

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN  
March 17, 1995

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be happy today to present petitions on behalf of the people from the Gull Lake and Webb area of the province; also a considerable amount of names here from Shaunavon.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program toward double-laning Highway No. 1, rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And I'm happy to table these on behalf of the people from the south-west part of the province today.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions come from the Lancer, Abbey, Sceptre, Hazlet areas of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition. The prayer is as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these are constituents of mine from Shaunavon and Frontier area.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

**Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received.

Petitions opposing changes to federal legislation regarding fire ownership.

And petitions to allocate adequate funding dedicated toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

And petitions seeking the approval of Pool membership by a vote before the proposed changes to the Wheat Pool Act are enacted by the Assembly.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills**

**Clerk:** — Mr. Britton, as Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills, presents the eighth report of the said committee, which is as follows:

Your committee has considered the following Bills and has agreed to report the same without amendment:

**Bill No. 01** — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate the Briercrest Bible College

**Bill No. 02** — An Act to amend An Act respecting Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation

**Bill No. 03** — An Act to provide for the incorporation of The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The committee has also considered **Bill No. 04**, An Act to amend An Act respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, being an Act to amend and consolidate "An Act respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, being an Act to amend and consolidate An Act to incorporate Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat Producers Limited" and to enact certain provisions respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

Pursuant to rule 68, the committee held 32 hours of public meetings to hear witnesses for and against the Bill. The committee heard from 70 witnesses and also received 10 written submissions. The committee wishes to thank all those who participated in the process.

Your committee has agreed to report Bill No. 04 without amendment.

Your committee recommends under the provisions of rule 61 that fees be remitted less the cost of printing with respect to Bill No. 01, 02, and 03.

**Mr. Britton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Prince Albert Carlton:

That the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills now be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Tuesday next move first reading of a Bill, An Act respecting the expropriations amendment Act, lands and chattels, 1995.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Jess:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and the other members of the legislature, students and teachers from two schools, Radisson School in my constituency, and Shell Lake School just outside.

There's 76 in all, 7 to grade 12, sitting in the east gallery. They are accompanied by Walter Kyliuk, who is the principal of Radisson School. And the other teachers are Janice Kozun, Reiner Boensch, Rob Dalparte, Loretta Harpham, Joyce Scarpinsky. And I would like to have you join with me in welcoming them here and wishing them happy St. Patrick's Day in the morning as well.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, two visitors from Russia: Mr. Nikolai Khudykh and Dr. Lydmila Lykova. They are accompanied by their interpreter, Mr. Oleg Richkoff. Dr. Lykova is the chief expert at the Centre for Social and Economic Issues of Federalism with the Russian Academy of Sciences. Mr. Khudykh is the First Deputy of the Department of the Economy for the region of Krasnoyarsk.

They are in Saskatchewan as part of the Russian-Canada collaborative federalism project. This project has been established to share information on the Canadian system of fiscal federalism. After their visit, our guests will return to Russia to help redesign Russia's federal system based on its new constitution.

Dr. Lykova and Mr. Khudykh have spent this past week with officials in the Department of Finance to study the principles, goals, and legislative basis for fiscal federalism, the distribution of taxation and spending responsibilities, and the budgetary planning process.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's participation in the Russia-Canada collaborative federalism project is another recognition of our national leadership in these crucial areas. It also represents once again a much-deserved acknowledgement of the competence and professionalism of our provincial public service. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to warmly welcome our special guests from Russia.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Finance and welcome these people from Russia. It's been a privilege for me to be in not only the area of Moscow at least three times in the last three years, but I've been in St. Petersburg and in Kiev — of course that isn't in your country any more — but I've been in Kazakhstan, Alma Ata, and travelled there and met with a lot of government officials.

In fact — I'm not sure whether this is politically correct — but the day that Mr. Yeltsin turned the lights off in parliament I was across the river in the Ukrainian Hotel and I saw the lights turn off, and I have pictures of that in my file. At 5 after 10 the lights were turned off and I have those pictures; and that's where CNN (Cable News Network) was taking the pictures from, the next week that Mr. Yeltsin took the tanks and shot the parliament.

I have visited in the parliament with members of your parliament. I have visited in the Kremlin with various agents of Mr. Yeltsin, and so it's a special privilege for me to welcome you here as a part of transferring some of the information on a democratic society and relating this to how you transform your country into a democratic country.

Thank you very much for coming.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Koenker:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, a group of grade 7 and 8 students from Lakeridge and Sutherland schools in Saskatoon. They're accompanied by their teacher, David Ehmann, and chaperons Mrs. Haugen, Mrs. Jenzen, Mrs. Steenvoorden.

And I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them and wish them a safe trip home. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Lorje:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with my colleague from Saskatoon Sutherland in welcoming the students from Sutherland schools, and most particularly, Lakeridge School in my riding. And I would ask members of the legislature to note that this is a group of probably the best dressed, best behaved, and probably most thoughtful students that we've seen here for some time. So welcome to the legislature and I hope you enjoy your tour. I'll meet with you later for drinks and discussion.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Bradley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce today, to you and through you to the members of the legislature, a constituent of mine and a friend of mine from Radville, Rod MacDonald. Rod and I have had very many conversations and discussions about many issues that affect my area of the province, and all of Saskatchewan, and I really appreciate his

commitment to the quality of rural life in Saskatchewan. And I ask members to help join me in welcoming Rod here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Scott:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join my colleagues in welcoming Rod MacDonald to the legislature, a long-time friend and co-worker. Perhaps some of the members opposite remember our days on the Rafferty project. But I'd like to ask members in joining me to welcome Rod here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### St. Patrick's Day

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and a top of the morning to you. As you know, today is St. Patrick's Day and I would like to make a few comments in tribute of our Irish heritage.

It was in 1832, Mr. Speaker, that thousands of Irish along with Scots and the English in the first great wave of Canadian immigration chose to make Canada their home — my father's family among them. Because of this, Canada's status quickly changed from colony to country. That is why, one of the reasons why, St. Patrick's Day is important here in Canada and North America, as it is in Ireland.

Today, Mr. Speaker, there are only two types of people: the Irish and those that wish they were.

During all the rather bizarre commercialization associated with St. Patrick's Day, we should take a moment to remind ourselves the traditional view of the stage Irish person is somewhat distorted. As we look ahead to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination next Tuesday, we should note that the Irish too have been subject to racial intolerance and have yet managed to retain a proud and rich heritage.

Rather than stereotypes, Mr. Speaker, we should pay tribute today to the Canadians of Irish descent who have contributed much to the mosaic of our society with their wit, their music, their love and brilliant use of the language, their humour.

The story of St. Patrick is centuries old but we keep his memory fresh by honouring his people today. Erin go bragh, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Draper:** — Mr. Speaker, sir, as mentioned, today is St. Patrick's Day. Last year I claimed him on behalf of his own people, the Welsh, and this was not to denigrate either the Irish nor St. Patrick, but simply to put him into a better perspective. In St. Patrick's time, the population of present-day England and Wales was Brythonic Celts. The country was properly called Britain.

Erin was the home of Goidelic Celts, more closely related to the

Scots than to the Welsh. Raiding, fighting, looting, rapine was the order of the day between the branches long before the common enemy, the English, arrived.

I paid homage to St. David on behalf of the Welsh side of my family on March 1. Today I honour Margaret McManus, my great-grandmother, born and raised in Baile Atha Cliath, more commonly known by its Viking name, Dublin, by paying homage to Padraig.

The example, the experience, and the teachings of all good men and women, be they saints or not, are available and appropriate to all of us, whatever our race, our nationality, or our religion. It is my fervent hope that now some semblance of peace has been restored to Ireland, that all Irish men and women can live together in harmony, whether they revere St. Patrick, St. David, St. George, or even St. Andrew, for many Scots have migrated to Ireland.

So I say slainte and I give you the salutation used at the rising of the moon: Erin go bragh, long live Ireland.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### New Dialysis Equipment for Saskatchewan

**Mr. Keeping:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise today and inform this Assembly of some good news for all of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, over half a million dollars has been allocated for new equipment for Saskatchewan patients with kidney disease. These funds will go to cover the cost of 20 new and replacement dialysis machines for the health facilities in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.

The expansion of these programs will ensure that patients from all across the province have a better access to this life-saving technology. There are currently around 350 people in our province with kidney disease, Mr. Speaker, and on average 29 or 28 patients are added to the list every year.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, comes during National Kidney Month, which focuses on raising funds for research and patient services and education, as well as organ donor awareness.

While our new health system is providing a wider range of community service, there is a role for high-tech services by our base hospitals. And until a cure is found, Mr. Speaker, for kidney failure, dialysis is the most realistic option for many patients.

The good news I bring to the Assembly today will continue to ensure that all residents in our province have access to health services that they require. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Head Start Program in Moose Jaw

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an unfortunate fact that some low income families cannot afford to send their children to a much-needed preschool program. Some of these

children may go on to fail in kindergarten because they just aren't learning the basics. Fortunately, some concerned citizens from my constituency are doing something about this problem.

Mr. Speaker, in this Education Week, I'm pleased to inform the members of the Assembly that a new program called Head Start is being established in Moose Jaw to help these preschoolers. This new and exciting program is being organized by the people of Hunger in Moose Jaw.

This preschool program will be available for children aged 3 to 6, and would be partially funded by the federal government. In addition, the program will also rely on the support of the people of Moose Jaw.

The Head Start program will be a cooperative, community-based effort. It will involve several local agencies and groups, including the Moose Jaw Family Life Education Centre, the YM-YWCA, and the south-central early childhood intervention program.

The preschoolers' parents will also play an active role in the program, for they will be encouraged to volunteer and help out at the school. They will also be asked for input on how they think the preschool should be set up and run. Town hall meetings have already been scheduled for the Hunger in Moose Jaw centre at the Orange Hall, as well as at the YM-YWCA and Moose Jaw Family Life Education Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the Head Start program will give preschoolers a head start in education, and I wish them well.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Seniors' Health Care

**Mr. Toth:** — And top o' the morning to you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Health. The official opposition have brought forward dozens of cases which show that your health care attack is simply not serving the seniors of this province, particularly in rural Saskatchewan.

Each day, Mr. Minister, we receive telephone calls, we receive letters from concerned parents, concerned sons and daughters, husbands and wives, who tell us that a hospital is evicting their loved one with absolutely no place to go.

Yesterday in fact, Mr. Minister, we received an urgent call from Gerald Schultz of Rosthern whose father needs 24-hour care. A hospital in Saskatoon has informed Mr. Schultz that his father will be evicted shortly, but there are no available beds for Mr. Schultz to place him in near the community. There are no current nursing beds available in the immediate vicinity, and Mr. Schultz cannot do it himself.

The story, Mr. Minister, is far too common and home care isn't the answer for everyone. Mr. Minister, have you any idea of the level of concern for seniors in rural Saskatchewan, or are you

relying on bureaucrats in Regina to tell you what is going on in the real world?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, it's been my privilege in even the last few days to be travelling in communities beyond the capital of this city. And I'm regularly talking to both seniors and other people who have concern and care about our health care system. I'm not able to comment on the specific case which the member brings to the House this morning, and we can follow up on that.

But let me say, as the member well knows, in this very budget that is yet under debate in the legislature, substantial amounts of money are being provided to improve community-based and home-based care while at the same time recognizing that we will always need supportive care at a variety of levels, including up to about the most heaviest levels of care.

I want to quote again to the member and to members of the House, reaction from seniors across our province. And this appeared, Mr. Speaker, in the Saskatchewan Seniors Association newsletter, an organization which represents literally thousands of seniors across Saskatchewan. In this newsletter, when referring to the new emphasis on home and community-based services, one senior says: this is something we've been waiting to hear for a long time. It is very good news.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, I'm afraid that there are many people across this province, including Mr. Schultz, who are not totally impressed with that type of a response or an answer.

Because, Mr. Minister, while you indeed have allocated more funding for home care, that does not meet the need of the individual out there who is in a situation where they need some very heavy 24-hour care — care that is not easy to be offered under the home care program. Mr. Minister, I frankly don't see many seniors finding a lot of relief and a lot of comfort in the comments and the answers you have given to these questions.

However, Mr. Minister, there are some alternatives, and we've raised it before. I've asked you before why you do not allow the licensing of private care homes in rural Saskatchewan such as the one proposed in Avonlea, a private care home that would meet the need of a person such as Mr. Schultz. Mr. Minister, this will not cost the taxpayer one dime, and it will provide desperately needed nursing home beds for seniors and will relieve pressure on publicly funded seniors' facilities.

Mr. Minister, I believe this makes sense. Why are you restraining the licensing of such facilities?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, in reference to the member's question, and we've talked about the question in the House in question period, we've talked about it in estimates,

and I've assured him that we are very carefully working out some policy issues in this regard, and I expect to be making those policy announcements very soon.

Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to provide, across Saskatchewan, a wide band of options. Now, Mr. Speaker, today in Saskatchewan there are 10,000 people receiving heavy-level care. Now for the member to suggest that this care isn't available is simply false. There are 10,000 people across our province receiving heavy-level care, and that at a cost of about \$250 million.

We recognize that a wider band of options are necessary, ranging from care in one's home to care in one's community. And we're looking very seriously at some of the ideas that the member and others have brought to public attention and to the attention of this House. And we're looking at options that I think not even the member has conceived of, and which I know when announced will be very positive and very popular and welcomed by that member and all people in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, unfortunately we have, yes, raised this question before. But unfortunately as well, Mr. Minister, you keep telling us that soon you'll be making an announcement. But that soon has probably gone back about 12 or 14 months already. And people are getting tired of hearing the word soon. People want to know exactly when you are going to come to the point of making a clear-cut and affirmative decision regarding level 4 care in this province. And while you talk about the number of beds that are available out there, it's fortunate that there was a time span where some of those beds would have been made, or they wouldn't be available because certainly nothing was being done in the '70s.

Mr. Minister, there are groups that are willing to offer some solid and basic and sound care for level 4 patients across this province who do not have the ability to receive it in their homes — adequate care. They're willing to do it. Why will you not stand and give us a firm commitment today or give us a specific time period when you will be making that announcement, rather than just saying soon or very soon you will be making it. Why will you not do that, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member and members of the House that he and his government were in office in this province for 10 long years, 10 years. Will that member . . . can that member stand in this place and say one new, creative idea that was brought to support of care for seniors in this province during that length of time? Was there one new concept?

No, Mr. Speaker, 10 years — nothing. Now he's pushing, pushing, pushing us. Well that's fair enough, that's his job. And I repeat again this morning that policy in this regard will be announced very soon, and I am very confident that he and all members of the House will greet this policy with much

applause.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### ACS Employee Conflict of Interest

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for ACS, the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, it's been brought to our attention that a senior employee of yours in ACS in Swift Current appears to be in a serious conflict of interest. Mr. Bob McGowan is a senior credit officer with ACS.

Earlier this year, Mr. McGowan also began working for a private collection agency called Falcon Collection & Investigations. As you know, ACS has an extensive database and one of the most sophisticated tracking systems in the province. ACS has access to bank records, credit information, individual assets, outstanding loans, and other sources of income. All of this confidential information would be extremely valuable to a collection agency.

Clearly, use of confidential information in a private business would be conflict of interest. Mr. Minister, would you not agree that it is a conflict of interest for a senior credit adviser with ACS to also be working for a private bill collector?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cunningham:** — Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that this matter has been brought to my attention. I would appreciate it, if there are serious concerns on individuals, that the member would take the more appropriate route and bring those to my attention without fanfare and politics with the individuals' names. But, Mr. Speaker, we certainly will investigate. We have rules regarding conflict of interest and if somebody is in violation of those rules we will certainly take the appropriate action.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, that's why they pay you the big bucks, so that you . . . that's so that you pay attention to what your job is. ACS is a big component of your job.

Conflict of interest guidelines state, Mr. Minister, that an employee is in conflict of interest if he has private or personal interest which gains an advantage by virtue of position in public service.

I remind you of an instance a couple of years ago where SaskTel employees were told that they could not sell Amway any more because Unitel and Amway had some type of a working agreement and every employee got a letter from the president of SaskTel saying: no more Amway sold, boys and girls.

Now thousands of Saskatchewan farmers, Mr. Minister, deal with ACS and they need to know that the information they give to your bill collectors is kept very private, is not used for

someone else's personal gain. Will you give a commitment to investigate immediately and make sure that your ACS clients are not being used for private gain?

**Hon. Mr. Cunningham:** — Mr. Speaker, I believe I made that commitment in the last answer.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Okay, Mr. Minister, while you're busy thinking, I'll give you something else to think about. Are you contemplating privatizing the credit accounts of ACS? And if you are, will you give a commitment to the House today that people such as Falcon and Bob McGowan will not get that business without going to a fully open tendering process, contrary to what you've done in other Crown corporations with construction. Would you guarantee that, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cunningham:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the member opposite is on about. We certainly, in any business deals we make, make them above board and obviously without prejudice. And if there's any thought of selling ACS, I don't think those two individuals are probably on top of the list.

### Gaming Expansion

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government closed hospitals without a plan, and now they're going to open casinos without a plan. The government has no idea how many casinos Saskatchewan can support, other than the study that they themselves commissioned which told them that the current exhibition casinos already satisfy the full market demand.

My question is for the minister in charge of Gaming: how do you, Madam Minister, plan to measure and assess the impact of the Regina casino on the economy, on the existing exhibition casinos, and on the future proposed casinos? In other words, how are you determining how many casinos Saskatchewan can support?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well I'll just start by saying that I was very pleased to find out that the Liberal opposition in Alberta is supporting Saskatchewan's approach and that they're giving us the recognition that we deserve.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Nick Taylor of the Liberal opposition there, said that the Alberta government should follow the example of Saskatchewan and set up revenue-sharing agreements.

Specific to the question that the member opposite is asking, we did have — and she will be familiar with — the Candace Fox report in 1993, due to her very able research people on that subject. And they concluded that there was sufficient room for VLTs (video lottery terminals) and casinos in Saskatchewan, that the province can sustain two casinos with a limited number of machines each.

And at this point, we've only approved half of that capacity with the Regina casino, and each subsequent casino up to a maximum of four requires a market study, so I think that would be fairly obvious.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do take note of the minister stating that that particular report said that two casinos could be supported in Saskatchewan. Yesterday it was stated that casinos at . . . Saskatoon has not been ruled out as a site for yet another casino. That could mean two casinos in Saskatoon alone, Madam Minister, two in Regina and more around the province.

The government has chosen to actually ignore the one independent study that shows that the current casino models are all the province can support. And people are beginning to see the increased addiction to VLTs (video lottery terminals) and the failure of charitable lotteries because of too much competition for gambling dollars.

My question, Madam Minister: can you guarantee the people of Saskatchewan that the six- to eight-month waiting period that was promised after the opening of the Regina casino will be used to assess the impact on the casino market-place before any further casinos are opened?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you to the member. Mr. Speaker, I would have to assert that the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians is taking a very businesslike approach to this. That approach has been recognized by others, for example, in Alberta. And I would have to say that they have no desire to spend their limited economic development dollars on ventures that won't succeed.

And they certainly will be working closely with us to exercise due diligence over the next six to eight months in deciding what is viable in the province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Mr. Speaker, the government may think that this issue is worn out, and they may really want to put it all behind them and move on, but it is far from being over. In fact there are many, many unanswered questions, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Saskatoon overwhelmingly rejected the concept of a downtown casino for their city. And yesterday it was stated that Saskatoon has not been ruled out as a site for yet another casino. Saskatonians now realize that any casino expansion will not mean one, but two, casinos in Saskatoon because the exhibition boards do not appear to be involved despite the earlier policy of this government that they must be involved.

My question to the minister of Gaming: Madam Minister, when are you going to tell us how many casinos there will be and what the plan is for the exhibition casinos that already exist? Will Saskatoon and Regina have one or two? Or will they all simply go out of business because you don't know what you're doing?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I will restrain myself in my answer here, Mr. Speaker, because we have gone over and over this. The agreement was tabled in the House, and certainly the member opposite might use some of her contacts to verify the fact that Regina Exhibition has been in on all of the discussions, is certainly one of the partners. And any of the market feasibility studies have to consider existing operations and would have to work with any exhibition association in any location.

And if there's anything one could say about the agreement, is that Mr. Klein in Alberta should follow it because it's a model agreement for this kind of activity.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Trade Agreement with Australia

**Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, recently Canada has signed a trade agreement with Australia allowing for a significant increase in the importation of beef from Australia. I noted that there was no comment from you or from the Premier or from the NDP (New Democratic Party) government. What do you think of that agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cunningham:** — Mr. Speaker, the increase in imports of Australian beef was a federal Liberal decision to allow more beef into the country. It is a danger to not only our producers but to the American borders if the Americans feel that beef is flowing in through the back door. And I have written a letter to Mr. Goodale expressing concerns about this. They obviously are in charge of that decision.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Minister, just a moment ago you said you didn't know anything about something going on in ACS. I am sure the meat industry and the beef industry in western Canada, let alone in Saskatchewan, would be interested in your comments about importing a large amount of offshore beef into Canada.

We already have one of the highest import quotas of any developed country, and you have stood by as they've increased even more. There's no indication that we're short of beef. Cow kill is up 15 per cent. And you know as well that if you allow more beef coming into Canada, it means the jobs going from Intercontinental Packers; the jobs at Lakeside, the jobs at Cargill, are in jeopardy.

And you've said nothing. There's absolutely zero coming out of the Government of Saskatchewan on a major industry. The federal Liberals have taken away the Crow and said diversify. Now they've opened up beef imports coming into this country and you have stood there and said absolutely zero.

I would like to know why you haven't commented on something

as significant as this when in fact it has major implications for western Canadian farmers and agriculture.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cunningham:** — Mr. Speaker, we have spoken up for Saskatchewan farmers. We've spoken up on the Crow; we've spoken up on safety nets; we've spoken up on crop insurance; we've spoken up on the trade . . . the wheat trade issue. We've spoken up. And I also have written to . . . on this particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, the federal Liberal government doesn't understand western agriculture. I don't think they ever have, and probably never will. We continue to stand up for farmers. We haven't always had the cooperation from the other provincial parties in this province, but we certainly have stood up for Saskatchewan farmers and we fought hard for Saskatchewan farmers.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Minister, if you're standing up for western Canadian agriculture, show me how you've done it in this issue. Show the public. I have seen nothing, no comment out of the NDP administration, on a major trade agreement that is going to hurt western Canada, particularly as a result of the demise of the Crow.

And I haven't seen one single word. The stock growers, the cattlemen, the packing plants, the Moose Jaw Packer, Alberta packers, and other people in the meat business are very upset. And there's not a word coming from you. Show me that there's more than just rhetoric, that you really do care about it. Because in fact if we have got one of the highest quotas now, we're going to upset Americans terribly if we let more offshore beef in here and then go back into the United States — that's our major trading partner, and if we don't have reciprocal agreements or fair agreements, you're going to jeopardize agriculture here and you haven't said boo.

What I can't understand is why you wouldn't comment on something as major as this, at a time like this. And if you have, please table it or show somebody. Because we don't agree with the policy of the Liberal administration; why should you? And by being quiet, you tacitly agree with them. And I'm sure that's not the case.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cunningham:** — Mr. Speaker, the member should decide whether he wants rhetoric or he wants action. We have had meetings. We have taken action; we have dealt with the federal minister on every single agriculture issue. The member opposite has rhetoric in the House today. That's his contribution, after the fact, to stand up and beat up somebody because they haven't done the proper action.

Mr. Speaker, we have stood up for the farmers of Saskatchewan on every single issue — every single issue — and every time we get support after the fact. After the Crow was cut, then the provincial Liberals are onside, offside, onside, offside, and you

people who have worked hard for the last 20 years to cut the Crow are suddenly onside after it happens.

Mr. Speaker, we are the ones who are standing up for Saskatchewan farmers and we have fought hard and we have done our very best to protect our Saskatchewan farmers.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Gaming Addiction

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question this morning to the minister responsible for the gambling in our province. Madam Minister, yesterday we brought up the case of a Kindersley man who stole from his church in order to feed your Premier's slot machines. Your response to this situation was to say that the gentleman had a wonderful learning experience.

Well, Madam Minister, that is a callous, uninformed thing to say. It's like blaming the provincial churches for leading you into gambling, as you said. And I'm wondering, I'm truly wondering, whether you understand the seriousness of this situation. I'm wondering if you even recognize what VLTs can do to certain people, and that is the basic question. Madam Minister: do you believe that your VLTs are addictive?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think that people have difficulty with gaming. I think they have difficulty with alcohol. I think they have difficulty with bingo, difficulty with drugs. And I might remind you, during your 2,000 per cent expansion of gaming in 1983 when you privatized and commercialized bingo halls, you did nothing for gaming addiction, absolutely nothing. And it's nice to find that you've had a conversion here, on the road to Damascus, and now you're all in support of helping people.

But you had no such interest during the time that you were the ones that dramatically increased the activity in terms of gaming and people who are very much into gaming as more than just a recreational activity. I would say that your government very much promoted that.

So I would have to say that I have a lot of concern and sympathy, and have actually spent a considerable amount of my life working with street children, working with addicted people. I understand it fully. I think it is terribly unfortunate and we spend a lot of money on repairing the damage to those things. But still and all, at some point, the individual must take responsibility for their decisions.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. Madam Minister, it's unfortunate that you continue with your religious analogy like that. Deny, deny, deny. That is the first symptom. That is the first symptom of an addicted gambler who refuses to acknowledge that you are hooked.

Mr. Premier, you are hooked on gambling and yet you deny.

You deny the human cost. You deny the human toll of this advanced proliferation of gambling opportunities in this province. More bucks for the government — that's what you see in your government-sponsored, government-promoted gambling in this province.

And I don't believe, Madam Minister, and Mr. Premier, that you really understand. The Department of Health has an internal newsletter profile. There they say, the main problem identified in gambling is VLTs — your slot machines, Madam Minister.

If you want your casinos fast-tracked to make sure that they get up and running in the minimum amount of time so that you can get the maximum amount of bucks, why don't you, Madam Minister, try to get involved in your own learning experience? Why don't you call, Madam Minister, this gentleman from Kindersley and find out firsthand what you are doing to so many people in this province. Will you give that gentleman a call, Madam Minister, and have your own learning experience?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you to the member for his question. Mr. Speaker, we would certainly connect the gentleman with people who are qualified and able to deal with someone who has those kinds of problems. Whereas I have worked in those areas, I'm not a professional counsellor and I wouldn't pretend to be so. And I think it would be only responsible that if a person has that problem, that they get the appropriate assistance.

I would have to remind you of the origins of this problem. We never at any point decided to initiate VLTs. It was rural hoteliers who raised the issue with us because they wanted to be able to compete with Alberta, Manitoba, and the United States. And we were in fact suffering from a problem that was created by the fact that Tories surrounding us had decided that they were going to move ahead, much as you did with your bingo expansion in 1983. That was really a turning point in the way that gaming was viewed in the province.

I'd have to say that our government has increased the budget that we're putting towards prevention, education. There's \$1.5 million allocated to this. We certainly hope that people will make good choices. But the fact is Saskatchewan is not an island; we're surrounded by all kinds of influences. And we think the responsible thing to do is the best we can do to mitigate and to treat in those occasions.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 49 — An Act respecting Interior Designers

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I move first reading of a Bill respecting Interior Designers.

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

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 19**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Shillington that **Bill No. 19 — An Act to amend The Business Corporations Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we see it, and as I see it, I believe this Bill is purely a housekeeping Bill that updates some business regulations. In the Bill we see four main reforms that are achieved by this Bill.

First, the Bill clarifies definitions of how a company may be controlled and what is considered to be a subsidiary. For example, it clarifies that a company would be considered wholly owned by a company . . . pardon me, it clarifies that company A would be considered wholly owned by company B, but either were owned outright by company B, or if it were owned by two or more wholly owned subsidiaries of company B. These changes bring Saskatchewan regulations into line with the Canada Business Corporations Act.

Second, Mr. Speaker, the Bill allows directors of a company to appoint a limited number of interim directors between shareholders meetings if the company's by-laws allow this practice. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is in keeping with the Canada Business Corporations Act.

Third, the Bill allows two or more wholly owned subsidiaries of a company to amalgamate without the shareholders of the parent company having to approve it.

And fourth, Mr. Speaker, the Bill modernizes the definition of how corporate notices and documents may be delivered or stored, thereby allowing the faxing or other electronic transmission of notices and that storage of documents in an on-line electronic database.

Mr. Speaker, in view of these objectives of the Bill, I believe that these are appropriate objectives. I believe they're purely technical and non-controversial matters. And therefore I find no reason in adjourning debate, but Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to allow this Bill to move on to committee.

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

**Bill No. 20**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Shillington that **Bill No. 20 — An Act to amend The Co-operatives Act, 1989** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Toth:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, as with Bill 19, this Bill at least appears to be just a housekeeping Bill. And again I just want to point out six basic things that I believe the Bill is doing: (1) it removes the requirement for co-ops to register a particular municipality of operation and thereby allows co-ops to move their business offices anywhere in the province they wish; (2) it appears the Bill formally registers the term co-op as equivalent to cooperative as a business description limited to cooperatives; (3) we see the Bill affirms that directors can only be selected or fired by the membership and not by other directors; (4) it clarifies that only members may pass by-laws and may not delegate these powers to the directors; (5) it allows for speedier processes for dissolving inactive co-ops, particularly those where the remaining members, if any, cannot be located; and (6) a number of small grammatical wording clarifications that do not change the effects of the original Bill.

Mr. Speaker, what were the issues; what is the need? And we want to bring out a number of questions that we want to relate to the minister when we get into committee and therefore we will be allowing this Bill to move to committee.

But what is the real need to allow co-ops to locate their business offices outside of their areas of operation? Would this not allow small town co-ops to establish business offices in Regina? What would be served by this? Do co-op members want to have sole responsibility over by-laws? Is it not an imposition on the freedom of co-op members that they are not allowed to delegate decision-making powers?

And, Mr. Speaker, when an inactive co-op whose members cannot be found is dissolved, who gets the money and why? Who makes the determination that a co-op is inactive and how is that definition changed by this Bill? How many such co-ops are there that there is a pressing need for new regulations to deal with them?

Mr. Minister, in regard to a number of these questions we feel that it would be much easier to direct the questions directly to the minister and deal with the Bill more appropriate in committee, and therefore at this time we are prepared to allow the Bill, Bill No. 20, to go into committee.

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

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**General Revenue Fund  
Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation  
Vote 53**

**The Chair:** — Order. Before we proceed I see that the member for Kinistino is on his feet.

**Mr. Roy:** — Mr. Chairman, with leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Mr. Roy:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to introduce to you and to the members in the Assembly, two very special guests that are with us today in the legislature. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery. They're members of my family, Mr. Speaker; my brother-in-law, Perry Gaudet, and his wife Gail. Perry is a farmer and an SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) agent in Bellevue, and Gail is a school teacher and she teaches in St. Louis. So I would ask the members to give them a very heartfelt welcome.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### General Revenue Fund

#### Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation

#### Vote 53

**The Chair:** — Before we proceed to item 1, could we ask the minister to please introduce the officials who have joined us here today?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you. I'd like to introduce Brian Woodcock, president of SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation); John Law, senior vice-president, finance and accommodation; Al Moffat, vice president, commercial services; and Rob Isbister, director of financial planning, finance and accommodation.

#### Item 1

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take this opportunity right away this morning to welcome the officials that are going to be assisting us with SPMC and will be assisting the minister in her endeavours to answer the questions, of which we have many.

Madam Minister, just to start the process off as we always do, we have sent your department a list of what we will term as being global questions, as we have in the past. And my first question of course is, could you give us an idea whether or not you have dealt with those questions and when our office or myself could expect to receive the answers to those questions.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you for your question. We'll be returning the answers to those questions at year end. I would think it would take probably a couple of weeks past year end to have all the information together, but we're very close to our budget year end.

(1100)

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Madam Minister. We will of course wait with bated anticipation for the answers to our questions, because there will, of course, be follow-up questions that relate to those answers, and I think this is the appropriate place for us to get into the detail of many of those things. Obviously it is the only vehicle that we have to find out exactly what's going on in many of the government adventures.

The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, Madam Minister, is something that most people have a view of as being just another government department that really doesn't have very much significance, that they simply hold onto some properties and maybe have a few warehouses some place, full of old, used furniture. And in reality, because the media doesn't find this to be a very controversial or stimulating topic, that's about all the general public really seems to know about the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. It's something that not many people really question or talk about too much.

But the reality is that it is quite important to our province, as we have delved into this a little further. And so I think it's important that we spend a little time trying to show the public just how important this part of the government's activities are.

And as I've mentioned just now, we find that a lot of people think that there are warehouses full of materials that Saskatchewan Property Management has, that they sort of sit around with all of this furniture — chairs and tables and old desks and things — and maybe computers and what not, all stored up some place, and that nothing ever happens with it.

So I'd like you to explain to the public, Madam Minister, first of all of course, are there warehouses where you do store that kind of property, owned and controlled by the government through this vehicle? If they are in existence, what is the process for getting rid of this sort of stuff? Or do we just rent space for ever and keep storing it up?

One time I recall, just for an example, that somebody had printed up a few hundred thousand calendars, and somebody put them in a storage house and that they'd been there for 10 years or something. So I'll let you respond.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I thank the member for his question. I just wanted to get a little more information for you as far as how decisions whether to store or sell are made. There is a central furniture warehouse. The asset value of all of our furniture across government would be around 20 million, and of that about 100,000 in assets would be stored in the warehouse at any given time.

The rest that is considered surplus, due to age or just not being necessary for the particular functions anymore, goes to auction. And that's where, I guess, if some of us aren't elected again, where our furniture will be too.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Minister. Of course that's a little bit of a start at helping with the questions that people are asked about — all the furniture that is stored. Now who decides what furniture is obsolete or no longer should be in use in government offices? How is that determined? What is the criteria to decide that this is now something you will move out of active use into the storage process that would go to auction?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The people that are responsible for that in the corporation are maintenance and operations. And the basic rule of thumb of it is, anything that's broken or obsolete,

although they do even repair things, recover furniture, etc. So we try to be as economical as possible in the reuse of furniture.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, who are they — the people that make this decision?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Are you asking for names or positions?

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Both, please.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We do have a furniture manager in the head office, as well as regional managers, and we'll provide you with those names.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Fine. When would we expect to get those?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — There's no problem providing that within a week.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Minister. We'll again wait with anticipation for the information. I take it then that you have one person, or is this a group of people that does this? And it seems that you've covered a rather large area with a very short possible answer here.

You've got equipment scattered from one end of this province to the other. I'd like to get an understanding of how one person — or is there a team of people — can handle these decisions. Do they travel out into the country, for example, and examine the furniture every year?

Or do they have somebody make a memo and send it in and say, we got scratches on our chair, we want a new one; and somebody else rubber-stamps that and says, okay you can dump your chair and get a new one? Does a truck go out from Regina and pick this chair up from, say Melfort or Tisdale or Shaunavon or whatever? Is it collected into Regina? What happens to all this stuff? What is the process?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The thing I would like to emphasize to the member is that this is done on a regional basis so that there is activity in all areas of the province, not merely in Regina. It does serve the rural areas directly through the regional offices.

What happens is the people who are the tenants of a particular building would talk to the building manager responsible for their building and let them know what their needs are, what furniture has perhaps outlived its usefulness. That then goes to the regional manager who would store whatever looks like it's not repairable or retrievable in a local warehouse.

And once there is a sufficient inventory assembled, the overall manager would review the items and decide whether in fact he affirms that decision to allocate them to sale. And at that point they would then either be repaired and returned to some area of the province that needed it or they would be allocated for sale.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Madam Minister, when they're allocated for sale . . . Just to jump over a little bit that I'm going to come back to. Now the regional manager decides for an area. Let's suppose that . . . Well maybe

I should ask you, if you wouldn't mind explaining, how big these areas are, I guess.

I have no comprehension — if this means an area the size of a municipality, an area the size of 40 municipalities around Swift Current for example, or something like that. Now how big of an area are we talking about? And then I want to get on to the process of how it's sold.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay, there are six regions in the province: Prince Albert, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Regina, Yorkton, and Saskatoon.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Regina, Yorkton, and Saskatoon. And that's the whole ball game for regions? Well now that means that . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Six.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Six. Okay there's altogether . . . could you give us a map of that? There must be a map, something that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll let you answer formally for the record so that people can get that information.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We'll provide a map of the regions to you, along with the materials we're providing next week.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Minister. Now these sales that are held . . . I remember when I set up my office as an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) I thought it might be nice to have a desk in my office. And someone told me, well the government's got a lot of surplus stuff; why don't you get one there?

And I have to admit I didn't do a whole lot of research on it, but I started asking a little bit, and I couldn't find out when these sales were or where they were or where this furniture seemed to be stored or what the process was to get a hold of one. And then of course here came along an opportunity to buy one at an auction of a different sort, so I did get one and never pursued it.

But I think now, with the new policy that furniture is going to be going back to the government from all MLA offices, then new MLAs again might prosper by us pursuing this matter a little further so that we have access to the information of how we can access some of this furniture in the future.

So could you tell me, when are these sales held? What kind of sales are they? Where are they held? And how would we access the process and the information?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I can tell you that it would be a good idea if I loaned you my constituency assistant because he wouldn't let me buy a filing cabinet until he could find one at auction to buy. I've gone months sometimes without them, until he found an auction.

Anyway, the advertising is done, and all sales are advertised and conducted by private auctioneers in the area where the auction is held, and they must be advertised. I couldn't tell you specifically what papers those local auctioneers advertise in. We could get that if it was important. But they do advertise every sale.

We had about one sale per month. Most are in Regina; this year, two in P.A.(Prince Albert); one in Saskatoon; and when there's enough inventory in a region, a sale will be held regionally as well.

(1115)

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister. I'd like to pursue this avenue a little bit further. My colleague did state that he did buy his desk at an auction. It wasn't a government auction, but it was an auction. And I happen to know that he did because I was at the very same auction and bought a bunch of my office equipment at the same place.

But, Madam Minister, with our office equipment going back to the government now, is it possible for us, at the present time, to gain access to some of the office equipment that is in storage with SPMC? We've had two members of this Legislative Assembly that would have turned their office equipment over already to SPMC when they have left this chamber, so that office equipment should be available someplace.

Now at the present circumstances, we have to, as MLAs, go out and find our office equipment, our paper supplies, whatever it might be for our offices, either locally, which is perhaps best for us as MLAs, but we have to find it someplace. We can't go to SPMC, who at the end of the day is the ultimate owner of all of the office equipment within our offices.

So is there any avenue available today for an MLA to go to SPMC and say, I want a desk or I want a filing cabinet, whatever it might be, so that we can equip our offices this way, because the office equipment is owned by SPMC?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Today, no, there is no way to do that because the policy has been that the only people who can buy off the floor — and it's only some items they could buy; those with established prices — are municipalities, both urban and rural. No individual has been able to go into the warehouse and do that.

Now as you would know, the Board of Internal Economy has been discussing this and by this summer there will be a policy that I think would address some of the concerns that you're raising. And certainly your member on the Board of Internal Economy could again raise that there.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, some of the equipment from MLAs has already been turned over to SPMC. What has happened to that equipment? Has that gone to public auction, has it gone to private sale? What happens to that equipment?

As an example, cellular telephones. I believe some of them have been turned back by MLAs. Now what's happened with them? Have they been sold? Are they sitting in a box someplace? What's happening with that equipment?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Could we get a clarification, please, of whether you're talking about an individual MLA office or the

caucus office for the various three caucuses?

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well it really doesn't matter, Madam Minister, whether it's the individual MLAs, because that equipment is owned at the end of the day by SPMC. It goes back to SPMC. If I cease to be an MLA tomorrow, all the equipment in my office comes in to the government. It doesn't go any place else.

So it doesn't matter whether it's a constituency office, the caucus office, or an MLA's cellular telephone. What's happening with it?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — What we're just getting at here is the differentiation between equipment and furniture, because there's some equipment — for example, like cellular phones and some of the equipment, certainly, the furniture and what not in the Legislative Building — which is redistributed through the Legislative Assembly, and not by SPMC. So there is two different sources, depending on the source of funds and who's responsible for administering those funds.

All of these issues, the equipment and the property, will be dealt with in the overall policy that's being developed. But until that time, the furniture that goes back through the route of the MLA office would just go to auction as all other furniture.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So you're saying, Madam Minister, the office equipment out of an MLA's office that no longer exists, goes to SPMC for auction?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I should have been more specific on that. I apologize. It goes, first of all, to see whether it's redistributed within government, and then if not, then to auction. But not necessarily specifically, to an MLA office.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. So an MLA's office equipment, when he's no longer an MLA, would go to SPMC. They would decide whether or not it should be channelled back into the government stream. Do you mean into departments, Crown corporations, or does it come back into the Legislative Building, or what happens to it that way?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'd like to mention that I think the problem in communications here is that we're confusing apples and oranges. We're distinguishing between how furniture's handled and how equipment is handled, like cellular telephones, that kind of thing.

The furniture gets handled according to the government-wide furniture policy. There's no difference. Because it's MLA furniture doesn't make it different from anybody else's furniture. It's just furniture. And until there's some policy that differentiates, it's handled under the government-wide furniture policy and equipment is handled by the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well you still haven't told me what happens to it. But okay so, Madam Minister, the chairs in my office go to SPMC to be used as government chairs. The photocopier in my office, what happens to that? What's the difference between the chair and the photocopier?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I guess all I can do is keep repeating this till we've breached our communications problem here. Something like a photocopier is considered equipment, not furniture; and it would go back to the Legislative Assembly until the further policy that we're discussing is developed and approved.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well I had a few people running interference there, Madam Minister. I wonder if you could repeat that, please.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I hope I can. Okay, the photocopier that you referred to would be equipment, as opposed to furniture. So at this point, according to the policy, it would go back to the Legislative Assembly.

Now when the overall policy is developed and approved by the Board of Internal Economy, then at that point there would be whatever changes are agreed to. But until then, the current policy is furniture, SPMC; equipment, Legislative Assembly Office.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, I just happen to have a photocopier that's only good to be used for a chair.

When I changed photocopiers, the company suggested if I paid them \$100 they would take away my old photocopier. So it sits in my office today and does nothing. Because when I inquired what I should do with it, I was told just hang on to it and we'll let you know. So there it sits because nobody knows . . . nobody wants it and nobody knows what to do with it.

Madam Minister, let's talk about our caucus equipment. Caucus equipment comes from SPMC or it comes from the government. Now what's the procedures with caucus equipment?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — If the furniture is purchased through the Consolidated Fund, it comes back to SPMC for sale.

I would ask the hon. member to pay attention and we'll be able to get through this a little quicker. If the Consolidated Fund has paid for the furniture, it comes back to SPMC.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you, Madam Minister. Why then, if it comes from SPMC and goes back to SPMC as caucus equipment, can't we simply order our supplies from SPMC?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Because this is a time period where we're changing all these policies. I mean it is difficult to predict totally what the future will hold, but at this point I guess I can just reaffirm that it's handled under existing policies until there's a different policy.

And certainly the comments that you would make into that process would be useful, but the existing policy stands until the new one is in place. And that is that the furniture gets treated like any other furniture and you have to go to auction, just like anybody else, if you want to get it.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, right now I don't

want to sell anything. I want to buy something. I want something for the office. Now if I have that thing coming into my office and I decide then to dispose of it, it goes right back to SPMC. So when I want paper, let's say, or I want pens or paperclips, whatever it might be, why can't I simply phone up SPMC, because it comes against the caucus budget, and say, I want 10 pens; please send me 10 pens. But it doesn't seem to work that way, Madam Minister. We have to get them from SPMC, but we can't order them from SPMC.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think I'm starting to understand where we're not having a meeting of the minds here. In bookkeeping, people try to establish cost centres. And according to the cost centres, you receive a budget for furniture and therefore your budget is what goes to pay for your furniture. And so rather than SPMC giving you furniture that you're budgeted to get, you have to then go through the normal auction process to get it.

Now we are in the middle of changing this policy, but it is not SPMC that's driving this change, it's the Legislative Assembly — your member on the Board of Internal Economy; our members on the Board of Internal Economy. So at the point at which we give direction to SPMC to do it differently, then at that point they will, because they like to do whatever we tell them is the appropriate thing to do. So, I think the matter really resides with us more than it does with SPMC.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Madam Minister, what has happened with the telephones that have been turned back in to SPMC from the MLAs. Have any of them been disposed of?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'll just reconfirm that those go back through the Legislative Assembly Office, and I would assume they restore them back to wherever they were obtained from, whether it would be SaskTel or some other supplier.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So SPMC then does not get access to those telephones at all? The Minister is giving me hand signals that I'm hopefully interpreting correctly, that that's the case. They don't go back to SPMC.

So let me ask then, what is the difference between a cellular telephone, which may be owned by an MLA, and the photocopier? I understand what the mechanical differences is, but what is the property difference between them? And I know that there are certain members with 18-horsepower hair-dryers that could handle a photocopier as a telephone, but I don't think that's quite the issue.

(1130)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again I'll go back to my accounting explanation. It really is a matter of the source of the funds — who's responsible — just the same as it is in estimates for ministers to account for the areas that they're budgeted for.

So it really has very little to do with the item but the source of the budget that it comes from. As a general rule of principle, you can divide it into furniture and equipment, but it is the source of the funds that distinguishes who looks after what happens to it.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Staying on the same theme, as far as the equipment that's being held in warehouses and such, when your government formed government in 1991, some of the election promises were to bring back some form of a school-based dental program. And I guess it was the former government that had taken out a great deal of these dental chairs and dental equipment out of the schools. And I was wondering if . . . what has happened with that equipment today?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you for your question. Apparently all that was left in 1991 by the time we took over was the odd chair, and the rest had all been sold prior to that.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister. What happened to the odd chair? Can you give us a list of what equipment was left?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We can provide you a detailed list of the specific equipment and where it went and what not and when it went, if that would be more helpful than guessing and giving generalized answers.

**Mr. McPherson:** — All right. So what you're telling me is that you no longer have any of the dental equipment?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We haven't for a couple of years now. And that has been of course one of the budgetary difficulties in reconsidering that program.

**Mr. McPherson:** — So I assume that it was put up for auction. Did it show up on one of your auction bills?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — You're asking me to answer a question for activities that happened primarily before we were government, so I think you could just lean over and ask those questions to the members beside you.

We will provide answers on anything that we've dealt with since we were elected, and we'll give that to you in detail and in writing.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well I am talking about the equipment that you referred to was still there after the 1991 election, regarding the dental equipment. Now was it auctioned off or sold? Did you search out a buyer for it, or was it brought up at an auction?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Very specialized equipment like this is not very usefully or profitably sold in a general auction process because of the very specialized and limited number of people that use it. So it would tend to go more through searching through the community of people who use that kind of furniture: brokers — people who are acting on behalf of, perhaps another country even, a third-world country that might be looking for piece of equipment like that. So there's a bit of a different process for a highly specialized piece of equipment like that.

**Mr. McPherson:** — So that then, I take it, is the list that you're

going to provide: exactly what happened with each piece of equipment, how much we got for it, and who received it.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, that's right, we'd be happy to provide that.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Madam Minister, can you tell us what Crowns and departments that you supply . . . or that you . . . SPMC has inspectors, whether it be equipment inspectors or building inspectors, but inspectors as a whole.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Excuse me, Mr. Chair, I can't hear the questions any more because there's too much discussion going on.

**The Chair:** — I think the minister and the member for Shaunavon are both in agreement on this, and I ask all hon. members of the House to allow this to continue. Please to pay due diligence and attention. I recognize the minister. I'm sorry; the minister was saying she had difficulty with the last question. I'll ask the member for Shaunavon to repeat it, please.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. The question that I'd asked, can you give us a list of what all Crowns and departments that SPMC supplies inspectors for and what their duties are, what it covers?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'm going to have to ask you to clarify your question. Did you say inspectors?

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well people that inspect buildings or equipment, do you have people that go out and . . .

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We don't have any inspectors. Building inspection and those types of things are done by the Department of Labour and other provincial and federal and municipal bodies that work on different codes. That's not something that SPMC does.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well then, Madam Minister, does your department supply any building managers — someone that would perhaps go out into the community of, say, Shaunavon and look at the Liquor Board store there or the court-house or some of the Power offices?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay, I think what we're dealing with here is just a terminology question. We only manage the buildings that we own and operate. So, for example, the liquor stores would be done by the Liquor Authority; the Crowns' buildings are done by the Crowns. It would only be the buildings that we're specifically responsible for that we would do that.

And yes, there is a building manager. But again I think many of the kind of things you may be referring to would really be brought to the attention of the managers by the particular people who are using that space and raising concerns about who would know maybe the age of their carpet or whatever. But there is building managers for the ones that we particularly own.

**Mr. McPherson:** — All right then, we'll use the community of

Shaunavon as the example. Do you have buildings in the community of Shaunavon that you have inspectors go out and look at those buildings or those furnishings or properties in that community?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — As it turns out, we don't have much in Shaunavon. It is part of the Swift Current region, so the overall management would come out of the Swift Current office, again referring back to the regional organization.

There is an equipment storage facility for Parks, and Highways has space there also, but all the other space is not owned directly by ourselves.

**Mr. McPherson:** — All right, Madam Minister. Do you have anyone from your department leave their operation in Swift Current to go out into some of these communities, such as Shaunavon, and do inspections?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, that would be true. That's part of the regional operation and again that would come out of the Swift Current region.

**Mr. McPherson:** — This is going by the long-about route here to ask a simple question earlier on. So now can you tell us, what do they inspect when they get out to Shaunavon? Which buildings?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — It's really an overall client inspection that's done just to see if standards that are set for government space and what not are being maintained. And also again I would remind you that there would also be response to issues raised by people using the space, who would certainly be in a better position on a daily basis to determine whether there were particular problems or not.

I don't know if that's a sufficient answer, but that would be the nature of the . . . If you have a specific thing you're wanting, that would be very helpful, rather than beating around this bush for ever.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well, Madam Minister, I was actually going to use that in my next question: that I wish you would quit beating around the bush, because I think the questions have been fairly pointed.

When an inspector leaves Swift Current and drives to Shaunavon, can you give me a list of what he's doing out there? And don't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, stop beating around the bush, is absolutely correct.

Does he go to the court-house and inspect something there? Does he go to — I don't know — where the game wardens are? Just give me a list of the buildings that they inspect. Give me a list of what they do. It's simple.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I could really use the analogy that it's much like any building that one of us might rent and be in. And the landlord, or in this case the building manager, is responsible for things like temperature control, the level of maintenance in the building, the cleaning standards, just the basic kind of

obligations that any landlord would have to his space. I'm sure you have a landlord for your constituency office space. It would be very similar to the relationship you would have with the person that you rent from as far as them making sure that basic standards are met.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well, Madam Minister, we're just going to have to stay on this subject until you give the answer. Do you have an inspector that goes out and inspects the buildings in the community of Shaunavon, inspects the buildings?

(1145)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay we'll try this again and see if we get any closer here to an understanding. We don't do building inspection. We do overall building management and that would include, for example, either capital investments needed in the building or are client needs being met.

For example, in the case of the specific buildings in Shaunavon, the equipment storage for the park, is the roof leaking? Is the equipment dry?

There are supplementary activity though, that might be what you're getting at. There are preventative maintenance crew of specific tradespeople who have to meet certain standards for other departments' licensing requirements; for example, things like your boiler equipment. They'd have to make sure things were operating properly, pumps are repaired, that kind of thing. And that's particular types of crews that go out to make sure that items that are licensed by other areas are maintained at the level that's required.

But for example, if it had to do with specific legislation coming out of different departments on air quality, etc., those would be done by the inspectors out of those particular departments where that legislation originates and that's not done particularly by SPMC.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Madam Minister, some of the other offices — and we'll use, like a SaskPower office for an example — is that owned and operated by SaskPower? Or does your department have any role to play in SaskPower or SaskEnergy or ACS buildings? And you know what the lists are, so you know what I'm getting at.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — On the operations, the answer would be no. But there is a space coordination function in government; so for example, if a department needs more space and there's some surplus space, things like that, just efficiency in managing over all public expenditures on space. But we have no direct operational involvement in those buildings at all.

**Mr. McPherson:** — So then what I can assume then, for the SaskPower building there would be an inspector working for SaskPower driving out to Shaunavon to look at the facilities, see what their needs are. The same would happen for the Liquor Board stores, SaskEnergy buildings, Sask Health buildings, Crop Insurance — there's inspectors that are coming out from each department to look at their own buildings?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again I guess the only analogy I could

use is the same as when you lease any space in Regina. The private sector does not get together and coordinate all of the caring for space. There are particular people who look after the buildings that they own and are responsible for. And quite a considerable amount of the space the government uses is not owned, it's leased, so there would be a private person that owns that space and looks after it.

In the case of government buildings, it would not I don't think make a substantial difference. I know what you're getting at, you're getting at economy and efficiency, and I think everybody is always very conscious of that. But if people were not needed to do the job, I'm sure the job would not be there.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well, Madam Minister, that's exactly what I've been trying to get at. If Sask Property Management, if their overall goal is to manage the properties of the province, whether it's the Liquor Board stores or the court-houses . . . And I'm trying to get some understanding if there's ever been consideration of having one body or one inspector, perhaps based out of Swift Current, come out into the communities and look at all facilities that the government is in control of.

That's what I was trying to find out — if in fact whether we could do it with one inspector or one manager rather than have each department overlapping this same service.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well as it turns out, your question's very timely. Because there are some places where this is already happening and other places such as Shaunavon that are, right as we're speaking, going into a process of discussion as to what are some ways to do this.

There is places where the federal government has a presence where we do have an arrangement with them and that has resulted in reduced costs. One example is North Portal. But there is also arrangements with other government departments. Particularly the area where this can be very cost effective is in places like the North where the driving distances are quite large.

The economy is reduced depending on the distances involved. But in areas where there is considerable distance, this is certainly worth looking at. And I understand that people are right now looking at whether there's ways to already improve the arrangements that already exist.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm surprised how long it took to get that answer out of you.

Madam Minister, you had mentioned leased properties, the amount of leased properties that the government is dealing with. And can you provide us with a list of the leased properties that SPMC has with private individuals — who they are, what the lease terms are, and the amounts of the lease?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, we are able to give you the following information: the location, the building, the term, who owns it, but not the specific financial details because it's always been an agreement with the lessors that that type of market information is not available to other parties due to the nature of that market-place. But we can give you all the other information

related to this.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Madam Minister, is that a change in policy that you won't release this amount of monies that you're spending on the lease?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well that has been the tradition of this legislature and the unspoken agreement, I guess, with the industry that's involved. Now whether they would be amenable to that kind of a discuss, I guess, is something that could be explored. But at this particular time, it never has been provided.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Oh, I don't agree with you, Madam Minister, because SPMC has given that information before. In fact let me use an example. The Crop Insurance-Health office in the community of Shaunavon was raised in Crown Corporations before, and SPMC officials gave out the lease amounts. In fact I think it was something around \$50,000 a year that the government spends on leasing that Crop Insurance building from a fellow, I believe it was from North Battleford.

So I'm just now wondering . . . and I know another one that was raised was the Crop Insurance building in I think North Battleford itself, owned by I think it was Joe Remai or someone like this. And if I remember the figures right, it was something like a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year that we're leasing this for.

Now these figures came from SPMC. So I can only assume that this is a change in policy?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again I'm not sure of the very specific information that you're referring to from Crown Corporations, but in the legislature, it has been for the past 20 years the practice that that information has not come here.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well, Madam Minister, can you . . . this list that you're going to provide for us, it will tell the company name, who we're leasing it from, but also the individuals that are involved. And I raise it in this sense, that I was told the Crop Insurance office in, I think the community of Melfort, is owned and leased by the government. I think it's owned by the minister from that community.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Normally we deal directly with the representative of the corporation, and the cheque goes to the corporate name that we have listed as being the owner of the building. We can certainly provide you with the corporation name that we have the relationship with, and I do believe that information is available through corporations branch. I don't know if that's adequate to your question.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Well it probably isn't, Madam Minister, but if you could get that, the first amount of information, to us as soon as possible, then perhaps when you're back in the House another day we could delve into this further. And do I also . . . I guess I can assume that all the documents that you're sending to the official opposition will also come to the third party?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, no problem with that.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Just a few other questions, Madam Minister, and that's in the communications. Does SPMC have their own communications department or staff or people on staff that do communications work?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — It's out of the corporate affairs office, and there's one person who that is their primary function.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Now communications were going to be held centrally from government, was my understanding. I didn't realize that each department and Crown and such were going to do their own communications work. Can you tell me why SPMC, as just being involved in the management of properties, would need a person in charge of communications?

(1200)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay, I'll just let you know that that's largely a function internal to the department. There is 900 employees, so things like the employee newsletter, the annual report, and advertising for tenders within the responsibilities of SPMC, all those kinds of things would be done internally.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well I used a few minutes to research the fish war about the turbot. But we'll have to get back to the more important things of life which concern the province of Saskatchewan in the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation.

Now, Madam Minister, we have explored for some time the area earlier of the warehouses full of material that we have in this province.

And I guess the bottom line here is that you did say, just to refresh your mind, that you have \$20 million worth of equipment in the province that the Property Management, I guess, is in control of or responsible for; \$100,000, at any one time, worth of equipment that you have that is for sale. Is there any reason why your department couldn't have a list of the auctions that you alluded to? Is there any reason why that list of auctions and the dates and the times couldn't be given to some key people — for example, MLAs and other folks, like municipalities — that might be interested in buying that type of equipment?

Is there any reason why a list like that couldn't be provided to people, say, on a six-month basis or a year basis? These things must be planned ahead of time to some extent. So would that be possible, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'll just clarify again that there is a difference between furniture and equipment. You mentioned equipment. Equipment is not the question here, it's furniture — even if it's photocopiers that you can only sit on. A hundred thousand does not refer to inventory for sale — it's inventory available for redistribution throughout the broad network of needs in government.

The list of auctions . . . there's usually about a month notice of sufficient stock in order to hold an auction. But we certainly

could at that time send out notices to the MLA offices to facilitate finding out about them so that you don't have to hunt through the newspaper.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Can I interpret the word could as will?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We'd be happy to do that.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Now you differentiate between furniture and equipment, and furniture now is going to be on the auction, I understand, and I'm going to get a list of that so I'll know where to go to buy some furniture if I want.

Now if you have a computer that's been turned back to you — and that's equipment — and it's sitting in your warehouse, how could I as an MLA save the taxpayers some money and access that piece of equipment to go into my office rather than to have to use my allocated funds and spend them to buy furniture from a new or other source? There must be a way that we can save the taxpayers some money.

You could put a price on that, I'm suggesting. I'm not suggesting that MLAs should have the chance to access both their account and free furniture. What I'm saying is you could or should be able to designate a price and then take that much out of my MLA account for buying equipment and subtract it and doing all the bookkeeping and keep it all straight, but use that piece of equipment then and get some more life out of it if is, well, I guess a piece of equipment that is better than being just a chair, as my colleague's photocopier seems to be. I'm talking about something that still physically works and has some value to it. Is there a way that I can access that and could we not put that process into place?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay, the particular question you raise is going to be addressed in the new policy with the Legislative Assembly. And again it would have to be ratified by the Board of Internal Economy which you have input into.

As far as people being able to access computers now without having to go to an auction process, it would be school boards, municipalities, people like that, who under the existing policy, have the ability to do that.

But one of the things we might mention . . . because I have pursued this question on behalf of, for example, non-government organizations who tend to have small operating budgets. And really the problem is, is that by the time the equipment makes it there, most of it is considerably out of date in terms of modern computing standards and is not functional in many instances and is also equipment that may not be compatible with a lot of current systems.

So it's really not, I guess, an area where there's much potential, although whatever limited potential there is would be dealt with in the new policy. And I urge you to have your members on the Board of Internal Economy make sure that that new policy satisfies your concerns.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. When you sell

equipment to a municipality, how do you establish the price of what you're going to charge them for that equipment? Who decides what it's worth?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The method is like it is, I guess, in most things in the market-place. It's the condition that the equipment's in and the average resale price that would be comparable in the market-place. And again, because of the condition of the equipment you previously referred to, you'd be looking at around almost the 60, \$70 range, because the person may well be purchasing a liability as much as an asset with an old piece of equipment like that.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well maybe, maybe not. I can't quarrel because I haven't specifically said this is the piece of equipment so this one might be good or bad. Who is the person responsible for deciding what the cost of that piece of equipment should be?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — That person would be the director of sales and salvage.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Is there some protection against conflict of interest with that person?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again the people that are being sold to through this process, which would be the only place where there would be any room . . . because obviously when something goes to auction, it goes to auction, and anybody can put their hand up and bid.

So it's only within the framework of the school boards and municipalities that have access to the floor that there could be any question. And certainly those people are acting as agents on behalf of their boards and municipalities.

The amount of material that would be distributed in that way would be worth about 25,000 in a year, out of 400,000 in total sales.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well just to clarify my point, Madam Minister, it is not inconceivably impossible to have a municipality come in and buy equipment at a rather attractive price, take that equipment home and resell it and make a profit. And they may be in fact the laundering process to get that equipment into private hands, in certain cases. And I'm not suggesting that anyone is doing that; I'm saying that the potential would be there.

So what mechanism is built into the system to prevent that from happening?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — This would be much like I think the sale of vehicles or anything else that you might care to mention. There is a market price established. The value is set through the fair market value and other sales that are held and what those items have attracted in terms of what people are prepared to pay for them. So really I could say that fair market value would be the guideline.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — In my scenario, Minister, though, who would

police that person or those persons who are in charge of that process? What is built into the system to protect the taxpayers' interests in conflict of interest potential there?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I guess to reiterate, if you're dealing with fair market value, there's no advantage to someone to getting something because they could only resell it for fair market value and couldn't resell it for more. So there really is no room for anybody to capitalize on that sale, but I would say that there is a review done on a regular basis of the items that go for sale, and what they go for. And that's done by Mr. Moffat here.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well I'm glad to hear that there is a person actually in charge of watching this because what is fair market value to you might be considerably different than what is fair market value to me.

You might say this computer is worth \$5 because it will take that much effort to carry it out of the building. I might be a computer hack who knows that there's a lot of good chips or something in there, and say, hey, there's a thousand dollars worth of equipment inside that thing. All I have to do is get it. And so the reality is, then, that if a municipality were able to access that thing for \$5 and take it home and then resell it for \$1,000 to a private individual, there would be a potential for a considerable amount of profit there. So I'm glad that somebody actually is watching this, and I think that it is an area that needs to be watched.

I want to move on to some other areas, Madam Minister, for example, now CVA (Central Vehicle Agency) vehicles. Are they under your control in your department?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, I own quite a fleet of ageing vehicles.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Will we be getting a list of what vehicles are in your department's control and the condition of them and the age of them and the related kinds of important information?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes. We can give you a nicely detailed list by department.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Now you've alluded to having \$20 million worth of equipment under your department. That would include a lot of different kinds of things. Would that also include things like — oh, let's say — salt trucks in the Department of Highways and fire-fighting equipment up north? How far does this list of equipment go?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay. I'll just clarify a little bit because we had been discussing furniture previously and the \$20 million figure referred to furniture; 53 million refers to vehicles, and up to three tonnes is basically as big as we get, and then after that it's the department that handles that equipment and uses that equipment that manages it.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well of course now we've expanded your responsibility considerable, Minister, and it makes me wonder just what all is in your jurisdiction and under your authority. Could you give us a list of the inventory that your department

actually does take care of?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think we'll have to be a little bit specific because if we get down to detailing every item in government it would go to a fair extensive list. Are you speaking specifically about things with wheels, vehicles? Are you talking about airplanes? What is it really specifically that you want? I mean I'm sure you don't want everything down to the hammers; there must be some way to define what specifically it is you want.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Are you suggesting, Madam Minister, that you do not keep inventory lists of what the government owns and controls?

(1215)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Starting on page 16 and running through to page 23 of the annual report, there's a fairly extensive list of the nature and kinds of equipment and assets that Sask Property Management has, and certainly it would be possible to provide further details on most of those line items. I mean if you really want that, there is a possibility to provide quite a bit of detail, but I would hope that this would be information that you have a need for because this is a substantial amount of paper being reproduced. If you have a particular concern, it would help to focus it.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well I would like the detailed list, Madam Minister, as cumbersome as that may seem to you. I think somebody has to police what the government is doing with the taxpayers' money and the taxpayers' already-purchased equipment.

I can't understand if you don't have records and lists of inventory, how you can be in control of that inventory and how you can be sure that someone like myself might not just simply go into the Department of Highways and pop into a 3-tonne truck and drive over to the warehouse and load up a load of these chairs that are stored over there and drive home with them. You must have some inventory lists, and somebody must be in charge of policing those lists to see that in fact a person like myself couldn't do that. I might walk in and say, I'm an MLA. I have an office; I'm entitled to equipment. I want a set of keys and away I go. So what do we do about this?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well I was reading the list last night before bedtime, and I can assure you it does exist. And if you require that detail, we can certainly provide you with detail, and you can assess if that's adequate to your needs, and if not we would provide further information.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well, Madam Chairman, I feel really sad about your bedroom life being so boring but . . . Yes, I think we have to go into some detail now because as much as you want to do a good job in your role as the minister, I think it is incumbent on me to do a good job as the critic of this area and to try and find out as much as you know about what your department does; otherwise I couldn't possibly be considered in any way possible to be a good critic.

So whatever lists you were reading before bedtime and all of the other inventory types of lists that you have I would appreciate having so that I can have something to do with my spare time before I go to bed for the next few weeks. And I'd like to know how do you police these inventories.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — There's regular audits that are done of inventory that support the information provided in the annual report. And this would be done according to best practice principles for these kinds of activities for people who make this their profession.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — What people make this their profession?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We have internal auditors, and our auditor for the annual report is Deloitte & Touche.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well that's good. I'm glad somebody's watching over the equipment that the taxpayers have got all over the area.

In the fire-fighting equipment, you said that there is 3-tonne limits and that sort of thing, but we understand that there's a possibility that your department is in charge of a lot of the northern fire-fighting equipment. Could you brief me just a little bit on what types of fire-fighting equipment you would have up north?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We don't have specialized fire-fighting equipment. That's all purchased out of the resource protection development fund out of Parks. And we don't have . . . we would have just vehicles and what not, not specialized fire-fighting equipment.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Earlier you alluded to the fact that you have some buildings that you actually do own, although a lot of the buildings are owned and sort of operated by other departments. What kind of buildings in my constituency, the constituency of Maple Creek, would you own or take control of or have specific direct control of? Would there be any?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — In Maple Creek the only two that are owned are the visitor reception centre and the highway equipment repair building. The rest is all leased space.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Now you said Maple Creek. Are you saying specifically the town? When I asked, I was referring to my constituency, which would have like 14 towns — Gull Lake, Leader, Burstall, those kinds of places. Would they all have those same kinds of facilities then?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — If this is a matter of some import to you, we could prepare the information that way, but we don't maintain it that way. We would certainly have it by town, but not assembled as per your constituency, especially the way the boundaries keep changing.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's your fault.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — My colleague makes a good point. It's your

fault the boundaries are changing, not ours.

Yes, I do have a specific point to my questions or I wouldn't be standing here asking them, and that is to find out information. And we're doing rather well actually, of course if you do come through with your commitments to give us the information here.

So sure, let's pursue this a little further. It's important that I know what's going on in my constituency, even as it stands now, so let's work on the present boundaries rather than the old boundaries. And I will ask you then for a commitment to get a list of the things that we have in the towns in my constituency, and in the rural area too; maybe you own something out in The Sand Hills for all I know. I guess I have to bring myself up to speed on what's going on and that's the best way to do that.

I wanted to ask you — and I know you'll answer that, along with the next question — but I want to ask you, Minister, a few questions about the specific things that ordinarily will be answered in the generic list of questions, because last year we didn't get some of the specific answers. So in those areas where we didn't get specific answers, we would like to go into some detail.

And I would like to ask you, noting that you have not been the minister in charge of this portfolio for long, if you could provide us with a list of the detailed minister's travel — not yourself I guess in this case, but the minister ahead of you, and of course any that includes yourself, if that happens to have happened — and who accompanied you or him on each trip over the past year that we're talking about in the estimates here; all of the costs incurred including the accommodations and fees as well as the purpose of each of the trips that were taken in that period.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — To your previous question about assembling the information, both according to towns and other areas in your constituency, the answer to that is yes, we would prepare that for you.

Detailed ministerial travel along with questions that you outlined, yes, we can provide that to you. We'll do it at year end so that you have complete picture to March 31.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister, and I do hope that you are more diligent in delivering this information. That happened apparently last year, because our officials had gone through it and said there were some things that were missing.

So I suspect that probably that's just an oversight, and we wouldn't want to point any accusing fingers or anything like that. We would ask though that there be a little more diligence in trying to cover the whole package so that we aren't short on some of the answers.

How many staff members, Madam Minister, do you have currently working in your office?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Are you referring to my ministerial office?

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Yes.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Six.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Could you list them for us and tell us what pay range they're in?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I can hand this list across to you if you'd like.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister, we'll wait that anxiously.

**An Hon. Member:** — With bated breath.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — With bated breath, as the member has pointed out.

Have there been any promotions over the past year for any of these staff members, any changes in the staff members that are there, any change in status or description of their work?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — These staff were just hired as of February 3. And for staff that were existing in the organization previously, there was no change in their status. Obviously for someone who just obtained the job the change in their status would be they had gone from where they had worked before to working here. But for the staff that were already within the Legislative Building, there was no change in their status or pay.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, the new people in your office, can you indicate which ones on these lists those would be? Would it be Jill McKeen, Cory Oxelgren, Rick Ellingson, Erna Pearson, Margaret Giannetta, or Doriolo Jeworski?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — There were two new people. One of them would be Jill McKeen, my senior MA (ministerial assistant); and Rick Ellingson, the junior assistant.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, Madam Minister, where did Jill McKeen come from? What were her qualifications? And where did she come from prior to this appointment?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Jill McKeen was attending the University of McMaster on a scholarship from the University of Regina. She had won the president's medal here and had gone on to get a scholarship, at both the master's level, and was working on her doctorate when I called her and asked her if she would please move herself back to Saskatchewan because I desperately needed her skills.

And she has an extensive background. She's a person of about my age who has an extensive previous work history in libraries, research, and related items. And she had done some previous research work for myself when I worked at the university, and found her skills to be at just a superior level, as of course the university did when they awarded her the president's medal. So I was very pleased to have hired her.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Madam Minister, I wonder if you could provide us with a copy of her qualifications?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — No, I think she'd be happy. If you're willing to give her a better offer, she might consider it.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I think you started that sentence off with a no, Madam Minister. So will you give us the qualifications or not?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Absolutely. I have her résumé in my desk and I'll provide it to you.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you very much. And how about Rick Ellingson, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I can provide you with a brief overview. He worked both in the NGO (non-governmental organization) sector and in the Department of Health before I hired him. And he previously worked in my constituency office and did such a fine job there and had such good rapport with people in the constituency that I was very pleased that he was willing to move over into the Legislative Building in the junior position.

But I can also provide you with his résumé.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you very much, Madam Minister. And how much of an increase in salary would both Jill McKeen and Rick Ellingson receive from their previous employment or placements?

(1230)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think it would not be fair to compare a student salary, someone who has been a student primarily working to supplement their student income in libraries and other things over that time — that would not be a fair comparison. I could compare her to what somebody with a doctorate would make working in her profession.

Rick Ellingson, I think, it's an increase of about . . . but see, it's a different job, it's different responsibilities and a different job, so he would have received the pay that's assigned to the bottom level of the range that he was hired into, but certainly commensurate with his skills and experience.

If I would suggest anything, it's that our constituency assistants work at a very modest salary.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, you might think that they work at a very modest salary, but a good number of the public believe that they're very well paid. And since he was your assistant in your constituency office — and I have no idea whether or not he was the only assistant — that looks like a salary increase of about 12, \$13,000 a year, Madam Minister.

You mention Jill McKeen should be compared to a doctorate salary level. Does Jill McKeen have a doctorate?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — She's just in the last year of her program and works as a . . . worked previous to coming here as an instructor within the department there at McMaster, so certainly was considered well qualified by her educational institution; again reaffirmed by the fact of continual scholarships to continue her work.

I'm not sure if I've answered your full question there.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, perhaps for Jill McKeen a better comparison would be to a sessional assistant for a pay scale, comparison-wise. Do you have any idea what a sessional assistant would make at the duty she was performing?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Her qualifications and reimbursement are comparable to the level of any other staff that would be receiving that salary. And I think in fact I'm very lucky to have someone with those kinds of qualifications working for myself in a ministerial office. This sets a very high standard for the conduct of our office.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister. You may believe that this person is very qualified and good, and perhaps she is — I have no idea — but as the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are concerned . . . is whether or not she's receiving the proper remuneration. And in their sense proper means as low as possible for the qualified person.

Madam Minister, the other people in your office — Cory Oxelgren, Erna Pearson, Margaret Giannetta, and Doriote Jeworski — have they received any salary increase in the previous year?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — They weren't my staff until February 3 so I would have no idea what happened to them previous to that. If it's important to you, we can find out, but I certainly don't have any idea of what happened prior to my hiring them. They received no increase upon joining my staff.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, where did these people come from then?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Erna Pearson, Margaret Giannetta, and Doriote Jeworski were previously in the Minister of Health's staff. And many of them go back a long way in the employ of government, predating our government in fact. And they have just been very good staff who I've been particularly pleased to have, because starting out with four portfolios wasn't particularly easy, and they certainly have been excellent staff.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, you named three. What about the fourth one?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Cory Oxelgren was previously in Mr. Penner's staff in CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) and associate minister of Finance.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — And what was the level of pay he was receiving there, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The same as he's receiving now.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Did he receive that same level of pay for the entire previous year?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again that's something I wouldn't know. I'd have to find that out for you.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, we would like to have that information if you would, please, for the past year for each one of the individuals on your staff; whether or not there has been any changes in the salaries or in the categories in which they're in.

They very well may have jumped into a different category while retaining the same salary. But if you go from the top range in say A to the bottom range in B, which might very well be the same salary scale, but it leaves you a lot of room then to go up incrementally.

And so it's very important I believe, Madam Minister, that the public knows that this sort of thing is not happening; that people aren't simply jumping around.

When all of these people left their previous areas, other than Jill McKeen who was not employed in government, did they receive any severance before or when they left Health or when they left the other areas? When Rick Ellingson left your constituency office to come to work for you, was there any severances involved?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — No.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. You will provide us though with all of the scales and what they were at before and categories?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'll provide that for people who were previously in the employ of this building. I don't think it is either my right or my responsibility to reveal what people were making in another university in another occupation.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm prepared to accept that one for Jill McKeen.

Madam Minister, to go back to SPMC's inventories and items such as that, do you have an inventory of all of the computers?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We have a listing of all of our computers for SPMC, but not government-wide, no.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — For the computers that are owned by SPMC, you have a list for all of those? Okay, the minister indicates yes.

Madam Minister, how many computers have you purchased within the last year?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We can certainly provide that to you.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Madam Minister, can you give any justifications or rationale for those computers that you may have purchased?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We can provide that with the information that we're going to be giving you. But I just might add that SPMC does have responsibilities for things like the GIS (geographic information systems) system, etc., and these are business-related computer usages. And so there would be things like that. But we'll explain those in the attached briefing notes with the computer expenditures.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Madam Minister, would you mind explaining just what GIS is.

**Hon. Ms. Carson:** — That's a system that, I think, has been emerging more and more in wide use throughout a number of departments. That's a geographic information system that gives a wide range of surface geographical survey and even below-ground information about any particular area.

It's quite an amazing thing if you've ever seen one in operation. And in fact I invite you over to have a look at the thing because I got a chance to look at one a while back with one of the private companies that operates a system in my constituency, and it really is quite an amazing operation.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister. We may indeed take you up on that as the hydrographic information, I think, would be very interesting.

But, Madam Minister, when it comes to computers, as we all know that you can . . . to purchase new computers today, you can get some very powerful equipment in very small packages. But within an office system, you may not necessarily need the top-of-the-line computer system to provide the service that is needed.

As an example, the Clerk's offices in here, in the Assembly, run on old Wangs that came over with Noah and the Ark, and yet they still manage to get the work down — although they would argue, very slowly.

So perhaps, Madam Minister, I think it's very important to know what kind of equipment you're buying and for what service and location you're buying it for. So that's the kind of information I would like to have as to what was the justification of buying a particular piece of equipment. If you bought a Pentium when all you needed was a 386, I think there's a question to be asked there, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'll give you a few answers to that. One of them is because of the explosion in networks and different ways of using computers, e-mail, etc. We have set up an information technology committee which will be bringing in expertise of the public and private sector and looking at the broad-based information highway needs.

But certainly for the purposes this specific question, we still have a lot of old stuff, two old XTs and what not, and we have new equipment that's being purchased in strategic areas related

to information technology and business needs in the province. But we will provide you with that detailed list and statement of mandate regarding the particular areas that that's used in.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, is SPMC setting up this new information system? Is that what you're telling us? And then exactly what kind of information is SPMC then gathering and what are these strategic objectives?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again specific to our corporation, we will tell you where this equipment is, what it is, what area it's being used in. And I think that will give you sufficient information for the questions that you're interested in. If you have broader questions, you'd have to address that to people like SaskTel and other people that are involved in the whole information highway venture.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, is SPMC involved with the other departments in supplying equipment or in supplying technical information?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay, as you know, in the past in the days of the horse and buggy, SPMC took regular mail around. Now with the information highway, they coordinate all the voice and data services of government, and that includes the e-mail system, government-wide e-mail system, enabling us to eliminate a lot of paper, a lot of handling, and a lot of travelling back and forth through this system.

Through the purchasing agency, any computer equipment purchased for executive government goes through SPMC, and they also provide or retain technical consultants to help the various areas design their systems and ensure within that network compatibility.

I don't really know what else I can say other than this. It's all a very new area, and it's requiring some restructuring, some rethinking, and some new investment to be able to deliver the new kinds of services that are expected with the information highway.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister. I'm very glad to hear that SPMC is in the modern age because when we look at health care in this province, it is going back to the horse and buggy. And I'm glad to see that SPMC is not one of those departments that is returning to the horse and buggy.

Madam Minister, when you do technical support for another department, you said that the other departments purchase equipment through you or acquire equipment through you. Do the other departments pay for that technical support? And do the other departments own the equipment, and therefore SPMC is paid for it? Or does SPMC own it and rent it out? Or what kind of a transfer is made in that area?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — They really just look after the process of purchasing, the procurement and the retaining of consultants. Everything else would be the responsibility of the department because of course it's in their budget, and it's their responsibility related to their budgetary decisions that they make and the relative importance that they place on the different things that

they're doing. So we're really more of a facilitator of the process.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — When you're providing technical support, though, Madam Minister, does SPMC receive compensation for that? Are those SPMC personnel that are providing that technical support?

(1245)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Our technical expertise that is provided into this is at the stage of procurement and purchasing. We don't actually go into the offices and set up the computers and stuff like that. That's not what we're involved in; it's the process of procurement and retaining — helping people locate the expertise that they need, rather than any direct delivery of that expertise to them.

An additional response is that it's provided for free, that level of service there.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you, Madam Minister. You mentioned the information highway; the e-mail system is operated by SPMC. Is SPMC getting involved in the Internet system by providing equipment or terminals or access onto the information net?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — SaskTel is the deliverer of Internet, and we will work with them as that system unfolds to determine exactly what the department's role might be in helping to make that happen. But at this moment we have no direct involvement; we're really at the customer end of things, and SaskTel is the deliverer.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, when you're talking the customer end of things, are you talking about SPMC as a customer? Are you talking about, say the Crop Insurance offices around the province as being . . . you have supplied equipment to them, and they are the customer end for the Internet from SaskTel, or who are you referring to as the customer?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — It's really more of a coordinating role on behalf of all of government as it relates to the Internet because again it's important that there be . . . I'm sure you know as well as I do how easy it is to spend money in this area without getting the result that you hoped for in terms of your equipment or your systems or even your software. And really what the job is here is to coordinate that as various departments link up to the Internet with SaskTel. It's a facilitative function.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Does SPMC's office itself act as a customer on the Internet?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — At this point SPMC has one station. SaskTel has provided one station to a number of areas to try them out and monitor them and see how they might apply and how useful it is being hooked up to the Internet for any area of government that's part of, I guess, the initial pilot to see what the utility of this. So SPMC in that sense is a customer, and

they're trying out how the internet system might apply usefully within the kind of matters that SPMC deals with and works with.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you, Madam Minister. Would SPMC be supplying equipment for any other locations of a similar nature within other departments?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — No, it's up to the departments again to identify their needs, and we would assist with procurement. But any relationship they would have on the Internet would be with SaskTel.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you, Madam Minister. What kind of a cost is involved with SPMC with their one station?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — During the pilot phase, there's no cost because it's really very experimental to see what is possible and what is useful.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, I would like to be able to connect up to the Internet at no cost. Even if SaskTel was providing me with that connection for free, there's still a cost because there's equipment sitting there that somebody had to purchase. So what's the cost for this for SPMC, not just for the connection to SaskTel's line but for the equipment that's sitting there?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I know this is a bit of a difficult thing to understand when we're used to using other systems. There are no real new costs because the equipment was already there. Modems were already there for the purposes of e-mail and what not, and what it is, is a new line that's really in the nature of a long-distance line. And there already were long-distance exchanges occurring, only occurring via telephone instead of via a direct computer link.

So what it is, is more of a changing of the way of doing something, as opposed to substantial new costs of any kind.

So at this point, there is no real new cost. SaskTel is likely absorbing a small amount of expense in terms of their desire to check this out and to pilot it and to see what its utility is before suggesting broader application of it. I would call it I guess a research and development phase.

But there are no real new costs because this equipment and the modems, etc., all existed. It's really just a new use of them.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. So the modem and the computer that you're using was already on-line with your e-mail system. So am I to assume then . . . can you answer whether or not there was any new equipment gathered in from some place to make the Internet connection — any new software?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — No.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. There was no new software either purchased . . .

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — No.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — It's nice to get a clear, crisp, one-word answer, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, I have two questions related to your staff in your ministerial office, if you could answer please. Were the positions advertised?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I essentially had two days between when I was appointed and when I started being a minister. No, they were not advertised.

The only real new person that wasn't already within the system would have been Jill McKeen. And I very specifically wanted her specific skills and her specifically because of my experience with her very excellent work, although when I had hired her on a previous occasion, it was through competition which is how I got to be familiar with her skills.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. In the case of Jill McKeen, was your office or any of the departments involved in moving costs for her? You mentioned she was going to school, I believe, in Montreal. Did your office or any department pay any moving costs for her?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — It's standard government policy that would apply, but I would add that being a student she really didn't have a lot to move and has begged and borrowed furniture and what not here, so there really wasn't any substantial cost involved there. And whatever cost there would be would be according to normal government policy of what's acceptable. But it's been very low in this instance.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Madam Minister, I wonder if you could outline for us then what the normal practice is for an employee coming into government, seemingly for the first time.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — How about if we just send you a copy of the relocation policy and then you'll have all the details.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm not sure, though, if you would call this employment a relocation. To me, the term relocation means if you have an employee working at P.A. (Prince Albert) and you move him to Maple Creek, that's a relocation.

But when a person comes on to a job for the first time, that's not in my mind, a relocation. When you hire on to a new job it's up to you to get there. Now you could try to negotiate with your new employer that they pay some of your costs, and perhaps this is what you're talking about, but I find it surprising that every employee that would get hired by the Saskatchewan government would be automatically provided with moving costs from wherever it might be they were coming from.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again you would realize that the Government of Saskatchewan does also have to provide similar standards to other employers and to the private sector, and there are two policies regarding this kind of thing.

One is do with existing employees, and another one is to do with new hiring, and there's two policies that refer to those two distinct situations. But I might add that even Canada Employment Centre recognizes the need to occasionally pay costs so that people can relocate to other employment in Canada.

And I think if you're going to talk about an open Canadian economy where people relocate according to skill to where they're needed and where their skills can be used, I think it is not unusual for relocation costs to be paid, particularly for people who are working at this level of expertise. It's fairly common.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:57 p.m.