

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Nineteenth Legislature

Monday, April 6, 1981.

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. SPEAKER: — I want to take this opportunity today to introduce a very important group of 39 students from the constituency of Saskatoon Westmount who are seated in the west gallery. They are from Bishop Klein School, grades 7 and 8. They are accompanied by their principal, Dick Nieman, teachers Lyle Hasson and Dale Bertsch. I hope all members will join with me in welcoming these students from Bishop Klein School to the legislature today. We hope they have a pleasant and informative stay in Regina and a pleasant trip back to Saskatoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SOLOMON: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you, and through you to all members of this Assembly, 33 senior citizens from the constituency of Regina North-West and surrounding area, from the St. Peter's Senior Citizens' Activity Centre. They are headed by the president of the organization, Mrs. Anita Exner. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. I hope you will find the proceedings this afternoon very interesting and entertaining. I have had a couple of opportunities to meet with them in the past at their new centre on Argyle. I even had a few lessons in the game of snooker. I plan to get back to that centre to try to get even and get some of my money back. I hope you have some questions when I meet with you later. We'll get together for some refreshments and perhaps some picture taking as well. I ask all members to welcome the senior citizens from St. Peter's to this Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Cutback in RCMP Services

MR. LANE: — In the absence of many of the cabinet ministers, I assume because of the weather, we will endeavour to keep our questions to those ministers in attendance. My question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs. Last weekend there came the announcement there would be a cutback in RCMP services in the province of Saskatchewan. There seemed to be some confusion. The Solicitor General for Canada indicated that he had sent a telegram to this effect to the Attorney General of Saskatchewan who indicated that he had no notice. Now the hon. member is shaking his head. Perhaps the minister can clarify that. Would you now be prepared to indicate that your government will immediately have the Attorney General or another official return to the bargaining table with the federal government so that there is no further cutback of RCMP services?

April 6, 1981

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, we never left the bargaining table. We are prepared to be at the bargaining table any time the Government of Canada and the Solicitor General are prepared to call a meeting to have further negotiations and discussions on police services and cost sharing of RCMP services. We will be prepared to attend meetings provided meaningful negotiations can be resumed.

MR. LANE: — Well, the press indications are that negotiations seem to have broken down and they have not gone on for the last little while. My question to the Minister of Urban Affairs is that I think all members of this Assembly will agree that it will be a national tragedy if the RCMP becomes a political football. Rather than wait for the Government of Canada to call a meeting, would it not be more than appropriate for the Government of Saskatchewan (as we are one province which is most affected by a cutback) to call immediately for a return to the bargaining table and immediate discussions on this potentially very serious problem?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to take the hon. member's suggestion under advisement and discuss his recommendations with the Attorney General. He is the minister who has been involved in negotiations with the federal authorities, in particular the Solicitor General's department.

Golden Acres Motel

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister in charge of Sedco. Mr. Minister, for several years in this Assembly, I have been questioning you on the subject of Golden Acres, although it takes a day like this to bring the subject up in this session. About a year ago you indicated that when the matter was finally disposed of you would give us a complete report. When I questioned you last year, Mr. Minister, you indicated that the personal guarantees on Golden Acres (or Fairview Developments) had been called. Is the minister prepared to report in this Assembly today and tell us what the up-to-date status of it is? Have the personal guarantees been called? Have they been paid? What is the status today?

HON. MR. VICKAR: — It is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to update the hon. member on Golden Acres. I have to tell him, however, that even though the guarantors have been called on to make restitution, we have not completed the call on all of the guarantors. The hon. member for Thunder Creek will realize that one of the guarantors is an estate and that estate (if I remember correctly) is in Calgary or Edmonton and we are now negotiating. From the remainder of the guarantors, we have accepted an offer. That will be included in our final statement as soon as we are completed with the estate in Edmonton.

MR. THATCHER: — A supplementary question. The minister is aware that he made basically the same statement one year ago in this Assembly. And if he recalls, his excuse for not making things public at that time was that there was a little parcel of about one acre left to dispose of. The minister is also aware that a few weeks after that date that was disposed of. He now is fully aware that one year has gone by. Is he telling this Assembly again (do I completely understand him) that it has taken one year to call the guarantees of people who are very highly placed in the New Democratic Party in Moose Jaw and is the minister telling the Assembly that there is no politics involved but it has just taken a year to get around to sending out the mail?

HON. MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, the latter statement is correct. It just takes that length of time to culminate all of the activities, as the hon. member well knows. I might

April 6, 1981

also tell the hon. member that it is very true that the five-acre parcel was sold and it is part and parcel of the package. The only thing remaining now is the calling of the guarantor which is the estate. As soon as we have that settled, I will be able to give him a complete figure. If that comes along this afternoon, my friend, you have my commitment that you will have it tomorrow. But if it comes a week later, you will get it a week later.

MR. THATCHER: — Supplementary to the minister. Would you tell this Assembly and inform the people of Saskatchewan, since you have been assuring us since day one that there would be no losses incurred by Sedco or the people of Saskatchewan, exactly how many cents on the dollar from the guarantors you are prepared to accept, since you have indicated that they have made you an offer and you are going to settle it subject to what this estate should say.

HON. MR. VICKAR: — That's right, Mr. Speaker. There is no way that I can give the hon. member a figure. I just finished telling him that we are dealing with the estate and I am not going to disclose any other figure until we have completed dealings with the estate. Whether there will be a loss or not, I can assure the hon. member that there will not be a loss on the principal that was involved.

SGI Refund

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). Mr. Minister, I have in my hand the latest accident rate book for SGI. On the inside of the front cover it says: "February 1, 1981, a new rating structure designed to reflect more equitably the cost of insuring each vehicle model comes into effect." I have a licence application from a gentleman by the name of Mr. Turner on an automobile that he purchased on the last day of December 1980. He purchased the licence on January 2, 1981, where you charged him \$203 for the premium — correctly so, because that's the figure that's in last year's rate book. Shortly thereafter (or I shouldn't say shortly thereafter) on March 17, you sent him a notice of underpayment for \$72, the difference between the '80 and '81 rate.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is this: when are you going to refund the money to this gentleman? Secondly, when are you going to straighten out the mess in SGI?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, I haven't a clue as to what the member is talking about. Obviously I can't know about individual situations; besides, the member usually hasn't a clue as to what he's talking about. I'll take it as notice, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I object to the minister saying that he doesn't know what I'm talking about. My question is: did you not hear what I presented in the form of a question? I laid it all out exactly the way I have it here. I gave you the dates and everything else. Did you not hear what I gave you as information? Why would you want to take notice of the question?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, I said I will have to take notice because I will check out the individual situation, obviously.

Funding for Sheltered Workshops

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, it has been brought to my attention that there's a compelling need for

April 6, 1981

increased funding for the sheltered workshops in this province. The situation is that over the past few years they've been getting increases in the budget of about 5 per cent to 7 per cent, where their actual costs have been increasing 10 per cent to 12 per cent. What action are you prepared to take to alleviate this situation?

HON. MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, in the area of sheltered workshops which the member raises, we, at the present time, fund 50 per cent of their operating costs. I think that there is a group of people who are asking that 100 per cent of the funding for sheltered workshops be paid by the department and in that way the revenues that are earned by the sheltered workshops could go into paying the people who work in those workshops. I think that that is an area we are looking at. We do think that the people who work in these sheltered workshops should be paid a decent salary. I will have a look at it. It's something the department is working on at the present time.

MR. TAYLOR: — Supplementary question, Mr. Minister. Do you realize that in the sheltered workshops the financial situation today is that many of the most productive workers, people who with a bit of further training could be in a less structured situation and perhaps enter the mainstream of society in a productive fashion, are being held back because their productivity is needed to offset the economic expenses of sheltered workshops? Are you aware that that situation is existing?

HON. MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we do pay for half of the operating costs. That's a far cry from where it was a few years ago. As well, we are building group homes, in which, in conjunction with the sheltered workshops, the individuals can live. We have a program. We announced another project in North Battleford only last week, where we are going to be building another group home in that area to help supplement this program of people who are handicapped working in sheltered workshops. The member asks whether we are aware of the problems associated with the fact that they're not being paid enough. That's something that we are looking at and, hopefully, will be able to come forward with a proposal that will better reflect the work that is being done in those sheltered workshops in the near future.

Uranium Sales to France

MR. PREBBLE: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Mineral Resources and the minister responsible for SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation). Last week the Cluff Lake mine officially opened and Amok has long indicated its wishes to sell uranium to France. My question is whether the minister will seek to ensure, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, that Saskatchewan uranium will not be sold to France as long as France continues to refuse to sign the non-proliferation treaty, and as long as the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. I wonder if the member for Thunder Creek could cease his unparliamentary interruptions and allow the member to go ahead with his question. I have observed many times that the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland does not interrupt the member for Thunder Creek when he is on his feet.

MR. PREBBLE: — My question once again, Mr. Speaker, is whether the minister will ensure on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan that Saskatchewan uranium will not be sold to France as long as the French government refuses to sign the non-proliferation treaty, as long as the French government insists on providing nuclear assistance to other governments committed to developing nuclear weapons, and as

April 6, 1981

long as the French government continues to administer underground nuclear testing in the South Pacific?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, the export of uranium is controlled under the laws and the jurisdiction of the federal government. I don't think frankly there is any other way it can be done, because we don't have any way of policing whatever international or national agreements there are between governments. I believe that the federal government and the Government of France have some bilateral arrangements, and international agencies are involved. I believe that uranium leaving Saskatchewan for France will be used for the purposes for which it is intended.

MR. PREBBLE: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I believe Saskatchewan could exercise power in this area through making this a condition of the Cluff Lake surface lease. But my supplementary is: how can the Government of Saskatchewan consider it proper and just to be in partnership with the French Atomic Energy Commission through Amok? That commission has been directly involved in underground and above-ground testing in the South Pacific; the company has sold reprocessing technology to Pakistan, giving the Pakistan government the power to develop the bomb, and has also been involved in nuclear assistance to the South African government, putting it in a very strong position to develop nuclear weapons. How do we justify our partnership with the French Atomic Energy Commission given its activities in this area?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we are involved in numerous joint ventures in northern Saskatchewan. The conditions under which people become involved in exploring for uranium basically are that they abide by the laws or the rules laid down by the Government of Saskatchewan. With respect to mining, they follow the terms and conditions of their leases, be they surface leases or exploration leases, and they follow the safety conditions etc., laid down by the Government of Saskatchewan with respect to any mining operation there may be. As far as I'm aware, the Amok operation in which we are a partner, has adhered to all of those requirements.

Access to Farmland for SPC Studies

MR. PICKERING: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the minister responsible for SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation). Mr. Minister, in regard to the proposed power plant at Gravelbourg, has SPC any immediate plans to initiate legal action to gain access to farmland to conduct their environmental studies at this point in time?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, SPC has been attempting to find ways of gaining access to that land. SPC is currently considering, given the information we recently received from the surface rights association, the next steps which will be taken in that regard. No final decisions have been made.

MR. PICKERING: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The *Western Producer* of April 2, if I may, said:

SPC vice-president of public affairs, Dave Anderson, said in a telephone interview that the corporation plans to obtain an order in council for expropriation in the next couple of weeks in order to gain access to the land. Anderson says, the corporation regrets the necessity of taking the legal action and hopes

April 6, 1981

the survey would work so work can be completed before seeding.

Would the minister not now agree that legal action has in fact started and that you are going to conduct the survey against the farmers and ranchers that are involved in the area?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Well, I think the hon. member knows that until an order in council is passed there is no authority to take steps to enter upon the land and take those samples. I can indicate to the hon. member (and he can check the records on this) that I am sure there is no such order in council passed at this time. However, it is certainly true that that is one of the things we are considering and a decision will be made in the very, very near future. I would indicate to the hon. member again that the only purpose of going upon that land is to undertake to make certain tests with respect to environmental and engineering impacts so that we can carry out the evaluations that are necessary before any kind of decision can be made with respect to proceeding with that development.

Oil Pricing Negotiations

MR. ANDREW: — A question to the Minister of Mineral Resources. As you know, Mr. Minister, next Monday in Winnipeg the first of the next round of negotiations on oil pricing between Mr. Lalonde and Mr. Leitch will take place. Can you advise the Assembly as to whether or not you or any members of your department will partake in that meeting and whether or not you are any more optimistic as to success than are reported by Mr. Leitch and by Mr. Lalonde?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, the meeting is between Mr. Leitch and Mr. Lalonde. It has been set up between them; we have not been invited. Frankly, I have not written or phoned them and asked to be there. I understand it is a bilateral meeting between them. I have met with both Mr. Leitch and Mr. Lalonde over the past few weeks. If both of them are not optimistic, I would hardly be able to say that I am optimistic that the two of them will be able to get together. So if you are reporting to me that they both are very pessimistic. I would suspect that's the way the meeting will turn out. I've always found it unlikely that two pessimistic people negotiating with one another end up with an optimistic result.

MR. ANDREW: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. You have indicated that you have had negotiations with Mr. Lalonde. Is Saskatchewan pursuing a separate proposed agreement with the federal government or are you staying back to your other stated position of waiting for Alberta to arrive at an agreement before you tag in behind?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we've put our position and our concerns to the federal government. We have met with Alberta and British Columbia. We have together stated our concerns and drafted a communique just before Christmas. Our position has not changed from then. We have no proposal, as far as I am aware, which has been put to us by the federal government that we are considering. Our assumption is that following the meeting between Mr. Lalonde and Mr. Leitch, we will be advised by one or both of the parties as to what went on there and as to whether or not there is any usefulness of following up with another meeting.

Our position at this point in time is one of opposition to most of the parts of the national energy program. We have asked for substantive changes, if indeed not a new program. I

April 6, 1981

think our position complements Alberta's. It is not identical in all circumstances because the impacts are different. But I think that's where we are at this point in time and we'll have to await the outcome, if indeed there is any outcome of the meeting next week, before deciding what further course of action we should take.

MR. ANDREW: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Press reports would also indicate, Mr. Minister, that in fact we're probably looking into mid-July for a potential break through in that agreement. As you know, both Husky and Mobil and several other of the producers in the heavy oil fields of Lloydminster are losing money on their production and have indicated in press statements that they would be able to hold on for a while (that was their statement in January) perhaps into early May. Have you been in touch with those two companies as to their present status and whether or not there is any likelihood of a shutdown in the Lloydminster field, particularly by Husky Oil?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, I am advised that the current status is that of the three general areas of oil activity, the one with the least immediate impact, and I don't want to suggest that it is not going to have a significant long-term impact, but the least immediate impact has been in the Lloydminster-Kindersley area.

I have not personally been in touch with either Mobil or Husky for some matter of weeks. My officials are in reasonably constant discussions with them. I am not advised of any impending problems, and I have not been advised that they have announced or are intending to announce any imminent shutdown.

Use of External Consultants by Department of Continuing Education

MR. BERNTSON: — A question to the minister responsible for continuing education. I have here a copy of return no. 153, which was tabled in the House last fall. The return asks for the names of all reports and studies commissioned by the Department of Continuing Education to external consultants during the period March 1, 1979, to March 25, 1980, the names of these consultants and the final costs.

In your return you have indicated reports on the role of Saskatchewan Science Council and the science policy secretariat in relation to the government's needs, and the role of SaskMedia in relation to public and government needs were farmed out to an outside consultant. That consultant was Pratt Management Ltd. of Saskatoon. Under final cost you simply say that the project is not yet completed.

Bearing in mind that this was tabled last fall, could you indicate whether, in fact, that project is completed? Will it be available to this House, and do you have the final costs?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, I am not able to give the figure with respect to the final costs. I will take notice of that. I believe all of the work on the studies is completed, but I will also take notice and confirm that, and give the hon. member the information re requests.

MR. BERNTSON: — Thank you. A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I also have here return no. 163. The return asks for the names of all reports, and studies commissioned by the Saskatchewan Science Council to external consultants during the period March 1, 1979, to March 25, 1980, the names of these consultants and the final costs.

The return indicates that the Saskatchewan Science Council farmed out studies to an external consultant on:

April 6, 1981

1. The role of the Saskatchewan Science Council and the science policy secretariat in relation to the government's needs;
2. The role of SaskMedia in relation to public and government needs.

The consultant was Pratt Management Ltd., Saskatoon. The final cost was \$33,932.07. I wonder if the minister would indicate to this House whether, in fact, the same consultant was given both of those projects: whether it is one project, and your department isn't in full control of what is going on and didn't know what the science council was doing perhaps; or, if Pratt consultants will be paid twice? Just give us some indication of what is going on there.

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, the appropriations for the science council are paid by way of a grant through the Department of Continuing Education. They are the same studies: they would appear on the accounts of both departments (agencies) and we wanted to give the members complete information so they could see what the records show. But the way the records will show it is that the science council makes the payments for those studies; the Department of Continuing Education makes the grant to the science council under the structure of the estimates, and so it would be passed on through and show on the books of the Department of Continuing Education as well. But they are, in fact, the same studies and there is no double payment, but simply a recording in both sets of books in order to ensure that that information is there.

Negotiations with Canfor

MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister responsible for Crown investments corporation. Mr. Minister, can you give us an indication today as to the progress of negotiations with Canfor, or any other company with regard to coming in as an one rating partner in the Prince Albert pulp mill, the Meadow Lake saw mill, and the full Prince Albert Pulp Company operation.

HON. MR. COWLEY: - I have no announcements to make.

MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Mr. Minister, it's very easy for you to give an answer like that regarding the Prince Albert pulp mill which is already in operation. It doesn't have such an effect on people who are working there. The particular situation in Meadow Lake is that the mill has closed down. There are 150 to 200 people still very anxiously awaiting an announcement from you. We must have some announcement from either the government or some company that you're bringing in. When, Mr. Minister, will you be able to give us an answer and give those people some satisfaction as to their future and their jobs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, when I'm ready and have the necessary information, I will give the member an answer. Whether that comes before or after any proposed sale of the Prince Albert pulp mill will depend on the circumstances.

MOTIONS

Substitutions on Committees

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Before orders of the day, I beg leave of the Assembly to move, seconded by the Minister of Labour:

That the name of Mr. Vickar be substituted for the name of Mr. Long on the list of members comprising the select standing committee on Crown corporations.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the Hon. Minister of Labour:

That the name of Mr. Tchorzewski be substituted for that of Mr. Johnson on the list of members comprising the select standing committee on Crown corporations.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: —Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the Hon. Minister of Labour:

That the name of Mr. Long be substituted for that of Mr. Vickar on the list of members comprising the select standing committee on public accounts and printing.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. SMISHEK: —Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour:

That the name of Mr. Johnson be substituted for that of Mr. Skoberg on the list of members comprising the select standing committee on public accounts and printing.

Motion agreed to.

April 6, 1981

ANNOUNCEMENT

Congratulations to Provincial Junior B Hockey Champions

MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would like to ask the Assembly to join me in extending our congratulations to the coach, Dale Sandles, and the Hudson Bay Junior Saints hockey team on winning the provincial Junior B championships. I find it extremely gratifying because seven of those boys who played on the Junior B hockey championship team, I coached for eight years in minor baseball. I would also like to wish them the very best in the upcoming national finals which will be played in Winnipeg on the Easter weekend.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the hon. member in congratulating the Hudson Bay Saints on the winning of the Saskatchewan Junior B Hockey Championship. It's a great credit to the town of Hudson Bay and to the team involved. I'm sure all members will join me in also congratulating them.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

POINT OF ORDER

MR. THATCHER: — Before orders of the day, I have a brief point of order. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all of us in the Assembly have heard you comment that questions should be brief, of urgent public interest, and to the point. On Friday, I asked a very similar question to the one the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland asked today. The primary difference was that mine was crisp and to the point and brief.

Mr. Speaker, my point of order is this: today's long, lengthy question was almost an exact duplication of mine, except it was longer. The minister's answer was the same, and he was allowed to proceed. The second portion of my point of order, Mr. Speaker, is more or less a question. May we, on this side of the House, interpret the fact that since the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland was allowed to go on and make a speech or debatable points as a prelude to his question, we will be allowed the same exercise in the coming question periods?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I should remind the members of the Assembly of the rules which govern this question period. I think I can direct them specifically to the member for Thunder Creek and the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland. Quite often I find both of them to be offenders of the rules in this House.

The rules are quite clear. Questions must be brief and to the point. Questions must be asked only in respect of matters of sufficient urgency and importance to require an immediate answer. Here is the important part for the members of this Assembly. Questions must be stated without preamble or speech and not be in the nature of debate.

April 6, 1981

I think in the past it was fair to observe, and an examination of the record will find it even today, that the member who raises the point of order with regard to this issue is one who does put his questions in the nature of a debate. I would say today that the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland was giving as much information as he was asking for. The question period is not for the purpose of giving information; it's for the purpose of receiving information. I would encourage all members to review the rules which govern this question period. I think it would make for a much better question period.

Also review the rules of decorum and etiquette in this Chamber, so that the parliamentary procedure which is observed during the question period will be one all of us can be proud of. It will not be a period where members are yelling across the floor at other members, calling them by their first names, or not referring to them by their constituency, doing it all while not having the floor themselves. I think all members would do well to review these rules for the question period.

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, could I have leave of the Assembly to return to introduction of guests?

MR. SPEAKER: — Agreed.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce, sitting in the Speaker's gallery, four grade 9 students from the high school at Watrous, Saskatchewan. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Coulter. Unfortunately, Mr. Tchorzewski is not here today and is not able to greet you but I want to express, on behalf of all members of the Assembly, a welcome to this Assembly. (I got the wrong gallery obviously.) I look forward to meeting with the students later for pictures and drinks.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW

LABOUR

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 20

Item 1 (continued)

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Chairman, before you pass item 1, I have a remark or two which I would like to pass on, in light of the remarks which were made by the member for Rosthern on Friday prior to this House adjourning. At that time, I think he took a very deliberate and a very serious liberty in this House by quoting from an article which he said he would Xerox and send over to me (which, incidently, he did not do). However, after going through a large number of press clippings, I found the particular article to which the hon. member for Rosthern referred and said something about in his remarks on page 1820 in *Hansard*. The remark is almost unintelligible, but it says:

Mr. Minister, in this newspaper quote, once again, it refers to: "Workers are

April 6, 1981

village idiots, who don't know what is good for them."

And then he goes about attributing that to the director of occupational health and safety, Mr. Sass, who is obviously unable to defend himself. I feel obliged to put a few remarks into the record in that connection.

I want to refer to the article to which, obviously, the hon. member was referring. If a single soul in this legislature can listen to it and somehow draw the conclusions that the member for Rosthern drew, then he has to have a more convoluted kind of mind and a more obscene sense of reasoning than anybody I have ever sat with in the legislature on any other occasion. This article is from the *Moncton Times*. I want you to listen to what it says and see if you can draw the reasoning from it that the hon. member for Rosthern drew, because it is the most convoluted reasoning which could ever be imagined. It says:

The struggle for safe working conditions has become a struggle for the sanity of the worker, Robert Sass said in an address to 350 delegates to the 11th Canadian Labour Congress convention on occupational health and safety. He said the rights of workers to refuse jobs which are a danger to their health must be placed on the political agenda. Sass said that existing working conditions are an influence that goes far beyond the time spent at work and are often responsible for psychological problems, impotency, sterility, the breakdown of the family. He said the notion is being put forward that workers are village idiots who do not know what is good for them.

I wonder if anyone else in this legislature or in the press gallery can take the inference from that that Mr. Sass said that workers are village idiots. No convoluted kind of reasoning can read that newspaper article and gain that kind of an inference from it except the hon. member for Rosthern.

Finally, the article concludes by saying:

"The struggle for your safety is a struggle for your sanity," Sass told the delegates. "Reform will come from you and no other source in Canada if we are to save ourselves."

There are a host of articles which I know also the member for Rosthern has available to him, other articles in which the same inference was made or at least the same suggestion was made. Here is another article which came from the *Winnipeg Free Press* and I have no doubt that, being a clipper of clippings, the member for Rosthern has this one too. It says, "Workers Victims, Not Idiots." This is another one which draws attention to the same logic or reasoning which was expressed in the Moncton article. I don't think I want to go on any further with this, but I think it portrays the attitude of the member opposite when he deliberately attempts to misrepresent or misquote an article which was used at another point in time. I don't believe for a minute, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. member misread that article. I think he has been deliberately destructive and mischievous. I think that is a bad use of the time of this House. I think it is beneath the dignity of the person who is attempting to attribute this to a civil servant, who is well-recognized for the work which he has done in occupational health and safety all over this country and across the United States and a variety of other countries in the world.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

April 6, 1981

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think that attempt was an illegitimate attack which, I think, was beneath the dignity of this House. I would think that if the member had a proper approach to work in this House, he would stand on his feet and offer an apology. I think he should have the common decency to do that.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Minister, I just want to run this by you. The notion is being advanced that some ministers of labour are irresponsible because of psychological problems, impotency, sterility and the breakdown of the family. Would you say that I'm implying that you are those things?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — You are reading words into that article that are not there. The hon. member is reading into that article some additional words that are not in the copy from which he is reading. You have injected additional words into that copy that are not there, because ministers of labour are not mentioned in that article.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Speaker, that is correct. I simply placed the fact that I had said "the notion." I could say, "the notion that ministers of labour are anything," and you could draw from that, in fact, that I was implying you were the things which I mentioned. I just used a quick example because it was easy, it was in the article. What I am suggesting to you is that it is possible and quite conceivable that any member, any person, could draw the conclusion that the deputy minister's saying that the notion was being advanced, could be in part agreeing with that notion.

Surely one thing was clear; he wasn't saying who was advancing the notion. I suggest that was likely a good idea, because the fact of the matter is that the problems these workers are enduring right now and are having to put up with are, as I think the deputy minister believes, a problem of government and a problem of the politicians not addressing the problems of the workers. That is what the member for Rosthern is going to get down to. He is going to get down to the nitty gritty, the problems of the workers. He is not going to waste any more time of the House arguing with you whether or not a wrong implication was made with the deputy minister.

I might add as well, and I am sure the member for Rosthern will substantiate it, that you yourself often do that. In all probability, more than any other minister in this House, but when the slightest tinge of that comes from this side of the House, you get your back up and your feelings are hurt. I tell you very sincerely that the member for Rosthern is not casting any aspersions on any deputy minister. He is quite simply attempting to get some understanding of who is advancing this notion. That is what the deputy minister said: that a notion was being advanced. What I would like to ask right now is: who is advancing the notion?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I am sure, Mr. Vice-Chairman, that the member for Rosthern is indeed grateful that the member for Moosomin comes to his defence. He surely needs some defence because that is the weakest, most convoluted kind of defence I have ever heard. Obviously, the inference in the newspaper article is clear. The inference is clear. The member for Rosthern made a deliberate effort to cast an aspersion, to take meanings from that article that no other person in this legislature could derive from that article. It is clear and precise. It only takes a reading of the article by anyone who has any flirtation with the English language at all to understand what the article is saying. Surely the member for Moosomin isn't attempting to defend on that basis.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I am glad you came the way you did today. Maybe we'll

April 6, 1981

get some facts clear once and for all. It is interesting to note that the quote you referred to is exactly the quote I used. I have sat in this House long enough hearing the member for Moose Jaw North, you and other members do the exact same thing constantly. I don't hear you complaining about it when your members do it. So if we turn it back on you, it's nice to see you wiggle. Let us see you quit doing it and maybe the opposition won't have to do it, because you started it. We have decided that if you want to play that game, we'll play it right back with you. You have quoted other people, Mr. Member for Lakeview . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I can give you a long list. Mr. Minister, that point has been brought up; it's not clear. Now let's get back to the labour estimates. That's what has happened. If you want to get into this one, I don't mind coming right back at it.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Just in light of the aspersions which have been cast, which are fully understood by all members of this House, I think it would be fitting and proper and decent for the member for Rosthern to offer an apology just out of a pure act of selflessness and gentlemanliness in the legislature. He knows he took a liberty which was improper. I think the gentlemanly thing to do would be to offer an apology.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, may I suggest that you look at Mr. Skoberg's comments of the other day and you will begin to see what I am talking about.

The other day when we started the discussions, we were talking about pensions. The comment which you made in your brief last week, called "The Reform of Canada's Retirement Income System — A Saskatchewan View," is the area in which I would like to start the estimates. Your comments were quoted in the *Star-Phoenix*, April 2, "Public Pension Plans Favoured."

Over the years you have been famous for referring to a portable pension — I believe this moves with you from job site to job site — as well as to a mandatory pension. You seemed to indicate that it would be done through either workers' compensation or a mandatory system, basically. Would you like to explain that further to the House?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, I welcome the opportunity to talk about the Saskatchewan position with respect to pension reform. At the national pensions conference in Ottawa last week, Saskatchewan was the only province which articulated a position with respect to pensions. I think it was well-recognized by all of those who attended the meeting from the business community, from the insurance industry, from the pension industry, and by representatives from each of the 10 provincial governments and the federal government, that a very major gap exists — particularly with the demographic bulge which is taking place. Large numbers of people (the post-war baby boom, if you like) are entering the work force or have entered the work force and will become retirees after the turn of the century, between the years 2000 and 2031.

We are suggesting in a very precise way that there are a great many failings in the present systems, both public and private, in terms of providing retirement incomes to Canadian senior citizens who reach the age of 65 without adequate pensions. We suggested that there are a number of major criteria which we believe must be acknowledged in order to update our pension system and that a pension system which acknowledges those basic criteria can best be put in place by the expansion of the existing pension system.

First of all, we are suggesting that the devices currently in place, the OAS (old age security) and GIS (guaranteed income supplement), must be the vehicles which will

April 6, 1981

properly prevent senior citizens from being allowed to live in a state of poverty. We are suggesting an upgrading of the guaranteed income supplement for this purpose.

Secondly, to more properly fill the needs of future retirees, we are suggesting that the most appropriate method will be an expansion of the existing provisions of the Canada Pension Plan. It meets the basic requirements with respect to affordability, equity, portability and the other features which can be filled more properly by expanding the Canada Pension Plan than by setting up a separate monolithic structure, which would be costly to administer and, we believe, not properly fill the role of providing retirement incomes for senior citizens. We are suggesting, then, that the expansion of the existing pension system, with its broad application, is the most appropriate method. I think that, in a very general way, has been our position, as it has been outlined in "The Reform of Canada's Retirement Income System," and as outlined in the briefs of the national pensions conference.

MR. KATZMAN: — You are suggesting that the Canada Pension Plan has sufficient funds within it to give what level of pension? You must have a level of service which you intended to give.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think the hon. member will know that the Canada Pension Plan is designed to replace approximately 25 per cent of earnings to a ceiling maximum. Obviously, that has not filled the bill. It will not meet the requirement in terms of maintaining large numbers of people who are regarded as middle-income people, so that they don't have to, in a very major way, alter their standard of living when they reach the age of 65.

Obviously, if you are talking in terms of expanded benefits, you are talking also in terms of increased contributions to the Canada Pension Plan. You pick your figures depending on the results you want to achieve by providing additional benefits on the basis of additional contributions to CPP.

That lends itself to all sorts of combinations, depending upon how rich you want to make the Canada Pension Plan, in order that it delivers up as much as two-thirds or 75 per cent of a person's earnings, up to a maximum ceiling. That is obviously a decision that has not been made in its entirety — in terms of providing benefits to retirees in the future.

We haven't dictated in any precise way what should be provided in terms of adequate benefits, but I think that up to a maximum ceiling we should be looking in terms of replacing something in the order of two-thirds to three-quarters of the income that a person enjoys up to certain maximums, which are clearly not defined. This is not an exact science because it's going to be followed, as the Prime Minister indicated, by a meeting of the various jurisdictions in the very near future. Perhaps as early as July of this year the various provincial jurisdictions will have an opportunity to meet. The ministers responsible for pensions from those jurisdictions will have a further opportunity to discuss them in more detail.

MR. KATZMAN: — Let me ask an obvious question. Do you consider, or does the Department of Labour consider, payments toward your pensions as part of your pay package? Let me make this clear. Does the Department of Labour consider the payment made by the employer, toward your pension plan (be it CPP or be it a company plan) as part of wages? They're deferred, I realize.

April 6, 1981

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think it's becoming generally accepted where, if it is not, it should be considered to be deferred wages that are payable to the employee when he (or she) reaches what is referred to as normal retirement years.

Money that is paid into a pension fund, in large measure, should be locked in and invested, and the opportunity provided for employer contributions to be matched with employee contributions. As we have done in our own pension benefits act, we provide for the application of a reasonable rate of interest.

You will know that our pension benefits act is providing for an average of the interest paid over a 10-year period for Government of Canada bonds. It is placed there for the very precise purpose of providing retirement income for our people when they reach that retirement age, rather than have them move from job to job, as has been the experience in the past. On each occasion before the locking-in process took place, I'm afraid there was a return of the employee's contribution, leaving the employer's contribution behind.

That process was repeated on successive occasions until too often the employee found himself at the end of the road with a very inadequate pension, having contributed for perhaps 10 or 15 years, and only able to realize a very small pension, which, along with OAS, often is not sufficient to keep that person above the poverty level.

What we're saying is yes, that money contributed should be regarded as income placed in a trust or in a fund regarded as deferred income wages to be drawn at a time when a person reaches that retirement age.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I believe it was last year in this House in the bill you referred to that we tightened up the regulations a little bit to make sure that funds would stay there for retirement in more cases than it was happening. In the past people were quitting, taking their pensions out and, therefore, in later years, they had an insufficient amount in that pension.

My concern is a little different here, though. For an example, if I get so much from my employer on a percentage system (let us use the best six, 35 years, 2 per cent per year, which is 70 per cent of your salary on your best six), the first thing they do is to remove the CPP portion that you get. Are you suggesting that any private plans be tied so that the total amount when you say two-thirds, or three-quarters, be the combination of the two? Or are you suggesting to private enterprise that you can have your private pension plan or have both or the only program should be the CPP program and any other program you buy separately on your own and the employer doesn't contribute to it?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — That offset to which you draw attention will be taken care of in general terms by the regulations that take effect on July 1, 1981. That offset provision is disposed of by virtue of the regulations that become effective midsummer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The offset that you're talking about, a reduction of the pension received from a private pension plan being offset by the amount of your Canada Pension Plan benefits, is being outlawed. Maybe that's not a good expression, but it's being outlawed by the passage of the amendments which take effect on July 1.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, maybe these amendments that will come in on July 1 are going to alleviate the situation which exists, but I would just like to draw a few statistics to your attention. This pertains to 37.2 per cent of the population of the province of Saskatchewan whom we call unattached individuals, many of whom are widows who

are living at present below the poverty line.

I would just like to quote a few statistics here from Montreal economist, Dian Cohen, regarding the situation of pensions for people in Canada. The headline is "Canadians not Financially Prepared for Retirement," and it says:

The statistics relating to Canadians and their pensions are terrifying. Half the people who get old age security also get the guaranteed income supplement because they have no other income.

The old age security plus the guaranteed annual supplement of \$4,350 provides enough to live in poverty. The old age security plus the Canada Pension Plan (which goes to people who have worked outside the home) \$5,296 — almost exactly the national poverty line.

Most private pension plans don't provide benefits to a spouse if the employee dies after retirement. Half the private pension plans don't provide benefits to a spouse if the employee dies after retirement.

With regard to women (and that's where I say a lot of this 37.2 per cent in this province is located), the average death benefit paid to a widow is \$4,000. More than half of the married women become widows between the ages of 55 and 64 and they have no personal income of their own. In fact, the statistics show that 56 years of age is when many of the women become widows.

I think those are very ghastly statistics. Those are Canadian statistics, but I'm sure many of them hold true in the province of Saskatchewan. You announced that there may be some changes in June of 1981 and I certainly hope those changes will alleviate this situation. I think you and I both know very well, if you are living on \$4,000 or \$5,200, you're sure not living very well. Now I'd like you to indicate if those statistics are indicative of the pension situation here in Saskatchewan? If they are, do you see this change in June '81 rectifying this and if not, will you use your offices to improve the situation? I think it's just a horror story.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think to suggest that anything we have done with respect to pensions in Saskatchewan, as they apply to the regulations through The Pension Benefits Act which takes effect this year, will have little or nothing to do in terms of improving the lot of those already retired — to imply that would be an attempt to mislead. We are attempting to provide a better set of circumstances for those currently in the workforce. We are providing, for example, by the regulations and the amendment to the act, that the pension benefits to be received from a pension must provide for survivors' benefits. And you'll know that a large number of pension plans do not provide anything for the surviving spouse. In the event that the husband dies, as is usually the case statistically (usually the husband precedes his wife), in too many instances I'm afraid the husband takes that pension with him. And, accordingly, there are no survivor benefits as a provision of many existing pension plans. The benefits that will be described under the new act will make it necessary for that to be acknowledged. Unless the husband and wife mutually sign away the provision for survivors' benefits, it must be included, and The Pension Benefits Act provides for the renegotiation of pension schemes in existence in order that they will all provide for survivors' benefits.

We're looking at benefits for the future with respect to an expanded Canada Pension Plan that will provide the opportunity for homemakers to make contributions to the

April 6, 1981

Canada Pension Plan. By what process this is financed raises some very major questions because it would then provide, in many instances, the opportunity for the more affluent to contribute on behalf of their wives, if it became necessary for a husband to make double contributions in order to cover his wife under Canada Pension Plan provisions. There are as many suggestions and options as there are days in the week, but it's very possible that a drop-out provision can be allowed for women in the workforce, to allow them to drop out for a period of child raising. This is a very real opportunity to provide more thoroughly for the needs of women in the workforce, whether they be paid as part of the workforce or whether they be those who perform a major function in terms of raising our children. They are probably some of the most productive members in the workforce, notwithstanding the fact that they are not given the appropriate recognition by virtue of contributions and benefits derived from a public or private pension plan.

MR. TAYLOR: — Then the situation today if you were one of these females, widow at \$4,000 or so, is that there would be no recourse. My colleague spoke to you about the compensation and I accept that you can't go back and change everything that was in existence. But the actual fact today for a lady in Saskatchewan at \$4,000 is that as inflation increases, the individual has no other recourse than social assistance. Is that correct?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think, generally speaking, you will know that all members in Canadian society are entitled to old age assistance. It is available to all people over the age of 65 (without a needs test), along with a guaranteed income supplement which is an income-tested program or welfare for the elderly, if you like (that's what it is precisely). Also, the Saskatchewan Income Plan provides some additional benefits. In the event that needs are greater than will be provided for by OAS, GIS, and SIP, then the welfare system is obliged to pick up the slack and provide, through the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, the additional benefits which are needed as provided for under the schedule of the Saskatchewan and Canada Assistance Plan schedules.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I welcome the suggestion of July 1 when the option of discounting one pension because of the other will now be gone. I think that will bring pensions more true to the form they really have.

I have another question on the pension plan, Mr. Minister. I believe it has been about a year since the rules were changed lowering the 10 years and so forth, so that people can't cash in their pensions. Are we seeing what kind of effect that is having on people? Are they leaving their pensions there and deferring them voluntarily, or are they still complaining because they now can't pull out their funds? I know that there were a large number of complaints right after we passed the act — unanimously, I believe — in this House.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think that the hon. member is making mention of the earlier locking-in provisions where the old 45-and-10 rule applied. If you were 45 years of age and had been with an employer for 10 years, your contributions were locked in and vested. The change provides for an aggregate of 45. For example, 44 years of age and one year of service or 35 years of age and 10 years of service. Of course, it is not effective until July 1 of this year. I think you will see very little in the way of withdrawals.

I think we recognize that we in Saskatchewan are limited in how far we are able to go in terms of improving a voluntary pension plan before we make it somewhat stringent and

April 6, 1981

unattractive to employers, if we require additional financial benefits that they believe are onerous. With respect to employees, I suppose there is, to a lesser extent, sometimes an inducement for them to opt out. In general terms, we think that there is going to be no rush to opt out of existing pension plans. We think that people, more and more, are becoming aware of the need to make some contributions during their working years in order that they may enjoy an element of independence during their retirement years. I think that point is getting across. It's still a major problem with respect to people under 30 who, I suppose, see age 65 as being a long way away, until all of a sudden they discover they're 55 and time is far too short to acquire or accumulate anything which looks like a meaningful retirement income. I think more and more people are recognizing the need for early contributions in order to allow the magic of compound interest to go to work and provide payments for workers during those so-called golden years.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, concern has been stated many times by your government and by me, from our side, regarding locking-in, as you refer to it now after changing the regulations. I would refer to a municipality because it is the only area which normally isn't required to fund it with some insurance company or properly along that line. What happens down the road, and it has happened, if a municipality were to go broke? I realize it is something they've looked at in the United States, but not here at this point. Is there any way that the funds for those employees' pensions are protected?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, sitting behind the rail is the superintendent of pensions who has the responsibility, in large measure, to protect those employees who are members of a private pension plan. That's one of the obligations of the superintendent of pensions: to examine and ensure the solvency of existing pension plans for the purpose of protecting the best interests of workers who have made those contributions over many years.

With respect to the municipalities going broke, I suppose municipalities and governments only go broke to the extent that the tax-paying public is no longer willing to provide through the tax base those moneys necessary for them to carry on the work that they are required to do. Generally speaking, I think the answer has to be that the private pension plans registered with the superintendent of pensions reflect the judgment and the overseeing that is done by the superintendent of pensions to prevent that kind of eventuality from taking place.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, another area I would like to go into is the fire area. The member for Indian Head-Wolseley has asked a question in the House and, therefore, I will let him start the questioning with reference to the volunteer fire brigades and the training of the same. I'll pass to the member for Indian Head-Wolseley.

MR. TAYLOR: — Thank you. Well, just one comment. I think we discussed this fairly thoroughly on Friday last and I took from your statements that you are going to be looking at this situation. I think you mentioned that there would be a meeting sometime in June. I contacted some of the fellows involved over the weekend. I just put this up as a consideration. They have a convention just prior to that meeting and I think it would probably help them in their deliberations if you could meet with them before their convention. Would that be a possibility?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, first of all, I mentioned on Friday that there is a meeting taking place on May 6 and 7, I think, between people from the Department of Labour and

April 6, 1981

people from the cities of Saskatoon and Regina to see if there is some method that can be developed for the purpose of using their facilities for training. I am told that the meeting in June, which the departmental officials are having with the fire chiefs and those people responsible for the volunteer fire-fighting department, takes place a week prior to their convention. From their perspective the timing is a week prior to their annual convention and that's thought to be appropriate for their purposes. That's what I am told today.

MR. TAYLOR: — That's fine. If it's prior to their convention, we won't discuss it any further.

One other thing comes to my mind in connection with fire. If you have been looking around North America, I would say in the last year or two, the problem of hotel fires seems to be popping up in the newspapers continually. This is not just in Las Vegas where we have seen that they had a number of them. I understand that their buildings are perhaps not constructed quite as well as some that we have here. The situation doesn't just confine itself to Las Vegas, Nevada. Certainly there have been serious hotel fires in Toronto, Montreal, and to my way of thinking these are becoming far too numerous. Perhaps some of them are attributable to arson; I don't know the causes of all of them.

My concern is that if you try to get a room in a hotel here in Regina (and I think it's the same in Saskatoon), they are booked constantly. If you look at the economic indicators, especially for the city of Regina (which I am more familiar with), there will be more hotels built in this city.

The problem we see in hotel fires is the access: can the people get out? In some situations people have been trapped higher than the ladders could reach. What I am wondering is whether, as the Department of Labour, which is responsible for fire safety and fire prevention in this province, you have taken steps to see that the existing hotel accommodations (mainly in the two major cities but I suppose there are conventions in Yorkton, Estevan and so on) are equipped with the necessary equipment to prevent occurrences such as have been happening in other major cities in Canada and the United States.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, in each and every case I expect they believed they were amply protected, until such time as a fire took place. Then, of course, they discovered they were not.

I think we have been fairly diligent over the last number of years in effecting regulations in hotels, special-care homes and that sort of thing in order to provide protection to the public which was not previously available to them. We have our 1974 regulations which require, for example, an automatic sprinkling system in all new hotels and apartment blocks over five storeys. We require also by the 1974 regulations that new hospitals or institutional buildings over three storeys be required to be sprinklered. All new special-care homes over one storey are required to have a sprinkling system throughout. So, we once again find ourselves in the difficult situation of believing that these sprinkler regulations should apply to all hotels, but to pass those regulations after the event becomes extremely costly — especially if they have been made retroactive. And so we have to do it ourselves, I think, particularly making sure that there are fire alarm systems which will properly alert people in those circumstances and that we have the proper fire escapes appropriately located and lighted.

April 6, 1981

You will know that since 1974 there have been a number of hotels which have either undergone major renovations or been built. The Sheraton Centre, for example, in Regina, has complete sprinkler protection, as do the Westwater and Holiday Inns, just to name three which have recently been built or renovated.

Our sprinkler regulations also provide incentives for existing nursing homes to provide a sprinkling system throughout and we find that, with the financial inducements which have been offered to nursing homes, only three of these homes over one storey have not been covered by this process. Two of these are currently under consideration, with social services providing as much as 90 per cent of the capital cost for installing the sprinkling system.

Several one-storey homes also have a sprinkler system throughout. As I indicated, the 90 per cent grant system for the installation of sprinklers has been a major inducement in bringing them to special-care homes in particular.

I understand that of existing hotels, the Saskatchewan and the Bessborough are under review at this time and are considering installing sprinkler systems.

In general, I think we have been quite diligent in pursuing the safety measures. We provide, for example, by our hotel regulations, that hotels with over 50 rooms must have a person designated as a fire warden. One purpose of this is to require that there will be somebody on duty around the clock to alert guests, through the fire alarm system or whatever, that there may be the presence of fire. So, while I suppose nothing is perfect and nothing that you could do ensures that there will never be a fire in the city of Regina or the province of Saskatchewan that will cause a problem or take a human life, I think to the extent that has been possible we have been attempting over the last number of years to upgrade the requirements of the system in order, hopefully, to prevent that kind of a disaster from occurring here.

MR. TAYLOR: — I take it from your remarks, then, that you feel that in Saskatchewan (I will agree that you can't safeguard against everything that could happen) things are not looking too bad. One thing that always worries me when I go to a hotel (I don't know if it's a concern of yours) is that if I get up too high in that hotel I get a little nervous. In fact I'm kind of handy with a lariat and I often think I should pack one in my suitcase so that I could use something a little stronger than the bed sheets to get out with. I'm just wondering, do we have the equipment in Saskatchewan to rescue people from the top floors of hotels should a fire break out?

HON. MR. SNYDER: —Well, I think it has to be said (I'm not sure; I'll have to be corrected on this) that our firefighting equipment, our ladders, obviously will not reach to the top floor of a number of hotels that are in existence. I think probably in the rural areas there is no hotel that cannot be serviced by a ladder that would reach the top of most hotels in the smaller urban areas. But certainly, I suppose there is always a possibility, as dramatically exhibited on occasions, of rescue by helicopter and the like. Hopefully that is not going to be necessary, but one never knows. Anyway, our regulations are attempting to make people as aware as possible and enforcing well-lighted exits and fire escapes and doing all of those things that will allow people proper means of egress from a building in the event of fire. I suppose there will never be a possibility of extending that to the point where we can say with certainty that there will never be a catastrophe, except that we do believe that our people are protected to the extent that it is possible. With all new construction there will not be any hotels built following 1974 that aren't completely protected with sprinklers, and that has to be regarded as the

April 6, 1981

most complete protection that can be provided.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I just want to make a couple of comments on this subject because I've been taking special note of some of the problems that we've had in the continent as it relates to fires in high-rise buildings, whether they be hotels or business offices or whatever. I suppose it takes an identification of the problem before one can address oneself to the solution.

In Saskatchewan's case we never really thought that we had a problem until our own people were able to witness, via the television media, the terrible fires that were existing not just here on the continent but throughout the world in high rises. In hotels I suppose you have a lot of transient people, a lot of people that may be having a greater access to alcohol, or having good times or what have you, and this could lead to some irresponsibility as it relates to fire control and their own safety for that matter, and the safety of the other occupants of the building.

In taking a look at Saskatchewan's situation I find, as you have already stated, we do not have, for example, an adequate helicopter service, even in the two major centres of Regina and Saskatoon, to free residents or people that are staying in hotels. We'll use hotels as an example. For that matter, I don't even know if there is an exit on to the roof — I really don't.

You know the idea of a coil of rope in a room is not such an absurd idea, not so absurd at all. Some of us are rather handy with a rope. I tell you it would be far and away a better idea to have a coil of rope (I'm not kidding) in each room than it would be to have (from examples that we witnessed in the United States) people tying their bed sheets together and making it down to five floors from the ground, and having to drop the rest of the way. Well, they might as well have jumped from the top; it would have been a quicker death. What a terrifying thing. Although it may appear at this time to seem humorous in a sense, it's real. Had those same people had a rope and were physically inclined, they could have made it to safety.

I tell you, very sincerely, people from my own area (and I have talked to other people from rural parts of this province), who don't too often stay in a hotel or motel, are coming to Regina and they are not checking in at the Regina Inn or the Sheraton, because they don't want to be up there. The memory of what they saw on television is in their minds. They are staying on the ground floor. I don't much blame them.

I want to tell you two stories. I was in the Bessborough one night and I happened to be on the top floor. The elevator wasn't working, not any one of the three. We endeavoured then to go down the stairs. I challenge you to come down those stairs some night and end up hitting the right door that brings you out onto the main level. It is like the house of mirrors. I ended up two floors below ground. I was totally lost.

I ran into a fellow down there. He said, "What are you doing down here?" I said, "I don't know, I'm trying to find my way out." He said, "You came through the wrong door." I said, "That's obvious; this isn't the main lobby." What if the place had been burning down? That's the Hotel Saskatchewan. I tell you that place is deplorable. The place isn't bad from the ground storey up, but what is from there on down is something else. When I think of the terrible fires we've had very recently and the conditions which I experienced in that hotel, it sure began to twig in my mind as to whether or not there were safeguards built into that hotel.

April 6, 1981

I doubt very much if in Saskatchewan we do have the mechanisms by which to save people from a major fire, a major outbreak. It is possible and we should have the precautionary measures in place to at least rescue people. We should not have the deplorable situation we have in the Hotel Saskatchewan. The exit doors are not clearly marked, saying that this is the ground level, exit here. As I said, it is more like a house of mirrors.

The other one is that I happen to be staying in an old house that has eight suites. I was fortunate to get a place in the city of Regina, because housing is hard to come by. I got the eighth suite at the top. There are seven other suites. You know, just last night — I might add I have to share the washroom with two or three other occupants of the house — I went to use the wash facilities, and I smelled something burning. I really wasn't too keen on the idea of knocking on everybody's door to say, "Are you burning down here?" There was definitely something burning that was not supposed to be burning. Nonetheless do you know that in that particular building, with my being at the top, suite eight, I am so concerned about a fire in one of the seven suites below me (six — one is on the same floor), that I literally walked around that place on the outside to see where I would get down if there was a fire below me. I was fortunate; I found a nice big healthy evergreen tree which goes up one edge of the house and I could come down that evergreen tree.

But I didn't see any means of fire protection. I can't see any smoke detectors in that building; there are certainly no sprinklers. In fact, the water doesn't work half of the time. I'm telling you that I very much doubt that we have in Saskatchewan adequate fire regulations, whether it be in hotels, high rises, business offices. or in residential areas. I highly doubt it.

I think likely the most encouraging form of fire safety protection is probably built into our insurance policy, that if you have two smoke detectors, you receive a 5 per cent reduction on your insurance. That is likely one of the greatest incentives we have for people to build safety regulations into their own homes or apartments. Now, I suspect that you must have regulations which apartments must abide by. But I'm telling you (and you can't disagree with it) that in the province of Saskatchewan we do not have adequate fire protection. Maybe we have adequate regulations now for new building starts. I won't dispute that, but in those buildings that exist, we do not have adequate fire safety protection systems built in.

Those are my comments on that particular problem, and I would appreciate a response.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Yes, well, I can appreciate the remarks that the hon. member makes, because my understanding is that the set of circumstances he describes relates more to a rooming house situation than to an apartment block arrangement. I imagine the hon. member knows that in that set of circumstances, in any of the 11 cities where full-time fire-fighting departments are available, the responsibility for the by-laws rests with that particular urban municipality.

It was mentioned that a more appropriate means of egress is a coil of rope. I suppose this presents a thought and a rather amusing set of circumstances. I was thinking of a story (as long as we're telling stories in the legislature) of a fire which took place in Milestone some years ago when an uncle of mine lived there. He recalls very clearly a commercial traveller who was on the fourth floor of a Milestone hotel which caught fire, blocking the exit. Very carefully, the traveller gathered all of his samples, put them in

April 6, 1981

the trunk, threw it out of the window, uncoiled the rope which was provided at that time, took hold of the end of the rope and leaped out of the window. This obviously was done in a fit of something less than sanity.

I'm not sure that that presents itself as a very viable option in terms of appropriate fire-fighting equipment or means of egress. We would like to think we are more properly addressing that problem by clearly lighting exit corridors. I suppose some responsibility also rests with the individual who goes to a hotel to inform himself as to the direction of the fire escape. In the event of a fire, I suppose there would be some difficulty in getting one's bearings.

We think, in general terms, that while there are some deficiencies, our system is probably as adequate or more adequate than most, but we are not prepared to suggest that there is not room for continuing improvement. Of course, we look to the various fire departments and the people who advise us with respect to that matter. Certainly, we believe it is one which deserves the attention of the department and the public, generally.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I have just one additional question on the fire issue. I think one of the other things that your department should look into is the vast amount of experience which you have acquired over the years (and I'm not sure if this applies to your department, or urban affairs). There are now many more volunteer fire departments, but when they want to buy equipment (I refer to the truck and the equipment on the truck), they really don't seem to have enough knowledge of what they require and don't require. There are some basic principles set down for them by your people, and they do assist them, but I suggest that perhaps you should have a look at the Ontario experience. You will see the results of refinements in their equipment, and recommendations to their fire-fighting volunteers for rural fires versus town fires, versus village fires and the requirements which they suggest. And they suggest on how to watch prices. This is the last issue I wanted to bring up. Could you respond?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — With respect to the service which is provided by the department, the Underwriter's Lab is the organization that has the responsibility for properly assessing equipment to be used by the volunteer fire departments. I think it's done a thorough job in keeping the provincial jurisdictions informed. We, in turn, through the fire commissioner's office, make available that kind of information to the volunteer fire departments, and provide them with brochures and specs of any equipment that they may wish to purchase on the understanding that the Underwriter's Lab has had a full opportunity to survey this equipment and make recommendations as a result of ongoing tests. They report particularly on the testing of any new equipment which appears on the scene, and their kind of advice is readily available from the department. That's one of the major functions of the fire commissioner's office.

MR. KATZMAN: — I'll give you a simple example, Mr. Minister. A fire nozzle which seems to always be recommended is a brass nozzle which costs about \$95. The city of Toronto uses the same nozzle made of plastic and it costs \$14. They are both approved by Underwriters or whoever approves them. The people locally were not aware of that kind of option being available to them. The only reason I discovered it is because I happened to walk through the wholesaler's in Toronto called Cousins or Carruthers or something. I saw them and I asked why they were there, and they told me they were now legal.

The reason I refer to this is because of the truck, not because of the pump that's on it. I

think there should be suggestions to a rural municipality or a volunteer department of what basics they should have. Unfortunately in my own constituency, they seem to be looking at a lot fancier truck than they really need, and what the Ontario experience shows they really need. Ontario has been into the program longer than we have. I suggest we, at least, check with them on their recommendations to their rural and volunteer fire departments. Their criteria seem to be a little different and, yet, the program seems to be working very well for them, and it doesn't cost the amount of money which our people seem to be looking at. That is basically my concern.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, my understanding is that those options are available and every effort is made to provide them to the volunteer fire departments. The most economical one is, of course, a matter of concern to them because they will want to make the best decision relative to the amount of money that they have to spend. My understanding is, unless it's a new product which has appeared on the market in a very short period of time, that the values of the different types of equipment remain in place until they are replaced with something which is just as good for a lesser amount of money, or perhaps a superior piece of equipment. We attempt to keep all of that current, and up to date with respect to all of those pieces of equipment that are made available. That's done on an ongoing and up-dated basis.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Minister, I would like to refer you to section 99 of The Workers' Compensation Act. The reason I do that is because it was brought to my attention this morning by a claimant who was quite upset with that particular section. Are you aware of it? I'll read it to you:

Subject to subsection (2), any compensation for loss of earning capacity payable by the board under this act to a worker or his dependant is to be reduced by the periodic benefits that person is entitled to receive relative to the death or injury under the Canada Pension Plan.

You may be perhaps thinking of an amendment to that particular section. If you are, then I have no further questions, but if you're not, I frankly can't understand what the Canada pension benefits have to do with the individual's collecting under The Workers' Compensation Act. It seems a very unfair clause in the act and I would ask you now if you would give consideration to removing that section.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — No, there is not an intention to change that. That became part of the income maintenance system when the new act came into effect. You will know it was intended that the method of paying a worker would be different after the new act came into effect from what was the case before. Prior to the passage of the new act, an employee was paid on the basis of a percentage of his disability. I think I mentioned to you last Friday that a worker, regardless of whether he was able to return to work and regardless of his income after the injury, received perhaps a 45 per cent disability pension. Another worker might have been regarded as totally disabled for purposes of returning to the job he was working at when he was disabled.

You will know it's a requirement for the employer to contribute on behalf of the employee to Canada Pension Plan benefits, and so the integration which took place was a deliberate and a calculated provision. Thus, when a person becomes a recipient of CPP benefits, he is integrated with the workers' compensation plan in order that income maintenance becomes our Bible and measuring a percentage of disability doesn't. So, yes, there is an integration of CPP benefits with the compensation benefits in the same way as OAS benefits are integrated.

April 6, 1981

But what we're saying, essentially, is that we discharged our responsibility to that injured worker, having maintained his wages from the time of his injury until the time he became a retired person at age 65 and was entitled to OAS. In the meantime, if he were a member of a private pension plan, we were paying from the time of his injury until he became pensionable. An amount equivalent to some 10 per cent was set aside for the purpose of buying that person an annuity or providing for his pension benefits during those years between the time he was injured and the time of his retirement.

So, yes, there was an integration. I think it's perhaps not as fully understood by members opposite as I believed it was, but that was part of the package. The integration of CPP with workers' compensation until age 65 was very much a part of the new package when the income maintenance process was brought into being with the new Workers' Compensation Act.

MR. KATZMAN: — I am having the page bring you over a copy of (I assume you'd call it) a J-form or something along that line. A charge is made here of \$2 on this particular form by the chief inspector of the electrical and elevator safety unit. I have blanked out the name of the individual, but I assume you can track it down by the number on the top. Just below the number on top, you'll see a part of a stamp that says, "No inspection to be made." My concern is with two things here. You charge \$2 for an inspection; that's the indication. First of all, is that correct or not? What is the \$2 charge for? Then it says, "No inspection to be made." Could you explain that?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — It's quite clear. It's our intention to provide for something like what the hon. member is drawing attention to. This is the installation of a Coca-Cola sign in front of a building. For purposes of registration, a registration fee is charged to the person who has that service provided to him. It does not carry with it the absolute assumption that there is going to be an inspection for the very minute kind of installations that the hon. member draws attention to. With the inspection people, who we have in the electrical inspection branch, we provide that all owner's permits are inspected and inspected well. If you get an owner's permit in order to install, then you are registered and you pay your fee, and in light of the fact that you are doing your own installation, we regard it as being one that probably needs careful attention. Accordingly, all owner installation permits are inspected.

All of those permits which charge a fee of something over \$5, indicating a larger kind of installation, are inspected, and then we use a scatter gun approach in terms of those smaller installations where there is a minimum of hazard involved. Accordingly, in something in the order of 10 per cent of all those \$2 permits (where a small electrical plug is placed in an establishment, or a Coca-Cola sign is put out in front of an establishment) rather than use the time of an inspector, who can be more properly used in other places, the minor installations then are not necessarily inspected. Please do not refer to these as inspection fees because they are not inspection fees. They are registration fees required so that the department will be aware of where those installations have taken place, the extent to which the alteration of an electrical system has taken place and, particularly, the location of where those owner permits have been part of the system in the trade. Accordingly, you are right.

This form, to which you are drawing attention, that says, "No inspection to be made," is an internal working document. Obviously, in the file of those installations which require inspections will be those such as this, that are not intended to be inspected because of

the appropriate use, I suppose, of the manpower which we have available to us. I want to say, once again, that all owner permits are inspected in 100 per cent of cases with fees of \$5 and more. It is a registration system. It does not necessarily carry with it a requirement that each and every installation shall be inspected.

MR. KATZMAN: — You are making one comment and I am just making sure I hear you correctly. All owner fees over \$5 are inspected.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — No, I said 100 per cent of all permits where fees are charged in excess of \$5, indicating major changes are to take place — all of those are inspected. That is to say, you go in and satisfy the chief inspector that you are competent to wire your garage or your hen house or whatever; in that particular set of circumstances then, if it is an owner permit which is requested, all such cases are inspected also.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, there is a misunderstanding right now and here is the reason. When I phoned and asked about these certificates, I wasn't told they were registrations. I was told they were inspections, and some of them you do and some of them you don't. If you would change the wording on here somewhere to indicate that under \$5 it is a registration fee, then I agree with you. It is 100 per cent correct. But I don't seem to see where it says registration of that job. That is where I was getting into problems, when people were saying, "Look it, they are charging me \$3 or \$2" — and I have a file of these things. Yet they don't do an inspection. Why don't they call it a registration fee? I have talked to several electricians. They have all told me it is really a registration fee, but it is called an inspection fee. But in actuality, they don't bother inspecting a qualified electrician if they have seen his work and they know his work is good and if the fee is only \$2.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I don't see anything on the form J which draws attention to inspection fees. It is a fee which is charged for purposes of registration. You and I have a little trouble with the English language from time to time.

I don't see anything on the form that guarantees inspection; it doesn't suggest that, to my knowledge. It is for purposes of registration, so that the department will be aware that major alterations and renovations have taken place. Perhaps, in all instances I've indicated to you, inspections do take place for home-owner installations and for those who are charged more than \$5 for a permit.

I suppose the jargon has grown up with the industry and there is a tendency to refer to them as inspection fees, because there is an inspection in a large percentage of cases; something in the order of 97.5 per cent of the total permits for electrical installations were inspected during the past year. So, in the jargon of the trade it becomes regarded, I suppose, as an inspection fee, but essentially it is used for purposes of registration so that we know where the major problems are that deserve the attention of our inspectors.

MR. KATZMAN: — Could your department consider indicating on the form when they make a new batch that fees under \$5 are considered registration, but inspection can be made. That would solve what is happening in the industry. People are coming to us and saying that the Department of Consumer Affairs says that they are supposed to inspect. We stand up and ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs why the department doesn't inspect. I understand what you are saying. The jargon has grown up and everybody presumes that because it says inspections, etc., on the form that an inspection will be carried out.

April 6, 1981

My second question, Mr. Minister, is about the inspection of elevators, for which you also issue certificates — and for boilers, refrigeration plants, and so forth. How often do you inspect them other than when you give the permit which you see hanging in the elevator, on the boiler, or on the refrigeration unit?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, I'm told that, in terms of electrical inspection for elevators, they are inspected annually. Boilers are inspected annually. Pressure vessels are inspected on some kind of ratio between 1 and 5 years, depending upon the number of pounds per square inch and the age of that particular pressure vessel. Essentially, then, those with the largest number of pounds per square inch will receive inspection more regularly than those with very low pressure. Essentially, then, it is one year for elevator inspection, one year for boiler inspection, and 1 to 5 years for pressure vessels, depending on the circumstances.

MR. HARDY: — Mr. Minister, I notice under the occupational health and safety branch that you have what is classified as a pressure welder inspector. Would you explain to me what his duty is?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — The test, of course, is for high-pressure welders who are doing such work as pipeline welding and things of that nature, which require a particular degree of skill. The requirement is that the test be taken annually. For purposes of best utilization of our inspectors, the tests take place in the city of Regina or the city of Saskatoon, with our inspector giving the practical test to those holders of pressure welding papers.

MR. HARDY: — A new question. Is it the same inspector who travels around the area who gives the test in Saskatoon or Regina?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, I'm given to understand that the person that perhaps you are referring to does do some testing other than in the two major cities of Saskatoon and Regina. I understand that that same person was down and did some testing of pressure welders in Coronach and also went to Toronto in order to give some tests to pressure welders before they came to work in Coronach. So I believe probably then that it is perhaps the same person that you are talking about. But they do not normally travel about the province. It's under unusual circumstances. Normally those tests are given in the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina.

MR. HARDY: — Well, was it not true that up until about two years ago this inspector did travel to the small welding shops and to the industrial places and give the test right on the spot?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — We are attempting to establish the date when the provision was changed. I think probably it was in 1973 or 1974 when the inspector did travel about. We found it to be an inappropriate use of the person's time and, accordingly, the tests have been offered since 1974, I believe, in the city of Regina and the city of Saskatoon only, rather than adding to the time of the inspector travelling (as he was obliged to do) a great many miles. It was perhaps not a particularly effective use of a skilled person's time in terms of providing those tests.

While we acknowledge that it is some inconvenience for the employee to travel from Kelsey to the city of Saskatoon, it's an occurrence that takes place only once a year. We're hopeful that it has not been too much of an inconvenience to pressure welders.

MR. HARDY: — I'd like to clarify one thing. Does that inspector still go back out to check the welding equipment itself within the employers' or employees' shops? He did up until one or two years ago — two years ago at least — check at least a portion of these welders right on the job. I notice here that in 1978 and 1979, there were 912 tests and in 1979-80 there were 721 tests. I know from talking to some of the welders in my area that they just don't bother to go in to get the tests because it is so very expensive. I had a run-down done on the cost of coming into either Saskatoon or Regina and it appears it runs between \$400 and \$500 per person by the time he comes in one day, stays overnight, takes the test the following day and goes home. I just want to clarify that. At the same time this same inspector still comes around to the shop to inspect the equipment. My question would be: is it not appropriate for the inspector, since he is coming to the shop to do the test of the equipment, to give the employees the test there at the same time?

MR. SNYDER: — Well, you've got us baffled a little bit here because the people in my department do not check the welding equipment in your shop in Hudson Bay, Kelsey, Tisdale, or wherever. We don't have that kind of an inspection service for welder's equipment, their welding tanks, oxyacetylene or whatever. That's not the responsibility of the safety services branch of the department to provide those tests. We are at a bit of a loss to know what it is you are drawing attention to.

MR. HARDY: — Ill just clarify that. There was a time about two years ago — I'm not aware of it lately in the last two years — that one inspector came around and tested the employee and the equipment right on the site. Am I not correct?

MR. SNYDER: — We are still having some difficulty with you. I assumed there might be a possibility that our apprenticeship people might have been involved in some way, but no, there are no inspectors with the Department of Labour who test that kind of equipment. I don't know whom you could have reference to. Certainly we don't have those bodies around who run around testing equipment in individual welding shops, and do not give tests to the welders on site. That has not been the case since 1974 when the on-site program of testing welders was discontinued.

MR. HARDY: — And so you would not consider now to give them . . . Okay, I'll assume that whatever you said was correct. I have this information from one welder in Hudson Bay who told me that up to two years ago he was tested there, right at Hudson Bay in the welding shop. Since then he has had to send his employees in to Saskatoon or Regina, one at a time because he can't send all his welders at one time. He found it very, very expensive — about \$400 to \$500 to send the employee, by the time he paid his wages, paid the cost in, paid the hotel room for the one or two nights (whatever was involved) and back. I was just wondering if your department would reconsider, then, a testing on the site.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think really you are going back farther than 1978 or whenever it was you believed that happened last, because we haven't been doing on-site testing since 1974, I'm told. Unless there was a rather major increase in staff, a doubling or trebling of the people we have available to us to provide those tests, it's not the intention to provide that service on the site because, obviously, a person's time is not well used if he's driving great distances in a sparsely settled province as is the province of Saskatchewan, with quite a distance between points where welders are to be examined. Accordingly, it's not the intention at this time to revert to the former method

April 6, 1981

of testing, which obviously would require additional manpower that is not available to us.

MR. HARDY: — Well, I'm sure in the Hudson Bay area alone there is bound to be 20 or 30 high-pressure welders, although I'll accept your point that you are not going to send somebody around. But I would urge your department to look at it again because I'm sure that one man travelling the province is much cheaper than each individual driving into Saskatoon. Maybe some of the larger companies can afford to send in an employee and pay their way, but some of the smaller welding outfits find it very hard to finance \$400 or \$500 for an employee. If they have two or three employees per year, they find it a little bit expensive.

I have one other question I'd like to address to you. I heard you mention that there were some questions asked in your absence, and one of the questions that was asked in your absence was the question regarding the SGEA contract with the public service and workers in the camps and community training camps. Let me clarify that. That's with the correctional centre basically. Those are some of the correctional training camps which are established in some of the remote areas. I believe there are six of them in the province of Saskatchewan. They have been working under an SGEA agreement for the last three and one-half or four years, at least. Some of these employees, such as at the White Gull camp north of Smeaton with 12 to 15 employees, have been requesting their overtime be paid to them. They've drawn it to your attention. I believe that you probably have a copy of the letter, as I do. I just wonder what you've done to see that these employees get the benefits which are due to them.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — The Department of Labour, as such, has not done anything, for the plain and simple reason that the employees involved have apparently not filed with the Department of Labour a complaint, or requested that an investigation be undertaken. What has happened, as I understand it, is that there have been a number of employees over many years who have worked for the Department of Social Services and have been regarded, under the terms of the SGEA agreement, as field employees. That is to say they work something in the order of undefined hours receiving, I presume, eight hours pay for approximately eight hours work.

It has been suggested, I understand, that those employees are working at the disposal of their employers on occasions where hours are in excess of those worked — that is to say the eight hours a day. They live on-site. They live in a camp. Basically, they eat and sleep in the same general area as they perform their work. Accordingly, they designated as field employees. Whether this is appropriate or whether it is not is not for me to judge.

I understand that the employees, through the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association, are grieving that particular set of circumstances. I understand that a grievance procedure has been made available to them. That is in the process of happening now. I can't make a judgment. There's no way that I can make a major judgment as to whether there's a violation of The Labour Standards Act or not. What has to be determined is whether those employees, as designated, are field employees and accordingly exempt from the provisions as described by The Labour Standards Act.

What I'm saying is that I don't know whether they are employees for the purpose of The Labour Standards Act or not, or whether they are designated as field employees and thereby the hours of work provision puts them outside the requirements of The Labour Standards Act. It has gone to the grievance procedure. The employees are proceeding

April 6, 1981

in that way. I understand that our labour standards people have not been given a grievance to investigate.

MR. HARDY: — I'd just like to draw your attention to the letter. I believe it has been drawn to your attention. Am I correct? You're aware of what has been going on? Under the SGEA bargaining agreement, they fall into the category of correction worker 1. I believe that's their classification. They've also written to a labour relations or staff relations officer. The Saskatchewan Public Service Commission has clarified its position on it. I think this was dated September 8. I'm sure you have a copy of that, as well. I just wonder if it isn't time that your department took a serious look into this situation. There are 35 or 40 employees. They have been entitled to overtime, according to the agreement, for almost two years. Some of them at White Gull have been entitled for almost three years. It's a considerable amount of money. I would urge your department to take a serious look into it.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — My officials tell me that as late as this morning, they've been in touch with Mr. Fred Cuddington of the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association, and as of this precise moment, we have no complaints with which we can pursue an investigation. We have nothing from the employees in question. Accordingly, it's following the legitimate grievance procedure, and I understand the SGEA and the Public Service Commission are the ones who are attempting to determine where the difficulties rest; it is not, at this point in time, the responsibility of the Department of Labour.

If the employees lodge a complaint with the department, then obviously it becomes our responsibility. In the meantime, they're attempting to negotiate or settle their difficulties and arrange a suitable compromise or whatever is required between SGEA and the Public Service Commission.

MR. HARDY: — Will you clarify one thing? You said there hasn't been a complaint lodged. Maybe not a formal complaint, but in this letter it says:

Specifically the issues are non-payment for hours worked, 18-hour shifts and overtime. We have been unable to resolve our differences across the bargaining table via the grievance procedure.

This was sent to you on March 12, 1981. I would assume from the letter that they have gone through the grievance procedure and now they're asking you, on their behalf, to see that they get what they have coming.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I'm not sure that I'm positive of which letter the hon. member draws attention to. Can you tell me to whom the letter is addressed and signed by whom?

MR. HARDY: — It is addressed to you and signed by Larry Brown.

HON. MR. SNYDER: - Could I have a copy of it please?

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, while you're waiting for a copy of this letter, may I also check something? I understand it is an unfair labour practice to threaten somebody; if you do not withdraw your grievance, it is an unfair labour practice by the employer or whoever makes that charge to the people. Is that correct?

April 6, 1981

HON. MR. SNYDER: — It's probably an undesirable practice, but I don't believe that it's defined in The Trade Union Act as an unfair labour practice. Obviously it's frowned upon and probably carries with it an indication of bad intentions. I don't have a copy of The Trade Union Act with me, but I would doubt that is the case. My recollection is that it's not accurate; I'll check it.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I understand that if an employer threatens to remove or change your working conditions because of a grievance that you are wishing to file over pay, that's an unfair labour practice. Now maybe I'm wrong, but I understand one can say, "Look, if you file that grievance, I'm going to change your working conditions and therefore you may be unemployed."

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think the hon. member is drawing attention to the provision which says it's an unfair labour practice to change the conditions of employment while the process of collective bargaining is taking place. That is to say that while you're bargaining a new contract, it would be an unfair labour practice for the employer to change the conditions of your work or to offer you an increase while he is in the process of bargaining with the trade union which represents the employees. I think that's distinct from what you're drawing attention to here. I think you're confusing the two provisions.

I should also draw attention, if I may, Mr. Chairman, to the fact that this letter of March 12, 1981, does not request any action, but says, essentially, "We wish to inform you that we have approached officials in the apprenticeship and standards division. If we have no success through our efforts to resolve these situations through those channels, we will be pursuing the matter before the courts." This is what is being suggested here.

Let us take it into consideration. My impression was that no formal request has been made and I am not sure that this is regarded as a formal request for assistance from apprenticeship and standards. Perhaps we need to take another look at it. But that's my impression. They have been pursuing the normal grievance procedures available to them, and had not requested our attention to this. Perhaps we had better take another look. That has been my impression throughout.

I had some discussion very recently with the people at the Public Service Commission and they believe they are pursuing this thing in the appropriate way to resolve the problem.

MR. HARDY: — I have another question, Mr. Minister, which comes to mind. As an employer myself, if my employee were to write a letter to your department stating exactly that, would you not feel it your duty to make overtures or approach me to get this thing straightened out?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Under normal circumstances, certainly. In every set of circumstances which I can recall, when an employee draws attention to the fact that there are alleged violations of The Labour Standards Act, we have an obligation to go in and solve those problems. In virtually each one of those instances, that's the only mechanism available to the employee in those circumstances. Accordingly, we honour that as an obligation when they do not have a grievance procedure or some other device they can use to address a problem.

So I think, perhaps, there has to be recognized that difference with respect to an

employee who files a grievance and one who has a mechanism that he can use for resolving that difficulty.

MR. HARDY: — One final question. Would it not appear to you that they have used all of the mechanisms, except the courts, and that is always open to any employee. Again, I ask you: would it not be because it involves social services, as the employer? I just wonder, because it is in social services, is the Department of Labour hesitant to do anything about it? If it is, I urge them to get on it and get it done.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I can't answer you any more definitively than I have. The fact of the matter is that there has not been a formal request made to conduct an investigation and prosecute. There was an original approach made to the apprenticeship and standards division, with a request to let them know where the proceedings would properly take place. I understand the Public Service Commission and the SGEA (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association) have been conducting their examination in an attempt to sort out the problem. Our services have not been requested. In the event that they are, we will certainly provide the good services of the apprenticeship and standards division for purposes of solving this problem in the event that what they are doing is inappropriate. But I think the member seems to indicate that things are lying there and no action is being taken.

I understand at this precise time the apprenticeship and standards division, not being involved, had determined that it should wait until such time as the Public Service Commission and the SGEA solve that problem. As I understand it, they are in the process of attempting to do that at this time. If that is unsuccessful, then by all means we will do an adjudication. We treat the employees of the Government of Saskatchewan no differently in terms of hours of work and wage claims than we do with employees in the private sector. The government gets no special treatment with respect to labour standards provisions.

MR. HARDY: — With all due respect, Mr. Minister, some of this has been going on for close to two years. Would you not consider a formal request for your department to take a more serious look into it?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, I don't know if there's another question. I've indicated as clearly as I can to the member for Kelsey-Tisdale that if a formal request is made we will move on it. As late as this morning, Doug Cuddington of the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association spoke with officials of the Department of Labour. They are not requesting that we intercede at this time. If they request that we intercede, we shall intercede. In the meantime, I don't know how else I can say it. I believe this is the third or fourth time I have said that at the present time the SGEA and the Public Service Commission are attempting to negotiate and resolve the problem.

In the event it is not resolved, and a formal request is made of us, then we shall move in and treat it the same way as any other investigation or complaint with respect to hours of work, minimum wage, overtime provisions, and a host of other provisions which we take care of. And we will move tomorrow in the event they request us. If a request arrives tomorrow, we will do whatever is necessary in order to be of help to them.

MR. HARDY: — Let me clarify that. You say that, if they request that you look into this, then your department will look into it almost immediately. Is that what you're telling me?

April 6, 1981

HON. MR. SNYDER: — In the event that the parties agree they have failed to resolve the problem, certainly the labour standards people will offer their services in an attempt to clear up this difficulty. It has been long-standing. Yes, I suggest we will. I thought I had made that clear.

MR. HARDY: — You said "the parties." I understand it isn't the parties; I understand it's the SGEA. What do you mean by "the parties"?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — If you have on your mailing list an employee who is aggrieved, who levies or delivers to our people in the apprenticeship and standards division a complaint, and who wants us to proceed with it, then we will by all means. At this point in time we have not received that kind of a request from the individual employee. In the meantime, SGEA and the Public Service Commission have been attempting to resolve this question of field staff. In the event we receive a request, either from an individual or from a group of them, then we'll proceed in that way.

MR. KATZMAN: — One question to get this field employee question straightened out. The designation is assigned by the Public Service Commission. Am I correct that someone is either a field employee or is on a working schedule?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — It is established by the collective bargaining process. That determines who is a field employee and who is not. Generally speaking, a number of people who were previously referred to as field employees as a result of the last round of collective bargaining are not now considered to be field employees, with regard to payment for hours of work and provisions of that nature.

MR. KATZMAN: — A field employee would be handled very much like an average employee, an employee who works 40 hours per week or 160 hours in four weeks and so forth. Anything exceeding the 37.5 or 40-hour week, which a field employee is supposed to work, he would be paid overtime for. Am I correct?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think it has to be said that a field employee is just as the name indicates. He works undefined hours for particular purposes or for jobs that are performed. For example, a labour standards inspector is judged more in terms of his production record: the number of inspections which he conducts over a period of one month. We know by that process the kind of time that is spent and the averages in terms of inspections that take place; we can measure them one against the other. But in general terms, a field employee, by description, is one who works undefined hours.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, let me make myself clear. We are both talking about the same thing: a 40-hour employee receiving overtime after 40 hours. For a person working on an averaging order from the minister, everything exceeding 40 hours within the week is overtime. A field employee is paid for 40 hours, they suggest, but it's a little flexible. Now, when does he get overtime? Even if he worked 50 weeks a year, 80 hours a week, are you suggesting that he wouldn't get overtime? I'm asking so that we know what the rules are.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, a field employee, as the hon. member knows, is one who works undefined hours and is exempt from the hours of work provision. That's why they are referred to as field employees. They work undefined hours and are not entitled to overtime, due to the very nature of the work that they perform. Accordingly, they are exempt from the provisions of The Labour Standards Act.

MR. KATZMAN: — Then what you are saying to me is that when the public service designates someone as a field employee, there is no such thing as overtime for that employee if the union and the employee agree to that?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — That is not a matter of the Public Service Commission's unilaterally designating a person as a field employee and then excluding him from the hours of work provision. It's because the nature of the work that is performed is such that it's either difficult or impossible to determine the hours of work. There is no set place where the employee begins his job; there is no place where he terminates his day. Sometimes that person is on the road and has no direct supervision; hours of work are almost an unknown quantity. For that reason, the so-called "field employee" works undefined hours and is not entitled to overtime. He is sort of a self-regulating person, if you like.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, we're still going around in a circle: I realize that. I'm trying to pinpoint you. I understand that the Public Service Commission and the union agree that this is a field job. Therefore, the employee will be paid so many dollars per month or per week; he will not be supervised by anyone; he decides his own hours and his travel. He does not receive overtime pay no matter how many hours he works, and if he works fewer than 40 hours, it's not deducted. Now that's the employee we're talking about. That is what you consider a field employee. So if that field employee is required to work 18 or 19 hours a day, that's tough luck Charlie, because he's a field employee. He has no right to claim overtime.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think you have to take into account the cold, grim realities of life. The fact of the matter is that I don't know of any civil servants who are working 18 or 19 hours a day. Do you? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, but you know all I am saying is that in unsupervised circumstances, it is pretty difficult to determine hours of work. I don't know of large numbers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, okay.

You can take the circumstances in White Gull camp. You are suggesting that overtime should be paid in all circumstances because there is a possibility that that employee may be called or is at the disposal of his employer at some given point in time. I presume then you're suggesting that all of those hours should be paid because the employee may be called upon to perform a service in the White Gull camp. Is that what you are saying? I wish you would say that. If what you are suggesting is that in all those circumstances where an employee may be called upon to perform a service of an emergency nature, that all of those times in excess of eight hours in any given day when an employee may be called upon, he should be paid on the basis of time and one-half, then I would like to hear you stand in your place and say that.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I phoned your department prior to estimates because I wanted a copy of a file which indicates exactly what you are indicating now. It is called the Turner case in the city of Saskatoon, where your department found the city of Saskatoon guilty. It had to pay 10 years' back wages. I mean, you people have made a ruling on this type of thing once already. The city allowed a man to be disturbed while he was resting, to come back on and, therefore, it was ruled he be paid wages for those 10 years. There is a case on file. It is called the Turner case. I believe the labour supervisor is now retired — Sid (I can't remember his last name). He was the labour officer involved in the case. Carl McLeod was acting on behalf of the city of Saskatoon. It gives you all the names of those involved in the case. You had a judgment. I am saying, why is it different now?

April 6, 1981

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Let me tell the hon. member that around July 1, 1980, I am given to understand, those employees at the White Gull and other camps were no longer classified as field employees. It may very well be that there is a good and valid reason for there being overtime payable as a result of their no longer being regarded as field employees. If that is the case, then an assessment will obviously be made and moneys will be collected in the event that there was work done in excess of eight hours and the worker was regarded as an employee who is entitled to benefits under the act. I can't tell you anything more than that. I don't know what more I can tell the hon. member that I have not repeated on a number of other occasions.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, my colleague has been pointing out the question of people working longer hours. I know of instances of SGEA employees who have been working much more than 37.5 hours. In fact, I have had experience. I think, speaking for the farming public, if they were dealing with people in agriculture, we appreciate seeing these public employees out there to meet you at 7:30 or 8:00 when a farmer starts work in the morning, and some of these people are there. Some of these people would still be around and working on things, maybe meeting you at 8:30 or 9:00 at night. Now, that is service, and that is what we want to see.

But at the same time, some of these people are working far in excess of 37.5 hours in a week. They inform me that if they were to be working 37.5 in a week, because they don't get any overtime, that actually some of their offices would be shut down by about Thursday which would be a great disservice to the public. Now, it is these good, dedicated employees who are keeping some of those organs of government functioning without overtime.

Then, these same employees will be required to work along with office staff, who get overtime on certain projects (you must take my word that they worked on these; I can't disclose which ones they are for obvious reasons; I think you will accept that). These people worked side-by-side with designated office employees who received \$800 overtime in that month and these people who I am representing here received nothing. Now, I don't think that is fair treatment. When you ask me to stand up and tell you if there are people in the public service who are working in excess of 37.5 hours a week, there certainly are, Mr. Minister.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think the hon. member is attempting to put words in my mouth. I did not suggest that there were not people who, on occasions, work in excess of the prescribed 37.25 or whatever. The hon. member for Rosthern seemed to indicate that there were people who were working 18 hours a day on a regular basis, which I believe not to be the case in most circumstances. I acknowledge fully the fact that there are ag reps and others, who because of the special nature of the work that they perform, because of the activities that they are involved in, on occasions are involved in excessive hours of work, and by virtue of the SGEA agreement with the Public Service Commission, are regarded as field employees.

I think that is a matter that you should discuss when the Public Service Commission is before you, rather than when the Department of Labour is before you. I am not in a position where I'm going to make any attempt to judge the right or the wrong of a collective agreement that is entered into between employees and their employer. I believe that is the duty of someone else, other than the Minister of Labour.

As I indicated before, if there is a grievance and individuals believe they have been treated badly and are in need of the services of the apprenticeship and standards

branch, we stand ready to offer that service to them.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, you have our assurance that we will be raising it with the Public Service Commission. It seems very obvious that to get something across to the government opposite we often have to talk to two or three departments before we get answers.

Now, as far as these employees coming because they have a grievance . . . My God, you must realize — is this person going to jeopardize his position? I can imagine the type of treatment he'd get from the government opposite if he came and said. "Well, by golly, I'm supplying a good service out there and I'm not getting any overtime."

We have seen that happen. We saw what happened to Ron Duncan. So, don't tell me to tell them to go see you. They're coming through the channels through which maybe some change can be brought about. You can mark my word that we will talk to the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, too.

MR. HARDY: — The Minister of Labour was saying that nobody works 18 hours. I can think of some employees up in my area who work for the DTRR (Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources) who during the fire season or hunting season work much in excess of a 37.5 hour week. A lot of them work 18 hours a day. I can specifically think, going back to Hudson Bay — wilderness camp it's called or one of those camps — they work 18 hours a day when they are out there. Some of them even have to stay overnight. They live in the town of Hudson Bay, which has nothing to do with staying at the camp. These are the people to whom I was referring who do work 18 hours a day. One of them has to stay overnight and supervise the inmates.

You are probably aware of all that they are responsible for — escape, safety of the inmates, and everything else that goes with it. So, I just want to say that there are people who work more than the 37.5 hour week. These are some of the people I have been referring to. Again, I think it's your responsibility to look into it.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, while I was on my feet a while ago you asked for examples. You've been given examples by both the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, and the member for Kelsey-Tisdale. I think the average order of people are paid overtime because they work the hours and so prove they work. I suggest to you that your department look at the field people you have exempted from overtime and suggest to the Public Service Commission and the unions that we should be looking at the average hours that these people are working and who are not given hours off in lieu, in due course, and that overtime should be paid.

Mr. Taylor gave an example of where a field employee works side by side with an hourly office person. The hourly office person was paid overtime yet the field person who worked did not get overtime, and did not get time off in lieu, which is normally what the field person would get. Therefore, Mr. Minister, I suggest that your department have a look at this problem and maybe make some recommendations to the Public Service Commission that it should look at something that may alleviate part of the problem. I'm not saying that that's the final answer. We have to find some type of solution so that it is fair and equitable.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I just have to say that I find it somewhat unusual that the member for Rosthern and the members opposite have to draw attention to the inadequate nature of the people who bargain for SGEA. I never looked upon them, in my

April 6, 1981

experience, as being negligent in their duties in protecting the best interests of the employees they represent. I've never found the Cuddingtons and the Sperlings and the Kowalchuks or the Larry Browns to be timid in putting forward union demands they believe are legitimate for the membership they represent. Quite frankly, I believe that without any help from the Minister of Labour, the bargaining committees of the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association are able and competent to properly represent the best interests of those employees, be they hourly-paid or field employees. And if they are not legitimate field employees, I have some degree of confidence that they will have the spunk to dig in their heels and do those things necessary in order to provide benefits which are legitimately the right of those employees, without the recommendations of the Minister of Labour about how they should best perform their duties.

MR. HARDY: — Under the application to labour relations boards under section 5, you had some unfair labour practices. I see there were 4,814 granted and 14 dismissed. Could you give me the names of the ones granted and the ones dismissed?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — The records of the labour relations board will obviously have all of those over that calendar year. If you are talking about that particular fiscal year, yes, we can provide you with the number of applications, or the number of unfair labour practices which were alleged and those which were dropped, and those which were proceeded with. But we don't have the records of the labour relations board with us. We can probably provide that information to you. Yes, we'll provide that for you if that's good enough. We'll get it to you by mail.

MR. HARDY: — And the cost of administering it?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — There's just no way on God's green earth that we could attempt to measure the time of the labour relations board in adjudicating a particular unfair labour practice. They might handle one unfair labour practice charge or a dozen along with the applications for certification and rescission and amending orders and all of that. It's all part of an overall cost, and it wouldn't be possible to break down the cost of processing an unfair labour practice. It just wouldn't be possible.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Chairman, we can continue down the numbers if you like, with permission, so that if we spot something as we go back we can refer to it.

Item 1 agreed.

Item 2

MR. KATZMAN: — Regarding policy planning and research, over the past few years we've heard about several different things you were working on. Is there any specific issue you are working on now?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, I think it has to be said that the policy planning and research people are the ones who, first of all, do the ongoing research for the department on various policy decisions made with respect to a host of things. In addition to that, they produce our publications; they do our annual report and do the internal planning and research which goes into the normal scheme of things. The

description there, if you like, from the annual report, details quite clearly the division responsible for dissemination of information as a result of research. The findings of many studies and surveys are published, as are several annual and semi-annual reports; in most cases these reports are free of charge to the public. We have a policy planning unit, collective bargaining analysis unit, and data dissemination unit. The collective bargaining calendar shows the expiration of collective agreements and there is a host of other publications. They are used by both the trade union movement and by management and are part of the duties and responsibilities of policy planning and research.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, do you have a list other than what you just referred to, so if a person wanted some of these briefs they could just get hold of your deputy or whoever to get hold of it? And where do they get the list from?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, we can give you a list of all of the publications produced and even put you on our mailing list if you're not now. I rather thought you might be. We'll provide a list of all the weekly and annual publications which are being provided. We can see that you get a copy.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Minister, I want to go back to item 1. I understand that there was some kind of an informal agreement. It's nothing all that serious, at least in terms of the question. The answer might make the issue more serious. I want to just ask some questions in regard to the most recent labour force figures, which I have before me, for the province of Saskatchewan. I see that there's a decline in the total labour force of some 4,000. As well, Mr. Minister, I note that there's a decline in the number of employed by some 7,000. The unemployed are up 3,000, giving you an unemployment figure of 6.7 per cent, representing the highest unemployment figure that you've had since March, 1979. If we consider that, you have a very high unemployment figure, given that the labour force had remained at what it was or increased, which you would think it would normally do if there's a great flow of people into the province (there isn't, but you people seem to think there is; there are a few people trickling over the border). With these renewed opportunities we talk about for the youth, there should be an expanding labour force in the province of Saskatchewan. If there were an expanding labour force, I would think that your unemployment figure would be looking more like 7.5 per cent. So, I would just ask you to explain away, if you can, how it is that you have the highest unemployment figure, at 6.7 per cent, that you've had since March 1979 even though the labour force declined by 4,000 people.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — There's an old story that says that figures don't lie but liars figure a good deal. You can take any set of circumstances and build them around the case which you wish to make. That's obviously what the member is attempting to do. You've taken a very select set of figures. You've taken a one-month summary and have attempted to indicate a trend.

Let me do something more comprehensive for you. Let me give you an indication of the non-agricultural labour force in Saskatchewan: 1975, 260,000; 1976, 285,000; 1977, 294,000; 1978, 299,000; 1979, 316,000; 1980, 335,000. You've taken a monthly fluctuation at a point in time when the construction industry is in a bit of a doldrum because of interest rates and the weather conditions which fall upon us every year about this time, and attempt to indicate that somehow a disaster has fallen upon Saskatchewan. You've taken the statistics and you've abused them — in such a way as to create an image which is totally untrue. The labour force, as compared to one year ago at this time, is up. I don't have the figures with me, but there's an increase in the labour

April 6, 1981

force of several thousand, over and above what it was one year ago.

No doubt, right at this moment, we have the highest unemployment which we've had in a good many years. Saskatchewan has either been the lowest or the second lowest with unemployment figures for as long as we can remember. There has been one report only which showed British Columbia to have a lower unemployment figure than Saskatchewan. I'm rather inclined to expect that, by next month at this time, that will be reversed. Alberta's unemployment rate will be the lowest in Canada. Saskatchewan's will be the second lowest. B.C.'s will be the third lowest. I may be wrong on that, but I'm willing to venture a guess that that will be the case. The fact of the matter is that Saskatchewan's labour force has been growing. In a very few years, we are going to have a population in Saskatchewan which will exceed 1 million and the labour force is going to go up comparatively.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, Mr. Vice-Chairman, your labour force has only gone up about 15,000 in total since March, 1975. I would just ask a simple question: is the 6.7 per cent unemployment figure the highest monthly reported figure since March, 1979?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I don't know, but I would rather venture a guess that likely it is the highest since March, 1979. Yes, I think I would be willing to bet that's probably the case.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, of course, you would be willing to bet, because I'm using your own statistics. The point I am making is that you have a very high unemployment rate figure given the minimal increase in your labour force over a two-year period. I ask you: how does that reflect the so-called economic boom we're supposed to have in the province of Saskatchewan? How does it reflect that? Obviously the economic boom that we have here in Saskatchewan is not filtering down to the average labourer in Saskatchewan. He is obviously not getting the benefits of this economic boom because you have a rising unemployment figure here in Saskatchewan, given this minimal population that we have here. You don't have the problem that Alberta has. You don't have the problems that the federal government has with a labour force which is increasing dramatically. And their employment opportunities are not being met, understandably, because the government can't find jobs as fast as the labour force is expanding. I'm telling you that you don't have the problem the federal government has, nor the problem Alberta has. You have a very simple problem of a very stagnant population which doesn't increase very much and, therefore, the total labour force doesn't increase very much. Despite those two very beneficial factors, Mr. Minister, you have a rising unemployment figure, and I say it's a damnation on the Department of Labour's policies.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — The member obviously would revel in the fact of a higher unemployment rate — that would really cheer the member up and really warm the cockles of his heart. The fact of the matter is, we've had an unemployment rate here, on the average, that has been for 1979, 4.2 per cent. I don't expect the averages for the years 1980 and 1981 to be much different than that. Probably we may even be somewhat better than that. But, in total, our unemployment picture has been either the best or the second best and we expect that is going to continue.

You have taken the seasonal fluctuation of one month — and this has been the only month, during the period of time that the member for Moosomin has sat in the House, when he's been able to grab hold of any set of statistics, which may be entirely accurate, or may be the result of some survey which has been done on a rather restricted basis, to

April 6, 1981

make his point. But we'll wait until next month's figures are down; obviously the seasonally adjusted rate for Saskatchewan tells you a different figure than is apparent on the face of it. But on the average, 1979 was a pretty respectable 4.2 per cent, the second lowest in the whole of Canada.

The hon. member seems to derive pleasure out of the fact that for one single month out of 12, the indication seems to be somewhat over and above the year before, notwithstanding the fact that there are more people in the labour force by several thousand, than was the case a year ago at this time. I say if he gets his bangs in that way, then he's entitled to them. But, it's a matter of using statistics in a very select way, and that's what the hon. member has been doing. It won't stand up, nor will it serve you well in the long haul.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Vice-Chairman, I must say that the Minister of Labour with his "cockles of my heart" has surpassed the little saying that we got one day from the Premier — "jot and the tittle." Well, nonetheless, the point of the matter is very simple and is clearly understood by all other members of the Assembly: you have a problem here in Saskatchewan. The audacity for you as Minister of Labour to stand up and say: "Well, you know we've got a lower unemployment rate here in Saskatchewan than in any other province"! I don't know why you would use that argument when I had just finished explaining away to you — and you should have understood — that you should have a lower unemployment rate in Saskatchewan than in other provinces in Canada. So you should, because you don't have the population growth which other places in this country do. My goodness, there are more people going to Calgary in a month than come to Saskatchewan in a whole year, I should think. And I'm just running off the top of my head with that figure; whether that's accurate or not, I don't know. I would highly expect it would be, Mr. Minister. Since we are trying to find where these employed and unemployed are. I want to refer you to some figures here. (I see we have the Government Whip awake; that's nice. He's been sleeping for the last hour and a half. I don't know whether to take that as a compliment or not, Mr. Chairman, but it's nice to see him awake at least.) Now, Mr. Minister, I want to just ask you something (there's likely an explanation for this) and I ask this in a sincere and friendly way. I see that your statistics here indicate that your total of non-agricultural industry employees is 280,700. Well, I'm just taking a look at the figures out of your own department where it states that total . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon?

What's this? I have to show you the book and everything, do I? My goodness. It's the *Monthly Statistical Review*. All right, you have a lot of people working for you. These boys don't even help me. I have to do it on my own, Mr. Chairman.

Look, in the month of September the number of employed people is 429,000. Okay? Now, total non-agricultural industries employed (same month, same year) 280,700. Now I subtract. I take 429,000, subtract 280,700, and I get 148,300 people. Now, where are they employed? Are the farmers considered as employed people in your statistics? Are the people in agriculture-related industries considered employed? I'd like to know, you know, what those 148,300 are considered. They are not part of the total in agricultural industries. They are not in non-agricultural industries. So am I to assume that those 148,300 are in agriculture-related industries, and do they include farmers? Are they included in your statistics or not?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I am not sure whether I understand the full import of that rambling question. Obviously the question that you asked was whether the people who are described in the non-agricultural labour force were working in agriculture. The

April 6, 1981

answer to that is, obviously, no. That was one of the questions that I thought you asked with real depth and perception. Obviously, the non-agricultural labour force is what it indicates. It's a non-agricultural labour force.

You should have a look, too, at the budget speech, which indicates population growth. The hon. member seems to believe that our population is declining and he indicated while he was on his feet that, somehow or other, Saskatchewan had some real troubles. Well, let me tell you that there are other provinces that just wish very dearly that they had the kind of problems Saskatchewan has. It shows Saskatchewan in 1971 with a population of 926,000. By 1972 there was a slight decline before it started its upward climb. At the present time it shows in 1980 our population having risen to 969,000. If somehow the hon. member can term that a decline in population, a decline in labour force, then he's having as much trouble reading statistics and figures as the hon. member for Rosthern is in his reading of press reports from the Moncton newspapers. The cold hard facts are that Saskatchewan has enjoyed an increase in the labour force a very marked way; the population has increased from 926,000 in 1971 to 979,000 in 1980. And he attempts to draw pleasure from the fact that, somehow or other, statistics indicate, for this one single month, an increase in the unemployment rate — which, I believe, will be proven to be something less than the statistical figures by the time next month's figures are released.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, you know, my second line of questioning was totally unrelated to the first, and I find it most interesting that the Minister of Labour felt it necessary to come back and defend the government on the initial question. Obviously there's something there to be defended or he wouldn't be going right back to it. I wish, Mr. Minister, you would have answered my second question. And if I have to tell you, it's on page 2. If you look at page 2 — can you do that? Have you got this book with you or not? You don't have the statistical review? Well, I asked you to answer the question . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He can have this; I have it all marked out for him. Now, Mr. Minister, it's all marked out for you. I can remember the figures.

You'll see the 138,000 figure written there. That figure is the total employment in non-agriculture-related industries, subtracted from that other circled number higher up in the first left-hand column, which is the total number of employed people. So, that 138,000 figure represents employed people, but they are not part of the total agriculture-related jobs. Where are those 138,300 people employed? Can you tell me that? I want to know. Are they in the agriculture-related industries or aren't they? It's not too hard to figure out. I have it all circled and marked out for you.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — You asked where those 138,300 people are employed. Your answer is obviously in mining, forestry, milling, manufacturing, construction transportation, trade, finance, insurance, real estate, community business, personal services, public administration, defence, and total non-agricultural industry. You have to get down to the base of this thing.

This is a document which is distributed by the bureau of statistics — the *Monthly Statistical Review*, which is not a Department of Labour document, for starters. That is why I'm having a little difficulty. If you had been referring to a document for which we have some responsibility, we might have it with us and be able to answer with more clarity the questions you are asking. Obviously, if you believe that this is a Department of Labour document, you're entirely wrong. It's not produced by the Department of Labour.

April 6, 1981

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, the government uses the *Monthly Statistical Review* quite often for their own benefit. It's a Government of Saskatchewan document. Certainly you must have some confidence in other departments of your own government. Surely, you must.

You talk about the member for Rosthern not being able to understand something. In all, your critical comments about him I suggest you have to be really thick, like fog in London, or something. I've given you the figures.

For September, 1980, it says 446,000 — that's the first column on the left. That's the total labour force. Across from that it says 429,000 — those are employed. Now, down further, it says "estimate of employees by industry — total non-agricultural industries, 280,700." You subtract 280,700 from 429,000 and you come up with a number of employees, 138,300, who are employed somewhere. I want to know where they are employed. That is a simple question. It should require a simple answer. It's simple mathematics. I have a calculator I can slip across, too, if you like.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I don't know what kind of a precise answer the hon. member is suggesting. He indicates first of all 429,000 employees with 280,700 in non-agricultural industries. Simple mathematics provides 148,200 in the agricultural industry. Obviously, they're in support services or in agriculture generally. I'm not part of the bureau of statistics, nor do I attempt to make a judgment of where each and every one is employed. I think that's a rather ludicrous kind of a question to be asking me at this stage.

Just how I supposed to discern in what agricultural performance the 148,300 are employed? Am I supposed to be telling you whether they are involved in the dairy industry, or in some other undertaking? That's a ludicrous question to be asking me at this stage.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Minister, you think the question is ludicrous. The answer seemed very ludicrous to us as well.

A few minutes ago you indicated that the total non-agricultural industries had grown from some 280,000 (I can't recall the exact figure) to 335,000. How do you obtain the figure 335,000 on agricultural when that report says 280,000?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I am not at all sure what the question is that the member is asking. I can give him some figures on labour force statistics, which obviously fluctuate from month to month and from year to year. The statistical information which is most recent is that of January 17, 1981, showing a total labour force of 436,000. In December 1980, which is the closest comparison, it was 434,000. On January 19, 1980 (one year earlier), it was 427,000. So it showed an increase from 427,000 in January 1980 to 436,000 in January 1981. I will agree with you that this produces principally nothing except figures which perhaps do not suit the member's purpose. They are a fluctuating set of circumstances. If you compare January 1981 to January 1980, you have an apt comparison. You have something to measure economics and the growth of the labour force by.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — It is too bad you didn't hear my question. I have exactly the same figures you just finished rattling off in this report. That is not the question I asked you. You indicated earlier, reading from some other report which you have in your hands

April 6, 1981

(and which we don't have) the total non-agricultural industry growth from 1975 right up to 1980. I don't recall what the first figure was, but I recall you saying that it was up to 335,000 in 1980, non-agricultural. In this report, it says 280,000 (1980). Now, I am using exactly the same year as you used; obviously you have figures which we don't have. I am asking you to account for the difference between 280,000 and 335,000. The question is very, very simple. It has absolutely nothing to do with the total labour force which you have just been rattling on about.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — These figures are derived from Statistics Canada. The figures which I gave you showing 335,000 as the non-agricultural employed labour force are Statistics Canada figures. They show the year 1980 at 335,000; 1979 at 316,000; 1978 at 299,000; and one year previous to that, 1977 at 294,000. They are Statistics Canada figures and those are the figures which we use.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — My next question is this: where did we get the figure of 280,000 which is in this report? There is a difference, Mr. Minister, and that's what I just can't seem to get across to you. You have one set of statistics and your government is printing in the monthly statistical report another set of figures. I want to know how you account for the difference? I heard your reply earlier and that is why I brought it up, because the report here shows 280,000. The report you are quoting from (from StatsCanada) shows 335,000. Now let's have some accountability on the difference of 55,000 employees.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — You have to take into consideration that when you have an opportunity to question the bureau of statistics, it will have to give you the justifications for the figures that it is providing to you. I'm taking full responsibility for the statistics that we are providing here on the basis of Statistics Canada. I don't know under what terms and conditions or upon what basis the bureau of statistics arrived at the figure you draw attention to. I don't know whether it is using a different definition of the employed labour force or not. What I am hanging my hat on, and taking responsibility for, are the figures published here with respect to the Statistics Canada figures which we use on an ongoing basis. Accordingly, I am not able to reconcile the differences between the figure you show of 280,700 in 1980 as compared to the 335,000. We'll attempt to reconcile the two figures and give them to you because quite frankly I am not in a position to do it. I am not a statistician, nor are the people who are seated with me in a position to give you the statistical review or the rationale for the figures from the bureau of statistics. We use Statistics Canada figures as the basis of our information; they'll obviously be able to give you a judgment as to how they arrived at that figure. I am in a position where I am not able, without going back to the department to determine how they arrived at their figure. No, I am not able to do that.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Minister, that's the answer I have been looking for all the time. Obviously there is an error. I don't know whether the error was in the StatsCan figures or whether the Government of Saskatchewan is producing the wrong figures in its monthly report. Obviously there is a reason. That's all I am asking. What is the reason for the difference between the two? My next question: does the Government of Saskatchewan get the statistics on labour from your department or from StatsCan? I would imagine it would get them from one or the other — in which case, if you are giving them the figures, then you gave them the 280,000; if StatsCan is giving them the figures, they would have received the figure of 335,000. How are they getting their figures for this report? You can provide the answer tomorrow, as far as I am concerned.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — You are directing that question to me and I've told you already

April 6, 1981

that I am not competent to answer that question. I am competent to answer and respond with regard to statistics that are used by the Department of Labour. I have indicated to you on several occasions that we use Statistics Canada as a basis for this information that provides the figures I have given you. I can't tell you how to reconcile the figure that shows 280,700 compared to 335,000 and I can't tell you any more than we'll attempt to determine where the distinction lies. I can't tell you at this stage.

MR. BERNTSON: — On the index page of the *Monthly Statistical Review* it says:

Statistics provided in the following tables have been obtained from Statistics Canada publications and other reliable sources.

Would you indicate to this House whether or not your department provided any statistics to the monthly statistical review people in the bureau of statistics?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — My people tell me that they are not aware of any statistical information being provided. As is indicated here, the people who produce this document use, presumably, the same statistical information as is provided to us. I can't tell you why the two figures are not reconciled, but we'll attempt to find out and let you know the distinction between the two.

MR. BERNTSON: — You will find out and let us know the distinction between the two? That's it.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — One more question. I know it's getting late, but I just want to ask this question . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You can leave any time you like. These are Statistics Canada figures as well, because they are the same figures you quoted. I just want to know how you arrive at the different labour force totals for month to month? August, for example, shows 464,000. I realize in August you have all the students out working, so that would account for that increase in labour force. But how does it fluctuate between December, January, February, from 434,000 up to 436,000 down to 432,000? Why that fluctuation in those three months? If you want to give it to me tomorrow I'm happy; I'm going home, too.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I can't tell the hon. member how we justify it. Obviously it's done by taking a sampling as all of Statistics Canada material does. The fluctuation between January, February and March — I'm not sure that I'm even going to attempt to analyse or discuss with you or attempt to justify statistical information that's made available from that source. Obviously there's a perfect valid reason for the decline in the sampling that they take in each month in order to make their estimate or the determination of how many people are in the labour force. Obviously, the decline has something to do with climatic conditions, and when people in the workforce re-enter school in September of each year you see a remarkable drop. That always plays a very major part in the statistical figures. But I can't be more precise than that, nor should I be.

I can't tell you why, on each and every occasion, there's a variation from February to March and April. Oftentimes it's climatic conditions. Sometimes it's a re-entry of workers into the school force, and a host of other considerations that I can't begin to imagine, but will attempt to find out and enlighten you.

Item 2 agreed.

April 6, 1981

Items 3 to 6 inclusive agreed.

Item 7

MR. KATZMAN: — Item 7, Mr. Chairman. I sent over to the associate deputy minister a newspaper clipping of Tuesday, March 17, and the reason it was sent over is . . . The article explains the PCB problem. The building is basically being contaminated. My concern is: have we got any situations that may be coming in Saskatchewan like that? And of course, I refer to the old, I think it's called, MacCosham's or McKee's building in Saskatoon which now houses the city of Saskatoon's purchasing department. The basement of that building, in my understanding, is creating considerable occupational health problems.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well the hon. member will know that they are having some difficulties connected with that building dating back some period of time. There have been rather remarkable efforts made and inspections that have taken place — broadloom laid, steam cleaning done, and a spraying of the walls under high-pressure water in an attempt to decontaminate, if you like. During the winter months, I am given to understand that in spite of all of the problems which manifested themselves in the summer. They seemed to die down during the winter months. It may very well be that this building cannot be refitted and refurbished in such a way as to make it habitable. Our occupational health people have been in close touch with the officials of the city of Saskatoon. A number of corrective orders have been put in place and some genuine effort has been made to clean that building up and make it habitable. Our people will be watching the occupational health and safety people very closely, in order to make a determination as to whether those problems manifest themselves again when the hot weather arrives. If they do, and there's no possibility of making that building usable without causing continuing difficulties, then I expect the building will have to be phased out entirely.

MR. KATZMAN: — In other words, you are (just to make it clear to myself) prepared to recommend that that building not be used if, this summer, the problems which they've tried very diligently to correct cannot be beaten?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Unless there is some method which can be utilized to restore it so that it's a safe and a fit building for human beings to work in, obviously those determinations will have to be made.

Item 7 agreed.

Items 8 to 10 inclusive agreed.

Vote 20 agreed.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW (SUPPLEMENTARY)

LABOUR

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 20

Item 1

MR. KATZMAN: — Could you tell me why you went over the budget and needed the extra amount?

April 6, 1981

HON. MR. SNYDER: —The safety services division is the largest subvote in the department, with a staff complement of 108.5 person-years. The majority of the staff in the subvote are inspectors. The turnover rate was low. What does this have to do with anything? Basically, I'm reading from an explanation which provides me with very little of anything.

I understand that the major expenditure had to do, at least in part, with the fire inspection which took place as a result of the large fire at the Gulf refinery in December 1980. Additional salary adjustments in the last contract, plus a further increase on October 1, 1980, plus the fire, make up the basic \$280,000 supplementary estimate.

Item 1 agreed.

Vote 20 agreed.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

April 6, 1981

CORRIGENDUM

The Debates and Proceedings for Wednesday, March 25, 1981, (N. S. Vol. XXIII. No. 30A) was inaccurate in failing to report third reading of the following bill:

Bill No. 40 — An Act Respecting the Establishment of the Wakamow Valley Authority

The Debates and Proceedings for Friday, March 27, 1981, (N. S. Vol. XXIII. No. 32A) was inaccurate in failing to report third reading of the following bills:

Bill No. 30 — An Act to amend The Vehicles Act (No. 2)

Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend The Department of Consumer Affairs Act

Bill No. 44 — An Act to amend The Consumer Products Warranties Act

Bill No. 31 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Insurance Act

Bill No. 11 — An Act to amend The Lloydminster Municipal Amalgamation Act, 1930

Bill No. 43 — An Act to amend The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources Act

Bill No. 37 — An Act to amend The Non-profit Corporations Act, with amendment.

The Debates and Proceedings for Monday March 30, 1981 (N.S. Vol. XXIII. No. 33A) was inaccurate in failing to report third reading of the following bills:

Bill No. 35 — An Act to amend The Small Claims Enforcement Act

Bill No. 3 — An Act to amend The Trustee Act

Bill No. 46 — An Act to amend The Highways Act

Bill No. 25 — An Act to amend The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act

Bill No. 33 — An Act to amend The Water Power Act, on division

Bill No. 23 — An Act to amend The Surrogate Court Act, with amendment

Bill No. 36 — An Act to amend The Land Titles Act, with amendment

Bill No. 49 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the change in the name of the Department of Consumer Affairs to the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, with amendment

Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend The Credit Union Act, with amendment, on division.

[The online version has been corrected]