

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 15, 1983

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr. Rybchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall, on Tuesday, under Rule 16, move:

That in the opinion of this Assembly differences of opinion between Canadian citizens or governments, and citizens or governments of the United States, shall be settled by discussion and negotiation, and this Assembly rejects as insulting to the people of the United States, the unrepresentative and unrepresentative of the feelings of Canadians, the desecration or burning of the American flag and condemns the action of those who acquiesce or participate in such provocations against a neighbour.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you. Through you and the Assembly I would like to welcome 37 grade 10 students from the Muenster high school. They are located in the east gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Dick Blechinger, Gordon Rook, and Ellen McNeil. I want to welcome the students from this very progressive community of Muenster, where the St. Peter's College is located. I hope that they have an enjoyable visit to the legislature. I will have the opportunity to meet with them for pictures and for refreshments, right after around 11 o'clock. So will all join with me to welcome the students.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sutor: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you 24 grade 3 and 4 students from Judge Bryant School along with their teacher, Phyllis Stanko. They are seated this morning up in the Speaker's gallery. I'd like to advise them that I will be meeting with them right after question period. I hope they enjoy their visit to the Legislative Assembly this morning. I'd like all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weiman: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pride that I introduce to you and through you to this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan, a fine group of students from one of our great schools in Saskatoon Fairview, School Father Vachon, grade 7 students, 32 in number. I would like to point out that the Minister of Education has been so impressed with your academic achievements and your behaviour that he's declared tomorrow a holiday for you. Also, Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pride,

and equal pride, that I also introduce the two teachers accompanying them. They are probably the two finest teachers in all of Saskatoon. It is just a mere coincidence that one of the teachers is my brother-in-law, Dave Knowles; the other is my baby brother, Brian Weiman. He is the person blushing in the blue shirt up in the west gallery. As well, I would like to introduce to the House one of the parents from my area who has accompanied them on the trip, Mr. Webber. I look forward to meeting with the students after question period in the rotunda for pictures and later on, at 11 o'clock, we will go for some refreshments in the members' dining room.

I'm sure that you will find this informative. I'm sure that you'll be asking your teachers many questions on the way home. We'll see you later. I ask that we all join in wishing them well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly, 25 grade 8 students from Ituna, Saskatchewan. They're here today with their teacher, Mr. Bill Hudema and their driver, Mr. Fred Stecyk. I would also like to welcome them on behalf of my colleague, Mr. Petersen, from Kelvington-Wadena, which overlaps into their school district. I would ask that this House welcomes them and I will be meeting with them at 10:45 for pictures.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Valley View Lay-offs

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Social Services. Yesterday, in the House, and the day before, you indicated that a number of the staff at Valley View had been laid off or fired, that you were reconsidering that action by your department and in fact by yourself. I would like to question the minister today as to whether or not these individuals in particular one, a speech pathologist, had been reinstated while you do your review.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, my first concern when we were looking at overall government efficiencies was the program area, and that had been the directive given — that I wanted to know the possible effect if there were to be staff reductions, what it would have on the program, the service to the client or the resident, and in this case, in Valley View Centre. That information had not been forthcoming to me. I have no idea of what it meant to the implications of the program, and I had asked that it be put on hold and I have a chance to review it with the deputy, and that review will be completed before Wednesday of next week.

As to the effect of the lay-off and the subsequent announcement that I had made in this Assembly, the people did receive their slips, and that still stands. The decision as to what happens after will come forth by Wednesday.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister has said both inside the House and outside, the day before yesterday, that the dismissals were contrary to her instructions. What I'd like to know from the minister is what instructions in fact you gave to your officials, and whether that was in writing or orally. What were the instructions in fact that you gave them? If this action that was taken was contrary to

that, what instructions in fact did you give to them?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, the overall management of the department, and particularly when we're talking about staff reductions or even the addition of staff, whether it be Mr. Koskie's sister or someone else, that's an internal matter. On this particular issue, the discussion was orally with department people when we were looking at where we were going for 1983-84. My directive was: if we are looking at staff reductions and greater efficiencies, no matter what centre it is in, I want to particularly know the effects on the program. If the efficiencies are to be gained it will not be gained at the expense of the program, period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. It seems hard to believe that you can talk about a program and yet cut 11 people. How would you expect them to be able to cut 11 people and not cut the program? My question to you is whether you are aware of a cabinet document dated November of 1982, which says in part, '... savings of \$230 through staff reductions at Valley View and North Park, \$100,000 saving through implementing a selective resident charge at these institutions.' Were you not considering this in cabinet as part of your budget estimates that you were preparing, and was this not the instructions that you gave to your officials?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, Mr. Speaker, it was not.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — If you're saying it was not, how does it happen that in the *Estimates* that appeared in this House there is, in fact, on point 8, subvote 8 of page 86, Valley View Centre, a reduction of 11 staff? How can you, in fact, blame your officials when you're the person who in fact signed the document dismissing these 11 people?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not about in the management of this department to put blame anywhere. I simply said . . .

An Hon. Member: — Yes, you have.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, I haven't. I have simply said that information has not come forward, and until that comes forward to me, that matter will be reviewed.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in the House the day before yesterday the minister indicated, and outside the House, that she was very upset with this action taken by her staff, and I believe attempting to put blame on her staff for action that was taken by herself and her government. My question to you is whether or not you will now consider today reinstating the 11 employees who you are so upset that they were dismissed? Will you reinstate them today?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I am in consultation with the deputy on the particular issue and the final decision will be forthcoming by next Wednesday.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Social Services, and it concerns the staff cuts at Valley View, and particularly, a Dr. Maharaj. Dr. Maharaj, as you know, has been on the staff of the Department of Social Services for some time, and has, along with the George Reed Foundation, developed

the Pictogram-Ideogram Communications system — PIC for short. Perhaps the minister will know that some weeks ago I was asked to give a TV testimonial on behalf of the George Reed Foundation, in which I was specifically asked to recommend PIC. I believe the Premier also was asked, and he, as I on television, recommended to the public the merits of PIC.

Now the question that I ask the minister is: if this program put forward by the George Reed Foundation is an outstanding program, as the Premier and I were led to believe and asserted to the public, why are you now discharging the man who designed it, and the man who puts it into effect?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Leader of the Opposition. The program has its merits in the communication system for those that are disabled. I would also be the first to recognize that there are other programs that speech therapists use, depending on what the diagnostic technique has been for the child. This has nothing to do with this particular program or this particular person. And after I've had further consultation with the deputy, a decision will be made as to that staff reduction element at Valley View.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — A supplementary to the minister. In view of the fact that you accept the PIC program (Pictogram-Ideogram Communications) as an outstanding program, and in view of the fact that it was . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. The member rose to ask a supplementary. Supplementaries are not permitted to have a statement ahead of them, but rather you're to get directly to the question.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister in charge of the Department of Social Services. My question to you is very simple. Because you know that Dr. Maharaj developed this program, and you admit the program is a good one, why are you now dismissing this man from the service of the Government of Saskatchewan after more than 13 years of devoted service?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The reason I asked for the review was to find out what implications it had on the program. And if PIC (Pictogram-Ideogram Communications) is very much part of that program at Valley View, then I wanted to know the implications. I didn't have that information for whatever reason; I didn't have it. And that's why I asked for the review.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — A further supplementary. Would the minister advise why she discharged the doctor before the review was completed?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated the other day, there had been some news brought forward that at that point in time I was unaware of. And it had to do with the staff reduction at Valley View, one being the gentleman in question that you raise here, the founder of the communication system of PIC. Because of the deep concern I had had on the program area for the mentally handicapped, I had asked that the exercise be put on hold - the staff reduction of those 11 people - and I wanted to know the implications to the program area at Valley View. And that is what I had asked for, and that will be done by next Wednesday.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister in charge of the Department of Social Services. The preparation of your budget will inevitably involve a

review of the program. You presumably reviewed the programs, reached your conclusions, incorporated them in the budget, decided to discharge 11 people, including Dr. Maharaj. The question I ask is: why, in your initial review of the program which led to the budget which caused his dismissal, did you decide that this program was unworthy of continuance, and Dr. Maharaj should be dismissed from the service of the Government of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — In the initial preparations of the budget (and I'm sure the member well knows) individually — and if you're talking about the PIC (Pictogram-Ideogram Communications) program, of course that was not reviewed. PIC all by itself — the direction given, and my concern, was if there are any efficiencies to be gained at Valley View, it must not affect the quality of program to the clients. And that's what I want to assure myself of by next Wednesday: that the quality of the program has not been affected.

Mr. Shillington: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. It has to do with a more fundamental and a far older principle than the program at the Valley View Centre. Indeed, the principle that I want to talk to you about, Madam Minister, predates this Assembly. It's called ministerial responsibility. It seems clear, Madam Minister, that you were involved, but you deny it. What is clear from your own statement is that you chose this forum to rebuke your officials. I ask you: whatever became of the doctrine of ministerial responsibility, whereby the minister in the House accepts responsibility for what happens in a department?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I think the member is perhaps indicating if I will admit, and I have said something else, that I am not telling the truth. I have stood here and I have accepted full responsibility. I wanted the information; I do not have the information. I have said that. I'm accepting responsibility for that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I want that information to ensure that the quality of program to the mentally handicapped in Valley View is not affected by the measures that were taken. When I get that assurance then further action will take place.

Mr. Shillington: — I just want to read, Madam Minister, your first and last statement of that ministerial statement. (New question, Mr. Speaker.) 'Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I rise today,' You then made your statement, and you concluded with the remark, 'That action was counter to direction given.' That, Madam Minister, is something less than an acceptance of responsibility. It is an attempt to lay a responsibility on your officials for disobeying your action. I ask you again, Madam Minister: do you or do you not accept the doctrine of ministerial responsibility in a parliamentary government?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I think I missed part of the question, but I think it was: you asked if I accept the ministerial responsibility. Yes, I do.

Mr. Shillington: — It might be easier to follow it if the people around you weren't braying at the top of their lungs, but let me repeat the question. I am going to read for you, once again, the opening and the closing sentence of your ministerial statement: 'Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I rise today . . .' And then you closed with the following statement: 'That action was contrary to direction given.'

What you told this Assembly was that they didn't follow your directions. Madam Minister, that is something less than accepting responsibility for what your department did. You're attempting to say your officials disobeyed you. I ask you again, Madam Minister, what ever became of the doctrine of ministerial responsibility in a parliamentary government?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I ran for office based on the principle that people have got to stand up and start talking, instead of as the past administration that was simply, 'No comment, no comment, no comment.'

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, that day is gone. If you were on a door-knocking campaign, you would hear people say, 'I am tired of the attitude of politicians where information is not forthcoming to the public, where politicians don't stand up and tell them exactly what is happening and how they feel.' That day is gone. The public wants the information. My direction was: if there are any efficiencies to be gained in Valley View Centre, I do not want it to affect the quality of program. When the announcement came forth in the press, I had not had the information as to how that affected program service at Valley View. It's as simple as that. I wanted the information; therefore, I asked for the review.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Social Services. Is it something that we will now come to expect, that you will present a budget in which you cut staff and as the press build up pressure against you, you will then blame your staff who carried out your instructions, and say that you're doing a review? Is this what we can expect from now on?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member from Shaunavon thinks that this was done under public pressure and the pressure created by the media, I think you'd better think again. It wasn't. Not one call, not one call. So let's be sure on why it was done. I have told you why it was done, and I will ensure that the department is as capably and ably run, if not better, five times better, than when you were minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the minister. If you're telling us that you're doing it because there was a mistake made, that you're reconsidering it, then why do you refuse to rehire the individual who is a world-renowned speech pathologist? Why don't you simply issue an order that you have the power to do, reinstating this individual? You can't have it both ways. You can't say he was fired by accident and not rehire him. That leads everyone to believe that officials were instructed to fire him and you're covering up. To prove the point and clear the air, why don't you simply today issue a statement rehiring the speech pathologist?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated why I won't do this. This has nothing to do with a particular individual, a particular position, nothing at all. Until I get the information as to how the program, the quality of program and service provided by those 11 positions is affected, then I will not do what you are asking to do.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Social Services, and this concerns her budget which she has presented, and the program at

Valley View Centre which she says is now under review because she didn't understand the program implications of her budget at Valley View. Would she advise the House of what other areas and department of the Department of Social Services she did an inadequate review of the program of, and accordingly will in due course be announcing yet further reviews because she didn't understand the program implications of the budget she introduced in this House?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well on the budget process on what ministers understand, don't understand and what they actually do on the budgeting process. There was direction given for some efficiencies and it was indicated at that time, yes, there could be efficiencies at Valley View. And I said those efficiencies can take place as long as they don't affect the quality of service to the residents. That was the direction.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Social Services. On her own admission she has now reached the conclusion that the quality of service at Valley View may be affected by the cuts which she introduced on the grounds of efficiency. Otherwise, she would not be doing the review which says she is doing. The question I ask the minister is this: what other branches of the Department of Social Services are likely to be the subject of further reviews to see whether or not there are cuts in the quality of program? If she has stumbled onto this problem at Valley View, where else may we expect the next stumble?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, there will not be any further reviews to stumble on, as you have suggested.

Firings in Department of Highways

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Highways.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — The minister, in a recent news article, apparently has fired another 125 people, or so it says here. Could the minister indicate how many of these people were part-time employees and how many of them were permanent employees?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the hon. member for the question today, and raising a concern that we had 18 full-time positions and 139 part-time positions.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Highways. Could the minister indicate if these were all on maintenance crews, or were some of these that were fired on engineering crews, too?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Speaker, we had 18 public service positions. We had 139 labour service positions, and in that were works branch and maintenance employees — maintenance and works branch employees. Maybe I should explain it, Mr. Speaker, for the members opposite. There are grading crews that do summer construction in the province of Saskatchewan. They should understand that.

Mr. Lusney: — Supplementary to the Minister of Highways. It indicated in the news article that some of these employees may have had up to 25 years of service. Were these employees that were on maintenance crews or just working on grading crews

during the summer?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Speaker, some of these employees have worked for the department for five years, or 10 years, or 15 years. I think, Mr. Speaker, we should explain to the members opposite that these people have been laid off. They're really not going to be unemployed because they now have the opportunity of changing bosses. Instead of working for the Department of Highways and Transportation in the province of Saskatchewan, they can now work for the private sector. The opportunities are there for them now in the province of Saskatchewan. It's just a matter of 180 people, and of that 180 people, Mr. Speaker, 23 are vacant positions where it just goes to prove that this government is trying to run a more efficient government in the province of Saskatchewan . . .

An Hon. Member: — And not build roads.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — And one of the hon. members says we're not trying to build roads. No, Mr. Speaker, that's not true; we are going to be building roads. But it is going to be the private sector that is going to be building the roads in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — A new question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, how can you suggest that these people are not out of work? They have no job. You are not guaranteeing them that they will be able to get employment with the private sector. Is it not true then, that these 180 people, that you suggest, are definitely out of work?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Speaker, two points. The Department of Highways, over at the deputy minister's office, we have a four-man employment team that are working extended hours to enable the employees that have been laid off — to explain their bumping rights with them, and they're getting total co-operation.

This time, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have to beg your indulgence to read part of a letter here from the Saskatchewan Road Builders Association. And I will just read you two small paragraphs because this is a very important issue, Mr. Speaker, and I want to point out to the members opposite just the . . . re the changing of the jobs. I will read to you two paragraphs, Mr. Speaker. The letter is dated February 24th, 1983:

A substantial shift from the public to the private sector would require that contractors in the province employ an additional 100 or more equipment operators, labourers, flagpersons, etc., experienced in this type of construction work.

Paragraph 1, Mr. Speaker.

To assist our contract members in locating experienced employees, our association would be prepared to make its office available to provide lists of names with occupational experience to our members of people who may be displaced from the public sector. This is a service we now provide for our members, with respect to students graduating from technical schools in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I think this just points out that we have a grave concern in the province of

Saskatchewan. But what is happening, Mr. Speaker, is that these employees will not be working for the Department of Highways and Transportation. They will be allowed to work for the different contractors with the Saskatchewan road builders construction in the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, one final comment and I think it's very important: private enterprise is not just a slogan with this government, it is a commitment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I rise, before orders of the day, to raise a point of personal privilege. While the Minister of Highways was answering and responding to a question, it was very clear to members on this side, the hon. member from Shaunavon was clearly to be heard, Mr. Speaker, clearly to be heard saying: 'A little bit of graft here, eh? A little bit of graft here, Mr. Speaker.' Clearly he was not on his feet, but we have recognized in this House at many times, Mr. Speaker, that those type of comments are clearly a breach of privilege of this House, Mr. Speaker. I raise that to you, I raise that point to you and leave it in your hands. I think it is improper.

Mr. Speaker: — There are a lot of comments made back and forth across the Chamber during question period. If this comment was made it appears on the record. Then it would be easy to deal with. Personally, I didn't hear it, but I will review the record and bring in a statement on Monday.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Report of Department of the Attorney-General

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Before orders of the day, I'd like to table in the Assembly the first annual report of the Department of the Attorney-General.

The first time in the province's history the department has filed an annual report.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I would move:

That motions for returns (not debatable) 1 through 20 be made debatable.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

CULTURE AND RECREATION

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 7

Item 1

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister introduce his officials?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives me pleasure to introduce to the House on my left the deputy minister of Culture and Recreation, Mr. Bill Clarke; behind me on the right, Mr. Dick Clarke, the executive director of culture activities; and on the left behind me, Mr. Ken Johns, the acting executive director of sport services.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to begin by asking you for your position on the Batoni-Hunter bid for the Blues. I wouldn't really have raised the issue because up until a few days ago you had, I thought, made your position clear, but in answer to a CFQC reporter who asked you if the government was going to be financially involved in any way with the financing of the Blues, you were reported to have said that once the financing package was in place, you would consider some form of participation. I think that was how you were reported on CFQC.

My question to the minister is: were you incorrectly reported, were you just trying to get rid of a bothersome reporter — and, frankly, the odd one is capable of being that — or have you changed your position? Has the government changed their position on the financing of the bid to bring the Blues to Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, my personal position on the bid is that I am totally in favour of the attempt. I wish it every success. I have trouble seeing anything about that in the estimates for Culture and Recreation, and the reporters, I don't think, misquoted me. I think you have misquoted the reporters.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I am not misquoting the station. You were reported as having said that once the financing was in place, consider some form of participation by the government. My question to the Minister of Culture and Recreation is: is the government considering any form of participation in the Blues in a financial sense, either by loan, by grant, by guarantee, or in any other fashion whatsoever; is the government considering accepting, directly or indirectly, any financial liability for this bid?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — I have indicated publicly that we would consider, consider, a position or guarantee if it was necessary to make the venture operable.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. I asked the question, Mr. Minister, because I think it is a change in position. When you guarantee a loan, certainly of a venture of this sort, you are putting money into it. You are at risk in putting money into it. I don't often agree with the notorious hockey, the owner of the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, no, in Toronto — Ballard — I don't often agree with Harold Ballard. But when he described the financial risk of running a hockey team on the Prairies and described it as being a high-risk venture, he was undoubtedly accurate. I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that if you are considering it, if you are preparing to guarantee . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, has the member from Regina North West got his teeth in today? I say to the minister that when you accept, when you say you're prepared to guarantee a loan for a hockey team, the city of 150,000 people which same venture is going to build and own and run a stadium, you're accepting a guarantee on a high-risk venture and to suggest that you're

not putting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member wants to compare it with Green Bay; I'm sure I don't need to do that for the minister's . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right. For the benefit of the member opposite, I can tell you that there is a very large population lives within driving distance of Green Bay. The number of people who live within 120 miles of Green Bay numbers in . . . The member from . . . The deputy minister of culture and youth will know. There must be close to 20 million people live within driving distance of Green Bay. That unfortunately is not the case in Saskatoon. That is not quite the numbers you're dealing with. So I ask you, Mr. Minister, to exercise some caution in guaranteeing a large sum of money. You may well be called upon to honour it.

It is a change in position. The reason why I asked in the fashion I did, I assumed you were incorrectly quoted. The reason why I asked was because I have a copy of the *Star-Phoenix* of December 17th in which you are reported to have said, and this is the quotation from the paper:

Schoenhals said he offered no financial assistance on behalf of the province nor was any sought by Hunter. He maintains no government money should go into such a venture.

When you say that you're prepared to consider a guarantee of this venture, Mr. Minister, you're prepared to put into that project.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, I must admit I find this somewhat surprising to hear a representative of the previous administration talking to us about what is and what is not a high-risk venture. If I took the time to list the ventures that your administration squandered this province's money on, direct equity money, we'd be here till next week — shoe companies, malting companies, go on and on. I will take your point.

Secondly, though, I am very distressed to hear the very low opinion that you appear to have of these people of Saskatoon and surrounding district. The Premier has mentioned a number of times, the people of this province are indeed first-class and world-class, and they will support that program. They are starved for entertainment and they will support it to the hilt.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I made no derogatory comments about the people of Saskatoon and the surrounding district and I'm quite prepared to let you use *Hansard* in any fashion you like because I didn't say it and it isn't there.

Mr. Minister, I recognize the qualities of Saskatchewan people but the risk cannot be denied. There isn't a major league hockey team in a community the size of Saskatoon, with the service area it has, in North America. I say, Mr. Minister, that when you're prepared to guarantee the loan, you're prepared to put money into it. And if this statement still stands, 'Schoenhals maintains no government money should go into such a venture,' if you still stand by that statement, then you'd better start backing out of your guarantee, because when you guarantee something, you'd better be ready to put the money into it.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — We have indicated that we are prepared to consider, I repeat, to consider a guarantee position. However, the member chose to discuss the . . . (inaudible) . . . of various hockey teams. I can tell him that the hockey teams located in the United States are, in fact, on the main not making any money. Of the

hockey teams in Canada, which have considerably smaller population centres than the ones in the States, all except one are making money. It's not necessarily an element of population. It's an element of interest, of concern, of marketing. There are all kinds of things involved in promotion any activity. I believe that this project, if it becomes a reality, will be extremely successful.

Mr. Koskie: — I'd like to ask the minister, since he is considering at least some financial guarantees, whether he in fact will be commissioning a feasibility study independent of the Hunter-Batoni group which are promoting it, so that we have a guarantee that if you're going to be putting up any money then a independent feasibility study will have been done? Have you commissioned one; are you intending to before you start guaranteeing?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — We have done considerable studying in that area independent of Mr. Hunter.

Mr. Koskie: — What are the general consensus of your feasibility study in respect to the viability of it?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Very promising.

Mr. Shillington: — Are you prepared to table those studies?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — No, sir.

Mr. Koskie: — Who did the study?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — I didn't indicate there was a specific study. I said we have a considerable amount of work. We have done it in-house. We have done it through private firms in Saskatoon and Regina.

Mr. Koskie: — Could you indicate to the House what private firms in Saskatoon that you used?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, I missed the question.

Mr. Koskie: — You indicated that you used some private firms. Would you indicate the private firms that you have used?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — No.

Mr. Koskie: — Are you indicating to the House that you have done a study in which you are considering putting into jeopardy guarantees of this government, and you are unwilling to put before this legislature feasibility studies which you say are looking good? Is that your position that you're unprepared to disclose to the people of this province the results of your feasibility studies?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to have the work that we have done stand beside the feasibility that your government did on the plywood mill in Yorkton that lost \$12 million and made one sale. When you undertook your infamous potash take-over you were asked continually for a study; it was never tabled in this House — refused to table in this House.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, there is simply no comparison. The Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, until your wrecking crew took over, made money from day one . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It certainly did. It certainly did. Get your annual report. Get your annual report and look at those figures, Mr. Attorney-General. It made money from day one. Mr. Minister, when you guarantee something, anybody's going to loan them money if they got the signature of one Bob Andrew on the bottom of it. Anybody's going to loan them whatever they want to buy that. So the risk is no longer the lending institution. Once you guarantee the loan, there's no risk to the lending institution; the risk is all yours. Are you prepared, Mr. Minister — and you said you are not. Why are you not prepared to table the feasibility studies on a project of this immensity?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — As my colleague has very clearly indicated, when in opposition, this party attempted for four to six months to acquire a feasibility from a potash take-over. It has not obviously been the custom of this House. We feel it's some work that we have done within shop.

Mr. Shillington: — I want to move on to a different area, Mr. Minister. I'll leave that with a note of very considerable caution. You obviously have not yet got a project I think you can consider . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, there's something very empty across the way that seems to be braying. There's something very empty between the member's ears.

I just expressed a note of caution, Mr. Minister. I just expressed, Mr. Minister, a note of very real caution in guaranteeing a privately owned professional hockey team in this province. You can't make the comparisons you can with the Riders and Taylor Field. Taylor Field is owned, if I'm not mistaken, by the city of Regina. And the Riders are owned by a community-based organization, and it is vastly less expensive. Professional football is less expensive than professional hockey. I think that must be common ground. You don't need the ticket sales for professional football you do for professional hockey. I'm going to leave it, because in a sense we're arguing about something that you haven't yet done. You have not yet guaranteed anything. I gather you haven't got anything yet you can consider. So in a sense the discussion is somewhat hypothetical.

Mr. Minister, I want to get onto some of the specific items in your estimates. I want to first of all, ask you if there's been any dismissals, terminations, or lay-offs — let's leave out the word lay-offs, because there were some. Apart from the lay-offs on March 31st, or which occurred shortly thereafter, were there any terminations or dismissals in your department since we last dealt with your estimates — say, since January 1st, '83?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, first of all in response to the preamble, if I might, I can't help but wondering if the member opposite's caution or concern on the project that was under discussion is for the fact that the guarantee or the fact that it's privately owned. I think regardless, the project is at this stage, as he indicated, hypothetical, but I think it is very interesting to have on record that the party opposite is adamantly opposed to having an NHL team in Saskatchewan. In answer to your question, no.

Mr. Shillington: — I'll give you a hundred bucks if you can find that in the *Hansard*, and I'll say that in the *Hansard*: I'll give you a hundred bucks if you can find in the *Hansard* that this opposition is opposed to NHL hockey in Saskatchewan. If you find it, it's yours, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I want to go through the details of your estimates. With respect to general administration, there has been some staff cut; there have been at least some positions cut. Question: what positions were they and were there any employees filling the positions?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, in answer to question: two permanent vacant positions have been deleted. They were a clerk-typist 2 and a facilities director.

Mr. Shillington: — Was someone occupying those positions or were they vacant?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The word ‘vacant’ means there was nobody in them.

Mr. Shillington: — I didn’t hear the minister, and knowing the minister’s extreme sensitivity, I will attempt to treat you a good deal more gingerly in future questions.

With respect to regional services, again, there appears to be a cut of two and I want to again just to ask the same question with respect to that cut in staff.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Once again, two positions — one temporary, one permanent — both vacant.

Mr. Shillington: — Where were they located?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — One of those vacant positions was in the Regina office. The other vacant position is in the DNS transfer situation.

Mr. Shillington: — I was going to ask you about that as well. The double asterisk suggests that this subvote is affected by the DNS dismemberment. How did the DNS dismemberment affect this subvote?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — We transferred to Culture and Recreation — three full-time recreational people and one secretary . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Shillington: — I’m having some difficulty hearing the member. I’m having some difficulty hearing the minister, but let me ask you then a supplementary.

An Hon. Member: — He’s muttering.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, if some other people were muttering it would help too. The minister may be muttering, but if some others were muttering it wouldn’t hurt.

Mr. Minister, do I understand that if you had not transferred the staff from DNS that figure would have read 34.3 instead of 37.3 — that in fact it is larger than it would have been because of the transfer from DNS? I will readily admit I may not understand this process.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Those DNS increases are in both last year’s and this year’s. In other words, in ’82-83 the number that you see is 39.3, I believe. It would have been reduced. It appears in both columns.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. Culture and multicultural . . . With respect to general administration, if I can go back to general administration, other expenses, there is a

rather sharp decrease in that, and I wonder out of what that arises, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Basically, reduction in the total number of staff, and some very prudent management.

Mr. Shillington: — The reduction in the staff doesn't seem to account for the entire amount, and I'm wondering what prudent management covers.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The staff reductions — again, vacant positions. There are three of them: recreational consultant 2, and clerk-typist 3, clerk-typist 2. The prudent management would be in efficiencies of a general nature, doing more with less, all the things we've talked about.

Mr. Shillington: — Then with respect to culture and multicultural support, I want to ask the same question with respect to the decrease in staff. What positions were deleted, and where were they, and were they filled?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Once again: three vacant positions — recreation consultant was the classification there, and two clerk-typists.

Mr. Shillington: — Were they filled, and were they in Regina, or where were they?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Vacant positions in the Regina office.

Mr. Shillington: — The Museum of Natural History. You don't have to tell me where the position was. Just what was it, and was it filled?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Once again a vacant position; the classification was museum technician 1.

Mr. Shillington: — With respect to heritage conservation, what positions were transferred to Parks and Renewable Resources and what positions were cut? I tried to do some factoring on my own, and it was apparent that some had been transferred. It also seemed to be apparent to me that some of the positions had been deleted. So perhaps you can give me a breakdown of what was transferred and what was deleted.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — There were three positions transferred, two vacant ones abolished, and also 7.59 transferred to Parks and Renewable Resources — non-permanent people that is.

Mr. Shillington: — Let me just run that past the minister again. There were three full-time positions transferred and two full-time positions cut and seven part-time positions, the equivalent thereof, transferred to parks and recreation. All right. Would you then give me the description of the two positions which were deleted?

I'd also, Mr. Minister, ask for a breakdown of what responsibilities were transferred. I assume it was historical parks, but what responsibilities were transferred to Parks and Renewable Resources and what was retained within your department?

Resources and what was retained within your department?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The two positions were both research officer 2, the vacant

positions that were eliminated. The historical parks were the only portion that was transferred . . . (inaudible) . . . might. One of those positions was filled — a gentleman named Burke. We found him another job. Nobody has lost their job; we found him another vacant position.

Mr. Shillington: — Finally, in sport and recreation, there's obviously just a part-time position deleted — 0.8. What does that represent?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Recreation consultant 1, a temporary position in Regina.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, your department shares an honour with a few others — consumer and corporate affairs is one — in which every single subvote has sustained cuts in staff. I want to go through this individually, but I want to express regret that the government feels that this is an appropriate area in which to cut. I say that because that always happens. If there's any belt-tightening, it always seems to occur in the cultural areas. And, indeed, I note that the cuts in the cultural subvotes, if I can call them that, are more extensive than those in the sports subvote. And I want to express regret, Mr. Minister, that that should happen. It makes the progress in fostering the appreciation of Saskatchewan's heritage and culture all the more difficult when it's as sporadic as it is, and I want to express regret that your department should have been singled out for cuts that were well above the average sustained by the departments in government.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, in response, what has obviously happened in this particular department . . . When we came to government there were something in the area of 20 vacant positions that had been vacant for a period of time. We are providing better service with the same number of people as were there. However, in the blue book we are attempting to present an honest picture of how many spots we have and how much money it will take to run the government. We don't have that extra money showing.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I've got that from every single minister that I've dealt with estimates in: 'Oh, we're not cutting services; we're just doing it a little more efficiently. We are reorganizing,' By that token I assume that what's likely to happen to the Liberals in the next federal election is they are likely to get reorganized. That seems to be the way you use that word. That seems to be the way you use that word, Mr. Minister. I don't accept that in this department, and I don't accept it in the others.

I may say that I've gone through several estimates. I've heard ministers say, 'No, we're just doing it more efficiently; we are streamlining.' Inevitably what happens, Mr. Minister, is when the Assembly adjourns I am the recipient of a large number of telephone calls, sometimes from employees working in the government, sometimes from the general public, just furious at the suggestion that fewer staff can do the same amount of work.

By and large the staff when you took over . . . I know you'll never admit this because you believe that there's . . . I suggest that members opposite share an all too common view of public servants, and that is that they are overpaid and underworked and desperately struggling to fill their hours with something to do. That was not in fact an accurate description of this government either before or after the election.

By and large most of the departments were stretched pretty thin, and most of the people were stretched pretty thin, and I suggest to you that there simply isn't any fat there.

When you cut positions, the service to the public is going to deteriorate, and the promotion of the goals of this department is going to deteriorate.

It's not an argument you and I are going to settle in the Legislative Assembly. It will be settled in that larger assembly of public opinion, and I have . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yeah, but you're going to run the deficit you have or cut the programs that you have. You've missed something. I know the minister fully intended to tell the public that during the election. You just never seemed to get time, did you? Just never seemed to get time to tell them about the deficit and the budget cuts. You just never seemed to get time. Well, you're not going to have to worry about it in the next election because you're not going to need to take time.

An Hon. Member: — They'll know.

Mr. Shillington: — They'll know. And I have no fear, no fear, Mr. Minister, of what this is going to do, what this issue this will be in the next election. It won't be one that you'll headline in your campaign literature. I can tell you.

Mr. Minister, I want to go on to the Centre of the Arts. I note that the grant is cut in half, and I'm wondering if there was some extraordinary grant last year. I assume you're not going to cut the grant in half. You own the facility, and you're going to see yourself coming around the corner if you skimp on this one. So I would just appreciate, Mr. Minister, an explanation for the sharp decrease; I assume there is some explanation.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, just a couple of comments again, to the preamble. The fact that you don't accept what I am presenting doesn't change the fact that those are in fact the facts. I would suggest to you that the people of this province are not going to be misled by your argument that you can provide service by paper positions with no people in them.

And lastly, I will admit that in our campaign we did make one very fatal error — we listened to the numbers that you provided. We'll never make that mistake again.

Finally, in answer to your question about the museum, excuse me, the Centre of the Arts, there is a considerably smaller number — roughly half — because when we took government we had to pick up the deficit from the preceding year which your administration hadn't paid. We chose to show it in the blue book, which was not a practice before, and that's why that number is smaller.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, with respect to grants in support of the arts — multiculturalism, heritage and museums, I note there is a (if I can find it here again) . . . There seems to be a cut of 103,000. I am wondering, first of all, why, and secondly where?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The subvote reduction is \$195,000. It is caused by the fact that two support programs were transferred. One was an FSI program, the other for Wheta Matowin. They were transferred to the Native Affairs Secretariat, consequently the change.

Mr. Shillington: — This may save us some questions later on, so all of the native recreation programs have gone to . . . It's no longer intergovernmental affairs. I guess it will be Executive Council. Is that right?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — That's not exactly true. There are \$20,000 in a different subvote for the Back to Batoche program, and the native sport and recreation programs are still with us.

Mr. Shillington: — Since you've got that figure out, why don't you . . . I was going to ask you at the moment, why don't you give me the figures for those two grants, I think they are?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Back to Batoche is \$20,000 as I indicated. Sport and recreation program is 126,000 for the two programs.

Mr. Shillington: — The grants in support of community regional recreation development — I note as well there seems to be something transferred from DNS. Again I'd appreciate an explanation as to how that affects the comparison as distinct from the absolute figures.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Basically the same amount of money is included for regional services and community grants.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. There's a reduction here of some 400,000 — it's not quite; it's more like 350. I'm wondering why the cut, for an explanation for that.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The reduction there is because some of the concerns in that area will be taken care of with our facilities program which we introduced in the budget, as you are aware.

Mr. Shillington: — So the only cuts in grants will be, in effect, those which relate to construction of recreational facilities. Is that what I understand? There's no cuts other than the cuts in what would be recreation facilities.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Yes, the majority are in that category.

Mr. Shillington: — Well I guess then I'd ask you what's the minority; what remains to be cut?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: The other is minimal and it's a result of us changing some programs, some adjustments, some internal concerns.

Mr. Shillington: — Let's go to the recreation facilities program, I reviewed the program. The formula, I don't think, is as rich as ours and I think that's true in several respects. We don't need to belabour that point. It is again, Mr. Minister, your impecuniosity caused by your own mismanagement. And I won't belabour you on that point.

I was concerned about what I thought was . . . There used to be a . . . A part of the formula was an enrichment, if the money was spent on a cultural facility, I thought that had been deleted, and I stand to be corrected, but I thought that aspect of the formula which enriched the moneys available for a cultural facility had been deleted. I guess, first of all, I'd ask if that's accurate and, if so, why?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — First of all, to clarify a grave misconception, your program had a \$10,000 base grant - \$15 per capita, and then a whole bunch of conditional

things. Our program has a base grant of \$5,000 and \$25 per capita. The basic part of our program is richer than your program in fact.

In terms of your question about cultural facilities, yes, that has been eliminated. The reason that has been eliminated is that we do not propose to dictate to any community what facility they should spend their money on. That is, in our opinion, a local decision, the right of the elected officials in that community to decide. I don't feel that anyone in our department is prepared to take that on. Local autonomy is the buzz-word, if you will, and we're prepared to stand behind that.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I want to express a note of dissent on that point, Mr. Minister. Inevitably it seems, for some reason or other, cultural facilities seem to get short shrift. That inevitably seems to happen. I was interested in the Alberta equivalent of this program some years back, wherein there was in fact a requirement that a percentage of the money be spent on cultural facilities. I think that's accurate. Either that or they had to have a portion of their facility had to be cultural. You had to have an art gallery on the back of a curling rink. I'm not sure that makes a good deal of sense. I'm not sure the Alberta program made a lot of sense, but it does seem to me to make sense to encourage communities to develop cultural facilities, because they seem to get short shrift. I think that is not in the long-term best interests of the province.

I think unless the senior government, unless the provincial government provides leadership in the area, the cultural facilities, the cultural side of these facilities just do not seem to grow and enhance. Once they're there, they're well-used, but they seem to require some degree of encouragement. I'm not sure whether it is the nature of the people involved in sport and culture or what it is, but it does seem that the cultural facilities need a degree of encouragement and I'm sorry that that factor was taken out. As I say, I think the Alberta program may have been extreme, but it did get the job done.

I recall being in a Lloydminster — I think it was what they called a communiplex. It was a curling rink-skating rink, and the back of it was an art gallery. I thought it interesting, and I put it no higher than that. I do think the provincial government has that responsibility to provide some leadership in the area and encourage the communities to use part of their money for cultural facilities.

With respect to immigration settlement service, I would ask what figure was spent last year — you may not know that; if you do, fine — and what figure is budgeted for this year.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Just a comment again to the preamble. It seems to be where we end up. We see our role as promoting, encouraging culture and cultural activities. We see the decision regarding the facilities that a community wishes to build and operate as a local decision. We feel if we are encouraging, promoting the cultural groups that that type of support will come up and will have an effect on their council. We feel that local autonomy is the direction to take in that respect. That is not to infer that we are in any way not promoting cultural activities.

In response to your question: '82-83 budget, \$57,000; '83-84, \$72,000.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. '82-83 was a 14 per cent increase. That's a fairly simple mathematical equation. '83-84 is a relatively large increase in percentage terms, Mr. Minister. I'm not criticizing it in any sense. I think this is something we absolutely must provide, is services for immigrants. I'm just curious, though: does the department

expect a rather large influx of immigrants, or why the increase from 57 to 72?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Part of that increase is due to the federal-provincial agreement, but on that general term I would indicate that we expect a great number of people to flock into this province, now that it's free and private, and everything's rolling cheap gas . . . (inaudible) . . .

Mr. Shillington: — Well, if the minister has changed this program to the extent where people from Alberta and B.C. who return home are thought of as being immigrants in need of immigrant settlement service, then that's a new definition. Of course the minister doesn't; I know. His comment was facetious, and I take it at that.

The cultural activities grant — I have the same question. What figure in 1982-83, and what figure for '83-84?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Just a comment. My comment about people coming into the province was certainly not facetious, but it did not apply to that particular program.

The cultural activities grant, '82-83, \$161,823; '83-84, \$160,000.

Mr. Shillington: — I have to apologize, Mr. Minister. My attention was distracted just when you read the figures: 168 for '82-83 and 163 for '83-84?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — '82-83, 161,823; '83-84, 160,000.

Mr. Shillington: — So there was actually a reduction then of \$1,000. I guess that's not a monstrous sum.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Just by way of information, in '82-83, the actual expenditures, what was subscribed in that program, was \$128,596.41. Consequently we thought \$1,000 was . . .

Mr. Shillington: — I'm having difficulty recalling the program. How were those grants made available to the public?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — I have a page that indicates the purpose, the criteria, eligibility to activities, the calculation of the grant. Would you like me to read it? Would you like me to send it to you?

Mr. Shillington: — The provincial cultural organizations grant program. I'm wondering what the '82-83 figure is, and what the '83-84 figure is. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The figures in that program are \$160,000 in both cases.

Mr. Shillington: — Talent hunt. If I recall correctly, this should be the year in which the competitions are held, if I'm not mistaken. I just ask for confirmation that the talent hunt which we've come to know in the past is proceeding as usual.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The talent hunt was held in late March in the previous fiscal year. This is the touring year — the off year, if you will.

Mr. Shillington: — The talent hunt for the visual arts. As I recall that program, one year there would be exhibitions and competitions; the next year the visual arts would be

toured. I also note from the annual report that there are 38 communities participating in 18 regions in six zones in 1981. I'm wondering what level of activity you anticipate in 1983. Do you have any indication of that?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — This is roughly the same — possibly a slight increase, that's difficult to determine exactly, but the same number of districts, and zones, and so on.

Mr. Shillington: — With respect to museums, I am wondering how many museums received how much in total? How many grants, and what was the total?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The numbers, the bottom line if you will: the budget in '82-83 was 494,215; 1983-84 is 500,000. I have a list here of approximately 15 programs, and I don't think I'm through. Total number of galleries involved, museums, is 87. Would you like the list?

Mr. Shillington: — I just want to express a note of concern. It would appear that there is but a 1 per cent increase, 1.2 per cent increase in the funding. I understood the figures to be 494 to 500. That's a relatively modest increase to put it mildly. I assume museums are facing the same problems that everyone else is. I wonder why the rather modest increase, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — As you are probably aware, this was a new program that we instituted. It was in its first year last year — the actual uptake was 431,300, again a considerable increase.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, your officials seem to be all set here and maybe we can save ourselves some time. I'm going to ask you under the multicultural grants program, the number of grants given out, and how much, and if you've got some more yellow sheets, your officials can make one available to me. I was going to ask the same question with respect to multicultural projects. With respect to the multicultural grants then, I want to know how many grants, what was the total of the, and if the official have a yellow sheet, you can just send it over.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — If it's satisfactory, we'll give you the whole multicultural package.

Mr. Shillington: — Well that takes us, I think, down to heritage conservation. Thank you very much. We now then would have left in your department the heritage conservation section, historic interpretation section, archaeological resource management section — am I still doing all right; is that still your department? Okay then, with respect to the heritage conservation section, I would like to know how many municipalities have designated one or more buildings, and how many preservations are in total.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The information I have isn't exactly broken down by the total number of towns, communities. I do have the total numbers in terms of designations. Possibly I'll give you what I have, and if you have other, we can search the information. The designations that are completed: 151. The notice of intent issued: 29. The inquiries regarding suggested sites is 50. Those that have been tabled, withdrawn or repealed are 38. Now that's effective as of 1st of March.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, and I would appreciate that if you want to send it over. This is something in the nature of a self-congratulatory comment since this particular piece of legislation was a passion of mine when I was in office. It does appear to be working, and working very well.

I noted from your annual report that in 1981-82 the staff conducted 60 public information seminars and 40 detailed site inspections. The question to Mr. Minister is . . . You may have missed that, you may have been distracted. I noticed in 1981-82 your staff, from your annual report, your staff conducted 60 public information seminars and 40 detailed site inspections. The question to you, Mr. Minister, is whether or not you still have sufficient staff left to provide that level of service, to provide whatever is requested — given the increasing number of designations, there may be increasing demands. I say, Mr. Minister, and then I'll sit down, I think it's essential for the program that the staff be available to the communities, or it simply won't operate. The communities depend upon your department for expertise and assistance.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The answer to your question is yes.

Mr. Shillington: — I'm coming down to the end here, Mr. Minister. The Saskatchewan Inventory of Historic Resources — I think that was began in 1981, and I gathered from your annual report that there were at that point in time a thousand sites which were recorded, and you were also conducting a survey of early power plants. I would appreciate, Mr. Minister, a brief comment on the activities under this program in 1982, and a description of what you plan on doing in 1983.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — We are basically continuing along the path of last year. We will continue to do surveys for archaeological artefacts at the various sites as they come up. We're working with communities in that respect. Is that the intent of the question?

Mr. Shillington: — I was hoping for a more detailed description of what you had done in '82 and what you planned in '83 if you can provide it. You may want to respond in writing. It's not an easy question, and the minister may prefer to respond in writing and that would be satisfactory.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — We will prepare something and send it.

Mr. Shillington: — That may also be the appropriate way to respond to my question, first with respect to, I may say, provincial designations: have there been any provincial designations since you took office?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, it'll take me a moment to go through this. The territorial administration office in Regina was designated in July of '82; the university admin building on the campus in Saskatoon in November of '82; the Veregin prayer home in July of '82; the Weyburn Bank of Commerce building in November of '82; the courthouse in Wolseley in November of '82. Obviously, we haven't dropped the program; we're carrying on full speed.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, there are, I gather, something remaining of the administration buildings left in North Battleford, or Battleford — I'm not sure which community. I believe they are actually currently used by a Catholic order. I don't think they're in any immediate danger, but they are, I think, a priceless part of this province's heritage, and I wonder if any consideration has been given to designate those

buildings.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — That's a very complex situation, as I'm sure you're aware. There have been a large number of additions; it is very difficult architecturally to establish what the original building — the one with the historical significance — is. We have had consultants working on that. We have worked very closely with them. We hope to have a decision in that matter very shortly. As a matter of fact, the order of fathers that you indicated would like a decision quickly. They don't need that size of building, or would like to make some changes on the site, and we are attempting to work with both groups.

Mr. Shillington: — This is another question to which you may prefer to respond in writing. With respect to the Museum of Natural History and the sciences section, I'd appreciate a description of the activities actually conducted in '82 and what you have planned in that area for 1983. And if you want to respond in writing, that would be satisfactory.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — We will respond in writing. We have opened, recently, a discovery room in the building where schoolchildren can go and have a hands-on experience, a well-received concept that people seem very happy with. But there have been a number of things, and we'll send something in writing.

Mr. Shillington: — The summer games, Mr. Minister — am I correct, the 1984 games were in North Battleford? Do I remember correctly?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — That's correct.

Mr. Shillington: — Has an agreement been concluded with that community with respect to the level of provincial funding?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — It's concluded; signed; it's all in position.

Mr. Shillington: — What level of provincial funding then is going to be made available to the community?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — The operational agreement is slightly in excess of \$90,000. If you want the exact, we can again send that. The capital money is \$60,000. Of course that's a matched contribution from the city.

Mr. Shillington: — Recreation for the disabled, and the integrative recreational grants for disabled persons (what a name) — I'm wondering again, how many grants? In what total for '82-83 and '83-84? Again, if you've got the yellow sheets, they're more than satisfactory.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — We have a sheet that covers all category grants, that may answer all the questions. We'll just send that sheet over.

Mr. Shillington: — We may have saved ourselves some time here, and I'm not sure what's on the sheet. And perhaps I should wait till I . . . Yes, that answers the next five questions . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, no, no, not quite, Mr. Minister.

Do I understand this Indian subvote 00-6 is no longer part of your department, that it's gone to Intergovernmental Affairs?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — No, that \$126,000, I indicated earlier, is in that support grant. That's a portion of it. The label is not accurate; it's not totally for Indians.

Mr. Shillington: — I am getting close to the end, Mr. Minister. The arts board: have there been any changes in the board since we last did estimates, say, any changes in the board since January 1st, '83?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — No, the board is extremely competent. We're very happy with it; there have been no changes. Whale of a job.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, can you say the same for the staff? Any changes in the staff of the arts board?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — There have been two resignations. They are still working; it hasn't come up yet. But there have been two people have resigned to go on to other things, but there have been no dismissals or anything of that nature. We're very satisfied with the staff as well, if that's the question.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, just a few questions on the recreation facility grant, I believe it's called. Can the minister tell me whether projects which were under way prior to the announcement of the program, will they be considered for funding?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Projects which were begun since January 1st, 1982, are eligible . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . January the 1st, 1982.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, that's 1982, not '83. So anything that was going on in '82?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — That is correct.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, you will know, or you may not know — I know the number of letters that you sign — but I wrote a letter asking about a \$100,000 grant to the community of Gull Lake. In a reply letter you indicated that this was a special type of grant, and I understand how that process might work. My question about it is whether or not this will be included as part of their grant under the new program. Will they be eligible for this \$100,000 as well as the additional grant, or is this a special grant? Can you just explain that for me?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Communities that received that special aid are not eligible for the new program. It was a condition of the aid.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, can you indicate to me a list of the number of communities who got similar grants? In watching the OCs that come out I noticed a couple of them but can you provide for me or list to me the numbers of communities and the amount of the grant that would be involved under this special program?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — I don't have that with me, but I can provide it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Tell me, do you give any indication about a rough number — were there 10, 15?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Less than 10.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had a couple of question. Mr. Minister, in terms of subvote 13, grants in support of sporting and recreation programs, I wondered, seeing as how there is a realignment of certain branches in northern Saskatchewan, and I note from your explanation on the bottom here that portions of those programs are now realigned with your department, I wondered: is there any clear way that the northern communities could find out what is in store for them, in terms of subvote 13, subvote 14 and subvote 15 on your estimates?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — In response, Mr. Chairman, to the member's question: subvote 13 — those are grants which go to provincial organizations. They are not to communities. Consequently there probably doesn't impact on the question.

Fourteen — grants in support of community and regional recreational development go to the recreational boards. The criteria for application in northern Saskatchewan would be identical to the criteria for application in southern Saskatchewan. There is no longer that line that defines the two. It's one province. The people from northern Saskatchewan had representation at the annual meeting in Moose Jaw recently, and my department has had meetings with the board representatives from the North specifically to involve them in the process and how it works.

The grants under the provincial cultural and recreational facilities program, which we have talked about . . . Once again, the application, the criteria for grants are identical to all communities throughout the province.

Mr. Yew: — In regard to subvote 4, page 25, under regional services, you specified, and it's again identified in the bottom here, that a portion of that subvote was also included in the vote for DNS. Mr. Minister, I wonder: do you have any staff specifically aligned to look after the northern portion, specifically appointed to the northern portion of the province?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — We have four staff people headquartered in La Ronge, specifically for that purpose.

Mr. Yew: — Am I to understand that the four people that are designated in La Ronge will remain in La Ronge to administer the portion of that program?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — That is correct.

Mr. Yew: — One concern that has been raised quite frequently over the past couple of years, a year and a half or so, is the recreational facilities, projects, that were initiated by the former administration and 95 per cent of those projects were completed, Mr. Minister. But factors that weren't taken into account ultimately ended up with the facilities not being quite complete in some instances. I'm referring to Deschambault, Pelican Narrows, Sandy Bay. Some recreation facilities just weren't 100 per cent complete. I wondered, Mr. Minister, if you have had nay proposals to the effect, and if you have, will you be giving consideration to try to complete those buildings?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, the program, the previous one that the member refers to, is a federal-provincial program that ended. Yes, we have had some communications from those people. Consequently, in the new program that we have introduced, they may apply that money to complete those. It's one of the additional concepts that we've built into that program specifically for those types of situations.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I wondered under which portion of your budget here would they apply to?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — That's the provincial cultural and recreational facilities program.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have no further questions.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I just have a couple more questions on the new cultural recreational facility grant program. You mentioned that under your program the basic grant is \$5,000, and I believe under ours it was 10,000. You said that would work out better because the per capita grant is higher. But isn't there a cut-off of a certain size community that would be less benefited by your program, given the fact that the basic grant is half of what the original plan was?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — There will possibly be a very few communities, just extremely small ones, that would in fact have benefited more from a larger base and a smaller per capita. The huge majority of the communities in the province will in fact be in better shape with our program than they were with yours. I suppose, if you wanted a rationale, that you could indicate that we don't want to leave communities in a situation where they can't operate the facilities they build.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, the calculations that I do here — the \$5,000 difference in the basic grant — if you divide that by the per capita grant of \$25, you'll find that all communities under 200 people are less advantaged than they would have been under the basic 10,000 grants. And what you're saying in fact is that all communities of less than 200 people are having to pay so that the larger centres will benefit.

Now it may be that you've decided that all communities under 200 no longer need recreation facility grants, or at least equal amount. But I dare say that the majority of communities in this province are under 200 people. In fact what you're doing is setting up a system that gives an advantage to the large centres and takes away from the small, those communities under 200, and I'd like the rationale for that. If this government has written off communities under 200 then this is what we can expect to see.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — I think that if those communities under 200 . . . (inaudible) . . . build a whole lot of facilities that they couldn't operate, it would probably have a quicker effect on ending. As a matter of fact you are exactly wrong. What we're trying to encourage, as the other elements of the program will indicate, is urban co-operation. If those communities are to remain viable, to provide the services to their people that will lead to a high quality of life, they are going to have to start to co-operate. So we have indicated that community A and community B may, if they have urban co-operation, build one facility here, build another facility there. Share them. We have indicated that they must not only have a sharing aspect, a co-operative aspect to the capital, but also to the operating. We would hope to involve them.

In this day and age when you can drive 15 miles in 15 minutes or less, it doesn't seem irrational to build a hockey rink in one, a curling rink in another and a library over here, and have some type of sharing. And that's the concept that we're trying to promote. We stand behind it. We feel it's rational. We feel it's the right concept.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I can accept some of the statement that you would like to see co-operation between communities, but I have a hard time understanding how putting the basic grant from 10,000 to 5,000 does that. It would have been just as simple to leave the grant at 10,000 for those communities, and have the same incentive in your per capita grant for them to co-operate. But what you've done is cut in half the basic grant for communities of 100, and let me just explain to you what that does.

In terms of a community of 100 people, you have cut the grant from 10,000 to 5,000, and what that means is a great deal less money per capita for those communities that have 100 people even though they pay the same amount of taxes other communities do. And I say that's unfair. I'm not against your idea of having them co-operate. You can do that at any rate through your incentive program which you have announced. But by cutting the basic grant from 10,000 to 5,000 you have in fact cut off a good number of communities the opportunity to create, even through co-operation, any meaningful recreational facility in their community. And I would just like to warn you that this kind of action, for those rural communities, the many hundreds that exist in this province, is the start of the death knell for many of those communities because those communities revolve around the curling rinks and skating rinks, and by not providing a basic grant of at least 10,000 — and I think by this day and age, two years later, I would much rather have seen that grant at 20,000 per community rather than being cut in half. When you take inflation and everything into it, you're cutting it much more than half.

And what that does in terms of recreation facilities in many, many communities is just eliminate them from ever living up to their expectation of building a new curling rink or a new skating rink. I would like you to take that into consideration in developing or extending this plan, that the important part for the small communities is not the per capita grant, but in fact, the basic grant which we had set at 10,000 — which you have not cut in half or more than cut in half, using inflation. And it's just not appropriate and it's not going to be acceptable. I think when the word gets out to those small communities that this is what is happening, you will see a backlash, and I would just like to alert you to the fact of what is happening if you haven't considered that.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, we'll take that under advisement, but as far as recreational facilities are concerned I tend to consider the experts, if you will, in my department and the recreation boards throughout the province which we have listened to in designing this program. I find that once again the old NDP concept that you can argue both sides of the fence and talk out of both sides of your mouth and still try to make sense, but I don't think the people accept that. If you increase the base you obviously discourage co-operation. We feel that for the long-term viability in those communities there had to become some urban co-operation and sharing of those types of facilities.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I still find it hard to believe how the incentive for co-operation exists. Let's use the example of four towns that have 100 people in each. If you had 10,000 in, they would have a basic starting grant, no matter which town they decided to build in, of \$40,000. With your program they will have a basic starting point of \$20,000, and \$20,000 is not enough to get a project off the ground. \$40,000 might be — it might not, but what you're doing is eliminating even four towns getting together to build a skating rink or a curling rink or a swimming pool, and that's the concern.

You say that you will listen to your experts in the department. And what I would like to

tell you is that the word I am getting back from those communities is that they do not believe the experts in your department. They believe that they know what is best, that they would rather have a higher basic grant because having a low per capita or low populations, that system is geared towards those towns and villages and cities — and yes, Regina and Saskatoon will do very well, but communities in my constituency will do a fair deal less impressively under your program than they would have under ours.

And I'm just making that point. I am not being critical of the fact that you are putting in an incentive to get people to co-operate. I think you could do that as well as maintain the basic grant at \$10,000 or even increase it to keep up with inflation, to 15,000 or 20,000 for those small communities, as the basic grant. Because as you'll know, a skating rink today costs in the area of \$800,000 to put in artificial ice, and you're giving a basic grant of \$5,000; if they've got four communities, you now have 20,000. In looking at a \$800,000 project, this program isn't going to go very far, and I think there'll be a great deal of disappointment in it.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, as is the usual case, he takes a comment out of context and attempts to use it to his advantage. We have a number of sources of information. You are one. On this side of the House, we have 55 who I can call on; myself is 56. And they indicate that the people in the communities are very satisfied to have this program in place. I take it under advisement, what you say, but we'll stand by the program.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 15 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 7 agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials for answering questions.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Just in closing, I would like to thank the officials of the Department of Culture and Recreation for providing the information, and we will expect, I suppose, over the next week or two, Mr. Minister, to get the information. Maybe if you would give us an indication of when we can expect it by, we will then be on our way.

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, we will provide that information within a week, and I too would like to thank my officials for doing an outstanding job.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

URBAN AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 24

Item 25 (continued)

Mr. Chairman: — Is the minister ready? Would he like to introduce his officials?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I'd like to introduce my officials.

On my left here, I have Stan Willox, general manager of Sask Housing. Directly behind me I have Leo Larsen, the executive director of finance, and on my right over here I have Tom Carter, director of research.

Mr. Shillington: — I want to make a general comment initially, Mr. Minister, and it's an expression of concern about the level of housing in this province. I'm not laying the problems all at the door of this administration. No doubt you people did not mastermind the very severe recession that the world has gone through, but it has resulted, Mr. Minister, in a very sharp decrease in the number of houses we're building.

I was rather interested . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . When you consider the level of comments that I'm competing with, the member from Weyburn may well be the most important member, since he's the only one able to provide medical assistance to the type of people who surround you.

I was interested, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Donkeys was the precise animal I was thinking of.

I was interested, Mr. Minister, in reading the opening paragraph of the annual report of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Is there any insurance against getting hit by flying teeth in this place? Are we covered for that? I don't know.

I want to read to the minister the opening paragraph of the annual report of 1981, and it reads:

High interest rates continue to have a negative impact on the performance of the housing sector across Canada. In Saskatchewan, housing starts during the year totalled \$5,972 — 9,572 — close to the previous year's starts of 6,250, but far short of the 10,000 starts required annually to meet the demand for new housing in Saskatchewan.

That's my concern, that when the level of housing starts is increased, we are light-years . . . I suggest, Mr. Minister, we are light-years away from actually meeting the demand out there. My fear is that, and I suggest to the minister that what was stated in the annual report, that 10,000 units a year on an average is what we need. I think it's probably accurate. My concern, Mr. Minister, is that some day the recessionary clouds are going to clear. The pent-up demand is going to break loose and we are going to experience runaway inflation in the cost of housing as happened in Vancouver and Toronto.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you agree with the fact that this is a potential problem, and is potentially very serious, and if so, is the corporation doing any kind of research or studying on the problem of the pent-up demand, as I call it?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Chairman, that was a long question and I could give a long answer, but as far as the research on future leads, certainly, we're always keeping track of that. I think it's something that we done from the day one when we started in government.

Second of all, if you take a look at what we have really done in regards to housing in the province, I think that we've introduced a program — that was the Build-A-Home program. To date we're just doing some — I'm just looking here — to date we have 2,076 approved applications for this year alone. I think that we are moving forward; 10,000 would be a realistic figure in the number of units needed when and if the recession or whatever it is is done. Certainly Saskatchewan, if you look at Saskatchewan I the first part of this year alone, I think our housing starts were up over 300 per cent. I don't know what else any government could do in regards to looking ahead, and projecting ahead.

And in regards to research, certainly we're doing it, and we're continuously doing as I assume was done with the previous government.

Mr. Shillington: — I'm not actually suggesting, Mr. Minister — I know that I'm renowned for my non-partisan approach to these thing, and this is, believe me, non-partisan — I'm not particularly suggesting that there's a whole lot more that should be done here and now to increase housing starts. I'm really not suggesting that. I am suggesting that it is a potentially very serious problem that we are going to face, and that I hope someone is doing some thinking about it in the corporation.

I want to go through your estimates now with you on a subvote by subvote manner, Mr. Minister. I want to deal with one other issue first, and that is the apparent extension of the private firms in leasing public housing. In the estimates of the Minister of Co-operatives, I asked him about a co-operative, and I think the name was the Rochdale Housing Co-op. He indicated to me that that co-operative had in fact been transferred to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, and that it was being leased by a private rental agency. I expressed my concern about that in your last estimates, and I ask you, Mr. Minister: has there been any extension of the system whereby private real estate firms, or private agencies, handle the rental of public housing?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Just to answer your question, first of all, we don't normally get into public housing at all. It's just in non-profit where the middle-income families are housed. In regards to that Rochdale Housing Co-op, those units were not cancelled as per se, they were just brought back under the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, which would be allocated out into the public sector. So there's really no problem there, as far as I can see anyway.

You were talking about vacancy rates in the province. And you well know that right now, with the increase of the housing coming on the market, that right now we have a vacancy rate in Regina. It went up. I don't know what the exact figures are, but it's about 2 per cent. I understand Saskatoon's getting close to four. The magic number is about five. You wouldn't want to get much more than that or you wouldn't get any real estate going anyway. So we're getting close to that. We don't want to end up in the situation — certainly not like Ontario — but certainly we don't want to get one like we got in Alberta, where you got 15 and 20 per cent vacancies. And a lot of those . . . it just won't be no more rental units built in there for a considerable time. That does affect the province, because it affects the construction industry. We would like to see it come on a gradual slope . . . (inaudible) . . . where we pay them on a continuous basis.

Mr. Shillington: — I want to deal with that comment, Mr. Minister, but I want to deal, if I can, with the rental of public housing by private firms. Has there been any extension of that pilot project, as you styled it, in your last estimates?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — No, there hasn't been no extension, as the hon. member probably knows. I said previously, just a month or so ago, there will be none until we see how this pilot project works. And at that time we'll take a good look at where we want to go with it — if we want to go anymore. We're not saying we're going to. We're taking a real serious look at it — it's a pilot type project — to see if it will be cost-efficient, and at that time, after a year or so has gone by, we'll take a good look at it.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I want to express the gravest reservations about it. And I also want to express the gravest reservations about an evaluation which evaluates the system on whether or not it's cost-efficient. I suspect probably you could do it cheaper than it's being done. Just give it on a first-come-first-served basis.

The previous board — as I understand mostly how this thing was leased out, it was leased out through a volunteer board — attempted to be more sensitive than that, and attempted to ensure that the goals of the public housing program were met. My fear about private rental agencies is in fact they will be cost-efficient; they will not take time to be sensitive to the needs of the various people, and they will lose sight of the goal of the program, which is not to maximize the returns on the housing units but, in most cases, to ensure that the neediest people, that those who are neediest, have their needs met.

So I want to express, Mr. Minister, the gravest reservation about the program, and I want to express a grave reservation about the method by which you're evaluating it. I do not think a cost-efficient evaluation should be the sole, or even the primary, criteria by which you evaluate the efficacy with which you're leasing out public housing.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, as the hon. member well knows, like I said earlier, we only put out the two projects. But, just relating to that, we have submitted to CMHC, through the federal government, that to allow us to average within these units, both low . . . to use an averaging income within these units. In other words, if you were a higher-income person, there'd be a market rent established, and a lower-income person could come in and be averaged over the whole project, which would in fact allow both low income and middle income to have the same facilities under the same conditions. And it won't be segregating out whether you have a low-income housing unit or a middle-income housing unit; it will be an averaging one.

We think it's a new way to go, because it doesn't allow you to feel inferior living under the same conditions in the same building. We think it's a way of integrating both low and middle-income families under the same conditions. We've asked the federal government to allow it. They haven't approved it yet, but we've been working it. We hope they will allow that and, by doing that, we will allow to have a lot more low-income families living in probably better conditions. By doing that also, that would do away with some of the problems you had brought up in regard to how the selection would be made, because it would be based on income as well as the other criteria. And the other criteria set out the same for the housing for the private . . . as it is through the housing authorities within the towns or cities.

Mr. Shillington: — I don't intend to belabour the subject except to express the fervent hope that the federal government doesn't allow it.

Mr. Minister, the senior citizens home repair program, home repair assistance act, is down a couple of hundred thousand dollars. Is that anything other than simply the fact that the program is in its more mature stages when fewer people are in fact eligible for

it? Is there anything else to this but simply the maturity of the program?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — No, that's right. It's the maturity of the program. The program is just winding down its five-year roll-over. It's just winding down at the end of it.

Mr. Shillington: — And when does it end?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Next September it ends.

Mr. Shillington: — '83 or '84?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — In '83.

Mr. Shillington: — Is there any intention to enact another one of these programs, Mr. Minister? This is not the first one; one has followed on the heels of the other. I think we're a very long way from being in the position where senior citizens have effected all the repairs to their dwellings that they need. I think this was an excellent program. At a minimal cost, it upgraded a lot of the housing the senior citizens live in and, not incidentally, allows them to continue living in their house when it might not otherwise be possible.

I think this program met a number of different objectives, all of them worth while; assisted senior citizens, kept senior citizens in their own houses, which is desirable if it can at all be attained, and I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if there's any intention to start again with a new program on the heels of this one?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, my understanding is that at the end of September it automatically rolls over. I think legislation is set within Sask Housing Corporation to automatically let it roll over anyway. So the only thing we could do at that time is to see maybe we should be putting some more into it at that time, or what we should be doing with it, but normally it rolls over in September. We expect, as far as I know to date, that's what will happen. We'll maybe look at it and see what else we could do to keep them in there.

We agree with you, by the way, that they should be in their homes, and we'll do everything we can to encourage them to stay in their own homes. And if this is what is needed, certainly we'll continue with it. If we can do something more and add something more to it, we will do that too. We think that the longer the senior citizens stay in their homes, the less expensive it is to the Government of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan, and the living conditions are certainly much better if you're in your own home.

Mr. Shillington: — I think probably the quality of life's a little better too.

Subsidies for low-rental housing projects: this experienced a sizeable increase of nearly 20 per cent, and I'm wondering why, and what projects are budgeted for.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, my understanding is that it's because there'll be 975 more new units coming on subsidy this year, is why the increase is.

Mr. Shillington: — The grants for non-profit sponsors of moderately priced senior citizens accommodation is an increase in excess of 50 per cent. I assume this is

because there's some new projects have been approved and which you'll be funding this year, and I'd appreciate an explanation for that increase.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, part of it was cash flow from previous years that was carried over. The other is some new commitments. There has been one committed. The Ilarion home in Saskatoon is going to expand. That's the only one I'm aware of to date that's been . . . But there is money there in the budget to allow for some more units to be brought on stream.

Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, it's come to my attention that the federal government is evidently not going to be able to provide the \$3,000 grant to new home builders that they promised up to the end of April. This may have some very serious implications for the people of Saskatchewan, particularly home builders and home buyers. And I wonder if the minister would care to comment upon the implications of this for Saskatchewan and any initiatives that may be able to be taken with regards to protecting Saskatchewan home-owners and home builders.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, in answer to the member's question, yesterday I met with HUDAC (Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada). They have a deep concern about this. It could affect up to 1,000 units, we would estimate. I think, yesterday they told me 600 units that had been applied for that the fund has run out for. My understanding is, they're coming at the rate of about 200-300 a week right now — the applications. It will be a major concern to the housing industry. We will be contacting . . . We've already talked to the local CMHC people here — Peter Anderson. He hasn't given us any assurance one way or the other. We will be contacting the federal minister next week in regards to it. We'll be certainly asking at least to extend enough money to run the program out to April 30th as originally indicated.

I know that there is a deep concern among all the housing industry. And it would, in fact, reflect back on the province on the number of units that would start this year if they don't allow the extra money to come on stream.

Mr. Dirks: — Well, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, one of my constituents happens to be a home builder, a small home builder, who at present has, I believe, something in the order of five houses that he is constructing. He has indicated to me that if the \$3,000 grant does not come through for at least four of the individuals in question, that in fact they will not be able to purchase the homes. He will be left holding the financial bag, and quite likely may experience personal bankruptcy. Would you care to comment on what you would advise that individual to do in this particular circumstance?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — That's certainly a good question, and I don't know how to answer it, because I don't know what else he could do other than what we're doing: give a strong representation to the federal government to extend the program. We as the province of Saskatchewan as you well know extended our program. We have the money. It will be there for whatever number of units come in. I would urge him to join with the rest of the housing industry. And I think they're making a very, very strong presentation to the federal government to extend it. Hopefully, they'll do it; hopefully, it will maybe be in their budget, although my understanding is the federal government is not going to extend the program. But hopefully they'll at least extend enough money till that date.

Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, would you just reiterate again when your officials will be meeting with the federal officials or at least discussing this matter with

them? I didn't hear your answer previously.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — My officials have already talked to CMHC; that was yesterday or the day before. We have asked them provincially to do what they can to help us down in Ottawa. We will be contacting or I'll be attempting to contact the federal minister early next week. I tried this morning, he wasn't in; I'll be trying on Monday to contact him to, if necessary, arrange a meeting. I'll go meet with him, whatever. He's going to be in Saskatoon towards the end of next week. Maybe at that time I could really sit down and have a meeting with him and to discuss how we can proceed with this, and to, in fact, ask him to extend their portion of the money to allow it to run out to April 30th.

Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minster, is it possible . . . I'm just wondering if any of your officials have suggested to you that there may be the possibility that legal could be taken against the federal government. They certainly left the impression that the grant would be available to individuals right up to April 30th, and many people did in fact make key financial decisions based on the assumption that that grant would be available right up to the end of the month. So I'm wondering whether or not there is the possibility of legal action being taken against the federal government.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, I don't really know if they can take legal action or not. They can try. They indicated to me yesterday they would look at that . There was budgetary figures put out earlier in the year, although they weren't made . . . they were made in a news release, and I understand that's about all that's ever done. CMHC had never once said to us, or to the housing industry in fact. 'Remember that limits are . . .' They never really drew it to their attention and I suppose that's a lack of not double-checking the news release. It was done early in the year and I was not aware of it, and HUDAC yesterday, when I talked to them, they had been unaware of it, till all of a sudden it was brought up. Really I don't know. Legal action I couldn't say. They indicated to me that they would look at it, but I don't know what legal action they would have.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know on that issue, whether or not this is a big problem with small contractors or not, maybe it will become one, but I wonder if you are looking at any alternative to assisting those people who have gone out on the limb in dealing with a federal government that is insensitive to the needs of Saskatchewan. Would you consider assisting a contractor like that, possible with picking up the \$3,000, to see them through this morass that they are getting themselves in as a result of the federal government's inaction? Would you as the minister in Saskatchewan look at assisting them through that period?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, as the member well knows, I couldn't make any commitment certainly without treasury board and cabinet's approval. And certainly we'll always look at whatever is possible to be done. I would hate to think that as a provincial government we're going out there picking up the federal part of their share. They do have an obligation to Saskatchewan. It's part of Canada.

And they do have an obligation to us as well, whether it was in this text or in other texts, and they do also have a responsibility there in the sense that directly or indirectly, without really realizing, the industry has been misled, thinking there was an unlimited number of units there. And I'm not that too sure that as a province we should be going out and picking up their tab. But certainly we have a concern for the small contractor. Certainly we'll look at anything we could possibly do and certainly be discussing it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I appreciate the minister's position where the federal government would back out of a program that, I think, all people in the province thought was in place for a given period of time, and now announced that they are running out of money. And I appreciate the minister taking that to his cabinet and to the treasury benches to see whether or not he will be of some assistance to those people who will inevitably find themselves in problems, as mentioned by the member from Rosemont.

Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I would like to go back for a moment to the grants to assist seniors for the home repair program, as I understood the minister to say that this program will be reinstated, or a new 5-year program reinstituted as of September 1, 1983.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — No, I really didn't say that. I think it rolls over the end of September anyway. What I said, it automatically rolls over if there's nothing done to change it. At the same time, I said that we will look at it to see what we can do. If we want to make some changes, that would be the time we would do it. We haven't at this time made any decision whatsoever in regard to whether we would change it or wouldn't change it. It has been a very good program, and we certainly would hate to see it just completely discarded. So we're looking at it to see what we can do — if we can make it better, or should we just let it roll over. We haven't made any commitments to date, and we're still looking at it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So, as the minister has outlined, if the program is to end September 30, it would take a cabinet order to cancel the program.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, my understanding is that there's a bit of a problem there, but my understanding is it would not be necessary to do that, although we'd certainly check that out.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, excuse me if I'm unclear on this matter. A few moments ago you said that it would automatically roll over if nothing was done, and now you say that it might be the other way. Could you just ask your officials there for a point of clarification? Because I think it's rather important to know in advising seniors who probably or possibly had done work in the last couple of years and may need some additional work done. In their asking the question, it would be nice to know whether we can give them a guarantee that, as of September 30th, there will be a program in place or there won't be a program in place.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, my understanding is that it says within the regulations it may be made, the grants may be made, and I suppose that's the thing that's a grey area. I said earlier that we were looking at it, and we weren't cancelling or doing anything. I said we'd look at it to see what is needed in senior citizen housing and home repair. And we fully realize — at least I do — fully realize that there is a need there. What the need is or how we . . . The need is there. How we address that need . . . We're looking at it, whether it be through exactly this program or whether it'll be a little bit different. I suppose that's where they come in . . . whether we let it roll over or introduce a new type of program. But the need is there, the recognition of the need is here, and we will be doing something in that line. Now, exactly what, I don't know. And, you know at first, initially, we say we'll let it roll over, and that's possible. Secondly, maybe we'll add something to it and just let it roll over that way. Third, maybe we'll come with a new type of program. In any case, we know there's a need there, and we intend to address it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, in light of the fact that we now have in Saskatchewan a home care program, which certainly encourages seniors to remain in their own homes as long as possible, I think the home repair program was and has been an integral part of that. And I would encourage the minister, who is unable today to tell us whether or not that program will be continued after September 30th, for that reason, mainly, but secondly, because a large amount of employment is created during the winter months when employment tends to be the highest in all areas of Canada, that this program has gone a long ways in all communities in the province to keep people employed during the winter months. And I would encourage you to use your influence in cabinet to see that this program is not only maintained at the present level but increased to keep up with the inflation rate over the last couple of years, and that the new five-year program be an increase of 25 or 30 per cent — whatever it would take at least to maintain the program in its present state. And we will be watching closely, I suppose, for an announcement which will have to be made by mid-summer if this program is to be on the road by September 30th.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I'm coming back to the point raised by the member for Rosemont and the possibility that the federal grants will not be available. As the minister is probably aware, this information is not widely understood, and if there is a danger that people may be contracting to purchase houses in the belief that the \$3,000 federal money is available, and if the minister is of the view that it may not be available, then I would urge the minister to urge the HUDAC (Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada) or any other persons who are in the business of selling real estate to make the situation clear.

I have here yesterday's paper wherein people, I'm sure, all in good faith, are suggesting that . . . Here's an ad: '6,000 in rebate money available when you purchase X.' I think they are assuming that the 3,000 is available. Another one: 'Low energy, super-insulated, custom-designed homes - \$6,000 grants and 3,000 interest-free loan, plus sweat equity.' All those suggest that the people who place these ads — and those are not the only ones — believe that the federal money is available. And I'm not for one moment suggesting that the ads were meant to be deceptive. They may, however, serve to deceive even without that intention being the case. I wondered whether the minister would again advise us whether he thinks there is a real risk of this not being available, and if so, whether he thinks that it would be appropriate for steps to be taken to see that the people are not misled. Again you may say it's not your responsibility, but I put it to you as minister of the crown.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well first of all, in answer to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, yesterday I did meet with HUDAC and they were very concerned about it. And they said that they would be telling all their members about it, to be aware of it.

Second of all, some of those advertisements may not be misleading in any way, because they could have been pre-committed. As you well know, the federal government will pre-commit so many. They may have went in and had them pre-committed. So I don't know if they are or they're not, but there's a possibility they could be pre-committed units.

The concern we had was the ones that's coming on that weren't pre-committed, and that are coming on stream now. We certainly will try to work through the real estate and through the housing industry to make them aware that it may not be extended, or the \$3,000 may not be available to them. And we'll do everything we can to keep anybody

from being led astray. I fully realize it is not our responsibility in a way, but yet as a resident, or responsible to the people of Saskatchewan, certainly we will do all we can to keep them from being misled, if that would be the word to use in this situation. At the same time, we'll do everything we can to get the grant extended. We'd hate to have the housing industry slow down because of it, so we're going to try and do both next week, and we'll do whatever we can to assist the problem.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, let me just say I thank the minister for that statement. If our constituents find themselves in this situation, they will tend to feel that somebody should have done something, and they will look to us. If there's any way we can avoid the problem, then clearly it is highly desirable. And I thank the minister for taking it up with the housing industry. I know he will pursue it, and I thank him for that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I just would like to follow up on that point in the strongest way and encourage the minister to do what he can to advise the people of the province. And I think his department, or his area, is one of the areas, I suppose, that I have been encouraged by. He seems to be able to get programs going and moneys for housing, and I appreciate what he has done in terms of the \$3,000 grant, both initially and to get it started and also to extend it, and I would just like to say, and hope that he would encourage the people to become aware of the fact that the federal government may be backing out of a commitment. And I think members on this side would agree that the program that he has undertaken is a good one, and to continue it on, because housing is very basic to the people of the province, and to continue in that direction.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Co-chairman. Mr. Minister, I just want to say at the outset that certainly housing program and policy are very important to the residents in northern Saskatchewan, and I want to begin with some information that I arrived at from news clippings regarding the rural and native housing program. I note that your department in Prince Albert has taken a very careful review and examination of the program in northern Saskatchewan, and I understand this as well from the communities themselves, from local elected officials.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you will be advising the legislature and the people of northern Saskatchewan with respect to a new program — if one is expected.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, in answer to the hon. member's question, certainly we have looked at it, as you well know. We've had people in every community talking with the local elected representatives there, asking them how we can handle the situation as it is, what is needed, how to go about it. We don't really want another situation as was there before. I think the people there . . . I respect that.

We've looked at senior citizen housing in the North. We'd like to integrate it, the same as in the South, the same type of situation. We'd like to put some responsibility with the local people to look after these units. And I think if we can get that local responsibility there, there's a lot of real fine people there, and if the responsibility can be placed properly there with them, they'll do a real good job for us. And what we'll do this year, as a program: we are just putting together a program now for the northern people in there and what we'll do with them is do pilot projects in areas around in regard to senior citizens and in regard to family housing — put them in there where the need has really been brought forward by them, and especially with the senior citizens. We'd like to put some senior citizen housing into the North. We'd like to see it administrated by the people within the community, and we think it's sort of a new — well, I don't know, new, eh, but certainly a good way to go, because the senior citizens there do need

accommodation. It's been recognized, I think, for a few years, even by the former administration, and I think it's time that we did something in that line.

We also had a concern. Some of the units that were built there under the rural housing program were built, designed for maybe people that had never maybe been in that type of home before. And so we've said to them, 'What could you do — what kind of unit would you like built that would be what you would like to see, instead of what we would like to impose upon you?' And they have come to us with a lot of different ideas. We are looking at them; we'll be going back to each community, asking them if this is what they would like in it, and I think we're going to go back and sort of touch with the communities in each case. I think it's a good way to go. I think it's been well received up there and hopefully that'll be very successful.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, you indicate to me . . . In your response you indicate a new program. Just how much does this new program defer in terms of regulations for the home-owner, as it relates to the former program?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, there is one advantage that we think, that with bringing in SHC and all our housing (northern housing and the housing in the province), under one group, is that all the regulations SHC has will apply in the North and they apply pretty fairly. And we think that by setting out those regulations the same in northern Saskatchewan as it is in southern Saskatchewan (or whatever you want to call it), that it is very fair and equitable.

There may be some cases, particularly in some of the far northern communities, where we may have to vary a little bit to make the regulations fit the local needs, but basically the regulations will be the same across the province. Like, it's one province; they're all part of our province and we're incorporating them all into it.

Mr. Yew: — I have some very dire concerns about the regulations and the former program, if it's going to be changed and make it applicable to the rest of the province. The reason for that is the fact that the rural and native housing program, as the minister understands, was evolved because of the fact that it recognized the disparities of the people living in the northern administration district — the low income levels — and it recognized that it had to meet a very unique condition. There were people up there that could not afford the types of housing programs that the rest of this province could afford, and my question is this, Mr. Minister. I understand that some of your officials (and I won't mention any names here, but I have records of my own) have actually initiated meetings at the local level with local government. And at some cases, there has been mentioned that Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will get tough with the home-owner. Just what does this imply, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, in regards to the hon. member's question, I don't know about the tough part of it, because it's tough living in the North and we recognize that. But their levels of rent will be set to their levels of income, which is a maximum of 25 per cent of their income. If they have very low income, they have very low rent. You know, a unit may cost \$60,000 or \$70,000 to build in the North. They may be paying rent as low as . . . Well, even less than that if their income is down, it could go down as low as what? As low as \$32 a month — they could pay that low on a new unit. And that is fixed of rent to income and that is based about as low as I think anybody could consider it.

Your concerns in regards to the regulation in regard to that, it's the same across, and

it's set to their income to start with, so I suppose the only thing that you're talking about being tough would maybe be paying the \$32 or whatever it would be for their income. If they're that low, they're probably on social assistance and it's paid anyway, so really I don't see where there's any problem.

The idea was, there was some problems up there. Some had been living in the North — and you're well aware of it, and I won't mention any names, but you're certainly well aware of it — that never paid any rent or very little for years and years and years. Some of those people well could have afforded to be paying the full 25 per cent which would have been much greater. So there is a need there to clean up some of the acts. We will recognize, under special circumstances, the need and I think that's where it will go back to the local community decision of what is the need.

And so, while we're cleaning it up on those who could afford to pay, the ones that are low-income will certainly be treated fairly.

Mr. Yew: — Well, thank you. Mr. Minister, the next question I have is in respect to some calls and some letters that I've had indicating concern that there may be a new policy in place and I don't know, honestly, but it seems that after your administration took over, that the housing payments were jacked up quite considerably. Is this a fact or is it not?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — No, that's not a fact; it never changed. The only thing different is that we're asking them to make the payments now.

Mr. Yew: — Pardon me, Mr. Minister, I couldn't get the . . .

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — I said, no, the payments have not been jacked up. The only thing now, we're asking them to make the payments. In some cases they weren't making them before and we're saying, 'Now you have an obligation; you have to make the payment.'

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, have there been any evictions?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — I could take notice. I'm not aware of any at this time, but I could take notice of it.

Mr. Yew: — Certainly that was another item that was raised at the March 24th meeting of local governments in Prince Albert, Mr. Minister. Seeing as how you've taken notice on that question, I won't dwell further on that one.

In terms of your new program, Mr. Minister, once your review is completed, what will your policy be for the delivery of those homes?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, first of all, we'll try and encourage local people to do the building. Certainly, we'll try and encourage local people to look after them once they're up. In fact we will have local people look after them once they're established. We will do everything we can to get local people involved. As you well know, when we cleaned up a lot of those units that were scattered all over and half finished, pretty near all of it - if not I guess a bit maybe, but a good portion of it — went directly to the northern people. We went right into the communities, found somebody there, got a price from them, got them to fix up the units. Most of them are finished now.

As you are well aware too, there was almost 100 units that were all smashed to pieces that right now we're in the process of repairing. We don't want these reoccurrence to

happen if possible, and that's why we're going back to local communities to help this keep from happening again.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you. I raised that question because, you know, I like other members in this Assembly are concerned about, you know, the involvement of the local people at the local level, at the community level. I say that certainly the capabilities are there at the local level in terms of apprenticeship, and as well we have local housing groups established in many northern communities. And further to that we have the Northern Contractors Association.

I was a bit concerned because of the fact that at the meeting I mentioned earlier, people were complaining at the meeting that contracts were being let to people from southern Saskatchewan while there were capabilities at the community level, and I refer to Sandy Bay and — pardon me — Prince Albert and Meadow Lake, and those complaints were coming from Ile-a-la-Crosse and from Sandy Bay. I wonder if the minister has heard of those complaints?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, first of all we believe it's all one province. We'd like to see . . . (inaudible) . . . To answer your question, there was a few contractors — one or two small contractors did some out at Meadow Lake, and there was a few out of Prince Albert that done some. But you must remember that there's a lot of native people in both those communities that would be involved. I don't know specifically the native communities in Sandy Bay that done it. They were all contacted. They all had a chance to put an offer on it and, you know, we tried to keep native involvement, native employment there pretty near entirely, and I think we did a relatively good job of that. But whether it come out of Sandy Bay, whether it come out of Meadow Lake, or Prince Albert, I couldn't say for sure. But most of it come out of the North.

Mr. Yew: — Yeah, I simply wanted to point out that part. I'm happy that the minister has taken note of the fact that there are people with expertise at the local level that are interested, that want to take on the contracts, and that are available. And I certainly hope that the senior officials in your department will give that very careful consideration in the future.

Now getting back to the housing program, Mr. Minister, I note in the paper here, April the 6th, mention that the local governments would be given some responsibility in terms of your housing program, that they would be involved as soon as this northern municipal act was passed in this legislature, Mr. Minister. I wondered what specifically are you talking about and looking at in terms of transferring of responsibilities to local government?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well basically there's three or four things that we would plan to do up there. First of all, the administration of the units — I think I indicated that a few minutes ago. Secondly, the needs of the community — to examine what needs is in the community. And third of all would be the selection of applicants would be done by the local which is fair because they know who needs it. And what we'll do then is tie it all in the same as we have all the rest of Saskatchewan. That's how it's done in all the other communities in Saskatchewan. And they'll be on the same basis. We feel they're equal. They should be equal and they'll be able to do the job.

So they'll be doing the administration. They'll be doing the needs of the community to see what's needed and they'll also be doing the selection of the applicants to go in, which puts the entire responsibility at local level where it well should be.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I brought the subject up because of the fact that the local government body is mentioned . . . Certainly want to participate in programs that are important like housing and they certainly don't want to be stuck with just a collection of mortgages, mortgage payments, etc.

In terms of the fact that you've mentioned repairing existing programs, some 100 or 200 you've mentioned a while ago, is there a program that you have initiated that I, for some reason or other, haven't gotten aware of, to repair the existing homes in northern Saskatchewan? You mentioned some 200 homes that were being repaired. Could you elaborate on that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, really I said 100 homes, but I understand it's about 135 units that we found have been in some type of disrepair. In fact some were just about completely dismantled. We're in the process now of having those units repaired and fixed up by people within the local community, if at all possible. We went to people in there and they're doing the repair jobs on it. I don't know if all will be done by the local people but most of it will be.

Mr. Shillington: — I had a great list of questions. I think I'm going to slip over them. Yes, I know members opposite will be very disappointed.

There are two or three that I want to cover and then the rest are informational, Mr. Minister. I propose the following: to cover four items specifically. Then I have a number of information items. I intend to read them into the record. Your officials can respond in writing. I really don't need the answers now, if they're prepared to do that. And if it turns out that I ask for information which is not available, I would be understanding.

I do want to ask about the home improvements for the disabled program. It's a decrease of nearly 50 per cent in the former amount and I'd appreciate an explanation of that.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, my understanding is that although it's down, that's all the demand was there. The demand was never got up there. We've always been low. There was 130 grants we expected. That's what we expect to have in. It's just never got very high. It just wasn't taken up that much. It's a good program but it's never been used. And so as you know, budgetary things are done. What's an estimate will be done. It's a new program that's in there. But that's all we feel will be taken up on it.

Mr. Shillington: — All right. Do I take it that the minister is committing himself to not refusing any legitimate requests under this program?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — That's correct.

Mr. Shillington: — The home energy loan program. Where are we with this thing? There were two of them actually, and I understood one was operated by SHC, and one you operate; one was discontinued, one continues. Could I have your comments on what we have here? I understand SPC had a program, you had a program; one was discontinued, and one was continued. Perhaps you can enlighten me?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, I don't know. It's not in our department. All we did was

administration or the inspection — not even administration, just the inspection of it. As far as I know, people are still applying for them and still getting them. My understanding is they're still there. I really can't answer that, but we haven't been told otherwise, anyway.

Mr. Shillington: — I just want your comment, and this is the last specific item — second last, I'm sorry — on infill housing. Is there any intention to expand this program to other areas? I want to say, Mr. Minister, that it was an excellent program. It met two needs. It revitalized somewhat dilapidated residential areas, and I can say that I think, with some credibility. I represent that area. It assists in renovating dilapidated housing stock, and it provides housing for people who need it. I think it was just a first-rate program, and members will agree that it was in the right constituency, too. I think I'd be equally congratulatory if you would've put it in Regina Victoria. I might even understand it in Saskatoon Centre, but I do want to encourage, Mr. Minister, your corporation to expand and continue the program. It was just top drawer.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, in answer to the hon. member's comments or questions, first of all, it has been recognized as a good program, but also a very, very expensive program. I suppose it's a matter of rating our priorities. The program will continue on, but whether it will continue on, you know, at an accelerated rate, I would doubt very much because of the down time in the economy. We feel that it would be better to have more units out there, like the Build-A-Home, where we put the \$3,000 grant out, and instead of expanding maybe the infill program, while recognizing that the infill program has its place in here we're not going to discontinue, but we're certainly not going to accelerate it in times right now. We would much sooner see more homes built at the present time, continue this program on, and as times pick up maybe we can accelerate it at that time.

Mr. Shillington: — Am I correct that the infill housing is leased space?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Yes, you're correct. It's leased land.

Mr. Shillington: — All right. Mr. Minister, I want to express a note of concern about the lack of accommodation available for leasing. Individual privately owned dwellings do not meet the needs of everyone. There is a large constituency out there which need to rent their housing stock, and virtually since the '60s we've had a chronic shortage of accommodation available to lease. And it's alarming actually, because we are coming out of a recession. I expect we are coming out of a recession, notwithstanding the best efforts of the members opposite to prolong it; it does seem to be coming to an end. And we are . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It's in spite of the efforts of members opposite.

Mr. Minister, the former administration came into office under virtually the same circumstances - came into office in the midst of a difficult recession. We had a vast oversupply of rental accommodation, and what happened was that the economy quickly overtook that. You are, I think, in the mature stages of a recession with no vacancy. Ask yourself what you're going to have if and when the economy picks up and the demand quickens, as history has shown it will. You're going to have a very critical shortage of rental accommodation. So I want to express to you, Mr. Minister, the concern that individually owned houses do not meet the needs of everyone, and that we need additional rental accommodation, and we need, I think, a very large supply of it. I would encourage your corporation to emphasize that aspect of shelter.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, in answer to that, just the other day (last Friday — a week ago

today), I announced that there were going to be 129 rental units built on the Hamilton Street project over here. You know, that's just one . . . (inaudible) . . . We expect about 400 rental units (Sask Housing does) in the city of Regina this year.

At the same time, the vacancy rate right now is about 3 per cent in Regina. We had talked yesterday with HUDAC in regard to what may be necessary to stimulate the rental housing in Saskatchewan when and if the need arises. So we have been discussing it with them to see what could be done provincially to stimulate that type of rental industry.

Mr. Shillington: — All right, Mr. Minister, if we have agreed, I'm going to read some questions into the record. When *Hansard* is available Monday you can simply answer them as best you can. I do not specifically . . . I'm really asking for data rather than trying to provoke an argument with anyone. And if that's agreeable, I'll do that.

With respect to the loan forgiveness under rehabilitation of existing dwellings, I note there is a 58 per cent decrease. I would like to know why. I would like to know what effect the addition of the DNS had on it.

With respect to subvote 30, the building co-operative housing program, I note an approximately 30 per cent decrease. I would appreciate knowing why.

With respect to the rural housing program, I note a 50 per cent increase. I would again appreciate an explanation for that.

With respect to vote 32, the grant to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation for non-profit sponsors of moderately priced accommodation, I would like a list of the grants actually given in the last year, and any projects approved during the last year in which you expect any new projects approved.

With respect to land assembly, I would appreciate a list of land actually purchased, and a list of any requests from municipalities for land assembly which you have not been able to meet, for any reason.

With respect to non-profit housing, in 1981, I note by your annual report that there 10,027 units completed. I'd like equivalent figures for '82. For 1983, I'd appreciate knowing what is budgeted, and what you expect.

With respect to the public housing for senior citizens and families who can't afford private rental accommodation, I note in 1981 there were 804 units started. I'd appreciate the equivalent figures for 1982. For 1983, I'd appreciate knowing what is budgeted and what you expect and anticipate for 1983.

Finally, Mr. Minister, with respect to subvote 20, urban natives, I note in 1981, there were 490 starts. I'd appreciate equivalent figures for 1982, for 1983. I'd appreciate knowing what is budgeted, and what units you will anticipate. I anticipate, Mr. Minister, that some of this will not be readily available in the form in which it's requested. Other information, you may not be able to supply. Given the fashion in which I've asked you the questions, I'm prepared to be understanding so long as you make a reasonable effort to answer the questions.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Certainly, as I did before, we'll get the information to you as soon as possible.

Item 25 agreed to.

Items 26 to 35 inclusive agreed to.

Item 36

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Deputy Chairman. Mr. Speaker, just one question here. I wonder if you can confirm that there will be 150 housing units built in northern Saskatchewan for 1983. I quote from the paper here, the P.A. *Herald*.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — I'm sorry, I missed that. Would you repeat that please?

Mr. Yew: — I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can confirm that your department will be building 150 homes in northern Saskatchewan this current year.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — That's the number we're looking at. It isn't confirmed. It may be more or less, but not likely less. It's not confirmed. That's the number we had talked with the northern communities about — that we'd pick out a certain number of communities and put these specialized . . . not specialized, but these units in there, as I explained before. But that is the number we're looking at, yes, it is.

Mr. Yew: — One final supplementary. Seeing as how there is no homes built in . . .

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Order, order. The member from Cumberland is trying to ask a question.

Mr. Yew: — Seeing as how there were no homes built in the last fiscal year, the fact that there is a necessity out there, and the fact that there are capable people to hire, local housing groups, to build those homes, I hope that you will give this matter serious consideration, and verify that you will have at least 150 homes for the North. With that, I wonder if you might want to respond.

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, I can't give you, you know, the guarantee it'll be that, but certainly that's the number we're going to try and put there. We've talked to them about it and made the whole, as I've explained a couple . . . We went through all the communities, talked to them all to see what their needs are. It was sort of a job that we felt we should do if we probably made any kind of commitment. One hundred and fifty, as you well know, and anybody that's worked within government, is a commitment you set aside and say, 'That's what we'd like to see done in there.' It depends on the weather and everything else. The communities themselves may not want something that we thought maybe should go in there, so that could end up more and could end a few less, but that's the number we would like to see end up in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, while I'm on my feet I'd like to be sure to mention the non-budgetary transactions as we go through.

Vote 24 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS

SASKATCHEWAN HOUSING CORPORATION

Vote 49 — Statutory

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

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank my officials for joining me here today. I'd like to thank the opposition for the way they presented the questions. That was certainly . . . And certainly I'll get the answers to you in regards to them. I think it's the way that parliamentary procedure should be carried on, and I'd like to thank you all for the way it's been handled.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, I want to thank the minister and his officials for the courteous and efficient way they've assisted us in dealing with these estimates.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:10 p.m.