

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petition has been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) it is hereby read and received:

Of residents of the village of Ebenezer praying that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to investigate the construction of chemical storage facilities within the village.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the House, a group of people who have joined the proceedings of today's legislature.

I'd like to introduce Chief Roland Crowe, the chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. With him is Chief Barry Ahenakew, Chief Louis Taypotat, Chief Henry Neapetung, Chief Wayne Standinghorn, Chuck Thomas, Hubert Sand, Lyle Acoose, and Elaine Flamont. And I would ask all of our guests to rise and be recognized in the legislature, and welcome you all.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, it is my very great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the legislature, the person whom I expect this Assembly will be appointing as the Ombudsman of Saskatchewan later this day, Ms. Barbara Tomkins.

I would like to also introduce her family who are all here and who play a very important part in her life — her husband Kirk, Kirk Rondeau; her children, Meaghan, Andrew, and Anna; her parents, Robert and Gerry Tomkins of Regina; and her parents-in-law, Malcolm and Lucille Rondeau.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members of the Assembly to sincerely welcome Barbara here today, as well as her family.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, we too would like to extend a warm welcome to Barbara and her family today, joining us in the Assembly. And we look forward to working with her in her new role, as it would appear she will be appointed the Ombudsman of the province of Saskatchewan. We appreciate that and we welcome them.

And also on behalf of the official opposition, I extend our welcome to the Indian leaders across our province who have joined us this morning. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it's a privilege to welcome some guests to the Assembly from the north-west. I'd like to introduce to you and through you the chief from Sweetgrass Reserve, Chief Wayne Standinghorn, who is here today, and say welcome.

And also I have the privilege of having 22 students and some chaperons and the teacher from Lashburn School. We have in your gallery, Val Thackeray, who does this on an annual event. She tries to get some students down to Regina, which I think is just great. And I will be meeting with them and answering questions. And we have chaperons too: Kay, Wayne, Linda, Marilyn, and Karen.

So I'd like all the members of the Assembly to join in welcoming the chief and the students and the teachers and chaperons.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is our pleasure today to welcome a significant number of visitors from out of province from our sister province to the east, Manitoba.

Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, on the east side, are 33 grade 7 students from Douglas School in Douglas, Manitoba. They're accompanied today by their teacher, Ms. McInnes, and five chaperons. They will be experiencing a tour of the Legislative Assembly from 10:30 until 11 later this morning.

We want to extend them a very warm Saskatchewan welcome, Mr. Speaker, and also I ask members to join in, in wishing them safe travels and an enjoyable summer. Welcome to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to, along with the member from Prince Albert, welcome our special guests today. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll do it, with due respect to all languages, Indian languages, you know, in this nation.

Mistuhi tugageneetagan ootu e pe n'dootumagehek. Oomu wunusowehin ka wee peetiguchigatek tu weechihigo keechanisineenuw. Pogeesspeehk Ogimahin usichi Ogimagan ka weetutoskemitot . . . ewugo kistenimitowin. Tuwaw.

Mr. Speaker, in translation: it is indeed a tremendous pleasure to have the chiefs and their representatives welcomed here, and to come and listen to the Legislative Assembly. In the time that legislations are introduced in this House to help people, it is extremely important. Whatever government works with Indian people and they work together, it is a sign, an historical sign, of respect.

And I welcome them again in this House, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan Association on Human Rights 25th Anniversary

Ms. Lorje: — Mr. Speaker, this weekend in Saskatoon the Saskatchewan Association on Human Rights and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour are co-sponsoring a conference on erasing racism.

The Saskatchewan Association on Human Rights was founded to promote and expand the principles in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That declaration was created to ensure that dignity, justice, and equality are available for all. Over their brief history, this group of dedicated volunteers have worked and lobbied for aboriginal and Metis rights, for pay equity, and for a charter of rights. In general, its mandate is to promote and preserve the rights and dignity of each individual in society.

As we congratulate this organization for its quarter-century of necessary work, we should as well ask ourselves why during the last years of this century a group such as this is necessary. The denial of human rights is quite simply a vestige of narrow-minded tribalism with no place in our world. We no longer have time for verbal or physical attacks on individuals because of their race, creed, colour, or — yes — their sexual preference. There are more pressing problems to resolve in this world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

TWC Financial Corporation

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this time to inform the House about TWC Financial Corporation and its exceptional success in Saskatchewan and western Canada. TWC Financial Corporation was incorporated as a mutual fund dealer in 1986.

The head office of this corporation is in the town of Radville, Saskatchewan which is within my constituency. Today TWC can proudly boast itself as Saskatchewan's largest independent mutual fund dealer. In addition to its success in Saskatchewan, this corporation since 1990 has also been registered in Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia.

The success of TWC Financial Corporation has brought great economic and employment opportunities into Saskatchewan. In Radville alone, TWC has hired 31 head office employees. The business processed at TWC Financial Corporation has doubled every year since 1989. In order to facilitate this growth and the expected growth of the future, a new building was built in 1992.

Furthermore an addition to this will be added later this year because of even more growth. Presently over 190 independent representatives are licensed within TWC Corporation at this time, with 100 in Saskatchewan; 33 in Alberta; 25 in Manitoba; and 34 in British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Saskatchewan success story and I would like the House to join with me in congratulating TWC Financial Corporation on their success and to wish them just as much success in the future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nipawin Licensed Practical Nurses Chapter Award

Mr. Keeping: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to announce to the House that the Nipawin and district chapter of the Saskatchewan Association of Licenced Practical Nurses has been chosen for the chapter award for 1994.

This award is presented annually on the premiss of chapter activities and community involvement. The Nipawin and district chapter have been involved in numerous activities over the years. Over the last year particularly many chapter members have been involved with a program for LPNs involved with administration of medicine.

They've also completed a number of specially designed clinics on foot care. These clinics were such a success that the chapter set up a booth in the health fair last year. But Nipawin and district chapter is currently raising funds for various other educational workshops for the members.

A licensed practical nurse or an LPN works under the direction of a medical doctor or a registered nurse or a psychiatric nurse. There is a required one-year training program which must be completed, the most of which is hands-on nursing care.

I know most of the nurses in Nipawin, and I'm not surprised that they were selected to receive the 1994 award, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to once again publicly congratulate them and commend them on winning this award.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Tower at Prince Albert Penitentiary

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, Italy has its leaning tower of Pisa which tourists have visited for centuries. The tower was also supposedly the site of some of Galileo's famous experiments having to do with gravity and with motion.

And not to be outdone, and only a few hundred years later, the city of Prince Albert now offers to the tourists its own tower with its own distinct history and with its own scientific possibilities. The north tower at the Saskatchewan penitentiary was built in the mid-1920s

and was an important part of the penitentiary security until 1962.

During that time there was only one recorded incident of a guard firing a warning shot toward a suspected escapee. Now the tower, with its winding staircase leading to the guards' walk-around, has been restored as a tourist attraction. As well on the bottom there's a collection of prison artefacts. After all, the prison has always been one of Prince Albert's tourist attractions, consistently attracting visitors from all parts of Canada.

As for the science, I invite the Tory Party to imitate Galileo by taking to the top of the tower the large leadership candidate from Rosthern and small one from Kindersley. And then the two should leap without bungees at the same time to see if they can both hit the ground running simultaneously — in the interests of science, of course.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

District Health Board Elections

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this morning are for the Minister of Health or her designate. Madam Minister, another group has added its voice to those calling for district health board elections this fall. This time it is a group who would normally be expected to be supporting your party.

Madam Minister, we received a letter from CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) local 176 which represents the employees of the Regina General Hospital. They say, and I quote:

We believe it of the utmost importance that these elections be held as soon as possible (the health board elections, Madam Minister). We strongly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to hold health board elections this fall in conjunction with the civic and school board elections.

Madam Minister, local residents want the elections this fall. Municipalities want the elections this fall. And now we see hospital employees want the elections this fall. Madam Minister, will you commit to holding health board elections this fall, as all of the people of Saskatchewan are requesting?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the member opposite knows full well that all of the people in Saskatchewan are not requesting elections this fall. In fact the people who are involved in the very difficult work of reforming the health care system — and I might add, doing a very good job at their community levels — are telling us that it would be premature at this point to move to elections. The member opposite realizes that.

Now the member opposite also knows that the whole issue of elections isn't simply a question of when we are going to have elections, whether they be this fall, later this fall, next spring, or next fall. There are many other issues that have to be sorted out surrounding elections. And so we are working towards dealing with these issues in a methodical way because we want to do this right, not just to do it because the members opposite have chosen to politically grandstand on the issue of elections.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Madam Minister. We keep hearing from you and from Garf Stevenson about the people who are telling you to delay the health board elections. But every letter we have received, every single one, from municipalities, from SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), from local residents, from hospital workers, and now even from CUPE, every letter we have received has called for elections this fall.

In fact, Madam Minister, the only people we have heard calling for the elections to be postponed are you, Garf Stevenson, and your politically appointed health boards, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, can you show us evidence of all of the people you say want the elections postponed by tabling letters to that effect? Other than the health boards, your politically appointed health boards themselves, who exactly in this province wants the elections delayed, other than yourselves?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, the SAHO, which is the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, which represents far more than the district health boards who were nominated from their communities — it represents other health care organizations as well — has put out a press release saying it would be disruptive.

I have asked Mr. Stevenson to consult with the public at large on a number of issues. One issue being when people feel would be the most appropriate time. I will wait to hear from Mr. Stevenson on that issue.

I want to point out that elections will be done when it is appropriate for health care, not when it is politically appropriate for the Tory Party. We will hold elections, as we are committed to do, when it is appropriate for health care. The members opposite had nine years to have elections with health boards and they chose not to. They had no democracy in their health care system — nine years and they didn't do it. We've committed to it in legislation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, it's interesting you speak of it being

Health Boards' Purchasing Policy

politically appropriate, the timing of the elections and why you'd want that. Because in the letter from CUPE they suggest, Madam Minister, that you have a hidden agenda and that is to hold the elections off until as late as 1997, after the next provincial election. That's what they suggest in their letter to us, Madam Minister.

And that's because you know how much damage your so-called wellness plan has caused and you don't want to open up the old wounds and expose your government to criticism until after the next provincial election. Isn't that right, Madam Minister? Your whole strategy and Garf Stevenson's phoney commission have more to do with preserving the NDP's (New Democratic Party) political wellness than the wellness of the people of Saskatchewan, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, the clear position of the PC (Progressive Conservative) Party is that the elections should be held this fall, and we've presented a piece of legislation in this legislature to that effect. But given that you have now ruled out that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member has gone on long enough. I want him to put his question.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that you've ruled out that option, will you at least today guarantee, Madam Minister, that health board elections will be held prior to the next provincial election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has indicated that we don't want the public to know how horrible our health reform is. Well clearly, the member opposite's statements, his whole agenda, is political because he's obviously uninformed about the fact that Saskatchewan is perceived, not only nationally but internationally, as leading the way in health reform.

Michael Rachlis and Carol Kushner, the authors of the Canadian best seller *Second Opinion*, have recently written a new book called *Strong Medicine* which says — and talking about health reform across Canada, comparing all the systems — he clearly indicates that Saskatchewan's in the forefront. And both Rachlis and Kushner say and I state: something wonderful is happening in Saskatchewan again; the country watches with awe.

Now the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, have fought health reform from day one. They don't want it to succeed because their agenda is political. They do not care for the health of the people of Saskatchewan or for future generations, and the need to make the system more effective, more responsive, and affordable for future generations.

That is their agenda, pure and simple, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we continue to hear from a party that has attacked labour from the time of their inception.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Well, Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, that's one of the most blatant non-answers that I have heard in a long time and you, not even skilfully, evaded the question. You did not answer the question at all, Madam Minister. It just boggles the mind that the government opposite is so blatantly engaged in politically motivated stalling tactics as far as the health board elections are concerned.

You people simply do not want anyone on those boards that may not be in complete sympathy with your objectives. Madam Minister, we need accountability on those boards and for those boards.

Mr. Speaker, I have a series of questions that is going to try to accomplish that fact. Madam Minister, I understand that part of the savings that taxpayers were supposed to realize from your health cuts were to be used as a result of . . . were to be realized as a result of volume buying by the new health boards. Can you, Madam Minister — this is the question — can you articulate the new policy with respect to this new purchasing arrangement, and would you table copies of that policy so that everyone can see it precisely?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the health boards are looking for all sorts of ways of reducing costs in terms of health expenditures. On specific details with respect to the matters the member opposite has raised, I will certainly ask the department to provide him with the information that is available.

The members opposite however, I should say, Mr. Speaker, are far more interested not in helping the public in Saskatchewan but in grandstanding for the upcoming Tory leadership convention that soon is going to take place . . .

An Hon. Member: — The big one and the little one.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The big one and the little one, I'm advised, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite, if they were truly concerned about improving the health system for future generations and for the people of Saskatchewan, would have come to this legislature with suggestions for their communities and their district boards to implement new programing that we have said will be made available to the residents of Saskatchewan.

Instead they have been here simply belabouring certain issues that they feel they can politically grandstand on that do not lead to a higher quality health care system, but will simply serve their political purposes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, let me say once and for all for the member opposite that the big guy from Rosthern has no political aspirations. I've mentioned that; I've concretely said that. So having . . .

The Speaker: — Okay, now that we've got that out of the way, the member may want to direct his attention to a question. Order, Order.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And since my time starts as of now, I'll direct the question to the Minister of Health once more. And quite frankly, Madam Minister, you are the one here that is politicizing the issue. I have not said anything political other than ask you for your policy. I want to know what your policy is in so far as tendering is concerned. And apparently there is no such policy from your answer, Madam Minister.

It's also evident from a letter that I received from the medical division of Liquid Carbonic — Liquid Carbonic, Madam Minister. This company has been supplying hospitals with medical gases for many years. Now recently four hospitals have notified Liquid Carbonic that they have unilaterally cancelled the contract and have signed arrangements with a different company. And as the letter points out, and I want to quote here:

Liquid Carbonic, and perhaps other suppliers in the industry, were not given any opportunity to quote for that future supply of gas. It is very possible, if not probable, that had we been given the opportunity to quote, our price would have been significantly lower than Canadian Liquid Air, that got it. It is difficult to see any rationale or sound business purpose behind the hospitals' conduct.

Madam Minister, perhaps you can explain why health boards would not be asking for tenders for hospital supplies, especially in light of their tight financial situation.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want elected boards but they want us to dictate to these boards. I find that position rather inconsistent.

On the issue of the Liquid Carbonic situation, Mr. Speaker, this has been brought to my attention in the last few days and the Department of Health is going to be discussing with district boards what the process is and how we will be proceeding in this regard. So these discussions are taking place at this time with respect to that particular issue.

However, district boards have a need to look at ways that they can reduce their costs to the system and do what they feel is most effective for their district. And so many district boards, being motivated by this, will be changing some of the things that have happened in the past. If they weren't changing anything, obviously we wouldn't receive any correction of some of the problems.

On this particular issue, however, I have asked the Department of Health to look into it. They are reviewing the matter with the district health boards and so there will be further information on that when

that review takes place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you have just confirmed two things. First of all, that you have no policy. And secondly, that there is no accountability of taxpayers' money that go through the district health boards. That's precisely what you have just said.

And the letter points out further, Madam Minister, and I quote again:

If the hospitals wish to obtain the lowest price available in the market, surely they must canvass the market to determine the lowest price at which the various suppliers are willing to contract.

Madam Minister, the conduct is even more puzzling given the fact that Liquid Carbonic is the only manufacturer of medical gases in this province. It appears that the health boards have no guidelines for fair and open tendering for bulk buying. The medical sales manager for Liquid Carbonic has been phoning all over the province trying to find answers, but no one seems to be willing to take responsibility.

Madam Minister, I ask you that you take responsibility for this inquiry, and further I suggest you immediately move toward holding elections for health boards such that everyone in the health care field can be held accountable for whom they serve. Would you do that today, Madam Minister — make that commitment that you will do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — On the member's question, Mr. Speaker, I had pointed out to him I've already asked the Department of Health to look into the matter far before he ever raised the question, and it is being looked into and under review.

The matter is not as simple as the member opposite paints it. There are a number of issues that have to be resolved in this regard. And so I am waiting to hear from the Department of Health how it will be resolved. It's not a question of . . . as simple as they put it.

He says there's no accountability in the system and he is wrong. The member opposite sat in this House, the member opposite sat in this House when we pointed out how, along with the Provincial Auditor, we have discussed accountability. He was provided with reams of information on accountability. Not to mention the fact that district boards, unlike when they were in government, have to have at least two public meetings a year. And in this sense, in this fashion, are accountable to the members in their district.

Health care boards in the past have never had to do that. The Tory opposition had nine to ten years to make health boards accountable; they did not. We

have made them accountable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, that is a bunch of nonsense. And that is precisely where your accountability falls down. The Provincial Auditor is not able to audit the district health boards and there's a very good reason for that, Madam Minister, because you have seen to it that he can't. He cannot because you're not supplying him with the funds necessary to do that. And that's a conscious effort on the Treasury Board part and cabinet's part who dictate to the Board of Internal Economy, don't give the Provincial Auditor enough money that he will be able to do that.

And the Provincial Auditor is telling us right now, Madam Minister, that almost half, almost half of the public taxpayers' money that is going to be spent, he will not be able to audit because he doesn't have the funds available, Madam Minister. That's accountability, that's accountability. And the money that these boards now are going to be spending are done so by appointed boards, they're not even elected, Madam Minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Does the member have a question? I want the member to put his question, please.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, I thought I was doing quite well in making the point. Madam Minister, will you, will you commit to fall elections for the health boards so the people of this province will have accountability and that they will be satisfied that indeed these health boards are representing them, instead of the Garf Stevensons of this world?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, for a man who has chalked up a \$15 billion debt in this province — 15 billion for our children and our grandchildren to pay off — for him to rant and rave here about accountability, I'll tell you, that is very shallow. Ranting and raving about accountability when he's chalked up a \$15 billion debt in this province, personally, as he sat on cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to auditing of health boards, let me say this: when the members opposite were in government, those hospital boards were not audited by the Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Auditor didn't audit the home care boards, he didn't audit the special care home boards; and now the Provincial Auditor has worked out a process with the government whereby auditing will be more accountable to the Provincial Auditor than what it was in the past. In fact he does audit a number of these boards, although not all of them. The rest are audited by private auditors; they're accountable to the department and the department's accountable to the Provincial Auditor.

For them to suggest there's no accountability is false, it's not true, it's misleading, it's misinformation, it's typical Tory tactics of misinforming the public.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Trade Union Act Amendments

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for the Minister of Labour. Mr. Minister, section 37 of The Trade Union Act ensures that labour costs at all levels of government, including Crown corporations, schools, hospitals, universities, and even municipalities, will continue to be protected by the status quo. That means all levels of government will be prevented from contracting out certain services.

Mr. Minister, what happens to the freedom of those responsible for running taxpayers' institutions to reduce costs, when what in fact you are doing is legislating that they will lose their freedom?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, as I've repeatedly pointed out in the past, the group of workers to which section 37 applies, those cafeteria workers, security workers, cleaning services, are ones that are frequently tendered out. They are usually at the bottom of the barrel . . . at the bottom of the ladder in terms of salary. It is enormously difficult for them to get any rights because their employer keeps changing. As soon as they organize to present some minimal demands for protection, their employer changes. And they often go. This is an attempt to provide those people who are on the bottom rung of the ladder with a little protection.

And we really would ask the opposition members to give some consideration to the workers in addition to other considerations which perhaps legitimately occupy your attention. Do give some thought as well to the workers who have had such a difficult time in this area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, workers in Saskatchewan are taxpayers too and your government's new labour laws are going to cost Saskatchewan taxpayers money. Your laws guarantee that no public sector union will ever have to settle for anything less than the status quo. And some government services will be protected from competition, eliminating all the possibilities of lowering costs by contracting out services.

Now there are municipal leaders who have asked me to ask you this question, Mr. Minister. What advice do you offer to municipal leaders who now feel that your provincial government has limited their options in being able to responsibly represent the taxpayers who elected them?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The suggestion emanating from the Leader of the Third Party, which I've heard from a number of people, which suggests that these wages can never be lowered, it's just not accurate. There's nothing to prevent them from being lowered. It simply means that if they are you've got to discuss that with the workers, and you can't do it through the

back door by retendering out and therefore getting rid of the workers.

What is wrong with involving workers in the discussion? There are any number of progressive governments and any number of progressive businesses which have carried on successful discussions with workers and have been able to agree upon a lower wage of workers, a lower level of wages. And there's any number of examples where this has been done successfully.

That's all this requires, is that it be discussed with the workers and negotiated with the workers. And I do not see why people find it so offensive to involve the workers in the discussion, when their very livelihood is involved. I don't know why people find that so offensive.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, what we're wanting to talk about here is what are of genuine concern to municipal leaders who have been elected, people who are trying to make decisions in the best interests of all the people that they are elected to represent. Now that represents everybody, including workers in the province of Saskatchewan. What a lot of people are saying, including those who are in charge of human resources, including those, as I mentioned this week, who were involved in helping you establish your occupational health and safety legislation in the province of Saskatchewan, is that you are creating an unlevel playing-field.

And this is going to introduce all sorts of difficulties for people who are trying to deal with extremely restricted budgets. What I ask of you today, since it is your responsibility as part of this government to spend tax dollars as efficiently as possible, and to do so by whatever means possible without doing away with essential services, how can you then in your own government cut costs when you are restricted for overall consideration of how to do so by your very own legislation? How are you going to be able to deal with this?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I hear what the member of the third party asks of me. What I ask of you is that you show a fraction of the compassion for these workers that you showed for the judges, or show a fraction of the compassion for these workers that you've shown for the office of the Leader of the Third Party.

These are the workers at the very bottom of the ladder. Surely they are entitled to some passing consideration, even by members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it is always humorous for people to listen to someone who indeed took an 80-some per cent increase in his own salary when he became a cabinet minister. It's also interesting how what you do is you

make decisions to talk about workers in such a way that they're the lowest on the totem pole, when many people who are public sector employees in the province of Saskatchewan do better than small business people in terms of their own salaries, their benefits, the securities that they have.

What we are wanting from you is to ensure that the people who have been elected by the people and for the people are allowed the option of being able to do their job on behalf of the people. They want to know why it is you're removing from them, through legislation, options — options to contract out, perhaps getting far better deals for the people that they were elected to represent.

Will you answer that question, please?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The member opposite made some passing reference to the salaries of members of the treasury benches. We took a 5 per cent pay increase, and you? And you? A 37 per cent pay increase.

What is asked of you is that you give some thought to the position these workers are in. They are people with the lowest salaries, with no protection, and very limited ability to get any protection because as soon as they begin to do what every worker has the right to do, which is to organize, they're thwarted because their employer changes. It's an attempt to deal with a problem. I just ask the member opposite to give a fraction of the consideration to these people that you've showered upon judges and the Office of the Leader of the Third Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the House to move an address recommending the appointment of a new ombudsman.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Appointment of New Provincial Ombudsman

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move an address recommending that Barbara Tomkins of Estevan be appointed as Saskatchewan's new Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman's office has become a key part of the way Saskatchewan people can seek redress when they feel their government has not dealt with them in a fair and equitable manner. The office has played an important role in investigating and determining grievances brought by citizens against the government. Because of its non-binding role, its true importance is in mediating disputes and, when necessary, writing reports that fairly assess whether government action has been appropriate.

It is essential that any candidate for this position demonstrate an understanding and an empathy for the

rights and needs of disadvantaged people. As well, the person must be able to act in a non-partisan and independent manner as an officer of the Legislative Assembly.

I'm very pleased to be able to say that such a candidate has been identified to fill this difficult position. Barbara Tomkins is an extremely bright, articulate and determined person who has long been a strong and passionate advocate of the disadvantaged. She brings to her job a keen interest in mediation and sees mediation as a large part of the Ombudsman's role.

Ms. Tomkins has practised law for 18 years, Mr. Speaker, beginning with a term in private practice, then as corporate counsel for the SaskPower Corporation for two years. She worked with the Regina office of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission for three years, then followed by a six-year period again with SaskPower. She currently serves as legal director at the south-east area office of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission where she has worked for six years.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Tomkins has been identified following an extensive public search. Advertisements were placed in the daily newspapers and applications were received by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, 73 such applications were received. A review panel consisting of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the chair of the Public Service Commission, and the assistant clerk of the Executive Council, developed a short list from which Ms. Tomkins has been selected. I met Ms. Tomkins this morning, Mr. Speaker, and I was charmed to learn that as a student in school, before there had been a single ombudsman appointed in any jurisdiction in Canada, Ms. Tomkins read of the office as it existed in Europe and developed an ambition at that time to some day become Saskatchewan's Ombudsman.

We are seeing today the realization of a dream that she's had for most of her life. It is important for me to note, Mr. Speaker, with appreciation, the role of the Leader of the Opposition and the Justice critic, the hon. member from Moosomin, as well as the Leader of the Third Party, who have been consulted on the results of the selection committee's report and whose views and comments have been very valuable to the government in deciding upon the appointment of Ms. Tomkins and presenting it today to the Assembly.

(1045)

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure therefore that I move, seconded by the hon. member from Moosomin:

That an humble address be presented to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, recommending that Barbara J. Tomkins, of the city of Estevan, be appointed as Ombudsman for the province of Saskatchewan pursuant to section 3 of The Ombudsman Act.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to rise in this Assembly and to join with the minister and to second the nomination of Barbara Tomkins to the position of Ombudsman in the province of Saskatchewan. Just from looking through the résumé and certainly the consultation process and the discussions we've had with the minister, I can see where the panel may have had a difficult time choosing between all the applications that came in and finally arriving at the choice of Ms. Tomkins for the position of Ombudsman.

But we believe that certainly Ms. Tomkins has the capabilities. Certainly her résumé would indicate that she has worked in a lot of fields that would really create the avenue with which she will be approaching the position of Ombudsman, and we're pleased to be able to stand and second the appointment of Ms. Tomkins to the position of provincial Ombudsman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise today on behalf of the third party to congratulate our new Ombudsman, Barbara Tomkins, on her appointment. And I offer my congratulations to Kirk Rondeau as well, her children, and other members of her family who must be very proud today.

I understand that there were many excellent candidates who applied for this position, and the task of selecting one was not an easy one. All who applied I believe should be acknowledged and thanked for their interest in public service to this province.

The level of quality of competition merely points to the outstanding capabilities of Ms. Tomkins, to be chosen from such an illustrious field. And as the Minister of Justice pointed out, she has a very varied legal background of more than 18 years, and she's had a substantial background as well in working within government departments and corporations which will prepare her very well for her new duties.

Additionally, her most recent employment with the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission has provided her with obvious years of very obvious hands-on experience.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Justice for keeping the third party caucus informed throughout this process — the process of advertising, screening, and the selection of the new Ombudsman. And we are most appreciative of the fair manner with which all applicants were treated, and through which all political parties were apprised.

Again, Mr. Speaker, and to Ms. Tomkins, we offer you our heartiest congratulations on your appointment. I'm very confident that she will serve this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan very well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 72 — An Act to Establish the Saskatchewan Gaming Investment Corporation and to enact certain Consequential Amendments arising from the enactment of this Act

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I stand to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Gaming Investment Corporation Act.

Gaming has been a long part of Saskatchewan's history. From the games of sticks played by Saskatchewan's first nations before the advent of European settlers to the church bingos of the early 20th century, gaming has been a part of Saskatchewan life.

It was the federal Liberal government that decided to legalize and ultimately popularize gaming with its Criminal Code amendments in 1969. In that year *pari-mutuel* betting became legal in Saskatchewan, and the exhibition associations first started profiting from gambling. By 1971, their gambling operations included small-scale casinos.

In the mid-1970s federal and provincial governments began to run lottery schemes for profit. As this form of entertainment grew, the governments of the day, faced with robust treasuries, turned the profits from this form of gambling over to the charities through funding networks of sports, recreation, and cultural organizations.

The 1980s saw the advent of large-scale casinos for profit that brought in millions of dollars for private business. This gaming trend continued to grow in popularity and proliferated. The 1990s have seen the introduction of video lotteries in age-restricted businesses with profits going to provincial treasury to support health care, education, and deficit reduction.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was sworn in as minister responsible for Gaming in March of 1993. I am the fourth minister to hold that position in this administration. And like my predecessors, my role has been to provide for effective and responsible regulation of Saskatchewan's gaming industry. My term as Gaming minister has seen many changes and many challenges.

It was only a matter of weeks after I was sworn in that we were faced with perhaps one of our most difficult issues. For a difficult four weeks, Saskatchewan people watched as we were drawn into an emotional and trying debate over the seemingly inconsequential

issue of casino development, and the complicated issue of jurisdiction and the inherent right to self-government by Saskatchewan first nations. These four weeks were perhaps the most trying time of my ministry.

Mr. Speaker, I remember daily briefings with my staff and with my officials on the issue. And I remember us being forced to reconcile the conflicting desires of Saskatchewan people to provide for strict control of gaming, and on the other hand the desire to recognize the right to self-determination and self-government. And I remember debating how we would bridge these two competing views without permitting it to escalate into the situation that has been etched into our memories of another debate over the issue of a golf course in Oka, Quebec.

And, Mr. Speaker, I say this sincerely, that it is by the courage and the leadership of people like my colleague, the Minister of Justice, and Chief Roland Crowe, that we were able to avoid an Oka. Mr. Speaker, I raise this issue because I think it is important that this Assembly understand the significance of the Bill that I am introducing today and that I am addressing today.

Over the past 14 months I have been meeting with Chief Crowe to reach an agreement that is acceptable to all people. It's an agreement that builds on the mutual respect of two peoples and provides for mutual benefits. As you will recall, on January 17 of this year Chief Crowe and I announced that we would be entering into negotiations to form a partnership for operating two Saskatchewan casinos.

In undertaking these negotiations, Saskatchewan people have told us that they want tightly controlled expansion and a provincially regulated gaming industry, that they want all Saskatchewan people to share in the benefits of expansion, and that they want a peaceful resolve to an issue that has been a source of dispute between governments and aboriginal people across Canada.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be joined by Chief Crowe to announce that we had indeed reached an historic agreement that accomplished these objectives. Mr. Speaker, it is a result of that agreement that I stand today to endorse this legislation to create a new Crown corporation to establish, to operate, manage, and conduct casino operations in Saskatchewan under the full legislative authority of this Assembly.

This legislation provides for tight regulation of the casinos by the province and it ensures the historic revenue-sharing formula negotiated with the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) is accountable to the legislature.

Further to this, Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides for the new Crown corporation to be regulated at arm's length by the Liquor and Gaming Authority while ensuring provincial audit standards are met in its financial operations. The corporation's board of

directors will consist of seven people appointed by cabinet, three of whom will be nominated by the chiefs of the Legislative Assembly of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. The remaining four will be nominated by the province.

It provides for the establishment of any casino and its location to require cabinet approval, and it will be subject to regulation by the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation and the agreement with the FSIN does not resolve or prejudice the respective positions of the province and the federation on the issue of jurisdiction over the on-reserve casinos. However, it's generally agreed that the Saskatchewan casino market will be near full capacity with the development of these two casinos. While other small-scale casinos may open, and the courts or federal government may provide first nations with the ability to operate casinos outside the provincial jurisdiction, it is these two flagship casinos that will provide the greatest benefits to both peoples.

Apart from the ability to ensure tight control and provincial regulation, there will be significant economic and financial benefits arising from these two projects. This legislation ensures that these benefits will be fairly distributed and will be fully accountable to the Saskatchewan legislature.

Specifically, this legislation establishes the first nations fund and guarantees, under the authority of law, that 25 per cent of profits from these ventures will be directly reinvested into our first nations. It ensures that this money will be used for the purposes of economic and social development on reserves. And it provides secure funds to enhance the educational, recreational, and cultural development of Indian people by Indian people. And it provides for a capital pool to build and renew the infrastructure that has been sadly ignored by governments since treaties were signed over a hundred years ago.

Mr. Speaker, this fund is fully accountable to the legislature and will be audited and examined using the normal procedures of this Assembly. But more important, Mr. Speaker, this fund provides a base for funding Indian people to secure their future, based on their priorities and based on their self-reliance.

(1100)

A second directly accountable fund will be set up by this legislation to provide security to associated entities — entities such as hospital foundations, exhibition associations, and the Metis.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that increased gaming opportunities may cause some Saskatchewan people to change their game of choice. We have seen this happen in Saskatchewan hotels as people choose to play the VLTs (video lottery terminals) rather than the break-open tickets that fund the hospital foundations in Regina and Saskatoon.

We believe that charity is an important part of Saskatchewan heritage. That is why we will ensure that money is available to provide an offset for those charities that have become dependent on gaming revenue and may find an effect from the expanded opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we also know that the exhibition associations have relied on casino revenues to fund many of their programs. And they too will receive compensation if they're not involved in the management of casinos.

And Metis people will also be direct beneficiaries of this program. Money will be available to them in support of their social and economic growth, as they too are an important part that has been excluded in the past from the wealth that this province has to offer.

The exact division of the associated entities fund will be negotiated with the respective partners over the next year. Mr. Speaker, these funds will be subject to review by the Legislative Assembly. They will be subject to audit and they will be subject to scrutiny by this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to say that this is historic legislation that is important because it formalizes for the first time a real partnership, a true partnership, between the province and Saskatchewan's first nations. It provides an alternative to paternalism, and it recognizes the mature nature of Saskatchewan Indians and Saskatchewan Indian governments.

But, Mr. Speaker, it does more than that. It provides for an open and accountable operation of casino gaming in Saskatchewan that is subject to tight regulatory controls and the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. It is a responsible approach to gaming expansion that has looked at the mistakes of the 1980s and has acted to correct these.

This legislation itself is marked by a commitment to legislative accountability, tight control, provincial regulation, public scrutiny, and inherent fairness to all Saskatchewan people. This legislation builds on our strengths as a province and as a people. It provides for increased economic opportunities for all Saskatchewan people, and in particular for Saskatchewan aboriginal people. And it provides for a real and lasting partnership with Indian nations who jointly share the responsibilities and the benefits that accompany this economic opportunity.

In closing, I want to thank Chief Crowe and those who have preceded me in this portfolio for their leadership and their vision in helping to ensure that this policy benefits all Saskatchewan people and promotes a lasting peace.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I move second reading of this Bill, An Act to Establish the Saskatchewan Gaming Investment Corporation and to enact certain Consequential Amendments arising from the enactment of this Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's with some pleasure that I stand to address a few comments before moving adjournment of this motion to the Bill No. 72, An Act to Establish the Saskatchewan Gaming Investment Corporation and to enact certain Consequential Amendments arising from the enactment of this Act.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, when the minister talked about an ongoing heated debate in this Assembly and throughout the province, it's something that he spoke very truly of; and the fact that the people across this province have certainly established, in their minds, their principles, their ideals, and their feelings regarding gambling and expanded gambling in the province of Saskatchewan. And that no doubt as we enter the debate, there will be more debate take place in this Assembly.

And, Mr. Speaker, as an opposition party we have appreciated the information and the calls that have come to our office regarding the Bill. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, there are calls from individuals who are quite supportive of gambling. There are applications being made from individuals and groups as well who have some major concerns.

And I'm appreciative to see that Mr. Crowe and a number of our native leaders from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations are with us this morning. Because I'm sure that in their discussion with the minister and with the government they're not only pleased with the opportunity for some economic activity for their people and for the job opportunities that are going to be created, but I'm also aware of the fact that they're very strongly aware of some of the implications and the problems that can arise. And I appreciate the suggestions and the fact that they're willing to take a look at some of those other problems that can arise and offer suggestions.

And I would invite Mr. Crowe and our native leaders to certainly consult with our office as well and give us their viewpoints on this piece of legislation as we debate it in this Assembly. As I believe it's only fair that the opposition, in addressing the concerns that arise, that we represent . . . and I believe my colleagues and I have over the process of this legislative session and as opposition members, have looked at ways of representing all people and all pieces of legislation that have come to this Assembly. And our door has certainly been open to all interest groups and individuals.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to consultation with Chief Crowe and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. We look forward to some consultation with the Metis association. We're also looking forward to consultation with other interested parties and groups.

In light of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that we feel that it's

only appropriate that this consultation process be given some time to work, I therefore at this time move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program Vote 68

The Chair: — Before we commence I would ask the minister responsible, the Provincial Secretary, to please introduce the officials who have joined us here today.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to introduce to you and to the House, the officials who will be assisting us today. Behind me and to the right is Mr. Howard Leeson, who's the Deputy Provincial Secretary; to my immediate right is Mr. Dickson Bailey, who is the executive director of the infrastructure program; and behind me directly is Cathy Dermody, who's the director of administration in the Department of Provincial Secretary.

Item 1

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Mr. Minister, and your officials. I just have a few questions this morning on the infrastructure program, which we'd like to have you attempt to answer for us.

Mr. Minister, the infrastructure program was originally proposed by the current federal Liberal government during the last election as a municipal infrastructure program. It was to be cost shared by all three levels of government. Apparently, Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan is the only provincial government in Canada that is not putting up a full one-third of the money. Could you please explain why this is so?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm having some specific numbers sought out for me here, because I think the member's suggestion that this is not the way it is being done across all of Canada is not totally correct, because every province is using a different way to allow for the expenditure of this federal money.

In the province of Saskatchewan we have worked out, in cooperation with the municipal organizations, a distribution of the funding of the federal allocation. And we have added some provincial allocation as well, on a per capita basis, so that the municipalities will have access to federal infrastructure money and to provincial infrastructure money as well on a per capita basis.

And it works out in this way. For municipal projects there will be \$32 million of federal money and \$10 million of provincial money. For projects which are designated by the province, there will be \$25.71 million of federal money and \$57.71 million of provincial money. So if you take all of that and put it

together, we get a total amount from the federal government of \$57.71 million. And there will be a contribution from the provincial level of \$67.71 million and from the municipal level of \$47.71 million.

Now just to give you an example, Mr. Chairman, and to the member opposite, for his information, how in Saskatchewan the program is different than it is in other provinces — and in each province it's different — we have tried to be very careful in making sure that one, municipalities, on their portion of the allocation, pick the projects that they think are important to them, rather than having somebody at the provincial government level oversee and decide for them what should be the priorities in the municipalities. Now that's far different in some places and I don't want to do this in a partisan way, but for example, in New Brunswick in Moncton, the city of Moncton, for example, the city had put together its priority list and because the money there has been allocated on the basis of federal constituencies, that list has been totally ignored and the allocation of the money has been decided by some politicians connected to the government of the day both at the provincial and the federal level.

We have decided that that's not the appropriate way to do it. The municipalities of this province have appreciated that and have indicated their support for this process and I think that it's working very well. We are ahead of most provinces in the allocation. We are ahead of most of the provinces in the announcements, programs off and running.

We appreciate the cooperation and the assistance of the federal government. The municipalities appreciate the cooperation and assistance of the federal government and the provincial government and it's helping to create some very badly needed jobs in Saskatchewan.

(1115)

Mr. Swenson: — Well I appreciate the answer, Mr. Minister, and if your officials could provide me with global numbers from other provinces and how things are being done, I would really appreciate that because we'd like to make sure that you are telling us the straight goods on these things.

The problem, Mr. Minister, you identify some fairly large numbers here. But as I understand it, half of the money which you supposedly are contributing, were on existing provincial projects. In other words, you've designated things that you were going to create anyway before this program came along and you're throwing those in the hopper and you're saying this is part of our contribution.

Now these are capital projects which we had undergoing. And now we're going to take money out of this program and we're going to use that as our contribution. And I don't think that's quite fair, Mr. Minister, to tell Saskatchewan people that that contribution is whole, because it isn't.

Now can you explain to me — and I know municipal government were unhappy with this — why you'd consider existing projects which you already had ongoing to be a credible part of this program?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, here is where indeed there is some similarity between what Saskatchewan's approach and many of the other provinces, although . . . and certainly I will undertake to provide the member opposite all the information we can from other provinces because I think it's a useful comparison.

All of the projects that have been announced so far are not projects that were ongoing. They are either new projects or projects that have been accelerated, which would not have been done for the next two, three years, so it is truly an increased amount of expenditure which is creating jobs that would otherwise not be taking place in this year. It is true that there will be, throughout the year, some of the allocation for the money for projects, if they come to pass, which the . . . the money for which has been allocated in the budget.

But we tried to anticipate in the budget some of the things that we might be able to do if the agreement was signed and if we can get the approval of the federal government. But none of the projects that we have approved so far, and I hope that we approve in the future, are those that have been already ongoing. These will be new; they will be accelerated from years into the future so that we bring them back forward to this year and to 1995. That's useful from the point of view of job creation, but I think it's also very important to note that it's useful from the point of view of getting some very badly needed projects done which otherwise wouldn't have been done.

I think the Cumberland bridge is an outstanding example of a cooperation between the federal government, the local community, the provincial government, on a project which the people of Cumberland House have been lobbying for for as long as I have been a member of this House — and that's now 20 years — and they were lobbying before that. Finally they're going to get the bridge. And I think we all should be happy for them, and quite frankly, the infrastructure program and this cooperative spirit that has been around is making all that possible.

So I want to assure the member, none of the projects are projects that are ongoing now. They are projects that are accelerated.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, you and I both know that I wasn't referring to the Cumberland House bridge. That was . . . but that's a very poor example, Mr. Minister, and you should talk about some of the health and educational facilities and other things around the piece that you are going to put some of this money in over the next two years which I suggest to you would have been done anyway.

And that's the problem that people have with your program, is that this particular program was identified

as a way to create new employment opportunities and repair infrastructure in a lot of our municipal jurisdictions. You have now taken it, and you do have the agreement of the federal government — I'm not discounting that — but we should not pass this off to the people of this province that some of these projects weren't on the drawing boards. Some of those projects, Mr. Minister, were on the drawing boards when I was on the treasury benches and they will be ongoing.

Now you're trying to tell the people that no, that would have never occurred and that's why we had to grab the cash out of the program and put into our programs. And I suggest to you that isn't going to create the level of employment that people were expecting in this province from your program. And that's the problem with it and that's the explanation that you have to give.

Now are you going to give me an absolute assurance that by the end of 1995 that none of the projects which have been on the government's drawing boards will have any money put in out of this program at all, absolutely none?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — All the projects that we will be getting approval for . . . because it's not simply a provincial government approval, it's a joint approval between municipalities if it's a municipal project, the provincial government and the federal government. And if it is a provincially designated project, it has to be joint approval between the provincial and federal government.

There will be no projects approved that have been started. There have been no educational facilities approved at the present time. We certainly are quite willing to look at educational facilities that are not in the process of being in the construction portfolio at the present time. Because in the announcement of the federal government, they made it very clear that their programs — it's not our program, it's their initiative — their program was not going to be the same as that of the national municipalities association.

They said the projects would be for municipal infrastructure, for educational needs, and other kinds of needs. I have heard federal ministers talk about, we should spend some of this money on the information highway. It's hardly a municipal infrastructure. So all we're doing is living within the terms of what the federal government has provided.

And, for example, so are other provinces. In New Brunswick, there has been \$3.6 million dedicated to the Atlantic Bible College, a private school. In Alberta, there has been money allocated for the purchase of a street sweeper, \$170,000, and a snowblower. Now we're not approving those kinds because we want to make sure that the projects we approve are going to create jobs. The purchase of a snowblower, I'm not sure how many jobs that creates that would not have already been there. But we're trying to be very careful that we do that.

But just not to take a great deal of time, directly answering the member's question, Mr. Chairman, the programs or the projects which have been approved and which we will be approving are not projects that are already in the process of proceeding. They are going to be projects that are going to be accelerated. And they will be projects that I think are going to do a lot of good for the communities of the province of Saskatchewan as well as create jobs.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I hope when we review this program next year, Mr. Minister, that we haven't seen a significant amount of slippage there. So we'll watch very carefully to see how you administer this.

Now you maybe have already answered this, but I would like you to repeat for the record. I believe on the news release of April 25, '94, it states that 30 million over the next two years will go toward upgrading Saskatchewan rural roads — rural roads, not urban roads.

Could you tell me how much of that 30 million is provincial money, and how much comes from the federal government and how much from the municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Ten million dollars because there's a one-third component. The federal is going to be coming from the federal government under the infrastructure program, and the other \$30 million are going to come under the revenue-sharing program which already exists in the provincial government. There is more money in that this year, for purposes of road construction, by four and a half million dollars, than there was last year. And that's how the money is going to be allocated.

Mr. Swenson: — Was I reading the release wrong? Because you've given me about \$44 million total here. You said 10 from the provincial . . .

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Ten million dollars from the federal level because of the infrastructure program and \$20 million will come under the normal funding that comes from the revenue-sharing program that the provincial Department of Municipal Government has ongoing.

Mr. Swenson: — Okay, and on top of that then there is another four and a half this year?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I was confusing, I think, the House. I just used the four and a half million dollars as an example of some additional money that's in that revenue sharing for the purposes of roads that wasn't there last year. But that's part of that \$20 million that I talked about.

Mr. Swenson: — All right. But the commitment to \$30 million in total is still there. Now you haven't answered me, how much of the 20 million then is provincial government money, and how much is municipalities putting up money?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — It's difficult to answer that

question. I can provide the formula for the member, and we'll do it in writing. But there's a formula in the revenue-sharing road construction account which provides different amounts for different municipalities, depending on how the formula applies to them. The Minister of Municipal Government could probably speak more to this than I can. But if the member wants us to provide him with the formula and how it applies, we can do that.

Mr. Swenson: — I'd appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. It's very important that, as these monies are allocated, that we understand who is putting up the money because a lot of rural ratepayers are wondering what portion of this they are going to get stuck with on the tax rolls of their municipalities, and it's very important for us to understand that formula in talking to them.

Now, Mr. Minister, in Manitoba we understand a portion of the infrastructure work program is going toward a program similar to Sask Works that we have here, and I think you know the details of that program. Is there any way that that is possible with the existing Saskatchewan program, and if not, why not?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think the member refers to the program that's under New Careers. The money will be appropriated according to the project; but in some projects, if there is an opportunity for the employment of New Careers people, that's certainly available. And I don't know whether any of that has been so determined but we will be certainly more than willing to encourage where it is appropriate and possible, to involve people under Sask Works on some of these projects. We'd be more than happy to accommodate that.

Mr. Swenson: — Well this is important, Mr. Minister, because that program deals with a lot of people who have been falling to the wayside in our employment rolls and they have a very successful record of giving people 14, 16, 20 weeks of employment which then allows them to move back in the workforce and I've seen examples of it in the city of Moose Jaw with New Careers, very successful.

Can you tell me who is designated with this program? If people wish to approach government with a concept towards using people that currently are in that category, who would . . . what would be the approach that we would use in coming forward?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Certainly the office of the director of the infrastructure and the Provincial Secretary is where any ideas should go. But I should tell the member that we have already undertaken, through Mr. Bailey, to have discussions with the New Careers office to make sure that they are aware of this and ask them for their assistance, because I agree with what the member from Thunder Creek said at the beginning of his remarks.

And I fully say that this program, New Careers, was begun in the 1980s. It was an excellent program. It has provided all of the benefits and the training that the member opposite has talked about.

When I was briefly in charge of it this summer as Minister of Education, I asked for a report on the success rate of people who then come out of this several weeks of employment who then get into the workforce. The numbers were very impressive, and we're trying to encourage that.

So we've already begun to make the contacts with the New Careers organization to alert them to this, and get them to help steer any potential employment to us so that we can accommodate it.

Mr. Swenson: — So, Mr. Minister, what you're telling me, that as far as the provincial government is concerned, that there is still money that is allocatable, that the federal government and municipalities would be willing to buy into this particular idea, and that there is money available, that we won't be out on our own here.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We would do this in the projects which have been applied for and which have been or may be approved in the future. The only projects . . . not only, because they have been substantial. There have been some municipal projects that have been announced, including the city of Saskatoon and several other municipalities.

I believe that on Monday there will be another announcement on some municipal projects. There is the Cumberland bridge project. Did I miss anything? Oh, there's the municipal roads project. And there will be others. But within all of those projects opportunities for the New Careers people to be involved are going to be there.

(1130)

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to you, Mr. Minister, and your officials. I'm very pleased that the infrastructure program was delivered to the provinces as promised. I'm not quite as enthusiastic as how it has shaped up in its application. Mr. Minister, how many applications have you had in the province for projects under the infrastructure program?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I am told that . . . and first of all let me comment on the member's comment about not being pleased about how it's going because really I don't know where she's coming from on that. She'd have to be the only citizen in Saskatchewan, I think, who would be so displeased because the program is going exceptionally well.

The federal government has been cooperative. The province has been cooperative. Municipalities are happy and satisfied that it's going very well. And the projects that have been announced and those that will be announced in the future are going to be legitimate projects that are going to be fulfilling some very important needs.

They're not going to be projects, as have been the case in some provinces like New Brunswick where there is

a Liberal government, where they're making the decisions on strictly partisan basis. We're not going to do that in Saskatchewan.

So if the member is displeased about how the program is going, let her put on the record what she's displeased about so we can have a little debate about that because I'd be more than happy to have that kind of a debate.

Now if the member wants to ask us some legitimate questions, as the one dealing with the question of how many applications, I am told, and we don't have, because it's a running number but there is something in the area of 100 applications that have been made, 100 applications, and we are considering all of them. Obviously we're not going to be able to accommodate all of them because there is . . . the federal government has only provided to Saskatchewan \$57.7 million, which is about \$10 million less than we think we should have been eligible for.

But because the formula is based on unemployment — where we have the lowest unemployment in all of Canada — and because it's based on population and our population is small compared to some of the other provinces in Canada, such as Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia, and Alberta, we were allocated \$57.71 million and I think that those dollars are going to be wisely spent. The provincial money that is going to be put in is going to be wisely spent. They're going to create long-term benefits because of the facilities that are created and is going to create jobs for the short term while the projects are under construction.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Can you give me a general idea of how much both federal and provincial funding will be spent on projects which involve the traditional types of infrastructure — roads and sewers and upgrading of those?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — A little earlier I outlined for the member from Thunder Creek the allocation of the money and you will see that — here it is — that we have allocated that there will be an expenditure with municipal, provincial, and federal money, \$89.71 million on strictly municipal projects because the municipalities will decide what those projects should be, as the city of Saskatoon has already decided and it's been announced.

There were going to be \$83.42 million in total spent by the provincial and the federal government on projects that are going to be related to infrastructure needs of various kinds in the province such as the Cumberland bridge which was announced just the other day. In the forthcoming days and weeks you will see similar projects announced but the member will understand that we don't approve these projects on our own — it's a joint approval process — and we don't announce them on our own.

We feel it's important for the projects, because there is provincial and federal money, should be announced jointly at the appropriate time. But that's the

breakdown. All of the projects are going to be projects that are going to be important to either the municipal or to the provincial infrastructure in Saskatchewan.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The Leader of the Opposition was speaking about the Manitoba project which will create 2,300 direct and indirect jobs. Now that was in total on the ones they announced in April. One of the programs that he was talking about will provide \$10 million to employ more than 1,800 welfare recipients, and that program will save the public \$3 million in welfare payments.

And when you were discussing it, you spoke of using the New Careers program and integrating it into the employment force. Have you done an examination to determine the potential savings from such a program?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the project that the member opposite talks about is not a Government of Manitoba project; it's a city of Winnipeg project. And I don't know all the details of it, but generally the way the member describes it, she is correct.

We have not done an evaluation of the money that's going to be saved because you don't save money in this program. I'm not saying that it's costing excessively; the same amount of money would be spent no matter how you do it because there's only so much money to be spent.

But the benefit of trying to access some of the potential employees through the New Careers program is that it will provide jobs for people who badly need those jobs, who need to get back into the workforce, who gives them an opportunity to get some training and experience in the workforce. And as the statistics over the years under New Careers show, people who go through this, by and large in quite a large, significant number, stay in the workforce because they've had the experience on how to do the work. They've had some training, but they've also had some experience about how to go out and seek employment.

So there's some benefits there. And to the extent that we can enhance the New Careers through this program, we're quite happy to do that.

Mrs. Bergman: — I guess what I was asking, the \$3 million that would be saved in Winnipeg, as you rightly put it, would mean that these people would no longer be on welfare during the time of their employment. And that's basically the question I was asking.

A number of other jurisdictions are using the infrastructure program for some rather innovative projects rather than mainstream public works projects. Is it your objective to implement any innovative projects through this program?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, we're looking at a wide range of potential projects, with that long list that I mentioned to the member opposite. And I think we're going to be able to achieve that. I don't know . . .

I mean, innovative is really in the eyes of the person who defines innovation. I prefer to define it as projects that are going to be of some important need and of long-term benefit for whatever community they are built in and in some cases for the province as a whole.

I guess you could in those terms define the Cumberland bridge as an innovative project. It's not something that was going to be built, certainly hasn't been built for the 30 years of the community of Cumberland House under various administrations — Liberal, Conservative, NDP. But they've lobbied during that time. It's under this particular administration — which just happens to be a New Democratic Party administration — with money from the federal infrastructure program, that we're finally going to get that done. I think that qualifies under the definition of an innovative project.

But there are other things we're looking at as well. I mean I don't want to be critical of how the money is being expended in other places. But for the purposes of the debate, I want to raise some of the things that are happening in places like New Brunswick where the municipality is being told by — unfortunately in this case — the Liberal Government of New Brunswick and the Liberal government in Ottawa, you've got no say in where the money is going to be spent. We've got our list, and the federal members of parliament are going to pick that list.

Well I want to say, to the credit of the minister from the federal government here in Saskatchewan and to the credit of, I think, the way we're operating it and running this program, that's not going to happen here.

We're going to pick projects. We're going to let the municipalities pick the projects on the municipal program because they know better what they need. And we're going to designate provincial projects which are legitimate and create jobs. The announcement that came out of Alberta recently from the community of Rocky Mountain House where they're going to spend \$170,000 on a street sweeper and snowplough and \$52,000 on a snowblower, those are probably very important expenditures for the community, but they aren't going to create one job in that community. And that's not what the project was intended to do.

So please understand — and I can assure you — that we're not going to adopt that kind of approach. We want to make this program work as best as it possibly can.

Mrs. Bergman: — I can understand your enthusiasm for doing so. The program will employ people, and that's true. What is the province doing to use this program to create new, permanent jobs?

An Hon. Member: — I'm sorry, I was preoccupied.

Mrs. Bergman: — No problem. The program will employ people. What is the province doing to use this program to create new jobs that are permanent?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — A good infrastructure in any economy allows for and enhances economic development. This program was not developed for long-term employment. This program was developed and stated by the federal government to provide short-term employment, kick-start employment, as some federal politicians have described it; that's a fair description.

In the province of Saskatchewan, we're not relying on the infrastructure program to be the sole economic development vehicle. We're going to use it to develop the kinds of infrastructure as best we can to enhance economic development.

But the province itself has a long-term economic development strategy under the *Partnership for Renewal* strategy which the Minister of Economic Development and the Premier have spoken to many times. But to the extent that . . . And we're doing it through regional economic development authorities; we're doing it with targeted tax measures such as the fairly significant reduction, I think about 20 per cent, in the small-business tax rate which we have implemented over the last two years; such things as the reduction of the sales tax for manufacturers for things that they have to buy which they use in the manufacturing but which they have to replace from time to time; that's a long-term economic development strategy which the province has put together.

But going back to the infrastructure, you cannot, whether it's roads or bridges or the electronic communications infrastructure, unless you are up to date in those things, you're not going to be able to see or maximize the long-term economic development strategy. So to that extent, the two do tie together.

Mrs. Bergman: — And I agree with you; that was the aim of the infrastructure program as the federal government outlined it.

How many jobs will be targeted to people — young people or people who have never had jobs before? Is there any effort to make sure that applies to them?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — There's no way, there's no way to know that because when . . . this is not . . . I don't want to designate anything. Let us assume the city of Regina, when their projects are approved, they will do the hiring, they will do their tendering process; so we can't say how many jobs of a gender or age are going to be employed in those kind of projects. I don't know how you would be able to make that kind of an accurate statement. So I can't answer that question.

If people are unemployed, they're seeking a job, there's a construction job available, everybody will have access to it and depending on who the project managers are will determine who's hired there. I hope a lot of young people and students are able to access these jobs, those jobs. I think there's some promising signs in Saskatchewan from the point of view of young people employment.

There's an article in I believe the front page or the third page of the Regina *Leader-Post* today, which has officials of Employment Canada saying that the number of jobs for students and young people this year has increased quite significantly over the number available last year. That is not to say that it's as good as anybody would like it to be. I think there's a lot that needs yet to be done, but I think there's certainly clear signs that there is movement in the right direction. And to the extent that we can encourage and it can happen that young people are employed in infrastructure projects, that would be a plus.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In northern Saskatchewan, families with income under 20,000 is double the rate in the South so getting a job is of major importance. There are 19,700 people ready and able to work but only 40 per cent of them in the North have a job. How much of the job creation in the program will be directed to the North?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — All of that has yet not been decided or announced but I can tell the member from Regina North West that in the Cumberland bridge project, for example, with agreement with the community at least 50 per cent, at least 50 per cent of the jobs on that project are jobs that are going to have to be made available to Northerners. So we're making an effort to make sure that Northerners are employed in northern projects and if they can come down in other projects, that fine.

(1145)

But the only northern project that has been announced so far is the Cumberland bridge. But because I have already said it publicly and therefore I don't think it's going to break any protocol with the federal government, we are seriously looking at doing some water and sewage projects in northern communities which will provide northern employment.

But as to the full amount of this money that we'll spend in northern Saskatchewan, I can't say because all the approvals with the federal government have yet not been made. And when that's made, certainly we will be publicly announcing it and the information will be available not only to the member from North West but to everybody in the province.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you. I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Minister.

Now I have one more somewhere here . . . What is your government's plan to repair the infrastructure that breaks down after the money for the infrastructure money has been spent? Have you discussed that — the future? After some of this work has been done, what is the future of infrastructure in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I guess the answer to that is the infrastructure will be there. It will be maintained in the same way as it would be maintained under any circumstances. If it is municipal streets and roads and sewer and water, the

municipality would be responsible for the maintenance of those projects, the way it is now. If it is a provincial project such as a bridge or whatever it might be or some other facilities, then the province would maintain those projects under normal budget appropriations as we do all the time. And that's . . . I don't know what more I could say to that.

Mrs. Bergman: — One last question. With respect to the trade and convention centre in Saskatoon, has that funding been approved; what stage is it at; and it is contingent upon the city building a casino in any particular location?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We have had no application for a trade and convention centre from the city of Saskatoon, so I can't really say much on it. It's really a responsibility and the decision of the city of Saskatoon as to what they want to do with this.

And I can tell you now that any project that may come will not provide any money as is part of our casino policy. There will be no provincial money going to any casino project. If there's a casino project that happens to be in the vicinity, that's going to be somebody else's business. There will be no infrastructure money, assuming that this comes, to be going for a casino.

But I guess the bottom line is we have had no application for a trade and convention centre in Saskatoon so therefore it's not been considered to date.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, to you and your officials for answering my questions.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 68 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I would like to thank Mr. Bailey, the director of infrastructure program, for his assistance here today. And we appreciate the fact that I was able to answer the questions because of his presence here.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to offer my thanks to the officials for coming in today and for the minister's answers, and we look forward to much dialogue in the future.

General Revenue Fund Provincial Secretary Vote 30

Item 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to the minister, welcome to you and your officials.

Mr. Minister, we've been looking forward to this debate for some time with bated breath. We've been anticipating the debate with the highest-paid secretary in the province of Saskatchewan, and we indeed accept the challenge with some delight. But we're pleased to be here.

Now, Mr. Minister, I think you did hold up a volume of information and asked if you'd send it over. I'm not exactly sure what you had, whether it was the global questions which . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, yes. We've received those, and we certainly appreciate that. And thank you and your office and your department for having forwarded those answers to those global questions. We have a few questions that are arising out of the global questions that we have brought forward.

But before I get into the specifics of Provincial Secretary, Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask a question regarding SaskTel. I understand you're the minister responsible for SaskTel. And the question has . . . and it's been an ongoing concern and complaint that has been coming in to SaskTel — certainly was there when our government was in office, probably was there back in the '70s and the '60s — and that's regarding phone districts in the province of Saskatchewan.

And we still have some little districts, and I was just wondering, Mr. Minister, if your office or as minister, if SaskTel is taking a serious look at ways in which we can come to more workable arrangements in helping some of these small communities where basically most of their phone calls are long distance, and the 40/40 really doesn't do much to address those concerns. And I'm wondering if you could give us any indication of what might come and whether there is any change under way.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I don't want to engage in a debate on SaskTel because I don't have SaskTel officials here. That's a Crown Corporations matter.

But to that question, in order to be of some assistance, I can simply say that that is an issue that's always under constant review. I can't say what may come out of it, but I remember in the 1970s when efforts were started to consolidate some of the districts. In the 1980s that happened under the former administration. And that's something that SaskTel is going to have to and in fact is reviewing now as part of its overall strategic business plan into the future, as we get into the competitive world.

The member, I'm sure, understands that SaskTel is no longer the kind of Crown corporation that it at one time was where there was a monopoly. It is now in the competitive business with other private sector companies — Mobility Cellular for example is one of those examples. There are many other things — the products they provide, they're competing for.

And I have indicated earlier that the government will soon be releasing a White Paper addressing the question of long-distance competition. We do have, and fortunately so, a moratorium from CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) until 1998.

I understand that the government of Quebec has asked the federal government for a reconsideration of the policy so that there is some provincial

involvement in some of these decisions with regard to communications, telecommunications. And we have indicated formally with a letter to the federal government we'd be very much interested in that discussion because we think there should be some provincial involvement in this.

But I'm going off to some other topics . . . but going back to the original question, yes, that is a review that's taking place. What's going to happen I can't say at this time but when some decisions are made, SaskTel will be making the announcement; and if the member is able to bump somebody else off from the Crown Corporations Committee and attend when they were before the Crown Corporations Committee, we can give him more specific answers.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And, Mr. Minister, I would be pleased to have the opportunity to sit down with yourself and maybe someone in your office to discuss some of those questions rather than taking up time in the Assembly today and address some of those matters as SaskTel does its review and I appreciate that.

Mr. Minister, I have a number of questions here, and I think a number of these questions I'm going to basically probably give you two or three or four questions at a time rather than one question and specifically just getting up to ask each individual question. And maybe in that matter we could facilitate the process of the committee a lot more smoothly.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to know if you can tell us what the mandate of your department is. What does the department basically do on a daily basis? Are there any previous government functions that it performs? And what new functions has it developed?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the mandate of the department is more than being the Provincial Secretary. Nobody would ever expect me to ever be a secretary. That takes a special kind of skill which I never hope to have.

Members, anybody who's been in any administrative offices knows that a minister or a president or a director survives because of the secretaries that work there. I'm not sure I could ever fulfil that function. But the mandate of the Department of the Provincial Secretary, it is a central agency; it is not what one would call a line department in the same manner as a Department of Health or a Department of Education. But our role is to coordinate and manage intergovernmental affairs, to telecommunications policy and broadcasting issues. In the Provincial Secretary is located the protocol services for the government, the French-language services. We're responsible for the funding and whatever support is provided for the Lieutenant Governor.

And in recent months since my appointment, probably the most significant role, although the rest are important too, has been in the area of intergovernmental affairs. And this area will certainly become even much more involved as the myriad of

reviews and studies and negotiations between the federal and provincial governments begin to take place on social policy issues, on a whole wide range of things. And I suspect that this is going to be a considerably busy time because of what's coming.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, possibly one other position that could be added to that is political watchdog, and to just maintain the good, smooth operations of government. I'm not exactly sure but it would certainly appear to be that.

Mr. Minister, in your office we noted, in the global questions, that there were a couple of employees . . . and I'm not sure, I may get the names pronounced a little wrong. Donna Fincati, I think, went from a 2,893 a month to 3,454 in the space of just three months, an increase of nearly 20 per cent. And also, Lisa MacMurchy who went from 2,480 last year to 3,454 this year, an increase of nearly 40 per cent.

Now, Mr. Minister, we've had an ongoing dialogue and debate in this Assembly regarding salary increases and the fact there are certain people in our society that were refused increases. And yet here again we see, even in your office, where there's substantial increases that have taken place in a matter of not over a year, a year and a half, but a matter of a few months. And certainly the public are wondering how can you justify the outrageous increases. What have these employees done to earn these increases, and what are the qualifications for these positions?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to answer that. In the case of Donna Fincati, this was a reclassification because Ms. Fincati moved from her original position of junior ministerial assistant to that of intermediate ministerial assistant, within the classifications that now are published, which didn't used to exist before.

So it's simply a change of jobs from a junior position to an intermediate position, and therefore there is a different pay scale there. There was no increase to her in the pay scale itself; she went to exactly the same level which she left, so there's no increase other than the fact that she has now got a more senior position and therefore is in the new salary that applies to that position.

In the case of Lisa MacMurchy, she is my senior secretary. Before this position she was an intermediate secretary; but when my previous senior secretary left, Lisa MacMurchy moved into that position and therefore is paid according to that position.

There was no . . . again no change from the step that she was on, simply because it's a new position which pays a higher salary, just as if you move from a director's position to a vice-president's position, there's a different salary that's paid in the vice-president's position.

An Hon. Member: — And qualifications.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'll provide them to you.

(1200)

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, as we've seen time and time again, we've noted and certainly your office has and many of your colleagues have indicated that the increases in salary weren't necessarily salary increases, but were reclassifications.

Now I think to most of the public across Saskatchewan, a reclassification was just a polite way of giving people a major increase in salaries. In most cases they continue to work in your office, you indicate that they've moved up a stage, which automatically gives them the salary increase. Most other people don't have the opportunity to move up.

I'm sure if you were to ask the Provincial Court judges, they don't move from a class 1 to a class 2 or a class 3 position. They would probably argue that if they had that opportunity then we wouldn't have been and your government wouldn't be in the position that it is today, where you're being taken to court because of the roll-back and the rescinding of your legislation.

So I think, Mr. Minister, the people across Saskatchewan are wondering what real public benefit was served by just reclassifying people and bumping them into a higher income bracket, rather than just saying, okay, we'll give . . . take the normal increases, like other public employees across the province have received.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The explanation is very simple, Mr. Chairman. These people took on a different job and a different position. And that is not unique; that happens in retail stores, that happens in factories, that happens in the public service. If you are employed as a clerk steno 1, you get paid a certain salary. If there is a vacancy in a clerk steno 3 position and you apply and you get that job, you will get paid the salary that is paid by that particular position with all the increased responsibilities that come with that position.

In the case of both Ms. Fincati and Ms. MacMurchy, they both were moved into the new positions — not new positions, but positions in which there was a vacancy because people who had previously filled them went on to other jobs or left.

So I don't think that there's anything confusing about that and I don't think the public does not understand what that's all about. I think the public of Saskatchewan clearly knows that if you work at a certain job and you apply for a different job and you take that job, that you will get the pay that that particular job pays. This was not an attempt to simply increase somebody's salary. This was people who moved to a different job which has higher responsibilities and are paid according to the classification of that job.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Asking leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the minister and the member from Moosomin for allowing this interruption.

It's my pleasure today, Mr. Chairman, to introduce on behalf of the member for Melville, some 54 grade 4 students from Parkview School in Melville seated in the Speaker's gallery.

They've already had the tour of the legislature, and I regret to say they had their picture taken and I wasn't able to be there with them; so contrary to what guide services indicate about my picturesqueness, it didn't work out today.

Accompanying these 54 grade 4 students are their teachers, Darlene Taylor, and Elmer Heshka; and chaperons, Mrs. Burrige, Mrs. Nordin, Mrs. Szaroz, and Mrs. Smith. I ask all my colleagues and all hon. members to join me in welcoming these Parkview School students, teachers, and chaperons to the Legislative Assembly and wish them a safe trip back to Melville.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Provincial Secretary Vote 30

Item 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well, Mr. Minister, you've just given us a bit of an exhortation as to why people would apply for new job opportunities. It seems to me that in the private sector if the job opportunity comes open, there is a public tender, at least a notification put out and tenders open for bids for people to . . . individuals to apply for these positions.

And I'm wondering if in your offices there was a notification and there were tenders for these positions or the fact that it was just another avenue . . . You can argue one thing, but the reality is it was just a way of bumping up people into higher-salaried positions and using the argument that they have taken a position where they actually have greater responsibilities, and I would question the fact of those responsibilities. Indeed, Mr. Minister, can you tell us what new roles have been played by a number of these individuals in the positions they have now assumed?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think . . . once again I have to disagree with the member opposite. The positions in the office of the minister of the Crown are positions that are not publicly advertised positions. Everybody understands that. They are positions that are particular, confidential kind of positions that they report directly to the minister.

I don't think anybody in Saskatchewan would expect that ministers would hire under that kind of a process, so that does not apply in this particular case. I mean I ask the member opposite did the member from Rosthern who became the whip of the Conservative Party, did the Conservative Party or House Leader . . . sorry, House Leader. Maybe the member from . . . he's not the whip, but whoever might be the whip, I'm sure the Conservative caucus or the Liberal caucus didn't issue an advertisement asking for applications to fulfil the role of the whip or the House Leader which is the same kind of thing. And yet when they moved into that position of the whip or the House Leader or became a member of the . . . Leader of the Third Party with an additional member, there came along an increase in pay. I don't know how you can argue that this is somehow wrong.

There's something I want to add further to the member from Moosomin because I had forgotten it, and that when these two individuals moved to their new positions, they moved to the bottom of the range of those positions, so there was no increase other than what those positions pay for. The responsibilities of Ms. MacMurchy are those of the main secretary or the secretary in the minister's office, so she fulfils the role of all of the direction of the secretarial staff in my office, and therefore there is greater responsibilities that come with that.

In the case of Ms. Fincati, when she moved into the position of intermediate, she undertook the additional responsibilities of being my ministerial assistant looking after SaskTel which in itself is a full-time responsibility, but she carries along with that some other responsibilities as well.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, I just want to make one comment regarding your argument as to whether or not we had open nominations for the positions of Government House Leader or Whip. Certainly if you're going to be a House Leader or a whip on this side of the House, you've got to be, first of all, elected to this Assembly to be appointed to that position. And it's not really an open, competitive position.

I'm sure on your side of the House it was the same thing. You didn't openly have a competition for those positions. And the Premier made a decision based on the individuals around him. So I just wanted to remind you because I'm afraid maybe that's some of the criteria that we're seeing taking place in your office right now and we hope that that changes.

Mr. Minister, as well you hired two new staff members in your office this year, Randy Dickin and Linda Sarafinchan, former official agent for the NDP in 1991 election. And here again, were these open competitions? Were other people considered? How did you select the individuals? What were their qualifications.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Once again, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Sarafinchan was hired to replace Ms. Lois Thacyk who left my office and therefore I had a

vacancy, and Ms. Sarafinchan came in to be my chief ministerial assistant. She was hired at the bottom of the salary range.

Mr. Dickin is my junior assistant. He was brought in at that level at the bottom of the salary range. Ms. Sarafinchan has a teacher's certificate. She has been involved in public service for a large number of years. Yes indeed, she was the secretary of the New Democratic Party at one time. I don't think that that should in any way . . . in fact if anything it makes her more valuable in my office because of the experience she has gained from that.

Randy Dickin has had various experiences in the workforce, has been attending the University of Regina, is not attending this particular year, as is the case with many students who may take some time off to earn some money to go back to school. And he is fulfilling a particularly valuable role in his capacity as my junior assistant. I would be pleased to undertake to provide some more specific information to the member on all of their curriculum vitae and I will do that in writing.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well I think, Mr. Minister, you certainly give some sound reasons for the personnel that you have in your office. I however must take a moment just to reflect on the fact of where the positions you took when you were in opposition. And I trust that the next time, after the next election possibly when you're on this side of the House again, that you remember the decisions and the reasoning and understand how . . . maybe you'll understand a little more how government works, having been back on that side of the House.

But, Mr. Minister, I'll give a number of questions here, and maybe you can . . . if you feel . . . you can also feel that to . . . send the answers to us in writing as well, rather than taking up the time of the House in answering these questions this morning.

I wonder if you would detail all expenses paid out to ministerial staff in the past year. Detail all travel undertaken by ministerial staff in the past year, including cost — both total and per staff member — mode of travel, destination, purpose of each trip. Detail expenses paid out to yourself as minister in the past year, and detail all travel undertaken by yourself in the past year — including costs, who accompanied you, destination, and purpose of each trip.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. My assistants tell me that was a little fast, but we'll get it out of *Hansard*, so no problem.

A lot of this information has already been provided in the information which was sent over, but we will look at what is missing there — the questions that you have asked which we have not answered — and we will redo the package and certainly provide it for you. Because I think this . . . eventually it all gets into the *Public Accounts*; but I appreciate that it comes later, rather than sooner. And we will certainly be very expeditious in providing you with that information.

And I will make sure that the Liberal member of the third party will also get the same information.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'm trying to be as articulate as I can and yet move through the questions I've got here at the same time, trying to bring up some of the points that we've noticed in going through the global questions that we feel maybe we didn't receive all the answers to. And I appreciate the fact that you'll take the time to get those answers for us.

We noticed, Mr. Minister, that comparing your personal expenditures between this year and last year, we of course realize that your department last year was actually only in effect for roughly six months at the reporting end last year, and so we've tried to take that into account.

However it looks, Mr. Minister, that in relation to the fact that your department was really only in effect for some six months, the cost of your department is substantially higher when you take into the fact the full year versus if you made the comparison figure.

For the six months of '92-93 you've spent about 42,000 for four employees, according to your answers to our global questions from last year, for a total monthly expenditure of about 7,000.

This year you've spent 138,889 on three employees, for a total monthly expenditure of about eleven six — an increase of over 70 per cent. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, how you account for this significant increase.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, I can answer the question. The report that you had for last year was not for a full year because intergovernmental affairs, communication policy unit — those are the two main ones — were only reported for six months of the year because they came to the Department of Provincial Secretary part way through the year. And so there will be some discrepancy between those numbers and what you will see for this year because for this year you're looking at a full year. And that's why you will see that kind of an increase.

There really isn't an increase other than the fact that the expenditures shown under Provincial Secretary for last year were only for six months for those two major components which are intergovernmental affairs and telecommunications policy unit.

(1215)

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, the figures that I gave you in discussing the costs for the years, that partial year last year and the year this year, was that funding mostly for employees, or were there any other areas that the funding was used in?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm told it's all personnel.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I noticed in 1992-93 there was spending in the category of employees went from

24,728 to 141,956 for this year. I'm wondering, although the period is only double, it seems that there's a significant increase of sixfold. Would part of that increase come back from our argument a little earlier on, where people were reclassified into new job positions, and therefore the increases in salaries took effect this year, and that's the reason we see such a substantial difference? Because if you take the 24,728, multiply by 2, that's only just about 50,000. Yet we're up to 141,000 for the full 12 months of '93-94.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I think we're working from the same song sheets here. In the 24,728 number, that did not include telecommunications policy unit. That did not include intergovernmental affairs. Now if we go to the other sheet — the more recent one — we're talking about the in-scope. That now does include intergovernmental affairs, and it does include telecommunications policy unit, and I think there are two additional people that have been transferred from, one, the Department of Finance for administration officer. And the other one was one person from Executive Council which I believe is part of the intergovernmental affairs unit.

Mr. Toth: — So what you're saying then, Mr. Minister, is that actually what we have is a number of people that now have fallen under the purview of your department that weren't there before, and as you amalgamated the departments . . . Fair enough.

I noticed under contract employees, there's an increase as well in this category that we can't seem to explain from the global questions by the difference in reporting periods alone. We see an expenditure of 50,000 on contracts last year and 145,000 this year. I also notice there are three contract employees we have listed . . . are Greg Argue, Ian Peach, and Clay Winslow. Can you tell us what each of these people did or are doing for your department?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Let me first of all try to be helpful by some clarification. There may have been more contracts than what is here. When you look at contracts three, it's as of March 31 or the end of the month, the number of people on contract. But throughout the year there may have been others, and I think we have provided the whole list of contracts in the material we've provided that have been undertaken throughout a year. So that's why that number . . . you can't just read it the way it is.

Now once again, I am told that one of the reasons why there is a change in the numbers is that in the first report, the June 18, 1993 one, that was the one that deals with the six-month period. And the one of March 31, 1994 deals with a full year. And so that if you take all that into consideration, there's not that great a difference.

Now as to the contracts that those three individuals who you referred to speak of . . . Do we have that? Yes, here we are. Mr. Greg Argue. He was on the contract service. Mr. Argue did some research, short-term

research on agriculture related to NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) because we were at that time in the processes of having to find where we were heading with this thing, knowing that it was going to definitely be in place. Mr. Ian Peach, who is there until the end of June, he's our Ottawa liaison officer. We felt that we needed somebody in Ottawa day by day to monitor when there was a change in the government and talk of a wide range of changes in policy and policy reviews to sort of be on top of the issues so that we could be on top of them here in Saskatchewan. And he's been fulfilling that role for us.

Mr. Winslow, we brought Mr. Winslow in to pick up some of the responsibilities that Mr. Dickson Bailey had when we moved him to be the executive director of the infrastructure program which has turned out to be a fairly time consuming responsibility.

Mr. Toth: — So in all then, Mr. Minister, how many contracts or contractual agreements did you have? I'm just noticing that, at least in the information that I have in front of me here, the one page gives us the three individuals we just talked about: Mr. Argue, Mr. Peach, Mr. Winslow. The second one — and I just misplaced it for a minute here — has Mr. Bailey's name on it, but there's just two. Well Mr. Bailey was transferred to another department. I forget the other . . . oh maybe it's right here. Yves Larochelle — I believe contractual service — accepted a temporary position. Were there any other contractual agreements besides what would appear five individuals?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Besides the three you see here for 1993-1994, Mr. Bailey had been on contract, and he is now transferred to permanent because of his new responsibilities, so he's no longer on contract status. There were several employees — and I will undertake to provide you that information because I seem to not to have it with me — that were part of the communication agency which was located in the Provincial Secretary's department. But as of the beginning of this fiscal year, we have transferred that to the Executive Council. And when the Executive Council is before the legislature, you may want to pursue that some more.

Those people who were on contract there — and I think there we about three; we'll confirm that — they no longer are on contract because they've been transferred to Executive Council. But that is the extent of the contractual personnel that we had in '93-94.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, as well, you alluded to the fact that Mr. Peach was located in Ottawa. You indicated that you felt you needed a liaison in Ottawa. What I'm wondering . . . is Mr. Peach still located in Ottawa? What was the length of his contract? How much has been paid to him to date? And, Mr. Minister, as well while we're talking about just . . . maybe I should ask you to just respond to this before I get into the next one because it doesn't directly relate to Mr. Peach.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Peach is still in Ottawa because we feel that's where he can serve us the best.

He is on contract until the end of June of this year. And we may be looking at offering him another position; oh, I understand he's taking another position and not working for the provincial government. And then we'll have to consider what we do with that at that time. He is being paid during this three-month period at the rate of \$4,000 a month.

Mr. Toth: — I guess one question that arises from that, since he's located in Ottawa, has he been there permanently, or has he been back . . . moving back and forth? I'm not sure whether he's at family members' or what kind of costs would be associated with his travel back and forth to visit with — say — family members that he visited in the province.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Peach has worked in Ottawa when we recruited him. He has been working in various capacities there. He's worked in the Department of External Affairs, I understand; he's been a research assistant of the Faculty of Law, Queens University. He is legal assistant to the ministry of the Attorney General in Ontario. He was constitutional adviser to the joint special committee in the process for amending the constitution in 1991.

So he's certainly got the knowledge of the Ottawa environment, if I can define it in that way, that we needed in the individual that we wanted because we wanted somebody who knew what was going on and knew who to contact in order to get information that would be valuable for us in putting together our policies and our approaches in our dealings with the federal government.

There has been no moving expenses because he was resident of Ottawa; he is resident in Ottawa and apparently is leaving at the end of June to take on new employment.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I notice there's another line that says, other personnel at \$142,000. What would this include or who would this include, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That line under other — \$142,396.48 — includes the following. I'll give you the specifics. There was a severance of \$117,505.44 because of employees who were . . . positions were no longer available. There was a car allowance in here of \$405. There was honoraria of \$2,200, and a career assistance expenditure of \$4,839.38. That's career assistance for people whose positions have been abolished, and therefore there is a program in the government to assist these people to go to another occupation and another career.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, as well I indicated before that . . . I asked the question regarding travel. I notice that there's significant increase in travels both in your personnel in in-province and out-of-province. And I'm wondering if you could give us an indication of why we have such significant increases in travel by yourself and department personnel at the end of this year compared to last.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Three reasons. One, that the first year you're looking at was a partial year, six months. What we're looking at now here is a full year. In that first year not all of the employees were on board. We had some employees brought in since then, so therefore there would be more travel.

In the first numbers you're looking at, intergovernmental affairs was not involved. In this most recent set of numbers, we do have intergovernmental affairs. And in intergovernmental affairs, because of the kind and nature of the work, there is a considerable amount of travel. Intergovernmental affairs, when you're dealing with other provinces, the federal government, and in some cases international matters, I'm sure the member will understand that there will be an increased amount of travel, as there has been. If we're going to make sure that we are on top of issues dealing with the federal government and make sure that the province is treated the way we think it should be treated, we're going to have to go to Ottawa from time to time or Quebec City to be on top of issues.

The same applies if we're dealing with the question of the provincial twinning with China. You can't do it over a telephone. There's a cultural thing. There's a business thing. The Chinese . . . I introduced some people here the other day, a working group that was here. Because Intergovernmental Affairs is now Provincial Secretary, there's a greater need for this kind of travel expenditure.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So I guess what that indicates, in your last comments about the twinning with China, it certainly looks like some of the decisions made a few years ago are beneficial. And as we move into the new age regardless of which party is in power, maybe at the time it seems insignificant, but we've all got to move along. And I appreciate those comments.

Mr. Minister, I notice that Mr. Dickson Bailey was on contract, and we had Mr. Bailey in just a moment ago regarding the infrastructure program. I'm wondering, is Mr. Bailey still on contract now, or is he a permanent employee of the department, or what is the rationale behind Mr. Bailey's contract? And how is he employed presently, and what are his duties and his qualifications? What were his qualifications for the jobs that he has presently been performing?

(1230)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Bailey is no longer on contract. He is now an Order in Council appointment, permanent. The member will know that Order in Councils are at the wishes of the Executive Council or Her Majesty, but he is permanent to that extent.

Mr. Bailey is the director, executive director of the infrastructure program. He has certainly a lot of important qualifications for that in that he has extensive experience in the redesign of policies and procedures for the community grants review program in the city of Regina, where he was employed. He has

been a senior policy analyst in the urban planning department of the city of Regina during a period in the 1990s. He's had private secretary experience as a managing partner in Performance Development and Training Ltd., and he was Chief Electoral Officer in 1979 to 1982, as the member will know, and director of policy development and co-ordination branch, Transportation Agency of Saskatchewan, between 1976 and 1979.

So I think he certainly has the qualifications to do the job that is necessary over that two-year period of time in the federal-provincial infrastructure program because of that kind of a background.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And picking up where . . . as a member of this side of the House, you probably would have reminded us of the fact and I remind you of the fact, probably the most important qualification: possibly some good political leanings and feelings at the time as well.

Mr. Minister, there's a Mr. Bob Hersche and a Cyril Scheske listed as senior policy advisers. Can you tell us what kinds of policies they advise you on and what their qualifications are?

Also, what do the research officers who work for your department do? Specifically, what research have they performed in the past year, and have they completed any reports for your department? Could we see the copies of these reports?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Both Mr. Scheske and Mr. Hersche were public service competition positions. They do the work in the telecommunications policy unit, dealing to a large extent with CRTC questions. So therefore, they interface with SaskTel as well as the policy questions of the provincial government.

I can provide you with the details in written form, but I'll give you a short summary of the backgrounds of these individuals.

Mr. Hersche is now the senior adviser in telecommunications. He was for some time executive director of operations of Saskatchewan Telecommunications Network or SCN, from '89 to 1993. Under the previous administration, he's been project coordinator, Saskatchewan Provincial Secretary, from '87 to '89. Manager, research and budget unit, Saskatchewan Parks, Recreation and Culture. And has had various positions within the provincial government that give him a wide range of knowledge.

His educational background is: he has a Master of Arts degree from the University of Manitoba, Bachelor of Arts in Honours from the U of R (University of Regina) and Bachelor of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Regina.

Mr. Scheske is a graduate from the University of Regina in computer science. University of Regina, qualifying for a year in Master of Arts in environmental science. And has a Bachelor of Arts with distinction in

sociology and mathematics. And is a graduate of Royal Roads Military College as well.

He, prior to coming to the provincial government, was director of the business development division in Co-operator's Data Services Ltd in Regina, and I can undertake to provide more details on that. But I think what the main question the member is asking is, how do they get their positions. The positions were Public Service competitions.

Mr. Toth: — And, Mr. Minister, the question as well was, what research have they performed in the past year? Have they completed any reports? Would those reports be available to the House?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Their main work has been research related to the CRTC because of the changing world of telecommunications. That has preoccupied most of their work, but as you will have noticed in the press today or yesterday, there's talk of health technologies, business that may be an opportunity. They did a considerable amount of work in the work related to the study that was done on that, and those are the major areas which they have been concentrating on in the past year.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, we also notice that you have a couple of new committees this year, one the Information Technology and Telecommunications Strategy Advisory Committee, and I guess the big question is, Mr. Minister, wouldn't it have been more appropriate to run these committees under SaskTel, Economic Development or Sask Research Council rather than out of your office, and what's the reasoning for running them out of your office versus these corporations that they're probably . . . the areas that they're dealing with specifically?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The main reason is that these are generally general policy committees as opposed to the business kind of decisions that SaskTel has to make. These are general policy questions that the government has to look at from the point of view of telecommunications and so on.

So we believe it would be inappropriate to have this kind of work done with the commercial Crown corporation which has a particular view of the world because of the nature of the business that it does. In government we need more of a general policy approach, and that's why they're located here: to make sure that they give us that kind of advice as opposed to the advice limited to the perspective of the commercial Crown which would in this case be SaskTel.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, as well your department in its global questions reported that this year you have nine CVA (Central Vehicle Agency) vehicles. We'd like to know who the vehicles were assigned to, and why they were required. And last year you gave us some answers to whether these vehicles were owned or leased and the cost or value of each vehicle. I'm wondering if you could do that again for us this year, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The member might point out where the nine number comes from, because I am told that the number of vehicles assigned to the Provincial Secretary's department is five, not nine. Okay? Just a moment.

The vehicles . . . the member asked to whom have they been assigned and that's what I was looking for. There is one vehicle that was assigned and it was leased to the French policy unit, French-language coordination. There were two vehicles assigned to the Lieutenant-Governor — one which she uses mainly out of Regina but there's also one in Saskatoon. And there were two others — one which is assigned to the deputy minister and one which of course is assigned to the minister, who must have a car.

And that is the extent of and to whom these vehicles are assigned. And as of April 1, if you look into the year, the *Estimates* which we're considering, that vehicle is no longer assigned to the French-language unit, so now there's only four.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Minister. Mr. Minister, I thought you were within walking distance of your job and therefore you didn't need a vehicle . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right.

Mr. Minister, we also noticed that you published a new manual this year — the communication service procurement policy manual, and what I'd like to know, is this manual essential to the report of last year's committee, the communications audit committee? Could you outline the main recommendations or guidelines of the manual, and would it be possible to receive a copy of the manual, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — May I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the member raise that question when the Executive Council is here, because that unit is now transferred to the Executive Council, and the officials who have that information will be here when Executive Council is brought before the House.

Mr. Toth: — Regarding computers, Mr. Minister, and this seems to be a question that comes up with every department. The staff, in going through the questions as well, have a question here: it seems that you failed to answer our global question regarding whether or not specific computer purchases have been tendered; why you didn't tender them, if you didn't tender them; and could you provide us with that information, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm informed that all of computer purchases have to be tendered. They are tendered according to the government policy. The government policy applies to all departments, so I'm told that the computer purchases we have had have indeed been tendered.

Mr. Toth: — As well, Mr. Minister, under computer purchases, we notice there's a miscellaneous computer purchase supplies worth 3,900 to almost

\$4,000 from Carlyle Computer Products. To your knowledge — and what we are trying to determine — was this a single computer purchase, or was it just the total of miscellaneous purchases made over the course of the year?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm sure this is the wrong technical term, but I would call them as, the accessories — like buying diskettes, mouse pads, those kinds of things. There would be a whole list of those little items that would be included under that expenditure.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, on the subject of polling — this is something that continually arises regardless of which government's in power — on the subject of polling paid for by your agency, I'd like to go back a little in time a bit, to some surveys done outside this year in review.

In September of 1992 you conducted a general omnibus survey of the residents of Saskatchewan. In the executive summary it is stated that 57 questions were asked, yet the survey instrument lists only 55 questions. Likewise, in December of '92 you administered an omnibus survey in which the executive summary states that 58 questions were asked, yet our copy of the survey shows only 47 questions being asked.

And what we'd like to know is how do you account for these differences between the stated number of questions and the actual number of questions being published?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — First of all, I think it's worth noting that the polling expenditures are down again for, I think the second or third year in a row, because we've been trying to reduce the amount of expenditures there. I think we've done it quite significantly.

The reason why you will see the discrepancy in numbers of questions asked is that sometimes the pollster may define a question as one question, but under there may be a number of subquestions. So we may be talking about the larger number, but the pollster will see it as being the one question, not calling the subquestions as separate, individual questions.

I should also point out that this also, along with the communications agency, has been transferred to Executive Council. And if the member wants those specific answers, those officials will be here then.

Mr. Toth: — Okay, Mr. Minister, just a couple further questions. We've also noticed that most of the executive summaries and general methodology sections of your surveys do not bother to state the total numbers of questions asked, and we'd like to know why.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's really a kind of a technical question that I think we should address that when the officials are here in the Executive Council,

and they'd be able to give that. I'm sure there's nothing complicated about it, but I'm not competent to be able to speak to that without those officials but they will be here.

Mr. Toth: — Possibly one last question from myself, Mr. Minister, and that is one of the major reasons we're concerned . . . and you just talked about the fact that polling numbers were down or the costs associated with polling was down again this year. What I understand is that we've had a number of people also call us with some of the polling that has been done, and that's one of the reasons we've asked this question, the fact that the number of questions they've been asked versus what we've indicated or we've been informed were the number of questions on the poll.

(1245)

One of the questions or a couple of the questions that seem to be continually asked in each one of these polls when people are contacted regarding these surveys is that pollsters commonly ask respondents how they are going to vote, who they think the best leader is, and other such clearly political questions. Can you confirm for us that your department is in fact carrying out partisan political polling with taxpayers' money?

It would seem to us and to a lot of people that the polling, indeed, and the conclusion we've arrived at is the fact that you've just conveniently neglected to leave out the questions that would basically be trying to draw out some partisan political responses. And that's the conclusion we've come to in looking at the polling. And, Mr. Minister, we wonder if you can explain this to us.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well you've come to the wrong conclusion, I'm pleased to say. We're talking about expenditures. Let me point out that in the whole overall department this year as opposed to last year, there is an overall reduction in the expenditures. And I think that last year it was 7.268 million; this year it's going to be 7.233 million. Just as we have reduced the whole polling expenditures, we have been reducing the overall expenditures of the department.

I also want to remind the House, Mr. Chairman, that all of the polling that is done by the Government of Saskatchewan, the omnibus polling, is released every three months. It's published, it's made available to the public, it's made available to the press. That's unprecedented in Saskatchewan. It's one of the major reforms that we've brought about in this government since 1991. It's freedom-of-information accessible, but we publish it so that people don't even have to pursue that question and ask.

There are no first-by-the-gate to first-by-the-post questions asked in these polls. The government and the taxpayer doesn't pay for that. But I want to point out this: when a pollster undertakes a poll, he or she may have several clients for which they poll at the same time. All we do, or anybody else, is we buy a

certain number of questions on the poll.

If the pollster is asking some questions about who you might vote for if an election was asked at this time, that wouldn't be questions that were being asked because the provincial government has asked it to be asked; the pollster may be doing it for some other political party or for some other client. Because the pollster will be doing work on behalf of more than one client on many occasions, and therefore there will be questions in those polls that are not related to the questions which the government has put on that particular poll.

Mr. Toth: — Well, Mr. Minister, the matter of polling is something that certainly could take some more time. However, I think it's a matter that we can also address with the Executive Council, and I appreciate the time that you and your officials have given.

I'm not exactly sure that I agree with all of your answers, but I thank you for the time you've given this morning and at this time I'll allow other members of the Assembly to get into the debate.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I would like to ask some questions about the recent western premiers' conference. What was the cost to the people of Saskatchewan for this trip?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — That just happened last week so all of the full expenditures will not yet be compiled so I'm not able to give you that. But that's public information when it's available, but I don't have that here because we don't know the full amount of that, as I think the member will understand, because all of the bills have yet not been submitted.

Mrs. Bergman: — I'll look forward to getting that information when it becomes public then. What role did your staff play in organizing the event?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — As part of the functions of the department of intergovernmental affairs, the department will organize, totally, this kind of a conference from the province of Saskatchewan's perspective, but they will do it in conjunction with somebody from the Department of Executive Council and any other departments that may in some way be involved in some of the discussions there. But intergovernmental affairs certainly will take the lead role as the central agency responsible in organizing.

Mrs. Bergman: — What is your department's role in Saskatchewan's input to the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations? Does it play the lead role for Saskatchewan? And how do you coordinate your efforts with other government departments, particularly the economic policy function of Finance and the function of Economic Development?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — There is overlap between several departments. The department of Provincial Secretary, through intergovernmental affairs, will take care of international policy. But as it applies to trade matters it'll be the Department of Economic

Development that will be the lead department. Provincial Secretary's intergovernmental affairs branch will coordinate, but that lead responsibility would be with the department that has that responsibility — and in the GATT question would be the Department of Economic Development.

Mrs. Bergman: — What work plan does your department have for the forthcoming year regarding preparations for international trade negotiations?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the various . . . it depends on what kind of international negotiations may come up. In the case of agriculture, the Department of Agriculture will play the lead role because obviously there is some discussions that are taking place between the United States and Canada on things like durum wheat and other similar questions. That would be the Department of Agriculture.

What intergovernmental affairs would do is make sure that other appropriate ministries and ministers are plugged in, make sure that the Premier is plugged in and is knowledgeable about the cross-sectional, across-government implications of any policy that's being talked about. It will do a coordinating role, but if it's agriculture, Agriculture will take the lead. If it's GATT, Economic Development will take the lead, but you always need to have a central agency that coordinates all of the actors to make sure that we come up with a coordinated policy, speak with one voice and go to any negotiations from a position of strength and pursue whatever agenda is important to Saskatchewan.

So I think that's very important.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you. The *Estimates* document states that through this, the telecommunications and broadcasting subvote, the government develops policies and represents the government's position with respect to telecommunication agencies. What is your role with respect to CRTC hearings on Saskatchewan broadcasters' applications?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The department, on CRTC applications, will always have some comment on behalf of the broadcasters if — or whoever — somebody similar to that wants some input from the provincial government, they will approach the department, telecommunication policy unit, and we will do whatever we can to assist them. We have written prior to this, to the CRTC on behalf of people who were making submissions.

There may be from time to time, when the government may want itself to make a submission. I have not experienced one during my term in this particular position but that's certainly an opportunity that may come about, depending on what the issue might be.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you. What role does the government play in the sponsorship and development of Sask#Net — Sask#Net, the Saskatchewan portion

of the worldwide Internet computer network?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — What the department has been doing is playing a coordinating role between the province, the universities, both universities, working jointly with Alberta and Manitoba to make sure that our efforts are being . . . and SaskTel. So the department's role has been a coordinating role bringing all of the actors together.

We are now working on something that I am told that is called WurcNet (Western Universities Research Consortium) and part of the coordination of the department will be to make sure that all of the players are pursuing in a coordinated way, this project.

Mrs. Bergman: — Could you tell me what WurcNet is?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Sorry, it's W-u-r-k. It's Western Universities Research Consortium is what that's all about.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you. The province of Alberta operates a public television network called Access Network similar to our SCN. The Alberta government has changed its policy on sponsoring the public network and has decided to cease government funded operations, and it appears the Access will be absorbed into the private network. What is the current government policy on sponsoring public broadcasting in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — As you will have seen in the Department of Education, SCN in Saskatchewan continues to exist even though the federal government is deleting its funding, I think regretfully so, but that's happening. That's different than what is happening in Alberta where they are, I understand as the member points out, are totally pulling out. We think that SCN has an important role to play. It is now located in 223 communities in Saskatchewan. Through SCN there are services such as university classes being provided in rural Saskatchewan so people have access to that kind of service; and there is, I think . . . as we get more into distance education which is, I think, going to playing a more important role in the province, SCN or some form of SCN will play a very significant role in delivering that kind of service.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you. To what extent will your department influence the minister responsible for SCN?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Once again, our role would be a coordinating role. We don't have any responsibility for SCN; that is under the ministry of Education. We have no responsibility for that. But the department's role as a central agency will be, to make sure that it plays the coordinating role, that all other interest within the government, being it SaskTel or Education or some others, are playing one role and have a central place in which to go from the point of view of policy development.

Mrs. Bergman: — One last question. What is the

government's policy on the development of the so-called thousand-channel television universe? What influence will your agency have on growth in this industry?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We've been, in our capacity as the coordinating agency, been supporting both the broadcasters and the cable companies to make sure that they're able to provide the kinds of services that they want to provide. We've been very supportive there. This is where I said earlier, we would intervene on their behalf or assist them, or send letters of recommendation to the CRTC if they request it and it's within the policy framework of the province.

Mrs. Bergman: — You're saying that your work involves writing letters or providing some kind of support to them in that way?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — All of the above, and if necessary, even going so far as to make representation.

Mrs. Bergman: — Sounds good to end on a right note. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and to your officials. I appreciate your answers to my questions.

Item 1 agreed to.

The Chair: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Trew: — To ask leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and apologize for interrupting the important matter of voting, but it is my pleasure on behalf of the member from Kelsey-Tisdale to welcome, seated in the west gallery today, 20 grade 8 students from Porcupine Plain School. Accompanying the students are teachers Rob Pletz and Debra Zeleny; and the bus driver, Bill Zeleny.

It will be my pleasure to meet this group in room 255 in another 15 minutes or so. I ask all members to join me in welcoming the grade 8 students from Porcupine Plain School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Provincial Secretary Vote 30

Items 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 30 agreed to.

The Chair: — If the minister wishes to acknowledge his officials before we go on to the next item.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I want to express my appreciation to the officials who have been with us for their assistance and thank them for being here.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chairman, I too join with the minister in thanking him and his officials for their responses to the questions we've had this morning. Thank you.

General Revenue Fund Loans, Advances and Investments SaskTel

The Chair: — There is no dollar figure. Are there any questions? If not, then that is agreed.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:04 p.m.