

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 11, 1983

EVENING SESSION

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure this evening, with leave of the House, to introduce a group of 14 boys who are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and who belong to the 40th Cub Pack, that has its headquarters at Marion McVeety School. Their leader is Pat Lawson. On behalf of the members of the legislature, I wish to welcome this group of young boys to this session. I wish to inform you that I shall be pleased to meet with you at 8 o'clock for refreshments in the cafeteria downstairs. I would ask the members to please join with me in welcoming the 40th Cub Pack to this House this evening.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

CONSUMER AND COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 4

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, when we adjourned at 5 o'clock, I was in the process of trying to establish from the minister in charge of the liquor commission what he thought the increase in alcohol consumption would be. He mentioned that he didn't think it would be a great deal. But can you give us some idea, from the studies and review that you say you have done, what kind of an increase you're looking at, and whether or not in your opinion that is an acceptable increase in light of the statements made by the Minister of Highways, for example, that we should be going quite an opposite direction? I'm just trying to get clarified what the opinion and what the policy of this government is in regard to alcohol consumption in this province. It's a little difficult to have it both ways when you're in government. You were able to do that in opposition very easily, but now that you're in government, I think you owe the people of the province an unequivocal line of thought and policy on the consumption of alcohol. Either you're in favour of increasing it, or you want to assist people in avoiding the problems associated with alcohol consumption.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite's question is highly speculative. We don't know how many additional special vendors will be added out there until the amendment is passed. And when it is passed, the applications for special vendors will have to be dealt with one at a time, and when the amendment is passed, we may add one special vendor in the ensuing year; we may add two or we may add six. We may not add any; it all depends. So, his question is speculative. I cannot give him an answer to that question.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, in amending the act, the minister certainly must have availed himself to the information that was around as to how many people had

applied for, and whether or not there was a need to amend the legislation. What I'm asking him in his office as minister, how many more liquor vendors he expects to have over the coming year, if the legislation is, in fact, introduced and passed through this Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — It's impossible, Mr. Chairman, for me to even hazard a guess on this. I can tell the member opposite that we have many, many applications, probably more than a hundred. I haven't counted them one by one, but there are many, many on hand at the office of the liquor board.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would outline the criteria by which he will be issuing new liquor vendors in this province once the bill is passed. Can you tell us what criteria you will follow in setting up the issuing of new liquor licenses?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the final criteria has yet to be drawn up. When we discuss the legislation in committee, I will answer any questions in detail at that time. But, I'll tell you that the criteria will be much stronger than their criteria is. At this point in time, there are some special vendors in rural Saskatchewan that are as little as six miles apart. That doesn't make a great deal of sense to me — to have one vendor in town A and another in town B, six miles apart. That was their criteria, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, it seems ridiculous to think that, if it was too lenient before under the previous administration, you would now come in here and say you're going to pass legislation to expand it. How can you criticize the former government for being too lenient, and say how we're going to solve that problem of leniency is by having more? Can you justify how you need legislation to increase the numbers if there's already too many? I know that Conservative logic is a little different from mine, but I still have a hard time understanding how you're going to solve the problem of having too many liquor vendors by increasing the numbers. Can you explain.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, socialist logic is that you don't listen to the folks out there. Socialist logic is that you impose your views upon them. We're not going to impose our views upon anyone in Saskatchewan. We have received many letters and applications from folks in rural Saskatchewan who want special vendors. We have said to them that we will amend The Liquor Act allowing them to vote in their own communities. Them, to vote in their own communities as to whether they want a special vendor, or not. It's gone on before. They've voted as to whether they want licensed dining rooms; whether they want licensed restaurants; whether they want beverage rooms; and whether they want clubs or whatever. There have been local option votes all over the province. We're saying that they should have the same opportunity out there to vote on special vendors if they so desire.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, earlier on I asked the minister to clarify a point about liquor consumption in the province, whether he thought it would go up or not. And I believe just prior to 5 o'clock he said that he assumed or that he thought it would go up slightly, and I was asking the question of how much earlier on, and he went on to explain that he didn't know how many liquor vendors were going to be open. But the question, the original question was: how much do you think liquor consumption will go up as a result of relaxing the liquor legislation and the liquor outlets and vendors in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, I can't speculate on how much consumption will go up because we don't know how many special liquor vendors, additional vendors, will be granted at this time. They had made allusions before that we were going to put licenses into corner grocery stores and every town and on every corner of every town and city in Saskatchewan. That is totally false. We do not propose to do this in any way, shape or form. What we're saying is we want to give a service to people of rural Saskatchewan — a service where they want it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, the minister must, in establishing what he predicts to be revenue for the sale of liquor in terms of taxes for the government, must certainly predict an amount of consumption, otherwise you would not possibly be able to establish a budget. What I'm saying is, on what basis did you predict your revenue income in terms of liquor; what kind of consumption did you base that on? A constant from last year or an increase? And if it's an increase, what amount?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the liquor board's estimations of revenue for this year, 1983-84, have not taken into consideration the addition of any extra special vendors in the rural areas. They're making the assumption that consumption will increase in direct proportion to proximity of, or additional special liquor vendors. I would like to know what studies they have to prove that that will be so in this place, in this province of Saskatchewan, at this time.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I asked the minister a question on what volume of alcohol consumption his revenue income was estimated and I still didn't get an answer on that. Is it last year's consumption or an increase? That seems pretty simple. And all you have to do is ask your officials what number it was based on and tell me. And that's pretty straightforward.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the liquor board is expecting a decrease in consumption in Saskatchewan, and of course in sales, as indeed right across the country distillers, wineries and breweries are expecting a decrease in consumption.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Is this a trend that has been going on in the areas that you're talking about over the past number of years? What are you basing this on? Can you give me a background on what you would base that kind of a prediction on? Give me a bit of a history or the study that was done that would indicate that alcohol consumption in Saskatchewan will decrease next year, just so I have an idea of where you're getting your answers from.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — One document we have received, and I'm sure that the opposition received it when they were in government, was an erosion document prepared by the Saskatchewan Brewers Association that showed that beer consumption has decreased considerably in the last year or so. Distillers also project that consumption of spirits is going to be down across the country. Wineries on the other hand, I believe, indicate that their volume will either hold the line or increase slightly.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, if you are predicting a reduction in the amount of alcohol consumed, can you tell me why you're also predicting an income revenue of about 39 per cent in the amount of money you intend to raise from the sale of alcohol, at the same time as consumption is going down?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — That estimation, Mr. Chairman, would come from the liquor

board's new markup policies. We have indicated that we are going to raise an additional \$9 million this year through increases in prices for beer, wine, and spirits, and the new markup policies would account for the projected increase.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So you're saying the markup price that people in Saskatchewan will have to pay will be in excess of 40 per cent, because if you're predicting a drop in consumption and you show an increase of I believe it's about 39 per cent, then you must be predicting that your increase in take by the government for this group of people will be in excess of 40 per cent of liquor in the province of Saskatchewan. Is that true?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — I would take notice of the hon. member's question, Mr. Chairman, and get details from the liquor board to him so that they can explain where the projected increases are coming from.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Chairman, that seems like a very elementary question when you have your officials with you. I can hardly believe that the people sitting around you don't know where the revenue from liquor is coming from or where it's going to, but I suppose if you don't have the answer you don't have the answer. But I would expect that before we get finished this line of questioning, and I would hope that you would be able to give it to me before we finish up here tonight.

But another question I would like is if you would give me the numbers in terms of actual consumption of alcohol in the province that would have gone through your operation last year, and what you predict it to be in the different areas for the coming year.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sure the hon. member is aware that I don't have any officials from the liquor board here with me today. It was not indicated that the estimates today would be on liquor board questions, and they know very well that I do not have my officials here with me today. They are wasting the time of this House at this time, Mr. Chairman, and they know that very well. We were here to discuss Consumer and Commercial Affairs estimates, not liquor board.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I find it interesting, and I'm sure the press will find it interesting, that doing estimates is now a waste of time in the province of Saskatchewan, as well as social service groups doing a job is a waste of time and taxpayer's money, but simply because you don't have answers to the questions, Mr. Minister, is not a good enough reason to say that we're wasting time, and what I would like to tell you is that you were well aware that we would be dealing with the liquor board commission because you received a letter from our caucus, from the member from Regina Centre. And if he has the letter with him I would ask him, if he would, to read it into the record so you will know and the rest of the people here will know that you full well that we would be dealing with this. You're simply making an excuse now for the reason that you do not want to give out the information because you're not very proud of it.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I . . .

An Hon. Member: — He's asked a question.

An Hon. Member: — Did you ask him a question?

An Hon. Member: — Sure he did.

Mr. Shillington: — I will leave it then until the minister answers the question. I'm waiting to hear the minister deny that he received notification from me that this would be discussed.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I was trying to get from him to confirm that he did not know that we were going to be dealing with issues related to liquor. Are you really attempting to tell this House that that is the truth, and that you did not receive a letter from our caucus saying that we would be asking questions? Is that what you're trying to tell us?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, there is no vote in the blue book on liquor board, liquor licensing items. We were not prepared to answer questions on the liquor board this evening or today. Out of courtesy I've answered all their questions, without my officials being on hand. I've had my officials from Consumer and Commercial Affairs here, sitting in their chairs, since 2:30 this afternoon. They've pandered the time of members of this House while they could be going through the estimates of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. I can't understand why they don't get on with the business at hand.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I find it hard to believe that the minister did not know we were going to be dealing with liquor when we sent him a letter last week, when we dealt with it this afternoon. To say that this evening he didn't know we were going to be dealing with this is simply unbelievable. And the fact that there isn't an estimate in the blue book, I can tell you that on page 8 there is a revenue under Saskatchewan Liquor Board, of 125 million, that you are responsible for collecting, and if you think that that is not an important part of your job, then you should get a job description from the Premier, because that is part of your job and you are answerable for the actions of the government in that area. And what I would like to know is — again you still have not answered my question — whether or not you were informed that we would be asking questions on liquor.

You are attempting to tell the House that you were not aware of it, and that we're wasting time. That simply is not true, and I want you to tell me whether or not you received a letter from our caucus telling you that we would be asking these very questions.

Mr. Shillington: — Perhaps we can assist the minister somewhat. When we dealt with your estimates here in February, you expressed astonishment that we might have any questions to ask on liquor. And you didn't deal with them that night, and we never did get around to dealing with this particular issue.

I do not normally make a point of writing each minister, writing Mr. McLaren and saying, 'Now, I'm going to be examining you on the following subjects.' I don't normally make a point of that because it isn't necessary with any other minister.

An Hon. Member: — Well, the Premier.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, it seems to be a problem with the Premier as well, but apart from you two, that usually isn't necessary. Most of the others know what they're responsible for.

Because it had been a problem in February, I made a special point of writing you on Friday. I phoned your executive assistant, Mr. Minister, and I left word with your office

staff. I then phoned Mr. Pederson's office and I left word with his staff. In addition, I wrote you a letter, Friday. You came today, and you got the letter, and I really want to hear the minister tell me he didn't get the letter because I know darn well he did. You got the letter. What more do you want? You shouldn't need any warning at all. You should know what you're responsible for.

An Hon. Member: — We started this afternoon and tonight he could have had his staff here.

Mr. Shillington: — Exactly. We started at quarter to 4. You knew five minutes after we were into our estimates that you were going to be responsible for it. Why don't you get your staff? You had all kinds of warning to get your staff.

Mr. Chairman, I have a proposal to make to the minister who seems woefully unable to prepare himself for his estimates, notwithstanding the fact that he gets warning of what we're going to be discussing. If your officials aren't here, and if you can't deal with this particular portion of your estimates, we'll deal with the rest. We will adjourn your estimates and allow you to return with the officials of the liquor board and then liquor licensing commission.

Now, if you'd prefer that — I see my colleague's nodding — if you'd prefer that, the opposition will agree to that, deal with the rest of your estimates and adjourn it — and come back on the issue of the liquor board and the liquor licensing commission. And if you're getting . . .

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, according to the business of the assembly as listed today, the estimates which I was to deal with were Consumer and Commercial Affairs, Co-operative and Co-operative Development and Saskatchewan Research Council, and I have all those officials present and ready to deal with estimates in those areas.

The liquor board and the liquor licensing commission do not have a vote in the blue estimate book. They are brought up in public accounts with the media present, if that's what the opposition wants. Now, further to that, I have instructed one of my officials to contact the liquor board officials to see if they can get them here before the evening is too late. And, then indeed we will deal.

Mr. Shillington: — Is the minister telling us that you would prefer to leave the question of the liquor board and the liquor licensing commission and go on with the rest of the estimates until your officials come? If you do, I think that is a courtesy which we would extend to you.

An Hon. Member: — He doesn't have his officials here. Wait til they get here, then you can backup

Mr. Shillington: — That's what I'm suggesting. And, if that's what he wants, we'll do that. That's what I'm suggesting, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — I would be prepared to go into the estimates of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, at this time, Mr. Chairman, and answer any further questions pertaining to the liquor board at a later time.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Chairman, just on a point that has been raised here, I want to indicate that the minister indicates what is on the agenda — Consumer and Commercial Affairs. I want to say that, previously the minister of industry and commerce was in here, and that other subvote was CIC or Sedco, and at that time he indicated, too, that he wasn't going to be responsible for answering any questions in relation to it. The chairman ruled, at that time, that we were entitled to pursue questions relative to the area covered by the minister. And, I think that applies in the case with the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — I think that's been settled. He's going to be bringing his officials for liquor board a little later on, so we can go on with the rest of Consumer and Commercial Affairs.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Before we move on, away from liquor board and licensing commission, I think there has been an insinuation by members of government, that somehow we're not following the agenda that was given to us today. I would like to inform the assembly that in talking to representatives of the government this morning, my staff were given a list, and I would like to read it for you so we're all aware of what we were given as the agenda for today. And, it goes like this — estimates for review: Co-operation and Co-operative Development; Consumer Affairs; Office of Rentalsman; Rent Appeal Commission; Provincial Mediation Board; Saskatchewan Research Council; Liquor Board and Licensing Commission; Saskatchewan Securities Commission — just so the minister is aware what is involved in his domain and that we can get on with this, so that he is ready for all of these when we get to them, so we don't get into this problem, later.

This is what we received from the government, therefore, with the limited staff we have, we prepared for it, and I find it hard to believe that the government, with, at its disposal, unlimited numbers of people cannot be ready for estimates. And I would very much appreciate then when we're given lists like this, we can move ahead with them. Because traditionally the sessions in this House have lasted 40 or 50 days. We are now on day 16. . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Chairman, the member for Regina South says that 50 or 60 days . . . I happen to have here a list of the number of days in sessions. The 18th Legislative Assembly, province of Saskatchewan, first session '75-75, 46 days; second session 1976, 40 days; third session 1976-77, 56 . . .

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — I think, member from Shaunavon, I think this has no bearing on it now. I think the problem has been solved. I think we can carry on with the consumer information.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — What I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, if I could just be allowed one moment, is that we anticipate when we're given a minister's area of responsibility, that we don't have to check each particular area before we go into it; that when a minister's estimates are called, we move ahead with them and complete them. And I would hope that that would be the way we arrange estimates because otherwise it gets very, very bogged down, both for the officials of the department as well as for the opposition. I think in fairness I agree that we should follow the agenda that's set out by the government. And that's what we were trying to do.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Chairman, if I can simply respond to that. I think the

tradition in the House has been, for example when the minister of industry and commerce has his estimates, at the end of those estimates you would go to some subvotes that happen to exist, whether they be Sedco, CIC, and certainly that was clarified while we were in opposition that we had the right to ask questions on that.

Now what would normally happen here because liquor is a revenue source and, as you know, is handled in its own particular commission, it does not show in the blue book. Now the tradition has been that it would come up following the going through of the process. The normal process that one would go through would be for this particular minister to do consumer and corporate affairs, then to do Co-ops and then go back and finally pick up the process that allowed him to have questions with regard to the liquor board which also falls within his jurisdiction. It's something that the government will respond to, is responsible for, even though it's not found in the blue book, and that's because the tradition has developed that way.

When we called the estimates today, it was for consumer and corporate affairs to be followed by Co-ops. We would then proceed further with the right to deal with liquor board and to deal with the Rentalsman and whatever else came through that in the process afterwards. The initial call was for Consumer Affairs.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — I think the point has been taken. I think there is really no . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, a point has been made but one that is not accurate. In dealing with this subject earlier today, the case was attempted to be made by the minister that he was not responsible to this Assembly for liquor commission or liquor licensing. That's the point and case that we are trying to make. It's not simply as the Minister of Finance is trying to say here, that he doesn't have his officials with him and he wanted to leave it to the end. The Minister of Consumer Affairs questioned whether or not he was responsible for that area and whether we had the right to ask questions. It took a ruling for the Chair, I would inform the member, to make it legitimate that we had the right to establish questions. This is no previously arranged nice commitment that the government is making to us. The minister refused in the initial stages of estimates. Mr. Chairman, the debate here and the argument is not with the Minister of Finance, who helps prepare the list in the House agenda. The argument is with the minister responsible who attempted today to tell us that he was not going to answer questions. The Chair has ruled on that and I agree that we will be asking questions and we do agree that we will come back to it later.

But I don't want any indication left to this Assembly or to the press that it was our responsibility for the fact that we're not dealing in the proper order, or that the minister is unaware of his responsibilities as he tried to explain to this House earlier today, at about 4 o'clock when it took a ruling from the Chair to get him to answer questions on the liquor licensing commission. And I think it's important that that point be made here, because it's not simply a matter of priority; it's a matter that the minister was attempting to not answer questions on liquor licensing commission.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Order! I think we've discussed this already and I don't see any point in belabouring the situation. We already have decided that Consumer and Commercial Affairs is going to be on the agenda. The minister has said that he would be willing to bring the liquor board in later on, so I think we could get back to the business at hand, and it's Consumer and Commercial Affairs and get on to item 1, administrative services.

Mr. Shillington: — We'll get on then with your estimates, Mr. Minister. The member from Regina South is being extremely provocative, but I'm going to ignore him.

I want to deal in general terms with your estimates, Mr. Minister. Your department was slashed in a manner which I think merits some comment from you. It was an 11 per cent budget cut, by my calculation, and a 13 per cent staff cut. And I'm wondering what it is about today's market-place that you feel makes it so much easier for the consumer to deal with the problems of the market-place and why he's less in need of protection now than he was last year?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, it's evident that the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs is going along with the times of restraint. There have been cut-backs in governments, in public service, in business right across the country. We have reduced our budget by some \$613,000 from the 1982-83 estimates. The member for Regina Centre indicated the position cuts, and it's only indicated that some positions had to be cut to accommodate the budget cuts. It's as simple as that.

In times of restraint we have to streamline, we have to make cut-backs, we have to make people very productive in these times.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, that is just nonsense. Your department is not going along with the times. There was a 7 percent increase in the budget. Your budget sustained an 11 per cent decrease. And I ask you why your department was singled out for such savage treatment at the hands of the Minister of Finance?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Are you trying to tell the people of Regina constituency to pull more out of their pocket to fund the civil service in Saskatchewan? Do you want your constituents to pay more taxes than they are now? This government has held the line, and we intend to hold the line. We intend to practise restraint, and that is what we are doing.

Mr. Shillington: — Why, Mr. Minister . . . Let me repeat the question . . . I might say that the minister's badly in need of some instruction. The process of dealing with estimates is not one whereby the government ministers ask the opposition members questions. The flow is the other way around. I ask you again, Mr. Minister: why was your department singled out for such treatment? Every single subvote has been cut in terms of staff. Every single subvote which delivers programs has been cut. So I ask you, Mr. Minister, why is it that the Department of Consumer Affairs is thought to be so much more superfluous than other departments?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, when the questions don't make any sense, I've got to answer them with a question. And the hon. member's questions are not making any sense at all. So I answered them with a question, if that's what he wants to know.

Mr. Shillington: — Why the cut, Mr. Minister? Why the 11 per cent reduction? Why the cuts in staff on every single subvote which delivers program services? I'll let you go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we have not cut any programs in the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. We are providing the same services with fewer people, and with 620,000 fewer dollars. If that doesn't make sense, I don't know what does.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, if you have developed the magical formulae for delivering more programs with fewer staff and fewer budget, why don't you share this genius with some of your other colleagues who apparently needed an increase in budget to accomplish the same function?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, every department in this government was asked to play its part in restraint. The Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs indicated that we could cut back in staff and that we could cut back some \$613,000 and still provide the same services that were provided last year. The consumer of Saskatchewan will be protected and protected well by the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, are you admitting that you were overstaffed on March 31st, 1983, before the staff cuts came into effect?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, of the 21 man-year reduction that's indicated in the blue book, 13 of the positions have been vacant for an average of 11.6 months.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, you said you were going to do the same job with fewer people. You admit you're going to have fewer people. The logical conclusion from that is that you were overstaffed as of March 31st, and that's what I'm asking you to confirm. Is that accurate?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we found ways of doing more with less. It's as simple as that. Businesses all across the country have had to find ways, and governments have had to find ways, of doing the same amount or more with less. It's a sign of the times, if you will.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, that comparison is ludicrous. A business which has cut staff has done so because of falling sales. Has your work load decreased? Are you getting fewer complaints this year than you were last? Is there less demand for the services of the department this year than last? That's the only basis upon which you can fairly compare your cuts with the cuts of a plant or a retail outlet.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we've increased in efficiency and effectiveness in the department. We've reduced turnaround times for issuance of various types of certificates. Example: certificates of incorporation or registration have been reduced from four to six weeks average to around one week, and that is just one of the ways that we've improved efficiency. We're offering an over-the-counter emergency service where clients need to obtain a certificate of incorporation on the same day. In such emergency circumstances, a certificate can be issued in as quickly as a half-hour. That's a much better service than that government prompted the department to provide when they were in power. And we're doing this, Mr. Chairman, with 21 fewer positions than in 1982-83, and with 613,000 fewer dollars. Now tell the people of Saskatchewan that is not running the department in an efficient way. You tell your constituents that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I can well imagine why the turnaround rate for registering companies takes one week now, because who is registering companies in Saskatchewan? But that has very little to do with the question that was asked. . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . The Minister from Regina South will know, and for sure you won't need as long to register a company in Saskatchewan because it will be such a

novelty since last April 26th.

But the question to the Minister of consumer Affairs: were the number of complaints you have received . . . Have the number of complaints gone down or up since this time last year?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, consumer complaints have actually gone down slightly in the area of consumer complaints. But in the area of bingos and lotteries, for example, they've gone up. So there is a balance there; there are actually not many more this year or any less than there were in previous years.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, that's quite an answer: there's not many more or many less than there were at this time last year. I knew that when I asked the question. What I wanted to know is: is there more or less combined complaints than there was last year? That was the question and it still is. I know there could be more, there could be less; I just happened to have that idea before I asked the question. What I wanted to find out from you is: is there more or less?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the consumer complaints, that is the consumer complaints of all types, in 1982 were 3,262. In '83 — 3,019. To March 31st — 3,019. That's a reduction of approximately 8 per cent.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, just on a point of clarification, you're saying that between January 1st, 1982 and March 31st, there were 3,262. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The first figure I announced, Mr. Chairman, was fiscal '81-82 — to the end of March 31st, '82 — 3,262. To the end of March 31st, '83 — that's for the fiscal year '82-83 — 3,019.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to go through some individual subvote items, then. The Rentalsman has been reduced in staff, if I could find it. The Office of the Rentalsman has been reduced one staff. It was reduced from 21 to 20 in this fiscal year. It went from 24 to 21 in your last budget, so this cut comes on the tail of yet another one. Your earlier cut must have caused some difficulty, because when the officials were before the public accounts committee they related some difficulty in being current. Now you've cut it again. I ask you about this particular cut. What was it about this particular subvote that caused it to merit a cut in staff?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the one position referred to in the cut-back from 21 to 20 positions was a position of a research officer, and that function has been filled by another branch within Consumer and Commercial Affairs. In regards to cases, we expected to have the backlog cleared — up to the end of December, '82 — to have all of these cases investigated by the end of April . . . this week, pardon me.

Mr. Shillington: — Well that's a curious answer, Mr. Minister. You indicated that you hoped to have the applications which you had received to the end of December cleared up by the end of April. It is my understanding that these applications have to be dealt with within a three-month time period because that's the notice required on the act. You are admitting, it seems to me, that you aren't dealing with them in a timely fashion. If you aren't dealing with them in a timely fashion, what are you cutting staff for?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the Rentalsman indicates that all the rent

review cases and rent increase cases are current, but matters pertaining to security deposits and ruling on other disputes have all been investigated and will have been investigated by the end of this week, and will be current at that time.

Mr. Shillington: — Do I understand the definition of current is that you will have dealt with all the requests received prior to December 31, 1982, by the end of this week? Is that what you're telling us current means?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes, that's true. That's on everything other than rent review and rent increases. That is always current, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, surely, Mr. Minister, you're not suggesting that if you're three and one-half months behind in dealing with those applications, you're current? Surely your goal is to deal with them a little faster than three and one-half months, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, this government inherited a terrible mess, a terrible backlog of cases when we took over in May 1982, and there is a good reason why we have had to in effect work our fingers to the bone to get to the position where we are now, and in short order . . . Well, we have the situation well in hand now. I don't know why the minister for Regina Centre is harping on this situation. It is well in hand now, and under the guidance of our capable Rentalsman we are providing the service that the people of Saskatchewan want.

Mr. Shillington: — The minister from Regina Centre, as you so aptly styled me, the minister from Regina Centre is in receipt . . . As you know, Mr. Minister, I am in receipt of a lot of complaints about the whole system of the Rentalsman. . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . The complaints are . . . I don't need to table them. Your minister's got them, and he knows that full well because I write to him directly. And if the minister wants to deny that he's been receiving correspondence from me on this subject, I'd be delighted to hear that, but I don't think he's going to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No I don't think he has. The Minister of Highways is unable to contain his stupidity, but the Minister of Consumer Affairs is not denying it.

Mr. Minister, I have been receiving complaints, and surely, Mr. Minister, a year is soon enough to tidy up what you call a terrible mess. And are you suggesting that you're going to run consistently three and a half months behind, on dealing with your applications? Is that your idea of tidying up something and running it current? And if it isn't, how long is it going to take you to deliver decent service to the tenants of this province?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, by the end of April I am informed that all matters in the three offices of the Rentalsman in Saskatchewan will be current — that is, by the end of this month, all matters in the three offices will be current, and any delay will be because of hearings or investigations that are going on at this time. The turnaround time now is three to six weeks. That is adequate.

Mr. Shillington: — So by the end of April, you are going to have it to the point where you're going to be three to six weeks behind. Well, frankly, I'm from Missouri, Mr. Minister. I tell you, Mr. Minister, I'm from Missouri on this, because I recall being in these estimates a month ago, and I would swear you told me that you were current at that time. I don't have *Hansard* with me, and I'm not going to make an issue out of it, but

when you tell me, 'Oh, don't worry, we may be three and a half months behind now, but we're going to shave that to 40 per cent by the end of the month.' I'm from Missouri.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you what rate of return you are allowing landlords on their equity. You'll recall this is kind of an old movie. I tried to cover this ground with no success in your estimates in February. When you allow an increase to a landlord in the rent, what do you consider to be an acceptable rate of return on the landlord's investment or equity?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Now, Mr. Chairman, in answer to the member from Regina Centre, we don't base rent increases on equity of investment. We don't base rent increases on equity of investment; they're based on the four main factors as contained in the rent control formula that was devised by the opposition when they were in government.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, what is the average of the rent increases currently being granted to landlords? What's the average currently?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — 13 to 14 per cent.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I say to you, as I said before, that your formula needs some sort of adjustment if it's producing increases of 13 to 14 per cent. I know, from our previous discussions, Mr. Minister, that you can't say that a landlord's cost of operating an apartment block have gone up by an average of 13 to 14 per cent. I know you can't say that, because you don't have that sort of statistical base. Mr. Minister, if you're allowing increases of 13 to 14 per cent when the rate of inflation has sunk far below that, then I suggest your formula needs some adjustment so that the increases bear a little closer relationship to the type of increases being granted to everyone else, except the crown corporations which are in a class by themselves. Everyone else is making do with under 10 per cent. And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, how do you justify those increases in a day and age when everybody else is being asked to make do with inflation minus one?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Now, Mr. Chairman, the member for Regina Centre is quite aware that the rent control formula was devised by them when they were in government. And they know that rent control legislation was brought into effect in this province in January of 1976, at the request of the federal government, to complement their legislation on mandatory wage and price controls. At the same time, mortgage interest payments were considered in establishing rent increases of those landlords in financial difficulties. The rent increase formula was changed in 1978 by them, and mortgage costs were no longer directly passed on to the tenants. Rather, an economic factor is included in the present Quebec formula, which passes through, over time, increases in mortgage rates. This protects tenants from significant one-time increases in rents.

They also, Mr. Chairman, moved away from rent control in all other centres in Saskatchewan, other than Regina and Saskatoon. They know very well that they were moving inexorably away from rent control. No matter how often, how loud they stood up on the summit, or the pulpit, and preached that they were the saviours of renters in Saskatchewan, they were moving away from it. We have said, Mr. Chairman, as the new Government of Saskatchewan, that we are committed to rent control legislation. We will be committed to rent control legislation in the future. We are going by the formula that they devised.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I wonder if it's ever occurred to the minister that the formula may have become a tad outdated? When we were in office I don't recall receiving the volume of criticisms that we are now, with respect to the level of the increases. That started last year, by my experience.

Mr. Minister, you can't justify 14 per cent by the general level of inflation. You can't justify it by suggesting that that's within your guide-lines of inflation minus one. You cannot relate it to the landlord's costs. You cannot relate it to any particular return on investment. How do you justify a formula which produces 13 to 14 per cent? And don't give me the ballyhoo that it was the formula which we had. It was the formula which we had, but it wasn't the subject of the complaints it is now.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, of course I'm concerned about the average increases of rents in Saskatchewan. As I have indicated in earlier estimates, we have now compiled a great deal of information on rent control from both sides — the renters and the landlords, the developers — and we are in the process of putting all of this information together and to see how we can make this formula more equitable to both sides. And again, I am very, very concerned with the rent increases that are shown on the averages in this province.

We are looking at other ways to stimulate the building of multi-unit buildings in the province of Saskatchewan so the vacancy rate will increase. And thereby rents will be held down through a natural process, in the free marketing process rather than in the controlled process — it just has proven over and over and over again that it just doesn't work.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, you are not going to suggest to this Assembly — and I am not going to treat that last comment as serious — that you're going to rely on a natural market process to control rent. You know and I know that the level of vacancies is such that that will not happen. I'll do you a great favour and ignore that remark and treat it for what I assume it was — a silly, facetious comment.

Mr. Minister, you said you are compiling this statistical data and you're going to review it. You're going to make it fair to both sides, more equitable to both sides. I ask you how you're going to do that because you canned your research officer. Who's going to do that? And don't tell me it's going to be policy and planning because they're next on my list and their staff is cut. So I'm curious, Mr. Minister. Are you going to do this yourself? Or is the individual in your department who didn't have the wits to pass on my comments Friday that we're going to be dealing with liquor, is that person going to do it? Who is going to do it, with the reduction in staff?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we do have a policy and planning branch in the Department of consumer and Commercial Affairs which are handling quite nicely all the statistical data that we need. And they are putting together the information that we need to make adjustments. I'm also informed that they, the opposition, when they were in power, cut one research officer 2. They cut the position and used that position as an assistant to the minister. They made him and EA. We don't take people from the department and make them EAs to the minister here.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, there's no suggestion of any cut in the estimates. I happen to have the estimates with me. There's no suggestion of any cut. But I think, Mr.

Minister, it's a good deal less relevant to talk about what the former administration did than to talk about what this administration is doing. You are a year into your term of office. And if you cannot discuss your own activities, then I suggest that is a very lame performance.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, who's going to do it? Policy and planning have been reduced by 20 per cent. You've cut 20 per cent of staff. It's one staff but it's still 20 per cent. You tell me that your research capacity in your Rentalsman's office was cut. You cut the research officer there. I ask you: who's going to do it? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yeah, well, we're getting to the . . . This province is getting a look at what productivity means. It means a sharp deterioration in services, Mr. Minister. That's . . . You people are going to have to put out a new dictionary because you are redefining the English language. When you say an increase in productivity, what you mean is a deterioration in services. When you mean streamlining, when you say streamlining, you mean cutting.

An Hon. Member: — Just streamlining it a bit.

Mr. Shillington: — That's right. . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Well, the Minister may have lost track of my question. I was attempting to straighten out the Minister of Rural Development, and the Minister of consumer Affairs may have lost track of my question. I ask you the same question. Who's going to do it? If it's going to be policy and planning, what activities are they going to drop? Because they've lost staff. So if they're going to do this, what activities are they going to drop?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the department has a director of policy and planning to do research. We also have a regular research officer 2, and two part-time. That makes four people. Four people can handle the research that is needed if they're put on the vital issues of concern to the people of Saskatchewan, and of course within the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs such as rent control issues. We have four people; they can handle it quite adequately.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, what issues are not vital and what issues are they being taken off of if they're going to do this one?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The rent control is quite vital. And I can't give the hon. member a line-up at this time of what others aren't, but we know that rent control is vital.

Mr. Koskie: — I really want to go back to the rent control formula. And the minister indicated that he was taking a look at it and was going to make modifications to the formula, as I understood him, which in fact would be more equitable both to the tenant and to the landlord. Would you enlighten us as to what you had in mind? Are you going to increase it for the landlord and call that more equitable for the tenant? Or are you going to decrease it, the amount of increase, and help the tenant and call that equitable for both? Could you outline (I mean this is rather a strange pronouncement) as to how you are going to achieve more equitable situation for both tenant and landlord in respect to modifications of the formula? Would you mind sending some light forward on that unique statement that only you could make?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, when the studies are complete, the package is complete and presented to me, it will be forwarded to the members of this Assembly in due course.

Mr. Koskie: — With respect to the formula, Mr. Minister, you say you're using the same formula that was used by the previous administration. Obviously, if you looked at the record, that during the time that the formula was in use, there were modifications in it, one to meet the very high interest rates which were being encountered by the landlord. And adjustments were made. Certainly what has happened in the last year, when the interest rates were at the highest, there was a 13 to 14 per cent increase. Now the interest rate has gone down substantially, and the inflation rate. And you start blaming the increase that you granted of 13 to 14 per cent on the formula. Why haven't you changed the formula to reflect the improved condition of the landlord? Or are you paying off your political debts?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, I'm asking the member for Quill Lakes to be patient. The formula will reflect the interest rate decrease over time. It will reflect that. The same way higher interest rates did not suddenly appear. So we will be making these adjustments in due course. We're working on the problem created by those members opposite. It's their rent control formula. We are dealing with it. We will deal with it in due course, but it will be equitable.

Mr. Koskie: — There is a large portion of the rental accommodation that is not under rent control. Is it the intention of the minister to extend the rent control to the post- 1976 apartments?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, they were the ones that were moving away from rent control when we came into office on April 26th. Now they're asking us to extend it. You now, you can't have it both ways. What do you want, extension of rent controls or removal of rent controls? You were moving away; now you're asking us to extend it. I'm telling you that we will be making adjustments to this formula so that the people of Saskatchewan can live with it.

Mr. Koskie: — I'm not particularly concerned with you going through a recitation of what was in the past. Today we're in estimates to ask you what your policy is, and what direction you're going. And again, I repeat to you: are you intending to extend rent control to those units that are not presently under the controls?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — That will be indicated to the members opposite in due course.

Mr. Koskie: — Have you, in your review to date, made any indications as to the possibility of proceeding with that?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — We are reviewing it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to ask further: has there been any adjustment in respect to the damage deposit?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — No.

Mr. Koskie: — What is it at, at the present time?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — It's the same as before, \$125.

Mr. Shillington: — I want to go on to a different area. Getting back to the liquor board. I want to deal with planning and policy for a moment, Mr. Minister. You have

reduced this. I want to know what it was they were doing before, which was (and my apologies to the member) superfluous, that they're not going to be doing, because you've cut out 20 per cent of their staff.

And Hon. Member: — That's the third time you've used that word today.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, it's a good word.

An Hon. Member: — We're trying to teach you guys. . .

Mr. Shillington: — That's right, that's right.

An Hon. Member: — You can pronounce it now.

Mr. Shillington: — I'm told if I use it 999 times you people might come to understand it.

Mr. Minister, what is being cut from their activities? You reduced the staff by 20 per cent. What's being cut from their activities?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we cut one position in the policy and planning branch, and of that one position cut we brought in two part-time people to job-share, as it were. And of those two part-timers, one has expertise in the computer field and one has expertise in the insurance field. So again, the policy and planning branch is capable of doing any job we ask of them at this time. It isn't as large a branch as it was before because it falls into line with restraint that is being practiced by this government at this time.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I just want to be sure I understand the minister. Are you telling me that the two part-time people are going to be sort of working half a day each so that you in fact have had no staff reduction, just a change from five full-time people to four full-time people, and two half-time people? Is that what you told me?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. I want to go on the film classification: here you've cut the staff in half. I'm going to listen with some fascination, Mr. Minister, to see how these people are being more productive. I assume they're doing one of two things: they're either watching two films at once, or they're running the same film twice as fast. And I assume that that is the increase in the productivity. I'd ask you to confirm that.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we have reorganized the film classification board. There was one permanent position, that is the director. We intend to bring in a part-time committee. Now, the advantages of this is that it will give us a broad representation from the public, from the people of Saskatchewan, and their views will represent the views of the people of Saskatchewan as a whole on classification of films.

Mr. Shillington: — Would the minister run that past me with a little more detail? You are going to have a committee which is going to view the films and do the work that the staff did? Would the minister run that past me with just a bit more detail, please?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Well, I'm informed that last year, Mr. Chairman, the film classification board reviewed 174 films on the average of three hours in length, and

that is a total then of 522 hours of work. And, on the average, we expect about 1,700 hours.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, the minister is saying that they're only viewing half as many films and that's why they've only got half as many staff. Is that what the minister's telling me? I'm searching here for my annual report, and I have it. Let me see if I can quickly . . . Ah, haha . . . Films viewed in all categories — 1980-81 there were 359 films in all categories viewed; 1981-82 there were 326. Are you telling this Assembly that last year they only viewed 175, and that the number they viewed was half as many?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in 1981-82 there were 326 films reviewed. So far this year, 174, to March 31st, 1982-83. Another factor in there is that the Chinese Film Society used to send in at least 90 films a year. They are no longer doing that, Mr. Chairman, so that accounts for the fewer numbers of film classifications at this time.

Mr. Shillington: — This day has not been lost, as I'd thought. I've learned something. You're telling me that the Chinese Film Society was sending in pornographic films and that you people were reviewing them? Tell me, were they in Chinese or in English?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — They had English subtitles, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, how many Chinese porn movies did those people get to enjoy in the film classification board?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — We were concerned with the violence aspect of the movies, Mr. Chairman. There were no explicit sex scenes portrayed in these films, from what I understand.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, how many, Mr. Minister? That would still leave you with . . . Okay, assuming there's 90 which you're not viewing, that would still leave you, if the numbers remained the same as last year, approximately 235 to 240. Why the dramatic drop to 176? Are there fewer films coming into the province? Are there fewer films coming into the province?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The factors that explain this then, Mr. Chairman, are the major film corporations. Instead of having to have each and every one of the films they send into the province to be classified, they'll send in 10 prints, or maybe 20 prints; we only have to classify one. We only have to classify, view one and charge for one. Also, another factor is that many of the films being shown now in theatres across Saskatchewan, and across the country, run for longer terms at the theatres they're in. They may run for several weeks or several months, depending on the popularity of that film, so that accounts for the numbers.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I didn't understand your answer, Mr. Minister. What do you mean when you say the major film corporations will send in 10 prints and you only have to view one? I don't understand that, Mr. Minister. What are you doing different than what you used to do?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — All right. Let us use 'Bambi' for an example, Mr. Chairman. If they sent in 10 copies of 'Bambi' to the province of Saskatchewan, we would view one and charge for 10, but we would only have to view one. Thus we would . . .

Mr. Shillington: — But a serious comment: surely the minister is not suggesting that before, if you got 10 copies of 'Bambi,' the poor rascals would sit through it 10 times and watch each print, on the assumption of one might be different. Surely, Mr. Minister, that's not a serious comment.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, where we used to charge per print, now we charge in a lump sum for a package of prints, not in an individual basis any longer.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, you sure have, Mr. Minister. I initially started out this charade by asking you how they were doing twice the work with half the staff; watching two films at once or running them twice as fast. We now are talking about how you are charging for them. I'm frankly surprised to hear that's relevant to the reduction in staff. I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, and I've assumed that you haven't changed your procedure so that you're not watching 'Bambi' 10 times.

I want to know why the work-load has decreased so dramatically that you only need half the staff. I have no idea what the minister is telling me, whether the minister is telling me that your statistical base has changed, and that therefore these figures are going to be different, that you're counting them different because you used to count 'Bambi' 10 times, or what you're telling me. I just really wish that you would clarify what you're telling me, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, in the year '80-81, the film classification board had to review 359 films. In '81-82, it went down to 326, and '82-83, down to 174 — smaller numbers, less hours, fewer hours needed, fewer films because we review one film instead of the whole package.

Mr. Shillington: — Surely the minister didn't look at 'Bambi' 10 times. Surely, the fact that you're only charging them for one, instead of 10, is irrelevant to the present discussion. I am asking you how it is that you are getting by with half the staff, I'm not asking you how you're counting the films. How are you getting with half the staff?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — It's a matter of efficiency, Mr. Chairman, in that we're viewing fewer films than we have in previous years, because of the methods I have described. So, it only makes sense, and rather than having enough employees there, in effect, on the board, to view some 1,700 hours, as we have indicated we only need enough employees to view some 450 hours. Why should the people of Saskatchewan pay to employ people for work that is not there? The work is not there any more, thus the reduction in staff.

Mr. Shillington: — Is the minister telling the Assembly that you had excess capacity and that these people only worked half days beforehand because you had twice the staff you needed? Is that what you're telling the Assembly?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, and they have been assigned other work to do.

Mr. Shillington: — How many hours did they spend reviewing films in 1981-82?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — 326.

Mr. Shillington: — And how many hours did they spend viewing films in 1981-82

then?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — I'm sorry, I misunderstood you to ask . . . The first question you asked was '81-82.

Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry; then '82-83. I'm trying to get a comparison.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — '82-83 — 174; '81-82 — 326.

Mr. Shillington: — And the difference is accounted for by the deletion of the Chinese films. Is that what I understand the Minister to say?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — In part, yes.

Mr. Shillington: — It's the rest of it that I'm having some difficulty with. I don't understand where the rest of the delegations have come from. Mr. Minister, I don't understand the 10-prints, one-viewing comment. I just can't follow you.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, again, we had the capability of providing 3,400 man-hours with two people. Last year in '82-83 all that was needed was 1,044 man-hours. We had the capability for 3,400. All that was needed was 1,044, thus we don't need that number of staff. We've gotten two full-time positions to one full-time with part-time staff. And previously the criticism of the film classification board that it was too narrow in scope. We had two middle-aged males as it were, and I'm a middle-aged male, and I think that my, probably, view of classification would be quite narrow as compared to the broad spectrum of people in this province — older people, younger people, men and women, those who work and those who don't, and so on. So now we have the opportunity with one permanent employee and some part-timers of having input from the public into classification and we're also increasing productivity at the same time. With these part-timers we can add women, we can add seniors, we can add younger people; we can get a broader perspective in the whole area of film classification.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, would you describe for me the function of the committee? Does the committee actually view films? Is it an advisory committee? What is the function of the committee?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we're using the same criteria as has been used in the past in classification of films. No change.

Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry. The minister didn't understand my question. What does the committee do? Is it advisory? Does it view the films? What function does that committee serve?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The committee views the film, reviews it and makes a decision as to how it's going to be classified.

Mr. Shillington: — The committee will review all films that the . . . They'll be present when all films are being viewed, are there on a selective basis, or what's the intention?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — They'll review all the films, Mr. Chairman, that are submitted to the classification board.

Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry, I missed the minister's comment. I was engaged

elsewhere.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — They will review all the films that are submitted to the classification board.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. Can you give us the names of the people who are on the committee, if you have appointed anyone to it?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the same people are on the board till May 31st. The director of the board is Lawrence Hartt. We have not made any selections yet for the future when the part-timers do come in.

Mr. Shillington: — What will the rate of pay be to what you call the part-time people?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, at this time it still hasn't been determined. We're looking at options, and we don't know what the rate or the per diem will be at this time.

Mr. Shillington: — I want to move on to a different subject, if I might. I want to run over a series of items here. There was a cut in the staff of insurance and real estate. Is that because of fewer agents being licensed? What's the explanation for the reduction there?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The deletion there, Mr. Chairman, was a research officer 3. We have the capacity now, with the planning and policy people that we have in place, to serve any needs of the insurance and real estate branch.

Mr. Shillington: — You cut out a research officer. Is that what I understood you to say?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes, research officer 3.

Mr. Shillington: — And who's going to be doing that? Who's going to be picking up that load? The same policy as the planning group that you cut earlier?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I won't make the obvious comment, Mr. Minister.

Communications. As I understand the aim of your communications section, its aim is preventative — the maxim that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure — and I gather that this section is being reduced. I wonder how you justify that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Again, Mr. Chairman, the matter of restraint comes into play here in that with fewer people we can provide the same quality and the same amount of services that we have in the past. We've changed direction slightly in that instead of sending people out to go face to face with groups or individuals who need consumer advising or information, we're providing material and direction either through a brochure, over the telephone, or by letter.

Mr. Shillington: — Of course, you always provided the informational material and the information over the phone. Are you telling the Assembly that the decrease in activity will be a lack of availability of speakers when requested for organizations? Is that what you're telling us, that you're not going to be doing that you used to be doing?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Again, we're sending out self-explanatory material, Mr. Chairman, and this material can be used broadly by many groups out there. And over the years, there has been an expertise that's been developed out in the public at large. School teachers and what not in the community can provide direction and information that they have acquired in the past.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I'm going to leave this, Mr. Minister. It's obvious that you are cutting back in the area of communications, and that means you're cutting back in the area of prevention. And I say to you that you are being penny wise and pound foolish, because an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Some money spent in communications and education will result in a great deal less demand on your department elsewhere, and this is just being penny wise and pound foolish to cut back in the area of communications.

With respect to education and extension, are there any of the projects there that have been ongoing that are going to be discontinued? I think, for instance, of the money management program. Are there any of the ongoing programs and activities which will be discontinued in the area of extension and education?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Well, the answer to your question is no. I do agree that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and it is more efficient to provide materials, self-explanatory materials, to consumers out there, rather than sending out one person from the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs to talk to two or three or half a dozen or a dozen people, which is very expensive.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I've made my comment on that, Mr. Minister. I think you just . . . Efficiency's the wrong word. You are being a great deal less effective when you don[t provide the personal contact. And that is not efficient; that's inefficient. When you're less effective in the area of communications it means you're less effective in the area of prevention and self-help, and that is not efficient; that's inefficient.

I asked you specifically about education extension. Any of the ongoing programs such as the money management program being discontinued in that area?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The money management program will not be discontinued.

Mr. Shillington: — Are any of the other ongoing programs being discontinued?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — No.

Mr. Shillington: — Is the *Consumer Times* being continued with the same frequency as it was before?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. The *Consumer Times* is still going out with the same frequency that it has in past years.

Mr. Shillington: — Can you give me the number of incorporations for 1982-83?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — 3,120.

Mr. Shillington: — Down from 3,054 in '81-82.

Insurance and real estate, Mr. Minister. Have there been any prosecutions against any firms or individuals in the '82-83 year, and have there been any calls on any bonds?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — There have been no prosecutions.

Mr. Shillington: — Any calls on any bonds.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — There have been no calls on bonds in insurance and real estate.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay, the next subject I want to deal with, Mr. Minister, is the provincial mediation board. A fairly drastic reduction in staff — I'd appreciate your comments on it and why that occurred.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, there were two councillors that were deleted. One had been slated to go to Prince Albert and one to Yorkton. The decision was made not to open offices in those locations.

Mr. Shillington: — That accounts for two staff. What about the balance?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The debt co-ordinator that is indicated as deleted was to be in the Saskatoon office. That position was deleted and the debt co-ordinator for Regina is now handling the business that occurs in the Saskatoon office.

Mr. Shillington: — That's three. Are there not four positions deleted, Mr. Minister? Five, none the less. Where are the other two?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The other two positions indicated in the blue book have been transferred to the administration branch in the department.

Mr. Shillington: — But, Mr. Minister, the administration branch went down by one position. How do you transfer two people to administration and still lose a position?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we deleted three positions in administrative services, and added two, for a net of one.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, in a period when increasing numbers of people are having trouble managing their financial affairs, and are having trouble with debts, how do you justify cutting 25 per cent of your staff? Surely this is the period of time when I would think you would need all your staff, when increasing numbers of people are having increasing numbers of financial problems.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, it can be accounted for by the fact that banks and credit unions are getting more and more involved in money management these days. Therefore, government s don't have to be so involved as they were in the past. It's again part and parcel of restraint, and part and parcel of letting people do for themselves what they should be able to do for themselves, instead of having the big brother attitude of the previous administration. Banks and credit unions are getting more involved in money management. They're providing more materials, and they're providing counsel nowadays. They can do it just as well, or better, than government.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, that is unadulterated nonsense. That is

unadulterated nonsense. I deal with a bank and I deal with a credit union (and it's the Royal Bank and the Sherwood Credit Union) and I have not seen any difference in their activities over the last year. I know that there are increasing numbers of people who need assistance. The suggestion, Mr. Minister, that they ought to rely on their own devices, surely begs the question. By the time they stumble through the door of the provincial mediation board, their own resources have proved to be inadequate, and they're in financial trouble, or they wouldn't be there. People do not wander in at the provincial mediation board saying, 'Listen, I've got a series of opportunities coming, and I want to know if they're going to get me into financial problems.' That's what they do at a bank or a credit union. But that's not what they do at the provincial mediation board.

An Hon. Member: — How do you know?

Mr. Shillington: — When they come through the door of the provincial . . . Because I was involved with the department for some years, that's why. When they come . . .

An Hon. Member: — An excellent job.

Mr. Shillington: — I did an excellent job, that's right.

When they come through the door of the provincial mediation board, they are having difficulties, and they have normally exhausted other sources. In a time when increasing numbers of people are having increasing financial problems, how do you justify gutting this branch?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — I'll reiterate what I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, that the banks and credit unions are providing this information free of charge to people out there. I belong to two credit unions and have for many, many, many years. I've also had accounts at various banks across the province, but most of my largesse is with credit unions now. I find that you can go into credit unions in this province — Regina, Saskatoon and anywhere — and you can find literally racks and racks of pamphlets giving you information on any money matter that you want to dwell on. If that's not good enough for you, you can go to a loan officer and get that information also. So we're moving out of the business of providing services that can be best provided by free enterprise in the province of Saskatchewan. Not your socialistic, Big Brother, big hand on the poor heads of the folks of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'll tell you what you're doing. You're in the business of getting out of assistance to the poorer people in this society. This is what we've been talking about all day long. That's what we've been talking about all day long, Mr. Minister.

The provincial mediation board does not assist the well-heeled. It, by and large, is a service provided to the poor, and to the lower-income people. And the suggestion that somebody who is trouble over his head is going to walk into the Sherwood Credit Union, pick up a pamphlet and obtain the advice and assistance he needs, just defies belief. It defies belief that you actually believe what you just said that somebody who is in trouble over his head can go read a pamphlet and get out of trouble. Now surely, Mr. Minister, you've got to have a better explanation for us than that.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Going back to the member for Regina Centre's own words, 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' That's indicated that the people of

Saskatchewan, when they go to banks and credit unions and get the material, the brochures, and what not on money management., that they can prevent these problems from occurring. And indeed, looking at statistics from the provincial mediation board for '81-82, that is up until the end of March 31st, '82, there were 3,010 interviews and investigations on money management in Saskatoon and Regina — that's 3,010.

Now let's go ahead to the year '82-83 ending March 31st, just a few days ago. The numbers there, for interviews and investigations in money management, were 2,147; that's 900 fewer than the previous year. It must mean that the banks and credit unions are supplying a service to the people of Saskatchewan. If you want to look at orderly payments of debts, the total for '81-82 was 266. The total for '82-83 to March 31st was 239. That's a minus 30 factor. Can you understand the number? Watch my lips.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I'm going to leave the subject, Mr. Minister, but this government should be ashamed of itself, in a period of economic difficulty, for withdrawing services to those who are having financial difficulty just makes no sense at all. It's like in the middle of a plague withdrawing medical services. It's the same thing. The need has never been greater. The reason why there are fewer requests this year than there were when the NDP administration was in office was because when the NDP administration was in office we did everything we could to provide assistance to them. You have been doing everything you can to avoid giving them any assistance under this nonsensical theory that free enterprise — the banks and the credit unions — are going to rush to the assistance of those who are having financial difficulty. Banks and credit unions may be able to provide some assistance to people avoiding financial difficulty, but they are not in the business of assisting people who are in financial difficulty.

I say, Mr. Minister, I am disappointed to hear that you are extending your free enterprise philosophy into this area. What you've done, Mr. Minister, what you're saying is, 'Socialism for the rich; free enterprise for the poor.' And I've said that before, and this is an illustration of free enterprise for the poor — free enterprise for the poor.

Mr. Minister, I want to go on to the question of lotteries. There were some changes in the area of lotteries, and I want a comment from you. The changes in the lottery regulations made it possible for political parties to hold raffles and other related sort of activities. I think that makes sense, Mr. Minister. It was going on anyway. It was impossible to prevent, even if one thought that it should be prevented. So to the extent that you've made it possible for political parties to get licenses, I think that's probably just recognizing reality. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: did the change in regulations accommodate any other groups who heretofore could not get licenses? Political parties are the ones I know who were allowed in, but was any other group allowed through the gate with those changes in regulations?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, it wasn't a change in regulations that allowed political parties to hold raffles. It was a change in the government's definition of charitable — what was a charitable organization and what wasn't. And prior to April 26th, the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, licensing and investigation branch, the branch that covers charities, changed its policy to define a political party as well as a union being charitable. Therefore, they were allowed to hold raffles.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. As I said, Mr. Minister, I have no quarrel with . . . I wasn't aware that unions were also allowed. I have no quarrel with either. I think most groups were doing it, I think, probably, not to anyone's great detriment.

Mr. Minister, the Culliton commission I gather was funded out of your department. I saw that in the answers which you gave to my questions of last time. And I want to say, Mr. Minister, I want to thank you for your timely response to the questions put to you. I think I got my answers back from you quicker than anyone. And I want to thank you for that.

In the answers which you gave me, you indicated that the Culliton commission, I understand, was funded out of your department. Could you tell me, have you received Mr. Justice Culliton's report?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the Culliton commission was set up by the previous administration to look at rate structures for public utilities in Saskatchewan. He was working on his report last spring. On April 26th, however, with the change of government, the new government indicated that a public utilities review commission would be set up. And thus the need for the Culliton report was not carried . . . It was no longer needed. It was not carried through with. Thus, no report has been filed by Justice Culliton.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I thought Mr. Justice . . . I understand, Mr. Minister, that Mr. Justice Culliton is doing two reports: one on freedom of information, one on the public utilities review commission. With respect to his report for freedom of information, is he being funded out of your department or is that being funded out of the Attorney-General's department?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — It's being funded out of the Justice Department.

Mr. Shillington: — The last subject I want to deal with, then, is the Saskatchewan Research Council. In the answers which you gave me, there was a very large number of lay-offs. There were some 19 or 20 lay-offs. Do I assume from that that their activities are being cut back, or is this being privatized and funded out of the private sector, or how do you account for the relatively large number of lay-offs at the Saskatchewan Research Council?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, I have my research council officials somewhere in the building. I will deal with Saskatchewan Research Council when I can call them in. No problem.

Mr. Shillington: — I want to make one comment, and then that's all the questions I have, Mr. Minister. It is something that I'd ask you to look into and review with this policy and planning branch of yours that's been reduced. It has to do with The Land Contracts (Actions) Act which I understand is an act assigned to you as minister.

Heretofore it had been universally assumed by the entire legal profession that when you borrowed money on the security of land, you could not be responsible for any deficit or deficiency. All that the lending institution could do was to take back the land. As a result of a decision last year in the courts of this province, the act has been largely emasculated. Now, unless the person from whom you are buying the land took the land as security, you can be sued for the difference. That means if, as in the case in 19 out of 20 cases, or 99 out of 100, you borrowed from a bank or a credit union, you can now be sued for a deficiency, and thus borrowers and mortgagors in this province have lost, as a result of that decision, a very significant bit of protection which they once enjoyed in this province.

I am not particularly expecting much of a response this evening. I would just urge the minister to take this matter under review and give consideration to amending The Land Contracts (Actions) Act and The Limitation of civil Rights Act, I guess, and give mortgagors the protection in the future which everyone heretofore assumed they had.

As I say, you may or may not want to comment on it. I just urge you to give that some consideration, and with that I have no further questions on subvote 1.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

Item 8

Mr. Shillington: — You have here, heartening change. Here, you have an increase in funding for this. I just would appreciate a brief explanation for the relatively generous increase in funding. I assume it relates to the work-load, but, I'd just appreciate your explanation.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we've increased the numbers on the rent appeal commission from five to 10, to accommodate the work-load.

Item 8 agreed to.

Items 9 to 13 inclusive agreed to.

Item 14

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could tell me what good fortune you're assuming this year with respect to this morass? What good fortune are you assuming you're going to have this year, that you didn't have last year?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we're digging into that issue and keeping it covered well.

Mr. Shillington: — I think, Mr. Chairman, we should now adjourn this, unless the liquor board officials are here. I think we'd adjourn this to a subsequent day, at this point in time. Perhaps the officials are here, I don't know.

An Hon. Member: — Go on to the next one.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, deal with Co-ops next.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — We've adjourned this, as . . . (inaudible) . . . official here at this time and with your leave, we'll bring them in tomorrow.

Mr. Shillington: — We'll adjourn this and deal with it tomorrow and deal with Co-ops. Deal with Saskatchewan Research Council next, actually.

Mr. Chairman: — Is it agreed that Co-ops and Co-op Development will be next on the agenda?

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I just asked the Acting House Leader why we wouldn't deal with the Research Council next.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

CO-OPERATION AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 6

Item 1

Mr. Chairman: — The estimates before the committee is Co-operation and Co-operative Development, page 24. Would the minister introduce his officials please?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. The officials here from the Department of Co-operation: to my right, the deputy minister, Mr. Dale Folstad; to his right, the director of administration, Mr. Don Trew; and behind me, Mr. Al Mulholland, the director of examination services.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would tell me if there has been any changes in the staff in your office? I here assume that there is no division between Consumer Affairs and Co-ops, and just ask you about your staff generally. Has there been any change in the staff in your office either in personnel or in rate of remuneration?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — I assume you are referring to the minister's office.

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — As it pertains to Co-operatives, I have one executive assistant, John Gibson, who is salaried at 30,000 per annum. And, he is the only one that is administered by the Department of Co-ops. One assistant secretary, at . . . (inaudible) . . . You need the salary of the assistant secretary? No.

Mr. Shillington: — I want to say, generally, Mr. Minister, that this department was not as badly savaged as some of the others, and I'm pleased to see that. I'm pleased to see that if you allowed consumer and corporate affairs to go down with the ship of your mismanagement, at least Co-ops does not seem to have been quite as badly treated.

Mr. Minister, in administrative services there are two fewer positions, and I am wondering what that relates to. Why are there two fewer positions in administrative services?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, as part of our reorganization of the structure of the Department of Co-ops, we had in total four fewer positions in administration, but we then add on the two that are employed in the minister's office, making a net of two fewer positions in administration.

Mr. Shillington: — Do I understand that the staff which you just gave me the information on — that's additional staff which you didn't have in '82-83? I'm sorry. . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes. Is that additional staff which you didn't have in '82-83? Surely the EA and the assistant secretary would have shown up in last year's estimates,

as well.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The assistant secretary's position was temporary before, and it was made permanent just recently — at the beginning of the year. And the executive assistant that I referred to, John Gibson, was only two weeks ago, transferred from the jurisdiction of Consumer and Commercial Affairs to the jurisdiction of Co-operatives.

Mr. Shillington: — So, it was not a new staff person in your office, but simply a transfer from funding his position out of consumer and corporate affairs, to funding his position out of Co-ops. Is that what I understand the minister to say?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — That's true.

Mr. Shillington: — Then the four fewer positions this year than last year, where were those positions lost?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, we announced the restructuring of the Department of Co-ops way back in December, and at that time the hon. member had requested complete details of the reorganization, which we provided to the hon. member and, I believe, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, through his chief of staff, one . . . Grant Mitchell? . . . Grant Mitchell, yes. And the reorganization, of course, became effective March 31st, 1983.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. Co-operative development: you have eight fewer positions there. Would you tell me what the eight positions are and where are they physically located in the province?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — In co-operative development, positions abolished included a co-op management adviser 1 — Regina, ditto for Saskatoon and ditto for Estevan, a research officer 5, a research officer 3, a research officer 2, and another research officer 2, and also three temporary positions were deleted. However, we added two new positions, and they are: administrative officer 3 and a research officer 4, for a total of eight positions.

Mr. Shillington: — Why the decreasing emphasis on co-operative development? Surely the co-operative principles are as sound now as they were when your department was established, and they're certainly as sound this year as they were last year. Why the decreasing emphasis on co-operative development, or is this something else that you're privatizing?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Most of the positions deleted within the purview of co-op development were policy and planning people, Mr. Chairman, and we have indicated that we want our planning and policy to come from within the branch and, indeed, from without, from input, if you will, from co-operative people in Saskatchewan. We feel that the planning and the input should come from within the branch itself and, of course, from the people out in the field that are working as co-op management advisers out in the rural areas of Saskatchewan.

Now, it was also indicated to me early on when we moved into government in May, by the leaders of the co-op centrals out there that I visited with — the wheat pools, the credit union people, the Federated Co-op people, and indeed co-op college people, Co-operators and so on, that they expected us to be just as lean and just as efficient as they were in their operations in these days of restraint. So we had to have a hard look at

the Department of Co-operation to see where we could delete positions and still keep our programs operating effectively. We have done that and the terminations that we did bring about, the people who were affected were given four months notice — the permanent people were give four months notice; the temporaries were given one month notice. And I'm proud to say that all of those people I believe, all of those people have now found new positions — most of them new positions within government, and there were a couple of the 13 net that I alluded to in the last estimates, who are now out in the private sector.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, you indicated that three of the positions which you deleted were co-op management advisers. Now those people relate directly to the public, so to that extent at least, you're decreasing services to the public. But, I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that policy and planning is an essential element if the co-operative movement is to grow. This department provides the intellectual fountain, if you like, of the new co-operatives. Federated and the Credit Union Central and so on do a good job in their traditional areas, but the concept of a co-operative is a very elastic one, and it's very flexible and it's capable of growth — it's capable of being used in new areas. And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that when you delete the policy and planning people, what you delete is the future growth because you delete the development of the new fields and the new ideas.

And, I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that what you have done with these cuts is to choke off the growth of the co-operative movement in the future.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The indication from the hon. member opposite was that policy and planning had been obliterated from the map of the Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development, and that is not so. Policy and planning, as I indicated in my earlier answer, has now been brought in to the scope of co-op development, and we are putting strong emphasis on policy and planning within, within the branch of co-operative development. Those positions that were deleted in the policy and planning, when it was indeed a separate branch of the department, we found that when we took over government the people in policy and planning indeed had no practical experience with co-operatives. So what we're saying is that we're drawing our resources now from people within the development branch who have practical and related experience with the co-operatives of all kind: retails, and day care co-ops, snow-plough co-ops, and you name it. There are dozens and dozens of different kinds of co-operatives out there. We certainly are putting just as much emphasis now on policy and planning as we have in the past. But we feel it's in a better position now to do more good, with more grass roots input.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I suggested to you that your budget in consumer and corporate affairs is eloquent testimony to the priority which you're giving to the protection of consumers, because your department had been cut a good deal more so than the average. And I make the same comment with respect to the Department of Co-operatives. I suggest that the figures here are eloquent testimony that this is no longer a priority of this government.

I recall the comments of Mr. Gil Johnson, speaking to a group who said just that, that from now on co-operatives are going to be treated the same as everyone else. That wasn't the case with the former administration. Co-operatives received a particular emphasis and a particular support because we believed in the philosophy.

I suggest to you that the figures in co-op development, and the bottom line which is an

actual decrease of \$200,000 in funding, are eloquent testimony that you give co-operatives low priority. If you gave them anything else, you wouldn't slash the funding the way you have.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the member from Regina Centre referred to a remark made by Mr. Gil Johnson. And we've gone over the remarks that he made in his address to, I believe it was a co-op activities council, and what he said, and what the leaders of the co-op sector in the province agree with, is that there was too much pie-in-the-sky programs during the previous administration. They weren't effective programs that the previous administration were delivering. They were not relevant.

The leaders of the co-op movement in the province of Saskatchewan have told me, they've told my deputy and others within the department, that they want equality with the rest of businesses in Saskatchewan. We've said that's what we're going to give them. We're not going to treat them as the hon. member referred to, not in so many words, but what he alluded to was a political football. They don't want to be treated like political footballs. They want to be free of that stigma. So we're in the process of developing good communications, treating them on an equal footing, and that is indeed what they want.

In regards to the numbers of staff, as I said before, they've indicated they want us to be lean; they want us to be efficient; and they want us to supply services that are relative to the co-op movement.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I can believe that you heard that from Federated Co-operatives and from Credit Union Central and the big co-operatives. I can believe that those co-operatives are not particularly in need of the services that this department has traditionally provided, but, frankly, Mr. Minister, I don't believe you heard that from the so-called developing co-ops. I don't believe you heard that they wanted to be treated like everybody else, because without the promotion and assistance of this department, those developing co-operatives will simply wither on the vine.

What we have here, Mr. Minister, is a fairly sharp difference in philosophy between this administration and the last, with respect to co-ops. We sought wherever possible to foster the development of new co-operatives in new areas. What you're saying is that you're satisfied that the major co-operatives in the traditional areas, Federated and Credit Union Central, are doing fine, and therefore there's less need for this department.

Tell me, Mr. Minister, are there any plans to amalgamate this department with the other one for which you're responsible, consumer and corporate affairs?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — No.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, a few short questions on co-operative development. The minister alluded to development of day care in the Department of Co-ops. I'm wondering if you can tell me whether or not any of these people, the eight that were eliminated, were positions that were working on the development of day care in your department.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the Department of Co-operatives has developed a new thrust and put a new and invigorated importance on the development

of day cares in the province of Saskatchewan. There have been no cut-backs in staffing in terms of service to day cares. We've introduced anew service where we're putting on seminars and meetings with new emphasis on accounting and bookkeeping procedures, with new emphasis on board management, and new emphasis on management and advisory services.

Day cares, to this department and to this government, are very, very important services that are needed in the province of Saskatchewan, and in co-operation with the Department of Social Services, the Department of Co-operation intends to provide day cares with every service possible in this province, so that they can grow and provide to the needs of parents in the province.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, that's very nice. I wonder if you can tell me: have any seminars and meetings been held to date in this new wondrous program that you're developing with any day care boards yet, or is this something in the future?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes, I can tell the hon. member that there have been several seminars and meetings and if he would like a list, a detailed list of those meetings, I can provide him with that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — As well, the minister mentioned board management. What exactly are you referring to? Do you have a policy that you are taking out to the boards in terms of management, or a plan? Can you as well fill us in on that — what guide-lines you are giving to the boards, who I'm sure can use some assistance in planning their budgets, seeing that they're having very, very difficult times, as well as in some cases where they're having lower numbers of children in the day cares, simply because the parent can no longer afford the \$200 or \$300 they have to pay even over and above the subsidy? And some of them are telling me now that they are going to have to increase their day care rates by as much as \$100 per month over the next couple of months because of the fact that the grants are not coming in quick enough and in enough abundance in order to keep up with the way things are going. And can you tell me what kind of a plan you have in terms of supporting and giving advice to the boards of these day cares?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — It's quite evident, Mr. Chairman, that there's continually a heavy turnover of board members in day cares in the province of Saskatchewan, in co-operative day cares, and because parents are moving across the province and from city to city and what not. So it's evident that there is a constant need for ongoing training of board members so that they can understand the management aspect and the functional role that they have to perform as board members. And we're dwelling on . . . with emphasis on budgeting, accounting and so on, and the duties of board members in day care co-operatives.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can the minister tell me how many people in the Department of Co-ops are presently working on this project of day care development and can you give me the names of those individuals and also the job description that would describe the work that they are doing?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Well, Mr. Chairman, all our co-op management advisers are capable of providing assistance to development of day cares in the province of Saskatchewan. They have standard packages that they use when groups of parents advise us that they want to incorporate as day cares, so all our co-op management advisers are capable of providing that service to the people of Saskatchewan. And,

indeed, in certain cases, we have to call in special advisers to provide expertise in the area of accounting where the co-op management adviser can't supply that expertise.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Is the minister then saying that none of the people in co-operative development have a job description that would be directly related to the development of day care? Are there no individuals whose sole responsibility is the development of co-operative day care in the province?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — It's a requisite, Mr. Chairman, that co-op management advisers have in their job description, that they are capable of providing the assistance that day cares need for their development. There are no particular individuals that are assigned specifically to day care development. Each and every co-op management adviser is capable of doing this.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Another question related to that area. Let's use the example of a day care in Regina or Swift Current who needed some help in developing a budget and that sort of thing. How would they go through contacting your office and who, in order to get that kind of assistance and guidance or, in fact, get involved in the seminars and meetings that you are talking about? Who would they contact, and what kind of arrangements would be made by your department to go out and to meet with them?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — I would suggest if someone lives in the Swift Current area, the Swift Current region, that he contact the co-op management adviser in the Swift Current office. The co-op management adviser goes from there and helps the people who want the day care co-operative to incorporate. He gives them all the information they need and any additional expertise that they might need, as I alluded to earlier in the field of accounting and in other areas they might need additional expertise. Open the phone book, look for the Department of Co-operatives, no matter what region you live in in Saskatchewan. We have co-op management advisers in Yorkton, Tisdale, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford, and Kindersley, and Estevan.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Could the minister inform me whether or not — since he has taken over that department — any communication has been carried on with day care boards in terms of a formal letter or communication letting them know what services are available from your department, in terms of organizing budgets and developing co-operative day care?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Our co-op management advisers, Mr. Chairman, have a continuous correspondence with day care co-operatives in the province. As well, last summer, our co-op management advisers held special meetings with day care co-operatives across the province, those that wanted to take advantage of informational services that they were providing at that time.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The reason that I'm asking these questions — I'm going to be writing to the day cares of the province over the next week, and so if I include a portion in there, that this kind of service is available from the Department of Co-ops, I would not be far off. And the reason that it's of special interest to me — it was something that was sort of just getting under way in terms of developing a day care operation that was being sort of jointly done by the Department of Co-ops and Social Services at the time that I was minister. So if I was to go ahead and let them know that this service is available, your department, you're telling me, would be able to handle the influx of requests and possible requirements to go out and have meetings with the day care groups in the province.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Yes, we'd appreciate that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Engel: — I have before me some press clippings I've been reading that relate to all kinds of pressures that are facing young farmers: cost-price squeeze, reduction in price of their grain, increase in prices of input costs. In the past when that kind of pressure hit, a lot of young farmers decided to get together and form co-operatives and there was some decent assistance available. Has that program changed at all as your emphasis change, or have you got staff in the field to take care of those kind of requests?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The department is, at this time, currently working on development of machinery-sharing co-operatives, Mr. Chairman, and it is a service and it is a type of co-operative that a need has been indicated for out there by the young farmers of Saskatchewan. However, we are running into some income tax problems now, that they may have to fact. So we're currently working on how to solve those problems and we expect that within a couple of months, or possibly a little longer, that we will have that problem solved and we will be able to forge ahead with the formation and incorporation of machinery-sharing co-operatives.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, under examination services it's actually an increase of three people. What accounts for the increase in the three people in that subvote?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — We took over the co-operative unit within Department of Northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman, and there were three positions there that we took over into our examination services branch.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, that's right, Mr. Minister, now that you remind me. The co-op guarantee board — can you give me the total aggregate of loans outstanding as of (I guess it's done on a fiscal year), as of March 31, 1983?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — \$2,604,300.

Mr. Shillington: — That's the additional loans guaranteed in the last fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — That's the balance of loans outstanding.

Mr. Shillington: — What additional guarantees have been given this year, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — None, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Shillington: — Have any been refused, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — No written requests for guarantees have been refused.

Mr. Shillington: — Can you give us a list of the loans which are in default — the loans which you have guaranteed, which are in default to the person who has lent them?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — There is only one past due, Mr. Chairman, and that is Alfa Cubers, a mutual — an amount of \$26,256 is past due.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I guess there's only the one overdue. Would you confirm, Mr. Minister, that that loan has not been given any supplemental guarantees, since you've guaranteed further amounts to loans which are already in arrears?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — We haven't guaranteed anything new at . . . since the new government took over, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Shillington: — The co-op home building program, Mr. Minister. Could you tell me how many units were built last year?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, there were 66 incorporations in 1982-83 . . . home building co-ops, 66 incorporations. As to how many specific units were involved. I don't have that information at hand right now, but I would estimate you could probably multiply it by three or maybe four.

Mr. Shillington: — Could you tell me, Mr. Minister, has there been any change in the status of the native planning and co-ordination unit?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — We have one position, Mr. Chairman, within the co-op development branch, that is specifically responsible for liaison with native groups, and their requests for information and requests for incorporation as co-operatives.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, the co-operative relations branch. There is a fairly sharp decrease in funding in other expenses. Do I assume that that to a decreased amount of advertising, or is there some other explanation for the decrease in funding in other expenses?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — It is advertising, Mr. Chairman, yes.

Mr. Shillington: — Could you give me the names and rates per diem of the members of the co-operative securities board? I could put the question differently. I got it from you last year. Has it changed since last year?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — The per diem, Mr. Chairman, is \$75. Did you request the names of those on the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I'll quickly run through. They haven't changed since the last estimates.

Mr. Shillington: — This is virtually my final question. It has to do with the George Taylor Co-operative housing in the Rochdale village housing co-op. Have these projects been completed and have the units been filled?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, the George Taylor project has been completed; yes, it has. In regards to the Rochdale project, the Sask Housing Corporation reviewed its housing priorities and, as a consequence, decided that the project could best meet the housing needs of the Cathedral community by tendering the management of the project to a private firm, so it is no longer a co-operative.

Mr. Shillington: — Who got the tender, Mr. Minister? Who was the successful bidder?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — I would refer that question to Saskatchewan Housing

Corporation.

Mr. Shillington: — That's fair. Let me just understand you, though. The Rochdale Village housing co-op was transferred to Sask Housing and it is they who have taken responsibility for it. If that's the case, I'll leave it and I'll take it up with . . . I don't see Mr. Hardy here. I'll take it up with the minister when his estimates for housing come forward.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2

Mr. Shillington: — One further question. Have there been any lay-offs, terminations — I don't particularly care about suspensions — but have there been any lay-offs or terminations within the Department of Co-ops, apart from the ones which might have come about as a result of the loss of positions? Have there been any other lay-offs or terminations in your department?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — No, Mr. Chairman.

Item 2 agreed to.

Items 3 and 4 agreed to.

Item 5

Mr. Shillington: — One question. I assume, Mr. Minister, that the explanation here again is the penniless state of the current government, and that explains the decrease in funding under co-operative grants. I assume that there's no pretence that there's any less need for it. It is just your incompetent management and current penniless state that results in a decrease in funding.

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — You can make whatever assumptions you like, Mr. Member from Regina Centre. We have indicated that that . . . It's been indicated to us, I should say, by the co-operative sector out there that that is all that is needed at this time, this year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, this is the second time today the minister has referred to the co-ops who are not in favour of this program, and I think in question period he mentioned they had relayed that message to him. I wonder if you will now send over to us the message that you received from the co-ops that would indicate that they were not in favour of that program?

Hon. Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of new co-operation in the province of Saskatchewan — and the spirit of co-operation is alive and well — the leaders of the central co-ops in this province have indicated to me and to the department they're happy with the new liaison they have with us, the new communication that they have with us, and the programs that are being carried on, and the fair and equal treatment that they are receiving. So the member's comments are ludicrous. We have received communication from them, verbally, through person-to-person contact. I am not going to take his question at heart to provide documentation on it. It is a new feeling, a new spirit of co-operation in the province of Saskatchewan. The spirit's growing on, is what I'm trying to say, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, the minister has referred to the fact that certain co-ops were not in favour of this program. My question to him: you're the one who brought it up that certain co-ops were not in favour of this program, and I'm asking you now to let us know which co-ops you are referring to.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. member from Shaunavon refer to the Minister of Co-ops from his seat, refer to the Minister of Co-ops as a liar. I think that is certainly unparliamentary language.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister of Finance to withdraw that statement because at no time either from my feet or from my desk did I refer to anyone as a liar. It was the Minister of Finance who from his desk was talking about liars. I at no time suggested that anyone was, and I would ask him to withdraw the remarks that he inferred that I had called someone a liar.

Mr. Chairman: — Officially there was no one on their feet at the time when this activity was going on. It was across, so the Chair cannot recognize anything that was not said on their feet.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, there was an accusation made in this Assembly not two seconds ago by the Minister of Finance that I had referred to someone as a liar, which I didn't do. I would ask him to withdraw that insinuation at this time.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will relay to the House exactly what in fact was said. He indicated, the member clearly within hearing range, Mr. Chairman — clearly within hearing range — and there's miles of precedent that indicates that the Speaker or the Chairman when he hears some kind of accusations in this House that are in hearing range regardless of whether he's standing on his feet or not is cognizant of it. I simply refer back to previous occasions when members were ejected from this House for uttering statements from their chair when they clearly weren't standing.

What I understood the conversation to be, Mr. Chairman, was as follows: they were challenging; the members opposite were challenging the Minister of Co-ops. I asked them, 'Are you in fact calling him a liar?' The hon. member answered in the affirmative. I suggest that that is certainly challenging the Hon. Minister of Co-ops.

Mr. Chairman: — I think the . . . refer back to what I said before. There was no official . . . There's heckling and, therefore, I think we should get back to the item on hand, and leave it at that.

Item 5 agreed to.

Vote 6 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS

CO-OPERATION AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Nil vote.

Mr. Shillington: — I just want to thank the ministers and officials for their co-

operation in these estimates.

Mr. Chairman: — I want to thank the minister and his officials.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:15 p.m.