot more work in this area.

And I want to bring the minister's attention to farm women in the province of Saskatchewan. We know that farm stress has been well-documented and that farm women are working incredibly hard and they are now having to seek off-farm jobs in order to maintain the farm, Madam Minister. I'd like to know what special services your department is offering or working on to improve the status of farm women and to establish rural child care in farm communities.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- There is no doubt that the number of family members on the farm have had to, and in many cases opted to look at off-farm income. I know my own area down in the south-west corner of the province -- a lot of the women in the rural areas surrounding Swift Current in fact have jobs within the city of Swift Current or perhaps in the town of Gull Lake, Herbert, Morse. There are several towns around there.

The issue of rural day care has been raised many, many times with the Department of Social Services from the Women's Secretariat, and I in fact believe . . . I was no longer with the secretariat when Social Services looked at expansion of day care for rural areas. It was not a matter of taking the model of day-care centres out of a place like Swift Current or Regina or Saskatoon and putting it into a rural area. But more importantly I think, Mr. Chairman, it was a matter of recognizing that rural day care was going to take on a very different design and picture than what we were

seeing in urban Saskatchewan.

Rural women were telling me and they were telling other people that they had talked to . . . that in fact many of them did not need a day care in the rural area all year long. Those women that were working in town -- many of them work part time -- arrange their hours in conjunction with their employer so they in fact are home when school is out, sometimes it's with the co-operation of a neighbour if they are lucky enough to have a neighbour close by. And sometimes many rural women need intensive day care for perhaps two times of the year: seeding and harvest. Now that was for those women that in fact are not working off the farm and in the town or in the city.

Interestingly enough I believe the Department of Social Services -- and the member might want to raise it when they get into their estimates -- in fact the Department of Social Services has not had any takers on the rural day care to my knowledge. But I do know that within their policies they developed the policy and there was the opportunity there for in fact that rural day care to take place.

I think there are a couple of issues that go not only with rural day care but in fact with urban day care. One has to do with various options of day care, whether it's on site at a person's work place, whether it's perhaps within the school system -- we've seen some schools take a look at that option -- or with another community organization in a very small town. I think the public attitudes have changed somewhat and that people in fact are getting together and starting to look at some alternatives and options so that families, women and men, may have some choices when it comes to quality care of their children.

Ms. Simard: -- Thank you, Madam Minister. With respect to the general issue of child care in the province of Saskatchewan, I want to make the point that there were 85,000 children needing child care in 1988 and there are only 5,577 licensed day-care spaces in Saskatchewan. That means licensed day care for only 7.5 per cent of the children who need it.

And this lack of government concern has resulted . . . the fact there has not been an increase in subsidy and there aren't adequate spaces in the province, this lack of government concern has resulted in a serious deterioration in the quality of care. The lack of funding is dealt with by cutting into the quality of child care and by paying low wages to workers, Madam Minister.

And child care right now is simply not affordable to most families; families earning over 15,000 are not eligible for any subsidy, and the average child care costs are \$350 per month. And even with a maximum subsidy of 235 per month, low-income families are hard pressed to pay the balance of \$115 per month per child. It becomes virtually impossible, and so they resort to other measures that aren't as good.

Now what we're talking about here, Madam Minister, the key to the issue of child care is that it's for children, it's for children. It's for children; it's not for the parents -- it's for children. Yes, the parents

benefit from it, but primarily it's for children and children do not have a voice in this society. And childhood is the most important stage in human life. An investment in child care is an investment in our future. And the commitment of this government has not been adequate; it has been seriously lacking. And according to anyone working in the area of child care, it has resulted in the deterioration of the quality of child care in the province of Saskatchewan. There simply hasn't been adequate funding.

Now your government talks at length about standing up for the family. But what we have witnessed in the last eight years is anything but a real commitment to the family. We are witnessing increasing levels of poverty in this province, women and children living in poverty in unprecedented numbers. We are witnessing women being turned away from transition homes at large numbers. We are witnessing a child-care system that is deteriorating according to all people working in it, because of the underfunding of this government. We witness a woman in Swift Current charged because she makes a complaint to the police about being sexually assaulted. This is anything but a commitment to the family, Madam Minister.

And I want to know what the Women's Secretariat is going to do to urge the Tory government to take some immediate measures to correct this ridiculous downfall in the number of licensed day-care spaces in the province.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Just a few brief comments, Mr. Chairman. I am not as negative towards the system as what the hon. member from Lakeview is. I have many . . . many parents have told me, including in my home town of Swift Current, that first of all they are thankful for an increase in the number of family day-care spaces. I still get from, including young mothers, their opinions that they want further options within the system.

And I will go back to on-site day care at the work place. That's been one of them. Now that has some limitations in terms of the communities that it's in, but nevertheless both young men and young women see that as a viable option for those where both are working or for a single-parent family.

If I look at the record of how much has gone into day care -- I mean, we're talking about the tax dollars; this is what the taxpayers are paying: in 1982 it was \$7.6 million; 1989-1990 it was 13.2 million. Now I think that is a substantial increase. And I would say, given that, I would also think that perhaps you are misinterpreting in terms of the deterioration of the quality and some other factors, Mr. Chairman, to almost double what has gone in in eight years.

And the member can make the argument, it's not enough. And I could very well agree with her, but I think recognition must be given to the fact that it's gone from 7 million to 13 million in eight years. I think that's only fair, Mr. Speaker.

There's no doubt that when it comes to women's issues I'd like to think they are mostly people issues. There's no doubt that they impact on women the most, or at least women perceive them as impacting the most. There in

fact is a role for greater co-ordination and greater facilitating of those issues to come to the forefront of all government departments.

I think government departments in legislation or in laying out policy or putting forth budgets and programs, Mr. Chairman, to the treasury board of government, should be ever mindful that 50 per cent of their population is women and they have needs that often times are not addressed within the ongoing government programming.

So it will be our intent this year -- you asked me specifically what we are doing. We will continue to deal, Mr. Chairman, in a flexible manner, but in a firm and an aggressive manner, in ensuring that women's voice and equality is given consideration in government.

(1700)

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. Madam Minister, I think that the point that my colleague was trying to make was that while it is true funding for day care in this province has gone up, the number of women entering the work-force in the last eight years has increased substantially. The number of children requiring some form of child care has increased substantially.

And, Madam Minister, no subsidy increase on the part of your provincial government. I think it's still at \$230 -- that's what it was in 1982. As well, the incomes, the level of income that one has to have in order to be eligible for a subsidy, has not increased as well. And so what you have, Madam Minister, are families that are considered below the poverty line that aren't eligible for any kind of subsidy.

But, Madam Minister, one issue that I do want to raise with you is the special needs of immigrant women in the province of Saskatchewan. It's interesting, Mr. Chair, since becoming elected in 1986, I've had the opportunity to meet with immigrant women and their associations from across Saskatchewan. And I must tell you that while immigrant women are happy to be in Canada, there are some support services that they'd dearly love to have.

And I don't know if you're aware of this, Madam Minister, but Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada that does not provide direct funding to immigrant women for language training. And one of the biggest barriers that immigrant women face when they come to this country is the fact that there's very little available in terms of language training. Many of these women come here with an education. They have attended post-secondary institutions in their own countries. Obviously they have difficulty . . . they have skills but they have difficulty with the language.

And I would suggest to you, Madam Minister, that it's time our province started to provide some direct funding to immigrant women's groups. And I'm wondering, Madam Minister, if you would take it upon yourself and make a commitment that there will be direct funding made to immigrant women for language training.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Chairman, I believe in fact there are some direct funds that go to some immigrant women's groups.

An Hon. Member: -- But not for language training.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- You're right. Not for language training.

Having said that, I also recognize that the community colleges and the extension divisions have a fairly large role to play and in fact have been playing that role, at least through the community college that I'm familiar with, for immigrants. And yes, it's for both men and women. It's learning English as their second language.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot give a commitment that in fact I would look at giving direct funding for that. I would first of all want to take a look at the funding that is going in, what it's being used for now, and also have some discussion with the Minister of Education as to what kind of funds are allocated through the community college. Is it being made by the local boards, or are they targeted specifically through the provincial? So I will endeavour to do that.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 and 3 agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

Supplementary Estimates, 1990  
Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure  
Women's Secretariat  
Ordinary Expenditure -- Vote 41

Items 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 41 agreed to.

Ms. Simard: -- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officials who were present here today to help us out with the estimates and to say how much I appreciate their input and no doubt we'll be touch with each other throughout the coming year. Thank you.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take this opportunity to thank not only my officials but the opposition for their interest as it relates to women and women's equality in the province of Saskatchewan.

I would also like to thank the officials. I think one of the most difficult jobs in government or any organization is that of being the co-ordinator and the facilitator, and it takes a great deal of skill and communications and interpersonal skills in order to get the job done. And for that, I thank them, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, I also want to thank the

minister and her officials. I think we've had a most useful discussion this afternoon, I think one of the best discussions that we've been able to have on this subject in the legislature, certainly since I've been elected. Madam Minister, one of the things you might want to do is follow the example in Australia, where every government department in that country has to report to the Prime Minister of Australia in terms of how they deal with women's issues and how much they spend in the area of promoting women's equality. And this is for each government department.

This might be something that the Women's Secretariat might want to follow up in the future. It's certainly something that the opposition would be interested and supportive of, if the minister in charge of the Women's Secretariat was able to convince her colleagues that this might be a worthy proposal so that we can really see how government departments are dealing with women's equality issues in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman: -- It now being past 5 o'clock, this committee will recess until 7 p.m. tonight.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.