

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

May 15, 1980

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

On the Orders of the Day

## WELCOME TO STUDENTS

**MR. D. LINGENFELTER (Shaunavon):** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to introduce a group of students on behalf of the hon. member for Morse. They are 15 Grades 7 and 8 students from the Stewart Valley School in Morse constituency. I will be meeting with them afterward for pictures and refreshments. I hope they enjoy their stay with us here in the Assembly. I am sure that all members will want to join with me in welcoming them here today and we wish them a safe return home tonight.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. M.J. KOSKIE (Quill Lakes):** — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce through you to the House some 15 Grade 12 students from the Leroy High School. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Bellamy, and their bus driver, Mrs. Frances Weisgerber. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that Leroy is in the centre part of my constituency and is sometimes referred to as the heart and soul of Quill Lakes. It has a very distinguished achievement in that from Leroy our past president of the New Democratic Party for Saskatchewan, Mr. Gerald McGrath, originates.

I want to welcome the students here from Leroy. Unfortunately, I am going to be tied up in the session this afternoon with estimates, however, some members of my staff will meet with you. I wish you a very pleasant stay here during the course of the day.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

## QUESTIONS

### Jamming of Signal — Channel 8

**MR. J.W.A. GARNER (Wilkie):** — Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the minister in charge of Sask Tel. In light of the statement made by the Attorney General May 8, 1980, Mr. Minister, and I quote:

I want to remind the hon. member that with respect to channel 10, there is not CRTC authorization of channel 10 in Saskatoon.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: in light of the fact that the Attorney General made that statement, now Telecable Saskatoon has the authorization from CRTC, will you stop jamming the signal of Telecable Saskatoon on channel 8?

**HON. D.W. CODY (Minister of Telephones):** — No we will not stop jamming the cable for channel 8. The authorization which they now have received is authorization for programming. It is not authorization to transmit a signal. We have the explicit right to long-haul carrying of signals. We are doing just that from Telesat, the satellite to the earth station. We are ready to give Saskatoon Telecable the signal any time they wish to

plug in.

**MR. GARNER:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that Telecable will be taking Sask Tel to court, what does Telecable Saskatoon have to do to keep Sask Tel happy? They have all of the licences. Just what do you expect the private operators, the owners of telecable Saskatoon, to provide you with before you will allow them and quit interfering with the business of Saskatchewan?

**MR. CODY:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. gentleman does not know what the CRTC in fact gave Saskatoon telecable when they gave them permission to broadcast the House of Commons debates. I just want to read what the judgment said, which will indicate to the hon. member that, in fact, it does not mean that we in Sask Tel must unscramble that signal and give the signal to them. Let me read, and I quote from the judgment from CRTC:

Given the serious nature of the contractual differences between Sask Tel and the licensees, the commission considers that the parties should attempt to resolve this matter between themselves. Failing which, the proper form for judging contractual disputes, is the court. The commission considers that by granting approval of the House of Commons' proceedings, it is not prejudicing the rights of either party.

Therefore certainly meaning it is no way indicating that we must, at this particular time, break our agreement which we have with Saskatoon Telecable and unscramble the signal and give them the live debates of the House of Commons.

### **Television Service in Rural Areas**

**MR. R.L. ANDREW (Kindersley):** — A question to the minister of Sask Tel. Mr. Minister, it would appear that in all likelihood there is going to be a long drawn out court battle starting with the injunction application by the private operators, between Sask Tel and the private operators. One of the results is going to be that the people of rural Saskatchewan will suffer in the sense they are going to be continually denied the right to cable television. Mr. Minister, when are the people in rural Saskatchewan going to receive the same television service which most other people in the country receive?

**MR. CODY:** — Mr. Speaker, it is pretty obvious to me that the people in rural Saskatchewan will never see cable television if the CRTC and the DOC (Department of Communications) continue the way they are. There is little question about that. There is no doubt in anybody's mind (or at least I don't think there is doubt in anyone's mind) that we know the revenues, which you have to derive from the larger communities such as Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, will go to help average the rates throughout Saskatchewan. If we don't have that kind of money, I can tell you the fibre optics system is in jeopardy. And if the fibre optics system is in jeopardy you people in Kindersley, you people in Rosetown and you people in Wilkie, will be a long time getting cable television.

**MR. ANDREW:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In both of our neighboring provinces, and particularly in the province of Alberta, 90 per cent of the population of that province is either now receiving cable television or licences are granted for them to receive that television. I understand in those provinces, Mr. Minister that there are voluntary pooling arrangements by the various companies and they have proven quite satisfactory. Is the minister saying to this Assembly, if Sask Tel has a complete

monopoly in the telecommunications industry that is the only way the price can be agreed to the entire population of Saskatchewan?

**MR. CODY:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I'm saying. There is just no question in my mind, or in anyone's mind. Again, I hearken back to the answer I gave to the hon. gentleman the other day which is simply that he would be the first individual to criticize Sask Tel and the Government of Saskatchewan if we did not provide the services which they cannot possibly supply off an earth station satellite. Those are services such as fire alarms, burglar alarms and home banking. He would be the first individual to say, you people stopped us from getting this because of the fact there is no such thing as cable . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order!

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan cable operations have offered to install 50 earth stations in Saskatchewan at a cost of \$1 million to supply services to all of rural Saskatchewan. Now my question to you . . . My question is not to the Attorney General; it's to the minister. How do you expect cable operators throughout Saskatchewan to provide this service and to assume an indebtedness of \$1 million in Saskatchewan if Sask Tel is going to come along and scramble all the signals?

**MR. CODY:** — Mr. Speaker, once again, the hon. gentleman obviously does not realize that just putting up a dish, just putting up an earth station, is not the end and be all of the situation. Let us be honest about the situation. How do you think you are going to get the signal from the dish? You obviously have to get it from a coastal cable to the home. Who puts the coastal cables in? Do you think that putting coastal cable into 50 communities in this province is going to cost \$1 million? Let me tell you it will be more like \$10 million, \$12 million or \$15 million. That's what it will be. And who's going to pay for that? If we have no revenues from carrying the signal, where are we going to get the revenues for delivering the signal through our coastal cable. It's pretty obvious that what the member is saying is that he wants us to take revenue from the telephone customers, put it into the TV customers hands (such as Saskatoon Telecable) so that they can profit, and deliver the service at the expense of the rural subscribers.

**MR. GARNER:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, why does Sask Tel have double headend equipment in the province of Saskatchewan? It is the only province with double headend equipment for telecables.

**MR. CODY:** — Why do we have double headend equipment? It's very simple. It's because we own the hardware. We and Manitoba are the only provinces which do that. We own the hardware which is the service going to the customers' homes. Obviously it has to be a headend and a stopping area.

### **CPR and the Crowrate**

**MR. R.L. COLLVER (Nipawin):** — I direct my question to the Attorney General and to the Deputy Premier in the absence of the Premier. The Attorney General will be aware of the duplicitous and arrogant ploy today by the Canadian Pacific Railway in attempting to blackmail the Government of Canada into changing the crowrate. My question to the Government of Saskatchewan is, what are your intentions in that regard?

**HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Agriculture):** — Well, Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, I'm not sure what the president of CP Rail is asking. If the CP Rail is asking

the federal government to implement the Hall report, I think that we would support the president of CP Rail. I don't think that's what he's asking, and if that's the kind of approach CP Rail is going to take it seems to me that we should implement in the country the long-term policy of the New Democratic Party, which is to nationalize the railway.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. COLLVER:** — Mr. Speaker, obviously my question did not attempt to get into the realm of politics but asked for a simple explanation of what steps the Government of Saskatchewan is prepared to take in light of this arrogant ploy. The minister will be aware that today CP Rail announced the cancellation of \$300 million worth of construction and said they would not renew it unless the Government of Canada changed the crowrate. My supplementary question to the minister is, will the Government of Saskatchewan consider the cancellation or postponement of some of its dealings with Canadian Pacific Investments and Canada Pacific Railway until Canadian Pacific recommences that construction?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Mr. Speaker, no, we will not cancel our order for hopper cars. Part of the agreement in the order for hopper cars and the purchase of hopper cars is that 53 per cent of the 1,000 cars would be allocated to CP Rail, we will continue with that agreement. I think that we should continue with that agreement because any withdrawal from that kind of an agreement will not hurt CP Rail, but will hurt the producers of Saskatchewan, if the hon. member thinks we should in some way because of the frivolous actions of CP Rail for want of a better word. First the producers of the province were not going to do that. Our representations will be made, Mr. Speaker, to the federal government calling on them as a federal government to resolve this issue, resolve the grain handling and transportation issue. They have a commission report before them, a commission which they set up which provides a solution which we support. We call on them to implement that solution.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister will be aware that there are a great many more contracts between the Government of Saskatchewan and Canadian Pacific Railway and its subsidiaries including CP Oil and Gas and others. My question to the minister is, would you consider, would your government consider bringing the same kind of pressure to bear on Canadian Pacific Railway as the Canadian Pacific Railway is attempting to bring on the Government of Canada? Because as the minister well knows, if the Canadian Pacific Railway refuses to go ahead with that construction project in central British Columbia, the hopper car purchase will be useless because those hopper cars will not be able to pass over the rails.

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Mr. Speaker, I can't answer for the hon. member. Within my knowledge the issue is beyond the grain issue. I can only answer with respect to the hopper cars. I've outlined the position of the Government of Saskatchewan what our intent is. And so far as CP Rail is concerned and its announcement, we will not be addressing CP Rail with respect to the announcement; we will be addressing the federal government whose responsibility it is for a national transportation policy.

### **Price of Wheat**

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — I suppose you want to know about the lentils policy.

**MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek):** — Well, I don't really know very much about

lentils, to the member for Biggar, but probably I've forgotten more about them than you will ever know.

Question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, this morning or I suppose it was late yesterday, the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, Senator Argue, indicated that the Government of Canada was planning to adjust the two-price system of wheat at the domestic level. The senator, I believe, was suggesting that the price was far too low and the consumers were getting too much of a bargain from western Canadian farmers. Would the minister very briefly inform this Assembly as to what the position of the department and his government would be on this issue and do you support the raising of the domestic price of wheat?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will recall that at a meeting with the federal Minister of Agriculture — I think it was three weeks ago — in the terms of a package to deal with the economic situation faced by producers in Saskatchewan, we called for an increase in the two-price system for wheat. It is now minimum 4 and maximum 5. We called to an increase to a minimum of 5 which is \$5 a bushel, roughly the cost of production today, with a maximum of \$6 a bushel. That position by the Government of Saskatchewan has been put forward to the federal government through the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Whelan.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Supplementary question to the minister. Would the minister agree that virtually all the commodities that are being sold by Saskatchewan farmers go on the world price? In other words, whatever the going price is, that's what they get. Would the minister also acknowledge that everything the farmers in Saskatchewan or western Canada must buy is on a tariff-protected market, the bulk of them to protect industries in central Canada that aren't nearly as efficient as they should be. In light of that would the minister agree that perhaps the department should re-evaluate that figure of \$5 to \$6 and put it in the perspective of everything else; that \$5 to \$6 is far, far too low for a domestic price and that it should be raised considerably higher than that?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Mr. Speaker, I should report to the hon. member that following this submission put forward by me and Mr. Whelan, I had an opportunity to meet with the minister responsible for the wheat board and to discuss this very issue and report to him the position taken by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which was not a two-price kind of position but a \$5.80 position on a formula going up. He indicated to me then that they were considering as a federal government a \$5 to \$7 kind of situation so we have an opportunity to make our case on a higher kind of figure than we had put forward about three weeks ago.

### **Interpretation of the Trade Union Act**

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — A question to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Minister of Labour, I have evidence that your department in 1978 informed the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, of which Larry Brown was the executive secretary, that section 11(2)(d) of The Trade Union Act stated that if a union had a membership of a hundred people, 51 of them would have to vote in favor of a strike for that strike to be proper. Is that a true statement supplied by your department as long ago as 1978 on section 11(2)(d)?

**HON. G.T. SNYDER (Minister of Labour):** — I'm reluctant to respond to the hon. member's question because time after time after time in this House members allege

something on information that has been totally and completely erroneous (and the member for Regina South sits in his seat and makes those implications fit.) I would like to have the member table the letter. It is my understanding that 11(2)(d) has been intended to read in such a way as to provide that the majority of those eligible to vote, which in my estimation and I think in the belief of the department generally, has been perhaps that in essence a majority of those actually casting their vote are those who would be entitled to make a decision as to whether the strike would be valid or not.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that Mr. Brown informed all Saskatchewan Federation staff and all business agents for all unions that your department upon its ruling if challenged in view — sorry — of your department's rule. In fact if Judge Johnson's recent ruling upheld the same decision then, Mr. Minister, why did your department not indicate to the membership of the Saskatchewan Government Employees' association of your decision you had made prior to 1978 (and I'll send you a copy of the documentation) where Mr. Brown, your former political aide, was told by you that ruling would be 51 out of 100 have to vote? Are you just protecting Mr. Brown, your political aide, or what are you doing?

**MR. SNYDER:** — An attempt to answer the kind of question the hon. member for Rosthern directs to me is like trying to grab a handful of smoke. The hon. members ask a question that defies any analysis or explanation. I can only repeat what I said my impression has been, and I believe generally of the department. The impression generally of the department has been that 11(2)(d) conveyed the impression (which was not upheld by the court) that a majority of those who actually cast a vote, who made themselves eligible by voting would make that decision. I don't know what I can do in terms of answering the hon. member's question unless he'll be a little more precise in directing his question. It's a totally incoherent question that I find almost . . .

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It is indicated the letter contained . . . If you wish, I will table it after question period because I am not allowed to table during question. But is it not a fact that you were just using SGEA employees to challenge a little in playing politics with them to benefit Larry Brown.

#### **University of Regina Psychology Department**

**MR. D.G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — My question is to the Attorney General, in the absence of the Minister of Continuing Education. Mr. Attorney General in view of the statement by Dr. Lloyd Barber that he doesn't think the university as a public place should be involved in covering things up, and in view of the statement by Dr. Richard Johnson, the head of the psychology department that half of the 14 faculty members are involved in cults, Marxist politics, parapsychology, and mind expanding drugs, (such as LSD), and that he, Dr. Johnson, has been advising graduate students from other universities not to enrol in the graduate program here in Regina, do you not agree that the Department of Continuing Education should commission an outside group to make a study of the psychology department of the University of Regina?

**HON. R.J. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — Mr. Speaker, I think we have a basic difference between the Progressive Conservative caucus and this government on the independence and the role of the independence of the university.

Mr. Speaker, we have established by legislation and by tradition in this House and in this province that a university shall be governed by a board of governors which is representative of the senate, the public, and the government; one which is designed to

determine the internal affairs of the university. And there is a very good reason for that — to prohibit or prevent the danger of political interference in the day to day or other operations of the university.

Now, I do not know of the statements of the learned doctor that the Deputy Leader of the opposition has referred to. I have not seen them. I can only suggest that the proper way to direct those complaints is straight to the university board of governors, to the president, and to the administration, and to have the university deal with this matter internally, as I'm sure the university is willing and capable of doing.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. The university has appointed Dr. Wilbur Toombs as the acting head of the department, a person who I think has some capability. But do you not agree, Mr. Attorney General, that this internal appointment is nothing more than piecemeal action and won't solve the serious problems that exist within that department in that university.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to avoid making a comment which may be interpreted or misinterpreted as being a political comment on the university. I want to remind the hon. member that there was a premier in this province, the late premier W. Ross Thatcher, (and I remind this to the press) who made a speech at Potashville (called the Potashville speech) involving his judgment calls on the way the University of Saskatchewan should or shouldn't be interpreted. Take a look at the headlines of that speech and the approach taken, not only by the university but by the independent public, because that speech was interpreted as an attack on the independence of the university.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we must be very cautious and conscious of the fact that this is an institution of higher learning, one where there is a board of governors. We ought not to interject partisan political objections or observations for fear of undermining this very valuable and precious institution that we want to protect in Saskatchewan.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Supplementary. Do the Attorney General and the government opposite not feel any obligation to the people of this province to investigate the university so that the University of Regina does not lose its academic credibility which it is certainly in danger of doing?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, I am saying to the hon. member that if the government says, we are going to investigate what's going on in the University of Regina, what would prohibit this government or any subsequent government from saying to a university, we are going to investigate the teachers and what they are teaching and the teachers and what they are doing. I want to say that is no less than a witch hunt at any university. If you believe in academic freedom, namely the discussion and interchange of ideas and the full exchange of views and teachings by the professors to the students, this is something the university board of governors must handle. It is not open to any political party or government to do, and I reject it.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### CRTC's Decision on Saskatoon Telecable's Earth Station

**HON. R.J. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a

statement regarding yesterday's decision by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), awarding Saskatoon Telecable Limited the authority to distribute a special programming channel delivered by means of satellite to cable television subscribers in Saskatoon. I wish to advise the Assembly that the Government of Saskatchewan will today request that the federal Governor in Council, pursuant to section 23 of the Broadcasting Act, refer that decision back to the CRTC for a full public rehearing.

In taking its decision without holding a public hearing, the CRTC failed to recognize the serious consequences of awarding the applicant the authority, the right to distribute a channel which the cable operator has said he will now utilize to challenge the authority of Sask Tel to provide earth station hardware under the terms of existing contracts.

Moreover, by taking this decision without a public hearing, the CRTC has ignored the interventions filed by the provincial government with it and Sask Tel, which stress the urgency and importance of the issues surrounding the application and the need for complete and open consideration from a regulatory and policy standpoint.

Mr. Speaker, the CRTC's decision demonstrates that since April 14, Saskatoon Telecable has been acting without the proper authorization in using channel 8 to broadcast House of Commons' proceedings, for it is only with this decision yesterday that Saskatoon Telecable has obtained authorization for use of that channel. I must register my dismay, Mr. Speaker, that the CRTC made its decision apparently without questioning why the cable operator had until yesterday been acting outside the authority of his licence.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the decision by the CRTC, which prompts the appeal to the Governor in Council could put at risk Sask Tel's \$56 million fibre optics cable television network, which is designed to bring cable television to more than 50 Saskatchewan communities in 1983. The project is the key to developing a major fibre optics manufacturing industry, not only in Saskatchewan but in Canada. Consequently this decision, which we are asking the Governor in Council to review, will threaten a project which could provide hundreds of high technology jobs to Saskatoon and to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, there are other reasons but the rules do not permit me during ministerial statements to elaborate. For those that I have stated, and other reasons, the government today wish to announce it will be asking the federal government to refer the CRTC decision back to the commission for a thorough and public rehearing appropriate and according to the relevant statutes of the law.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. R.L. ANDREW (Kindersley):** — In commenting on the Attorney General's ministerial statement today I find it somewhat odd that the Attorney General, of all people, talks about an open hearing when we have Bill No. 13 before this House and no concern at all being advanced for an open hearing on that type of thing. I suggest it's time the Attorney General opened up things too.

The Attorney General also seeks by every move, and this government seeks by every move, to have confrontation with the federal government, instead of approaching it as other provinces have done and delivering television to the rural people there. Perhaps it's time you set aside your political views, and your monopolistic situation on



everything in the telecommunications industry and address the problem of getting television to the people of rural Saskatchewan at a cost that is reasonable to the people of rural Saskatchewan. I suggest to you that perhaps you would put those as priorities and get the job done and quit worrying about your political dominations.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Before orders of the day, a number of returns have been ordered by the Legislative Assembly with regard to the Office of the Ombudsman. I wish now to lay those on the table. They are returns No. 174, No. 271, No. 453, No. 548, and. No. 630.

### **Point of Order re Question Period**

**MR. D.G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I rise on a point of order. During today's question period the Minister of Labour used some very unparliamentary degrading language to this Chamber in regard to the question by the member for Rosthern. I would ask you to ask him to withdraw those words and apologize to the member.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Unfortunately, when this was alleged to have occurred I did not . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, order! If the members will bear with me and allow me to finish this sentence before they start scoffing at the statement I am about to make. I'd appreciate it. I listened to the hon. member state his point of order and there was no scoffing during that period. The Minister of Labour.

**HON. G.T. SNYDER (Minister of Labour):** — I presume it can be regarded as a case of spontaneous combustion. I believe I called the member a silly ass and I am prepared to withdraw it.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Mr. Speaker, in point of order I asked for an apology to the member also.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order. As I was saying before I was interrupted a couple of times, when this was alleged to have occurred, there was a lot of noise going on in the House and unfortunately I didn't hear any remarks that were made. Apparently the Minister of Labour has retracted the remarks he made and I think that sets the record straight; they 're not in fact on the record any more.

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, during question period, I read from a document and I said I would table it. I wish to table it now.

### **COMMITTEE OF FINANCE — SOCIAL SERVICES — VOTE 36**

#### **Item 1 (Continued)**

**MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan):** — Mr. Minister we have a very good Department of Social Services working out of Estevan with some very dedicated people. We don't have too many complaints about how it is operated. However, it could possibly become more efficient by allowing the people in Estevan to work directly with the department and directly with their cases. In some instances they have to wait two or three days for an answer, even out of Weyburn, that could be dealt with right at the time in Estevan. They are very capable people who have been there for quite a number of years. I think that

would really make the Estevan office much more efficient.

**MR. M.J. KOSKIE (Minister of Social Services):** — I appreciate the comments of the hon. member in regard to that. As I understand it, Estevan is a suboffice of Weyburn. I would just indicate to the member that we are putting under review the various structures we have in order to meet that problem of trying to deliver the service more readily and directly in Estevan. That is the approach we are looking at.

**MR. LARTER:** — I take it then you will seriously look at possibly decentralizing decision making so they can make some of these decisions without having to wait two or three days?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — We look at that as a real possibility. The member for Rosetown-Elrose requested some information yesterday. The first is in respect to the follow-up on ESP (Employment Support Program) participants. I have this information, so I would like to provide him with the sheet; this is the best information we have at the present time, but I think it will give you some of what you requested.

**MR. H.J. SWAN (Rosetown-Elrose):** — I would like to come back to the employment services program and I wonder if the minister will table before the House a list of all the ESP committees, receiving grants for the coming year (the year we are in), and give me the amounts of those grants. I would also like the names of the committees that were there last year and the amount of the grants they received during that period. I want them as a comparison.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I don't think there is any problem. We don't have that here of course. We'll have to compile the list. You want the names of the particular committees that have received grants and the amount of the grant? Is that correct?

**MR. SWAN:** — Yes, I want the committees that received grants last year and the committees that are assigned to receive grants this year. They won't have received them for 1980-81, but if you have decided there will be grants for them then I'd like to have those committees.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Well, I am advised we haven't made all the decisions in respect to this year at this time. We have made some decisions and we can supply you with the information as far as we have in fact made decisions.

**MR. SWAN:** — Well, if you haven't made all the decisions, then I hope you're going to reconsider one that you made May 7 to the committee I mentioned yesterday. They still have at Love, Saskatchewan, a number of people who would like to be given the opportunity to work. They have a lot of material in the form of firewood that was cut by last year's committee but they don't have enough funds to bring it to a position where it's readily saleable. It's still in the bush. So I am asking you to reconsider your decision about funding for that particular committee.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I think any decision made by the department certainly is taken with some degree of consideration. As I indicated to you, the department has taken a look at that particular application vis-a-vis other applications, and on the basis of their best judgment they decided and advised that they would not be funding it. Now I don't think I can expect the department, if they have used their best judgment in making their decision, to reverse that decision.

**MR. SWAN:** — I'd like to move back into the provision of services for senior citizens. We were discussing at the time the House closed yesterday the fact that your department has forced some couple to separate in order that one could be maintained on social welfare. I am wondering if there is any thought being given to changing the position of your department in this area and finding another method for couples, so that the one who is not in a home can continue to operate as a private individual and not be pulled down to a point where the couple can no longer retain its own independence.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I certainly am aware of that particular problem area. I want to say that in the review we are conducting we will in fact be looking at that aspect. It is of some concern. I want to say that presently under the social assistance regulations, which cover anyone applying for assistance in a special-care home, a problem develops when one person is in the special-care home and the other person is able to stay in their own home. So what we have done there is to have voluntary separation (I know it was very, very limited, but this is where it was at). Provided that each couple was receiving the maximum OAS (old age security) and GIS (guaranteed income supplement), and that one was in the home and one was outside the home — I'm just telling you where it's at at the present time — then of course there was a separation so that you would not have to include in the income of the man or the woman who was in the home the income of the spouse who was out of the home. Because that was happening. We have adjusted it so that if they are getting any portion of GIS there is a separation of the income of husband and wife vis-a-vis the one in the home and the one outside the home. That I think is estimated at \$800,000 or maybe it's \$80,000. I'm not sure. All I can say is, yes, we certainly will be addressing and looking at that problem.

**MR. SWAN:** — I was having a little difficulty following you there and I'm sure that if I mail Hansard out to a senior citizen who was concerned about this, they will too (when you use just the abbreviations for terms). So I would appreciate it when you are speaking through Hansard if you will avoid using just the initials and then it will be a little clearer if you want to use it later. I can sort it out, but if you mail it out in that form a person can't.

You spoke as though the only people concerned here were senior citizens, and that's not the case. The one case I mentioned to you yesterday concerned a lady who had multiple sclerosis, had been in a hospital for some time and later was moved into a level 4 facility. So I hope you won't just refer to them as senior citizens, because in this case they are younger people. But there is still that need to provide some other method of funding this rather than having them both reduced to the point where they have to go on social assistance or separate.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I appreciate your point that it goes beyond senior citizens. It can affect other people who are much younger than that. The case in question which you mentioned certainly applies.

With respect to the situation you mentioned and also with regard to all those who find themselves in that position, we will address them, because we will be looking at the structure of the exemptions in looking at restructuring the system.

**MR. SWAN:** — In your first answer on this subject you were speaking as though there was something in place now, but you were using figures of \$80,000 or \$100,000 and you weren't sure. Could you be more specific on what the program is; is it in place and what are the figures?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — What I was speaking about is really the provision which applies to

senior citizens. Because under the basic exemption (if you can call it that) where both are receiving old age security (OAS) and are also receiving the guaranteed income supplement, the present regulations allow that the income of one spouse will not be treated as part of the income of the other (where the situation is, as I indicated, that one person is in the home and requires social assistance in order to stay there).

What we have done is increase the benefit so that it applies where they're getting any portion of the guaranteed income supplement; they don't have to get the full amount. And that, I am advised is the additional \$80,000 that will be required.

**MR. R.G. LONG (Cut Knife-Lloydminster):** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to take a few moments to make a few comments to the minister at this time regarding one of his programs, the Saskatchewan Home Care Program.

I understand at this time about half the districts in the province have been implemented and I think that program will make a very significant contribution to the well-being of Saskatchewan senior citizens, as well as the handicapped of the province. Once in place it can also, I believe significantly affect the cost of providing health care and certainly cut the cost of providing home care services to Saskatchewan people.

The Saskatchewan Home Care Program provides such services as home nursing, homemakers Meals on Wheels and handyman services. Mr. Minister, in my work as an MLA in the constituency, I find that there's a need for another service which could be provided with this program. I would term this service that of being a business adviser. This would be a person who could advise senior citizens out in the country, the city or wherever. They can travel about and visit senior citizens and advise them on government programs such as the senior citizens home repair program and the residential rehabilitation program. Both of them are programs which senior citizens sometimes find hard to interpret as to how to properly apply for them and properly combine the two of them. I think senior citizens, Mr. Minister, have problems dealing with income tax services. They are not always able to travel about to visit tax consultants and this sort of thing. I think a person who is able to do this sort of thing, visit them in their own homes and give them this advice, would be of very great value.

I think the member for Rosetown was pointing out some confusion with pension plans and some of the terminology. The member for Wilkie is asking me if I need another job. I'm quite certain, Mr. Member for Wilkie, that I've got plenty to do up there and if he keeps himself busy in his constituency, he has lots to do too. You guys come up any time and I'll plough what you harrow in a day, O.K.?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Direct your questions and comments through the Chair.

**MR. LONG:** — I think, Mr. Chairman, that these are some of the kinds of services this person could provide. Mr. Minister, I believe that the addition of this kind of service to the home care program would indeed make what is now a very fine program an even better program.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I just want to make a few comments with respect to the member's suggestion. Certainly, I think that this suggestion is one which many of the MLAs will recognize as a need that senior citizens have. I know that in my law practice or as an MLA one of the great problems that senior citizens do have is being able to fill out application forms, knowing that they are eligible for. Income tax is another area. I want

to say that in this particular type of service we have some more or less on a pilot-project basis in the cities of Regina, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw, which are funded by the department. One of the things they do is advise individuals who are in need of this sort of assistance, in respect to filing income tax, filling out form and making applications for benefits.

What we did with the home care program is to initiate it on the basis of the four major components that we thought were absolutely necessary to meet some of the problems or address some of the problems of the citizens of Saskatchewan. I think that home care has a future with expansion and I would like the expansion to come as we develop the home care board and allow them to function with what we have basically under the scope of them. The boards themselves then will be able to make input as to the nature and type of services that may be required in the future. Depending on the funding availability, there is a good chance of incorporating those suggestions.

**MR. R.L. COLLVER (Nipawin):** — May I suggest a brief point of order? I realize that all members are entitled to speak before this committee and ask question of the minister. But I really question whether or not it's reasonable, when the member has direct access to his caucus and other places and to the minister, to have these little dissertations placed on the record for sending back to one's constituents. One has to wonder whether or not various individuals . . .

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order, order! It certainly is not in order to reflect on the motives of any member of the legislature. Every member of the legislature has the right to speak. It is my duty to give every member of the legislature that right to speak. Your point of order is not well taken. I think the member for Maple Creek was next.

**MRS. J.H. DUNCAN (Maple Creek):** — We plan to cover the intent and the scope of home care in this province later on. I would just like to refer back to what you said in answer to the member for Rosetown-Elrose. In the study which you are commencing, will allowances be made for married people where both of them do not receive the guaranteed income supplement and that type of thing? We are running into situations where say a spouse is in a home and he might be 68 years old, the wife is at home and she might be 52 years old. They are really running into dire need. Within the whole scope of anyone going into nursing homes (because they don't even have to be 65 and over; I know in Maple Creek we have a 27 year old in the home) will allowance be made for a situation like this? Will there be a flexible mechanism built into any new regulations you do bring out?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Yes, I was merely elucidating the present situation. In answer to the member for Rosetown-Elrose, I did indicate that the review in fact would encompass all people who are affected by those regulations as they exist today. The percentage of people is quite small who are not senior citizens who go into homes or levels of care. I am advised it is somewhere around 10 per cent. Certainly those will be incorporated in our review in respect of how it may affect them.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — Mr. Minister with regard to home care, how many regions in the province are in actual operation delivering the type of services they have the mandate to deliver?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — We have 25 boards of the 45 in one stage or another or organization. Touchwood Hills is the operative one. It started, I believe, in January. Canora is scheduled in June to launch the official opening of implementation of their programs.

The others are at various stages of developing their plan. They submit that to the department and there is communication with regard to the direction they are going and if they need any clarification. Once that is in place, they go ahead and begin operation. That's where we are at now.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — So in fact you only have about two that are actually delivering the services they are meant to — just one and one coming on shortly.

Is your department supplying funds to any organizations at present that are providing these services in the interim?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Yes, we are proving funds for a number of organizations throughout the province in the interim to provide services as they were in the past. Some cities, towns and various communities were providing some or all of the services which are being provided under the new home care program. What we are doing is continuing to fund those organizations in order that the people in the various communities will not be denied that service until the home care package is together and operative.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — Mr. Minister, if you only have one in operation, could you give me a general breakdown as to where you spent about \$9.5 million in '79-80; why has it only been increased by less than 41 million for this year's services?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I have some information. The funds expended in '79-80 are broken down on the basis of expenditures: Meals on Wheels — \$554,00 plus a few dollars; homemaker — \$2,390,000; handyman — \$929,000 plus; co-ordinator — \$406,000; nursing — \$1,426,000 for a total expended in '79-80 of \$5,706,000. That was the appropriation of expenditures last year.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — That was spent through out the province? You indicated there is only one fully operational. Did you make grants to various organizations and that's the way the money was split up? It didn't go specifically to home care boards; it went to other organizations, is that what you are saying?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I am advised that there are 120 organizations throughout the province which are providing the various services similar to home care and we were funding those. We are continuing to fund them, in the interval until the home care package is in place.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would like to spend a few minutes on the scope of foster children's care in the province and the plight of some children in our province. Could you tell me how many foster children we do have in Saskatchewan who are placed in homes?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — As of the beginning of February, there were 2,250 children in the various foster homes as foster children, and in adoption homes. That was the total number of children we were dealing with.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — When a person applies for a foster child, what mechanisms do you have to go out in the field, to establish which are the suitable homes to accept foster children?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I'm advised that there is an application which is filled out by the person wishing to adopt. There's an application made to become a foster parent (I guess that's

what we're on). There is a home study done by the worker. Also they receive references as to the suitability and they check out the references of the particular family who is making application. Then that information is taken to the department, and I'm advised that there is an internal review made to see whether or not they qualify to become a foster parent.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — If your department becomes aware of any concerns raised by the foster children within a particular home, do you ever send anyone other than the original social worker to check the situation?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Yes, I think normally what one would do on the initial complaint would be to use the regional office and the worker who is in that particular region. But certainly if the facts or the circumstances seem to indicate, then workers outside of that region or the regular worker are sent in.

**MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek):** — Mr. Minister perhaps you could tell us what is the allowable maximum number of foster children in a home, in a specific region?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I'm advised that eight is the maximum number now.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, for about a years, in Moose Jaw (and I refer back to the member for Maple Creek's previous question). For about a year your office in Moose Jaw — at that time I believe the head was a gentleman by the name of Mr. Gil Peterson — was advised over and over again that there was a problem at a certain address on Third Avenue. I won't give you the names. I'm sure you departmental people can give you the instance I'm referring to just from the street. The same people over and over again went to investigate that complaint. Now I raise this in response to your other answer because the member for Maple Creek asked you, when you receive a complaint do you just keep sending back the same social worker? You replied that no, you don't. In this particular case the same person went back.

One of the complaints, Mr. Minister, was that at times as many as 20 people were staying in the foster home. Mr. Minister, that complaint was registered almost a year before any action was taken. It was raised to the department in Moose Jaw by church groups, by community organizations and by neighbors at the address involved. It was not until the pressure became very, very intense that the department in Regina launched an investigation and sent down some investigators.

It was about that time, Mr. Minister, that I became aware of the situation and discussed it with some of the community people who were involved. then I went to see Mr. Peterson. There I found a very frightened individual, fearful that I was on the verge of going to the press with it and fearful because he only had a year to go before he reached his retirement or was eligible for pension or whatever — very fearful. My comment to Mr. Peterson was, I'm merely here as an MLA, these things you just don't go to the press on.

I had no intention of it and all I asked for was a full and complete report. Mr. Peterson assured me that such a report would be forthcoming. He told me that two representatives from the department (I have their names written down in my files) were investigating the case. He confirmed that the children had already been removed from the house involved. If memory serve me correctly off the top of my head, I believe Mr. Peterson told me that at the time they were removed, 12 were taken out of the house. Now granted it was a fairly big house. It was one of these old-style houses that may very

well have had a finished attic. I don't know. It was a big house. But I believe it was 12 that Mr. Peterson told me had been removed by your departmental officials from Regina.

Mr. Minister, when I checked back to see if I was going to get a copy of that report (because I didn't go to the press with it; I accepted your department or regional head's assurance that I would receive a full report and that the matter would be kept in confidence). Mr. Peterson was gone. He had been removed from the Moose Jaw district. I believe that I have heard in a round-about-way that he's now in Weyburn. I'm subject to correction on that point.

Mr. Minister, I know that you were not the minister-in-charge at that time and I think some of the departmental officials with you now may not have been with the department at that time. But, Mr. Minister, I think it is fair to say that there has been a problem in the Moose Jaw area in social service for quite some time. I think it's fair to say that your department has been aware of the problem. Now I'm making no allegations or anything like that right now. But, Mr. Minister, I would like that report which your regional head at that time promised me. I would like to see it and I want to assure you that I'm not going to give it to the press gallery up there if it must be kept confidential, But, Mr. Peterson promised (and I have no reason to doubt Mr. Peterson's word because he was a very respected resident of Moose Jaw) to provide me a copy of that report subject to approval of his superiors. I assume that approval must have been denied.

Mr. Minister, some of the instances in this particular house, if true (and I emphasize if true), were horror stories — paddles, starvation — and I say if true, because I don't know. And therefore, Mr. Minister, I'll stop at that point and ask if you will make a copy of that report available. We'll go from there.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I just want to say to the hon. member that I was made readily aware of the problem when I assumed office. As a result of that particular case, the number of individuals who can be in any one foster home has been decreased. That policy was reviewed and that was put in place. With respect to the investigation itself, my understanding is that the police were involved. To my knowledge there were no charges laid as a result of their investigation.

I want to say with respect to Mr. Peterson making a commitment that he did not, without having received a prior approval from the department heads (which he I am told did not receive), have the jurisdiction to commit the department to supply a report which he was not preparing. I want to indicate to the hon. member that some of these are very difficult cases from the standpoint that allegations can be made and, if not substantiated, many people can be hurt in the whole system.

I appreciate his method of handling it in not going to the press. We responded from the department. It was underway when I became minister, and I think that we have put some checks and balances or better criteria governing these homes into place. We also put some into place limiting whether or not long-term foster children and short-term ones should be mixed in the same home. That has been resolved and the number has been decreased. I want to say to the member that on a confidential basis I am prepared to sit down and go over the material we have compiled in the department if that would be satisfactory to him. I would appreciate that the matter has been resolved. We have taken all immediate steps to prevent it from occurring again, and if that would be satisfactory I would be prepared to do that.



**MR. THATCHER:** — I thank the minister for that assurance and yes, that is most satisfactory. I am pleased to see some action was received. Let's get some from that specific case, Mr. Minister. Let's leave that. You say you've investigated, you say you've resolved it and you say you've learned something from it. Does this not raise a point about the intense pressure it took from your people in Regina to have anything happen? Your department head took so long to, shall we say, call in the troops for an investigation or ask Regina for help.

Mr. Minister, think it would appear that when people were saying, what they were telling your regional office for at least a year, was probably true in light of your answer. I may be reading things into your answer which weren't there, but I think it is fair to say that many of the bare-bones were probably true. I don't say that in a critical fashion, Mr. Minister. Don't misunderstand me. What I am saying is this, it appears that you had a real turkey running your Moose Jaw office. It appears that rightly so you pulled him out of there and I congratulate you for moving decisively. But it also appears that what you did was take a man who was not running his regional office properly in Moose Jaw and shove him into another region. Now, I'm saying that subject to correct, it is my understanding he is elsewhere. I will allow you to respond to that. I am not making any charges. But, Mr. Minister, if this man was doing a bad job in Moose Jaw, if he was not responding to problems until horribly intense pressure was put on him is it fair to thrust this man in a position of authority into another region? I ask that advisedly and not derogatorily, because I compliment your department for moving on it.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I just want to indicate that yes, he was removed as director of Moose Jaw. He is currently, I am advised, with the Regina central office. He is performing duties that have no direct delivery purpose to them. In other words he is not running any programs. In fact what he is doing, I am advised, is a particular study for the department. But he is not in the same position of direct delivery of services.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister I thank you for your candor but I wonder about the justice in that. Mr. Minister, if you foul up the Premier is going to fire you and you know that, and that is the way it should be. Well, he may not fire you tomorrow, but you know very well that you are accountable and you'll be fired. You know that people who foul up in their jobs, in most places if they blow it they are fired. Mr. Minister I have to really wonder about our system when somebody has blown it and blown it badly and he is kicked upstairs, so to speak. I don't know whether you call it a promotion or not. I don't know how many years were left, and there may be some compassion involved in that, but, Mr. Minister, I really wonder if it is the way to run anything. Is it the way to run a horse race, that when you foul things up you simply get booted upstairs to an executive desk, in other words as they would say corporately, make him a vice-president so to speak? I really wonder about that. At the same time, Mr. Minister, I want to acknowledge, if you have learned something from that experience and if your department has acted and if you have brought about change in your system, what more can we ask you over here? I appreciate your candor . . . and on an appropriate occasion I would like to see a copy of that report, if I may. I wish to assure you that it will stay with me. Thank you.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Just to comment a little further. I want to indicate that the individual was with the department for some 30 years, had carried on various forms of duties and it is my understanding in a capable way. I realize that in his position of regional director he had to share responsibility in the situation. But here were a number of other people who were involved. It was not his particular action which was totally responsible for the

situation.

As I indicated before, he has been a good employee for 30 years. He has not been promoted. He is doing a study. His retirement date is in September of this year. I think certainly we have to look for top performance in running our regions and various positions in the department, but we also have to recognize that he had given to the department some 30 years of good service. Accordingly, I think that would be a reasonable consideration in dealing with him.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — I would like for a few minutes to speak on the children who were in that home. I had letters from 11 of them. Many of them were taken out of intolerable situations in their original homes and placed into what ultimately turned out to be an equally intolerable situation. It is my understanding there was one social worker involved with that particular home. Indications are that perhaps it was her total caseload.

I might say, Mr. Minister, that without exception every one of those children said they had no place to go; they had no one to talk to. If they talked to the social worker, the social worker went back to the foster parents and certain things arose out of a situation like that. I think this probably indicates to us the need for a child abuse central registry or a child crisis line where children can phone, where they may have conversations with a social worker and can do so with complete confidence that their concerns will be kept confidential.

It is also my understanding that this particular social worker is no longer active in the same field but is now classified as a foster home evaluation officer. I don't know whether that's true or not.

What I would like to comment on is that these children were taken out of a situation which was intolerable, put into a situation which was equally intolerable, with no place to turn, and from what I understand they were sent back to their original homes. Now you tell me, Mr. Minister, when they become 18 and 29, can we really expect them to be normal, well-functioning adults.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I just wish to indicate to the hon. member that there is a child abuse registry being developed. It is in conjunction with Alberta, the other provinces and the federal government. So that is being developed. In respect to the concerns you raised, I think I received those for consideration. We do have the foster parent association which does do a lot of communicating on behalf of the foster parents. We have ongoing discussions with them so far as assisting the foster parents and the department in providing the best possible form of care.

Many of these, as you will appreciate, are really of great service to the children and to the department. This is the way in which we have been working. It is not always that easy to get foster parents. Accordingly, what we have been doing is, through their association, setting up the best possible situation for the children. I don't know if that answers it.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — I have no doubts, Mr. Minister, that probably 99.99 per cent of the foster homes in Saskatchewan are excellent homes. I'm sure no one would take a child, someone else's child, into his home unless he had compassion. I might add that I had a letter not too long ago from a 13 year old boy who was placed on a farm. He said he didn't know that life could be so wonderful. But I would like to urge you to employ a group of social workers who are specifically trained in dealing with child abuse. You

and I know that child abuse is on the upswing. I think it could be tied in to the central registry or this crisis line that children can talk to.

I know that in your budget you've under some types of restraint, but I feel very strongly there are certain areas where dollars and cents don't count. These social workers should be prepared to go throughout the province. They can be located in the major areas. I know in our own area we have one social worker who services our whole area and she just can't deal with all the problems that she has.

As far as I am concerned we just do not have enough social workers to cope with the problems they are faced with. That's not fair to a child. That's not fair to an unwed mother. That's not fair to a child waiting for adoption who is placed in a foster home because of lack of workers able to facilitate the particular adoption. But I would just urge that you proceed quickly with this type of idea and make the whole province aware.

With the children, it could be done through the schools if there is something available by then. I think it's utterly important in the type of society that we live in where there are parents that just don't care a hoot. Those children have to be made to feel important and feel they have somebody or some place to turn to.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Your comments are certainly well received. I want to indicate that we do in fact have social workers with special training for child protection against child abuse. One of the things you indicate is that the area and the case load are perhaps very large. Certainly, we would appreciate having more workers in this particular field. We will be looking at that in order to make sure the staff complement in the area is large enough. It is a very important and as you know a very delicate area. We recognize that we do need well-trained people in dealing with this problem.

**MR. SWAN:** — Mr. Minister, on a similar type of case (and I have been dealing with your department now for a couple of weeks on it from Saskatoon) there is a breakdown in communications. We have grandparents and other members of a family telling us there is child abuse. I phoned the department and I told them there was a person in Saskatoon in whom this family did not have confidence, yet the same person was sent back to deal with the case. You tell me that you can't get letters from the people to back up their statements, but the reason you couldn't get the letters is because it was the same person. I have a letter from one of them on my desk today and the other one will be in. If you don't get it, I will certainly pass them on to you. What I am trying to stress is this: I think you need to have an intense study of what is happening in Saskatchewan to ensure that indeed you do not have a problem. I know you have looked at it. I have a letter from you explaining what you have found but I don't think you have gone deep enough. This family is still maintaining there is child abuse and that there is a very serious problem. They have been trying and trying for almost two years to get somebody to move. I think it is absolutely too long a period of time. If you don't get the letters within the next couple of days, let me know and I'll pass them on to you. I want your assurance that you will send somebody new into that area to take a look at what's happening and see why there is the breakdown in communication.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I think looking at your point, you have to consider the complainants and also the individuals who are being complained against. The department as you are aware indicated, and I indicated to you, that the couple is receiving family counselling. Talking with the counsellor indicates that progress is being made with that couple. The ideal is to keep the couple together and to formulate a healthy family unit.

The second thing, in respect to the allegations, they have never been communicated to the department in writing. You give us the reason (I find it less than legitimate by the way, I really do) that they would not provide it to the same worker and at least put it in writing. That has been the request and I think it is a little bit of a lame excuse to say that if they are really concerned, why wouldn't they put the complaint and evidence which they alleged they have ready in writing? The other thing is, the couple was asked to have the children examined by a medical doctor. A doctor examined them. We haven't receive the report to date, but the department has been in communication with the doctor and he indicates there was no evidence of abuse whatsoever. We have the doctor, we have the social worker who has visited the home, made observations, looked at the children, seen the relationship with the couple, and we have the counsellor.

I know it's tricky but you have to balance how much you are going to harass the couple with complaints which the complainants won't even put into writing. I think that is pretty shabby on their part, not to have done that.

I want to say that in following it up that the director of the regional office has contracted each of those complainants and requested they provide these in writing. Or indeed if they wish to direct these complaints to him personally, he's prepared to meet with them.

So what I'm saying is, the evidence we have is that they won't come forward with any specifics of the abuse or allegations. I hate going onto too many details because you get into the confidentiality of people's lives, that's the problem with dealing with specific cases.

You put me on the spot because I have to start to answer it thoroughly and to give information which I think should not be revealed about the previous relations which the mother who is the complainant and the daughter who is being complained against.

**MR. SWAN:** — I am not wanting you to name people here and I'm not naming people. I told you, and I told the members of your department at the time I first called that they would not put their case in writing to the same person because it was the person who you were sending back that they were complaining about. They don't feel the person is qualified and they don't feel the person is taking the response.

Now you say they won't put it in writing. I have a letter on my desk. It must be 12 pages at least and you can have it. I have it today. It's right here in the House. I don't have it up here but I can bring it to you. If you don't get a copy in the next day or so, let me know and I'll give it to you.

But at least they are willing to put it in writing and they've signed it; it's there for you. So don't tell me the people aren't willing; they're not willing to put their case in writing to a person in whom they don't have confidence. If you had sent a new person, they would have. That's all I'm telling you. But what I'm asking is to have your guarantee that after you get these letters you will follow the case and clear it up.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I think there's no doubt we will, of course, follow it up. I just want to say I find that the explanation of why they wouldn't set it out in a letter — because they had no confidence in a worker — has nothing to do with setting forth their concern. Certainly, it would be on the file to the department. At least then they could come forward to you or to me and say we put it in writing, we gave it to the worker, here are the specifics — will you deal with it? But we aren't getting those facts. Well, we've invited

them to present it and I don't think that's asking too much. Because if you're going to make complaints alleging child abuse, then I think the complainant should be able to come forward because of the seriousness of the matter, to give the department the fullest support in specifying the particular concerns.

But finally in answering your question, yes, of course we will be reviewing the matter. And I look forward to receiving the copies of the letter.

**MR. SWAN:** — I have asked them to send the letter directly to you. If you don't get them, then I'll give you the copies, but the direct letters are better for you.

**MR. J.W.A. GARNER (Wilkie):** — Mr. Minister, you've stated that you want some black and white proof. O.K. I'll table this document after I read it. It's from a lady in the town of Wilkie with a teenage daughter to support. I read the following:

I, Fran Culbertson, of General Delivery, Wilkie, Sask., do hereby give James W. Garner, MLA, Box 5979, Wilkie, Sask., my full permission to investigate any files or claims or to consult with any government officials in the Department of Social Services, in the province of Saskatchewan, and to take whatever steps he deems necessary to help me obtain a fair and just living for myself and my family.

Mr. Minister, this lady kept her records for one month, especially for me, of her groceries. It's all itemized out. Her total grocery bill for the month is \$259.39. She receives from welfare \$193 from family income, \$50, from family allowance \$20, for a total of \$263.

Now, \$4 doesn't buy many clothes. And just reviewing the grocery list, Mr. Minister, I can tell without even consulting with the lady, basically what their diet was, and it wasn't very good. I see the meat purchases on here for \$1.79, \$1.63, \$1.40, and even one for \$2.21. They're not living high on the hog; they're living on hamburger.

Now I say to you, Mr. Minister, what does it take to help the people of Saskatchewan? I have two or three other claims which I would like to bring into this, one having to do with a senior citizen, and I will deal with that one later. This lady's health does not allow her to work. I know the lady personally. How much of an increase did social services (and I would like the exact figures) bring in in their new budget to help these people of Saskatchewan?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — The total increase is \$3.750 million. For the individual, this brings the adult rate to \$100, and the child rate to \$90, so there's an increase of \$10 on the food allowance which is in the pre-added budget.

**MR. GARNER:** — O.K. I understand the pre-added budget, but is it \$10 period — nothing else added — just \$10 extra for the food?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — The total amount is \$10. I believe to work it out in round figures \$9 was allocated to food and \$1 on clothing, but that was just the allocation. It was \$10.

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister I think it is very obvious that there is not enough money for the people in Saskatchewan who need social aid. Now I want to get that clear on the record. I am not opposed to social aid. It's good, but for those who really need it. Now

here is one case of a woman (she is divorced with a daughter) who isn't getting enough. She can't work; her health does not allow it. Now, I would like to deal with another individual, and this individual is handicapped: groceries \$100, utilities \$60, laundry \$20. I could go on and on, but I won't delay the House. Mr. Minister.

Now, I don't know how you are running your department. If we have people in Saskatchewan who shouldn't be on social aid so the others can receive it, fine, but we have to have more money for the (whether it be widows or divorced) woman and children who need social aid, for the handicapped people at home who need social aid. There has to be more money forthcoming.

One other question, Mr. Minister. How many employees have quit in your department in the last year?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I just wish to make a general comment in respect to the level of funding to those who are receiving assistance. I want to indicate that we have, as you can see, put into the budget an additional \$3.75 million. People with children, also through the federal government, get a child tax credit of \$200 which is of benefit to them. I want to further state that in the review of the comparison of our levels vis-a-vis Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba (I don't have those actual figures here, and they are somewhat difficult to compare) the comparison that I had seen is that we are in fact providing a higher level than in the other provinces. Now that may have been altered in this budget in the various provinces, but that was the position: relatively the same, but we were slightly higher than the other provinces.

To the last question that you asked, how many . . .

**MR. GARNER:** — How many employees have quit in your department in the last year?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I believe that was, I am advised, tabled with a return. We don't happen to have that with us. We can get that and provide you with . . . Have we answered that return? When you indicate quit, are you indicating resigned?

We'll try to have it for you later this afternoon. We just don't have it. The problem is when a person leaves for a promotion to another department, I understand that what he does . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes. What he does is resign and goes to another department but he necessarily has to resign his position to social services to take another position in another department. So it's very difficult to pinpoint that.

**MR. GARNER:** — I'm leading into something, Mr. Minister. That's why I wanted to know the figures. We'll go one step further then. Hopefully your officials can come up with the answers. Surely you'll know how many. I'm not concerned about the people transferred in your department but people who have resigned or quit working for social services. I can't put it any plainer than that.

Now, do employees of your department get paid overtime? I mean field workers, the individuals who go out and handle the case load individually in each town and area, do they get paid overtime?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — As you will understand, the social workers are under the contract of the

Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association which is negotiated on their behalf. Accordingly, they are paid under that collective agreement.

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Minister, I am the first one to give your employees, especially in the North Battleford region, credit. As much as I'm down on your department, I don't think people are getting enough money to live on in Saskatchewan. I will say the people that you have in the North Battleford office work very well, and there is communication between myself and them. I commend them and you're the minister, so I have to give you a pat on the back too. I have some reservations about doing that.

But what I'm leading into, Mr. Minister (and that's why I wanted to know how many people have quit or left your department) is that I think it's becoming more and more obvious that with this low and ridiculous budget you have in social services for these individual citizens who are on social aid, it's very hard for the field staff in your offices all over Saskatchewan to get out and tell the individual, well yes, you need more money but there isn't more money in the department. It's not in the pre-added budget. You can't have any more. So then naturally, they start phoning the MLAs. I know they're not only phoning the MLAs on this side of the House, they've also got to be phoning the MLAs on that side of the House. It's making it very tough for working conditions for them, very tough. Because naturally the individual will say Mr. Schmuck out there who applied for social services isn't getting enough and he takes it out on your field worker. These people have a very tough time, a tough job. There are many long hours they have to put in. Now why I wanted to know why or how many people have quit your department is because with a budget like that, such as I've just given out to you, on different cases, I would say a third of the case load in my constituency is problems with social services. Basically, I would say 75 per cent of them have a legal complaint. They're not getting enough to live on. Then your field workers have to go out and say, well try to find a job, go out and look for a job. When they don't have enough money to live decently on where do they get the money from to go out and travel around and look for a job? They don't, Mr. Minister. They just can't.

So I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, this year's \$10 increase is a mickey-mouse step. It's a start, but it's a slow start. It's 4 per cent my colleague tells me. What's inflation? Inflation is at 10 per cent. Now, they're behind to start with and they're falling further behind.

Are you not within the next year, going to do something about additional money for the people who need (and I emphasize need) social aid in Saskatchewan?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I ask the member to bear in mind that to those who are receiving assistance in respect to rents and utilities, which are often two important items, we pay the actuals. So remember in those two essential items we are paying actuals. Bear in mind also that when there was a decrease in the family allowance, about over a year ago, we picked up the loss of income that affected the individuals receiving assistance.

Certainly, I can't concur that the area of social assistance is not one of luxury, nor was it basically intended to be, if it's wanting to provide the basic needs to sustain life. Our efforts are directed toward getting as many as possible fully employed and able to support themselves.

**MR. GARNER:** — Well, Mr. Minister, you just said, to find employment. Now, where is the money going to come from for them to go out and look for a job? And what about the ones who can work? They're the ones I'm concerned about, Mr. Minister. The ones

who are able to work and go out and find a job, maybe they have to rough it. But what about people who have a health problem? What about the senior citizen who is crippled and living at home? He can't go out and get a job even if he wants to (and I don't doubt that he does want to, but he can't). So it is quite plain and simple, Mr. Minister, we have a problem in Saskatchewan, a large problem.

Now, the Conservatives are not the government. It's the NDP, Mr. Minister, it is the government opposite that tells us about the great profits from everything — the New Deal for People. We discussed this yesterday on level 2 and level 3. What about a new deal for the people who really need social assistance in this province.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — There's not a great deal more that I could add. I indicated that we have put more money into it. The senior citizens, as you will know, are entitled to the old age security pension. They are entitled to the government supplement, if in need. Further assistance will be given to them, by the federal Liberal government, of \$35 if they are receiving old age assistance and the supplement, which will be of additional assistance to them.

We have a program of further assisting the senior citizens with the Saskatchewan income program which is tied, as I indicated to the federal supplement of \$25 or \$45 a couple. So we have certainly made strides to better provide the resources to the senior citizens and to others.

**MR. P. PREBBLE (Saskatoon-Sutherland):** — I would like to make a few remarks and ask the minister a few questions with respect to day care services in the province.

I think, Mr. Chairman, there are three major initiatives in the area of social services that should be looked at seriously over the period of the next two years. One of course is an initiative in the area of preventive health which I commented on before. Second is a government program for universal sickness and accident insurance. The third, in my view, is the need for a major comprehensive program on day care in Saskatchewan.

One of the concerns I have, Mr. Chairman, is that while the services our government has provided to the elderly in this province have happily been increased very, very greatly in the last few years (and I congratulate the current Minister of Social Services and the past Minister for those initiatives) and while there have been considerable increases in the area of corrections, there has been an actual decrease in the percentage of the budget spent on child care and family services. I notice the Department of Social Services has a five-year plan when it comes to services to be provided for the elderly, a five-year plan when it comes to correctional services in the province, but I don't believe the department has a five-year plan when it comes to planning around child services and family services in Saskatchewan.

I think in this area the program that needs the most attention is the day care program. WE face a very central problem, on which I would be interested in the minister's comments, in this province and that is: in the face of more and more parents (both parents in the home) having to go out to work as a matter of necessity, how are those parents going to be able to raise their children when they are spending a large percentage of their time at work, unless day care services are being provided.?

At least two-thirds of the women now working in Saskatchewan are working out of financial necessity. Women face additional problems. For instance when they go to



manpower, often before they are able to be placed for a job, manpower will require that women have baby-sitting services. I certainly know that is the case in Saskatoon. So I say, Mr. Chairman, the department of Social Services should be giving more attention to the day care program and less attention to corrections.

I think if one looks at participation by native people in the day care area and compares that with the percentage of native people in our province who are unfortunately in our jails, you can see the contrast in the most dramatic fashion. There is a large percentage of native people in our jails and yet very, very few native people in the province are benefiting from day care services.

I say, Mr. Chairman, our government needs to begin to see day care as a societal issue, rather than just a service being provided for women. It should be seen as a service that is being provided for society. I think parents are not going to be able to work well and be able to feel free to participate in the work force, unless they know their children can be adequately looked after. I think we should look at day care as something that saves us money in the long term, because it allows people in many cases, especially single parents, to go out to work and to stay off the welfare rolls, rather than having to collect social assistance if they don't have adequate child care for their children. I think, Mr. Chairman, that we should essentially see day care as a part of our preventive programs in the area of child support. I think many children who are running into problems with the law today may have been able to avoid those problems had their parents been able to have good access to child care facilities.

I think we should reflect for a moment on what the spending policies of the government have been in the day care field. One of the things which becomes very dramatic when you look at past spending allocations over the years is that for instance, in the last six years since 1974, something like \$9 million has been allocated for day care spending and yet only \$5 million of that \$9 million allocation was actually spent. Mr. Chairman, in the vicinity of the \$4 million (as I understand it) went unspent and illustrates the fact that the organizational work which needs to be carried out by the Department of Social Services to ensure day cares are organized in Saskatchewan, is not being adequately done.

I think it is very clear that more organizational support needs to be given by the department to allow day cares to be organized. I think the reasons for this become very obvious when you look at the kind of persons, and the situations parents are in, who especially need day care. Often they are very low income people. Often, Mr. Chairman, they are single parents who are very busy and who come home at the end of the day very tired and who find it difficult to be able to put the extra time and energy which is needed and required towards organizing a day care centre. Since we are depending largely on the co-operative approach to day care, which I think is a good approach and which I congratulate the minister for. I think we also have to realize that staff needs to provide more of the organizational support which is required for those co-ops to get off the ground.

If you look at the operation of co-ops you realize that many of the people who are participating are often facing in administrative skills and this is often their first experience in a co-op, one quickly sees that more support is needed from the department in areas such as financial planning, assistance in the hiring of staff and assistance with planning capital expenditures. The day care boards often find themselves faced with serious health problems. There might be an outbreak of a particular disease in the community and they often need advice as to preventive

measures which should be taken. There are all kinds of complicated problems to be faced. Such a problem should be that of legal responsibility of the day care and where their legal responsibility ends. Another could be a problem of child neglect and what a day care centre does and what a day care board does in the event of facing a child neglect situation.

In all these areas, Mr. Chairman, I think more support needs to be given by the department to assist the day care centres.

I think, Mr. Chairman, the crux of the matter, beyond this organizational support, lies in the area of funding. I feel that first of all insufficient funding has been given for existing day care centres.

I want to congratulate the minister for the 20 per cent increase in the day care budget provided, but I want to point out to all members that as I understand this increase it is strictly funds which provide for the increase in the number of spaces for day care in Saskatchewan. Mr. Chairman, this does not address the serious funding problems which existing day care centres face.

If you look at the average day care fee in Saskatoon, Mr. Chairman, you will find it is in the vicinity of \$210 a month. On the other hand if you look at the parent subsidy you see it's in the vicinity of \$150 a month.

Now what this means first of all is that low income persons are being asked to come up with about \$50 of their own. But when you realize that day care centres in Saskatoon and Regina are inevitably going to have to raise their fees within the coming months (they have to give staff salary increases, that's the primary reason), then you can see that unless there is some increase in the parent subsidy many of the lower income parents who are currently sending their children to day care will simply have to drop out. They will be unable to pay the extra \$70 or \$80 or \$90 which is going to be required.

I think it's inevitable that the fees the day care centres are charging will have to rise. Therefore the parent subsidy must be increased. I would suggest to at least \$180.

It's my view that part of the increase in the day care budget for this year should go into increasing the parent subsidy, rather than simply increasing the number of day care spaces.

The matter of day care salaries is something I think needs special attention by the Department of Social Services. Currently, day care salaries are taking up between 72 per cent and 80 per cent of the budget of an average day care centre.

The starting salary for a day care worker in Saskatoon is in the vicinity of about \$660 to \$700. Their average monthly salary once they've been working for awhile is between \$750 and \$770. I think no one can question that there are extremely low salaries. What those salaries are leading to is a very high turnover among the day care staff. I don't think it's going to be possible to attract high quality people if they are not paid adequately. Given the current funding structures of the day care centres there's no possible way they can pay their staff any more without increasing their fees. If they increase their fees without an increase in the parent subsidy, lower income parents participating in the day care centre will have to drop out and will be forced onto the social assistance roll.

So I think the funding problem needs to be immediately addressed by the Department of Social Services. This high turnover rate among the care workers is also hurting the children. I think that must be obvious to anyone who has participated in a day care centre.

The other step I would urge the minister to take as quickly as possible, either in this budget or the next is, instead of simply paying a parent subsidy, to try giving the day care centre an annual operating grant which might be equivalent to \$75 or \$100 per parent participating.

I say this, Mr. Chairman, because I think we have to realize right now that the day care program in this province, as it currently operates, is only serving two groups of people — people who are on very low incomes and people who are rather wealthy and can afford to pay the full fee of over \$200. It's not serving anybody who is in between. I think we have to address the problem.

The only way to address it in my view is for us to change the principles upon which we provide funding to day care centres, and to look seriously at the idea of an annual operating grant to a day care centre. I think when we do this, we will immediately see that the demand for day care spaces will increase very much. We know very well right now, Mr. Chairman, as a result of recent studies which have been done that we are short approximately 17,000 day care spaces in the province if we assume that parents with children between the ages of one year and six years are going to make use of day care at least occasionally. The member for Regina South corrects me and says it is between 18 months and 6 years. He is correct and I thank him for pointing that out to me.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that figure alone shows the need for the government to set as a major priority in the coming budgets the need for a major expansion in day care spaces.

Finally, I want to make a few comments with respect to the training programs for day care workers in Saskatchewan. I think this is another area where there is an urgent need for improvement. Some provinces in Canada require an early childhood education degree before someone can work in a day care centre. I recently had some women from Zimbabwe who were on a day care exchange staying at my place. Zimbabwe, in Africa has a one year training program for day care workers before they are allowed to work in day care centres.

Here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman, the requirement, as I understand it, is only 40 hours of training. I think it's clear that's very inadequate and needs to be improved. I would urge the minister to take whatever action is in his power in this year's budget to see if that situation can be corrected.

The member for Indian Head-Wolseley, the Deputy House Leader of the opposition party (the Conservative Party), has said, what's happened to the concept of mothers and fathers, of parents? I think this is a very important point he raises. I fully support. I want to say, Mr. Chairman, the principle of mothers and fathers spending just as much time with their children as they can. I think the majority of mothers and fathers in the province want to do precisely that.

I want to say to the member opposite, I believe we have to get away from the idea of day care somehow being a service which allows parents to decrease the time they

spend with children or that allows them somehow to give up part of the responsibility they have in raising their children. These are not the fundamental principles behind day care at all . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think Mr. Chairman, (and I'm trying to speak above the voices of the members opposite) that we need to see day care as a societal service which is required because a large number of parents are having to work, out of necessity. They have no choice, Mr. Chairman. I think this is a very fundamental point.

Now, on occasion, Mr. Chairman, some parents who are not working may want to make use of day care services. They may have obligations for the day and may want to be able to go to a day care centre to leave their child there for the day. I see nothing wrong with that, Mr. Chairman. The member opposite says, what about the extended family concept? Many families are not fortunate enough to have immediate relatives living nearby where they can leave children. Yes, many have friends, but it is not always possible to make those arrangements.

I want to finish up, Mr. Chairman, by saying I would urge the minister, when he's undertaking the day care review which he has implemented and which I want to congratulate him on, to look closely at the possibility (especially in the urban centres) of using empty school spaces for day care purposes and to work out a co-operative arrangement with the school boards by which day care programs could be expanded by using school facilities. I know that in Saskatoon the public school board is looking at closing several schools in the downtown area and these schools, rather than being closed, Mr. Chairman, should be used for day care programs.

So in summary I would like to say that the things I would like to see the minister do and on which I would welcome his comments are the implementation of a five-year plan for programming in the area of child support and family services; increased support by staff in the Department of Social Services for the organizing of day care centres and for the month to month operation of day care centres; an increase, Mr. Speaker, in the amount of the parent subsidy from \$150 to hopefully \$180; an annual grant for day care centres; an annual operating grant which would make these centres more accessible to person in middle income salaries, so that we don't just have out day cares being used by low income and high income persons; expansion and improvement of the day care training program in the province and the department of Social Services working with the day care co-ops to enter into a co-operative arrangement with school boards to make use of empty spaces in the schools for day care program. I would be interested in the minister's comments on any of those points and I would urge him to consider them in his future programming.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I want to deal first of all with some of the issues which were raised with respect to day care. I will indicate to the member that we commenced the program in 1974, that we have made steady progress in the number of spaces provided, and that we are continuing. After five years of operation we have done a two-phase study. First of all we commissioned a report, to be prepared by the University of Regina (the sample survey and data bank unit), in order to assess with the users of the day care centres whether or not they were basically in agreement with the direction in which we were going. I'll quote from the report:

The government's current policies on centre development and control were supported by the majority of the respondents: 58 per cent of all the

respondents believed parents should initiate centre development.

Second and third choices were development by provincial government, 19 per cent, and by non-profit community groups, 13 per cent. An overwhelming majority of 84 per cent favored the government policy of parent-controlled boards for the new and existing centres.

We wanted to take a look at that to get the input of those who were using it. I think there were some 1,700 people who were sampled. I think the figures the member quoted, the some 17,000 children to be placed, cannot be interpreted as the total requirement for day care and I think he knows that.

In the department we are also doing an internal review of day care. We have received a good response from throughout the province on briefs and we are working toward the review of those briefs in order to give us a direction in which to go. I haven't talked to the minister for the last week and we have made some progress in other areas which he mentioned. With respect to staff training, we are co-operating with the Department of Education through the technical institutes to provide a training course. There are some considerations of up to two years training in respect to that.

We are also carrying out discussions with the Department of Education and we'll be initiating discussions with school boards to determine whether there is available space. As the enrolment goes down there is available space. And for particular type of day care centres the space certainly is being looked at.

I want to say that the average cost, as we have it, across the province is \$172. It will vary in locations. We do pay up to a maximum of \$150, so the difference as you can see is some \$22, which represent a fair amount of the total subsidy.

Of course in the review we will also be looking at the other areas you indicated, for example, the possibility of increased subsidies. We will be looking at the areas of operating grants, training programs and school use. Those areas certainly will be incorporated and reviewed during our study of day care.

I also want to indicate that in respect of family and child services, the department is putting together a fairly comprehensive proposal on it. They are still in the stage of working on that. Hopefully we will be able to come forward with a fairly comprehensive family and child service. The area I think we are primarily addressing is in sections 7 and 8 of The Family Services Act, providing support services for families with children who may be handicapped or mentally handicapped.

All I can indicate in closing, and I could go on, is that we are making an active review of this. What we have done is to go to the users and the people of Saskatchewan in order to get their submissions and recommendations as to the future direction we should take.

**MR. D.G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw something to the attention of the minister and that is the situation with some of the people in sheltered workshops and the support they are getting.

I was checking with a lad from my own constituency who is about 20 years old. He's down at Weyburn in the workshop. I think it's good that he is there. It gives him a sense of achievement and accomplishment.

But the problem I see is the support. He gets \$35 a month spending money, which I'm not really questioning too much. The thing I would question is that he gets a clothing allowance of \$14 a month. I understand they are paid on their productivity. In this case I think it is minimal, so he's getting \$14 in wages as well. The person with which he is staying gets \$365 a month. My concern, Mr. Minister, is that I don't think the \$14 clothing allowance is anywhere near adequate. My question to you is, when was the last raised? Let's look at the last five years or so. How much has the clothing allowance gone up/ The cost of clothing, as you and I well realize, has gone up considerably. I understand that in this workshop he has to be using blue jeans and things of this nature. His father at the present time is unemployed. It is putting quite a strain upon that family. I just don't think \$14 a month is anywhere adequate in the clothing allowance. I would suggest to you that you review this with the intention of raising it to a more realistic figure.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I appreciate what the member has indicated. The comfort allowance of \$35 and the clothing allowance for those in sheltered workshops are equivalent to those under other social assistance payments. They are on the same schedule. They are receiving then, under sheltered workshops, equivalent to what we provide under social assistance. All I can say to the hon. member is that we will be reviewing the rates. We'll take a look at his concern in the subsequent budget.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — My last question, Mr. Minister. I assume then you don't feel that the \$14 is adequate to the clothing allowance. Is that correct? You will be looking at this and perhaps bringing it up.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — We are going to be looking at the adequacy of all of the allowances in order to upgrade where they are needed.

**MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current):** — Mr. Minister, I have two or three short questions for you. I think it was to do with your predecessor. I understand there have been a number of complaints since the Prairie Pioneers Lodge in Swift Current raised its rent some month ago. Are you aware of that first of all? I also realize it's a board determination, the Pioneers Lodge board decides whether rents should be increased or decreased. I received a letter today (and it's curious I received it today during your estimates) from a lady in Alberta. I would like to read it into the record and have you respond to it?

Re: Room and Board — Rent at Prairie Pioneers Lodge, Swift Current.

Could you please let me know the rationale behind the following situation? My mother lives in the Prairie Pioneers Lodge Hostel in Swift Current, Room No. 12. Last January the room and board rent for the senior citizens who live in the lodge was raised by approximately \$100 per month. Because of this rent increase my mother, and I'm sure others in the lodge, is not taking enough government and CPR pension money to pay for her rent and she is therefore having to pay some of her rent from her and my father's (deceased) lifetime savings.

My brother has been informed by someone at the lodge that when my mother's bank account is depleted, leaving enough for the funeral expenses, she will then be eligible to apply for a larger pension. (I guess that's normal process.)

In comparison, the mother of my sister-in-law resides in Emmanuel Home in Edmonton. She pays a little more than half the amount my mother pays for the same room and board and she lives in a more attractive home, has a room to herself, lacking however, therapeutic exercise, the latter being provided in the Swift Current lodge.

Is the cause of this difference due completely to the fact that Alberta is a richer province or something else involved? The reason given for the rent increase in the Swift Current lodge was that the employees there had become unionized and so were receiving more pay. (I understand, Mr. Minister, to be correct that is part of the reason the rent was increased.) Are they receiving more pay to the tune of \$100 per tenant? To me it doesn't seem quite right that a person should not be allowed sufficient pension to pay his or her rent in a government institution. I believe that Prairie Pioneers Lodge is government sponsored.

However, there may be a very good reason but so far no one has told me what it is. Could you look into this matter on my behalf for my mother who has been a Saskatchewan citizen since she was 12 years old? It has nothing to do with my present cause, but she emigrated from the United States when she was 12.

Would you respond to that, please?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I don't know if the hon. member was here yesterday or not. We did have a fairly extensive discussion relating to this particular subject matter. I want to indicate that the Pioneers Lodge is not a government-operated lodge. It's operated by a non-profit organization and not by the government. The only one that we operate directly is the one at Wolseley. But, that aside, as I indicated yesterday, we did introduce an increase in the basic subsidy on April 1 from \$464 to \$497 on level 3, and \$156 to \$167 on level 2.

In addition to that subsidy the individual homes are entitled to \$300 paid to homes for heavy level 3, which represents up to 10 per cent of their level 3 case load. So that's extra to provide extra services for the heavy level 3. That's our basic financing at the present time. I am aware that some of the homes have increased their rates. We don't have the overall average across Saskatchewan yet because they increase them at different times of the year.

But in conclusion I just want to say we have introduced this increase in subsidy. What we have under review is to look in a comprehensive way at the whole structure of classification, subsidization, assessment and placement units. So what we are doing with the department during this year is that examination. That is being worked out with the Department of Health at the present time. We will be consulting with the various organizations, like Saskatchewan Association of Special Care Homes, nurses, doctors, and some of the homes, the workers. We hope to be able to introduce a restructured approach to the special-care homes.

**MR. HAM:** — A question. Mr. Minister, you say it's a private-operated home but you are subsidizing I presume the management of the home, or do the tenants receive the subsidy?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Well, the subsidies that I referred as \$464 to \$497, those are to the residents themselves to help pay for the cost of staying in the home. The \$300 that I referred to for the heavy level 3 is paid directly to the homes I believe.

**MR. HAM:** — Presumably then you have to control over the rent or any control of expenses of this sort of an institution, namely the Pioneers Lodge in Swift Current?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — No, we don't have any direct control in setting the rates at all.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — I would like to get back for a minute or two to SAP payments and family income plan. Low wage earners in the province are usually eligible for the family income plan supplements. But it beats me, Mr. Minister, how you can, when someone's relying on SAP payments alone and also get FIP payments, deduct that from their SAP payments. I know we have programs in Saskatchewan that are not available elsewhere. As far as I can see, Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island are the only two provinces in Canada that come close to providing social assistance recipients with enough money to even come close to the poverty level. But we are still far from maintaining a minimum standard of living for these unfortunate people. Have you given any consideration, Mr. Minister, to indexing welfare payments to the cost-of-living as they do in Alberta, Quebec and New Brunswick, rather than just raising these particular payments at will? They are not raised every year. Surely we can do more to bring up the standard of living for people who are totally dependent upon social assistance from the government.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — With respect to your comments of having deducted the family allowance payments from the amount which is paid under SAP, basically how it works is that under our social assistance we provide a specific income to that individual as set out in the regulations. A part of that income total would be the family income. You just arrive at that particular total. The reason essentially was that the family income program was instituted in order that it would be an incentive and an assistance to those whom I refer to as the working poor.

The recommendation is that we maintain a difference between the level set for social assistance vis-a-vis that which is obtained by minimum wage. Otherwise there may be a disincentive to work. Accordingly, the individual who was working at the minimum wage or above will receive, up to the level which is allowed, the family income payment on top of their wage. That will move them higher in the level of income. But we don't do that with the social assistance to the same extent. What we have tried to do is to arrive at a reasonable amount. I know, with inflation, what was reasonable yesterday may not be reasonable today.

In the two area where we do pay the actuals, utilities and rent, I think we can make the periodic adjustments in order to meet any deficiencies — as well as through indexing. We haven't actually turned our minds to the consideration of indexing.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — Did you say you were giving serious consideration to indexing welfare payments? Maybe this is a better question, would you give serious consideration to indexing the SAP payments and the like so they go up yearly to keep pace with inflation? They are so far behind now. If you would index them that would be a great help too.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I am advised that social assistance is tied in with a number of the federal programs. It makes it somewhat complicated. It is not a practice which has been



adopted throughout the province but we could take a look at that and see what the implications are.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Mr. Chairman, I have a very brief question. I noticed the minister's remarks today, with reference to the remarks by the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland that the minister was very interested in following the suggestions that the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland put forward to this assembly. Am I correct then, in assuming that the minister is doing studies to Zimbabwe with reference to the Department of Social Services in Saskatchewan?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — No.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Why then would the minister suggest to the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland that the suggestions pertaining to the day care centres, based on studies from Zimbabwe, were reasonable and that you would be going ahead to follow up on those comments?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I think what I was commenting on were the general areas raised by the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland. In his summary he indicated a number of points which he felt should be considered. They were the training program, the use of schools, the operating grant for them, the increase in subsidy, day care, five-year plan. I was commenting, not on his studies, but on the summary areas he had in fact raised, which are natural ones to review.

**MR. COLLVER:** — So the minister is saying he doesn't see anything untoward about the fact that the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland obtained his statistical data from Zimbabwe which is 85 per cent tribal society. But he came to those conclusions and the minister agreed with his conclusions. Is that correct?

**MR. KOSKIE:** — No. What I am saying is that I am prepared to look at some of the areas the member raised. I can go over there with you again, the use of schools, the training program, operating grant, increase in subsidy to parents, day care centres, five-year plan for family services. I generally think those are some of the logical area to be considering. Whether he based his knowledge on the study or not, those are some of the areas I agree need to be looked at.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — Mr. Minister, before we finish item 1, I would like to spend a few minutes talking about a major social problem facing the people of Saskatchewan. I think the majority of people do not comprehend the scope of it. The problem is the dimensions of Indian and native urban poverty in Saskatchewan.

I think if somehow the people of Saskatchewan could get the draft from the social planning secretariat concerning these dimensions, more people would be aware of the plight of urban natives. I think natives in general, especially natives in an urban setting face major obstacles in bettering themselves.

We have done many studies on what causes the problems and here the problems are but we don't come up with very many solutions. I think that in terms of employment, education, housing and health, native people probably form the most disadvantaged sector of our society today. It is one that we as legislators cannot address and we must realize we must address this problem as quickly as possible.

I think probably as it states in the study, they are the most highly visible group. Perhaps

we aren't helping natives, in general with the transition of migrating from a reserve setting to an urban setting. I think this whole study which was done is excellent, but I think where perhaps it fails as that there are no proposed solutions. I suppose you're aware of it. I suppose your department has a copy of it. I was going to read it into the record but with time so limited I won't today. But I would suggest that somehow we make this study available, through church groups or schools or whatever, to the general population of the province to make them totally aware of the really urgent plight of our native people. And perhaps we should invite input from communities across the province as to help which is available and idea for helping our natives with the transition from a reserve setting into an urban and highly technical world.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I just want to make a brief comment. The report I take it which you are referring to is the report of the social planning secretariat?

Yes, as is indicated in the report, there is certainly a very great awareness by the government of the plight or position in society of our native people. I just want to say that the government is certainly directing itself to give high priority to trying to meet some of those very urgent problems. The social planning secretariat is in effect orchestrating the development of plans. We have a deputy ministers' committee, which both the deputy and the associate deputy minister from social services are part of. In order that we may get a united approach throughout all department of government and Crown corporations, and so that they will be aware of the thrust we are making.

I think the member knows that in some areas of providing service we have run into a few problems. The essential problem is the jurisdictional one vis-a-vis the reserves and I think you are aware of that problem. We have had discussions with the FSI (Federation of Saskatchewan Indians) and apparently we are carrying on discussions with the federal government to resolve that area. But certainly the government is making a conscious effort to deal with the problem and our department is an integral part of the planning.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — I just have one quick comment. The member for Nipawin yesterday was chastising the Premier for not opening the doors of our province to Cuban refugees. I would just like to say that in many instances our native population and our Metis population have become refugees in their own land and it's about time we did something meaningful.

Item 1 agreed.

Items 2 to 35 agreed.

Vote 36 agreed.

**MR. SWAN:** — I'd just like to thank the minister for being fairly specific in most of his answers. I'd like to thank the staff for the backup information.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I just want to say that this being my first estimates, I appreciated the questions for the opposition. I think they were fair and direct. Accordingly I tried to be fair and direct with them.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — In that spirit of brotherly love, I do now leave the chair until 7 o'clock this evening.

The committee recessed until 7 p.m.