

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Eighteenth Legislature
33rd Day

Wednesday, April 6, 1977.

The Assembly met at 2:00 o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. J. WIEBE (Morse): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity to once again have the privilege of introducing a group of 16 students from the Morse High School. It is a privilege which I have had each and every year that I have been a Member of this Assembly. They are accompanied again today by their teacher, Mr. Carl Radbrooke, and I understand, their bus driver, Mr. Earl Conn. I understand they have had a very busy morning and will be spending a little over an hour with us this afternoon. I want to wish them an enjoyable, as well as an educational afternoon. I am sure all Members will join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. H.H. ROLFES (Saskatoon Buena Vista): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and to the House a group of 60 Grade Eight students who are seated in the west gallery. They are from the Hugh Cairns School, of course located in my constituency. The school is only a block from where I reside.

I had the opportunity to be with this group on Monday morning for about an hour to discuss with them the proceedings in the House. They are an excellent group of students, very interested in what is happening in Saskatchewan and particularly what is happening in their Legislature. I am pleased that they are with us today and especially when my Estimates are on and I hope they will have a worthwhile experience here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by three of their teachers, Mr. Sandy Balon, Neil Sedrick and Don Friesen. Again, let me welcome the group here and I hope they have a safe trip back home.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

CONSTITUTIONAL REVISIONS

MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier some questions about his Montreal speech and because of the broad fundamental importance of the issues it raises, I gave the Attorney General notice that I wanted to do this. I had asked the Attorney General yesterday whether reports emanating from Montreal about your speech were accurate in indicating that you would favor constitutional arrangements which would give to some provinces powers which others wouldn't enjoy and he indicated

to me that the position of this Government is clear, we believe that all provinces should be equal provinces in confederation. You, on the other hand, said in Montreal we do not insist on identical powers for all provinces. It seems to me apparently that there is a major discrepancy between the Attorney General's position and your position and since it is of the fundamental importance it is, I ask you to explain the discrepancy.

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — I think it really is a matter of interpretation. I think the Attorney General states the general proposition but I do say that indeed we do not insist on identical powers for all provinces and we have many, many instances of that. We have engaged in active discussions — I will give one instance only — during the last two or three years for the incorporation into the constitution of provisions with respect to appointments to the Supreme Court. In those discussions we have conceded out of hand, perhaps wrongly, I don't know, but we have conceded out of hand that in, let us say in an 11-man court Ontario would be consulted with respect to three appointments and Quebec would be consulted with respect to three appointments and the three prairie provinces might be consulted with respect to one or two appointments among the three provinces. It was clear from the whole context of that discussion that we agreed that with respect to appointments to the Supreme Court Bench Saskatchewan ought not to have the same voice as Ontario or Quebec.

MR. CAMERON: — By way of supplementary, I want to clear up another area with you if I may. I asked the Attorney General yesterday to give us an assurance, "that currently the Government of Saskatchewan is not prepared to see a constitutional reform except that it apply equally to all provinces." The response was, "Well, Mr. Speaker, I can certainly say that that has been the position and I have no reason to assume that there has been a change in that position."

MR. BLAKENEY: — I think again that that is a matter of interpretation. But certainly taken at its precise face value that's not accurate. If we were talking about revision of the Senate, which we are, I would not insist that Saskatchewan have the same number of senators as Ontario. It has never been the case and I would not now insist on it. If we are talking about appointments to the Supreme Court, I would not now insist that we have the same voice. We are talking actively about incorporating into the constitution provisions with respect to appointments to the Supreme Court. We have since 1970 or 1971 talked very actively about amending the constitution and we are talking there about the right of provinces to have what amounts to a veto on amendments. And we have conceded in Saskatchewan that it is proper to have population quotas, ones which have the effect of giving Ontario and Quebec vetos which are not possessed by the other provinces. That was in the Victoria Charter and that was approved by all provinces except Quebec and Saskatchewan and it was in many of the other revisions of the Victoria Charter which at least in a tentative way had been agreed to by other provinces, including our own. These clearly were tentative agreements, but we have conceded the points that in amendments to the constitution different provinces could have a different voice.

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MR. CAMERON: — By way then of last supplementary, may I ask you if your words as follows:

We need to encourage or at least tolerate special constitutional arrangements for one or more, but not all provinces, unorthodox as that may be in the minds of traditional constitutional lawyers.

The issues to which you have referred, the Senate, the courts and the veto power with respect to the provinces are issues of constitutional reform which have been around for many years and are not unorthodox to constitutional lawyers. Did you have any additional areas of power in mind when you said that we may except the Senate, the courts and the veto power that you mentioned?

MR. BLAKENEY: — The whole thrust of the speech was that we may well have to be innovative if we are going to find a solution which permits the people of some provinces, and here I was instancing the Province of Quebec, to achieve their aspirations within confederation. I did not mention any other arrangements in the speech. I did not mention any in the speech. And those that I mentioned at the news conference following it are the three that I have indicated here. I would offer one other to the House and that is in the area of immigration. Right now the power of immigration is concurrent between the provinces and the Federal Government. The role of the provinces has declined in the area of immigration simply through disuse. If the Government of Canada put forward a proposal which in effect said that the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia might have a somewhat larger role with respect to immigration than the provinces of Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan I would not welcome that but if it was the price I had to pay to keep Canada together I would certainly concede it.

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Premier, I would like to follow up the comments of the Member for Regina South. One other area of your speech did concern me and I asked the question yesterday, is it the intention of the Government or the Premier before making any radical departures or as he considers unorthodox changes or recommendation for changes in the constitution, is it his intention to bring them before this Assembly for open debate and discussion so that all the people of Saskatchewan, particularly so the Members are familiar with what you may or may not be recommending? Because it would appear to me from part of the text of your speech that socialism was being offered as a panacea for the problems of Quebec and the opportunity to stay in confederation. You mentioned potash takeovers and so forth, it disturbed me because that is an NDP philosophy which is represented by 40 per cent of the people of Saskatchewan. Is it your intention to bring before this Assembly your recommendations for constitutional changes for public debate so that all the citizens of Saskatchewan will be aware of them?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has misconceived the thrust of my remarks. The thrust of my remarks might be put in these words. My basic point is that in the task of achieving a

greater degree of effective independence for Saskatchewan or for Quebec constitutions may well be of thrust of my remarks might be put in these words. My basic point is that in the task of achieving a greater degree of effective independence for Saskatchewan or for Quebec constitutions may well be of secondary importance. That was the burden of my remarks. I said that changes in the constitution were not the only ways that we could talk about in permitting and allowing people in Quebec to achieve what they believe is their rightful place in confederation. And I said that it may well be that they could use other devices such as the public ownership of an insurance utility which would have the effect of giving a greater voice for francophones in the life of Quebec without changing the constitution. That was the thrust of the argument and clearly, if I'm putting forward that argument, I don't need to discuss it with the people of Saskatchewan. They've already opted to have a public insurance corporation.

COUNTRY'S EGG MARKETING SYSTEM

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Attorney General. The Saskatchewan Egg Marketing Association sets egg production levels, which the province is required to enforce and the constitutionality of the country's egg marketing system will be heard on June 21 by the Supreme Court. My question would be: is it the Government's intention to file an intervention, and if so, what position would you be taking?

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — I'll take notice.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BOARD REGULATIONS

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister in charge of the Highway Traffic Board. Is it customary for officers employed by the Highway Traffic Board to make statements and to issue warnings prior to regulations concerning the issues and the warnings being passed by the Highway Traffic Board itself?

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, I'll take notice.

MR. BAILEY: — Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the Minister, because this concerns about some 60 school boards in the province, Mr. Minister, that have been informed by members of the employees of the Highway Traffic Board that regulations will be forthcoming and the regulations haven't been set as yet, that all rear seats in panel buses must be removed. Now I checked with the Highway Traffic Board and that's pending regulations. Is the Minister aware of these regulations coming and if so, is the Minister prepared to make known at this time, as to the date of when these regulations will be set forth?

ENERGY CONFERENCE

MR. E.F.A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Attorney General told us regarding the Energy Conference in Ottawa, that he was not prepared to divulge much information, pending the unveiling of the Saskatchewan position today, but that it would be possible

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to give us the information today. I would direct the question to the Premier. The Minister from Alberta, Mr. Getty, announced this morning that their position would be that the province must have a \$2 increase per barrel as a minimum. Is it the intention of the Province of Saskatchewan to go along with that position? What policy is being enunciated by the province today at the energy meetings?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the policy being put forward is partly dependent upon the policy put forward by the other participants, primarily the Federal Government. Our basic position has some measure of flexibility and I will attempt to explain it.

Firstly, as an initial position, we say that there should be a significant increase in the price of oil. We are not insisting on \$2, but a significant increase. We have a second position, that if the Federal Government put forward a proposal which would not increase the price of oil, but would offer us some compensating advantages, let us say, if they would offer to remove the non-deductibility rule in the calculation of corporation taxes and possibly the withdrawal of the Federal Government from the taxation of gasoline at the retail level — if they had a package to put together to say, “we won’t put up the price of oil now, in order to safeguard consumers against a further rise in the cost of living, but we will make some other concessions to the provinces, a withdrawal from certain tax fields which we have moved into which are traditional provincial tax fields”, the Government of Saskatchewan would be prepared to consider it. If there is nothing forthcoming from the Federal Government, as we have anticipated that there will not be, then we will take what I might call the traditional position of saying that our resource should command something closer to the world price and that will be our position.

MR. MERCHANT: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might just quote the Minister of Energy briefly. The Hon. Alastair Gillespie has said that the minimum increase we would find acceptable is \$1.25 a barrel in July and he was referring to the 1st of July. That would just overcome the impact of the last OPEC price hike, but would do nothing to close the gap. That particular article from which I’m quoting, Mr. Speaker, in the Financial Post, the most recent edition, goes on to speculate that the federal position indeed is that they want to raise the price to just beneath the American level. That would mean a price of \$12 by July 1 of this year and \$12.80 by the end of this year. Does this province support that kind of a fairly dramatic increase and is there any plan if that kind of dramatic increase is, in fact, negotiated and it may well be with the federal intention, would the province then be trying to insulate the many consumers in this province, the farmers and the users of petroleum products who would face a very large price hike at the pumps?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, we do not anticipate that that will be the proposal. We have not therefore, considered in detail whether we would support that proposal. My offhand reaction would be that we would think that would be too large an increase and that while it might be attractive for the Government of Saskatchewan and for oil producers to have that additional revenue, its impact upon the cost of living would be sufficiently adverse so that on balance we would not favor an increase of that

size, at this time.

MR. MERCHANT: — Has it not been the position of the Government that you want to see the oil prices moved to the world prices, the OPEC prices? A \$12 price by July 1, would not yet be at the world OPEC prices, particularly taking into account the fact that the Canadian dollar is falling. The reason I suggest to the Premier that the increase has to be so dramatic is that the value of the Canadian dollar is down. I wonder if the Premier wouldn't rethink the position in relation to the fact that the value of the Canadian dollar is less than it was, when perhaps you were discussing the price increases that you thought realistic, even as recently as a few months ago?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the point that the Hon. Member makes. On the other hand we have to think of the impact on the cost of living that a sharp increase in oil prices produces. I ask Hon. Members to keep in mind that it is likely that natural gas prices will increase as well, since there has been a certain pattern developed of having natural gas prices follow oil prices on a somewhat equivalent basis. Considering all aspects of it, ourselves as a producer and ourselves as a consumer of natural gas and oil, we would think that, on balance, that big an increase at this time would not be desirable.

CONSTITUTIONAL REVISIONS

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to return to the Premier if I might. There is one other statement in his speech given in the Province of Quebec, that alarmed me and I wonder if he wouldn't mind explaining it to me, what his purpose or the thrust of this statement was? Indeed, from an economic point of view, one could make a credible argument that Saskatchewan would be better off if Quebec were to separate.

MR. BLAKENEY: — Yes, I think I could make a credible argument for that. I think that at least on the short-run, as the speech makes clear, was my reference that one could argue that for products produced in Quebec at a tariff inflated price, would mean that we would be able to buy consumer goods in this province at less money and the amount of market we would lose for our goods in Quebec, particularly the amount of protected market, would be minimal. And that, again in the short-run, on balance, I could put up a credible argument that we would be better off economically if Quebec separated. I went on to say that that was certainly not my argument. Rather, I very strongly supported Confederation for reasons which were not short-run economic reasons.

MR. MacDONALD: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Premier not consider that that kind of a statement made by a Premier in a province in Canada within Confederation, that economically, citizens of this country in one region, one areas or one province of this country would be better off without Quebec, would not be dangerous to the spirit of Confederation?

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MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, quite the contrary. I think that that statement is a responsible statement in the current context.

There are a good number of people in the Province of Quebec starting with the Premier, who are voicing the proposition that they can separate from this country and that they then will be able to form an economic association with the Canada that remains, and that this is certain since it is clearly in the economic interests of the Canada that would remain to enter into such an economic union. I want to make the point that it is far from clear that the rest of Canada would welcome an economic union with a separated Quebec and that this fact should be made known to the Premier of Quebec and to all others who are trading on that particular proposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — The statement that Saskatchewan seemingly may be better off on the short-term would conflict with, I think conflict with an interview you had given to the Leader-Post, I believe March 17. There was a lengthy interview wherein you indicated that it would have a very disastrous impact on the rest of Canada, separation, and you didn't seem to single out from the rest of Canada the Province of Saskatchewan. Either way I would appreciate an answer as to if there is any conflict. And secondly, with the potential possibility of Quebec separating, is the Government of Saskatchewan doing any research studies as to the economic effect on Saskatchewan of possible separation?

MR. BLAKENEY: — With respect to the latter question I would have, I think, truthfully to answer, no. Some preliminary figures have been taken off in a vague way about what our trade relations may be. I had someone advise me, for example, that approximately one per cent of our potash is sold in Quebec. Some figures have been taken off. I would hardly grace them with the name of a study at this time.

The other question you ask concerns the disastrous effects of separation. I think my point here is that I think the longer term effect of splitting up the current Canadian economy into two or three parcels, i.e. Quebec, that which would be left of Canada, and very possibly there would be pressure for some separation of the four western provinces or loosening the bonds of the four western provinces with Ontario, would be to fracture the Canadian economy to the extent that our economy would be a small economy in a world of large economies. And, accordingly, in the longer run I must say that I believe all Canadians would gain some advantage in sustaining the total Canadian economy intact. I say that even though I am conscious of the fact that that may not be true in the short-run, and it is possible that you can postulate an economy based upon the nine remaining provinces which would be every bit as strong as the ten province economy. So perhaps if separating had no other effects on the remainder of Canada and had no other effects on our relations with the United States, perhaps under those two assumptions my predictions are overly gloomy.

MR. LANE: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the intent of the Government, internally or otherwise, to commence a serious study into the impact on the economy of Saskatchewan and socially perhaps on the people of Saskatchewan of the possibility of separation? I am referring to the fact that a study which has been made by the Government of Quebec as to their position vis-à-vis Confederation, and in fact, supposedly according to their allegations that Quebec would be better off. Is it the intention of the Government to commence a serious study as to the social and economic impact on the people of Saskatchewan of Quebec separation?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Firstly, I think that the study you referred to done by the Province of Quebec dealt with the prospect of Quebec separating from Canada and a parallel study based on Saskatchewan separating from Canada is, of course, not in contemplation.

The question of what the effect would be on Canada as a whole if Quebec separated is something to which the Federal Government is to some sense addressing itself. Indeed, the Federal Government has put forward some figures of their own in rebuttal to those put forward by Messrs. Levesque and Parizeau. We do not feel that separation is imminent, in fact, we think there are many, many obstacles to the separation of Quebec from Canada. A recent survey over the weekend indicates that without economic association, the numbers of Quebecers who favour separation is well under 20 per cent. Under those circumstances we do not regard it as a clear and present danger. Accordingly, we have not reacted on the basis of it being a clear and present danger. I think it is not unreasonable for the Hon. Member to suggest that we might be pursuing that a little more actively than we are. And we will give that some consideration.

AGREEMENT FOR FLUID MILK PRODUCERS

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — A question to the Minister of Agriculture.

Last Monday the federal Minister of Agriculture's dairy policy which was generally accepted by the producers in the province as a good policy, did require that there be a 25 cent across the board levy on fluid milk producers in the Province of Saskatchewan to cover the export losses on skim milk powder. Now this will necessitate an agreement between the Provincial Government, your department and the federal Minister of Agriculture's department. I would like to know, if an agreement has been reached, it affects some 600 fluid milk shippers in the province?

HON. E. KAEDING (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the Member that we are aware of the new policy, we have not yet had an opportunity to discuss with the producers what their reaction would be to that proposal. There was some discussion of it at the Dairy Convention this year. There was some suggestion that they might agree to some part of that kind of levy. How they will respond to this proposal at the present time, we are not sure. We will be meeting with them very shortly on that.

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MR. BIRKBECK: — The fluid milk producers generally speaking are not concerned with the levy being applied to that portion of milk which is over their quota which becomes industrial milk, therefore, it is under federal jurisdiction but that which is fluid is under provincial jurisdiction. The matter of it even being legal under the present legislation in the province, I believe is really at stake. I don't feel that the producers . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BIRKBECK: — . . . the question very simply would be, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister, how soon can we expect an agreement to be made?

MR. KAEDING: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I assume that there will be an agreement made as soon as we have an opportunity to meet with the producers and discuss the situation with them and to see whether they agree to the proposal that was made. If they do not agree to it we will pass that on back of course to the federal authorities.

CONSTITUTIONAL REVISIONS

MR. CAMERON: — Mr. Speaker, if I may ask the Premier another question, getting back from cows to Confederation, can you give me an assurance in your tripping about the country with your formula for holding Confederation together, that you will not in the process commit the people of Saskatchewan to support a rearrangement of constitutional powers that give to Quebec or any other province some special status?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I really can't cope with that type of a question because in every sense of the word several provinces in Canada now have a special status. Right now, for example, there is a great uproar in the Province of Quebec dealing with a language White Paper issued by the Government of Quebec and the primary uproar is that it violates Section 133 of the Constitution, a section which sets special rules for language in schools in Quebec. If that isn't special status I don't know what is, and it has been there since 1867. I hope the Hon. Member is not asking me to advocate the removal from the British North America Act all of the provisions which now give special rights to the English in Quebec, all of which are special status. The whole Constitution is riddled with special provisions for individual provinces and accordingly I am not able to say that I will advocate the removal of all those, nor can I say that under no circumstances could we not contemplate some other provisions like the ones that have been in the British North America Act since 1867.

POINT OF ORDER ON QUESTION PERIOD

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Before the Orders of the Day I should like to rise on a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker. I think the records will indicate that the last three attempts I made to ask a Minister a question in the House and in each of the three occasions the Minister has advised he would take it on notice. I am wondering if this was a deliberate attack to prevent myself from

asking questions when today I had a very, very important question which concerns the people of Saskatchewan very seriously, and the Minister refused to answer the question.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I think the rules are quite clear on what the Minister may do when asked a question. The Minister may answer the question, may decline to answer the question, may suggest that the question be taken as notice, may suggest that the question be put in writing and I think the Minister did one of those.

HON. E. WHELAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — Further to the Point of Order, it is difficult for a Minister to reply to a question that he has taken notice for when there is no time allocated. I was sitting here with a question I would like to answer and there is no procedure that allows that. I wonder how we can overcome that difficulty?

MR. SPEAKER: — I am sorry I didn't notice the Minister, I have inadvertently missed the Minister. The Minister has the opportunity during the Question Period to rise and answer a question of which he had taken notice of previously. I am sorry if the Minister was rising and I didn't notice him, perhaps he should rise and get my attention in tomorrow's Question Period.

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley): — If you'll pardon me, on a Point of Order, I don't do this in the spirit of criticism, but I hope it might be advantageous to such things as the Premier's speech in Quebec because I think it is a very important one, we are discussing Confederation and I think most Members of the Opposition tried to be in a very positive way. But I should like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that when a series of questions develop of that kind that supplementals be permitted by all Members of the Opposition who wish to pursue that particular topic rather than as my colleague indicated, "from cows to Confederation", and if it is possible I should like to recommend or suggest to the Speaker, that when a subject of that kind of importance comes up if there are supplementals to follow original questions and they are separated around the Members of the Opposition that they be given some priority and I hope you would consider that.

MR. SPEAKER: — Well, I would respond to all Members that I try to allow as much time as possible to topics which, in my view, are important. However, in some other Member's view they may not be so important. I am not using "Confederation" as the example here, or "cows". I am saying in some other Member's view their questions may be much more important than the one I am allowing. In today's Question Period the first question took seven minutes and that is a fair bit of our Question Period time. Later on we got back into the same subject and there were further questions and supplementaries and finally we closed off on a question on Confederation. So a fair amount of today's time was devoted to Confederation and problems related to it. The other questions that were asked on Highway Traffic Board, SEMA (Saskatchewan Egg Marketing Association), Energy Policy, the Members may have thought they were important too. I have no way of making a judgment before I hear the question as to their importance.

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I appreciate the Member's concern about his question and looking at it in review I would say the Member is probably right, but I didn't have the hindsight at the beginning.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE — SOCIAL SERVICES — VOTE 36 continued

ITEM 1 — cont'd

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — I would like to revert to Item 1, not having agreed to it. A year ago in the Public accounts Committee we dealt with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and its suboffices of the Social Services branch. The Department of Northern Saskatchewan administers Social Aid Programs (SAP) in the northern part of the province under its jurisdiction. Now Social Services was not before Public Accounts a year ago but the administration of SAP in northern Saskatchewan had been severely criticized by the Provincial Auditor and there were many audit weaknesses in the northern Department of Social Services. Now what I would like to do is go through in detail the specific weaknesses they found and I want to find out whether (and I don't see why they wouldn't), why they do not apply to southern Saskatchewan under the Department of Social Services.

For example, it has been a much criticized practice of the department on the so-called single signature cheques and I understand that the department is now eliminating the practice of single signature cheques, and would you advise me if that is correct, or is the Government intending to do that?

HON. H.H. ROLFES (Minister of Social Services): — Yes, that is correct.

MR. LANE: — Well that's a pretty major change in policy and I believe the department had fought that change since probably the date of its inception. I commend the Government for removing the practice. I think the abuses that resulted from the single signature cheques far outweighed any possible benefits. As I say, the department had fought against the removal of the single signature cheque. What practice or procedure are you following in the case of an emergency now where you had beforehand strongly demanded single signature cheques?

MR. ROLFES: — We use a voucher for food.

MR. LANE: — Do you use a voucher for anything else?

MR. ROLFES: — Hotel.

MR. LANE: — Anything else?

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, I suppose anything that would be deemed absolutely essential in that particular emergency.

MR. LANE: — You have really just eliminated the practice of single signature cheques and instituted a new system. Was the new system avoiding the problems set out by the Provincial Auditor, was the new system approved by the Provincial Comptroller when he did any audit review of the department?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes, the dual signature was approved by the Comptroller.

MR. LANE: — No, no, I know the dual signature was approved by the Comptroller. They had been advocating it for several years. I asked whether the voucher system that you are using . . .

MR. ROLFES: — That is not a new practice.

MR. LANE: — Okay, but the practice of using the voucher system basically in lieu of the single signature emergency cheque, has that been approved?

MR. ROLFES: — Where it is possible we use an RSA (Regional Services Account) cheque and where that is not possible we use a voucher and that has been a practice in the department for many years.

MR. LANE: — Okay, how much was issued in the last year through the voucher system?

MR. ROLFES: — Would the Member be willing to go on to another question until we find the answer to that question?

MR. LANE: — Yes, I have a concern after I asked a question two hours later last night, everybody had thrown the question away and we had to start over. I would hope that . . .

MR. ROLFES: — This one is a little more significant than the one you asked last night. I'll make sure we don't.

MR. LANE: — What happens if there is a SAP (Social Assistance Plan) payment? There are two questions, first of all SAP and not Family Income Plan. How many overpayments? The total amount of the overpayments last year? And what amount was considered uncollectable of the overpayments of SAP as opposed to Family Income Plan?

MR. ROLFES: — The total overpayments were \$1,161,750, recovered \$688,437. Still left to be collected, \$473,313.

MR. LANE: — How many overpayments were made, I had requested.

MR. ROLFES: — Approximately 1,500.

MR. LANE: — Mr. Chairman, 1,500. I am assuming it was over 1,500. How many overpayments were written off and what was the total value of the overpayments written off in the year?

MR. ROLFES: — None.

MR. LANE: — Has the Department in the

last two years written off any overpayments on SAP?

MR. ROLFES: — None.

MR. LANE: — How many overpayments have been uncollected for a period of say, two years?

MR. ROLFES: — About \$950,000.

MR. LANE: — Nine hundred and fifty thousand dollars?

MR. ROLFES: — Right.

MR. LANE: — How many overpayments would that consist of, or how many recipients?

MR. ROLFES: — We don't know, we haven't got that information.

MR. LANE: — It is roughly double what the uncollected overpayments were last year.

MR. ROLFES: — I believe you asked for two years.

MR. LANE: — Right. The figure is either constant for two years or double the figure of last year. It is not cumulative, I realize that.

Would you not admit that given the nature of the payee that in fact the department is writing off about half a million dollars a year over the last couple of years on SAP overpayments?

MR. ROLFES: — The answer to that is, no. We are continuing to collect that money. We are attempting to collect that money. It is still our intention to collect that money if at all possible.

MR. LANE: — How long would your intention last in the normal course?

MR. ROLFES: — At the present time the department is reviewing the whole area of overpayments and the collecting of those overpayments. My officials tell me that they are going to be making recommendations to me in the very near future.

MR. LANE: — Why are they reviewing this particular process?

MR. ROLFES: — I think it is obvious. I don't need to answer that, I think the Member knows that there is some difficulty in collecting, certainly. Nobody denies that. Therefore, I think it is wise that we have another look at it and attempt to see if there are other ways of correcting the situation.

MR. LANE: — I think it is a little more obvious than that, that in fact the DNS, on SAP, it was found that overpayments (I am reading from the Provincial Auditor's Public Accounts last year) I think you have a copy of this, overpayments may not be collected and this was the internal control weakness. Write-offs of approximately \$5,000 per recipient were found in some cases. Of course what your department has done, you have done an end run on it and avoided the problem by simply not writing them off.

There is by the Statutes of this province a requirement that should the Government wish to forgive a debt it is required to get statutory approval and I believe the Minister of Finance is the one required to approve the write-off of the debt. It's, I submit, a practice which is approved by this Assembly. Really, what your department has done is avoid this Assembly and avoided the Auditor by simply leaving these overpayments on the books and not even bothering to collect. The fact that we have had half a million a year, I submit to you, and I suggest that what your practice has done is to avoid accountability to this Assembly through the Provincial Auditor by not writing off debts that are in fact uncollectable.

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, I am told by my officials that it is certainly a very difficult area that the Member is pursuing. But as I stated before we do have the particular area under consideration, not just in the department but in conjunction with the Provincial Comptroller and the Attorney General's Department and the Department of Finance. I cannot give you any definitive answer at the present time. Hopefully, and I say hopefully, by next year back in Estimates we may be able to give you a more definitive answer. But at this particular time, because it is under study by these various departments and officials I can't give you a more definitive answer. I disagree with the Member however, that we have avoided coming to grips with the issue by not writing it off and attempting to collect the overpayments. I think we are making an effort to collect it, although with some difficulty.

MR. LANE: — Why is the Attorney General's Department involved in your study?

MR. ROLFES: — We are asking the Attorney General for a definition on the wording of a debt and to the Crown. There is some haziness as to what that means. That is why the Attorney General's Department is involved.

MR. LANE: — Will the Minister, through his department, advise myself when a policy has been made as to what the Government's policy is on collection of overpayments?

MR. ROLFES: — My officials say yes, I would therefore say, yes.

MR. LANE: — I don't want to stir anything up today by getting into an answer of that particular matter. How many fraud cases of

department officials became evident in the last two years and would you list the cases please?

MR. ROLFES: — If the Member would be more definitive in his questions, whom are you referring to, staff or clients?

MR. LANE: — Staff.

MR. ROLFES: — One.

MR. LANE: — Which case is that, or is it still before trial?

MR. ROLFES: — I am told that the due process of law has not necessarily been completed.

MR. LANE: — Are you referring to the fact that appeal time has not . . .

MR. ROLFES: — That is correct.

MR. LANE: — What was the determination of the matter at the original trial?

MR. ROLFES: — The individual received a suspended sentence of two years and ordered to pay restitution of four thousand dollars.

MR. LANE: — Was the four thousand dollar restitution order the total amount alleged to have been taken?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. LANE: — How did the situation arise that led to the charges?

MR. ROLFES: — I hope the Member doesn't mind if I read the two paragraphs:

Fraud by a member of the Saskatoon regional office was detected by the Saskatoon police department after an attempt was made by the staff member to cash a regional services account cheque of \$512.92 issued in favor of a client at a local supermarket. He produced the client's operator's licence and the client's birth certificate as identification. The client was employed at the time and was not eligible for assistance, although he had received assistance previously. The documents were retained on file, contrary to policy.

MR. LANE: — The \$512.92 amount would indicate the practice had gone on for some period of time, how long had it gone on?

MR. ROLFES: — Approximately one year.

MR. LANE: — I think my statements are obvious that there has been a laxity in the department and the laxity in the department has been obvious and has been brought to the department's attention in the past by the Provincial Auditor.

One of the things the department has done which is really bringing the whole welfare system into disrepute is not taking advice from people like the Provincial Auditor. There are ways of tightening up the internal administration so that this doesn't happen. Every time there is a tightening up it is like pulling teeth in your department. You try and stop it, you don't agree with it, that in fact for example the single signature cheque, your department opposed any change in that. Although by all audit standards that is something that should have been mandatory, something which should have been obvious. You fought until all of a sudden the frauds happen in the department and the department is embarrassed. Now here is another example. The fact that it had been recommended to your department in the past by the Provincial Comptroller, I believe, and the Provincial Auditor, that one social worker do the interview and another one determine eligibility and handle the client or something of that nature. That in fact two workers were to be involved. You didn't do it, you refused to do it, until such time as the frauds became open and public, then you are forced to take action.

Why can't you take the approach that perhaps the Provincial Auditor and perhaps the Opposition have legitimate concerns and perhaps the Provincial Comptroller has got some good ideas, instead of fighting every time you turn around, fighting the suggestions of these people for tighter financial control and tighter administration. That is not helping the public image of your department. And I think you will have to admit that. That in fact what you should do as Minister is if they make a suggestion to you, insist on the implementation. Don't look for ways to avoid it. I say that one of the reasons for the low esteem with which the public holds your system is the very fault of your actions as Minister and the fact that you are afraid or refuse to take sound internal administrative and financial practices and institute sound financial management as suggested by the Provincial Auditor and the Provincial Comptroller.

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, very simply put, my answer to all of his comments would be negative, I totally disagree with the Member in his statements. I simply want to say that I think this department's relationship with the Auditor is certainly excellent, it is very good with the Comptroller. We have taken some measures. I did indicate to him last night and to the House last night, if you are willing to give me \$3 for every \$1 that I can collect, all right fine, I happen to disagree with that. I think wherever that has been tried, if you want to put so many civil servants in the field to try and collect the money and to try and avoid some of the abuses, that might take place. I just recently heard a big bank being taken for a million dollars by its manager. Certainly, don't tell me that these people don't hire the expertise and the staff that they need to avoid this. I think there always will be some. And to say that we are loose when we have one fraud case when millions of dollars are being

handled and thousands of cheques are being issued, I think speaks fairly well of the department and I think that is about all I can say. And to say that we have not been co-operative is simply not true. I think as the Member has said, we have set up a verification unit, certainly at some prodding from the Members opposite, but that is part of your job and we did listen. We are continuing to analyze the department, that is why we have a study under way at the present time. I think you will see further changes made next year. Whether it is at the prodding of the Opposition, or whether it is because we have found some weaknesses in our own system, I don't care. But I can assure you that if we find some weaknesses we will take the appropriate action. I may be back next year and you may be questioning me as to why we have more staff. I think if it is for the purposes you have asked me to strengthen the department, that I hope also you will support that.

MR. LANE: — Just a couple of comments. First of all, you say it was at the prodding of the Opposition, that is correct. But what you are doing with your blind attitude is you are forcing the Opposition into the position in the field of Social Services and Public Assistance to get the public support behind them in order to get you to move. Then you cry that we are going around and giving the facts out and we are not fair and they are not accurate, although they are from your reports. Now you can't have it both ways. The very answer that you have given me indicates the attitude of the Minister, that there is no way you are going to accept anything. You know, you are placing the Opposition and I say you have got no right to criticize, you are placing the Opposition in the position that the only way we can get action is to get public support behind us until the point that you are embarrassed, then you are prepared to act and I think that you are doing the department a disservice with that attitude.

I will tell you another reason why perhaps the relationship between your department and the Provincial Auditor is excellent, is that according to Public Accounts exhibit No. 7, filed by Mr. Lutz of last year, that the report wasn't issued for the Department of Social Services and I submit that that may be the reason, that in fact, the relationship is very good. He doesn't come around.

I would now like to ask the Minister, on the verification unit, how many people are employed in the verification unit, their functions, their duties and who they are?

MR. ROLFES: — 13 in total.

MR. LANE: — I asked for their functions, how many are clerical staff, etc.

MR. ROLFES: — One director, one steno, and 11 field staff.

MR. LANE: — The original proposal a year ago was five, when the department was first established. You assured us . . .

MR. ROLFES: — That was for FIP (Family

Income Plan).

MR. LANE: — The verification unit for FIP alone was five. Is there a separate verification unit for FIP as well as SAP, or is there just one departmental verification unit?

MR. ROLFES: — No, we have simply added staff.

MR. LANE: — So it's one . . .

MR. ROLFES: — For SAP.

MR. LANE: — But it's just one verification unit for all the programs?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. LANE: — Okay, can you tell me how many applications for SAP were investigated by the verification unit?

MR. ROLFES: — If the Member checked the Estimates you will find that those people are in the new Budget and they were on the way as of April 1.

MR. LANE: — So, are you saying that there has been no activity by the verification unit in the past year, other than being established?

MR. ROLFES: — The verifying of SAP has always been done in the field and I am told now that we will do the verification of SAP through a random sampling which is approved by the Comptroller's office.

MR. LANE: — How many, what's the sample unit? What's the ratio that you are using for sample units?

MR. ROLFES: — Between 800 and 1,000 per year.

MR. LANE: — That figure has been approved by the Provincial Comptroller?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. LANE: — None were verified, you are saying, in this past year?

MR. ROLFES: — Not by this unit, but they were always verified in the field. This is just a second system.

MR. LANE: — Let's find out now, my understanding and the assurances given by the Minister, our basic concern was that there was no verification of the application for Social Assistance or FIP.

In other words if someone filled out an application form and did it properly and as long as it was in compliance with the regulations, they were given assistance. No one verified whether the information going in at the outset was in fact true and that was the concern, there was no verification of the initial input into the system. Now, we were assured by the Minister, last year, that that's what the verification unit's job was to do. Now, why has the verification unit been held back for a year by the looks of things, or not been implemented, although we were being assured last year that it was being set up. Now a year later, it still hasn't been set up. Secondly, would you, if my assumption is right about the assurances given last year, would you tell me whether they are at variance with the way you are going to implement this thing and if so, how?

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, first of all, I believe that I gave absolutely no assurance to this House last year that we would move, on SAP, but I gave him clear indication that we would move on FIP, and we did so. We now are moving on SAP and I would like to point out to the Member it's going to be a long list, but he seems to want this information.

When a person makes application to establish eligibility some of the things that are done by the person who takes the application and by the department are as follows: We check their case classification; are they employed full or partial, unemployed, employable, unemployable, or medically indigent. We find out exemptions for assets and income. Exploration of all possible sources of income, including possible employment. We try to verify, or we get verification of earnings from employment. Verification of bank accounts, insurance policies, annuity payments; income from roomers and/or boarders; rental of property; farm income, allowable and non-allowable expenses. We check income from business. We check income of any kind. We have verification of other income, for example, OAS, GIS, UIB, training benefits, FIP, family allowance, war veterans allowance, Canada Pension Plan, Workers' Compensation. We check liquid assets. We check real estate assets. We check personal assets. All disposal assets have appropriate documentation, that is checked. We check whether there is support from the husband or the parent or the putative father. We also verify the eligible date.

I don't know what else the Member wants us to do when a person comes in to seek assistance. I think once an individual goes through all that and he still sticks around to seek assistance, he probably really needs it. So I don't know what else you want us to do when a person comes in.

MR. LANE: — I'll tell you and it's the same thing that we've been advocating for the last three or four years. What you do in your Department, if someone comes in and gives you information to each one of those questions that is in compliance with the regulations, that they tell you that they've got a bank account of only \$25 or whatever it is and that if each one of their answers is in compliance with the regulations, you give him social assistance. But, someone has given you false information down the line, they'll still get it because the reason for the verification unit, on a spot check basis, was to verify

the information that went in. We are back to the same problem. You're still not listening although you've had the Provincial Auditor and the Provincial Comptroller suggest this particular unit. Again, if you want public acceptance of your program you're going to have to give them the assurance that your system is working properly, and I submit to you again, that this is another example of your system avoiding making the tough decision to ensure the right input into the system. I submit to you that the same thing is going on now as did in the past. That a person who comes in and fills out one of the application for assistance forms does it in compliance with the regulations and it is possible that could be totally false. It is possible for that person, if he misses the spot check after a year, to get social assistance until he retires. That's the system that you've got and that's the system that we object to. That's the way the system works and you've admitted it again.

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, it's certainly true, I suppose, that what the Member says, could happen, except that on a random sample and verification it could well be that the person is then caught. But let me ask the Member if a client comes in and applies for assistance and the client is asked whether they have a bank account, the answer is no. Have you had previous employment? The answer is no. Have you any real estate assets? The answer is no. Do you have any liquid assets? The answer is no. Do you have a spouse? Answer is no. I want to ask the Member what would you do in a case like that? How are you going to verify whether the answers that are given are valid or not valid? I'll tell you one thing, if you're going to then go around, let's say the person comes from the city of Saskatoon and you're going to check every branch of the banks in Saskatoon and you can check every credit union to see if that person has an account. Then that's exactly what we said last night. And you'll have to give me \$3 for every \$1 you save. You may save a million dollars, but it will cost you \$3 million or \$4 million to do the job. There is no other way, any other country or jurisdiction that has done this has found that it's a very, very costly affair. It simply doesn't save you any money. It costs you two or three times the amount of money.

MR. LANE: — Well, the Minister is obviously wrong and every other jurisdiction does not say that. In fact, the costs of collecting overpayments, I agree, can be more than the return, except the Minister misses the obvious on that particular matter. And that is, if the department has a reputation for collecting overpayments and being firm . . .

MR. ROLFES: — We have.

MR. LANE: — Well, somebody may have told you that you have but that's not the public perception and that's not the recipients' perception. But secondly, if you really wanted to make your argument effective about pay \$3, I'd turn it around and say that you allow me in there for a year and every one I found that isn't right, I'll take the money from your salary. I'll bet you we would have very, very quickly the most efficient and most effective system that we could possibly find. Either that or we would be increasing the number of recipients by one in your

family. Now that would be a more positive way of ensuring that some action was taken.

What we are suggesting and what we have been suggesting in the past, quite simply, is a verification unit, that on a spot check basis, the numbers to be determined by the Provincial Comptroller and then when you have that verification unit, not to verify the application form, but to go out and to verify the accuracy, and that means checking at the banks and that means checking real estate. I expect you to do those very things. When you just said, how do you expect us to do it? I expect you to do it. I expect you to do it on a spot check basis, as determined by the Provincial Comptroller. You say, how do you expect us to do it? The fact is I do expect you to do it on a spot check basis. Now you are trying to say, on the one side you say, that how do you expect us to do it, and now, you are trying to say from your seat that you do it. You denied earlier that you even had the verification unit going out and checking. Now would you make up your mind. Do you know what's going on in the department?

MR. ROLFES: — You know, I've had some doozers all right, but you take it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Never had that dumb a student.

MR. ROLFES: — Well, I taught with his mother. She's a very lovely lady, a very outstanding woman and she's very intelligent.

MR. LANE: — Bright children too.

MR. ROLFES: — She has a very bright daughter, I agree, but she can't be lucky with all of them I guess.

Mr. Chairman, I indicated to the Member that we have set up a verification unit. It's in the process of being set up. We are doing exactly what he is saying that we should be doing on a spot check basis. All I said to him was that we simply can't verify every application. That's what I said to him and now he comes and repeats it and tells me to do what I just told him we were going to do and he wants to take the credit for it. Fine, if that helps your ego, fine with me.

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to direct a few questions to the Minister. Mr. Minister do you have any members of your staff, permanent or otherwise who are presently attending university, part time or full time?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. BAILEY: — Could the Minister advise me if in any way those who are in attendance either part time or full time are recipients of any forms of gratuity from the Department of Social Services in attending?

MR. ROLFES: — Would you clarify the word 'gratuity'.

MR. BAILEY: — Well, are there any payments? Are you supplementing their income to attend? Are you looking after part of their tuition? Any payment whatsoever?

MR. ROLFES: — The Government of Saskatchewan has an education leave policy I believe it's called and the percentages of salary that an individual would get varies with the individual and with the circumstances involved.

If I could just say so, this really should be directed to the Public Service Commission when their estimates come up. I haven't got the particulars on it.

MR. BAILEY: — Yes, but it is part of your report and I wonder, I just want to ask the Minister this question. Now they are in part being sponsored by your department to attend while they are still under the employment of the Department of Social Services. Does the department have a formula by which the number of years of service is used as to determine the amount of money they will receive?

MR. ROLFES: — No, the Public Service Commission has.

MR. BAILEY: — Another question I have for the Minister. Several years ago we saw it, an attempt by three departments, the Department of Health, of Education and of Welfare, known as the HEW Committee, and I know that the Members are familiar with that, an attempt on a provincial level to draw the three departments together so that there would be a greater amount of co-operation in dealing with the problems that really concern all three departments. Unfortunately this particular committee and this particular plan of attack, if I can use that word, kind of fell away. Now I don't know what the handle to the new organization is, there is a name to it and I am sure the Minister is aware of it. There is a recent attempt being made to co-ordinate the departments once again. As Minister of Social Services are you giving support to that movement once more, to the co-ordinating of the departments?

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, certainly if he is asking, yes, in principle I do support it. I would like to see more co-ordination between the three departments on programs that have a lot of overlap and similarity and affect the same groups of people. It is not as active as I would like to see it. I think there are some people in all those departments, and also in the Province of Saskatchewan, outside of the Government, who are still keenly interested in this area, but that is a slow moving process and I was involved in it before. I was elected to this Assembly as an interested person in Saskatoon, but even at that time we didn't make too much progress under the HEW Committee. I want to be fair with the Member, I don't think we have made rapid progress under the new committee of Health, Education and Social Services.

MR. BAILEY: — Mr. Minister, you recently

had a delegation to see you and some of your department officials in Saskatoon on this particular topic and they informed me that they, while they had a good hearing, they informed me that the Minister was not too receptive to their idea. Now, was that a fair statement for them to make?

MR. ROLFES: — No, it was not.

MR. BAILEY: — Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have a question again to the Minister. You have pointed out that in the report that some 50 people from your department, I believe it is, are in attendance at university completing their degree. Could the Minister provide us with the total funds the department is paying to supplement their income while they are attending?

MR. ROLFES: — Item 2, I think will indicate that. I think \$163,000.

MR. BAILEY: — \$163,000, Mr. Minister. I . . .

MR. ROLFES: — Excuse me, I may be in error. Let me just check that.

MR. BAILEY: — Right.

MR. ROLFES: — Is the Member referring only to the 50 staff who completed education leave?

MR. BAILEY: — Right.

MR. ROLFES: — Then my answer was correct.

MR. BAILEY: — The 50 staff that completed the requirements . . . would you give me that figure again?

MR. ROLFES: — \$163,000. It is in Item 2. I believe it is \$163,550. Am I correct?

MR. BAILEY: — That is part of Item 2?

MR. ROLFES: — That is Item 2.

MR. BAILEY: — Okay, I will just leave that then for a moment Mr. Minister. You may wonder about the next question that I have for you, how it concerns the Department of Social Services, and I would like to assure you that the possibility of what I am about to say becoming a reality is very great. We have a survey which I was looking at this morning, that was done as a telephone survey, which was at random. Fifteen rural school boards in Saskatchewan were phoned and they were asked three questions, and the information was supplied by each secretary-treasurer. The average position or cutback in staff amounted to, I think it was around three, that means three fewer positions. The people generally who are being cut back are the younger ones who have been there for a short period of time. That number, together with many, many young people who are not going to find teaching positions within the province, would you not agree that if they

did not find another position that these people will, according to the criteria that you just mentioned, be eligible for social assistance?

MR. ROLFES: — I really don't know what the Member is referring to. If they meet the criteria and there are no jobs available and they have no assets, yes, I suppose they are. Technically speaking they could. I can't answer that until the people would apply. It is impossible to say 'Yes' they all are or 'No' they are not.

MR. BAILEY: — Mr. Chairman, what I want to point out to the Minister is simply this. It is obvious that these people who are not going to find a position and obviously are going to try and find positions elsewhere, but obviously all of them are not going to find positions.

MR. ROLFES: — I am not that pessimistic.

MR. BAILEY: — Well, it is true there are going to be several hundreds of people who are not going to have teaching positions. Everyone recognizes that now. They don't have the, they would qualify in every way so I am suggesting that possibly you are going to have an additional number of people who are trained in education who are going to become recipients of social service.

MR. ROLFES: — Are you referring to our staff specifically that are away? Are you referring to those 50 people that . . .

MR. BAILEY: — No.

MR. ROLFES: — I didn't think so. All I am saying is that I am not quite as pessimistic as the Member for Rosetown (Mr. Bailey). I think that if those people don't find work in the teaching profession that maybe some of them will go into politics or maybe some will hold double jobs and then you might find a very compassionate superintendent who may give up his job for another person. I don't know, but I'm sure there are many more opportunities in Saskatchewan and in the West than there are in other parts of Canada.

MR. BAILEY: — Mr. Chairman, all I am saying is that the Minister can be prepared for it.

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Minister, can you advise us as to the status of the guaranteed annual income that you are proposing?

MR. ROLFES: — The Provincial Government is not proposing a guaranteed annual income. I think you are referring to the negotiations that went on with the Federal Government. No, I can't report at this particular time because I think the Federal Government is changing its mind on some of the programs that we thought we had some tentative agreements. I would expect the Hon. Marc Lalonde will probably hold another conference of Ministers of Social Services sometime this year, and one of the items that

would be on the agenda, I would hope, would be the guaranteed annual income and where it is at.

MR. LANE: — Do you expect it to be on the agenda?

MR. ROLFES: — I don't know, I really don't know.

MR. LANE: — You say you reneged, or you backed off on the word reneged, I am quite prepared to use the word reneged and take responsibility for using the word reneged, but what other programs will be affected by the reduction in the cost sharing?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes, as of April 1, 1977 Canada, the Federal Government, will no longer cost share on the 50/50 basis what they were previously cost sharing under the Canada Assistance Plan. Special care homes levels I-III, institutions for the mentally retarded, group homes for the retarded, elderly or disabled, approved homes for the elderly and discharged mental patients, any other adult residential facility with over five beds, at a charge greater than \$250 per month, and home care — the health aspects — that is nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and nutritionists, etc. All of these will not be under the CAP (Canada Assistance Plan).

MR. LANE: — Any other programs other than CAP?

MR. ROLFES: — No, that is all that will be affected.

MR. LANE: — What action does the Government intend to maintain or increase the level of service in each one of these items?

MR. ROLFES: — I think that is very difficult for me to discuss at this particular time because I can't speak for the Government, but I will certainly attempt to convince my colleagues here that even though we may lose some money that we had expected under the new Social Services Act that the Government will simply have to find those revenues out of provincial revenues and I am hoping I will be able to convince my colleagues of that. I think possibly there may be other revenues coming forth that we are presently not aware of and maybe because of some of the policies in the natural resources of this Government, those extra dollars will be available to my department next year for some of these programs and make up for the \$9 million loss.

MR. LANE: — Don't count on it.

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. LANE: — You said that this took effect April 7, 1977, is that . . .

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. LANE: — Surely the decision should

have been made by now as to . . .

MR. ROLFES: — It has been made.

MR. LANE: — Okay. Now what actions are you taking specifically with regard to ensure the same level of service or increased level of service on housing and special care homes levels I — III? What is your . . .

MR. ROLFES: — That is the assurance you have.

MR. LANE: — Okay, is there going to be any lessening of service in any of these areas as a result of the Federal Government's changing the ball game?

MR. ROLFES: — No.

MR. G.N. WIPF (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — A question please, Mr. Minister.

MR. ROLFES: — It is a spelling question?

MR. WIPF: — Do you give out grants for continuing education? Mr. Minister, I understand that the Big Brother group this year had made an application to you for some money. Is there any money that has been sent out or is there going to be an allocation to them?

MR. ROLFES: — I believe that I have indicated to some of the Big Brothers already that money is forthcoming. I forget now which ones, but I know Orders in Council have been passed and they have received their letters.

MR. WIPF: — Could you let us know when they will be receiving these? Is there a date set on it?

MR. ROLFES: — I believe they have gone out. The letters have gone out but the money hasn't gone out, but the letters have gone out indicating that the money will be forthcoming very shortly.

MR. WIPF: — Can you tell me when the money will be going out?

MR. ROLFES: — As soon as you approve this then we will have the authority to make the money available. Right now we can make one twelfth available.

MR. WIPF: — Okay. I will let them know it will be available in about two weeks I suppose.

MR. LANE: — Mr. Chairman, would the Minister mind explaining what

I believe the department is implementing, is it PMIS (Program Management Information Systems) or some type of system to evaluate goals, determine goals, and see whether the department administratively is attaining the goals or falling short. Would you explain that and what stage the implementation is?

MR. ROLFES: — A very brief answer to that is, 'Yes', we are implementing it in certain areas of the department. It does not, I am told, measure efficiency, but rather measures objectives whether you are accomplishing your objectives and that it is being implemented in several areas of the department.

MR. LANE: — Which areas and which programs?

MR. ROLFES: — . . . corrections and day care.

MR. LANE: — Why is it not being put into SAP (Saskatchewan Assistance Plan) and FIP (Family Income Plan)?

MR. ROLFES: — I think it is always good to go slowly on something like this and what we are doing at the present time is we are evaluating in those areas where we have implemented it and moving very slowly on looking at how effective it has been and possibly implementing it in other areas.

MR. LANE: — Well, again we question your internal management priorities that you could slap together the Family Income Plan and make the substantial overpayments and then when you come up with the management system that is designed to evaluate the goals and whatnot it is something to be taken cautiously. I would suggest to the Minister again that the Minister starts putting some priority on the administration of his department then. I think that that should have been put in a blanket way across the board, and I think the department very, very quickly had better find some way. I am sure that if you picked up the phone and asked the Provincial Auditor and the Provincial Comptroller they would find some way to measure efficiency. And it is possible that there have been many management studies about measuring efficiency and the administration of social programs. That is another example of the very low priority that you give in your department to efficiency and sound management.

Item 1 agreed.

ITEM 2

MR. BAILEY: — The figure here, if I am right, were going to be the means of these people, these 50 that you have mentioned, Mr. Minister, who are in receipt of some nice round figure of \$3,000 per person while they are attending university. Is that correct?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. BAILEY: — I would assume that a person who is in receipt of \$3,000 is in full time at university. Is that correct?

MR. ROLFES: — It is very dangerous to go with averages. You asked me if the average was around \$3,000, but they vary so much because it could vary according to time. Some are away for two months, others for six months, others for a whole year, others go because we request them that they go and get further training and we have specific objectives in mind for these people after they come back. Therefore, because you are asking them to make a sacrifice you have to make the incentives rather high in order for these people to go. The other thing that we have to keep in mind are some extra expenses involved for these people and those have to be covered — tuition fees, books, etc. The \$3,000 is an inaccurate picture of what is happening. The rest of it is simply salary. It could be 20 per cent, it could be 30 per cent, it could be 40 per cent, it could be 60 per cent. It really depends on how much the course that they are taking and the training that they receive is relevant to our department and what good they will do, having received this training for the department.

MR. BAILEY: — Okay, Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate what the Minister is saying and I certainly understand what he is saying.

The point, Mr. Minister, which I want to get at now is that while these people are attending at the university they are still associated with this part of your department. When they complete their requirements of a degree or whatever the training may be, they will be recategorized, will they not, on the salary scale?

MR. ROLFES: — Not necessarily.

MR. BAILEY: — Upon the completion of the degree, reclassification is almost assured, is it not?

MR. ROLFES: — As I indicated before, it depends on the length of course. I suppose if someone is going from an undergraduate degree to a master's degree I would expect that they would be reclassified, but if someone stays at the same degree but got training in a specific area, which we feel is relevant to our department, they may not get reclassified. So, again, it depends on the course that they are taking and whether they come up with another degree. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't.

MR. BAILEY: — Mr. Minister, you are very well aware that those who are in attendance at university and who are, in fact, receiving social services funds in the way of training and upon completion of their course are going to receive a degree, then, of course, reclassification as to their salary is bound to take place.

The point that I am making here is that they have been paid to attend university and then on top of that they are reclassified and receive a higher salary, and I am not going to

argue with that. Is not the higher salary in itself enough of an encouragement without having their university paid for?

MR. ROLFES: — Obviously not.

MR. BAILEY: — Would the Minister then not agree that it is a form — I know that it is within this department, it is outside of the Government as well, but is it not a form of social assistance? Is that not the way to look at it, because obviously they are going to return at a higher pay scale and they are going to get this training with the funds from Social Services?

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, I simply don't agree because I can recall in my own school system that I was in that for ten years. You were eligible for sabbatical and the school board, a committee was simply set up and if they felt that they wanted to further your education in administration and they needed people particularly in that area, or they needed people in counselling and they wanted people in that area because they felt that they needed more people in that area, so that when you came back with a counselling degree, a master in counselling, you would be more beneficial to that system. They thought that it was worth it to them. Sometimes school boards asked their staff, would you go and get education in counselling because we are weak in that area and we feel that if you go you could be a better individual for our system. All that I am saying is that in our training program, because the durations in the training period are so different, that many of them don't come back with degrees and are not reclassified, but those who do come back with degrees, I suppose many of them will be reclassified. But we expect because they have had training in a particular area they will be of more benefit to the department than they were previously. I know that it is an argument that has gone on for a long time and it doesn't, as the Member said, just pertain to this department. It pertains to school boards and other government departments and the private sector as well.

MR. BAILEY: — Do you have anyone who is attending say on a leave of absence for a duration of a full year, who is a recipient of any form of salary on top of the educational allowances that are being provided?

MR. ROLFES: — Maybe I didn't make it very clear that part of their salary remains. Are you asking me if all their salary is taken away and then we give them a certain amount? Is that what you are asking or are you saying what part of their salary do they retain when they are going to university?

MR. BAILEY: — Let me just change the question. While they have leave of absence from the Department of Social Services are they retaining a portion of their salary to attend, or are they retaining a portion of their salary plus a university allowance?

MR. ROLFES: — I am told it is a portion of their salary, books, plus tuition fees.

Item 2 agreed.

Revert Back to Item 1

MR. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — In regard to the information in the Public Relations office of the department, who is the officer responsible for that particular branch, his name and his background please?

MR. ROLFES: — It is Jim Oxman, and I don't believe that I have his background here, but we can get that for you.

MR. LANE: — What is the size of that staff?

MR. ROLFES: — Four.

MR. LANE: — Is that staff still subject to Treasury Board memo, I believe it is 98 of 72-73, which requires that Information Services approve all ads and that they all go to Dunsky and Struthers, is that still operative?

MR. ROLFES: — All ads have to be approved by Information Services.

MR. LANE: — How many ads did the department submit to Information Services last year? Okay, what programs were advertised through Information Services, surely your department has that?

MR. ROLFES: — I am told child welfare programs and mentally retarded programs.

MR. LANE: — Why was there no advertising on the Family Income Plan?

MR. ROLFES: — I don't know, but I suppose because most of the people are familiar with the program. I should also like to say that there has been some advertising for day care.

MR. LANE: — When did the ads for the Family Income Plan stop? When was the decision of the department made that they no longer had to be run?

MR. ROLFES: — I am told that budget restraint took it out.

MR. LANE: — I asked when that happened?

MR. ROLFES: — I believe in June of last year.

MR. LANE: — Was it budget restraint that took it out or the election advertising provisions of The Elections Act that stopped it?

MR. ROLFES: — Budget restraint.

MR. LANE: — Don't you find it somewhat

strange as a Minister that the Family Income Plan is implemented prior to an election without an audit and millions of dollars spent, overpayments criticized by those responsible in government for financial administration? After the election is over you cut out the advertising for the Family Income Plan. Are you prepared to give the assurance to this Assembly that prior to the next provincial election you will not recommence the advertising for the Family Income Plan?

MR. ROLFES: — No comment, Mr. Chairman.

Item 1 agreed.

ITEM 3

MISS L.B. CLIFFORD (Wilkie): — Mr. Chairman, we spent much time this afternoon examining the Family Income Plan and the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, for which the administration of the financial aspects is covered by this Item. I think that what we have proved, and I think it was proved last night, that there are indeed serious problems in the fact that there is around one million dollars in each program of overpayments and I think I should like, also, to say that the department itself has realized that there are serious problems and that the fact that you were looking into a program of re-evaluation is, indeed, necessary and commendable. Once your department has realized that there are problems, is perhaps a first step in assistance for not only the recipients but also for the department as well.

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, it is a debatable point again and I totally disagree with the Member that it has been proven that there are serious problems. I admit — I say this is the problem I suppose with this forum because as soon as the Minister admits that, yes, maybe there are some problems, then there are adjectives put onto the problems, they have serious problems, and I have to get up and say, 'No' there aren't serious problems. But I am prepared to look at it. If I don't do that then the Member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) says I have a closed mind and you can't win at this game. If I say that I thank the Members opposite for drawing to our attention some of the problems that we may have and then I say that we are willing to look at it, then the Minister admits that he has problems in his department. So I disagree with the Member when she says that we have proven that there are serious problems. I think we are willing to recognize that there are problems in this department. There are problems, I think, in every aspect of our human lives and that is because we are human beings. We know we are vulnerable.

The overpayments that the Member refers to, we have shown that if you look at other jurisdictions our overpayments in these areas are better. I am willing to compare them to any other jurisdiction. I think in that area we certainly don't suffer. But let's have a look at how we can improve them. I am willing to look at them and any concrete steps that you have to suggest to us we will be willing to take them and we will give you credit.

MISS CLIFFORD: — Mr. Chairman, I have given the Minister my concrete suggestions, which were rejected last evening, as far as even

being reasonable and one that I still think that simplified forms and a quarterly audit is necessary and I think you say that it is being done and I don't agree. I think if you look more closely at the fact that this should be looked at, some of the problems would be alleviated.

MR. BAILEY: — We have an increase of staff here of 100 per cent. I wonder if the Minister would care to comment.

MR. ROLFES: — This was indicated last night on Item 1. It is simply a transfer to Income Security. 32 transfers, six SAP verifications, three conversions.

MR. LANE: — Mr. Minister, I have some questions from your annual report. I am not sure exactly of your Planning Evaluation Branch, and they do some program evaluation, they also do Program and Policy Development, can you tell me what policy areas this particular branch is directing its attention to at present?

MR. ROLFES: — All policies and all programs in all areas of the department.

MR. LANE: — Is that branch doing anything about new policies then, the consideration of new policies? What areas is it doing research on at present?

MR. ROLFES: — He's rattling off so fast I can't keep track of them, but some of the ones are child care, juveniles, native people and their problems, corrections, management systems. You name it. I think there are a number of them that they are looking at.

MR. LANE: — Those examples you have given indicate the future priorities of the department?

MR. ROLFES: — They could, but I would say, 'No', not necessarily.

MR. LANE: — The annual report also states that the Income Security Planning Unit worked on modifications and improvements to existing programs. Were there any substantive modifications to the existing programs under the Income Security Planning Unit?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes, there were significant changes to Family Income Planning.

MR. LANE: — What were they?

MR. ROLFES: — We are getting them right now for you.

The benefit year was revised from April 1 of one year to

March 31 of the next year based on income of the calendar year, January 1 to December 31. In other words, from the calendar year to the fiscal year, to the Government fiscal year. The reporting of income was changed from an estimate for the full year to actual income earned to reporting date and an estimate for the remainder of the year. A retroactive feature has a provision which will permit families to estimate slightly on the higher side and forgo overpayments and if their incomes come in significantly lower than their estimates there will be no loss of benefits. Number 4 — employment expenses and income tax paid during the year will now be allowed as a deduction of income but will only be considered at the time as balancing the accounts at year end.

MR. LANE: — Would you explain No. 3 and would you admit that No. 4 will in fact increase the payments under the Family Income Plan and by how much?

MR. ROLFES: — Number 3, what was happening before, if people estimated their income a little bit higher than what it actually was, they would not be eligible for assistance. Now we are simply saying they can estimate a little bit higher and still be eligible. So, in other words, what was happening before in order to qualify, people would possibly underestimate their income. But what we are saying to them now is that they can estimate a little bit higher.

MR. LANE: — That is going to mean some fairly heavy overpayments.

MR. ROLFES: — No, no, it is going to be the reverse. You had another question, I forgot, what was the other question?

MR. LANE: — What would the added cost be to the program?

MR. ROLFES: — About \$100,000.

MR. G.N. WIPF (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — Mr. Chairman, the Minister replied to the Member for Wilkie (Miss Clifford), these problems that have arisen out of some of this, you said she was putting adjectives on this and you knew there were serious problems. Can you tell me in a dollar value what these problems cost over and above the estimate of last year?

MR. ROLFES: — Well, it is impossible to answer that question. I just don't know what you are referring to. Well, I just can't comment, I don't know what you are referring to.

MR. WIPF: — Well, I see that you have \$7 million overspent here on Social Services. This is part of the problem that you faced and you didn't consider it serious and I thought that probably a \$7 million overexpenditure on your Social Services Department was rather serious. However, you mentioned also that child care is in this Item here. I believe that your department says that some of these people working here have to be upgraded. They have to have certain standards to work in these child care

homes now?

MR. ROLFES: — You are referring to day care I assume? Could they wait until we get to the Item on day care and also in the Supplementary Estimates give you an explanation as to why we needed the extra money, okay?

Item 3 agreed.

ITEM 4

MR. LANE: — Would the Minister give me the departmental definition of each of these categories, if you have it in writing I would prefer it?

MR. ROLFES: — Could we send those to you, those definitions, or do you expect us to get them for you right now? We can send those to you, no problem, we don't have them here with us.

MR. LANE: — I would like to question the department possibly on their definitions. I am quite prepared to stand the Item if you want to proceed and come back to it.

MR. ROLFES: — I guess we'll just have to do that.

MR. BAILEY: — I, too, agree to the standing but I see in this one Item, Mr. Minister, there is an increase in each item. Now is this just the inflationary increase or are you in these various categories, for instance, the one dealing with the problems of families you have an increase there getting close to \$4 million. Are you anticipating an increase in this area or does that just include the inflationary prediction that you have?

MR. ROLFES: — Both.

MR. BAILEY: — You anticipate more problems dealing with families this year than last year?

Item 4 stood.

Item 5 agreed.

ITEM 6

MR. LANE: — Are these all income supplement payments? Item 6.

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. BAILEY: — Is this the Item in which the Saskatchewan Income Plan, is this the Item which you — the building, rebuilding or re-shingling, is this the Item — this is not the Item?

MR. ROLFES: — No, no, this is the Item of \$20 above the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Senior citizens.

MR. LANE: — What is the difference between that Item and the aged category under the assistance?

MR. ROLFES: — The ones in the aged are the ones receiving SAP. These have nothing to do with SAP.

MR. LANE: — How many of the aged recipients are receiving the supplement, plus SAP?

MR. ROLFES: — About 3,500.

MR. LANE: — How many would be under the aged category?

MR. ROLFES: — All.

MR. LANE: — How many would be under the aged category, 3,500? So all SAP recipients are also receiving the supplement?

MR. ROLFES: — 3,500 of them.

MR. LANE: — Okay, how many are under the aged category in Item 4?

MR. ROLFES: — 3,690.

MR. LANE: — That's a caseload.

Item 6 agreed.

ITEM 7

MR. LANE: — What of that increase will go to the Qu'Appelle region?

MR. ROLFES: — Staff?

MR. LANE: — Staff increases?

MR. ROLFES: — None.

MR. WIPF: — In Item 7 you have an increase of 20 staff, for an increase of \$1.8 million, could you explain that?

MR. ROLFES: — Would you repeat that please, I didn't get it?

MR. WIPF: — You have an increase of staff here of around 20 people with an increase in your estimates of \$1.8 million.

MR. ROLFES: — Which Item are you on?

MR. WIPF: — Item 7.

MR. ROLFES: — All right, I was looking at 8, but we are back at 7, fine. That increase is due to increase in staff and increases in salary.

Item 7 agreed.

Item 8 agreed.

ITEM 9

MR. LANE: — Dales House, I believe had some damage in a storm, what was the extent of that and what was the impact?

MR. ROLFES: — About \$3,500 and we had to move the children out for a couple of weeks, just some of the children.

MR. LANE: — How much of the listing under other expenses of this Item, which is practically a doubling of the other expenses, is going to temporary staff, and what are the major items that would cause the doubling in the ‘other expenses’?

MR. ROLFES: — There are no staff complement in there.

MR. LANE: — What were the major items for ‘other expenses’?

MR. ROLFES: — Repairs and renovation to the building about \$94,000. That’s the major item — \$94,000. The rest are all smaller items, \$1,000 and \$500, and so on.

Items 9 and 10 agreed.

ITEM 11

MR. LANE: — Is the Government doing any renovations, capital improvements to the Roy Wilson Centre at Sedley?

MR. ROLFES: — No, nothing major.

MR. LANE: — What are the Government’s intentions with regard to the Roy Wilson Centre at Sedley? Is it to maintain it or phase it out?

MR. ROLFES: — Our present intention is to maintain it.

MR. LANE: — How many girls are resident there now and what was the average over the past year?

MR. ROLFES: — An average of about 23, the capacity is 25.

MR. LANE: — Is the Government satisfied

with the concept of having these girls outside of a major urban centre?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes, reasonably.

Item 11 agreed.

ITEM 12

MR. LANE: — What does the staff increase consist of, what type of positions?

MR. ROLFES: — Three social workers and one laundry worker.

Item 12 agreed.

ITEM 13

MISS L. CLIFFORD (Wilkie): — Mr. Chairman, we have a number of problems in our correction centres both federally and provincially. You have since called a one-man inquiry into the problems that have been at the Provincial Correctional Centre. Have you got a report on this to date?

MR. ROLFES: — No, we have not.

MISS CLIFFORD: — In any of these institutions do you have any solitary confinement type of a situation?

MR. ROLFES: — Different definition than what you find in a penitentiary. Yes we have.

MISS CLIFFORD: — Does the Minister know that the Federal Government as far as any type of solitary confinement, the reports to date have been that there is a humane type of a system and they are rejecting it as such. Are you considering such a move?

MR. ROLFES: — I think, as I said, you have to be very careful that the definition of solitary confinement in our situation is considerably different than what you would generally speak of, as I think as inmates refer to the "hole". You don't have such a thing in correctional centres. For example, ours could be classified more as segregation, rather than solitary confinement. They can see through it and I suppose verbally communicate with the other prisoners. So I wouldn't — I think we have to make sure of the definition here.

MR. E.C. MALONE (Leader of the Opposition): — A question to the Minister. It is becoming almost an annual question on this particular Item in Social Services and it deals with the correctional facilities in Saskatchewan and I suppose it would be an appropriate question of any of these Items, but I ask it now because I think it is in an appropriate area.

We have had a disturbance again at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre. Yearly it seems we have disturbances, riots, whatever you want to call the things that take place in Regina or Prince Albert. Once again we ask the question, what investigation has been made, are charges going to be laid, is your department doing anything to come to grips with these situations and I think they basically go back to the problem of overcrowding, whether it is in Regina or Prince Albert, or elsewhere? I suggest that it is time for the department to start coming up with some proper plan so that we don't have these annual occurrences as we have in the past.

Firstly, Mr. Minister, I assume you have started an investigation into the last situation in Prince Albert, are you in a position to report to us at this time?

MR. ROLFES: — As I have indicated to the Member for Wilkie, yes, we have started. Mr. Logan was appointed, but I can't comment on it. He has not reported back to us. I expect that within the next few days that he will report to us. I don't quite recall the regular or routine disturbances that the Member is referring to. I think if you look back at the history of the correction centres, we have had very few, I think — my staff tell me that at the Prince Albert Centre we haven't had one for four or five years. I think it is not fair to say these happen on a routine basis, because they certainly don't. We have some problems, I agree with you, that we have some overcrowding. We are looking at further facilities as far as camps are concerned. I recently announced that there would be a new correction centre, a couple of new remand centres. We are looking at those.

The other thing is that I think just a few years ago there was a study done by a committee, they made a number of recommendations. We have acted on some of those recommendations. We still need to act on some of the others. We do have some extensive plans in the department, as I indicated, on correction centres and camps and new methods of dealing with people who break the law. But I have to recognize that as the Member indicates we have had some problems, certainly. I am hoping that with the measures we are taking and anticipate on taking that maybe some of those will be resolved.

MR. MALONE: — The problems boils down to overcrowding. I think that may be an oversimplification but that is what usually it comes down to. Let me ask you this. At the two major correction centres, the one in Regina and the one in Prince Albert for men, how many inmates are in each one, and how many inmates were those correction centres planned for when they were first constructed?

MR. ROLFES: — There are 364 in Prince Albert, 360 in Regina, as of this morning. They were planned for approximately 300.

MR. MALONE: — So each one — one has 64 more than planned for and the other has about the same.

What about remand situation. Are we still following the policy . . .

The proceedings were interrupted by demonstrators demanding more day care centres and state abortion.

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Chairman, I think you should be disciplined for that, that is entirely your fault
...

MR. CHAIRMAN: — I might say that if we had tried something different it might have taken longer, so we will carry on.

MR. MALONE: — I am not even sure where I was.

I was asking the Minister about remands, I believe.

MR. ROLFES: — In 1974, there were 28 in Regina, 39 in 1975-76, and 45 in 1976-77; in Prince Albert in 1974 there were 18, 1975-76 — 27, 1976-77 — 35.

MR. MALONE: — I didn't catch the first part of your answer. Is that the total number of people in each year that were on remand in the two institutions?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. MALONE: — I see. You referred earlier to a separate remand institution being recommended some time ago. To my knowledge that institution has not been constructed, or facilities have not been made available. Is it your intention to make those facilities available in this year that those Estimates cover?

MR. ROLFES: — I think I indicated in the Budget Speech that they are to be built with the correctional centres, the two correctional centres that I had indicated. We had indicated a correctional centre in the city of Prince Albert with a remand centre there, plus another 104-capacity correction centre, 25-capacity remand centre in another location and that has not been decided yet. But they are in the design phase this year. I said in the Budget Speech they should be completed about 1980.

MR. MALONE: — This is a question again we ask, and which you usually don't answer. But I think it is a significant question. I am going to ask it again.

What percentage of the inmates of those two institutions that I have referred to are of native background?

MR. ROLFES: — About 60 per cent.

MR. MALONE: — Is that percentage increasing, that is from last to this year and the other years?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. MALONE: — Can you tell me by what percentage it has increased every year?

MR. ROLFES: — About two per cent on the average.

MR. MALONE: — Do you have anything to indicate to this House that that percentage will decrease in the years ahead?

MR. ROLFES: — Generally speaking, no. Although we do have a native probation project which does help in some way. But generally speaking, no, we don't.

MR. MALONE: — Are there any special plans or facilities for people of native background for upgrading their education and getting them some way into the mainstream of life after they leave those institutions? That is, programs directed specifically at that native population.

MR. ROLFES: — Not specifically in our department. There may be in other departments.

MR. MALONE: — I don't like to keep harping on this, but it is a problem that is growing, and I think we kid ourselves if we try to ignore it. Have you given any consideration to having special programs for these people while they are in the institutions?

MR. ROLFES: — There have been some discussions taking place with the Saskatchewan Federation of Indians, also I am told that there is to be a conference in western Canada on this particular topic but to be more specific to your question, no, we haven't come up with any specific programs. We have been doing some thinking about it but I have to be honest and say we haven't been very successful.

MR. MALONE: — May I suggest to the Minister that you should accelerate your thinking. I think it is fair to say that in Regina, in particular, according to police reports, this is an ever growing problem of native people becoming involved with the law. The result of it is, of course, more native people going to the institutions. As I said some time ago in a question to the Premier, that this is a problem that we have got to start coming to grips with. I suggest that your Government, being the government of the day, should get moving on it. Because if you don't get moving now it is going to be something that is going to haunt us in the years ahead.

MR. ROLFES: — I can only say I agree with the Member.

MISS CLIFFORD: — I think also while we are on this, you know my main theories as far as probation go. The obvious end goal is that we not only protect the public but help the persons who are in these institutions. As far as a probation officer and case load, I would say an ideal situation would be 25 per probation officer, as they do try to hold to in the federal penitentiary system. Right at the moment you are almost twice that and I think as was stated as far as correctional institutions, these have got to become a priority. The Minister always states that he would like to do better, and that is commendable, as we all would. But we have got to look at priorities whether it be new

centres for better facilities or whether it be lower case loads for probation officers. We have just got to switch our priorities around to put this closer to the top than it is at the moment.

MR. ROLFES: — Agreed.

MR. G. WIPF (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — Mr. Chairman, of these correctional services how many of the 65 are your probation officers?

MR. ROLFES: — Forty-five, including supervisors.

MR. WIPF: — How many people are on probation at this time?

MR. ROLFES: — There are 2,187 as at December.

MR. WIPF: — That comes under the provincial responsibility. I agree with you at the start when you were replying to the Leader of the Opposition that they are not annual disturbances that we have in our correctional institutions, such as the one we just had in Prince Albert. I wonder if it is possible now when you laid out your terms of reference or whatever it was for your investigation, are the RCMP in that city and the city police in that city going to be having input into your investigation, are they going to be interviewed at all?

MR. ROLFES: — The city police, I suppose will be involved to the extent that charges may be laid.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, what I am asking is, in the inquiry will the man who is conducting the inquiry be interviewing the RCMP and the city police of Prince Albert, so that their statements may be included in his investigation?

MR. ROLFES: — Probably not. It wasn't given to him as part of the study. If you remember, I asked him specifically to look as to why this disturbance occurred, how it was handled and how to avoid future disturbances of that kind.

MR. WIPF: — Could you tell me why he would, in terms of reference for your investigation, why wouldn't he contact the police in that city when they were involved and they had to go up there?

MR. ROLFES: — He may in terms of how it was handled. I didn't specifically tell him whom he had to contact. I asked him how it was handled and if he feels, while he is doing the inquiry, that he wants to contact the city police he may do so, but I didn't specifically tell him he had to contact Garnet Wipf, or contact the city police in Prince Albert. That is the latitude that he has, but he doesn't have to, but he may.

MR. WIPF: — Well, I hope that he doesn't contact me, but in any

communication that you have with him, could you in fact, ask him to be in contact with the RCMP and the city police. I think they have a fair amount of input to make which will probably help you in your investigation.

MR. ROLFES: — I have sufficient faith in Mr. Logan, that if he feels that it is necessary, he knows that they were involved, if he feels that they have a significant part to play in his inquiry, I am sure that he will contact them without any urging from the Minister.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, you mentioned that you had 364 inmates in the Prince Albert Jail. Out of the 364 are there any in White Gull Camp right now and are they included in this number?

MR. ROLFES: — No, they are not included, pardon me, they are included in the number. They are not in the facility. About 48 at White Gull and about 37 in the urban camp.

MR. WIPF: — You have less than 300 in the institution in Price Albert then? So it is not overcrowded.

MR. ROLFES: — Well there are only 180 in the cells.

We only have 180 cells in the facility, I believe, but it has to be understood that the more people you have in a facility, the more possibility there are of disturbances. In that sense we are concerned with the overcrowding.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, I am one of those people who endorse Catholic White Gull Lake Camp and the old Holbein Camp they had up there. Are there any plans to expand this type of facility?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes.

MR. WIPF: — Where at, and when?

MR. ROLFES: — We have put forward a plan but we have not received final approval from the Treasury Board.

MR. WIPF: — In your plan that you put forward, how many people will be accommodated by this new facility and is it a bush camp type of operation?

MR. ROLFES: — Semi-bush of 28 people.

MR. BAILEY: — The Minister mentioned that at the present time, and I believe this is the correct figure, that there were some 2,187 people at the present time on probation. Can the Minister tell me whether this is an increase, say in one year?

MR. ROLFES: — In 1975 there were 2,144 cases; 1976 there were 2,187 from December to December.

MR. BAILEY: — Does the Minister have this information available? This number who are on probation, do you have any statistics or records which are available which would indicate the number of people who are on probation who are subsequently repeat offenders?

MR. ROLFES: — We only have the information for those who violate their probation. We don't have that with us here, but I think that we can provide you with that information later.

MR. BAILEY: — You do have the information as to the numbers?

MR. ROLFES: — Yes, while they are on probation. Okay.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, could you tell what the staff ratio to inmates in the bush camp is compared to the staff ratio to inmate in a correctional centre like the Prince Albert Correctional Centre?

MR. ROLFES: — Four to one in the camps, three to one in the Correction Centre.

MR. WIPF: — Have you got any data on the return of these fellows to institutions, those that went to the bush camp, the White Gull Lake Camp compared to the people who went through the institution and go back, I believe, 15 years compared to those fellows that were in the Holbein Camp. Which ones seem to be the best? Where do you get the less return from?

MR. ROLFES: — No, we don't have that information.

MR. WIPF: — I guess what I am trying to get at, is it possible for your department to get hold of this? It may be in the long-run a lot cheaper to set up these types of bush camp operation rather than build a lot of physical facilities.

The other question I want to ask: is this White Gull Lake Camp now being phased out in any way because of the problems of selling the product that they were working on up there?

MR. ROLFES: — The answer to your first question — we can't give you that information because the information was not collected on record, but we have this year started to keep record and hopefully from now on we will be able to provide you with that information. But, again, that won't be meaningful for about five years or so.

On your second question on the White Gull Camp, no, we have no plans of changing that right now, about removing it.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, the main job

in White Gull Camp, I believe is cutting pulp, fence posts and in doing this is this a break-even operation?

MR. ROLFES: — I am told that the program at White Gull is basically a training program, to train these people. Therefore, it is not a break-even operation and after awhile the people will go to work for other contractors in the area.

MR. WIPF: — In the fence post operation up there, are these sold on a competitive market, or are they sold to Sask Forest Products?

MR. ROLFES: — We don't know precisely the answer to that. Can we supply you with that answer when we get it? We are not sure of that and we don't want to give you the wrong answer.

MR. WIPF: — Okay, Mr. Minister, I will accept that later on.

The reason why I ask that is that there is some concern in the area of the local bushmen in competition with the camp operation.

Another question I want to ask is: what is the main problem in the institution, why we have such a high percentage of say native people, compared to white, or what is the basic problem that these people come in with, the prime basic problem?

MR. ROLFES: — Can I get clarification on that question? I am not quite sure what you are directing your question at. I want you to rephrase your question so I know precisely what you want.

MR. WIPF: — As I said, what is the basic problem you find these people have when they come into an institution? Is it alcohol, broken families, theft?

MR. ROLFES: — It is a very difficult question to answer. We are not directly involved with the courts as such, you know when someone comes before the courts for a particular crime that the individual might have committed. But I think it is fair to say that many of the problems of why people appear before the court, or why they break the law, are alcohol related problems. Having said that, I am not certain that alcohol related was the cause of the problem or whether poverty might have been the cause of the problem. You are asking me a very difficult question and I think that if society knew the answer to that, then maybe we could solve a lot of our problems that we have with minority groups particularly, and also with people who find themselves sort of discriminated against because of either the social system that we have or the economic system that we have. I can't be more specific on that question which you have asked.

MR. WIPF: — If a lot of your problems in an institution, and I understand that they are alcohol related problems, what programs have you set up in the institutions to deal with this?

MR. ROLFES: — We have added an alcohol counsellor in the Prince Albert Correction Centre and one will be added to the Regina one also.

The Committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:00 o'clock p.m.