

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Third Session — Nineteenth Legislature**

**Tuesday, April 14, 1981.**

**EVENING SESSION**

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW**

**CONSUMER AND COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS**

**Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 4**

**Item 1**

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I would like to first of all introduce to the legislature the staff present: Deputy Minister Lynne Pearson, Director of Administration Al Dwyer, and Director of Licensing and Investigation Mac McGillvray. We have other members of the staff. I will introduce them as they come forward. Thank you.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — I would like to join the minister in welcoming his officials to the Assembly tonight. I am sure that they are going to enjoy the proceedings. I suppose the minister is hoping that it won't take too long. By the looks of the smiles of his officials, they're hoping it will take the whole evening. I hope that we can keep the smiles on everyone across the way, although I must confess that I have some things to say which aren't pleasant and don't warrant a smile.

I want to, Mr. Vice-Chairman, point out the minister obviously isn't aware that his Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs touches on everyone in the province of Saskatchewan. As a matter of fact, it touches on more people than do the co-operatives. It really does, Mr. Vice-Chairman, the Assembly realizes that each and every one of us is a consumer in one way or another. In these times of inflation, in these times of high interest rates, in these times of rising costs at every level, it seems obvious to me just by your own documents . . . Given the fact we're supposed to be up to our necks in a buoyant economy here in Saskatchewan, what do you see fit to allot to the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs? The sum of \$4 million! Now, how that makes any sense to the poor consumer out there who is right with his back against the wall wondering how he's going to make ends meet the next day, and how your department can justify an expenditure of that nature is beyond me. There aren't any members in this Assembly, bar but a few, who aren't themselves faced with a difficult situation 365 days of the year in terms of their financial arrangements, in terms of making ends meet (to use the old cliché). So you can well imagine what the plight of the poor individual in Saskatchewan is at this point in time.

I think that that seems to be the very basis of my argument at this time. I say argument because if that's the only amount of money that you have to expend on consumer and commercial affairs, then you obviously aren't concerned. Now maybe you're like great people of the past and can take that nothing and spread it among thousands; maybe you are, I don't know. But how you take that paltry sum of money from this buoyant economy that we're supposed to have, and spread that out to be an effective means as a department to assist Saskatchewan people in combatting inflation, rising prices, rising interest rates, is beyond me. Now, it's going to be interesting, it's going to be very interesting.

I'll tell you another thing, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and I want you to listen because these are very important comments, and you should be aware of them, as well as the minister. It's a very important thing to note how this legislature, in particular the government (and even if we said the legislature, that's more on your side than ours, so we'd be less guilty by a long shot) views the Department of Consumer Affairs – it's rather a nothing department. That's the attitude – "We'll hold the big departments back." Just look at what we're doing. After all, we've held social services off quite a while. I suppose you're trying to give the minister all the time he needs. He's trying to conjure up in his mind all the arguments that the government is going to lay on him. Well, I tell you, you haven't a mind big enough to encompass them. And there are going to be a lot. But the point is this: the important departments that should be under review are being held to the last. Consumer affairs – "Well, that's not important; we'll slip that through some evening in the legislature. We'll just slip that one through. That's not important." That's what you people are saying. Those are your tactics. We don't call the shots on this side of the House – you people do.

If you wanted to place a priority in the Department of Consumer Affairs, you would have put some money in it. You would have put some teeth in it, and you would have brought it before the House at a time when it would have been recognized – but you didn't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I'd maybe make a good preacher, and you would take a lot of preaching to, too.

Now, Mr. Minister, I want to sit down and relax and enjoy a cup of coffee and listen to how you are going to justify that small amount of money for the Department of Consumer Affairs, considering you are supposed to have a buoyant economy. You have all this money, but you don't have anything to recognize the plight of the consumers or the people of Saskatchewan.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Well, Mr. Vice-Chairman, I am rather surprised a bit at the opening remarks of the member – surprised because it comes from that particular party. When we look across the country and the world, we find that there's a conservative movement going on in the United States under President Reagan. The direction that he is taking (and I would have thought the hon. member would have been in tune with that) is in fact a total relaxation, an easing of auto regulations and of environmental controls. Exactly the same situation is taking place over in Great Britain. I want to say that here in Saskatchewan with the department, I have, during the period of time that I have been minister, discovered a very important factor, namely, if the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs has the capacity to work with the consumer and in co-operation with the business community, there is no need for a tremendous amount of policing and overregulating. What we need is a continuation of what this department has been doing. Of course, there are areas of concern and areas where we may, in fact, increase the amount of particular protection. I think that a part of what we have been able to do is due to the efficiency and dedication of the staff in mutual co-operation of the department with the business community. It is perfectly clear to the member that the new department is in its formative stages and obviously, as the pieces are brought together into the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, the emphasis and the directions that we'll take will develop over a period of time and should not happen without planning and direction. Accordingly, I feel that the overall protection that we're giving to consumers stacks up well with other jurisdictions. I think that the consumer is generally satisfied and the business community has been able to work in conjunction with us.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Mr. Vice-Chairman, for anyone who listening, they know without a shadow of a doubt that the minister just said nothing. He just made a lot of noise and he said literally nothing in terms of answering the very serious question that I have addressed to you as minister. It is a very serious question. Again, it just highlights exactly what I said. You people don't take the Department of Consumer Affairs seriously. You don't take it seriously.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Sure we do; sure we do.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — The member for Moose Jaw says, "Yes, sure we do; sure we do." Lip service, that's all you're paying. The minister who's responsible for consumer affairs (it should be noted to all hon. members) was, in fact, the minister of social services. Prior to him, the Minister of Health was the minister of social services. It took the Minister of Health, the Minister of Consumer Affairs and the member for Shaunavon, who is the current Minister of Social Services — three ministers — two years to put one program together. Can you call that efficiency? I tell you it's the height of inefficiency and incompetence. That, Mr. Vice-Chairman, is what we're finding on a daily basis with this government — irresponsibility and inconsistency. They have lost their feeling for the people of Saskatchewan.

I've got letters in my office, Mr. Vice-Chairman, right now that are saying exactly that. This government isn't the same government the old CCF used to be, the one that had some compassion for the average individual in Saskatchewan. Oh no, and they're not. For those old CCFers out there who used to support your party (and I can say it and I've said it many times in this House) the CCF Party has done more for the province of Saskatchewan than any other party in the history of this province. That's the CCF.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — That's right and I'll remember the echoes in these hallowed halls of your desk thumping when I said the CCF. You boys, the NDP, can't take credit for what the CCF did, although I note that that's what you do on a daily basis. You're constantly living in the past and are going over all the old programs that were introduced by the CCF — all those wonderful things that happened yesterday. What about today? What about tomorrow, I say to you? What about tomorrow? That's what the people of Saskatchewan want to know. Are they looking to the New Democratic Party to form the new Saskatchewan? I tell you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, no they are not. They're looking to the Progressive Conservatives — progressive. Why even your own people in Manitoba have caught on that the NDP is a regressive party, one that looks always behind, always to the past. Some of their members have broken ranks. Look at what they've done. They've taken the progressive name; maybe they, themselves, intend to be progressive. Maybe they do.

Well, Mr. Vice-Chairman and Mr. Minister, I want to go back to some of your comments that virtually said nothing. And that's what you people do constantly — rhetoric, rhetoric and more rhetoric. I tell you that as a man, as a minister, you are full of rhetoric. I tell you and the Minister of Labor that you're full of rhetoric, too, when it comes to dealing with labor problems. Rhetoric — it is nothing short of it. It's nothing short of a tree with branches in full blossom that has no roots. The roots to your party were the CCF that was alive and well and strong and had a grip in this province, but not the NDP — not the NDP.

Now, Mr. Minister, you have to go back to your old arguments of rhetoric. "Well, we think we're doing as well in this department as the other provinces and other jurisdictions." I tell you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, for each and every department in this government, this province and the people in this province deserve better. They expect more than the other provinces because you, yourselves, are the ones who say that we have a great potential. But your Premier, at least, is honest enough to say that it will be 10 to 15 years before this potential benefit will eventually siphon down to the average man and woman on the street. And that's a fact. I agree with him on that. He admits that, when he's addressing the special joint committee on the constitution. But when he's here in Saskatchewan, oh, it's a different story. "We're buoyant; our economy is stable; our unemployment is very stable. We don't have an unemployment problem." I tell you we've already proved that, in the Department of Labor questioning. You have a labor problem all right – an unemployment problem. That is something to which you people haven't been able to address yourselves. You've been sitting there with no people coming in. There have been no pressures put on you by an expanding population. And you haven't, even at that, been able to handle the current problems with all this so-called money you're supposed to have.

For you to get up and say, "Well, we're doing as well . . ." How well are you doing? In the budget speech, what did the Minister of Finance have to say about consumer affairs?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Nothing.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — That's about it – nothing. He says in 1981 we will take new measures to protect Saskatchewan consumers. Recently this government established a new Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. Now, the minister just said a few moments ago that it's in the formulative stages. Look, Mr. Vice-Chairman, if it takes him that long to put that department together so it's functioning well for the people of Saskatchewan, we can expect that it won't really become effective for another two years – if it's anything like your in-home care program. That wasn't the grassroots peoples' fault; that wasn't the local boards; that wasn't my constituents and Graham Taylor's constituents; that was because of the mismanagement and the bureaucratic bumbling idiots you had in the Department of Social Services. The same thing is going to happen in consumer affairs – the same thing.

Why isn't the former minister responsible for SGI here? Why isn't he? Check *Hansard* and find out – because the poor civil servant got caught in a conflict of interests on a mediation board. Yes sir. He was let go – zap, out he goes to be replaced by one of that hon. member's campaign workers. That's why he went. Now, that's a fact; that's on the record.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Oh.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — "Oh," – never mind "oh" ing to me. That's on the record of this Assembly. The Premier said, "Hey, we can't have one of our ministers being trapped up by the opposition like that. No siree." Poor Ed is gone. He's not here now. What about Neil? I often wonder what the member for Kelvington-Wadena did. What did he do wrong? You know he must have done something. They tripped him up and booted him out. What about the former speaker of this very legislature? What happened to him? You dumped him off at his riding. "Hey, enough for you; you've had a ride; you've had the good times – not any more." It is this kind of political fooling around at the senior level which is costing the people of Saskatchewan literally millions of dollars. There is proof

positive in SGI and a whole array of other departments.

I should tell you that the stack of brown envelopes which comes with no signatures attached is growing. I don't know what we're going to do with it all. You may have to allot us new quarters. I understand you are working on some; I suppose we will have more room then. It's coming; it is coming all the time, and at a growing rate. The minister is sitting there; he can't understand, he doesn't know what I'm talking about. But I will tell you very simply what we're talking about. We are talking about you as minister responsible for consumer affairs. What are you doing.

I will tell you what it must have been: it must have been that the competition was too great. That's what the reasoning of the Minister of Social Services was when there were cries that there wasn't enough money for social services. He said, "Well, I have just been recently appointed the minister, and I'm in a competitive position with the other ministers of cabinet, and I'm sorry I wasn't able to achieve the amount of funds that I would have liked to have for my department." Now he says there's lots of money. The Minister of Social Services says there's lots of money for social services. We'll see when we get to that department; we'll see how much money you really have.

The fact of the matter is that you boys over there in your cabinet are in competition with each other for funds for the various departments. And if the consolidated fund of the province of Saskatchewan, which is fed 70 cents on the dollar by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, is being left to a potato scramble – a mad scramble between cabinet ministers for those funds – then I say we have come to a sad state in the province of Saskatchewan. You should be recognizing which department requires a priority, which one requires adequate funding, and which one could do with less funding on a priority basis. It's that simple.

I'm looking at the Department of Consumer Affairs, and I'm telling you, Mr. Minister, you have short-changed that department. And I'm asking you why. Was it because you had too much competition in your cabinet? If that's your answer, I could agree with you on that. No problem there. But I want to go right back to it. I tell you for the people of Saskatchewan's benefit, for the benefit of this Assembly, you have a responsibility to try to explain in some reasonable way why this department is entitled to \$4 million. Now with that I'm going to give you another try.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — The opening remarks again leave me with some humor, really. The hon. member indicates the New Democratic Party is not the old CCF. I would like to indicate to him that for a party to be elected as one was in Quebec last night, there has to be a meeting of minds with the people. I want to say that our electoral success speaks well for us, and certainly we are able to meet the aspirations of a great majority of Saskatchewan people and we will continue to.

I want to say that we live in a unique province – unique in its structure, unique in its economic development. We have in Saskatchewan, as nowhere else, a mixed economy with a substantial amount of the public sector in competition and working along side the private sector. This province is not subject to the uncontrolled free enterprise which exists in some other parts of the country. I want to say that with the presence of the public sector we are able to work with the labor force. We are able to develop the finest labor legislation. We are, through the housing corporation, able to meet some of the needs of the public. Government has not been afraid, through all the departments of government in this province, to reach out and meet the needs of the public. If the basic

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needs of the public are respected and met, it seems to me that the government is meeting the aspirations and the purpose for which it was elected.

The department's overall increase in funds was proportional to that of any other department in government. It rose from \$3,668,460 to over \$4,094,000, which represents 11.6 per cent. We have initiated programs in respect to the consumers in a new money management program. We have a greater production of further information which is more effective and an extension service helping consumers obtain information in order to function better in the market place. We are establishing a P.A. office. In the commercial field, we are reviewing the legislation in respect to the securities commission.

I think the member across the way is blowing and blustering but not really making any significant sense because, as I said before, what we do not want to do is overregulate for the benefit of the consumer at the expense of the business community. Presumably that's what the hon. member is saying: "Put more stringent legislation into place and tie the hands of business," rather than work toward, as I indicated, what we think is a pretty effective co-operative arrangement between the consumer and the business community.

I'm not saying that the department will be or is static. I think that there are new problems confronting the consumer, certainly as we enter the electronic age. We are cognizant of those changes, and aware that the consumer often needs protection. This is the area in which we have been working, and will continue to work. I feel that on balance, with the nature and the type of government that we have, he is indicating that we go back to the old clichés. In our society in Saskatchewan, the overall protection of government involvement, both in the economic and in the governmental aspect, has already given a very great deal of support to the public. I would think that in the area of distribution of wealth we have programs in place which will distribute wealth throughout Saskatchewan to people at the various levels of income. The record of this government is self-evident. And I think that it will be once more endorsed when the election comes. I will be prepared to go on the record of this government and the record of this department.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Mr. Vice-Chairman, I'd like to very briefly review some of the comments. For the member to be so misinformed as to think that the NDP and the CCF are anything alike is totally absurd. I would just point out to the minister that I suppose the best analogy is this: to those people who for many years supported the old CCF party, the NDP is about as much CCF today as the Liberal Party in this country is a right-of-centre party. It isn't. The Liberal Party is as far left as you people are, which has made it very easy for you to sneak into bed with them. In fact, you didn't even sneak; you jumped in with both feet in broad daylight.

What are the comments of the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg? He says that the Parti Quebecois victory is a wonderful thing. Socialist! It's very interesting that the NDP in Saskatchewan sees itself as a protege of the separatist Parti Quebecois. Isn't that an interesting comment? Isn't that an interesting insinuation that the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg left with our Assembly tonight? You know, that doesn't surprise me any more than these people being in there with the Liberals does. It doesn't surprise me at all. The Premier tried jumping in, but he couldn't get in because Ed got there first. It's a sickening thing, really, when you think about it.

Mr. Minister, you're very contradictory. You talk about regulations and you contradict

yourself. You say that I'm suggesting that we have more regulations. I don't remember talking about more regulations. I didn't even say that. Of course, *Hansard*, again, will verify that. I didn't even mention the word "regulation." You used it as a means of attempting to defend that paltry \$4 million. That's the position you're in.

At the very end of your comments, what do you say? You say, "We have more programs in place." Well, how do you have a program if you don't have a regulation? Do you have a bunch of programs out there without any regulations? Are you saying that your programs in the Department of Consumer Affairs don't have regulations or guidelines? You talk about a concern for regulations, and then turn around and tell me that you have more programs in place. There's no consistency, whatsoever, in your comments, none whatsoever.

I want to lead into a real concern which the consumers of this province have. Before I get into that, though, I want to ask you a very simple question. Are you prepared to go on record here tonight and say that the amount of money which you have budgeted for the year 1981 in the estimates is adequate in your judgment?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I want to comment, first of all, with respect to the rather superfluous comment which was raised in regard to the Parti Quebecois winning the election. I want to say that their victory was evidenced in Canada because they were a good government. That came from a large number of sources.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — How would you know? You wouldn't know the difference.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Good government? Oh, I've lived with it since 1975. It's easy to recognize it when you have an opportunity to work within it.

I don't think there is a contradiction in what I'm saying. I'm saying that, overall, as consumer protection increases substantially, it does require more legislation and more regulation. The hon. member is saying that he wants more consumer protection. What I am saying is that one of the ways it has been achieved (I indicated this by the United States auto industry) was by regulations. What happened there, as I indicated earlier, is that they have been decontrolling.

There were 34 regulations to be eased or eliminated. They ranged from auto bumper standards to various pollutant emission requirements. The administration also wants to scrap the fuel efficiency standards. All of that protection to consumers, in the United States, is the result of regulations.

What President Reagan is doing is taking off some 34 pollution and safety regulations, with respect to the auto industry. What I am saying is that we are attempting to meet a balance. Sure, one can move quickly into that area. Sure, there is a large number of consumers in society. But one must recognize a balance between the functioning of the business community and looking at the other aspect of providing the protection to the consumer. It seems to me that there has to be that balance.

I think we have done a good job in reaching that balance. With respect to the size of the budget, I want to say to the hon. member, as I said before, the increase in expenditure is relative to other departments. I am confident that with this budget we can, in fact, carry on the work. I think we can fulfill our commitment to the satisfaction of the consumer. I think that continuing as we have, working with the business community, we can develop a good working relationship which won't require a considerable number of

additional staff and additional bureaucracy.

Obviously, what the member is saying is, "Build up the department; get more staff; send them out to check the business community; regulate." What we are doing is providing a very substantial amount in providing information. We feel that an informed consumer will, in fact, do a considerable amount of his own protection. We feel that working in co-operation with the business community will enable us to resolve many of the problems which develop between consumer and vendor. This is the basic approach. I feel confident that the people of Saskatchewan will be well-served.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Obviously, again, anyone who was listening to the Minister of Consumer Affairs will know that this member is attempting to defend the main argument that I am making — you do not have enough funds in this department.

I have at no time, to this point, suggested overregulating or underregulating. I haven't talked about the Reagan administration yet. I didn't discuss the Parti Quebecois. I haven't been into any of those things yet. I just asked you a simple question, as Minister of Consumer Affairs, as to how you justify such a paltry sum of money. It was a simple, basic question.

In your very weak attempt to try to deflect the whole matter, what did you say? You said that I was advocating more consumer protection, which would mean more regulations, more bureaucracy. That's what you were saying. I didn't say that. I don't remember hearing myself say that. Well, don't put words in my mouth. I have enough that come out on their own. I don't need you to put them in my mouth. But then you turn around, and if everyone is listening he says, "ha, ha. What the member for Moosomin is attempting to do is get us on the same flight line that the U.S.A. is on. Deregulate. Deregulate."

Well, I might be talented, but I can't regulate on the one hand and deregulate on the other. Now, you can charge me with one or the other. And either way — whichever one you do — it is putting words in my mouth, because I didn't say either one of them. You could take either argument, but not both of them. And I think that's important for anybody who was listening carefully to what he said. He said I was going to (and I didn't, but he said I was going to) build up this Department of Consumer Affairs with an injection of mass expenditures into the department, overregulate it, fill it full of bureaucrats. Then he turned around and said, "What the member for Moosomin is advocating is deregulation as in the United States." Well, I mean really, how irresponsible! And isn't that the very issue I opened up on?

There is an irresponsible attitude sweeping the New Democratic government in the province of Saskatchewan. And it sure didn't miss the minister responsible for consumer affairs when it swept through. And I'm telling you again that on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, we're very concerned. On behalf of the consumers, we're concerned that you can't do a heck of a lot effectively with \$4 million.

Now, since you brought Reagan into it and the United States, if you want to know what they are attempting to do down there, I'll tell you. It's very simple. What they're attempting to do is to broaden the tax base. We have the second highest corporate tax here in the province of Saskatchewan of anywhere in this country. We have the third highest personal income tax level of anywhere in Canada. But we have that high tax level in Saskatchewan because you have narrowed the tax base. There are fewer and



fewer people paying more and more taxes.

I gave you the figures a while ago — 70 cents out of every dollar in the consolidated fund comes from hip national; 24 cents comes from the great resource policy of the New Democratic government . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 70 cents. Well, you mark that one down. And you try to answer that. What I'm telling you is that you've taken that wide tax base we used to have and squeezed it right up here like that, and it shot you boys clean to the top of a centralized government.

You say, looking down there, "Oh, the folks aren't raising enough money for consolidated fund. Well, then, we'll have to go into this business to generate capital ourselves." Very simply, Mr. Chairman, what this government has done (and it's reflected directly on the consumers) is removed the individual's ability to accumulate capital. When you do that, naturally an individual doesn't make any money. And when someone doesn't make any money, he doesn't pay any taxes. So if they don't pay any taxes, then the government is looking at their consolidated fund, and they're saying, "My goodness, we're short. Well, where are we going to get it? The people aren't generating wealth because we took away their incentives, so we'll have to go in and we'll have to generate it."

That, of course, is all in the master plan. That isn't something that happened by a stroke of genius or luck. It was a design set out on some three decades ago. And you're very effective at it. You've arrived at that point. That gives you the perfect reason to say, "Well, we have to generate wealth somewhere, so we'll have to go in and do it." So now you can go in and nationalize or take over businesses and get involved in the capital development, which individuals would do on their own if they were given the opportunity.

How does that reflect on the consumers? Very simply, it has removed the ability of an individual in society to effectively combat inflation, because he can't go out and make any more money since the opportunities aren't there. If the opportunities were there, he would be doing it — you can count on that — and you'd have a wide tax base. Then you wouldn't have all the problems in the consumer affairs department that you have. The people of Saskatchewan wouldn't have the problem that they have as consumers in this province, because they would be able, as individuals in society, to combat rising prices, inflation and higher interest rates. But they can't do it here in Saskatchewan. If you people were honest with me you would admit that you've run into a lot people who have just finally said, "Well, to heck with it. I'm not working from January to June just to pay my taxes." And they are not. That is the problem.

In the United States, the Reagan administration is going to attempt to broaden the tax base to give individuals in society the potential ability, at least, to combat inflation on their own. But you people wouldn't understand that. That is economics far and above what you would have the ability to comprehend.

I'll come back to my basic question. Obviously we are not going to get an answer as to why you can only see \$4 million as being the proper amount of money for the Department of Consumer Affairs. I asked you a point blank question which you didn't answer. I don't know whether Mr. Chairman took note of that or not, but you didn't answer it. I asked you to state categorically in this House whether, as far as you are concerned, as the minister responsible for consumer and commercial affairs, the funding as set out in this budget is adequate. This is a simple question. You can stand up and you don't have to make a speech. Stand up, look at your mike, and say, yes or no.

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That's simple – yes, or no. That's not too difficult. Now I want you to answer that question. Your officials are there. Talk to them. Say, "Hey, do you think the funding is adequate?" If it isn't, say so. Be honest. If you're honest you won't get into the kinds of problems that the minister responsible for SGI is in. So I want you to answer that question.

I want you to answer another question, too. I don't know whether you like math or not – maybe not – but you are a lawyer, so you must have done some studying. Do you have the first question marked down? I do want an answer. If I don't hear an answer I'll be coming back to ask you again. Now, I'd like to know if you know how many centimetres are in a foot. Mark that one down. I'd like to know if you know how many metres there are in 12 feet. Mark that down. If it was 50 above in Saskatchewan, what temperature would it be in Celsius? Have you any idea? If you had 10 pounds of anything, how many kilograms would that be? Do you have any idea? You are the minister responsible for consumer affairs. Those are the kinds of problems that the people of Saskatchewan are attempting to solve, and it's not easy. If you are the minister and you can't answer those questions, how do you expect the poor consumer to? There are three or four of them which I've given you there, and if you would have the answer just like that, then that's fine. So there are two questions. I want to know whether or not you think the funding is adequate. On the other question of metric and imperial conversions, I'd like to know if you know those answers.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate it if the hon. member would ask the questions, and I'll determine the answers. I want to go through it very slowly because there seems to be a problem in his comprehension. I was saying at the outset that there is an inconsistency in the whole approach; it is inconsistent with his being a member of the Tory party. Two principles that they work on are the uncontrolled free enterprise system and with that goes a lack of the essential regulation of that business community. I am saying that if you are going to have a considerable amount of consumer protection, what results in the development of that is (as was found out in the United States) that you have a considerable amount of regulations. Thirty-four alone in the car industry are being taken off.

I want to say that I rather resent the member's comment in saying that here in Saskatchewan what we have done, in effect, is taken away the incentive of the people of Saskatchewan. And I want to say that I differ with him. I think that the people of Saskatchewan are, and will continue to be, a very ambitious, very independent and very determined group – and very wise politically.

He wants to go into the area of inflation without seeking to find the cause. He uses inflation as his example, and one of the essential causes, as is put forth by economists, is government spending or overexpenditure. That has consistently been put forward. It has been put forward by the Tory party when they were running for office, and it has been (as I said) put forward by various economists across the country.

I want to say that under successive Liberal and Tory federal governments, we have had massive deficits in Ottawa. That's the cause of inflation: monetary irresponsibility. And I want to say that in Saskatchewan what we have done is have fiscal responsibility. We have brought in a balanced budget and I want to say that we are very proud of that balanced budget. Also, we are proud of the method of financing our programs, commensurate with that spending ability of this province. I think that in the form of government that we have here, and with the responsible manner of the planning and the staging of our economic development, we have been able to alleviate many of the

problems that have happened, for instance, in Alberta – problems of very rapid economic growth and as a consequence, a tremendous amount of social problems and upheaval. I want to say that Barclays Bank recently indicated that it wanted to come to Saskatchewan because of the future and prospect of that future. And one of the things they indicated was the way in which this government planned and staged its development, rather than wholesale unplanned development.

I want to say that as a consequence of the type of government we have in Saskatchewan a great amount of economic and social protection is provided to the people of this province. I want to say that in the whole area of housing and the programs that we have developed under Sask Housing, the renters' rebate, the mortgage rebate program, the property improvement program – a host of programs which have protected the individual, the consumer of services.

I want to say that in health care (and you won't like that), this is one of the few provinces in Canada where we are not charging the consumer a deterrent fee or a surcharge to receive health care. That is a responsible action of government and that is why we have been receiving the support the public has been giving to this party, the NDP, as it did previously to its predecessor, the CCF.

I want to say that I am confident in the fiscal management of this province. I am proud to be a member of treasury board. We will continue to strive to improve our department. I am confident, as I said, that we can fulfil the expectations of the public with respect to the budget which we have allotted to us.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — I'm not even going to reply to the member. There are a number of our members who apparently want to ask some questions. I will just simply say this: the minister is what I said he was in the beginning. He's totally irresponsible; he's totally blinded by the socialist myth that prevails over there and all that I've received in answer to my questions tonight has been a lot of philosophical, socialistic rhetoric that I've quite frankly heard enough of. He never answered one of my questions I asked here tonight. I'm going to let some of our other members attempt to get some answers out of him.

**MR. ANDREW:** — A question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I take it that, as minister responsible for the consumer, your responsibility also relates to the farming community in the province of Saskatchewan which I would assume you would class as one of your consumers. My question to you relates to the question that has arisen in the North Battleford area with regard to certain farmers. I'm sure you are aware of the situation without my having to lay it out.

Can you advise this Assembly, first, as to whether or not legislation will be coming down to protect those people, and I know the Minister of Agriculture has indicated that it would be, and, secondly, whether or not you are prepared to pick up some of the costs that those farmers are going to face with regard to the particular circumstances in North Battleford?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — As the hon. member has indicated, this question has been raised previously. I want to say the essential legislation that we have in the department is The Consumer's Product Warranties Act, which deals with consumer products.

With respect to agricultural products, they have been put under The Agricultural

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Implements Act. I think you're familiar with it – it details the type A contract and has other provisions for protection and repairs and so on. That is where that essential aspect dealing with the farmers is.

I want to say in direct answer to your question that, yes, as the minister said today (the Department of Agriculture is taking the leading role on the premise that I have given) our departments have been in discussion to look at ways in which that type of situation could be prevented from occurring again. I know there are various ways that one could look at it. You can look at the possibility of bonding the implement dealers. That is a very expensive method to reach that high a figure that is involved here – something like a quarter of a million dollars. The cost is somewhere between \$7.50 and \$10.00 per thousand for bonding. The alternative that we have looked at is to develop assurance funds, where each implement dealer would make a contribution. This is somewhat cheaper than actual bonding. Perhaps it can get to a level higher than that. That is an area to be looked at. The other area is in respect to farmers who deal in very high contracts where, as a consequence of something going wrong in this nature, their loss is very substantial.

As you know motor dealers are bonded. I'm reviewing that aspect but I doubt if it is high enough. It is \$5,000, I believe. Relative to the cost of the automobile it is some greater protection.

Certainly, we are looking at that and I am working with my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, and we will keep you advised of our progress. I don't think there is a final decision as to how the remedy is going to be brought in but certainly we are hopeful of getting one.

With respect to defraying some of the costs that had been incurred by the farmers, I think that has to be reviewed with some degree of caution. First of all, I am not sure that the court cases are completely finished. I know it was at the district court and the court of appeal. I'm not sure whether the appeal, if it were possible to go to the supreme court . . . I don't know if they are anticipating that and I don't know if the time has expired. We have to take a look at this. There are some mechanisms put in place already, and you are probably familiar with them.

The Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Bar Association has started a trust fund for it and I commend them for that. Some of you will obviously be aware of the leading figure, Mr. Larry Kyle, vice-president of the branch, who initiated it.

I think also there are possibilities that there will be some discussion between the Guaranty Trust Company of Canada and the farmers. I understood they were having some discussion relative to the court decisions and where the matter stood. Those are considerations that have to be looked at. We would also have to look at the implications of getting in at this stage of the game in respect to funding some of their losses. On that one, as the minister said today, we have not come to any decisions.

**MR. ANDREW:** — You tended today, or the minister tended today, to attempt to deflect the question that any contribution that would be made would go to Guaranty Trust. I think you, as a member of the legal profession, are obviously aware of the fact that Guaranty Trust has a right against the farmers based on the existing law in the province of Saskatchewan, and it is a matter of whether or not they are going to execute a given judgment (if it goes to that stage) and seize equipment or grain or encumber land or whatever it's going to be. That is the existing legal mechanism. Any contributions

would, in the end, end up in the farmer's pocket and not in the hands of Guaranty Trust or any other trust company. Guaranty Trust doesn't necessarily have to be singled out because it could have been any other trust company, and very often in the past has been other trust companies. So I would like you to clarify that point because, if you are to follow that suggestion, I think you should be cautioning the farming public of Saskatchewan and the lawyers of Saskatchewan not to make contributions because, according to the logic of the Minister of Agriculture, these will be going to Guaranty Trust and not to the farmers.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Well, I think that the trust fund was set up by the Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Bar Association and they can make up their own minds. I think that group will determine, without me telling them, where it is going. So I don't think that is particularly a problem. What I want to say is that there have been some initiatives set forth, as I said, by the Saskatchewan Bar Association. If my reports are correct, I understood there to be an offer by the trust company also, which would in fact match dollar for dollar what came to the trust fund. In other words, it would eliminate part of the claim or part of the debt, I guess, owing to them. So that, I think, has to be looked at with considerable care for the reasons I indicated: the fact of the precedent; the fact of whether it is going to the supreme court (I don't know if that's a factor); and thirdly, whether the system which is in process now will in fact resolve it. I think it certainly was a very unfortunate situation.

It is very difficult to anticipate as Minister of Consumer Affairs all problems which can be encountered in the business community. As you know as a lawyer, too, the court in its wisdom indicated that there was an assignment and the dealer in this instance was not, in fact, an agent for Guaranty Trust or for the assignee. Clearly, the problem which arose is that there was a trust built up dealing with an implement dealer for years and, as a consequence, it went this direction. I might, only as a point of conjecture, indicate that perhaps if you had been dealing with a locally based bank or credit union, it is a possibility that the local situation may well have been known more readily to the general community. That's speculation on my part, but it's a possibility because I know from my dealings in a smaller community that there is a fair amount of knowledge as to the general situation by local financial institutions. And I don't know whether Guaranty Trust had an office located in North Battleford or not, but I understand that its headquarters is in Toronto.

**MR. ANDREW:** — One further question. I think the answer you have basically given me is that the legislation will be coming forthwith, and that the Government of Saskatchewan will not be making any contributions to the fund set up by the law society. The trust company (and the benevolent people of Saskatchewan feel that they should) will be the people who contribute. So I take that to be your statement.

Mr. Minister, you are also in charge of the securities commission. There were some cases involving the securities commission last year. A constant problem that seems to be occurring with any violations under the securities commission is the penalty sections and the enforcement of any of those sections. What I'm talking about is a perhaps less than reputable person selling, let's say, shares of a non-public company – a private company – which, as you know, is restricted to 50 shareholders. You can get into various schemes by which they sell the shares to various companies, therefore spreading it out to more than 50 and going on quite substantially. When those kinds of things are happening, the problem, quite frankly, is that the penalties coming down are almost negligible compared to the amount of take the particular person is obtaining.

Do you have any comments, as the minister responsible for that, on perhaps toughening up some of the penalties for securities commission offences?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — In respect to the provisions of the penalty sections of the securities commission, I want to indicate to the hon. member that yes, indeed, we are looking at a revision of The Securities Act, and looking at the penalty section in order to attempt to make them probably somewhat stiffer than they are at the present time. We hope to be doing that during the course of the year in reviewing it. Some of the other provinces are already working on it and we have been monitoring what they are doing.

With the continuing growth and economic boom of the province, there's much more economic activity. As a consequence, we are looking at the whole area of securities. One area that is brought to my mind is the commodity futures, and certainly we're looking in that area also. There was apparently a firm that did in fact come from Chicago or somewhere to set up to sell commodity futures. It did not last very long in the province, but I don't think any of the public, as such, were hurt in the purchase of futures, from what I gather. But they folded up and left some debts behind, for advertising, rentals, and things of that nature.

Yes, we want to take a complete and comprehensive review in this whole area, and to strengthen the penalties, as you indicated.

**MR. ANDREW:** — I take it from what you are saying (and I absolutely disagree with it) that in fact there's an economic boom, and therefore, there are more rip-offs. Is that what you're basically telling us? Are you saying that the amount of scams, frauds and rip-offs is on a substantial increase in the province of Saskatchewan?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I don't think that's quite what I'm saying. I'm just saying that as you get more economic activity, many of the things which previously weren't going on in Saskatchewan now go on. I give commodity futures as an example. There was not sufficient legislation governing them. Why do people come to Saskatchewan who were not here before? I think it is attributable, partly, to the economic upgrading of the economy. And accordingly, new activities come forward. Therefore, what we have to do in the general area of security legislation is upgrade it to meet that increased activity and new type of activity.

**MR. ANDREW:** — Okay. One further question with regard to that. Could you provide for us the increased number of files that are being investigated by the securities commission in the past year and the year before?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — The significant parts which I have here are in respect to the activities of the securities commission for the past year. First, there is an increase in preliminary prospectus receipts from 158 to 252. There is an increase in discretionary exemption orders from 40 to 59, an increase in the number of investigations undertaken from 84 to 237, an increase in administrative hearings from 1 to 22. Those are the four items which I have summarized here.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Mr. Chairman, there are a few questions I want to ask concerning the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association. Mr. Minister, is it possible to assess fees or to compel a person to adhere to the policies of a non-profit association registered under The Societies Act of Saskatchewan to which that person does not belong? Now, I can put it another way. Is it the policy of this government, by regulation or order in council, to give an association registered under The Societies Act the power to control

a person's activities, that person not having consented to adhere or abide by the constitution, bylaws and objects of that society?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I sort of expected that question. As the member may be aware, The Real Estate Broker's Act, section 5(3) provided for bonding of all real estate brokers prior to licensing. Section 23 of the act provided for forfeiture for bond and established conditions and procedures for forfeiture. That is what the previous act stated. It required, in order for licensing, that the real estate broker would get a bond. Secondly, it provided for forfeiture of that bond under certain circumstances.

Last session, 1979-80, there were amendments to the act. Under the provisions of that act, rather than have each individual broker purchase bonds, there was established an assurance fund to be paid into what is called the association. But the association is the association under the act. The association holds that contribution in an assurance fund. The reasons that we went from bonding to the assurance fund is that, basically, bonding became very expensive for the individual. Putting it into the assurance fund is much cheaper for the smaller broker. So, that's basically what we have. With respect to the assurance fund, it is held in trust by the association pursuant to the act, but any expenditures which are made from it or any payments similar to the bond forfeiture, have to be approved by the superintendent of insurance. For the administration of that fund, the association is allowed, I believe, 10 per cent.

Basically, what I want to indicate to you is that it's a removal of the very expensive bonding into a system of an assurance fund. I'll just give you an example. It indicates here that the cost of bonding is \$7.50 to \$10 per \$1,000, with a minimum fee of \$40. Many of the brokers were bonded very low. It just wasn't sufficient. Rural brokers were only bonded to the extent of \$2,000 before. Saskatoon and Regina brokers were bonded to \$10,000, and brokers in other cities to \$5,000. Well, that wasn't a sufficient amount of protection in the event a problem arose. We wanted to establish greater protection but maintain a reasonable cost. As a consequence, what we did was establish the assurance fund. The fee for an individual is \$100 for an 18-month period ending June 30, 1982, for \$25,000 coverage, with a maximum of \$15,000 on one claim. If we would have stayed with the bonding system and had increased it to the level which we thought was reasonable, it would have cost \$250. So, we have gone from the penal bond into an assurance fund (which is protected in so far as the use of the funds is concerned) and have given the individual broker better coverage for less money.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Mr. Minister, it's a little difficult to follow you when you talk in circles like you do, but I was following you fairly closely. I still don't understand the reason. Who requested this in the first place? Did the real estate association of Saskatchewan ask for this, or was this just done by your department without consulting the real estate association?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — No, I'm advised that there was consultation with the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — All right. If they consulted with the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association, would that be with the members of the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association? They have members and they also have non-members. There are a lot of people in this province who do not belong to the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association. Who did they contact? Who was doing the consulting here?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — As you indicated, Saskatchewan real estate people have an association. Of course, it has members. It was with that group that the superintendent of insurance, Mr. Saunders, discussed the concept and worked and arrived at a position. So, yes, there was consultation.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Do you think it's fair, Mr. Minister. Going throughout rural Saskatchewan and talking to a lot of people, I've had a terrific amount of complaints from the non-members, who are being assessed and were never consulted in the first place. What about the non-members? This is what I'm getting at. If the real estate association members have agreed to this and think it's fine — what about the non-members? This is what the issue is about: the non-members.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I indicated to you that the essential discussion was with the real estate association. That does not include, granted, all of the members. But I want to say to the hon. member, as I have indicated to you, we were going to increase the amount of the bond because we felt that it just wasn't sufficient — \$2,000, \$5,000, \$10,000 in the two major cities. And we had the options: first, simply go ahead and increase it so that they have the proper protection, or at least a reasonable protection. We could have done that. I think it incumbent upon us to upgrade that protection. Secondly, we could try to get a scheme (and I must say a scheme that is working in other provinces), namely, the assurance fund. As I demonstrated on the basis of it, if we had just increased the bond, it would have cost about \$250 for everybody for the \$25,000 coverage and maximum of \$15,000 on any one claim. But we're doing this through this collective contribution of all, providing it for \$100 for 18 months. So I don't know where the complaint is, because we would have gone one way or the other. What we were able to do is to give a better deal through the assurance fund than going the other route.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Have you had any complaints or inquiries from any individuals in the province who aren't satisfied with this?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I have to admit I've had one that I am aware of. But certainly, I have had one brought to my attention. I am not aware of others, but I could check that to be perfectly sure. One, certainly, that I am aware of.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — When you get back to talk about the bonding and how important this was, can you tell me how much money was paid out in 1980 for bonds? How much money was paid out in 1980?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Are you asking about forfeiture of bonds?

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — How much money did you have to pay out if somebody had a problem and you had to pay out on their behalf, how much had to be paid out to cover a person's bond? There must be a figure here.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — No, I am advised that there was no forfeiture of bonds during 1980.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Well, then, that's exactly what we're getting at, Mr. Minister. Why go through all this commotion if there is no problem to start with. If it's correct to do this for the real estate association of Saskatchewan, are you now going to do it for the motor vehicles association, the cattlemen's association, and . . . (inaudible) . . . association — there are all kinds of them. Are you going to do it for them all?



You never had a problem here. All you've done is made one. You have unsatisfied people out in the country right now. Do you think it's fair that a man, an agent by himself, one person, is now being charged \$100 minimum — \$100 is what he's being charged — while there are groups in the city here or any city in the larger areas where there are, I think, 5 to 14 that only pay \$250? What you are doing is the opposite of what your government is always saying. You're penalizing the small man and helping the big guy. What has happened to set you in this different direction you've taken? Why did you get involved? Why did you bring it up? Why is the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association even interested if you never paid out a bond? You're still covered for only \$25,000. If anyone gets into serious difficulty, what is \$25,000 compared to what you had before for \$2,000? It has to be the biggest joke ever to try to put something through, to put a pot full of money together that you're not going to need. You didn't need it last year. You admitted you didn't pay out even \$1.

So straighten this out. Give me some good answers. Get to the bottom of why you're done this. You're not telling me the facts, Mr. Minister, when you say that we're going to save a lot of money and that this bonding is much cheaper for everybody. How could it be cheaper if you didn't have a problem to start with? Now, give me some facts instead of just fiddling around.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I don't have a full comparison here, but I was just checking to see whether there are other provinces which have a similar type of protection. I am advised that, depending on the turnover or size of the realtor in Alberta, it goes up to \$100,000. In upgrading the bonds, if you take a look at the motor dealers, they were set some time ago at \$5,000. Perhaps that has to be raised. Obviously, what you do if you decide you should have that type of protection . . . I don't think that necessarily, because you don't have a forfeiture in a given year, you shouldn't have protection.

One of your members questioned me with respect to the farmer out in North Battleford. I suppose, if we had an assurance fund among the dealers, that would have been covered, but I don't work in law. I don't remember another case similar to the one in North Battleford. I would have thought it to be pretty good protection. You can't have it both ways. You can't have me bringing something in to protect the farmer and have the assurance fund or legislation, or some agent to protect them, while on the other hand you say that just because there isn't a forfeiture that year, we should do away with it and that I did something which wasn't requested and wasn't necessary.

What I'm saying to you is that we try to work with the industry to achieve a goal at the cheapest possible rate. I think it can be demonstrated that's \$100 for 18 months. It's for \$25,000 coverage, I believe, with a maximum of \$15,000 on any one claim. That's the rationale. There's nothing sinister about it. If you want to say that we should go to every individual, I suppose that's the ideal. I don't think we would get a total consensus even if we did. But I think that we have a fair representation of support. To my knowledge I have had, as I recall, only one complaint.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Naturally, if you go to the real estate . . . I'll tell you what they're saying, because I've been on the telephone and have talked to many of the real estate firms in the city of Regina. Do you know what they are doing? They are laughing at you. They said, "Naturally, we like it, because if we have 20 or 30 people in our firm there are a lot less money and we are not interested in the bond at all." It doesn't mean a thing. If you have 14 people (I have the rate here; I might be wrong but I think it's 5 to 14), the charge is \$250. If I'm wrong, you can correct me on that. What is the right fee for that? I understand that for the first five, it's \$100 for an individual; then when he gets to five he

can have a real estate association with up to 14 people for \$250. Well, naturally, they like it. They only have to come up with \$250 for the whole group, but they are still only bonded for \$25,000 for 14 people, so it takes them back to \$2,000 per person.

I have yet to find a real estate person who will tell me that the bond part makes any difference at all. If there is a group of them, they like it; if it's an individual out in the country, naturally he is against it, because you haven't given him anything with your bond. It doesn't mean a thing to him. If you really want to do something worth-while and have some happy people, why don't you include the motor vehicle association of Saskatchewan? If you're going to include one, include them too. Tell me why you can't include them. Why bar the motor vehicle association and just take in the real estate association? It's the biggest joke I ever heard of.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I don't have the complete schedule here, but the information which I have before me indicates that a broker with up to four people pays something like \$200 and the majority of brokers would fall into this category. Now, that's the information I have. Normally, in introducing a concept, you walk before you run. The department people felt they had a fair discussion with the industry and that they were agreeable to the concept. We are convinced that the basic protection is better and cheaper in the long run to the membership.

Concerning the motor dealers, we will be looking at other areas. We will look at the options, whether it's continuation of bonding, as you would propose, or whether it should be insurance funding. But certainly I will take a look at it. We are carrying on similar discussions with auctioneers, motor dealers and travel agents. It just so happened that we brought in this one first, but that's not to say we are not intending to look at that concept for the others. I think they have the option and will see that the insurance fund makes more sense than the straight bonding.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Mr. Minister, we want to get off this tonight. I had a few more questions but your last statement makes sense to me. If you'll just proceed that way, I don't think the people out in the country will feel they are being penalized. A single real estate agent won't feel that way if he knows you are working toward a goal. Perhaps this is what we need to move into, because if it's good for one, it has to be good for another. But I still say to you, Mr. Minister, that you started on the real estate association when it wasn't necessary because the people never asked for it. As I said before (and I want it on the record) there were no problems last year.

I'm going to ask you one more question. The superintendent of insurance is sitting beside you. Does your superintendent of insurance have any jurisdiction over Saskatchewan Government Insurance such as he has in respect to every other insurance agency operating in the province of Saskatchewan?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Yes, the superintendent of insurance covers these two fields: first, licensing of SGI agents; secondly, contracts other than AAIA. I am advised that in the event that it were too harsh a contract for insurance with the public, then the superintendent of insurance could review that type of insurance coming out of SGI the same way as it could with a private insurance company. So in those two areas, they do.

I just want to make one comment in respect to our priority of who should get into this insurance fund first. You said, "You shouldn't have picked on the real estate brokers." I just want to say that it seems to me that while there were no problems, as I said, in 1980, with the property appreciation, land prices are rising substantially, transactions are

much larger and, while the record is good, the potential of the amount of call on an error or on fraud or whatever, would be much larger. So perhaps, from that viewpoint, we were right in our priorities.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — What I'm saying, Mr. Minister, about the superintendent of insurance is: if there is any problem with any insurance problem or company in Saskatchewan – we'll say the Royal Insurance or Wawanesa or you name it, any private insurance company – does the superintendent of insurance have jurisdiction to step in over any problems they have? What is his jurisdiction here? That's the question I really want to get across.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — With respect to this, I am advised that the superintendent of insurance licenses all the insurance companies in Saskatchewan but not SGI. SGI is exempt under its corporate act. The nature of the licensing of all the other insurance companies provides the superintendent with the power, under certain circumstances, to suspend a licence but that does not apply to SGI.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Can you tell me why SGI is exempt?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Yes, I would advise you that when SGI was founded, it was provided with the power to write insurance in all classes and did not come under the purview or the general operation of the superintendent under The Saskatchewan Insurance Act. So there is the difference: SGI has the power to write insurance of all classes as set out under the act.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — All right. We can't let this slip by. We have to ask a couple of questions on cemeteries. It won't take very long; we won't get into it this year.

I would like to get into it with you, Mr. Minister. If I could handle the Provincial Secretary, I'm sure I could put you in awfully deep trouble. Can you tell me how many commercial cemeteries are operating in Saskatchewan at this time?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Eight companies operating 10 cemeteries.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — You're saying eight companies running 10 commercial cemeteries. So there have been some added, then, in this last year. Is that correct?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — That's not what I am advised. Eight companies are running 10 cemeteries.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Who is the operator at the Weyburn cemetery at this time?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Same operator as last year, Green Acres. Earl Sanderson is the managing administrator.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — I just wondered on that insurance – you're saying it was private companies. Is crop insurance answerable to the superintendent of insurance?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — No.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — So, if you have trouble there is no one to go to there other than just the department?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — The Department of Agriculture.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — As Minister of Consumer Affairs, I'd like to know: what would your stand be on a public utilities review commission? We've been pressing for one of these many times. We feel that the utilities are going up in this province continually and I'd like you to respond. Do you see any need for a public utilities review commission?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I want to say again that in Saskatchewan (as the hon. member knows) we have Crown corporations like Sask Tel and Sask Power. I want to say that I feel this area has a public utility review functioning. First of all we have a board which is a representative group of consumers who formulate policies, and I think if you would look at it, it's a fairly representative group. I think, also, that in respect to Crown corporations I think it was the Attorney General who so elegantly described it the other day saying that in respect to the Crown corporation review committee, we have the most effective one in Canada. I listened to that and I believe that. I know you have called for that. Some provinces have gone that route. I know one cannot always make comparisons but if one does compare rates, one will find the public here is getting their utilities essentially next to cost. A utility review board is really in place in Saskatchewan by having that group of representative people on the board making those decisions and relating back to the consumers.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — This has been argued many times and I am not going into a long debate with you. I can't accept your statement that there is a representative group of people on the boards of these corporations. You know very well that there are a number of appointed political supporters on these boards and they don't represent the public. You say that the utilities in this province are being operated at cost. I question why are you able to take \$10 million out of Sask Power and put it into Crown investment. As I have said in Crown corporations committee, that is nothing more than a tax. I think the profits made by the utility corporations are well known by the people in Saskatchewan. I don't care to enter into a long debate on this. I just wanted to know whether you thought there was a need; obviously from your statement you feel there isn't. I think it is interesting for the people to know that the minister in charge of consumer affairs does not feel there is any need for any type of public utilities review commission in the province of Saskatchewan.

I would like to move to another topic, Mr. Minister, one that I have raised before but I would like your input on. I see under your subvote that you are in charge of film classification. You are also in charge of the sale of various commodities. I would like to ask you what action have you taken, as new Minister of Consumer Affairs, to prohibit the accessibility to pornographic reading materials by the young people in our province – materials that are available in this province which the government opposite refuses to tax. Have you looked at anything of this nature? I understand from correspondence with the Attorney General last year that perhaps this could be done. What action have you taken to this date?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I just want to get the last word in, for the record, in respect to your closing remarks of the summary of my statement. I don't think what I said concurs with what you said in respect to the utilities boards. I said that consumers are represented. I'm not saying that we can't look at a further development of the boards to further represent them, but certainly I think they are.

It's true that under my department is the film classification previously under culture

and youth. In respect to pornographic books, I want to say that at the present time there are really basically two controls in existence. If they're being imported, there are border checks and, in the event they're found to be pornographic, they can be confiscated. And also, there are certain provisions under the Criminal Code which cover this type of material. During the period of time I have been there, which is three or four months, I have not really reviewed that in any detail.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Well, I don't think the border checks are stopping an awful lot. They may be there for very lewd types of things, but I think you just have to go down into the bookstores anywhere in the city or throughout Saskatchewan and you can find all the dicey stuff you want. I know you're a new minister and I don't want to be unjust to you. I would ask you this question: would you consider looking at moving these things up so at least they are at five feet above the viewing level of the younger people? Or better than that, back in a shelf where one has to ask for them if one wants them? Will you give me an indication tonight that you, as the new Minister of Consumer Affairs, will certainly consider what I think is a very worth-while consideration?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Yes, I certainly can give you a commitment that we will look at the various options: the nature and type of legislation which may be required or whether, in fact, we need legislation. It may be possible to deal with the business community and arrive, as I was saying previously, at consensus without having to legislate. I share your concern there and certainly we are prepared to review that.

I know that you raised a question the other day in respect to the drug paraphernalia. That issue, as you know, is being addressed by the Minister of Justice in Ottawa. He is looking at it. It's primarily under food and drug and narcotics, and perhaps can best be related to that legislation. But as Minister of Consumer Affairs, I will be following through on that, too, along with the Attorney General.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Thank you. As you noticed, I didn't get too hard on you. I asked you to give it consideration and I take it you're giving me a sincere answer that you certainly will give it deep consideration. All right.

What about film classification? That has just been transferred to your department. I'm concerned about Teletheatre and these sort of things. We've raised that on this side of the House. Are you responsible just in regard to the films offered in the movies and the drive-ins?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Exclusively in respect to the classification of films. That's what has been transferred over: movie theatres and drive-ins. Those two aspects.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — I have some concerns in that area, too. I think perhaps maybe there could be a serious look at some of the stuff being promoted there, but I'll just leave that as a comment.

One thing I am concerned about is the problem of people. And let me address it perhaps to females in some situations — not exclusively to them, but to a large number of them who own automobiles. You take an automobile into a garage and you have whatever has to be done to it then. In most cases, you have to pay your complete bill then and there before you get your keys back. Now, I address this to the ladies because I don't profess to be a mechanic myself and I am subject to this sort of thing. A lot of ladies operate automobiles and they are certainly not mechanical. There is no cooling-off period. It is nothing to get a bill of \$150 or \$200. You don't get your car unless you pay

that bill. Then, you may go for two days and the problem which you brought in may still exist. Many people tell me that they have very little, if any recourse. I know that in direct sales in this province you have to have a cooling-off period. Maybe this is a legal problem which has to be taken up with the Attorney General. As Minister of Consumer Affairs, do you think there is a need for this? Has this been expressed to you? I am sure it must have if I have been hearing it. Then, what kind of action can your department take to improve this situation?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — This is an area which really deals with workmanship, that is, repairing an automobile or maybe doing other types of work. It is really the performance of the job. We are looking at what is known as The Business Practices Act, which may in fact address that area of concern in more detail. All I can say, I guess, is that we are reviewing it. We are taking a look and we have already started doing comparisons of other provinces. The area again, I guess, which we are looking at (in taking some time in putting it into effect) is trying to get the business community's understanding. But we have been working on it. In fact, I had hoped to come with at least a white paper, if not legislation, this term. That may or may not happen because of the scheduling and the length of time that I was there. Yes, that area of workmanship and so on, and your idea of a cooling-off period or whatever, may be worth looking at. We are addressing that.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Thank you. I am pleased to hear that. I assume if you are looking at this, that you have been hearing a number of concerns in your department about the same thing. I know in some other jurisdictions there is such a thing as an estimate, but I would think that an estimate would, in the long run, just add cost to the consumer. I don't think that is the answer or the route to be going – an estimate before the work is done. I am thinking of taking the work at face value as being, as you say, satisfactory workmanship and then having something of a cooling-off period. So just briefly, has your department been receiving a number of complaints about this type of thing?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Yes, I think it's a question of how one defines a large number. I'm advised that in this particular area, relative to workmanship, we do receive a fair number of complaints or inquiries as to remedies. That's what we're looking at.

**MR. HARDY:** — Well, with regard to that, Mr. Minister, I notice from your information division you had 19 press releases out, and two of them were regarding gasoline prices and automobile repairs. I just wondered what was suggested on those, and about what and to whom and why, and was there anything accomplished by these?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I couldn't hear you that well, I'm sorry. Are you referring to a news release or *Buylines*?

**MR. HARDY:** — I'm sorry. I should have spoken a little plainer. In your information division you had 19 press releases, and some of them were in regard to gasoline prices and automobile repairs. What they were about, I just wondered what they suggested, and to whom they were directed, in general, and if anything was accomplished by them?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I take it you don't have copies. Do you have a copy of the press release?

**MR. HARDY:** — No, I was just thinking of an annual report.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — In respect to gasoline prices and auto repairs, we can find those and supply you with copies of them.

**MR. HARDY:** — That was part of the answer, but I was just wondering to whom they were directed. The hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley was suggesting for ladies, and I just wondered if these were directed toward them or just to the public in general, and if anything was accomplished by them. I mean, did you feel any satisfaction from the releases?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Well, I'll briefly summarize it. I think what we do here is, primarily, say, in auto repairs, point out certain specific problems. As a consequence, through our communication with the public and with the business community, we get some pretty good feedback with respect to it. I suppose in respect to avoiding auto repair problems, we set out basically what protection there is within the department and some of the obvious pitfalls. I think, perhaps, what you were referring to is *Consumer Buylines* dealing with avoiding auto repair problems, and there it just essentially sets out:

Repair service problems with new and used vehicles cause persistent consumer complaints in Saskatchewan.

I won't read it all:

Many complaints received concern unauthorized or additional repair work, for instance.

So, we mentioned that one of the problems that we sometimes encountered is that more repairs are made than what were initially requested when the vehicle was taken in. And so we say, "Check to see if the manufacturer's warranty is still in effect." So we're saying to the consumer, "Maybe you're paying and you don't have to. Maybe the warranty is still there, so you should look at that." It says to be specific when authorizing repairs or service and to give written instructions, so you know more or less what you're ordering, what you're getting, and whether or not you're using the warranty. That's the type of thing in the *Consumer Buylines* about avoiding auto repair problems. That's generally what it deals with.

**MR. HARDY:** — I see one of your news releases was with regard to gasoline prices. I just wonder what you could tell them with regard to that?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — Well, I'm not totally familiar with the article but in this particular one in *Consumer Buylines* it gives where your gasoline dollar goes, who gets what, how much for what, and it gives causes of gasoline price differences. Those are some of the items that are dealt with in that one. It lists causes in gasoline price differences. It relates those to transportation costs and has a little squib on that, to dealer margins and it has a squib on that. Dealer margins commonly range from 5 to 14 cents a gallon and as dealer margins increase, prices increase to support programs which are sometimes given to dealers through the supplier and, as a consequence, you get these price wars going on with respect to the sale of gasoline. So it's primarily just where your gasoline goes, causes of gasoline price increases and of gasoline price differences. That's basically what's covered.

**MR. HARDY:** — My question was really not so much what was in it but whether you found there was any advantage to putting out this press release. In other words, what came back to the department that could help the consumer in any way? I know the price of gas is basically set. I don't think there is any way that the department can set the price of gas. I just wonder what comes back out of a release like that which would really help the consumer.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — We have people who are concerned about the spread in gas prices from one station to another. I know in my own constituency that is a problem and I get some questions with respect to that. The department also gets inquiries of that nature. What is the cause? Why is it going up? So what we're basically obtaining is some consumer information and some feedback.

**MR. HARDY:** — Just one other question. I noticed in your report you had soft drink prices. It said that a branch analysis of price differences between Saskatchewan and Manitoba led to correspondence from the Saskatchewan minister to the federal Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I just wonder what improvements or what suggestions you could make that would have any effect on the consumers.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I suppose, in dealing with that particular area, there was an observation made by the department that there was a difference in the prices of soft drinks. The way that we dealt with the price in Manitoba and the price in Saskatchewan was to contact the federal Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs for the purpose of seeing whether, on the basis of facts, there was unfair competition under the Combines Investigation Act. That was what was done.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — What did your investigation reveal?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — The investigation would be carried out by the federal government.

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Well, you wrote to them, so you must have had a report back.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — We haven't received anything from them.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — I have a couple of questions which I'd like to ask you. I'll try to ask them quickly. If you give your answers quickly, we can roll on to the next set of estimates. The first thing that I want to discuss with you is rent reviews. I raised some time ago in here (I don't know if you were in that day so I questioned another minister) the fact that 37.2 per cent of our population is living below the poverty line. These are unattached people; 37.2 per cent of the unattached people. Many of these people have to rent accommodation. They can't afford to own their own homes. Some of these people are out in rural Saskatchewan, and I imagine there are a number of them in the cities. What action are you taking, in the Department of Consumer Affairs, to safeguard these people against increasing rents? They're on fixed incomes and they can't keep up with the increases.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I think the hon. member realizes that, in communities of 2,000 or more, rent review is still in effect. In communities smaller than that, what we have been doing is implementing a program across the board. If we take a look at the activity of the public housing programs, we'll see that there has been a substantial number of senior citizens and urban-rural housing in the smaller communities. I have some statistics in



respect to that. It seems to me that a very substantial amount of housing has taken place in those communities.

I suppose, in conjunction with that (although it's applicable to all people), there are other ways in which they are assisted. There is the property improvement grant (PIG) which certainly assists them. There are the senior citizens' school tax rebate program and the renters' property tax rebate. The total sum, I'm advised, is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$74 million for the property improvement grant, the senior citizens' school rebate and the renters' rebate. Over and above that, we have the mortgage rebate program.

Those are the general programs which are in place with respect to the government as a whole. (I guess I say this only because I was in social services.) For those on social assistance, of course, actual rents are paid by the department rather than a limited amount. And I noticed the headlines coming out of British Columbia saying that many of the low-income people who are on social assistance are not allotted enough to keep up with the rents. But that is protected here in Saskatchewan.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — I noticed by your answer that some of the things had to do with property owners. The people I was referring to are not property owners, and some of the situations I've had did not involve senior citizens. Therefore, they have trouble getting into some of this senior citizen housing. But, I'll accept your answers and we'll move on to the final one.

I have a brochure by Colgate Palmolive — I've also been advised that Campbell's soups are doing the same thing — promoting within the school system the consumption of their products as a means for fund raising. In other words, if you bring in all the Colgate coupons, you receive so many dollars and the money goes to the students' recreation council. I understand from educators that many of them are upset about this. Have you any controls in place to safeguard a very captive audience of consumers — the children in the schools — against what I think is a rather unfair advantage being taken by these companies?

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — We don't have any direct control because it's primarily the jurisdiction of the school board. And I think that a school board could, in fact, take such action as is necessary to prevent that from happening through discussion with the administrators of that school. We do have a pretty close relationship with the schools in so far as they utilize the information packages that we have. I'm advised that in counteracting this type of promotion there is some information which we do disseminate to educators.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — I just had a letter from a school board person asking the Department of Education about this thing, in which it was pointed out that The Education Act is a bit silent. We'll just leave it, having flagged the issue with you. Perhaps it's something that your department could look at if school boards are concerned about this. And I think that those are all the questions I have.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Two years ago we had a considerable amount of debate about these licensed schools and so forth. Have you resolved the problems now? Are the reportings being done properly and is nobody beaten any more.

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**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I am advised that it is pretty well under control and that there are basically no problems there.

**MR. HARDY:** — I just have one more question on item 1. Going back to the soft drink prices, you said that you had not had a letter back from the federal department. I notice that this was made up in June 1980, which is almost a year ago. I just wonder why they haven't answered yet.

**HON. MR. KOSKIE:** — I really can't answer for the federal government as to why we haven't received a reply. That's pretty difficult for me to do. All I want to say is that we took the action as I indicated. I think the basic problem there is that they're having a lot of problems with the deficiency of the anticommones act. It's evident in respect to the so-called exploitation of the public by the major oil companies, where effectively they do not, in fact, have the teeth in order to do the job.

Item 1 agreed.

Items 2 to 13 inclusive agreed.

Vote 4 agreed.

## **CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW (SUPPLEMENTARY)**

### **CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

#### **Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 4**

Items 1 to 3 inclusive agreed.

Vote 4 agreed.

## **CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW**

### **SOCIAL SERVICES**

#### **Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 36**

##### **Item 1**

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce my staff. Sitting on my right is Mr. Duane Adams, deputy minister; further to my right is Mr. Gary Brandt, executive director of operations; and, sitting immediately behind me is Mr. Walter Charabin, director of administration.

**MR. SWAN:** — Mr. Minister, I don't propose to start off with a long speech tonight. I would like to get right into the questions.

There are a number of areas in social services that have been coming under question. My phone is ringing fairly steadily, as a number of yours are, I'm sure. One of the main concerns being raised of late is the home care program. I know that you have been working on it for a considerable length of time. You have been having a lot of trouble, apparently, putting it in place. We have seen a number of your staff members, who were

involved in it, come and go.

I would like to have you start off by explaining what the main problem was that caused you to lose some of your key staff members. I refer to Elton Marshall as one staff member, and Ron Hikel as another. I think something pretty serious had to have happened when a man of Ron's capabilities left, and when a man like Elton Marshall left. I think there was a serious lack of control, by your former deputy minister, as has been shown in the public accounts with which we have been dealing and this particular issue. There is something very serious when you upset the whole department the way you have. So, I would like you to basically outline what your problems were and what you're doing to solve them.

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Chairman, I would like to comment on the first question: what is taking so long to get the home care program going? I would like to inform the member that the home care program is not taking a great deal longer than we anticipated. The development part of the home care program is what takes the time. Many local people are involved in developing the home care plan for each of the districts. We now have 40 boards up and we are delivering service in 17 boards and we think by the end of the year we will be delivering service in all of the areas. To say that we are having a great deal of problems is a misrepresentation of fact. The home care program is well on the way to becoming one of the main social programs in Saskatchewan and one of the better programs in Canada.

In talking about Mr. Ron Hikel, I didn't have the pleasure of working with Ron. He wasn't in the department when I took over so I don't think it is fair for me to comment on that individual and his work ability. On the other hand, I think the question of Elton Marshall has been fairly well debated in the House. You are well aware of the circumstances surrounding that issue. I think to go into that in any great detail now would just be wasting the time of the House.

**MR. SWAN:** — Mr. Minister, I think that you came into the department. You have people around you who knew Ron Hikel very well. I don't accept the answer that you can't tell me why he left. You can talk to your officials; the people are here. Then stand up and tell me, why did you lose a man like Ron Hikel? There had to be a perfectly good reason or he wouldn't be gone.

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Chairman, on checking with my officials, they inform me that Mr. Hikel resigned, and I'm not sure of his reasons. That's one of the issues you get into. I think that people have the opportunity to resign from a position. I don't think it's our place to insist, if they want to resign, that they stay. That's the only point I can make on that matter.

**MR. SWAN:** — Why on earth do you need an assessment form like this in order to decide whether you can provide Meals on Wheels and repair the doorknob for a senior citizen and these minor household things? Now, we're talking about a home care program for people who live in their own homes and, for the most part, take care of themselves but need some assistance with minor things. Then we look at a document of this type with a number of questions and it's hard for me to understand why you need answers to questions of this type to provide the services under the home care program. Can you tell us why, in Saskatchewan, we need a form like that when in other provinces they use about a two-page form that seems to suffice and provides all the answers necessary?

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — The assessment form that you're talking about is the OARS (older Americans resources and services) assessment form. It is a long, involved document. When I first took over the department, I was of much the same opinion as you are — that it was much too long, and that we should be doing something about it. But having consulted with many of the people who are using it, they're saying that it's a good way of spending an hour with the individual who is being assessed. By the time you go through the form, the 20-odd-pages or whatever they are, you have a good idea of whom you are working with, and it's a good way to get to know the person. On the other hand, we are looking at the whole continuing care area. And this form will be used in assessing people, not only for home care, but also for entering institutions. I think it's an area we're looking at. We had many of the same concerns as you do, but we find this form works very well. If that's the case we should reconsider our opinion rather than deciding what is best for the people who are using it.

**MR. SWAN:** — Mr. Minister, you say the form is working very well. We have had a home care program going only for a short time in the area where I live, and that's not the answer that I'm getting. If my phone has rung once a week, I would say it rings ten times a week on this very subject. Why is it necessary to fill out a form of this length? Why are the questions of the type that you propose to ask the senior citizens necessary? And let me give you an example or two of what I'm speaking about.

To begin with, you go into a person's home, and you ask him, "What is the name of this place?" It's a town where he has lived all his life — is that a sensible question to ask anybody? "Who is the Prime Minister of Canada?" Do you really have to know that in order to provide Meals on Wheels? The next question: "Subtract 3 from 20, and keep subtracting 3, and so on down the line." What purpose do you have in asking that type of question of a senior citizen? That's the first page. Can you tell me how that relates to providing Meals on Wheels to an older citizen who is finding it difficult to cook for himself?

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — As I mentioned, we are looking at the form in a great deal of detail. We are scrutinizing it to see whether a better form could be devised for home care. At the same time some of the questions asked may look ridiculous and redundant but you have to be able to check the memory of the people to see if they can remember things. For example, if a person is qualifying for levels 2 or 3 and they remember things, I think it is very important, so some of those questions have relevance in that sense. I am not adamantly defending the form, because I have questions in my own mind about it. I think it is something we will be looking at. We will be taking your advice into consideration when we are looking at it.

**MR. SWAN:** — You're talking about assessing people for levels 2 or 3. This form was not proposed for that purpose; it was proposed for the home care program. That's the way it is headed up. When you come to levels 2 or 3, you are looking at a different situation. You are looking at people who need altogether different types of care than what we are talking about here. Some of the questions are very embarrassing for older folks. I don't know how many I have to read to you, but I am upset every time I get a call on this form. I think you need to review it and review it seriously with a view to providing the kind of questions needed to deliver services under a home care program, which is altogether different than the severe health care program that we looked at when we got into level 2 and 3.

When could we expect your department to take a look at this and design a new form so that people who need these minor services are not going to go through an

embarrassing type of thing like we have here, but rather are going to answer the questions needed in order to get the very essential services they are looking for?

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — When the member says it is used only for home care, that is not accurate. We are using the form at the present time for the total continuing care area which includes home care level 1, 2, and 3. For that reason some of the questions you refer to do apply in assessing a person who is on level 2 or 3. I don't want to get hung up on this point. We are reviewing the form and we are bringing in people to have a look at it to see if it can be made simpler and easier to adjust. I think your point is well made; we are looking at it and will be studying it. In the future if it isn't adequate or proper, we will be making adjustments to it. If on the other hand the professionals in the field who are using it like it and find it is doing a good job, it is probably the form we should be using. With that, all I can say is we are reviewing the assessment form, and we will be making a decision on it in the next couple of months.

**MR. SWAN:** — You are telling me again that it is used for assessing levels 2 and 3. It doesn't say this on the form anywhere. It says district number and there is a blank for you to put it in and it says home care program client identification; then it goes on into the form itself. It doesn't anywhere in here say that you are going to use it for level 2 or 3. This was introduced at the time the home care program started. It was not around for level 2 or 3 prior to that time, so don't tell me it was introduced as a form you are using for everyone. It was used for one purpose, and I think the facts you are giving me are misleading. You are misleading the House and I would like you to withdraw that and come in and tell us the straight facts.

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I think the point is that since the home care program was established, the form began to be used in that area. We have had some changes in the department in the area of continuing care where we now look at home care and the levels of care, 1, 2 and 3, as part of the same division, and we are, in fact, using that form in more than the home care area. We're using it in, as I mentioned, home care and levels 1, 2 and 3 and we intend to continue to use it until we have had time to completely review it and see whether or not it's appropriate. At that time, we will be making a decision on whether we continue to use it as it is or whether we make adjustments to it.

**MR. SWAN:** — If this is your case, then I would like you to tell me why on this form you don't say somewhere what it is to be used for. If it is classed as a home care form, fine; if it is classed as a form that you're going to use to assess all people, then it should say that somewhere. But it certainly isn't saying it at this point in time.

Which questions from this 32-page document do you ask a person who is looking for home care only, not going into the level 1, 2, 3, 4 situation, but just someone who needs services at home? Which questions are you going to use out of this document?

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I am informed that in the continuing care program (which is what we are using that assessment form for at the present time) in the near future, if the form is going to be used (and as I mentioned, that decision hasn't been made for sure, but will be made in the next couple of months) the cover page will be changed and it will say on the front that it's an assessment form used for continuing care rather than home care. I think that this reflects changes that have taken place over the last couple of months in the area of continuing care. So to say that, because the form has "home care" written on the front, it can't be used in another area, is inaccurate and doesn't reflect the true image of what is going on. We are using the form for home care and we are

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using it for the levels of care and so we will be making adjustments to the front title page, if and when we make the decision to keep using the form.

**MR. SWAN:** — Mr. Minister, you deliberately did not answer my question. Would you stand again and answer my question?

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I am informed that our department as such doesn't use the form. The assessment people or the people in the home care district, if it's being used for home care as you mentioned, will make the decision on what questions are going to be used and, in fact, all the questions that are asked.

**MR. SWAN:** — Mr. Minister, are you telling me that you don't know what your people are doing out there? Whether they are using the whole form or a part of it? Is that what you're telling me? That's what I'm hearing.

The information I have from the home care board members and the people who are doing the assessing is that you're asking every last one of those questions. If that's the case, then at least be man enough to stand up and say so.

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I think what has happened here is that the member is a little confused about how the home care program is working. They are not our people. The people who do the assessment and use the assessment form are not department people. They work directly for the locally controlled boards, the 45 district boards which are going to be involved in the province. They are the people who use the assessment form, not the department people. And it's my information that when they're using the form they ask all the questions on the form at the present time.

**MR. SWAN:** — Are you prepared at this point in time to make a change in your policy so that the complete form is not needed for those who are looking for only the home care portion? Are you prepared, as a minister responsible for the department, to make that kind of a decision so that these people don't have to answer all the embarrassing questions in that form in order to receive the minor care that they get at home?

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Yes. What we plan to do in the areas I mentioned is to have a very close look at the form, how well it's being used and how productive the answers are. As well, we will be looking to the association of home care boards, which is going to be established, to get a recommendation on whether it is a useful form or if there are changes that should be made to it. As I mentioned, that decision will be made over the next couple of months.

**MR. GARNER:** — Now, Mr. Minister, I don't know what you find this form, but I find it just shocking and totally embarrassing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yeah, yeah, big joke. Well, you get your two-by-four aerosol spray can and go in the back and club somebody.

Mr. Minister, I'll give you as an example my own two parents who are senior citizens applying for Meals on Wheels. My colleagues already brought some of these questions up. "What is the name of this place? Who is the Prime Minister of Canada now? Who was the Prime Minister just before him?" What has this to do with whether they want Meals on Wheels? I'm damned if I know. "Subtract 3 from 20 and keep subtracting 3 from each new number you get all the way down."

We're going to go through this, Mr. Minister, the whole thing. "How far have you gone in school?" (And the Minister of Labor would have to put in zero, because that shows his intellectual ability in here.) "Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about your family and friends." And you can just imagine my parents sitting there. "Now, are you single, married, widowed, divorced or separated," (or are you just living common law, I suppose). We go on. This can be a quote if you want it. You should be ashamed of sending a form like this out. "How many persons do you know well enough to visit in your own home?" What has that got to do with Meals on Wheels? "Do you find yourself feeling quite lonely? Sometimes or almost never?" Now imagine those senior citizens, if it's really important as to whether they want Meals on Wheels, answering whether they're lonely. You're not asking if they want someone to come in and visit, you're asking if they want a meal.

We're going to go on, Mr. Minister. The members opposite think it's quite a joke. "Next I would like to ask some questions about what you think about life." Well, do you think they're going to tell you they're thinking about dying tomorrow? It's a stupid form. "In general, do you find life exciting, pretty routine, or dull?" Well, I'll tell you after they filled out this, I know what they'll be looking for, and it sure wouldn't be heaven – just to get rid of the person that was coming to see them.

There's another one in here, Mr. Minister, which I think just about tops it all off. Now remember, you have someone going around to ask them if they want Meals on Wheels. This could be anyone's mother or father. "How often do you wet yourself, either day or night?" Now, what are you trying to do, take their dignity away? What do you care about it? You stood up before and said that you thought it was pretty good. That will be in the *Hansard* tomorrow. You tried to weasel out of it afterward. What kind of an attitude is this by the government opposite to the senior citizens of Saskatchewan? What kind of question to ask them! Who do you think is going to answer a personal question like that? This erodes their personal rights, their freedoms, when they apply for Meals on Wheels, and get, "How often do you wet yourself either day or night?" Smile – I notice all the government members opposite. It's a big joke. And this to you is a good form?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — He didn't say it was a good form.

**MR. GARNER:** — Oh yes, he did. Well, if the Attorney General was tuned in, he would have been in here earlier. He did. And then he started weaselling out of it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — He did not. He said that he had some questions about the form.

**MR. GARNER:** — Yes, he should have a lot more questions about it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Don't get your shirt in a knot, boy.

**MR. GARNER:** — Oh yes, we'll talk about getting a shirt in a knot or anything else. It's upsetting. And if you think, Mr. Minister, that you are going to help out senior citizens in Saskatchewan in any way by having them fill out a form like this, on who the Prime Minister is . . . About the only thing you most likely don't have in here is, "Do you vote NDP and will you buy an NDP membership?" I'm amazed you haven't that in here. Degrading and nothing but garbage – that's what it is.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Very dramatic, you are.

**MR. GARNER:** — Yes, it sure is for you. That just shows, Mr. Minister, how much the

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Minister of Labor is concerned about the senior citizens of Saskatchewan – believing in this report which is nothing more than a piece of garbage. To go out and ask people living in small-town Saskatchewan or anywhere in Saskatchewan if they would complete an application like this to get Meals on Wheels! You may think it's okay. The members on this side of the House know it's garbage; it's degrading. And, Mr. Minister, you are a new minister in this. You have an opportunity to clean up this department a bit. Get rid of that piece of junk and you will have a start.

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — It's a little hard to discover what the question was. But I would just like to point out once again that the form is used for more than one thing. It's used for more than Meals on Wheels, and in fact, many people who apply for Meals on Wheels and fill out the form enable us to find out they have many other problems and need much more care than, in fact, Meals on Wheels. On the other hand, I have mentioned at least five times that we are reviewing the form and a decision will be made whether or not we are going to continue to use the form in the future.

**MR. SWAN:** — Mr. Minister, I am concerned about the invasion of privacy of senior citizens. When we talk about a form of this type for the small services that you're providing, there's no need to ask the kind of questions that are being asked.

For the home care program it could be a very brief form, one with a very minimum number of questions and one that will not invade the privacy of people to the extent this one does. So I would encourage you to move in that direction, and to try and respect the dignity of our senior citizens.

I would like you to tell me how many people are getting service now from home care. How many people on a daily basis are getting service from home care?

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I am informed that it will take us just a minute to get the answers. Perhaps you'd like to ask another one in the interim. I would just like to mention one more time about that form being used. You mentioned that it is an invasion of privacy. If anything, the home care program is the exact opposite. What the home care program does is offer independence and normalization for senior citizens who would otherwise be in nursing homes or institutions. So, to say that the assessment form in home care is an invasion of privacy is inaccurate and the form is, in fact, the exact opposite.

**MR. SWAN:** — Well, Mr. Minister, while they're looking, I'd like to show you the forms from the other provinces. These are carbon-copied, so there are very few pages. In most cases, there are two pages, and the biggest part of the form concerns medical history – whether the person has to be have assistance taking his pills, and things. So, it's a very minor type of form in comparison to what you're using. I hope that you take a look at what others are doing close by. You don't have to go to the States to get everything. You can get some of it from the neighbors right beside you.

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — In terms of other forms which are available to us, we do have those forms as well, and we are looking at them in assessing the type of assessment form that we are going to use in the future. I think it's fair to say that we are looking at that alternative. In terms of how many people are receiving home care in the province, we do have 17 home care boards delivering service. To obtain the exact number we would have to go to the local boards and find out how many people are registered. We don't have that number here, but I think that we could find out in very short order.



**MR. SWAN:** — Would you dig up that information and bring it in tomorrow? We won't be finished tonight, so you'll have a little time to think about it.

I'm informed that as soon as the home care program took over the delivery of service, at least the Meals on Wheels portion of it, the cost of the meals delivered to the seniors almost doubled. I'm wondering if you can tell this Chamber what the difference is, as soon as you come in. Why do the seniors then experience a doubling of the cost of their meals? This is the figure that's thrown at me every time I talk to people about home care. They say, "Last week we were getting the meals for half as much. What happened when the government came in? Why has it doubled?"

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I think that it's not quite accurate to say that the price of the meals has doubled across the province. I think that there are areas where it has. There are other areas where it has stayed the same. I think the boards, in their own wisdom, have in places made a decision to increase the amount paid by the individual in order to subsidize other services. As well, we are looking at the whole area of funding to the home care boards to ensure the quality of service and that the price of the service is not out of reach for the people who are using home care.

**MR. SWAN:** — Would you enlarge a little bit on your comment that you are charging more for meals to subsidize other things? The person receiving the meal is only wanting the meal. He doesn't want to be subsidizing somebody else. Could you enlarge on that topic a little bit?

**HON. MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I think that it is fair to say that the meals are not, in fact, subsidizing other things but are subsidizing other meals. The program wasn't universal before. The people in the country now have access to Meals on Wheels whereas, in the past, they haven't. I think it's also fair to say, as I mentioned, that we are reviewing the whole area of funding of home care in terms of subsidies to the home care boards. The other point is that the home care boards do have the power to set the level of rates that they want for meals or other services in their communities.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:00 p.m.