

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise under rule 11 to present a petition today, signed by some 642 Saskatchewan residents from 55 different communities, many of them in the Assiniboia-Gravelbourg constituency.

These petitions are opposed to the elimination of the Saskatchewan school-based dental plan, and they seek the re-implementation of that plan, together with the re-employment of the dismissed workers.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure for me today to introduce, through you and to this Assembly, the member for Vegreville and his family with us today in your gallery - Mr. Derek Fox is the New Democratic member for Vegreville in the Alberta House.

Accompanying him is his wife, Viola Braun Fox, and his daughters, Taneen and Anya. I would like this Assembly to welcome them today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to introduce a guest to you this afternoon, and to other members of the Assembly, who is visiting us from Osaka, Japan. She is a young woman who's attending university in her third year, and her specialty is western history.

She is in Saskatchewan, and this is a first trip outside of Japan for her. She's had some other firsts - first horseback ride, first attempt at surf sailing in Saskatchewan - and I'm sure in her trip, in the rest of the time she will spend in Saskatchewan and Ontario, she'll have a number of other firsts.

The city of Osaka is a city of over three million people, so you can understand the impressions she is getting from the province of Saskatchewan as she visits here.

After leaving here, she intends to go to York University in Toronto for one month of intensive English studies. And her name is Mikako Kurokawa. And I'm sure all members will join me in welcoming Kurokawa-san to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tusa: — I, too, would like to introduce to the House a guest which I have in the Speaker's gallery today. The individual is the member for St. Catherines in Ontario, Mr. Joe Reid, MP. He is accompanied by his wife to our legislature this afternoon.

Mr. Reid and his wife are here visiting Saskatchewan. They have come back to a family reunion in Strasbourg. And I might add that he was formerly a resident of Govan - Govan district and town. Also, in part of his career, Mr. Reid has been the former mayor of St. Catherines. They are accompanied this afternoon by their niece, Merle Ridley.

I would like all members to please welcome Mr. Reid and his wife to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Monsieur le président, nous avons ici aujourd'hui des étudiants de la belle province. Bienvenue ici aujourd'hui à la législature et à Regina. Nous espérons que vous allez enjouir de votre visite. Bienvenue. Bonne chance. Merci.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Farmers' Quota Deliveries

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. My question is to the Acting Minister of Agriculture. It has to do with problems which farmers in eastern Saskatchewan are having today with respect to their deliveries - deliveries of their quotas prior to the end of the crop year.

In the past, when there have been delivery problems, the Canadian Wheat Board has looked at extending the crop year for a few days in order to accommodate all the farmers to get their equal opportunity of delivery to them so they can get rid of their grain, especially this year when the crop prices are dropping 8, 19 to 20 per cent? Has the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister, contacted the Mulroney government to see if an extension of the crop year is possible? And I would ask, what was Ottawa's answer?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that representations have been made to Ottawa. I can't be much more specific than that, and I will take notice of the question on behalf of the Premier.

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Minister, I assume that you know that last year we had approximately 1.7 million tonnes in storage, and this year there's just slightly less - about 1.25 million metric tons. The Thunder Bay shipping area, in particular, is very congested - both lines, and CN lines apparently are worse.

In your contract with the federal government, have you requested that the crop year be extended so that these farmers, in light of what I had said previously with the financial difficulties they're in, have you specifically requested that the crop year be extended to accommodate them in their deliveries?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I can't comment particularly, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what the specific representations

were. I will take notice of the question, although if my memory serves me correctly, our Premier enjoyed some success in this last year in a similar situation.

Impact of Increased Taxes in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of Finance, and it deals with the unprecedented tax bite by your government, sir, in this year's provincial budget, and the impact that those tax increases are having on the Saskatchewan economy and on ordinary people.

The flat tax was increased by over \$100 million; the 2 per cent jump in the sales tax will amount to 100, \$120 million; the PC gas tax, even after the rebate, will cost an additional \$50 million. Mr. Minister, that's 250 million or more a year out of the pockets of average taxpayers, or the equivalent of a 19-point jump in the personal income tax rate.

Mr. Minister, can you justify that sort of an increase in taxes on average people when your government is collecting not more but less from corporate taxpayers in this budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated through the budget, several questions to the opposition - for some reason they're not listening. The corporate tax rates, as I indicated, would remain the same for the simple fact that the differential between Alberta and Saskatchewan now is fairly narrow, and people will not make the arbitrary decision to set up businesses in the province of Alberta.

The big payer of the gasoline tax will be business. And that . . . you object to the gas tax, but the rebate exempts the average person when they keep their receipts. Business will be the big payer of the gasoline tax, Mr. Speaker. Business paying the gasoline tax still will not have a distortion vis-a-vis Alberta and Manitoba, with the gas tax being 5 cents a litre in Alberta and, I believe, 8.9 cents a litre in Manitoba. But the big payer of the gas tax will be business.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, your own budget documents show that you plan to take an additional 250 million in the three taxes which I enumerated, while you are taking less money from corporate tax and less money from corporate capital tax, up 250 million for Saskatchewan citizens - some of whom will be business - down 30 million for corporations. Mr. Minister, does that meet your standard of fairness? Does it meet anybody's standard of fairness?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I believe the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that the corporate capital tax rate in Saskatchewan is the highest in Canada. And it was raised in last year's budget.

I might advise the hon. member . . . again he's not taking into account in his calculations the fact that business is

the large payer of the gasoline tax in the province. But be that as it may, Mr. Speaker . . . and to the Leader of the Opposition, as we've indicated and as the tables show, the people of Saskatchewan, when one takes into account taxes and charges, are still the second-lowest taxed people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that if one wants to take a look at the tables at the back of the budget, the second-lowest taxed people in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And I know the hon. members don't want to hear that, Mr. Speaker. And one of the reasons that the Leader of the Opposition had to ask the question, not the minister of Finance, because the minister of Finance didn't want to hear that when he'd asked the question earlier. But they are the second-lowest taxed people in Canada.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, the member is previous; he's ahead of himself. The member for Regina North East is not yet the minister of Finance.

But, Mr. Minister, look at your figures. Do you not concede that your figures in the budget documents show that while individual income tax is up, and sales taxes are way up, and gasoline tax is up, some of which I know will be paid by small business, the amount received for corporation capital tax and corporate income tax is down. And how can you square that with any standard of fairness?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well again, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that the corporate capital taxes and the corporate taxes are down on estimates and payments by the federal government. That's what we estimate that the revenues will generate.

One should look at the rates, because it's the rates that are the important factor. And the fact is that the people of Saskatchewan are the second-lowest taxed people in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the opposition does not want to hear that, but they are the second-lowest taxed people in Canada. And one again can take a look at the rates. The rates, Mr. Speaker, are low; they're the second-lowest in Canada. And as well, when one looks at total revenues, I suggest to the hon. member that corporate taxes have always been lower than the receipts from personal income tax, and it's been that way for a very long period of time.

So if you want to compare apples . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. I think the minister has adequately answered the question.

Effects of Federal Government Tax Proposals

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Finance, and I want to ask him a question about a further tax grab that this government is undertaking.

Now, Mr. Minister, following last month's publication of the so-called tax reform package of the Mulroney government, you claimed that the changes could mean a

loss of \$18 million next year to the Saskatchewan treasury. At that time you also threatened a further increase in the unfair tax to make up the shortfall.

Now I refer you, Mr. Minister, in case you have forgotten, to page 50 of Mr. Wilson's white paper in which it clearly states that Saskatchewan will gain \$4 million next year as a result of these proposed changes, and it will gain \$20 million in total over the next five years.

Now I ask you, Mr. Minister, will you explain to the people of Saskatchewan the contradiction between your statement, which is a set-up for a further tax grab, and the statement of Michael Wilson from the federal government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again, to the opposition financial critic, that if one takes a look at the tax reform proposals of the federal government, integrated into that, in the first year, is a speed-up of the tax collections which means a quicker tax flow back to the province for one year.

The net differential, as I've indicated, as a result of the tax reform packages were, I believe, some \$18 million less to the province, and we've indicated that comes from higher corporate tax - lower personal income tax receipts. The differential in the two figures is the fact that the federal government, as part of its tax reform, will have a one-year speed up of payments to the provinces. But over the course of tax reform, that is the effect as I have given.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, what you say here and what Mr. Wilson says do not square. It shows in the white paper that the direct impact of personal and corporate income tax reform on the provincial government revenues are going to be a gain to the provincial treasury of \$20 million over the next five years. And that's a quote, Mr. Minister. Are you saying that the federal government is wrong, or are you saying to the people of Saskatchewan that Michael Wilson is misleading the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I've indicated on several occasions now that the differential between the calculations of the Saskatchewan Department of Finance and the effective tax reform is a net income loss to the province of Saskatchewan.

The differential comes in the figures because of the proposal in the federal tax reform to speed up the flow-through of tax collections back to the provinces. It's a very, very simply matter, Mr. Speaker, for those that understand. And the differential, as a result of tax reform, is a loss to the province of revenues. Again, the calculation means one year of less of a differential, Mr. Speaker. But it's only one year that one picks up on the speed-up . . . the flow-through of the tax collections.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — The only two people who don't seem to understand are the Minister of Finance in Saskatchewan and the Minister of Finance in Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, isn't the real story here the fact that you planned to use the Mulroney government's tax changes as a convenient way to undertake another unfair tax grab on Saskatchewan taxpayers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now the flat tax has been set at 2 per cent and you announced that in June. And you said at that time that it would go back to one and one-half per cent after the end of this year. Will you confirm to this House, Mr. Minister, that you intend to leave that flat tax at 2 per cent next year?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm frankly a little shocked at the opposition Finance critic . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, please. Order, please. Allow the minister to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — . . . wants to get into next year's budget and begin the budget debate, because they didn't participate in this year's budget debate, Mr. Speaker, and seem to have missed it.

Now what we've indicated are the revenue proposals and expenditure proposals for the fiscal year which we're now in. Mr. Speaker, I indicated that the flat tax was up one-half a point. We've been through the collection process. I hope he now has that figured out - that it's one-half a point for all of 1987. In January 1, 1988 that will drop back to the stated level of one and one-half points, Mr. Speaker. That is the government's position.

I wouldn't want to anticipate next year's budget. But I can give the assurance to the hon. members that next year - next year Saskatchewan, at worst, will still maintain the position of being the second-lowest taxed province in the Dominion of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister to cut out the mumbo-jumbo and directly answer the question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, will you answer this question: who's wrong here and who's misleading, or are you both misleading? Is Mr. Wilson wrong when he says to Saskatchewan people that there will be a gain of \$20 million to the Saskatchewan treasury in the next five years? Or are you misleading Saskatchewan taxpayers by saying you're going to have to leave the flat tax at 2 per cent, in spite of your promise to bring it back to a percentage and a half, so that you can have another tax grab?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be somewhat premature to let the hon. member know what

next year's budget will be. I have indicated the following: that we would be, as a result of federal tax . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I ask the hon. members to please allow the minister to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — As a result of the proposals for federal tax reform, we are assessing and reassessing the provincial income tax and provincial corporate tax schemes. I have indicated that to the hon. member. I have indicated that federal tax reform leads to the calculations of the Department of Finance of Saskatchewan to a net revenue loss.

Thirdly, I have indicated in no uncertain terms, because I don't want it misinterpreted, that whatever next year's budget will be, Mr. Speaker, that this government - and I give the assurance to the people of this province - that Saskatchewan will maintain its position, Mr. Speaker, of being the second-lowest taxed province in Canada . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Now I have asked the hon. members on several occasions to please allow the ministers to answer the question. And though they might not like the answer they're receiving, it is still the prerogative of the minister to answer in the way he sees fit. So I would like to remind hon. members of that, and ask them to not continually interfere.

I recognize the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

An Hon. Member: — I haven't finished my answer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Well, I believe we will go on now to the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

Legal Aid Commission Fees

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Social Services responsible for the Legal Aid Commission. In answering previous questions, the minister has sought to leave the impression that the idea of imposing user fees for legal aid in Saskatchewan is the brain-child of the Legal Aid Commission, and that he is just the helpless victim of whatever it is the Legal Aid Commission decides to do.

Will the minister now confirm that that is not, in fact, the case; that instead the Legal Aid Commission of Saskatchewan was instructed by this government to impose user fees after a decision of the cabinet to that effect?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can give you an answer similar to the answer that the former attorney general, now the member for Riversdale, gave in 1981, where, at page 781 of *Hansard* in 1981, the former attorney general at that time said, "The legal aid commission is (an) autonomous and independent . . ."

We are not in a position to instruct them to take user fees from anyone. I am not hiding from anything. I have indicated publicly, and I believe on the record, that I am not opposed, nor is this government opposed, to some

people who have some ability to pay, to pay something towards their legal fees.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I invite the minister to weigh his words with care. Is the minister specifically telling this House that the cabinet, or a committee of cabinet, did not consider the matter of imposing user fees on legal aid? And is he specifically telling the House that he is denying that this government advised the Legal Aid Commission to impose fees?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — I've already answered the question. I told you that this government is not opposed to user fees in legal aid for some people who have some ability to pay. And I think, if you will recall, I said so last week. So we're not hiding anything. I don't recall any instruction going out to them to impose user fees. I recall an indication that they were considering such a situation. And firstly, I don't recall any instruction; and secondly, they wouldn't be bound by it.

As I told the other member of the opposition a few days ago, I told them, and I'm sure you were here and heard it, that legal aid has considered its options. All we do is provide a cheque for a certain amount of funds. This year, there was a reduction of 8 per cent.

Mr. Goodale: — May I ask the minister a very direct question, and again I invite his careful response. Mr. Minister, last month did cabinet or a committee of cabinet specifically conclude that user fees ought to be imposed? And did you or your deputy minister or a senior officials in your department write to the Legal Aid Commission to advise them to impose fees?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well first of all, what's done in cabinet is not public, at least, even, not to you. Secondly, not that I know of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Table it and I'll look at it. You're waving a document. If you have a document, table it so I can look at it and I'll give you an answer based on what's in the document.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Effects of Federal Government's Tax Reform Proposals

Mr. Solomon: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance and it deals with the Mulroney government's so-called tax proposals.

You have publicly supported the federal government's tax reform proposals, and those proposals include a new national sales tax which will expand the sales tax to include services, and would be applied like a value added tax on manufactured goods at every stage of production, from raw materials to the final consumer.

Can the Minister of Finance tell Saskatchewan taxpayers why he supports a new national sales tax on all goods and services, including food, and how does he see such a tax as being fair to the average Saskatchewan consumer?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again, fortunately, virtually all of the members of the press have heard my comments and

response to this, and they don't put the interpretation on it that the hon. member has.

I have indicated on federal tax reform that my view that federal tax reform is proposed by the federal Minister of Finance is only the first step in a very long process of discussion and negotiation.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I've made it abundantly clear on numerous occasions to the public and to the press, that I'm opposed to a tax on food, and the government is opposed to a tax on food.

Thirdly, with regard to a national sales tax, what I have indicated on numerous occasions is that if a federal sales tax is to the advantage of the people of Saskatchewan, and we can eliminate the duplication between the two . . . of the two taxes, then I think it's very much worthy of consideration and discussion. And we're prepared to consider that approach. But if it's detrimental to the people of Saskatchewan, we don't intend to participate in a combined federal-provincial sales tax. If it is workable and if it is to the advantage of the people of the province, then certainly.

For particularly small business to only have to deal with one tax form, I think is advantage to the small-business community that will have to collect the taxes on behalf of the government of Canada.

Mr. Solomon: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, the same minister. Isn't the Mulroney government's so-called tax reform package a classic example of giving with one hand and taking with the other? Any reductions the average taxpayer might enjoy as a result of the changes to the personal income tax will be more than offset by higher hidden taxes on all the goods and services that they buy.

The sales tax is a back pocket, hidden tax - a hidden tax which you and Brian Mulroney . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. The hon. member, I'm sure, has a supplementary question, but I believe his preamble is getting inordinately long. So would you please put your question.

Mr. Solomon: — The sales tax is a back pocket, hidden tax, Mr. Minister, which you and Mr. Mulroney hope Canadian consumers will not . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order! Order, please. Please stand up and put your supplementary directly.

Mr. Solomon: — Isn't that hidden tax, Mr. Minister, why you find a national sales tax so appealing?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I've indicated that there are some potential benefits to a national sales tax. That means there would only be one tax. And the small business, particularly the retailers of Saskatchewan that would have to collect that tax, would only have to collect . . . remit one tax.

I've also indicated that if a national sales tax is not to the

benefit, or to the detriment of the people of Saskatchewan, we would not be supporting it. There obviously . . . when one looks at simplifying the tax system, conceptually, a national sales tax, one sales tax, has some advantages. If you want to complicate the system, have two, three, four, five - as many as you wish.

The question that the hon. member raises as to hidden taxes, other taxes, is, I don't think, a valid one. The debate can be, quite simply, on the national sales tax, as to whether it is put on the final goods, whether it's put on . . . at what stage that it is imposed. So to assume that a national sales tax is a hidden tax is a false assumption, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I will give assurance over and over and over again that we will be the second-lowest taxed province in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I want to rise on a point of order.

Under rule number 26 of Saskatchewan . . . *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan 1981*, rule number 26, Mr. Speaker, says, in part, that:

No Member shall . . . use offensive words against the Assembly or against any Member thereof.

Mr. Speaker, last Friday, and this is the first opportunity I've had to review the record, and I think that the parliamentary language . . . unparliamentary language, whether presented from one's feet or from one's seat, Mr. Speaker, is nevertheless equally unparliamentary.

And on page 1372 of the *Hansard* of July 24, 1987, in response to . . . or a heckle across the floor, an hon. member said, directed to the member for Social Services, "Where's the swastika?"

Mr. Speaker, I think that kind of language is offensive to all people, and that kind of language, Mr. Speaker, I think is unparliamentary. Now I don't know, or I didn't know, what the source of that comment was, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that Mr. Speaker couldn't know because Mr. Speaker wasn't in the Chair on Friday.

However, Mr. Speaker, in the Saturday *Leader-Post* of July 25 . . . July 25 in the Dale Eisler column, it says that:

On Friday, the verbal sparring took on ugly overtones . . . The most stark example came yesterday from NDP front-bencher Murray Koskie, who is without question, the loudest and most raucous heckler in the legislature. It came (Mr. Speaker) while . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. I'm listening carefully to the member's point of order - and he definitely has a point of order. I would allow him to continue, but I would caution him not to make it too long.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker:

(This) came while (Mr.) Schmidt was being questioned by the NDP justice critic . . . As Schmidt was responding to Mitchell, Koskie shouted from his seat “where’s your swastika.”

Mr. Speaker, my point of order is quite simple. In *Beauchesne’s*, rules of debate, page 114, 323:

Unparliamentary words may be brought to the attention of the House either by . . . (Mr.) Speaker or by any Member. When the question is raised by a Member it must be as a point of order and not as a point of privilege (Mr. Speaker).

I have had at the immediate . . . first opportunity that I had to review the record, Mr. Speaker, have done that. It’s clear that a member said, where’s the swastika? It is alleged, at least, by one Dale Eisler, that that member was the member for Quill Lakes. I’m sure that other members have heard it. Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. I wish to allow the member to finish his point of order immediately. Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order.

When the Speaker is on his feet all members realize that they must give way and be seated. And I would allow . . . ask the member, the Deputy Premier, to please, quickly, in a few words, end his point of order.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, the point of order is quite simple. There can be no doubt that there was unparliamentary language used in this House on Friday. I ask the Speaker to, himself, review the record and the evidence presented here, and the Speaker to decide whether the point of order is well-founded or not.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, may I speak to the point of order?

Mr. Speaker: — Yes, you may.

Mr. Brockelbank: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the long fabrication of the member from Souris-Cannington.

When a point of order - I think, Mr. Speaker, you will recognize this - when a point of order occurs in this Chamber, it is dealt with at the time it occurs. Now if, in fact, this occurs as the member has said, then it should have been dealt with with the Speaker at that time, or the member himself should have raised on a point of order at that time.

There is no opportunity for members to accumulate grievances and hurts in this House and bring them all to your desk at one time or another as a collection of grievances, or long after the occurrence has happened. I think . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. We are now having this member interrupted, and I would like

you to honour his position as placing his point of order and allow him to complete his point of order, if he has not already . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay. The member has finished.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking with respect, and to the point of order raised by the Government House Leader, I refer you to page 1372 of the July 24 *Hansard* of this House where it indicates:

An Hon. Member: - Where’s the swastika?

And my reply at the time, Mr. Speaker, was:

Well, I take exception to the allegations the members are making from their seats, and I don’t think they . . . should be proud of them. Publicly accusing the member for Melville of being a Nazi is not parliamentary language . . .

The unparliamentary language was raised at the very time that it was heard: however, it was not clear until we checked *Hansard*, that the offensive language was so loud that it could be heard on the microphones throughout the legislature and reported in *Hansard*.

I rise today to point out that calling a member of the legislature a Nazi has been ruled in *Beauchesne’s* to be unparliamentary language. *Hansard* points out the word “swastika”; however, the same members who are shouting now were shouting Nazi at that time. The issue here is not whether the member from Melville has been offended, because the member from Melville is a politician who is used to some difficult situations, used to some . . .

An Hon. Member: What’s the point of order?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Hon. members have the opportunity to speak to a point of order which has been raised in the House. A point of order has been raised in the House, and the hon. member is speaking to the point of order, and he has that right, although we don’t wish him to make long and prolonged speeches.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason that the laws of this Assembly are such is to keep order and so that there is orderly conduct in this Assembly. And I rise here not as an individual alleging that this individual is offended. I rise here as a member of the legislature on this point of order to indicate that this is a further example of how unparliamentary language can cause disorder in the House.

In this particular care there are many thousands of German people in this province, and I would ask that it is imprecise and unclear exactly which of the members opposite raised the point, but when considering it . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Members do have the right to speak to a point of order. I have cautioned the member not to make a long and prolonged speech. I believe he has had an adequate opportunity to make his point. I will give him one or two more seconds, if he has anything critical

and crucial that he might add. But I caution him that he only has a very short time left.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's difficult to make a short address when one is constantly interrupted. And there is another example. The bottom line, the gist of it all, Mr. Speaker, is that the Leader of the Opposition is responsible for his members and should apologize to this Assembly and to all German people for the conduct of his members.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please! Order, please. I have over the weekend had the opportunity of reading the particular article that the Deputy Premier refers to, as I usually read newspapers when I have the opportunity. However, articles in newspapers, even though they may name names, are not the basis on which I, as Speaker, can make rulings. And therefore, while it might have been an interesting article to those people who read it - or perhaps it wasn't so interesting - I cannot make my decision on that article.

I have also read the transcripts of *Hansard* this morning when I came to my office, and I did see a comment made by a member, as indicated by the Deputy Premier. However, the transcript of *Hansard* does not indicate which member may have made that statement, and therefore I cannot rule as to the individual who made the particular statement, although it is clear from *Hansard* that somebody did.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to speak a few words about unparliamentary language and the effect it has on parliamentary procedure here in the province. Unfortunately, unparliamentary language has crept in to the language of this House. And as hon. members know full well, I have on different occasions taken the opportunity to remind hon. members that they are not to use unparliamentary language since it is an affront, not only to hon. members, but it may be an affront to the Chair, to the office of the Chair, and by being an affront to the office of the Chair is, in fact, an affront to every member in this House.

I reminded hon. members of that, and I am distressed that that has occurred again, and I am hopeful that hon. members will remember not to do that again.

Now I might add that I have been quite lenient in my rulings on this matter. And hon. members will recall that on different occasions I have brought this to attention of members but have not taken any disciplinary action, have not done that for a good reason.

I believe that all members elected to this House are honourable people and, being honourable people, they will adhere strictly to parliamentary language and not cast statements, hurl statements against hon. members like we have just heard alleged. I myself have often heard "liar," "you're lying," etc., hurled across the floor by hon. members. And I believe that this deterioration in the parliamentary language of the House has serious implications. And I would like to once more bring that to the attention of hon. members that this House cannot,

and will not, continue to allow that type of language to continue.

(1445)

And with that, I would like to say that while the hon. member has made his point of ruling . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I have just heard, in the midst of my ruling, the hon. member to my left. And I might admit, quite frankly, that I wasn't looking at him. I know the voice. I will not ask him to withdraw at this time, but that's the last warning he gets.

Now I would like to remind all our hon. members again, very briefly, that I will not tolerate that kind of language any more, for the good of the House - for the good of the House.

And while the hon. member, the Deputy Premier, has raised a point of order, I cannot rule that it was any specific person. It is a point of order which raises a serious matter in this House, but not a point of order that I can make a particular ruling on, and I will end with those conclusions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Hagel: — Moose Jaw North, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. Mr. Minister, as the House adjourned with estimates for Education on July 23 at 10 p.m., we were engaged in a conversation - not a conversation but a review of the conduct of your department - a very serious matter.

I was disappointed that you did not come back to allow us to complete the review of this matter on Friday, July 24, but I am pleased that we have an opportunity to complete dealing with this topic today.

Mr. Minister, if we can begin with the review of the exchange of information that you presented to this Assembly when we spoke about the matter of the dismissal of the principal of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute - or the former principal of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute, Dr. Andrew Nicol - if we can review what you told this House, and I refer to *Hansard*, pages 1366 and onward, Mr. Minister, in which you told this House that Dr. Nicol's position was abolished. You also told this House that there is a person acting as principal at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute in Moose Jaw. And you further said, on page 1367, that there will be a principal there that will head up that campus when that campus is established as the Moose Jaw campus of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences.

Mr. Minister, then what you said . . . what you told us in

this House is that, and I quote from *Hansard*, page 1366, you said, Mr. Minister:

. . . what we had was a principal at the community college and a principal at STI. We only need one in the new structure; one position was abolished . . .

You then went on to say, Mr. Minister, and these are your words:

I think what the hon. member is trying to do is to try . . .

Let me begin again:

I think what the hon. member is trying to do is trying to lead us into the scenario that would suggest - he would try and suggest - (and these are your words, Mr. Minister) that somehow this heavy-handed, rotten Tory government has somehow done a disservice here to one of its employees. And that is not true.

And those are your words, Mr. Minister. You then went on to say:

We picked two (and I quote verbatim again) from the community college side - two of those principals - and two from the institute side.

Mr. Minister, can we seek some further clarification on those statements - because I don't know that the facts of the matter established that you were being entirely accurate in what you said - and can we review the campuses in Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister. My first question to you is: who is the principal of the institute in Prince Albert?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Bob Gervais is the principal at the Prince Albert campus. The acting principal in Regina - because I suspect you'll want all of them before you're done your line of questioning - the acting principal in Regina is Bill Black; in Saskatoon it's Larry Dinter; and in Moose Jaw, acting as well again, is Nancy Lynch.

It might be worth noting as well, for the hon. member's information, in Moose Jaw the community college principal is acting in a more . . . or the former community college principal is acting in a more senior position in the new institute structure. The bottom line is two institute positions were abolished, namely Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, and two stayed on, namely Regina and Prince Albert.

The case is further mudified, if you like, by the fact that the principal at Regina, Ray Meyer, has taken on a more senior position as acting CEO of the new institute. And I think that's the kind of information the hon. member will probably want.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you said, we picked two from the community college side - two of those principals - and two from the institute side. You've just given me names of four individuals who are at the four campuses. Would you please clarify for me how that, as a matter of

fact, is picking two from the institute side and two from the community college side, please.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, first of all, three of those four that I gave you are acting. Number one.

Number two is I stand by the basis for what we have done here is that we did not want to, when we embarked on the amalgamation, to be seen to have the institute side swallowing up the community college side, or vice versa. And we stand by that.

I think that's fair. It made eminent good sense. Because this was not to be an exercise where one . . . from the start is was never an exercise that we were attempting to abolish one side or the other and penalize them for some failures of the past. Because the reality is that we were not embarking on this exercise as a punishment for something they had done in the past. This was not . . . this entire restructuring is not being done because somehow what community colleges or institutes have done in the past was somehow wrong or somehow failed us. What we're talking about here is a structure that in fact can meet the demands of the next two decades.

And I think that process that we've embarked upon has been as fair as one can make it, as reasonable as one can make. There is yet lots of work to be done. Certainly some of the institute positions I suspect will be advertised before we're done. And I'm certain at the end of the day that we will have the new institute that will serve the people of this province well.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, on July 23 you made a very clear statement. You said:

We picked two from the community college side - two of those principals - and two from the institute side.

I'm quoting from *Hansard*, page 1366, Mr. Minister. That strikes me as being a fairly straightforward and simple statement. I've just asked you a fairly straightforward and simple question. Which two of those people that you've named to me have come from the community college side; which two have come from the institute side?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The point I should make at the outset is we're not talking people, we're talking positions. The institutes, as you will know, up until the legislation is passed at least, are an arm of the department of what was formerly advanced education, now Education. The community colleges are autonomous, governed by boards. We, I suppose, cannot tell them what to do. We can negotiate and talk with them, and that was the process through amalgamation teams, etc., etc.

We, in all fairness, as I pointed out earlier, thought that it made good sense and would be fair and reasonable if we yielded two of our positions from the institute side, namely, the Saskatoon and Moose Jaw one. And we were hopeful that the community colleges, although we can't tell them, I suppose, what to do explicitly, but through the negotiations there's been some expectation that they would yield up two from their side. And I stand by that. If you are somehow are wishing to put another

interpretation on it or twist that logic or twist that basis, that is not the case. I've been totally up front in this all along. And my officials have bargained, if you like, in good faith and negotiated in good faith and sat on the amalgamation team with others in good faith for the reasons I've outlined earlier. And I remain committed to that.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, like you I appreciate being up front and straightforward responses to straightforward questions. Let me try again. I quote again from *Hansard*, page 1366 of July 23:

We picked two from the community college side - two of those principals - and two from the institute side.

That's what you said, Mr. Minister. I didn't say that - you said that. Will you tell this House for my clarification, please: of these four people, which two are the principals that you've selected from the institute side?

(1500)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well I will repeat then, for the third time. Yes, we in our sense of fair play and reasonableness, yielded up two positions, which is half, it seems to me. The two from our institute side that we put on the table, if you like, was Saskatoon and Moose Jaw.

Mr. Hagel: — I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with the person that you identified at Saskatoon, at the institute there right now, Mr. Minister. You gave me some information about the individual referred to from July 23 who's at the Moose Jaw institute. Can you tell me who is at the Saskatoon institute now and the background of that individual please?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — To recap the situation for you at Saskatoon: the principal of Kelsey was George Brown, who took early retirement and we abolished that position.

Now then we were faced with a situation . . . I think the scenario, you might want to paint as well, then - what about the college principal there? Well the reality was he had as well resigned. So to run the college and the institute for us on an acting basis - in this interim period - we went to a fellow by the name of Larry Dinter, who was the former assistant principal of programs at Kelsey. So I think you can see that there's been nothing underhanded or mischievous or unfair or unreasonable, that it was quite a logical chain of events that led us to the point to where we have got to in this process.

Mr. Hagel: — So what you're tell me then, Mr. Minister, is that responsible for the administration of the Kelsey Institute today is the former assistant principal from Kelsey. And responsible for the administration of the institute in Moose Jaw is the former vice-president of the P.A. institute. Is that correct, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That is correct. But the point that I should make is that they are not . . . these individuals are not there merely to run the old "institutes." They are there in this larger capacity, as we move towards the dotting the

i's and crossing the t's on the amalgamation process, to in fact put these new campuses up and running, which is an amalgamation of the old community colleges and the old institutes that existed previously.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you're telling me . . . I want to make sure I have this clearly because it appears, at times, statements that have on the surface a very clear implication, are not so when we ask further questions. What you're telling me, if I can summarize - and please confirm if I'm understanding this incorrectly, Mr. Minister - you're telling me here today that the intention was that at the Saskatoon and Moose Jaw campuses the administrator would come from the institute side.

You're telling me that the administrator of the Saskatoon campus is now the former assistant principal responsible for programming, and the administrator, chief administrator, at the Moose Jaw campus is the former vice-president from the Prince Albert institute. Have I understood that correctly, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well the points I should . . . I would make again is that, yes, we gave up two positions. And what has happened since then, in three out of the four instances that I have mentioned to you are acting - and I ought to underline that word. And to go through that scenario again as to why we have who we have in Saskatoon, that doesn't seem to be consistent in your mind with what I've said, is for this reason: the principal there took early retirement. Of our two that we offered up, that position was abolished. That seems straightforward enough.

Now the question becomes: well why didn't you take the community college guy? Okay. Well as it turned out, he too had resigned. So we went to the person that . . . and I mean I did not make the decisions. We have an interim governing council that looks after these kinds of things, and I trust their judgement, quite frankly. They have in place to run the operation on an acting basis, Larry Dinter. And I know the appearance may be as you suggest, but I wanted to emphasize that we were trying to be fair. We offered up the two positions, but because of early retirements and in fact other retirements where people accepted positions elsewhere, this is the situation as it exists today.

So the third point, and the point I would want to emphasize again, is that this is an acting situation, and I suspect that in the not too distant future you're going to see some competitions provincially posted, perhaps even nationally posted, to fill some of the executive level positions at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology.

I can only assure the hon. member there's nothing here that we're . . . we're not trying to undermine anybody or be nefarious or not straight up, etc., etc. It's a matter of how it came to pass, as I've described it to you.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Minister, I would agree full-heartedly with your assessment. There does seem to be some irregularities, particularly when compared to your statement in *Hansard*, July 23:

We picked two from the community college side - two of those principals - and two from the institute side.

And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that there are more than just you and I who are having a hard time figuring out what your department is doing in its reamalgamation process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — You made the reference earlier in this discussion today, Mr. Minister, that, I believe - and again I ask for your clarification, because I admit quite freely to having a bit of difficulty following the logic here - that the people at the P.A. institute and Regina were targeted to be from the community college side. Is that so, Mr. Minister, or have we got a mumbo-jumbo, you know, conglomeration of something else going on over there, too?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well in P.A. we have Bob Gervais as the principal. Relative to the community colleges' staff, obviously we can't dictate, as I mentioned earlier, because of the autonomous structure of the community colleges, particularly there, but we obviously are in negotiations with them, and they're involved in the amalgamation teams and those kinds of things. Although, when it comes to P.A., that's a particularly new . . . unique case there, in some other dimensions, as well.

There was some . . . I'm not sure I totally follow your question. But that's some information I think might be of use to you.

Mr. Hagel: — You've just simply repeated to me what you told me before, Mr. Minister. And that's . . . I asked the question because it's not clear to me.

You told me before that you wanted institute people targeted for the Saskatoon and Moose Jaw campuses; you wanted community college people targeted for the P.A. and Regina campuses. You have just told me, again, that Bob Gervais is the administrator in charge of the Prince Albert campus. And you've advised me that Bill Black is the administrator in charge of the Regina campus. I simply ask you: did both these people come from the community college side?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — If, on occasion through the debate of . . . last Thursday, was it, I interexchangeably used positions and people, the correct . . . the most correct term, and the one I've tried to most often use, is positions. And the basis was we would offer up two from our side - that whole scenario that I've talked about. And all I can do is go through that for you again.

The positions is what we're talking, as opposed to people. And that's the basis for it because, in the larger scheme of things, we didn't want to see this, you know, power struggle or that kind of thing.

And to be really honest with you, I think all of the institutes and colleges were very appreciative of an agreement with that kind of logic and that kind of thinking. At the same time, it . . . And rightly so, as well.

Managers and the boards of community colleges want to do right by their staff. And that, to me, makes eminent good sense, as well. And we want to do right by them and make sure that this thing can go as smoothly as possible.

As I say, if I've used the word "people" where I should have been talking "positions," then I apologize for that. The reality is, we've yielded up two positions, and I've talked about the basis for that before.

Mr. Hagel: — Let me try again, Mr. Minister. Did Mr. Gervais come from the community . . . what you call the community college side?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No.

Mr. Hagel: — Did Mr. Black come from what you call the community college side?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No. And do you have three or four of these? I could answer in succession for you, perhaps.

Mr. Hagel: — Did Mr. Gervais come from what you call the technical institute side?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Mr. Hagel: — And did Mr. Black come from what you call the technical institute side?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Mr. Hagel: — I think, Mr. Minister, you may - if you want to just listen carefully - appreciate why I, and anyone else who is watching this amalgamation of technical institutes and community colleges, is having a little difficulty following the blueprint.

I distinctly recall you saying, just a few minutes ago in this discussion, and I referred you several times to *Hansard* of July 23 in which you have advised this Assembly that there was intended to be two people from the institute side at the Saskatoon campus and at the Moose Jaw campus; two people from what you called the community college side at the P.A. campus and the Regina campus. And you've now just finished telling me that as a matter of fact we have four people, all four people at all four campuses have come from what you call the institute side. Is that correct, Mr. Minister?

(1515)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well you can make what observations you like. And I said if there was some appearance of inconsistency, it was because of things like the fact that the community college principal in Saskatoon and the principal there both took retirement, and in one case early retirement.

But if you want to ask the question as to whether we're consistent in terms of yielding up two positions from our side, the questions then become this: was the principalship at STI abolished and the answer is yes. And the question is: was the principalship at Wascana abolished? And the answer is yes.

So you can put your view on it and ignore the fact that, in some instances in community colleges, both officers resigned. And somehow if you were going to take your example, in which case you're getting down to people again as opposed to positions which is where your logic breaks down . . . And that's why when I pose the questions I say: was the principalship of STI abolished? The answer is yes. Was the principalship of Kelsey abolished? And the answer is yes. And I think that logic stands pat and meets the test.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you will understand my confusion. In the statement you just finished making you told me that the principal position at Wascana, at Moose Jaw, and at Kelsey was abolished. That's what you just finished telling me. Will you get your facts straight and give serious answers to serious questions? Which positions were abolished?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — What my notes say is: was the principalship of STI abolished? And the answer is yes. Was the principalship at Kelsey abolished? And the answer is yes. And that is correct. If I said something else in one of the instances, I'm sorry.

Mr. Hagel: — Well your apology is accepted, Mr. Minister, and I would ask you to try and, in the interest of clarity, be a little more precise in the answers that you provide to this House.

There are literally hundreds of people who are directly affected in the employ of these institutes who are trying to understand the plan and what is going on within the Department of Education. There are literally thousands of students in Saskatchewan today who don't know what's happening in terms of their applications to technical institutes who are trying to understand what is going on in the education system in Saskatchewan today.

And in the interest of clarity - in the interest of clarity, Mr. Minister - you and I may disagree whole heartedly in a number of the philosophical objectives and plans that you have intended to put in place with your blueprint, but in the interest of clarity, at least for the people in Saskatchewan, can we get some clear answers here.

Let me review again then, Mr. Minister, to make sure I understand this clearly, because it is frustrating from this side of the House to ask you a question for clarification and then get two different answers.

Am I correct in understanding that you abolished the positions of the principal at Kelsey Institute and at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan Technical Institute? It was your objective to put in place, in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, after having abolished the positions of the principal of the technical institutes, to put in place there two people to head up the administration who come from, what you call, the technical institute's side. I believe you also told me it was your objective, then, to put in place, in Prince Albert and Regina, people who come from what you call the community college side. But that didn't pan out. And there's technical people from the technical institute's side

there as well.

I have not asked a new question, Mr. Minister. I've simply attempted to summarize what, I believe, you have told me here today. Will you simply confirm to me whether that is accurate or not?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — We are both to the same point now, when we talk about abolishments of principalships at STI and Kelsey. You're right. Yes, those two have been abolished.

But you're not right on the second part, that what we expect from the community college side was for them to offer up two positions. Now we can't dictate to them which ones, as you can appreciate because of the autonomous nature of the community colleges. That is still ongoing, as part of the amalgamation process. And I suspect that, when the dust settles at the end of the day, the balance that we've striven to, or strove, to attain . . . What's the correct language here? The balance that we'd like to have will, in fact, be the case. But we cannot dictate to them which ones they should give up.

In the interim, because we have to function, as you can well appreciate, we have some acting people in place. And so, I think, you have to remember that what you see today - even if these estimates are in December - might be quite different. And I would remind you of that because these are acting positions.

There's negotiations underway, as I've talked about before. There's going to be some competitions. So if I'm imprecise, I'm unclear, it's because of some of those factors which we don't have under our control. But our intentions are sincere and genuine. And I stick to that logic, and I stick to that basis because that is what I wanted, and we are working hard to come to that end point.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I sincerely do appreciate your admission that your answers are somewhat imprecise and unclear, because they are that. And I find it frustrating. I simply share with you my frustration in this House in trying to understand from the very top, from the administration of the campuses in the new super institute.

This is not the time I intend to debate with you the wisdom of that move. But goodness gracious, Mr. Minister, who but you had full responsibility for the timing of the decision? Who but you had full responsibility for the appointments of the people in those four campuses to carry out the administration? All of this in the context that there are hundreds of people whose employ and thousands of people whose studies are dependent upon those institutes being up and running full bore by the first of September. And I'm sure you can appreciate the frustration I feel.

Mr. Minister, this is not the meat and potatoes of what I was wanting to understand today. When I raised this issue about a half hour ago, simply to ask who was in charge of these four institutes, I thought that was a simple question that would have a simple answer and we could get on with it. But goodness gracious, what we have here now is confusion in simply talking about the relationship

between your plan and what is happening in the putting in place of the people who are running those institutes.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, in light of the fact that you have to bear full responsibility for the timing of these decisions, you have to bear full responsibility, whether you like it or not, for the appointments of people who are there. Was Dr. Andrew Nicol not, as a matter of fact, someone who had a larger amount of seniority and expertise in the advanced education system in Saskatchewan than any of the four of these people: Gervais, Black, Dinter, or Lynch, who are located in the four campuses across Saskatchewan? Can you give me an answer to that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, if there is some confusion, it probably is only in one mind, and it's not in my mind.

On the one hand, you criticize us for not having all the negotiations done, and the i's dotted and the t's crossed. On the other hand, you criticize me for knowing full well, as you quite rightly point out, that this place has to be up and running for the fall. You criticize us for putting in some people and making some acting appointments. You can't have it both ways, hon. member.

You're darn right we've got this thing under way. And you're right, we do have people in place to get the job done for this fall. And we have Bob Gervais in Prince Albert, and we have Bill Black in an acting capacity in Regina, and we have Larry Dinter in an acting capacity in Saskatoon, and we have Nancy Lynch in an acting capacity in Moose Jaw. And they will have the institute and these new campuses operational for this fall. Thank you very much.

Mr. Hagel: — You're very welcome, Mr. Minister. But I don't assume any responsibility for your actions. I hope that we can continue this with . . . as a straightforward discussion in the interests of the education system, the post-high school . . . the secondary education system here in the province of Saskatchewan. I simply am amazed that when you are the one who is laying out this blueprint - this well-defined blueprint for the future of education in Saskatchewan - and things don't pan out as you had intended, and you are the one to place people in those positions, that you don't follow your own plan. How do you expect the people of Saskatchewan to have confidence in you and in the Department of Education when you don't even seem to be following your own plan? That is plain and simply the point I am trying to make, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That is what separates the NDP party from the PC Party in this province. Where you, typically, like to be the central planner, presume that every bright idea originates under the dome in this legislature, we on this side of the House do not. And rather than sort of take some blueprint and ram in down the people's throats and say: this is the way it shall be because it came from underneath the dome of the legislature, we don't operate that way.

We went out (a) and consulted with the people to see what should be done, and (b) and more importantly, it's

that kind of consultation, and that kind of co-operative effort that's taking place this very day to amalgamate the institutes and the colleges into the new institute structure. And that's the way it will continue.

And if there's decisions that have to be made on an interim basis or an acting basis along the way, we shall make them. But this institute will be there for the betterment of adult education in this province the next decade or two, and in the process we are very cognizant of the fine staff we've had on both sides. And we want to make the best utilization possible of all of those people. Those are our goals. We remain undeterred in our goals, and we shall continue.

Mr. Hagel: — Clearly, Mr. Minister, I do not accuse you of having every bright idea in education in Saskatchewan because, clearly, you do not.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Let me come back to my question again, Mr. Minister. First of all, can you just simply confirm for me the amount of time that Dr. Andrew Nicol served as principal of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute, and what is the number of years that he has served the Department of Advanced Education?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As it relates to Andy Nicol, the person, as opposed to the position, and the process that we've been talking about earlier, I have no difficulty in answering for you as many questions as I can, although I am advised that Mr. Nicol has engaged a lawyer and I have to be cognizant of that insofar as what my officials provide to me and what I would provide to you. And I would want you to have that understanding up front.

I'm of the view, as I think I said on Thursday last when we were in this estimates, that a public debate of Mr. Nicol's credentials I don't think serves anyone well. But to relate your specific . . . the answer to your specific question is this: six years, I believe.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, to give credit to this conversation and to this Assembly, and given that we are talking about educational institutes, and given that we are talking about the Department of Education, would it be possible, that instead of referring to Dr. Nicol as Andy Nicol or Mr. Nicol, that we could refer to him by his academic credentials, and that is, I believe, Dr. Andrew Nicol. And could we use that terminology in this House, please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, as you've described it here this afternoon, we have four people serving to head up the four campuses that are intended to come under the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Arts and Science. You've advised me that they have all come from, what you call, the technical institute side. You've advised me that Dr. Nicol has worked as principal of one of those institutes, the STI in Moose Jaw for, you say, six years.

(1530)

Mr. Minister, it seems to me, and please correct me - please correct me if I am wrong in what appears obvious, in my assumption about what appears obvious, it appears to me that in Regina there is a person acting in the principal capacity who has not served in that capacity before. Please correct me if I'm wrong. It appears to me that in Saskatoon we have a person acting as principal who was previously an assistant principal - had never served as principal before. It appears to me that in Moose Jaw we have a person acting as principal who had never served as principal before as well, and who, if I'm not mistaken, has acted in that capacity for something less than a year.

Do I have a correct assessment of the administrative experiences of those people that you have heading up those institutes on those four campuses, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Your observations may well be right, but they're irrelevant because of fact that you continue to ignore is that they are there, the principals, in an acting position, at Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw are just that - acting.

And I'll be very surprised if you don't see a competition, Saskatchewan-wide or nation-wide, to fill those positions within the next few weeks on a permanent basis.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, was Dr. Nicol available to the department to serve in an acting capacity in any of those campuses?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — These positions I refer to . . . I suspect that the many people across this province, or perhaps across this country, who feel they have the qualifications, can apply, when we put these to competition. And I wouldn't want to bias the competition by saying one person over another has more or better qualifications.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, could we deal with straightforward answers to straightforward questions, please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — I have heard you say a number of times that these positions, the new positions, the permanent positions for the principals of the four campuses of the Saskatchewan institute of applied art and science will be put up for competition. That was not my question. My question to you, Mr. Minister, was this: you have told us, in light of the fact that it didn't pan out as you had intended, to get the proper balance between community college and technical institutes providing the administration of the four campuses, you ended up having institute people who have come from the institute side in all four locations. In light of the fact that I believe you are responsible for the appointments of those four people, my question to you was simply this, and will you listen carefully, Mr. Minister; my question to you was simply this: was Dr. Nicol available to serve in any of those four campuses as the interim principal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I think, hon. member, that we can agree to disagree on whether it's in anyone's best interest to debate qualifications in this House. What I will say to you again, for the fourth or fifth time, is that the two positions that we yielded from our side, if you like, the department's side, on technical institute's side, were the ones I referred to earlier, Moose Jaw being one of them. That in three of the four for various reasons, probably the most important of which is, the job must get done, albeit while we're in the state of transition. We have people there to get the job done, but three of the four positions are filled in an acting basis, and they will be going to competition. And I suspect there will be many people that will want to apply for those positions.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you have four people acting as principal in the campuses of Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Regina. Was Dr. Nicol available to the Department of Education to fill any of those four positions? Will you answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I can only repeat what I said insofar as the process. There were two positions abolished. We have three in an acting position. It goes to competition and I'm not going to bias . . . I mean if I make some statement in here, I have no doubt that three, or four, or five months down the road you will come back to debate somebody else's qualifications as to why they got the job as opposed to this person X or person Y getting the job. I don't think that's right nor responsible for myself as a minister of the Crown, and hence I will not engage in a debate over credentials - (a) that is not my job; and (b) it would not be responsible nor the right thing to do.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I am not talking about the positions that you intend to fill after advertising. I am talking about the positions that exist today and that I assume you're responsible for filling. My question to you very simply is this. It will not be surprising. It's the same question that I am asking for the fourth consecutive time: was Dr. Nicol available to you to choose from as acting principal in any of the four campuses?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — You're asking for a debate about who was qualified versus who was not. I have given you the logic for what we have done to date: (a) it revolves around balance; (b) it revolves around position abolishment; (c) it revolves around retirements; (d) it revolves around early retirements; (e) it revolves around positions being filled on an interim basis, at a minimum, by acting people. And finally and most importantly, it revolves around the fact that we wanted to use this time period of spring through to September 1 to make sure that we had this new institute up and running for the adults, the young adults of this province, to get the finest education possible in this brand-new institute, which because of its structure, because it now will have some of its own autonomy, it will be able to be more responsive, and it'll be a world-class institute with a budget close to \$60 million, attracting a world-wide calibre of people for that kind of an institute. I'm very excited about it, and I wish the hon. member was as well.

Mr. Hagel: — Well believe me, Mr. Minister, that the people of Saskatchewan and anybody paying attention to this question period today is less than excited about the

future and the kinds of plans that you are destined to give to the direction of education in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — My question to you now, Mr. Minister, is: how did these four people - Gervais, Black, Dinter and Lynch - fill those positions? Was there an open competition for those positions, or were they in some way appointed, and if so, by whom?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — They were appointed by the deputy minister on an acting basis while the terms and conditions of the competitions were being drawn up, and I'm led to believe that that's a normal kind of process for the public service in terms of its hiring practices.

Mr. Hagel: — Did you concur with those appointments?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, I was aware of them and I concurred in them.

Mr. Hagel: — Was Dr. Nicol available to the deputy minister of Education to be appointed to one of the four campuses in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Regina, or Moose Jaw as acting principal?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The rationale for who we put where I have gone through. I don't know as that any useful purposes served in going through it again; however, if you wish, I can.

It revolves around the several points I talked about earlier. And the primary one, if we start out from an administrative basis, was the point I talked about in terms of balance and fairness. Initially . . . not initially, but that was a main basis for our logic track, if you like, and I think one that made sense and certainly one that made sense to community college institutes involved.

And we stated, up front, that certainly there's going to be negotiations here. There may even be some people who would like to have got this versus that. But if we establish the rules up front that we would try and have this balance in terms of positions, we would yield too, and could they. That seemed to make eminent good sense to them, and the rules were established up front, if you like, and that's the way we've tried to operate through the entire course of the amalgamation, and we'll continue to try and operate through the course of the amalgamation.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I do not like to take the time of this Assembly to repeatedly ask the same question, particularly when it's not a difficult question.

You have advised this Assembly that all did not unfold according to plan in putting into place the acting principals of the four campuses. You have now advised this Assembly that ultimately the deputy minister, with your concurrence, appointed four people to act as interim principals.

It has all the signs and characteristics, Mr. Minister, of a scenario which involves a little bit of scrambling. It did not seem to unfold just as you had intended, and hoped that it would, in the interest of education in

Saskatchewan.

It seems to me that you had an experienced principal at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute in Moose Jaw, as you have said, with more than six years of experience acting in that capacity, available to you. I simply am asking for confirmation.

Was Dr. Nicol available to the deputy minister and to you, Mr. Minister, to fill any of those positions of acting principal at any of the four campuses in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well the points I will make again is the plan . . . that the point which we are in it today is, as I've said before, has a number of interim acting appointments. I am not going to debate credentials because one of the reasons that I will not engage in so is that the new positions, if you like, or the positions that are being filled on an acting basis, are the positions as a result of the institute and community college amalgamation. So it's . . . the position is somewhat broader than just simply principalship of the institute or principalship of the college. That's part and parcel of the amalgamation process and the formation of this new institute. And I don't know what more I can say for the hon. member.

Mr. Hagel: — Well, let me give you a suggestion, Mr. Minister. You can simply say yes or no. If Dr. Nicol was ready, willing, and able to serve this amalgamation process by acting as principal at any one of the four campuses, he was available. If he resigned his position or refused to work for the Department of Education, then he was not available.

In the first case, you say yes; in the second case, you say no, Mr. Minister. It's that simple. Let me ask you again: was Dr. Nicol available to serve as acting principal at any one of the four campuses in any of those positions appointed by the deputy minister and concurred with by yourself? Yes or no?

(1545)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Relative to the . . . What happened to the principal's position, the position of principal, at STI, I previously suggested to you that that was one of the positions that was abolished.

I know that the hon. member would like to have me pass judgement on another professional's credentials. And just think about what my judgement might do, in terms of it being on the record of the Saskatchewan legislature for all to see, for all future and prospective employers to see. What might that mean to a professional man's career?

I will not be lured into that debate because I have a bit more respect for professionalism and for the system than that. I don't believe this is the place for it. I will state again that all what we have done has been undertaken in good faith; it's been sincere and genuine. I stand by that. And I don't know if there's anything more I can add.

Mr. Hagel: — You could add a simple yes or no.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Does the hon. member really want that? As I said earlier, does the hon. member really

want us to debate in this Assembly professional qualifications of a professional? I mean, one could argue that I am not fit to make that judgement, and hence I'm not fit to answer yes or no.

But more importantly, is it fair to that individual? Is it fair to that individual in terms of what it could do to his future career? I believe not so. And as much as you've reduced what some might argue is a complex issue down to a simple duality - which is a characteristic of oppositions, a simple either/or, yes/no, right/wrong - I will not be lured into that simple duality. And that's final.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I am not asking you to tell this Assembly whether Dr. Nicol has the qualifications for the position yet to be advertised. You gave some indication of that when you answered a question on July 23. However, that is not the item under discussion at this moment.

The item under discussion at this moment has to do with the fact that you are the person in the province of Saskatchewan responsible for the future of education according to this blueprint that you keep talking about. You are the one who has to be held accountable for the carrying out of that plan in the best interest, I would hope, of Saskatchewan's young people, particularly, who are hoping through the education system to establish some confidence in their futures. Right now you are not doing a great deal to establish confidence in your conduct or the conduct of your department, quite frankly.

I am simply asking you to tell this Assembly whether Dr. Nicol was available to you to choose from in an acting capacity at a time in which you were obviously scrambling. You're telling this Assembly the plan for the chief administrative officers in the four campuses did not unfold as you had hoped, according to your blue plan. You have - you had in the employ of the Department of Education the principal of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute. Was he available? Was he ready, willing and able to act as principal in any of the four campuses? That's the simple question, Mr. Minister. Will you answer that question?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I don't think I need repeat what I said before. You additionally add at the early part of your question there, about positions that are going to be advertised. Yes, there will be positions advertised. I'm not going to bias that competition, certainly. That, too, would be irresponsible, and it's not the way it's done, as you will full well know.

But I . . . Those terms, in terms of the qualifications of candidates that are needed for these new positions, will be laid out in the competition, and I would encourage all citizens of this province who can meet those conditions certainly to apply.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you're not inspiring a great deal of confidence within the hearts of people who may be interested in filling those kinds of positions. Let me ask again. I ask you the simple question: to the best of your knowledge, was Dr. Nicol available to serve as an acting principal?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Two comments that I would

make in terms of the blueprint. You suggested that in your mind, at least, somehow it's gone off the rails and is not going as we'd expected and hoped for. That is not true. For the most part it's even gone smoother than I might have expected, given the magnitude of the changes we are making. So I want the record to be clear on that.

Secondly, I would consider it absolutely unusual, irresponsible, unparliamentary, undemocratic, and I could go on and on with the adjectives, if we were to start filling positions, public service position competitions on the floor of this legislature. That isn't the way it's been done. It's totally inconsistent with the principles and the practice of the Public Service Commission.

I think that to do so would make an extremely strong case for the hon. member to ask for my resignation, and I have no intention to give him a case for that. I have stated, time and time again, the basis for what we have done; there are going to be competitions. I mean, I suppose if there weren't competitions, you'd be saying, oh yeah, you just put your friends in there.

The hon. member, you cannot have it both ways. And it seems to me that there is nothing more democratic and more fair than an open competition. And that's the route we'll be going on these positions.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you told me a few minutes ago there was no competition, that those positions were filled by appointment of the deputy minister with your concurrence.

Let me ask you another question, Mr. Minister. My question is this: is it the intention of your department to re-employ Dr. Nicol in some other capacity? You've advised the Assembly that the position was abolished. Is it the intention of your department to re-employ Dr. Nicol?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — First of all, I would want to correct the statement that you made about what we appointed. And you conveniently ignore an important fact. I don't think you do it deliberately, but I think you conveniently have a case of selective amnesia.

Yes, you're quite right. The deputy, with my collaboration and approval, appointed those three positions. But in what capacity are they? In what capacity were those three appointments made? Were they permanent? And the answer is no. Were they acting? The answer is yes, yes, yes - every one of them.

In my mind that makes a substantial difference to what we're talking about here, because you can have acting positions, which is why you have acting positions and interim until you can go to competition, and be assured that the people of this province get the best candidate.

And I don't know what more I can say about the process, quite frankly. Insofar as what - the gentleman you referred to - what opportunities may be available, as I said before, I think the person has engaged a lawyer. But even having said that, and waiting to be fair to all - the public and to the individual - certainly the person to whom you refer is eligible to apply for any and various positions that he may feel qualified for, just as any other

citizen might.

And secondly, because that position was abolished - and I'm working a bit from memory here because this falls under the domain of the Public Service Commission . . .

An Hon. Member: — That's your area too.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Which is as well my area, as you point out, but I perhaps could be more well-briefed on the specifics. The hon. member, the person to whom you refer, had the right to go on a re-employment list. And I perhaps ought not to comment further on that, given the nature of some of the discussions, the legal nature of them, that may be ongoing at this point in time.

But I know, certainly, that was the case with the 150 or so position abolishments that we had, at least that was one of the options that we had, as I recall, in the down-sizing exercise that our government was engaged in.

Mr. Hagel: — In all of that, Mr. Minister, am I to interpret correctly then that it is not the intention of your department to re-employ Dr. Nicol?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No, that is clearly not what I said. And I will clearly say again: the person to whom you refer has the opportunity, as has every other citizen who feels he has the qualifications, to apply for any positions within the department, and for that matter within the government, perhaps, as it relates to his rights that may be his if he so desires.

And I'm not clear on the finer points of law on this one, on the right of re-employment, so I want to be clear: he has the opportunity for the department and, you ought to be clear on this, an opportunity within the department to apply as any other person. As well, and this one's perhaps in more the grey area, given I'm not sure of the legal nature of things, but certainly the re-employment list was an option for those in the down-sizing exercise.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, on May 12, when Dr. Nicol was advised of the abolition of his position, you advised this House in *Hansard*, on July 23, that Elizabeth Crosthwaite was the person who advised Dr. Nicol of the abolition of his position. Is she here today, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Mr. Hagel: — So there should be no difficulty in understanding then the process of how that communication was conducted. Is that correct, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I am the minister responsible for the department. Certainly I have officials here, many officials, not the least of which is Liz Crosthwaite, to advise me. Any questions that you put, the responsibility for the answer will be mine. I'm happy to do it. But I mention again, as I did some several . . . half an hour or an hour ago, because I want to be up front with it, I told you about the fact that there has been a lawyer engaged here, and I do have some responsibilities to the government and to the people of this province relative to that fact.

But I'll give you all the answers, in terms of whatever questions you might wish to pose here, however relevant it may or may not be that Liz Crosthwaite is here - yes, she's in the legislature. But the questions will be directed to me and me alone.

Mr. Hagel: — Very clearly, Mr. Minister, you're the one who's responsible. I simply wanted to make sure that the access to the information to the questions that I would ask is available to you, because you are responsible. And ultimately this Legislative Assembly holds you responsible, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, will you describe for this Assembly the process that was sued to communicate to Dr. Nicol that his position was being abolished?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The process was the same as it was for the others who had their positions abolished, the detail of which is, perhaps, more appropriately examined in Public Service Commission estimates. But the process was the same for the person to whom you refer as it was for the others. There was nothing different about it.

Mr. Hagel: — And would you describe to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister, what that process was that was the same as it was for everyone else?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I can more properly answer your questions in the estimates for the Public Service Commission, because the officials who were involved in the position abolishment, the entire down-sizing exercise, would be available to me then. And certainly an integral part of that was the consultants that we had the two firms. The one in this case that would be operational, I suspect, was Stevenson, Kellogg, Ernst and Whinney.

And I'm not trying to put you off of finding the answers. As I said earlier, it's probably more appropriate in Public Service because, although the immediate supervisor, which I referred to in this House on Thursday last, was Liz Crosthwaite, who did inform the person as such, that was only one small part of a process that we put in place to deal with this in a humane, reasonable, and responsible fashion.

Those officials are not here to provide me with the information, the step by step procedure, if you like. And I would prefer to deal with that in Public Service Commission estimates.

(1600)

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, when Ms. Crosthwaite carried out this action with the principal of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute, was she acting on her own accord, or was she acting according to direction of someone else?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — She was acting in accordance with the process that was put together by a number of parties, not the least of which was, obviously the Department of Justice, as well as the Public Service Commission. And throughout that exercise, I suspect we involved a number of people insofar as how to do it in the

best fashion, considering it's a difficult task no matter when one engages in these sorts of processes. And we wanted to do right by our employees as . . . despite the fact that it was a difficult situation, as best we could.

And there are some firms who have a very successful track record in this regard. And we drew on their expertise and they . . . A program was designed to deal with those at the management level, as there were for other levels. As I said earlier, I don't have those officials here, and I would prefer to deal with the detail at a later time.

Mr. Hagel: I can understand, Mr. Minister, why you might prefer to deal with it at a later time. But it's before this Assembly now.

Mr. Minister, I assume that when Ms. Crosthwaite advised Dr. Nicol that his position was abolished, that she was not . . . that was not a decision she had made on her own, that it was approved by someone superior to her. If so, whom?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, as I mentioned earlier, we made the decision that there . . . we would yield up two positions. STI was one of them. The Saskatoon Kelsey was the other one. We've been through . . . we've covered that ground in some fair detail prior to this.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, do you assume ultimate responsibility for this decision?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In terms of the . . . : In terms of the . . . Yes. I mean, I have (a) no difficulty defending the government's exercise to reduce the size of the public service by 2,000. That doesn't mean to say that it's easy. But the fact of the matter is, quite simply, we had more government than we could afford. And as it relates to the specific business of eliminating two positions, because of the fairness and the balance that we want to have, yes, I was in total concurrence with that.

I want to remind the hon. member, however, that if you're of the view somehow that I sat there with some list of computer print-out, poring over it in terms of yes, no, maybe, okay - that is not the case. And any suggestion that such is the case would be an unfair one on your part and, as well, it would be wrong. And if you're trying to suggest that somehow we enjoy making change and displacing people for enjoyment's sake, we do not.

But there is a larger responsibility here. The first is to the public of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers. And secondly, it's to have an adult education system that's consistent with the decades that are ahead of us. And that doesn't mean that somehow what we've done in the past has failed us, as I've said before, because it does not. What it means is, I mean, we wouldn't even be going through this debate here if we had not made the decision, a decision that you and your party agree with, and that is to give the technical institutes the autonomy that they should have; the flexibility that they should have; the right to eliminate course duplication that they should have; the right to make sure we've got the courses that are in tune with the needs of the business out there; the courses that are in tune with the need of the Northerners - to deliver more programming to more people in more places in Saskatchewan.

I mean, surely you can't have changed your tune. You must agree with the fact we needed a different form of governance. Even the New Democratic youth wing at your own convention this past summer had a resolution before your party, before your council, saying that we should have one institute.

I would suggest that your youth are ahead of you insofar as sensing the needs of the future. And that makes some sense because these young people today are very, very shrewd. They have a very good understanding of the world around them. They don't buy inflated rhetoric on the other side. And what we're doing is part and parcel of that.

And the process for this person was no different in terms of the program that was put in place than it was for any other individual in that kind of capacity. And I want to assure you of that. And besides, you sitting in this legislature, I mean, I don't see any sort of hard-hearted people around me who would not do the process in a right and proper fashion, given how difficult the job was. And I don't think you should criticize them because, in fact, the program was done right and proper and in a humane and sensitive way. That doesn't make it easy. It's never easy to make change. But there has to be changes made on occasion in a system, and we're prepared to tackle that. This is part of it.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you've told me that you assume responsibility for the abolition of the position. Do you assume responsibility for the process used to communicate that to Dr. Nicol?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Mr. Hagel: — And you've also advised this Assembly that it was a process that was similar to that employed to advise other employees in other parts of the government as well as within Department of Education, and you know this because you coincidentally are also minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, although I clearly understand that's not the estimates that are under review here today.

Will you advise then, Mr. Minister, in the process of this communication to Dr. Nicol, was he asked to turn in his keys to the building that day?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The process that was followed, as I mentioned earlier, whether it be for the person you referred to or others in that level in government, was the same for all, at least as close as possible.

For the reasons I outlined earlier, and for the details of that process, I will defer any other answers that I could give you until we deal with Public Service Commission estimates, because I do not have those officials with me here today, and we are not examining Public Service Commission estimates.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, to the best of your information, was Dr. Nicol denied access on his own to the Saskatchewan Technical Institute on or after May 12?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The process was the same there as it was for others. I do not have those officials here. I would be happy to go through the process in detail with my Public Service Commission officials because I don't know absolutely every step that they would go through. All I know is that they engaged the best advice they could find insofar as how one undertakes this difficult task. A difficult task certainly, but one not without its rewards at the end of the process in terms of a better and a more efficient government - \$226 million saving, something in that order for the people of Saskatchewan, and we stand by that.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, did someone on May 12 supervise Dr. Nicol in the packing of his personal belongings to be removed from his office that day?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'll defer those kinds of questions to Public Service Commission estimates, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hagel: — Was there no one from the Department of Education present when Dr. Nicol was asked to turn in his key and when Dr. Nicol was advised that he was to pack his belongings from his office and remove them from there that day? Was there no one from the Department of Education present when that took place?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I mentioned before, the process was one that we established for government globally, and I'll be happy to answer those questions in Public Service Commission estimates.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, are you saying that you will describe that in detail when we get to Public Service estimates but that you refuse to comment on that part of the communication to Dr. Nicol on May 12? That you're refusing to offer any other comment about that here today? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm saying I stand by the process. I'm saying that it's never easy when you're down-sizing government by 2,000. I stand by that decision. It was the right decision. And I stand by the fact that however difficult it may be, the process for the most part accomplished its goals of reducing the size of government by 2,000 in a humane, reasonable, sensitive, fair, understanding, and compassionate way.

And the reason we want to be very clear on that course of action, Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, is for this reason: too often governments are criticized by their employees as being too impersonal. And I think the same criticism occasionally arises in corporations, larger corporations in particular, where you have several thousand employees.

We do not view our employees as impersonal or inanimate objects. We do not view them as merely people with employee position numbers. But to us they are very real people with car payments, many of them, and house payments, and families, young families, not unlike those of us in this legislature. And that is why we undertook this decision with a great deal of thought, forethought, so that it would be done in their best interest, albeit that it's a difficult task. And I stand by that. I stand by

that.

And that's why we engaged the best firms we could to help us with that process. And that's why there was in fact a fixed process - to be done and to be handled with dignity and compassion. And as it relates to the person that you mentioned particularly, I would suspect very much so that . . . (inaudible) . . . we've handled that unpleasant task with dignity and compassion and understanding and sincerity and genuineness. I have absolutely no reason to believe otherwise.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, are you saying that in the dismissal of Dr. Andrew Nicol, or the abolition of the position as you like to describe it, that the process that was used, to the best of your knowledge and in your opinion, I gather you to have said, as both the Minister of Education and as Minister of the Public Service Commission, that you fully endorse the process that was used by the consultants to dismiss professional public servants, including Dr. Andrew Nicol from the Saskatchewan Technical Institute?

Is that what you're telling this House, that it was carried out in a manner that was consistent with your objectives and in a manner about which you personally approve and endorse and consider to be most appropriate? Is that what you're telling this Assembly, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, there will be many more interesting discussions on this topic. You can rest assured of that. And I'm sad to say that it is not the opinion of literally dozens, if not hundreds, of public servants in the province of Saskatchewan who lost their jobs without notice, and who were dealt with by the consultant firm employed by your government and given the infamous red box treatment. That is not a method that has been endorsed and considered to be humane and sensitive, as you've described it, by the civil servants in the province of Saskatchewan, and it's not acceptable to the people of this province, as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well this is a point that we could debate at some length, and perhaps more appropriately in Public Service Commission estimates we can.

And I can understand why the NDP, Mr. Chairman, would be upset with the Progressive Conservative government of our Premier. You would be upset that we would embark on a down-sizing exercise in the first place. And I can understand that because the NDP philosophy is clearly one of big government is good government; more government is good government; the more government, the better. Your philosophy is one of - and has always been one of - if it can be nationalized, let's nationalize it. If we can turn it into a Crown corporations, let's turn it into a Crown corporation. That is not our view.

(1615)

But it is our view that if we have to down-size, we will do

it in a reasonable fashion. And that's why we undertook the goal of a 2,000-position down-sizing. We undertook to do that as much as possible by voluntary means. Now what can be more reasonable and compassionate and genuine and humane and sensitive, than instead of us going around and passing out 2,000 pink slips, we put in place a process that would allow individuals to choose themselves whether they would like to take early retirement.

And when we embarked on that process, we were of the view that something in the order of 70 per cent of those eligible might undertake that. We exceeded that by something in the order - now I don't have the specific numbers, but we can do it in Public Service - by something more than 10 per cent - even more than we expected. They recognized that it was a good program and a reasonable program, and they undertook that.

At the end of the day, in meeting our goal of 2,000, two-thirds of those positions were eliminated, or two-thirds of that goal was reached by voluntary means, not, as you suggest, by handing out hundreds of thousands of pink slips, because that is not the way we operate. And we did not do it that way. We used early retirement. We used position abolishments. And we are controlling the hiring so that we don't see government get out of control in terms of its size.

Now I know that doesn't sit well with you and your party. I know that doesn't sit well. You're interested in big government only. You're interested in more government, because your view is that more government is better. Such is not the case. We don't need a proliferation of Crown corporations to run the economy. And I know, and I see the hon. member there sitting beside you, that you would like to have hands-on control. The central planners of the NDP would like to control everything. Nationalizing banks - I mean it goes on and on and on. Run the oil companies. It never stops.

And then when we try to turn the management of something back to the people - like technical institutes - when we try to give the authority back to the people, to give them the autonomy that they wanted, to give them governance, where is the NDP? Five months ago, six months ago, they were running around with surveys saying: we've got to change the institute governance structure. We've got to change it.

And the hon. member from Saskatoon Riversdale, whistling away here as if there is no substance to what I say, and he knows that he is whistling in the dark. He knows that he's out of touch with what's going on in this province and where we ought to head with our education system. He knows that deep in his heart the technical institute in Saskatoon know that what we're doing is right. They know that we should put in place a board of governors, not unlike the universities have had, and not unlike the community colleges have had. And the hon. member has made great to-do about this survey of the institute people and the students. They were so concerned that would the government make the right decision or would the government even entertain governance.

Well I ask the members of this legislature: did the hon. members ever - the education, the advanced education critic, the member from Moose Jaw who had his name on the bottom of the survey along with the member, the education critic - did they once bring one scrap of paper forward to this government or this minister saying, we know you're embarking on a new form of governance . . . we're looking at some restructuring. Did you once come forward with some recommendations? Did you once bring forward the results of your survey? And I asked hon. members: why didn't they bring the results of the survey forward? Why didn't they bring the results forward of a survey that talked about a new form of governance?

Well I'll tell you why, because the people they surveyed told that the government was on the right track. And they were ashamed to bring this forward, Mr. Speaker, because it would just make our case that much stronger. And that's why we haven't seen one shred of paper from the NDP critics, MLA's, or sitting MLA's who live in those institute's cities, Mr. Chairman.

There hasn't been one shred of input, advice, or guidance, even if the survey showed something else which is equally as big a cry. If that survey said that, Mr. Minister, you are clearly going in the wrong direction, then it was incumbent on them to bring forth the right position in their minds, Mr. Chairman. And not one shred of paper did my office every receive - not one shred.

And In fact when I read the press release and the press reports about the day the education critic and the advanced education critic then, when they held the press conference to announce this survey, I quite frankly agreed with everything they said in terms of why we ought to relook and rethink the institute structure, because there is duplication, and being an arm of the Department of Education doesn't make sense.

I think the hon. member, the education critic, talked about political interference, and this is exactly the line of questioning that I've been subjected to this afternoon. This is exactly why we ought to not have the institutes as an arm of the Department of Education so there could be absolutely no question, no question in so far as the autonomy of institutions of higher learning.

But somehow this selective amnesia, somehow what they stood for four or five months ago, Mr. Chairman, somehow all of a sudden that is not important, or perhaps is important - they know we're on the right track and they're ashamed to back up by case by coming forth with their survey results, Mr. Chairman, ashamed because they know we're on the right track. They know there was changes that needed to be made, and we are going to do them, as unpopular as some points of that change may be, Mr. Chairman, as unpopular as it may be, because change is always difficult.

But, by golly, we are determined and are resolved to provide the best adult education, not only in this province but in this country and in North America, Mr. Chairman. And we stand by that goal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — The minister goes on a wild and rambling oratorical excursion, back-peddalling faster and faster in vicious circles until, Mr. Minister, you will come face to face with yourself, and you will be as frightened as everybody in this province is of these plans for education that you purport to put forth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — The minister goes on a wild and rambling oratorical excursion because he doesn't have the guts to come back to the issue before us in this Legislative Assembly. And that issue, plainly and simply, Mr. Minister, is this: you don't have the guts to talk in this public Assembly about the conduct that the Government of Saskatchewan and the Department of Education has carried out with the infamous "red box" treatment of the civil servants of this province - people who have dedicated their careers to serving the people of Saskatchewan, who have been disciplined, in essence, in the process of being let go.

And, Mr. Minister, you go on this wild and rambling oratorical excursion because you're afraid to talk about the things that are concerning the people of Saskatchewan, and that is the conduct of you and your government and the insensitive treatment, not only of the people who formerly worked for this government, but the people of Saskatchewan. And you will pay the price, Mr. Minister, you will pay the price.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you obviously refuse to talk about this topic and it will come back to this legislature, and we'll let it go at this point today. And I understand, and the people of Saskatchewan understand, why you don't want to talk about the red box treatment that you gave professional civil servants in this province.

But, Mr. Minister, you have said to this Assembly that there is a person sitting in here, one of your officials, who was involved in the process of communicating to Dr. Andrew Nicol. So let's go back to that. Will you tell this Assembly, as best you are able, in the context of having been carried out by an official of your department, how was Dr. Nicol advised that his position was abolished? Will you explain to us the procedure, and as you refer to it, in detail?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The ... as in other cases, the immediate supervisor advised this particular individual, and any others that were slated for lay-offs that day, of the position abolishment.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, did, as a matter of fact, Elizabeth Crosthwaite, acting with, as you have said here in this Assembly, your approval, hand a letter to Dr. Nicol advising him that his position was abolished?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I've said before, in terms of the details, the step by step process, I would defer those questions and answers to the Public Service Commission because, as the hon. member knows, this was rather a broad-based exercise where we relied on the expertise and advice of a couple of firms who have some particular

expertise in the area because they've dealt with these kinds of situations before. We wanted to do best and to do right by our employees.

And I know that's a little difficult for some members opposite to understand, but that was our goal. And given that this is a difficult and tough exercise ... It's never easy; I want to underline that. But the reality is, given that it was a difficult exercise, it went as best as it probably can ever go, given the difficult circumstances that we find ourselves in.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you have neither confirmed nor denied that Dr. Nicol was given the famous, or the infamous, red box treatment in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, for the interests of the people of Saskatchewan, let me just briefly describe this infamous red box treatment, because heaven only knows it's been reported to too many elected members of this Assembly too many times.

The process of this infamous red box treatment, Mr. Minister, was for people - sometimes with some from the department; sometimes not, I understand - to be advised, in the company of the consulting firm, of the Kellogg firm ... You will know the exact name. I believe it's the Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney firm, who are professional, professional terminators - that will be a term that will have a great deal of meaning to the Minister of Social Services - professional terminators who would walk into the office of a professional civil servant, in many cases someone who had dedicated more than 20 years to the carrying out of programs for the people of Saskatchewan under several different administrations, where these professional terminators would walk into the office of a professional civil servant and advise that person that effective immediately their job was finished.

And at that minute would begin a process of terminating the person from their position. And what would it involve? Frequently it's been reported, Mr. Minister, that it would involve bringing into the room literally a red box; boxes specially made for professional civil servants who had dedicated 20 and 30 and 35 years of their life to the people of Saskatchewan; boxes made for them while being supervised to open the drawers of their desks and take out their personal possessions while someone supervised that very act of cutting the tie from their job that they'd carried out with commitment for many, many years at that moment.

And then, and then, Mr. Minister, the professional civil servant, many of these people having gotten their jobs because they qualified for them - they were the best qualified person by fair competitions through the Public Service Commission, which you also head up - then these public professional civil servants would be asked to turn in their key, to cut the tie, to close the door, to turn in their key, and then be personally escorted to the door of the - not only out the door of their office, but out, literally out the door of the office building in which they worked. That, Mr. Minister, does not strike this member of the Legislative Assembly as being the kind of humane and sensitive treatment that professional civil servants, you claim, were given when they were cut loose from their service to the people of Saskatchewan by you and your

government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, I find that process repulsive. Quite frankly, the people of Saskatchewan find that process repulsive as well. And I don't know, I don't know that that was the treatment given to Dr. Andrew Nicol on May 12. I do know you don't want to talk about the way that he was dismissed from his position as the principal, having served - the principal of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute - for over six years, a period of time in which Dr. Nicol not only was the administrator of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute, but under your term of government, Mr. Minister, was responsible for introducing a co-op education program piloted at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute. I'm given to understand, and having been piloted, having proven to be successful beyond comparison, not only in every other province in this beautiful country of Canada, but internationally as well.

(1630)

After having committed six years or more to the excellence of post-secondary education and to the future of Saskatchewan's young people, Dr. Nicol, on May 12, was dismissed by one of your officials under the supervision of the firm of Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney. And I don't know what that process was, Mr. Minister. I hope, in many ways, it wasn't what has been so typical for the way that the red box treatment was carried out with professional civil servants in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I come back, Mr. Minister, to you with a question about the conduct of your officials in dismissing Dr. Nicol from his position of principal of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute.

And I ask you simply this: when Dr. Nicol was given the notice about the abolition of his position, did he ask whether he would be given permission to participate and carry out the graduation ceremonies at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute for 1987? The end of the academic year that was scheduled . . . the event that was scheduled to be carried out in Moose Jaw about two and a half weeks later. Was Dr. Nicol denied the opportunity to oversee the graduation ceremonies of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute in 1987; and was that communicated to him by your official on May 12?

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, I ask you to listen very carefully to the question, and to answer very carefully that question . . .

An Hon. Member: — I always do.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you do not "always do." We've seen evidence of that earlier this afternoon. There are times that you have become confused. There are times that you have belaboured the point and found it difficult to get to the answer, Mr. Minister. I'm asking you a simple question today. And will you answer that question, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm advised that no one has any recollection of him asking. And secondly, and probably for this reason, as I pointed out in this legislature on Thursday last, it is not the department that decides who comes and who does not come to the graduation. It's something the students . . . the students' union put on.

In so far as the first part of your question, I object to your simplification, and in fact to the allegations that you would make in suggesting that Stevenson Kellogg, Ernst & Whinney are somehow terminators. I think little useful is served in that kind of characterization by a firm that has a good track record in terms of dealing with people in these tough situations. And, you know, it's so typical of the NDP and/or, I suppose, of oppositions generally, to reduce complex issues to a simple duality.

And I've said this in this legislature before, and I say it again. Here was a difficult and complex process. And you're trying to suggest that this process was merely one of a red box. Now if that isn't the kind of rhetoric and the kind of characterization that does nothing to give the people of this province a full characterization of the process, and unfairly, I might add . . . Because I say it, and I say it again now: I am quite prepared to talk about that process in this legislature under the appropriate estimates, which is Public Service Commission.

And for you to stand here and talk about some red box and yet somehow with that selective amnesia, fail to acknowledge the fact that there was consultants there that day to help the people through this difficult time and to provide them with counselling and to help them find the jobs, wherever - whether it be in another government department or in the corporate world - and to provide office services and to provide counselling one on one or in groups.

Now what about that part of the story? Why do you just try to scare the people of Saskatchewan with the typical NDP mentality of this infamous or famous red box? I will bring the details to this legislature, of that process, and in some detail. Because it is a process that, as I said before, was difficult. Given those difficult circumstances, I think it was handled in a professional manner.

And to hear people referred to as terminators is absolutely nonsensical - absolutely nonsensical. And I would doubt that the hon. member would go outside this legislature and refer to Stevenson Kellogg Ernst & Whinney as professional terminators. I would doubt that he would do that.

You know, I've stood in this Assembly, Mr. Chairman, for a couple of hours now, and I don't object to answering the questions or the line of questioning. But somehow, either I am very wrong or the hon. member is very wrong in that we can stand here for some two hours now, and I don't think I can count . . . I don't think it would've . . . I could count on one hand or less, the number of times that the hon. member has mentioned the word student, education, educational excellence, quality of education, opportunities for the future, training for the jobs of the future, eliminating duplication, getting rid of out-of-date courses. He hasn't talked about the implications for an educational system of the information age, the

knowledge-based economy.

No, none of those things apparently are important to the NDP. None of those things are important, you know. And that is so typical, Mr. Chairman, of what I find of the opposition to this.

The NDP know that we are on the right track from a philosophical standpoint in terms of positioning our adult education system for the future decades. They know we're on the right track. So what is their thrust always? They grope and probe away on points of process. We can always argue about whether we should have had one large board for the institutes or four boards. We can always argue about whether this should have been this position or that position. I mean, that is administrative . . . "administrivia" almost, if you like, in my mind.

And the reason that they focus on those, Mr. Chairman, is for this reason: they know that we're on the right track. They know that we're on the right track. They're getting pushed by their own people, their own supporters, Mr. Chairman. The New Democrats, the Saskatchewan Young New Democrats at their convention, most recently held by the NDP in this past June, had this resolution:

Be it resolved that the New Democratic Party endorse and actively support the reorganization of technical institutes under an independent board similar in nature and structure to the university's board of governors.

They know where they want us to head. It's just that their members in this legislature refuse to acknowledge what the NDP youth, and quite frankly, the other young people in this province, and the other adults in this province see as being needed to do for adult education in the future. So I have no difficulty with the process either. But we're agreed on one thing, that where we are headed is right, and that makes me feel good.

If you would just join us now in terms of getting the job done, getting this new institute up and running, the students will benefit by it, the staff and faculty of those institutes and community colleges will benefit by it, and the people of this province will benefit by it.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, it's extremely clear in this Legislative Assembly, when the minister is scrambling, and when we are dealing with a point that is a sensitive issue with the minister, you simply turn on the switch, Mr. Minister, and go on these wild and rambling oratorical excursions like the one we've just heard from you now.

My question to you, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I will gladly. I will gladly debate education with you. But we are here in this Assembly today to review the estimates of your department and you are the one who is required to defend the actions of your department. And that's what we're here for today, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, in response to my last question, you said, to the best of the recollection, if I

understand you correctly, Dr. Nicol was not told that he would not be able to do the graduation ceremony at the STI graduation about two and one-half weeks after May 12.

Mr. Minister, will you consult with your official - and I ask you to listen very carefully to this question - will you consult with your official and will you re-recollect whether Dr. Nicol, when he was dismissed, asked if he would be able to do the graduation ceremony, and was he told that he could not? Will you re-recollect that, Mr. Minister, and will you tell this Assembly straightforward, not in any wild and rambling off-the-topic discourse, but will you answer the question that's before you now?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — He didn't raise it with us; we didn't raise it with him. I'm advised that some time later the students' council raised it with us. It was our view that it wasn't our decision to make anyway. We don't run the graduation. It was the student unions that puts it on, and that is what we have . . . that is what I have said all along, quite frankly. And this was the only new piece of information there as the students' union raised it on his behalf, I suspect, or for him, or to see if in fact they could have him, and it was really none of our business.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, let me bring you back to July 23 in *Hansard*, page 1369. In response to the question that I asked when I . . . let me quote from *Hansard*, Mr. Minister. I asked:

Will you tell me why it was communicated to Dr. Nicol when the position was abolished on May 12 that we were not allowed to attend the STI graduation ceremonies scheduled to be held about two and a half weeks later?

And in response, Mr. Minister, let me quote to you verbatim from *Hansard*. In speaking about the graduation ceremony, you said in answer:

We had nothing to do with it. And if you're trying to suggest that somehow this hard-hearted government didn't allow this to happen, quite frankly, that inference is wrong - 100 per cent wrong.

Mr. Minister, I do not suggest that the department didn't allow it to happen. To say that statement is 100 per cent wrong is to say, as a matter of fact, that the government did allow it to happen, and I believe that you are being 100 per cent honest when you say that to this Legislative Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, you know as well as I know, as well as all the staff and the students from the Saskatchewan Technical Institute and the people of Moose Jaw and beyond know, that Dr. Nicol was told that he was not allowed to participate in the carrying-out of the graduation ceremonies of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute after having dedicated over six years of his professional career to the academic leadership of

one of the finest technical institutes in Canada. I might add, after having introduced the co-op education program to the Saskatchewan Technical Institute, which has had a commendable record of employment of graduates, not only in this province but commendable by comparison across the country and internationally; after having been given no notice of the abolition of his position; and the treatment by the Stevenson Kellogg consultant group that you employed to get rid of professional civil servants, Mr. Minister, it was the ultimate insult - it was the ultimate insult to not allow that professional educator to participate in the graduation at the end of the academic year.

And quite frankly, quite frankly, Mr. Minister, I don't know if there is any action that has been more characteristic of the moral conduct of your government. You talk about this fantastic blueprint for Saskatchewan that is going to make the future for our young people so much rosier, so much brighter, Mr. Minister. I share that hope for the young people of Saskatchewan with you, but believe me, I do not share the blueprint that you put forward, and I do not share the endorsement of the conduct that you have taken with the professional educators and the students of this province who are hoping to begin their studies on the first of September.

(1645)

Mr. Minister, I think you are to be condemned for the conduct that you have carried out with the professional educators and the students of this province. And, Mr. Minister, we will come back to these issues again and again. And I conclude by saying to you that I find this whole exercise repulsive. Not only the conduct your department carried out in the dismissal of Dr. Nicol, but the lack of responsibility that you endorsed and carried out with the professional educators and the students of this province. And I think come the next election, the people of Saskatchewan will tell you they didn't buy the blueprint and they didn't buy the way that you attempted to carry it out in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, first and foremost, I would like to put on the record that I have absolutely no knowledge of the allegation and accusation that you are making towards myself and my department. In fact, I would go on to add that insofar as departmentally organized functions go, where we did have some say as to who was invited - the retirement banquet for the early retirees - that we had some say in terms of how we hosted it and who we hosted.

We in fact invited Mr. Nicol. And I'm happy to say that he agreed and he came and we were very happy that he did to enable us to honour those who took early retirement. So I have absolutely no knowledge of your accusation and your allegation whatsoever. And I stand by my remarks in *Hansard* as you quoted them from, I think, Thursday night or Thursday afternoon last. I stand by those absolutely.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, you may claim to have no knowledge of Dr. Nicol not

being invited to his graduation, but your staff who report directly to you have full knowledge of that fact.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Because they told Mr. Nicol that he couldn't go to his graduation. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, will you deny that they told him? I ask you that. Will you deny it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I am advised that it was not raised by him. It was not raised by us. And given the circumstances, at the moment, that seems to make a lot of sense. And secondly, as I pointed out before, we are not the ones who run the graduation ceremony. That's a student union sponsored event. I suspect it has been for some good long time.

And if you're asking me if I deny it? Yes, I deny it because I . . . The answer to the question has been, as it's been on several occasions here, albeit that the hon. member may not have been in attendance at the estimates, that the process was as I described it. We did not raise it, at least officials in attendance did not raise it, and he did not raise it. As to our recollection, I'm giving you the facts as we know them.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Minister, in fact Dr. Nicol did raise it with your staff, and your staff ought to know that full well.

I just want to conclude this section on Dr. Nicol, Mr. Chairman, by putting Dr. Nicol's record of service to this province, his full record, on this public record.

Not only did Dr. Nicol bring in the co-operative education program, he also brought in, at STI, the public administration program. He introduced the computer engineering program. He, in fact, brought in almost all of the 76-week programs that are not being sponsored by the federal government at STI. He introduced the automation robotics program. Dr. Nicol holds a doctorate in vocational education, a master's degree in business administration. He was the second senior principal in the technical institute system in this province. And here's a man who, by your government, was thrown out of his office by a management consultant on the very same day that he was fired. He was asked to leave. He was dismissed vindictively.

I say, Mr. Minister, that the actions that your officials, that directly report to you, undertook in firing this man are symbolic of what has been happening throughout the technical institute system in this province. It's a disgrace to your government, and all the people of Saskatchewan are ashamed of the kind of ill-treatment that you have given to Dr. Nicol and to many other people like him at STI, at Kelsey, and at Wascana. It's a disgrace, Mr. Minister, and it's a record that you can't defend.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The hon. member in his question suggested that the person in question was thrown out of his office. And I know the hon. member as a reasonable, intelligent, and sensible person. In all sincerity, I question

the hon. person's ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well it's unfortunate the member from Regina Rosemont doesn't agree with my observations. But I say that in all sincerity. And that's why it surprises me when I hear the hon., member say that somehow we hoisted this person out on his petard, because quite frankly that's untrue, and you know that's not the case. You know, that's an example of the typical NDP inflamed rhetoric, the typical example of NDP overstatement and exaggeration, and the twisting and warping of, in fact, facts.

The hon. member knows that, and in all good conscience how can you say that? How can you say that? The process for the person in question, as I have explained in this House on several occasions, was as it was for the other 100 or 200 that were laid off that day. Not a happy time, certainly, but we tried to do it in the best possible way, given the circumstances, for those individuals. Not an easy situation, but we stand by the process.

And as I said to one of your colleagues earlier, I know that you're interested in maintaining a big government inefficiency, duplication, and out-of-date programming. You stand for all of those things; we do not. You stand for nationalization, central planning, more control by the government. But the people of Saskatchewan are telling us they wanted to get those institutes into a different form of governance.

You have failed to table to this Assembly or forward, to my office, your plan. So what is your plan? Did it turn out to be the same thing that we're doing and you're afraid to give it to us? You're afraid to show the people that we're on the right track? I stand before you, hon. member, and say, bring forth your survey results. Are you afraid to table them? Are you afraid that they show that we are on the right track? The people of Saskatchewan know we are on the right track here. We can argue process, and who - position, this and that. But for the betterment of adult education, for the young people of this province, we will continue with this process.

Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Minister, first of all, the members on this side of the House will be more than happy to table the results of our survey at Kelsey and at NIT with respect to autonomy - the two institutes at which we did them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And, Mr. Minister, when we table them, you'll be very interested to find that the results are that almost no one who responded to the survey that we undertook supports the folly of centralization of adult education in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, what there is support for is the idea of a local autonomy at the institutes affected. There is support, Mr. Minister, for a locally autonomous board at NIT. And there is support, Mr. Minister, for a locally autonomous board at Kelsey, with full representation from faculty, full representation from staff, full representation from students, full representation from local employers. That's what there's support for, Mr.

Minister.

What there is not support for is a model of centralization that your government has undertaken to centralize the decision-making process for the technical institute system here in Regina. Nothing is changing under your model, Mr. Minister, except that instead of you and your department officials running the technical institutes, a group of appointees, political appointees, your hacks, sitting here in Regina, are going to be running the technical institute system instead. That's all that's changed, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, we will be more than happy to table the results of our survey. They'll be on the table tomorrow for you to look at, and for the news media to look at.

Our position, Mr. Minister, is that you had, first of all, a responsibility to protect the public servants who were working for you. Your actions in firing 142 instructors at the technical institutes in this province was uncalled for. The courses that you claim were outdated, Mr. Minister, had a line-up three to four times the available entry positions for those courses, Mr. Minister. And we will take them course by course this evening. We will ask you to defend them cut by cut, Mr. Minister, because I don't believe that you can defend them. I don't believe that you can defend them, Mr. Minister.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to point to a couple of examples in closing before we begin again this evening, of the kind of out-of-date courses that you claim you needed to cut which we on this side of the House believe were necessary and essential to the young people of this province. Mr. Minister, first of all you decided to eliminate the dental therapist program at Wascana, and you cut back the dental assistant program; you eliminated it at Kelsey. And the only dental assistant program left in this province is now the one at Wascana.

And we say, Mr. Minister, on this side of the House, that your only reason for eliminating the dental therapist program at Wascana, and your only reason for eliminating the dental assistant program at Kelsey, was that your government was committed to abolishing the children's dental plan in this province as we knew it. Therefore you didn't need to train dental therapists any more, and that's the reason why those cuts have taken place - and that's the only reason.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, you claim that the nurse's assistant course at Kelsey was out of date, that there was no demand for it. Maybe you'll be able to explain to this legislature, in the evening, why 150 people were waiting to get into the 54 places in that course. We say on this side of the House, Mr. Minister, that the only reason that you abolished that course was because you were consciously planning to cut back on nursing positions at Saskatchewan hospitals, because your government was consciously planning to reduce positions in home care in this province, therefore you didn't need to graduate the

number of nursing assistants that were being graduated from Kelsey. That's the reason those cuts took place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, we claim on this side of the House that it is your conscious attack on medicare, that we have seen all too clearly now in the past month, that is linked to the cuts that you have undertaken to education throughout this province, Mr. Minister. That's the reason why we saw cuts in the health care education programs at Kelsey and Wascana, is because your government was committed to dismantling medicare in this province, and therefore committed to dismantling the training for medicare in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Minister, another issue that we'll be raising in the evening is, why it is that your government consciously undertook the elimination of technical institute programming courses that almost exclusively affected women. Five of the six programs that were completely eliminated by your government at Kelsey were programs in which almost 100 per cent of the enrolment was female.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Your government is committed . . . Your government is committed to launching an attack on education that makes it more difficult for women to enter the work-force. And in the evening we will be asking you very specific questions about why it is that your government is dismantling education opportunities for women in this province. So tell your officials to get ready for those questions, Mr. Minister.

And, Mr. Minister, we'll be asking you questions this evening about why it is that your government is pursuing a conscious policy of privatizing adult education in this province; ensuring that instead of education being available as a public service through this province where students can undertake technical institute education and face tuition rates of only 450-\$500, why it is that instead your government is embarked on a policy of paving the way for opening opportunities in the private sector where you close courses at places like Kelsey and Wascana to provide opportunities for your private business friends to open exactly the same courses in those . . . (inaudible) . . . That, Mr. Minister . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. Order. Being 5 o'clock the committee is recessed till 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.