

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 25, 1983

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Communication

Assistant Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the standing committee on communication, presents the fifth report of the said committee which is as follows:

The committee has given further consideration to the matter of television in legislative committees, and recommends that an in-house system of television for the standing committees on public accounts and crown corporations, similar to the television system in the House, be approved in corporations, similar to the television system in the House, be approved in principle subject to approved funding by the board of internal economy.

Mr. Katzman: — I move that the fifth report of the standing committee on communications now be concurred in, seconded by Mr. Lingenfelter.

Motion agreed to.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to you, and through you, approximately 20 students from the National Honor Society of Montana. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery. The students are from Dawson County High School, Glendive, Montana. They represent the honour students in the top 10 per cent of their high school. They range in the ages of 17 to 18. They are on vacation and requested a tour of the Legislative Building. I will be going into Estevan right after the question period so, as a result, the Hon. Gary Lane will be meeting with the group and having refreshments and some pictures. And I would just like to extend a very warm welcome to our American neighbours for the province of Saskatchewan, and hope they have a nice trip.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming this group of students from Glendive who are with us here today as part of their vacation. I must say the school agenda must be a little different than here in Saskatchewan. Our students are busy in the classroom today, but maybe you could inform the Minister of Education as to how you get a holiday at this time of the year. I'm sure students would appreciate that kind of information. But having been working very closely with people in Montana as a customs officer for a number of years, I have found it that your system of school, where you get three months off in the summer-time rather than two, is much appreciated by the students. And we welcome you here, and I'm sure you'll enjoy your stay. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly this afternoon two groups of students from two schools located in the constituency of Regina Rosemont.

Seated in the east gallery are 32 students attending from St. Francis school – grade 8 students – along with their teacher, Mr. Gerald Small. And I'll be meeting with you at 2:30, immediately after question period, for pictures, and then later on for refreshments.

Also with us this afternoon are 55 grade 8 students from the Ruth M. Buck school seated in the west gallery, along with their teachers, Mr. Al Chase and Mr. Dale Keller. And I will be meeting with them at 3 o'clock for pictures and refreshments. And I would ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in giving them a hearty welcome here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinsson: — Sir, I'd just like to extend greetings to the students from Ruth M. Buck, Mr. Chase and Mr. Keller. They had me over this morning and I appreciate their hospitality. I have two children that have attended that school throughout their educational career and I will say that it's at least as good or better than any other in the city. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that today I introduce to you and through you to this Assembly the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka. His Excellency Rodney Clement Austen Vandergert, seated in the Speaker's gallery. Mr. Vandergert has held foreign postings in London, Islamabad and the United Nations in New York. His journey to Saskatchewan is to further his knowledge of our province and country, specifically in cultural areas.

I shall be meeting with Mr. Vandergert tomorrow during lunch to discuss our various cultural concerns. I would also like to mention that Sri Lanka is one of our customers in the potash business in Saskatchewan.

At this time I ask the House to join me in crossing economic and cultural lines and welcome His Excellency, Mr. Vandergert.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly I want to join with our colleagues in government caucus in welcoming our distinguished visitor from Sri Lanka. I am delighted that you're able to be here at this time of the year. You may wonder whether the weather is always this nice; it isn't. you've chosen the right time of the year to come. We are delighted that you came at this time of the year. I hope you enjoy your visit and you find it educational and interesting.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Proposed Increase in SPC Rates

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour, the minister in charge, responsible, chairman of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. Mr. Minister, it has to do with your announcement this morning that the Saskatchewan Power Corporation wants to, in fact, extract \$85 million more out of the pockets of the Saskatchewan consumers this year, with rate hikes at more than 21 per cent, both electrical and gas. My question is this, Mr. Minister: can the minister justify taking \$85 million out of the pockets of Saskatchewan consumers at a time when increased consumer spending is commonly held to be the key to economic recovery in this country? How can you expect Saskatchewan consumers to spend more to fuel the economic growth, and at the same time, the exorbitant increase of \$85 million that you're taxing on to the consumption of gas and electricity?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, yes we can justify our request, and we are just explaining to the people of Saskatchewan what is needed to put Saskatchewan Power Corporation at a break-even, or slightly in a loss, position. We have to run our corporation the best way possible, and all we're doing is laying out what is required. It will be up to the public utilities review commission to decide whether we are correct or not.

Mr. Koskie: — A supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I ask you, Mr. Minister, in view of your government's inflation-minus-one guide-lines, which applies to the working people, the school boards, the universities, the municipal councils . . . I ask you why then are the rates requested by SPC today three times the inflation rate, and several times more higher than that in respect to your guide-lines? Surely, Mr. Speaker, if it's good for the working people, universities and municipal councils, your guide-lines, why isn't it good in the application of your crown corporations?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Speaker, all you have to look at is that there was no increases in 1982. When you looked at the 1983 and you divide it by two, we're at 10 or 11 per cent. And the other thing is that you have to look at, is that we have major capital projects under way. The cost of money is there, and we have to keep our debt-equity ratio at a reasonable guide-line that the people of Saskatchewan to the PURC (public utilities review commission) decide that we operate as a deficit. That will be up to them to come and tell us so. It's in the hands of the people of Saskatchewan to decide right now.

Mr. Koskie: — A further supplemental, Mr. Speaker. As the minister, you indicated that you put on a freeze for one year. Will you now admit to the people of Saskatchewan that that was a farce only to support you in getting elected?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, that is not true. We wanted the opportunity to review, which we did, and if you want to look at your past record, you had a loss last year of 3.5 million or 3.4 million. We also had a 3.5 million loss. We were projected at the beginning of the year of a \$37.4 million deficit, and I would like to commend the workers of Sask Power, the management, and our board of directors for doing a job in bringing it down to the level that we did this year.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the current Premier has referred to deficits as deferred taxes. Using that analogy, SPC is going to impose upon the public of Saskatchewan \$13 million in deferred taxes, because that we are told is the deficit, even with the rate increases which you've requested. My question to the minister is: are there any bounds to this government's ability to mismanage crown corporations? Specifically, is there any timetable within which you expect to have SPC running at a break-even point and these deficits repaid?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, there's many, many factors come into any projection, or any budget, and I go back to 1976 when the decline started as far as your debt equity ratio is concerned, and it's been deteriorating for the last six, seven years. We've come to the point where we've got to try and start bringing it back a little bit. And the fact that we've started the Nipawin, and it was a conceived plan of yours as well, and our natural gas program — we've got capital funding to look after, which is requiring borrowing and the interest rates in there. But I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan want to have power, they want to have natural gas, and they're going to approve whatever the PURC (public utilities review commission) application people or the commission decide is reasonable as far as our request is concerned.

Mr. Shillington: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, if the position of SPC had been deteriorating as you claim, how on earth do you justify the freeze in the rates which you promised during the election?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to tell the members opposite that the people of Saskatchewan have had a reprieve for the amount of cash that they've been paying out, and I think they are appreciative of the fact that their cash flow was helped during the rougher time of 1982. We can see it starting to rise now and will be in the ability to be able to pay extra for our power and our natural gas.

Mr. Shillington: — I'm wondering if the minister is going to make any conceivable stab at answering the question which I asked, and that is: do you have a time frame within which you're going to put SPC in a break-even position and pay back the deficits, or are you, like the Minister of Finance, just running on, hoping that you get lucky someday and are able to balance it?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell the member opposite that we already have a 10-year plan in place as far as Saskatchewan power is concerned.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — You've really whetted my curiosity, Mr. Minister. Is it the kind of thing that you can enlighten us on in the space of a few minutes in question period, or would you like to table your 10-year plan?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, we are planning the projection of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to get back into at least an 80:20 debt-equity ratio. We are a little bit over that now. This year it may drop a little more. But the demand has dropped, the potash mines haven't been working, our Ipsco (Interprovincial Steel and Pipe Corporation) hasn't been working, the farm machinery manufacturers haven't been working, the oil industry hasn't been working, but all this stuff is starting to come back and I'm sure we're going to see that we have the revenue starting to increase to cover a lot of these areas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. A large number of people in this province have been affected by decisions made by your department and your area or the crown corporations you are in charge of. You will know that you restricted the income of people on minimum wage — for two years. You are now telling them that they will have a 23 per cent increase in natural gas and power. Can you tell me whether or not you have made any special arrangements to take care of those people who you've frozen their income, saying they had lots of money? You're now telling them that this government is going to be charging them 23 per cent more for two basic utilities. Have you made any arrangements to take those people into consideration in terms of a cut or a reduced rate?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, I think what we, or I know what we are doing as a government is to get the economy going in this province, to get the jobs out there so that people can afford to pay the rates and whatever is required to run our province.

Mr. Shillington: — The annual report states that there are two reasons for this deficit. One is the rate freeze and the other is the abysmal failure of your government's open for business philosophy. Will you at least confirm, Mr. Minister, what your own annual report states, and that is that the problems this government is having with SPC are self-induced?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, I'll take note of those remarks, and we'll see in the next two or three years whether they hold water or not.

Nuclear Arms Race Protest Rallies

Mr. Shillington: — A question to the Premier. As I think the Premier will know, over the weekend thousands of Saskatchewan people attended mass rallies to protest the escalation of the nuclear arms race by the Reagan administration in the United States, and to speak out against the use in Canada, of Canada as a testing ground for the American cruise missile. My question, Mr. Premier, is: why was there no official government representation at any of these rallies? Why did you not attend or send some representative on your behalf to speak to this rally?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the concerns about mutual disarmament run right across not only Saskatchewan, but indeed, all of Canada and North America and likely the free world, and perhaps even behind the Iron Curtain. Our position has been on e that's been stated several times. With respect to disarmament, we are concerned about mutual disarmament, but have some reluctance to encourage unilateral disarmament. We have some concern that the representation coming out of Ottawa and coming out of Moscow and coming out of Washington is one that deals with mutual disarmament all across the world. And for the province of Saskatchewan or the state of Montana or anybody else to be talking about unilateral disarmament probably isn't going to have much impact on either Washington or Ottawa or the Soviet Union, indeed, Moscow.

With respect to our own representation, let me please turn for additional comments and reply to the Attorney-General.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, the matter had been turned over to me. I was

unfortunately unable to attend because of a prior commitment. We have expressed, as I have indicated in this Assembly in the past with regard to the general question of nuclear disarmament, that, as opposed to the NDP position that there be unilateral disarmament, we are of the opinion that disarmament should be mutual.

Secondly, with regard to the cruise missile, I have stated several times in this Assembly that the question of national defence is that of the Government of Canada, and we have made that clear. That is also the position articulated by my predecessor, the former attorney-general in this province that that was a matter for national defence.

I remind all hon. members as well, that under the constitutional law of this country, that in an area such as this, that the federal position is paramount to any provincial position under that doctrine of paramountcy.

Finally, I remind the people of Saskatchewan and all hon. Members that I have before me the lease agreement signed for the Primrose testing range, part of which is in the province of Saskatchewan, which was signed by the former CCF government, giving the federal government exclusive use of that territory for weapons testing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, Hear!

Mr. Shillington: — A supplementary to the Premier, Mr. Minister. By way of background, let me suggest to you that that rally was not about unilateral disarmament. That movement died in the early '60s. That rally was an attempt to bring to the attention of all nations the concern felt by the public for the dangers in which the world stands.

I would remind the Premier that I was preceded at the podium by the deputy mayor of Regina, the archbishop of the Anglican Church, the archbishop of the Catholic Church, and one member of parliament.

My question to the Premier is: why did you or a representative of yours not add your voice to the expression of concern to all nations with respect to the danger in which our civilization stands?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the Attorney-General has already answered that question. He was to be there but was unavoidably detained, so I can't add any more than that.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, a question to the Attorney-General. You have the largest caucus in the history of the province. Why didn't you send some other representative to attend at that rally in your stead?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I suggest to the hon. member: one, the responsibility for attendance was mine and I've already given an answer. Secondly, I would remind the hon. Member that in fact the actions taken by past governments, particularly with regard to cruise missile testing in this province, are damning of the practice of you and your predecessors. You signed the agreement giving the federal government exclusive use of the Primrose testing range in the province of Saskatchewan; you and your predecessors signed the agreement. And if anyone has a moral responsibility, and

perhaps a legal responsibility, it is the members of the CCF-NDP – as you proudly referred to them as the former CCF members that were in this Assembly – your predecessors.

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Speaker. I would remind the Attorney-General that I was not in school when that agreement was signed and I don't take responsibility for it. Neither does anybody in this caucus. My question to the Attorney-General is: will you confirm that the government sent no representative to that rally because, as the Premier stated initially in his reply, you do not share the goals of that peace rally?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I have made it quite clear. One, the responsibility was mine. Secondly, I have also, and the Premier has made it clear, the concerns that this government has with the mutual disarmament throughout the world. And we, I think, share the concerns of all. We do not share and don't take the argument that unilateral disarmament is dead because many of your party propose that there be unilateral disarmament. So don't try and convince anyone that in fact that movement is dead. The concerns, I think, of all people in Saskatchewan are there, that in fact people are concerned about international disarmament. As I say, I take the responsibility.

I do however, remind members opposite, you will have an opportunity this summer when you try and divorce yourself now from the CCF, you will have an opportunity of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Regina Manifesto which I believe you're going to make a big production. And I really hope, and I sincerely hope that there is a motion of condemnation of your predecessors who signed this exclusive lease for missile testing and weapons testing in the province of Saskatchewan. And I really hope, Mr. Speaker, as well . . . And they may ridicule a position but they've got an ample opportunity this summer. The hon. Member says that he wasn't even in school at the time that was signed. If he is at that anniversary celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Regina Manifesto, I hope he moves such a resolution of condemnation.

Mr. Yew: — Thanks you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my question to the Premier of this province. Just to be clear, can you please state for the record in this Legislative Assembly: is your government completely opposed to the testing of the cruise missiles in Canada?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I just reiterated our position. We favour mutual disarmament. We don't favour unilateral disarmament. But in those negotiations, we say that the responsibility lies with Washington and with Ottawa and with Moscow and the Soviet Union. Everybody across Canada, and I would suspect each and every solitary person in the province of Saskatchewan fears the build-up of nuclear arms, but knows if one side is much better prepared than the other, then it may not lead necessarily to peace or protection, so it's mutual disarmament. As long as it is mutual, we would endorse it 110 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yew: — New question, Mr. Premier. I'm speaking about a specific jurisdiction, a jurisdiction called the province of Saskatchewan. You are given the responsibility to look after this one specific area in Canada. I want to question your position with respect to the cruise missile testing agreement. Are you opposed to the cruise missile testing in Canada for Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the relationship is between our

defence capability and the United States' defence capability is, compared to that of the Soviet block. I don't know. That's not really my responsibility. I have no access to the defence information, defence records. For me to be commenting whether we should be flying a plane, or whether we should be building some tanks, or whether we should be doing something else, testing some equipment, is not my responsibility because I don't even have the information.

I could add, Mr. Speaker, the agreement is here in Saskatchewan because the former members' party signed, so we live with that. Given that impact that it may have on today's society, because they may have some concern about mutual disarmament, they'll have to bear the responsibility for signing it. But for general defence, that is not the responsibility of the province. It's the responsibility of the federal government.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Speaker, a new question. I want to state initially for the premier and his cabinet that I was a resident of the Primrose bombing range area at the time of the signing of the Primrose range agreement, and there was no such thing as a cruise missile in existence in those days. And I want to question the Attorney-General as well as the Premier of this province, seeing as how they are shrinking away from stating their position one way or . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please! Does the member have a question? This is not a time for advising, but rather a time for asking questions.

Mr. Yew: — Thanks you, Mr. Speaker, and my apologies. However, getting back to the basics of the question. I want to question the Premier again, once more: are you in favour or are you opposed to the cruise missile in testing in Saskatchewan, in northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I just want to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you directed the question to me or the Premier — was the way you prefaced it. As I have made it clear on numerous times, we have expressed our concern to the federal government about cruise missile testing. We are concerned about the safety of the people of Saskatchewan. We have taken what I believe, all action that we can take given the exclusivity of the federal national defence power. And the hon. Member says that 20 years ago cruise missiles weren't even thought of when the CCF signed this agreement. Let me refer to the agreement . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 30 years ago. The province, Mr. Speaker, agrees to reserve the area for the exclusive use of Canada for military activities. Canada will, in the event . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order please. Would you give the minister the opportunity to answer your questions.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — . . . 'Canada will, in the event that any form of fuse shells, missiles, etc. be used in or over the area, Canada will make all necessary precautions with respect to the demolition of unexploded shells, missiles, etc.'

I suggest to you that missiles of any form, and not technologically limited to what was known at the time or contemplated by this agreement, and I suggest to you, I suggest to the hon. Member that the true positions of members opposite will be known during the debate and the celebrations that they are going to hold on the celebrations of the Regina Manifesto. I suggest to you that this government has at least expressed its concern to the federal government, far more than what that government opposite did when it was in office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yew: — I want to raise a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I want to find out what date – time and date of the signing of that agreement.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The agreement, I believe, was . . . Oh, I can't find it. I've got it under the staple. It would be 1954. I do have, however, an addendum to the agreement signed in 1981 by the then minister of intergovernmental affairs, Mr. Roy Romanow, extending the agreement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a supplementary. I want to know what the government of the day, the Conservative Government of Saskatchewan, what their position was in those days. Did they raise any objections to that agreement, and following that, what is your position today?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, my reading of history at the time indicates that the Conservative Party has always stood for peace in the world, Mr. Premier, that the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan I have no doubt stood for it at that time, and I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservative Party at that time was far stronger in its support for world peace than the then CCF government, if this agreement means anything, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to Notre Dame College Varsity Hounds and Regina Pat Canadians

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Before orders of the day, I would like all members of the Assembly to join with me in congratulating Notre Dame College in the village of Wilcox for capturing the Canadian Juvenile Championship yesterday in Nepean, Ontario. Mr. Speaker, the Notre Dame Varsity Hounds defeated the Nepean Raiders to win the Colonel Sanders Cup by a score of 3 to 2. To the head coach, Barry MacKenzie, assistant coach, Phil Ridley, and manager, John Weisshaar, along with all members of the team in the college, I'm sure that all hon. members will wish to join with me in congratulating the Notre Dame College Varsity Hounds for winning the Canadian Juvenile Championship.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask all hon. members to join with me in congratulating the Regina Pat Canadians for winning the midget championship. I'm told that it was pretty exciting, that in fact the team was up and down, according to the news reports, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure that all people in the province share with me in congratulating both of those teams.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with hon. members here in also extending a congratulations to the Notre Dame Hounds, the juvenile team that won the championship. I just want to indicate that the initial tournament was held in Humboldt where Notre Dame competed against Humboldt and North Bay and a team from

Winnipeg, and they were successful during that tournament — excellent hockey, real gentlemen — and certainly we want to extend our congratulations.

Also I had the opportunity to watch the Regina Pat Canadians, and as our hon. friend said, it was an up and down game. They were down some two goals in the third period, and came on remarkably well, and to them our congratulations.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

EDUCATION

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 8

Item 1

Mr. Chairman: — Is the minister ready? Would you introduce your officials?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, at this time it's my pleasure to introduce some of our officials. Sitting to the left of me is deputy minister, Mr. Ray Clayton; and behind is the executive director of administration and support services, Mr. Gil Dumelie; and immediately behind me is the director of administration, Mr. John Moneo; and sitting in the rear, from this direction to this direction, is Mr. Phil Schalm, who is the executive director of development division; and next to him is Mr. Ken Horsman, who is director of policy; and next to him is Mr. Lou Jule, who is the director of OMLO (Official Minority Language Office); and next to him is Mr. Wally Sawchuk, who is the director of the superannuation plan.

Mr. Chairman: — Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Sorry, Mr. Chairman, one more official to introduce, and that is Mr. Peter Dyck and he is the executive director of regional services.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, the Premier and your government have consistently been making statement indicating, reiterating his government's commitment to education, as sort of being one of the corner-stones of life in our province. And what I'd like to ask the minister: whether, and as I say, the Premier is reported to having said at the recent teacher's meeting here in Regina that education is a corner-stone of life in our province . . . And what I want to ask the minister is, first of all, does he essentially agree with that statement? And if he would explain to me the full meaning, as he and his government view that statement: the corner-stone of life in our province.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to attempt to answer that. It's a very, very broad question and a very philosophic one. But, yes, I would concur with the Premier's position that education is one of the key corner-stones in the whole process

of economic recovery. And in that regard, I would think that what we have attempted to do during the 11 or 11 and a half months that we have been government is to take a look at the short-term and the long-term objectives in this regard. And really what we are attempting to zero in on is to bring about the development of the human resources.

It would seem to me a pretty logical thing that in addition to development of the natural resources that exist out there, that is, oil, potash and uranium, the mineral resources that we have, plus agriculture, and in addition to those very, very important developments that impinge upon economic recovery for our province, that perhaps even more significant (in my way of thinking) is to bring about the development of the human resources. And so, therefore, one of the first things that we attempted to do was to take a reading on where we stood in regard to our human resources, looking at it from perhaps training, development and growth right from birth until death, because that is the expectation as far as training and education is concerned in the latter part of the 20th century.

So, in this regard, what we did try to do was to assess where things were in pretty good shape and where we needed more emphasis being placed in that area from the development of more attention, or more changes to take place, or else just economic resource development in these areas. And so, when we take a look at the different components in the whole scheme of things educationally, we take a look at the situation from K to 12, and what the real needs are in that regard. And then we go on into the area of adult basic education and what the needs are there in community colleges, and technical institutes, and technical training, and university training, and distance education. And we take a look at the problem that we have with regard to accessibility of education and training, with regard to mobility, and in an attempt to try to dovetail all these different facets in the whole process of education, we have attempted to come up with some forward thinking and a long-range plan in regard to education.

And it's in that context, Mr. Chairman, that we are attempting to bring about the development of our human resources, and just to illustrate one or two illustrations, I would say that one of the things that we're going to place a tremendous amount of emphasis on is to develop in that area where people are in arrears educationally. And I speak about one out of every five to six people in our province who have grade 10 or less education. And as long as that fact exists, and as long as alongside of that, we have something like 74 per cent of the people who are on social assistance today have grade 10 or less education, to me there is a message there that economic recovery will be extremely difficult if we don't place a great amount of emphasis as far as attention and financial resources are concerned in that area.

The same thing would apply in this area of technical education and skill training and making opportunities available for those people in that particular area. But it's in this overall planning – it's in the context of overall planning that we decided to make the distribution of funding in the area of education in the attempt to bring about the overall development of our human resources.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, thank you, Mr. Minister. I think it is the contention of many people and educators throughout Saskatchewan that the educational system in Saskatchewan was second to none in Canada throughout the past years. And I know I recall a principal who went on leave to the armed forces into Germany from the home community of Humboldt, and I want to say that I spoke to him and he indicated that the educational system of Saskatchewan was viewed as being, as I say, second to none, a

high quality of education, and was indeed looked upon, although they used the Ontario system, the armed forces at that time indicated that in view of the overall strengths of the Saskatchewan scene that it was in fact one of the best in Canada.

I want to say that I don't think that the statements really add a great deal, because I think that the corner-stone of life in our province has, in the past, been education. And I think that the government in the past demonstrated that indeed education was of a top priority to this province. What I am concerned about is whether or not we have a lot of rhetoric in respect to the utilization of this resource development in some other new and innovative way which you are alluding to, or whether it's just words, because it seems to me the commitment of the province to educational system is really the end product of determining whether or not that commitment is there.

I want to ask you also about another statement which . . . I don't know if it bothers me or not, but again — the Premier speaking — Premier Grant Devine thinks that Saskatchewan schools need to be run efficiently and with a business-like approach. I would like you, as Minister of Education, to comment on that particular statement, because certainly I haven't had the benefit of knowing exactly what the Premier means by more rhetoric.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can assure the member from Quill Lakes, the hon. member from Quill Lakes, that what we are saying in regard to our commitment in education is not sheer rhetoric. It is something that we believe in; it is something that we are committed to as a very important part of the whole package of economic recovery.

Now in regard to running schools efficiently, if the Premier did state that then certainly I would concur with him. I do believe that it's incumbent upon those of us who are running educational facilities today, educational programs today, to be as efficient as we possibly can and to realize savings wherever it is possible, because of the tremendous amount of cost that is involved in education today, because the expectations are so great on the part of people, and for which reason costs continue to escalate. So that, I see really nothing wrong with that, and there is not the inference — I feel confident that there is not the inference, nor was there the inference intended by the Premier — that that should have anything to do with effectiveness in education, because we are concerned about running schools in an effective manner, and just because we're running them efficiently should not be a barrier to attaining that goal.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, the part that concerns me with the statement which you haven't addressed is that implied in that statement, and I'll read you what it says here. It's an article by Jane Bradley:

Premier Grant Devine thinks Saskatchewan schools need to be run efficiently and with a business-like approach.

It seems to me that there is implied in that that the school boards throughout this province are not in fact running it efficiently and in a business-like manner. There can be no other interpretation, Mr. Minister, to that other than a slur on all of the boards across the province, because if in fact they are running them efficiently and business-like, then why would the Premier or anyone want to allude to the necessity of running them efficiently and business-like? If it is a fact already that that is achieved, then you don't have to request that they be run efficiently and business-like.

And so what I'm saying to you is that while we have local autonomy and we have boards throughout Saskatchewan spending a tremendous amount of time for very little remuneration and, I want to say, have built in this province an outstanding educational system . . . And it seems to me that what is implied in that statement is that in fact they are doing less than what the Premier . . . And I want your comments in respect to how you view the operations as directed by the various boards and local autonomy throughout Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that there's some degree of misunderstanding, wither on the hon. member's part or else on my part. But as far as running schools in a business-like fashion is concerned, as I said before, I see not a thing wrong with that. In fact I see that as a very, very . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right, all right, look, I was involved in education until I came into this House. There are five or six people sitting in our caucus who were involved in education. We felt very, very confident about the quality of education that we had in our province and we were a living part of it. And personally, I was very, very proud to have been associated with the teaching profession in this province. I was very proud to have been associated with the teaching profession in this province. I was very proud to have been associated with the boards of education with which I was associated. I know that I speak for my fellow members that they felt the same way, and they still do. And I was very proud to have been associated with the people who worked in the Department of Education, and to me it was an honour to have the opportunity to assume the role that I have in this portfolio, because of that. And there was no way on earth that our Premier, or anybody on this side of the House, was intending a slight upon mismanagement of school boards and the manner in which they were handling their day-to-day problems.

What we're talking about, when we're talking about running schools in a business-like manner, are such things as energy conservation programs, so that we can save money in regard to that kind of thing. We're talking about and analysing such things as bus routes in order to realize savings. We're talking about proper maintenance for schools in regards to anything from roof repairs to upkeep in schools, and things of that nature and a host of many, many other kinds of things. We're talking about business education being taught in our schools, which it is in almost every secondary school in this province. We're talking about shop work, the vocational and technical training that occurs in a large number of our secondary schools. All these things require very careful management, and through that, we have a greater opportunity to give more benefit to more students through efficiencies.

Mr. Koskie: — That's all very good, Mr. Minister, but I want to say that there's nothing else can be taken out of that statement other than that the province is looking at greater interference with the boards, local boards, or questioning the manner in which they are operating the schools under their jurisdiction. Because simply enough, I'm saying to you that if we have the efficiency there, then it need not have been commented on. And the very nature of commenting on it obviously is of concern to the Premier.

I want to go on in respect to the thrust of education in the future. And again I want one final comment, because this is number one of the province making some statements to a group of teachers. And the statement that I want to address to you is this:

While he reaffirmed his belief in the need to teach students the basics of traditional subjects, he suggested schools would have to place greater emphasis on how those subjects would relate to the work world.

I ask you, is that a new direction in your view, that the Department of Education or the concept of your government is viewing education? Or was it in fact, being done in prior? I'll let you answer that and I may have some follow-up there.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, first of all, I want to assure the hon. member from Quill Lake that there is going to be no attempt on my part or this government's part, as long as I am Minister of Education, to have more interference in the running of school boards and school board affairs. I can assure you of that. As a matter of fact, I think that when I did speak to the trustees association, that that was the one point that I made abundantly clear. And philosophically, I just don't see that we can run the affairs of education from a central office in Regina, by a Minister of Education together with a Department of Education, as well as the people in the local areas can run their affairs. The people in Esterhazy and the people in Humboldt and the people in Moose Jaw and the people in the different parts of this province understand their issues, their local issues, and their educational needs much better than we do in the central office. And that is the basic principle that we will uphold.

In regard to many of the problems that have arisen in the 11 months that I have been Minister of Education, we have been very, very careful to respect, to completely respect the jurisdiction of the local school boards.

Now, with regard to your question about the changing emphasis of making our curriculum and our school programs more related to the working world, I can see some benefits for doing some of that. But, as I mentioned to you I think, when you asked the first question about last year's estimates . . . I think you posed that question to me: what was my thinking about education – philosophy of it?

I believe that education should have a balance, that there should be a basic core of education. And around that basic core, where you have your skills in mathematics and in English and in social studies, around that you build some very, very important components, such as physical development, such as aesthetic development, vocational training and many, many other kinds of things, including a good basic philosophy of life.

Now, one of those components is this thing that we call vocational training. I see nothing wrong with us giving maximum advantage to our students who, at the same as they are taking this basic core of education with a balanced approach to the overall development educationally, to at the same time learn something that is going to be of value to them and give them a head start insofar as job opportunities are concerned.

That is what is meant by the Premier when he makes a statement like you had mentioned, and that is what I concur with.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, basically what I hear from the minister, that there is likely, under your stewardship, a changing of direction or emphasis within the educational system from what was there before. Is that correct? Are you changing the emphasis as suggested by the Premier, that will in fact be more related to the work world? Is that the direction in which the educational emphasis is being directed?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — No, not exactly the way that you said that, but more in terms of making students more aware of what opportunities there are vocationally, more in terms of career counselling and orienting them towards the opportunities that are available, so that they can do some degree of exploration during the time that they are

taking their secondary education. That's what it really amounts to.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I just want to indicate to the minister that there would appear to be some change in emphasis in respect to the educational system. And what I would like to indicate is that: to what extent has he had consultation with the various interest groups in developing this change of emphasis? And the reason I ask you, Mr. Minister, is that there would appear to be a fair amount of different views in respect to the present educational system.

We hear the pluses and the minuses of the public school system discussed by a panel, and Bill Hawrylak, vice-chairman of Regina school board education, said:

The current school system is adequate. Schools must meet the needs of a wide variety of students: thus they cannot always provide for wants of special interest groups.

That's his.

I read over here where a Wayne Zimmer makes a comment. He's a parent involved in the special children education, and he said that:

The public school system wrongly emphasizes the kind of school built and the amount of information taught, rather than emphasizing values. The value system is basic to developing a thinking individual (Zimmer said). The smaller classrooms in an alternative school offer students the necessary individual attention, which creates independent thinking leaders rather than followers.

I think just reading a couple of those statements, we have certainly a variation of opinions in respect to where the educational system is at today and the evaluation of that system. And so what I'm asking you is: if you are really launching off on this here new course, apart and different from what we had traditionally established in Saskatchewan, which I say was well received and respected, I ask you, have you done a thorough communication with the various groups — the universities, the teachers, the trustees, and the various boards across the province? Because certainly here there is a wide divergence of opinions and, accordingly, I ask you: to what extent have you had meaningful discussions on launching your new economic order and tying education to the open for business philosophy?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, yes, I think that we've had ongoing communication with most of the groups that the hon. member has made reference to, and I speak about the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; I speak about the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. Through our department we have program development committees, and we have ongoing consultations with the major players in the area of education, constantly.

In addition to that, I could point out that it was our decision to continue with the review of the whole curriculum of Saskatchewan, with the idea of trying to arrive at what the goals should be, whether we were attaining these goals or not, what were the shortfalls or the short comings up to this particular time, and giving as much as possible public input into determining where we should be heading in the future is concerned. We will be listening, we will be listening to what the people have had to say, and sometime in

September of this coming year the report should be ready to be passed on to the minister, following which time we will make some decisions with regard to directions in education.

Mr. Koskie: — I would like to ask the minister a specific question and that is: what single most important contribution, in your view, could the government make to guaranteeing a well-run educational system in this province?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — I would say – and maybe it's not a very good answer, because there are a lot of things that come into my head when you ask that question – but I would say, honestly. I think the most important thing would be to listen, to listen, because education is everyone's business. And as far as it is humanly possible, to try to accommodate as many people as it is possible to accommodate.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I think that is a legitimate answer. I guess I go to the second most important, and I'll give you a hint, that it seems to me that in order to run a strong educational system in the province, one of the primary dependency is funding from the provincial government. It seems to me that that is very important, and with sufficient funds, I think that the guidance of the educational system will be very well handled by the local autonomy within the school boards, school division boards and the local boards.

While the province can listen, it seems to me that listening without being able to put sufficient funds into the system becomes rather a hollow action on behalf of the government. And I guess I want to get to the crux of the estimates, and while we hear a lot of rhetoric again from this government about education being a major corner-stone in the new utopia that we are being offered in this province with open to business, I ask you, from what you have indicated – your commitment to education – I specifically then say: why such a meagre amount of funding in respect to the operating grants throughout Saskatchewan? I think that no one can legitimately say that they are whole-heartedly supporting the educational system, and at the same time cutting back the funding, the like of which has never been seen in this province to the extent of this budget that was brought down.

And so, I want to get into this question, but I really want sort of a statement by the minister that you can't have it both ways – that you're supporting education, you want to see the growth of education, and at the same time you're cutting back the funding for operating grants. And I want to say that throughout this province the impact of those cuts are being felt and we'll get into that. And I want a general statement of how you can try to justify your government's strong support of education, and at the same time, undermine it as you have with this here meagre funding base that you've provided to the schools.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll try and keep this answer short, but about the best way that I can respond to your question with regard to funding, or financing, is, it is a fact that the grants that we gave in education, that is from K to 12, were 7 per cent, which is more than the overall government expenditures, and that indicated putting education on a high priority. I could remind the hon. member that this was not the case in the number of years prior to the time that we became the government, because in the early '70s the percentage was 33 per cent and it declined to 22 per cent by 1982.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I want to elucidate on sort of the history of school grants and the property improvement grants, which was initiated by the New Democratic Party.

I want to say that it was the policy of the New Democratic government to provide the school system and the educational services of highest quality. This was done in encouraging and supporting locally elected school boards, and particularly by providing substantial increases in direct operating grants to schools; by providing significant property tax relief to ratepayers, through the increases in the property improvement grants; by providing appropriate capital assistance; providing leadership and development assistance in services from the Department of Education in staff; providing leadership and substantial support for the special education needs in the North; providing special programs and funds for those urban school boards with special problems. And I want to also say that in the grant structure we provided special assistance to rural schools which had declining enrolments.

And if one looks at the historical record, it bears out these policies of the previous government's support to education. From 1971 to 1981, the CPI rose in Saskatchewan by 135 per cent. And during that same period, 1970-71 to 1980-81, operating grants to schools, exclusive of those in the North, increased by 218 percent. Moreover, during our term of office, local property tax payers were further assisted by a steady pattern of increases in the property improvement grants.

And thus, from 1970-71 to '80-81, while inflation increased 135 per cent, the combined total of school grants and PIG (property improvement grant) grants increased by 253 per cent – just about double the rate of inflation. And I want to say that whereas school grants and the PIG grants combined accounted for 57 per cent of the school expenditures in 1970-71 – 57 per cent – I want to say that they climbed in the last year we were government, in 1981-82, to over 70 per cent of the school expenditures.

And so what you have, I think, is an obvious history here of the previous government putting up the dollars to support the growth of education. And I want to say that what you have done here is to transfer the educational costs and shifted the educational costs to the local municipalities. I want to ask the minister how, in fact, when over the 10-year period we had annual increases on the average of over 13 per cent over the 10 years, we get a Tory government, and the first year they come into office, 7 per cent of less? And as a consequence what has happened is that there's been a massive shift of the cost of education to the local municipalities. And I want to say, I want to ask the minister: how can he demonstrate to the people of Saskatchewan his concern for education when he doesn't even come close to the record of the previous government's commitment to education?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, once again I'll try and keep this short; but once again, I would try to refer to some of the facts. First of all, I think that the hon. member is being very selective when he's picking out certain years that he's using to advantage. Once again I would remind him that if this was such a high priority for the previous government, why on earth did the share of the provincial budget decline for education, spent on education, why did it decline from 33 per cent in 1972 – from the early 1970s – to 22 per cent in 1982? That doesn't make sense, if you placed education on such a high priority. And, also, that the grants in 1978 covered 56.7 per cent of the cost of education – the provincial grants. By 1982, they were down to 52 per cent – 52 per cent, sir. So I don't know where you're getting your ideas about having put education on such a high priority. And this, I want to remind you, is during times of economic prosperity.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to agree with one thing that the minister indicated – that Tory times are hard times. I agree with that. And there were good times and sufficient funds for education under the New Democratic government. I want to say in respect to student-teacher ratio, from 1970-71 to 1980-81 there was an 18 per cent reduction in the number of students, and an overall increase in the number of teachers. Thus, in 1970-71 there were almost 22 students per teacher. In 1980-81 under the last administration, the NDP government, we had reduced this to approximately 17 students per teacher.

In respect to grants per student, the positive financial effect of these policies can be demonstrated by these figures, I say to the Minister of Social Services. The CPI increased by 135 per cent from '71 to '81. School grants increased by 218 per cent – same time frame. And grants per student increased by 277 per cent from 1971 to '81.

And I want to say that the record is there, that the previous administration committed dollars to provide a sound educational system here. Unfortunately, Mr. Minister, what has happened under your stewardship is that the funding of the province has gone down, with the consequences of local municipalities having to pick up the deficits. As a consequence, I suspect that there will be indeed a deterioration of the educational services, because, many of the local school boards in order to try to cut their budgets, many of them are operating at 9, 9.5 per cent, and certainly in the cities here they've demonstrated that to you. They can't, without cutting massively the services, keep it under 9 per cent, but still you give them only a miserable 7 per cent. And so what I want to say is: how can you legitimately indicate that you have education as a corner-stone to the development of this province when indeed you are moving in the opposite direction with the outstanding record of the government that predeceased this Tory government?

And I want also to say one other thing. Yes, there was good economic times when we were here, but it wasn't just luck, it was by the actions of the government. And today we find ourselves in one of the . . . and sliding fast in every area that this government touches. We are sliding downhill in resource development. In the operation of the crown corporations, they're in a state of a mess. And so what I want to ask you is: try to tell us here today how you could defend such a miserable increase and a cut-back of services in teachers from the educational system in a time when you're saying that you have to expand it. There are no jobs, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister. Many young people are out of jobs. And if you look at universities, and you look at high schools, people, rather than going out into the work-force, are continuing their education and preparing themselves for the future when we do get an economic recovery, probably under new government.

But I ask you . . . I think that you really have to try to justify why you are transferring so much of the cost over to the municipalities and why you are not concerned that as a result of the transfer you're going to be cutting services.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I'm having a little difficulty in understanding how we are the bad guys in transferring so much of the burden on to the local school boards. All you have to do is take a look at what the previous government did with regard to the sudden escalation of mill rates. Go back one or two years, and in 1981 the mill rate went up 15.9 per cent in rural and 9.6 per cent in urban – throughout the province, 12.9 per cent. And, you know, that's kind of an indication of how much pressure is being applied to school boards.

In 1982, the mill rate went up: rural, 18 per cent; urban, 16.9 per cent; an average of 17.5 per cent provincially. This year, under this government, the mill rates went up: rural, 6.8 per cent; urban, 9 per cent; provincially, 7.7 per cent.

An Hon. Member: — Quite a difference there.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, a decline of over 10 per cent from the previous year, or 10 mills, I'm sorry.

Mr. Koskie: — First of all, two things that he doesn't take into account. One is that the inflation rate and the interest rates during the '80-81 were at the highest this country has ever witnessed, and the inflation rate has indeed come down. But here, Mr. Minister, you're bragging about your funding. The separate school board may raise tax 27 per cent. The provincial grant to the separate system will grow by only \$139,000 in 1983, an increase of about 1 per cent from last year. Now they have doctored around and worked around, and then you may come back and say that they haven't had to go that high. But what I'm saying to you is that if the rates haven't been increased, that many of the . . . What has happened is that surpluses that have been built up are being absorbed in maintaining a reduced tax rate.

For you to stand up and indicate that services aren't being cut . . . I want to read here from L. Hicks, with her tongue firmly in cheek, said:

This year's provincial grant was not divine at all. In addition to drawing on their reserve funds, trustees cut some planned spending to keep mill rate increases as low as possible. Some repairs to older schools, acquisition of playground equipment, development of new programs have been deferred.

This is the statement of responsible people running the public school board here in Regina. And how can you say that your funding is maintaining the divisions? I can indicate further to the minister that the provincial budget raises serious concerns about the loss of teaching jobs and pupil services, especially in rural areas.

Mel Lofstrom, general secretary of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, said Wednesday:

Lofstrom told the federation's annual meeting that the level of provincial grants announced last week will force some school boards to reduce the number of specialists they employ, either cutting existing programs or staff.

That's the direction that you're going. And I want to ask the minister: are you denying that as a result of your miserable funding to the school boards that there will not in fact be cut-backs in services, in repairs, and also that there will not be a savage decrease in respect to the number of teachers that are let go because of the reduced funding? You know it very well. Just admit it and we'll get on.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, once again I think that the hon. member from the Quill Lakes is being selective. He's picking out this and that and so forth but he's not taking a look at the overall picture, as far as financial condition is concerned, of the school boards. And I might cite some statistics of my own here. I have here a list of the mill rates that were assessed in 1982, and then the mill rates and what impact our budget had upon those same divisions: Arcola, 1982 – 17 mills, 1983 – 2 mills; Assiniboia, 1982 – 20 mills, 1983 – 3 mills; Battlefords, 1982 – 22 mills, 1983 – 5

mills; Battlefords, 1982 – 12 mills, 1983 – 5 mills. I'm sorry. The first one there should have read Battle River and the second one Battlefords. Estevan, 1982 – 20 mills, 1983 – 6 mills. I'm sorry that should read Eston-Elrose. Estevan, 1982 – 16 mills, 1983 – 2 mills. Humboldt school district 47, 1982 – 9 mills, 1983 – 4 mills. Kamsack, 1982 – 16 mills, 1983 – 6 mills. Kindersley . . . Kerrobert, sorry, 1982 – 13 mills, 1983 – 5 mills.

It goes on and on and on. And you make reference to one school board complaining, and right below that article, Moose Jaw trustees say they are proud of the mill rate. They're proud of it.

The ratepayers will be asked for 6.1 per cent more money this year to operated Moose Jaw public schools. Trustees were in a self-congratulatory mood Thursday as they set a new tax rate showing one of the lowest increases in recent history.

Saskatoon – 5.9 per cent. You know, you can go on and on and on.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, you can go on and on and on and I imagine that you're hearing a fair number of the school boards contacting you. I want to say in respect to the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You got a problem?

The hour of reckoning has come and gone for the Regina tax payers, with city council and two school boards last week setting their 1983 mill rates. Again, it is the school board pointing an accusing finger at the provincial government for grant cut-backs that led the pack by imposing an 8.97 per cent, 11 mill level of increase. The city has kept the municipal portion of the tax tab increased to 7.75 recommended by the administration in its preliminary operating budget presented to the council last month. The combined effect of all of this, along with the library levy, is to raise Regina's tax rate between 23 and 24 mills.

That's what your great funding has done, Mr. Minister. And I want to say that I ask you: will you stand up here and indicate and deny that there will not be a large number of teachers lose their positions because of a decrease in funding? Will you predict that there'll be no teachers losing their jobs?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, first of all I would like to address myself to the statistics and the information that you gave about the Regina Public School Board, was it?

Now, once again, if you'd be careful to listen to the facts, the Regina Public School Board received a grant increase of \$2.2 million over 1982, which represents an 8.32 per cent increase. Now in time of recession I think that's pretty darn good. Now, what they chose to do . . . If they chose to go ahead and spend more money, more local money, then that's up to them, you see, because perhaps they weren't as concerned about their responsibility to look after the inflationary process.

Mr. Koskie: — I ask you a specific question, Mr. Minister: can you assure and guarantee to this House that as a result of your lack of funding whether or not, indeed, many teachers will not lose their employment?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, I think that the member knows very, very well that those decisions are not made by the Minister of Education. They are made by school boards.

Mr. Koskie: — I know that very well, Mr. Minister, and you know what I'm getting at. Part of the need for the reduction in teaching staff is a result of a lack of provincial funding. And what I want to say, generally here, is that the funding has been cut back substantially, that the costs have had to be absorbed. Many of the municipalities, what they have done in order to keep the mill rate at a reasonable level at this time — in this tough, Tory times — is that they have gone to the reserve funds, and you know that as well as I do. So for you to stand up and say that, you know, the mill rate is such and such for a given area, you don't address the entire subject matter because in fact . . . For instance, in Regina, what they have done is certainly go to the reserve fund, and to decrease the amount that the rate would have to be increased.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I just want to reiterate what I did say, that the Regina Public School Board, which the hon. member used as an example, got \$2.2 million increase this year, which represents an 8.32 per cent increase over last year . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the point is, I think that they were pretty well treated, and as a matter of fact, my officials tell me at the Department of Education — and these are by and large the same officials who were there under the previous government for years — they tell me that they've had less complaining from school boards this year than in perhaps any other year.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, big deal, less complaining. I mean, there's not much use of complaining to a government that is bankrupt. I mean, you're \$537 million in the red. There's not much use coming to a government that can't even support and pay for the programs as we were doing in the past. We had balanced budgets all the time during the course of our operation, and now you have a government that has no money. Obviously who's going to pick it up is the local school boards, because what would be the use of coming to you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you have a deficit of \$537 million in less than a year's operation.

What I want to indicate is that Mel Lofstrom, the general secretary of the STF, has indicated his concern with the loss of teaching positions. You aren't prepared to indicate or, apparently, to appraise the impact of this, and obviously are shifting the consequences of teacher cuts onto the local division. I'm asking you: have you no concern that a massive cut in the number of school teachers and the cut in services which are being proposed by some of the school boards, is this not in fact a concern to you?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, yes, I would be concerned about massive cuts as far as staff or teachers are concerned, but I don't see that that is necessarily forthcoming, as you indicate. What I see is that where there is declining enrolments it dictates that there should be a cut in staff, or else you've got people who really, in effect, haven't got a job to do.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, in respect to the funding in a declining enrolment problem in rural Saskatchewan, has the grant previously, the grant formula previously, made some allowances to help them to maintain a reasonable level of funding? And what I want to ask the minister is: has he in fact, in essence, made a modification in the general formula for providing and determining the grants which will give some extra funding to the rural schools? One of the major concerns that I receive is in respect, while there may be some declining enrolment, that the costs do not necessarily go down proportionately. I know in the past we did have a system which would in fact provide further finding to the rural school divisions.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, my officials will look up the information, but as I remember we have increased that factor – the small schools factor – which I think is what you're talking about. We have increased the small schools factor, that this year we've extended it to division 1 and 2, so that we've actually in the overall we've increased it by 47 per cent. Is that right? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 47 per cent, to look after those problems that are peculiar particularly to the rural areas.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Minister. And it was a concern, as I indicate, to a large number of rural schools. And, as I said, we introduced that change, and I'm glad that you've carried on at least in some extent the wise policies that we initiated in the past.

I just want to say in another area, which is not directly related to your department, that part of the method of ways in which we helped to support it (the educational cost) was by the increase in the property improvements grant. And you know very well that in the 1981-82 budget, the last budget, '82-83 I guess, that we introduced in March, that there was to be a substantial increase of property improvement grants which would help to alleviate at the bottom. I just want to say that I'm disappointed also that in support of the funding of education in Saskatchewan, which is primarily through the local tax base and provincial funding, that one of the ways that we did help to alleviate the rising property taxes was to increase the property improvement grants. Regrettably, one of the actions of the Tory government in getting into office was not to give the total grants as we had proposed to apply to all citizens who are paying taxes. And we had done consistently throughout our term – as education costs rose, we increased the property improvement grants.

I want to ask: in respect to the student population, has your department done any analysis as to the likely student population for the coming year and for the next five years?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, in regard to enrolment declines, my officials tell me, according to their analysis, that the enrolment decline has started to level off, particularly in the urban areas. An example of that is that in Saskatoon that the enrolment is actually increasing. And as far as the rural areas are concerned, the main problem as far as decline in enrolment is concerned is at the high school level. They project that even there, at the high school level, that enrolment should stabilize in the next three or four years.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, the former administration had initiated some very significant programs in northern Saskatchewan, and they had demonstrated quite a significant commitment to northern people in terms of education. I'll just name a few here as an example. The former administration had earmarked \$42 million for school capital projects, the inclusion of eight new schools in communities that had never before been served by such facilities. And also, it established a northern teacher training program. Thirdly, they initiated the successful establishment of community colleges in northern Saskatchewan.

I wondered, Mr. Minister, at this point in time, what your administration is proposing to do with those three areas. What is your government's commitment and policy with respect to those programs?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, in reply to the member from Cumberland, perhaps I could just give a very brief overview, and that might be satisfactory. If not, I would zero in on specifics, as he chooses.

But, first of all, the La Ronge office and the staff in La Ronge were retained so that the northern concerns in the province could be reflected in any decisions that are made by our department. Although the federal government has not made a commitment as far as the regional economic expansion to . . . I'm sorry. The Department of Regional Economic Expansion has not made a commitment to extend the Northlands agreement. Nevertheless, our department has decided to continue the payment of the northern educational opportunities grant. We also have agreed to continue and to support the northern teacher education program known as NORTEP, and have actually expanded this program to a four-year program. We are presently looking for expansion of that program by finding more accommodation for the officials, and for the office complex, and using a building called the upper Atco building in La Ronge as a classroom-library-administrative complex, so that we could convert the present NORTEP building into a student residence facility.

And then, as far as the curriculum is concerned, we have retained the northern curriculum development personnel, and we have added support from our own department to give further support to curriculum development.

As far as special education is concerned, we have retained support personnel, and we have supplemented this personnel by giving additional office staff assistance through our department.

We have taken up the issue of construction of teacherages in northern Saskatchewan where it is necessary to have teacherages in order to attract quality teachers, and a plan is being discussed with the school boards in northern Saskatchewan to allow these items, perhaps, even to be recognized as expenditures in the foundation grants formula.

We have been in discussion with the people of Uranium City, the officials of Uranium City, with the hope of addressing ourselves to the issues as they arise in that city.

And we have a unit for planning of our facilities located in Prince Albert, and we're looking to giving the school boards in northern Saskatchewan the same degree of autonomy and responsibility as we have given to the boards of education in all the rest of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, getting down to specifics in terms of the existing NORTEP (northern teacher education program) facility in La Ronge, Mr. Minister, I noted that you mentioned some facility in your presentation, and I couldn't quite grasp what the intent of that suggestion was. But in getting back to specifics, in terms of the existing NORTEP facilities, was there any new plans to provide a new facility for the group? Was your suggestion indicating that you will proceed with the new facility for the people that are currently taking studies, or are you suggesting that that existing facility will be renovated shortly?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, what I indicated was that we are looking at the existing facility (and this is just in the consulting stage right now with the officials in the La Ronge area), to be that that present facility to become a student residence, and that we would have the library and the classroom and the administration part in another

building. That's what we're looking at at the present time.

Mr. Yew: — With respect to another specific topic, Mr. Minister, I raised a question with the minister responsible for northern Saskatchewan the other day, and the question was then again referred to the Department of Education, and at this point in time I'd like to raise the question of the North East Community College facility. It was my understanding, and still is my understanding, that the area residents had proposed through the board to have this facility built in Sandy Bay. But I understand now that that has been changed. The directive now is to establish this new facility in Creighton. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, at this point in time, if you can elaborate on the circumstances leading to that?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I could answer that question. Community colleges does come under Advanced Education and Manpower, I could ask it at that time, or I could try to give you a very brief answer right now.

Actually, there's Sandy Bay and Creighton and the other location that was being considered — Cumberland, that's right. So, you see, the community colleges are run by community college boards. And so there are seven members on the boards. There are, as I recall from memory now, there are two from Creighton on that board; one from Deschambault; one from Pelican Narrows; one from Sandy Bay, and . . . Okay, I forgot the other. But this board met and they had representatives (what I'm trying to point out is from the different geographic areas there), and this board met and made the decision that instead of the administration office and headquarters being at Sandy Bay, that it would be better located at Creighton because of cost-efficiency and because of servicing to the area. And they had a meeting and the decision wasn't made in the first time that they met, and then in the second meeting they had the vote, and they voted 6 to 1 in favour of that, and they sent the report in to our office, and that is what I remember of it. I'd be pleased to make that report available. I have a copy of it, and I'd be pleased to make that report available to you if you want to see the details of the report.

Mr. Yew: — With respect, Mr. Minister, to the question that I just raised, I'd be pleased to receive a copy of such report. I was a bit concerned because my understanding initially was that the original board has proposed to establish such a facility at a centralized community, as well taking into consideration that that community lacked . . . a very low economic base aside from being centralized, and the fact that it was easier access to the surrounding communities. But anyway, I'll get on with the other questions.

With respect, Mr. Minister, to the bursary program in northern Saskatchewan, there was brought by the former government, I believe, a recognition that the North had very special educational needs. I wonder, Mr. Minister, at this point in time, if you could relate to us whether or not you will be placing special emphasis with regards to your bursary program for northern Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, could I ask the hon. member if . . . Are you referring to the NORTEP (northern teacher education program) bursary, or bursaries generally for students coming from northern Saskatchewan?

Mr. Yew: — That's right. Students coming in from northern Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, that fits into the area of continuing education, but we certainly are going to be giving special consideration to those people who need special

support. They will be treated on the same basis as all other students in this province, as far as the base is concerned. But then, in addition, we've written into it the opportunity to deal with people who need special support, and that would include students from northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Yew: — In last estimates, Mr. Minister, you provided to us – and I want to commend you for it . . . You know it's quite confusing for us in northern Saskatchewan to try to define clearly what your government's objectives and policies are with respect to various program areas, and specifically speaking with respect to educational needs and program objectives. You supplied to me at the last estimates, a copy of program allotments in terms of funding – money allotted for adult basic education, basic skill training development, learning centre, northern careers program, native outfitters, the trapper training program and finally, the program funding allotments for the community colleges.

I wonder, at this point in time, Mr. Minister, if I could ask you for your program array in terms of dollars and cents for these various programs in northern Saskatchewan – if you could provide that to us – so that we, at this side of the House can relate this information to the people of northern Saskatchewan with respect to these various programs.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, yes, I'd be pleased to make that information available to the hon. member. Once again, it is in the area of Advanced Education, and if it's in order, perhaps we could wait until that time and I could make that information available along with the others. But I've made note of it, and we'll make that information available to you as soon as possible.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, my question is regarding the school at La Loche that was burned down. And I wonder, could you indicate to the House at this time just how far the plans are, and when you could expect to start construction of that new addition?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, in reply to the hon. member from Athabasca, I can't give you word right now when it will go to tender. But right now, it's in the board's hands. They have commissioned an architect, and they are presently drawing plans for that school, so that precisely when it will go to tender, I'm not certain at this point.

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Minister, then plans are not complete then for the addition of this new school. Do you have plans or is it the department's plans to have that school out on tender and completed for September for the fall session?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, we have been dealing with the approvals as quickly as we possible can. There is no way that it would be completed for September of this year. What we would be hoping for is that it would be ready for opening in September of next year.

Mr. Thompson: — Well, Mr. Minister, this seems quite odd that that school was destroyed by fire approximately 18 months ago – going on two years. That is a facility that is needed in La Loche where we have a large number of students. It seems quite odd that you stand up in this House today and you indicate that that facility will not be available until September of 1984. I think that the priorities are in the wrong place. There's just no reason there. Maybe you should bring Batoni in from Alberta to build the

darn school, because you're going to build an 18,000-seat arena in Saskatoon in four months, and here we're waiting two and a half years to get a facility for education in northern Saskatchewan. I just think it's unfair that the department would not proceed at a faster rate with this facility in La Loche.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Having been in La Loche, I understand the degree of urgency that there is there. All that can I say is that we can't take credit for waiting for the two and a half years. Somebody should have been doing something about that prior to the time that we came on the scene. And as I said, we've just been around for 11-plus months, so that we can't really take the credit for that. I was rather surprised, closer to being shocked, that there wasn't something in place dealing with that prior to the time that I made my visit to La Loche to take a look at the facilities situation there.

Mr. Thompson: — That's fine, Mr. Chairman. You indicate that you were quite surprised that that school wasn't started when you took power, but you have to take credit for that. Your government has to take credit for that now. We were in the process of getting the architect to draw up the plans and put that school out for tender. It's your government that put the hold on it for a year. And, by your own admission, you stand up in the House and indicate that you were quite surprised that it wasn't under way when you took power. And I think that's an admission on your part, and you've also admitted that it is a needed facility. And, in closing, I would just say that somehow you put a red tag on this thing and get it going as fast as possible.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, I can assure the hon. member that is precisely what we have been doing, but it takes time. You know, we've got . . . Saskatoon has two schools which they say are urgently needed and Regina has two, and it just takes time for them to go through all the processes that have to happen. We've been trying to clear it away as quickly as possible, so that it doesn't get bogged down in red tape.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect to the capital grants, if you take a look at the 1982-83 NDP budget, DNS, the educational capital grants, was 6.4555 million; and education grants, capital, 13.112 million. So in 1982-83 under the proposed New Democratic Party government budget was \$19.567 million; that's what we were proposing for capital funding in 1982-83. In 1982-83 under your government, DNS was cut back to 4.313 million; and education, for the rest of the province, was maintained at 13.112 million. So there was a cut-back from 19.567 million to 17.42 million.

And what we find today in the '83-84 budget is there's all lumped together, and you have cut back still further to \$13.640 million. And what I am asking the minister: how can he justify having a cut from the 1982-83 NDP government budget of 19.5 all the way down to 13.6? You have cut it back from your '82-83, and you cut it back further in '83-84. If you have a commitment to education, why are you cutting the capital grants?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in regard to capital construction, maybe this indicates as quickly as anything would indicate what happens with school construction. It doesn't seem to have rhyme or reason, or at least it didn't have over the period of the last few years. It's up and down and here and all over the place, and the only way that I can explain this sudden escalation here it that it was an election year.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, why don't you give us the advantage of your insight, Mr. Minister, and indicate why you have cut back from '82-83 from 17 million to 13 million?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — You know, we could get into a lot of games here right now in

throwing things back and forth, but how come then, I could say to you, how come you cut back from '76-77 to '78-79? Look at the extent of the graph there on the decline. Why did you do that? You know, it's . . .

Mr. Koskie: — That's precisely the point. You have stood up here in your commitment to education and you have slashed the capital grants for education. What I would like to know is why you cut it back from 17.42 to 13.64. Obviously you don't intend to support education.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, we intend to support education. First of all, the \$17 million that was earmarked for capital construction by the previous government was done during the time of an election year, and they picked out spots and places — whatever it was — picked out all the places they could throughout the province to do the building. And this year we have picked those areas which are considered to be emergency areas, and we have put the others on hold, because it's a time of economic restraint, and responsible management dictates that that is what we should be doing. That's the only answer I can give you.

Mr. Koskie: — Tory cuts are called efficiency. Anybody else's cuts is inefficiency. I want to say, Mr. Minister, that the educational system is not very pleased with the amount of the drastic cut in the amount of the capital budget, from 17.42 in your first budget to 13.64. And that's a very substantial one.

And I would like, if the minister could provide us, a breakdown of all of the various capital expenditures which you are proposing in the year under review, '83-84, indicating a breakdown of the amount designated for each of the particular projects. Could you provide that information?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, we'll be pleased to provide that information.

Mr. Koskie: — I've heard that song before, and I'd just like . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Yeah, I know. I'd like to have it as soon as possible because we have had a lot of problems getting the information from this government. And in respect . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . We have, in respect to any notice of motion that they put on or any question, and in respect to the *Estimates*. So I'd appreciate it if the minister would provide that as soon as possible.

I want to turn to another peripheral issue, and that is the noon hour supervision. I want to say that there are a large number of school divisions that have written to you, Mr. Minister, have written to me, and are concerned in respect, or are requesting, and have requested, that you review The Education Act for the purposes of allowing the question of noon hour supervision in, to be a negotiable item in respect to negotiations with the teachers. As the minister will be aware there was a court case, I believe, in Moose Jaw and Tisdale, if I'm not mistaken. I just would like to know whether the minister can comment as to the direction that he and his department are proposing to go in respect to the question and the controversy over noon hour supervision.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, what we are doing is that we're proposing to maintain the same legislation that was in place when the previous government was in power. It is an issue that is to be bargained locally, and that's what we are maintaining.

Mr. Koskie: — The other question, Mr. Minister, is in respect to the destruction of SaskMedia by this government and the complete phasing out of it. I would like to ask

you: can you guarantee to the teachers of this province that you will be providing the same educational support that was done by SaskMedia before, and which I say many teachers in this province supported? And without consultation of any of the teachers of this province, and many of the school boards which endorsed the SaskMedia, this government ruthlessly, without consultation, destroyed it. And what I want to ask the minister: can he stand up here and give a guarantee that the so-called private-sector section are going to be providing the same type of services as was provided by SaskMedia and which was appreciated by the educational system in this province?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can assure the hon. member that we will be guaranteeing that all those services that were there before for education will continue to be there.

Mr. Koskie: — I would like the minister then, that he says ‘all the services which were there before,’ would he outline all of the services which he is including, indicate to us a detailed list of all of those services which he intends to provide?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, those services would include a film and tape library of educational programs; this is a service that’s offered free of charge to all Saskatchewan groups and residents. In addition, a tape duplication service for clients who wish to have their own copies of any of the programs in the library; also, a complete audio-visual production house, including an editing suite, studio, mobiles and operators, for the production of educational programs. The only significant changes as far as the educational sector is concerned is that there will no longer be producers and graphic artists on staff. The private sector producers and artists will be invited to produce all of the programs and the graphics for those programs in the future.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to turn to the issue of property tax. And as the minister will be aware, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities have passed a resolution indicating their support for the proposal that the property tax for support of education be essentially removed. I would like to indicate whether the minister has a position on this, and whether he has in fact had any discussions with that large body representing elected officials all across Saskatchewan in respect to their approval of the resolution supporting the removal of property tax.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, our position has been that we’re in favour of local autonomy, and that means that if we are that it goes without saying that those who have local autonomy must have some degree of fiscal responsibility. And so, in keeping with that principle, we have upheld the position that the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association has wanted us to uphold, or ahs favoured, I should say, and that is that the school division should have the opportunity of collecting money from the property tax. To complete the question, I suppose you were asking about whether I’d me with – would you mean by that SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities)? I have met with SUMA; I have not met to this date with SARM.

Mr. Koskie: — Is it the contention of the minister, or I understand his position, that adopting the position of SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) supporting the removal of property taxes as a funding mechanism for education as it is now, are you indicating that that, in fact, would of necessity remove the local autonomy of the local boards?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, I believe that there would be danger of that taking place. They

do need a tax source is the position that we have at the present time, and having said that, perhaps it's time that we took a look at the whole method of funding for education which would involve input from all of the people who end up paying for the cost of education. So it doesn't rule out the possibility that a change could occur, or should occur, in the next year or five years.

Mr. Koskie: — Shortly after you assumed office, one of the first actions that you took, and that was the elimination of the ward system for the schools. At that time you indicated to me that you would, while you acted I think in haste and destroyed what I think would have been a more democratic system, you did indicate that you had not entirely closed the door to the concept of a ward system. I would like to ask the minister if he could update us as to whether he has explore any further the possibility of having at least ward systems in the large cities. And I want to say that I have received letters from the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and other groups in Saskatoon, which indicated that it was really a very, very difficult time that the electorate had in voting in their school board because of the large number of individuals that are on a given ballot. And, obviously, that's what the previous government was attempting to resolve. I think we had resolved it in respect to the ward system being introduced to the municipalities, of the city election of councillors, and I guess I ask the minister: is he still following the directions of the Saskatchewan trustees association, or is he openly reviewing the possibility of a ward system?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in all honesty, no. For one thing, I suppose, I haven't taken the time to start a review, personally, on my own, but also I would say this: that I haven't received pressure from people, from groups or individuals, since that time, to do so. Yes, I am open to something that would be an improvement, but I felt rather than that we had acted in haste, as you had indicated, that the previous government had acted in haste. And this is what we were told, particularly by the school boards concerned, and that was the reason that we rescinded that legislation at that time.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, it's heart-warming to find that the minister apparently will only look at matters which are raised to his attention by a particular group, because that's apparently what he says. But I expect that the ward system will have to obviously await the return of the election of a new government in three year's time.

I want to ask the minister if he could indicate whether the number of possible school closures for the coming year . . . Are there any intended closures of schools?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, our list indicates that there are nine pending.

Mr. Koskie: — Could the minister provide me with information – it doesn't have to be now – as to the particular schools that are pending closing?

I want to . . . Mr. Minister, we've got the member from Moosomin talking from his seat again. No one listens to him – the windmill.

In respect to your personal staff, have you added any additions to your personal staff?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I assume that means in the minister's office? No, not since the previous estimates.

Mr. Koskie: — You have a Bill Barry as a special assistant and the last information was that he was paid, I believe, \$50,000 a year. Has there been any increase in Mr. Barry's salary since you provided the information before, and is \$50,000 correct?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, I think it's continuing education that he's assigned to, but there hasn't been an increase in his salary, no.

Mr. Koskie: — Okay. You have also a Ron Mitchell which is a special assistant. Could you indicate the salary of Ron Mitchell?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, his salary is \$50,000.

Mr. Koskie: — And you have a Marilyn Rice, EA, constituency. We would be pleased to know the salary of your EA doing your constituency work.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Her salary, Mr. Chairman, is \$35,000.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to, Mr. Minister, turn to a number of items, and I think we can just run through them faster rather than going from item to item. But there's a number of them that I am concerned with, and in the area of policy planning and special projects and program development. I am particularly concerned, Mr. Minister, that there certainly appears to be some de-emphasis in respect to the policy planning and program development. If I do an analysis of the . . . I know there has been a split there and a new subdivision, program development, I believe, but checking the figures it would appear that the overall expenditure has gone down somewhat, and I was just wondering whether you could explain the basic reason for the decrease.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the decrease has been . . . has not been great. WE did have a fairly heavy expenditure during the past year because of the work of the curriculum review committee, and although that work is still to be continued the expenditures will not be as heavy as they have been for this past year.

Mr. Koskie: — Also, in respect to consultative services, Mr. Minister, I note that there is a decrease in the size of the staff and a substantial decrease in the amount of funding. It seems to me that if you are cutting back on the consultative services that there's going to be felt throughout the educational system, but I'd like you to explain the major decrease in both staff and funding.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, this is an internal transfer that has taken place from the consultative division to the development division.

Mr. Koskie: — Similarly, in special education, although you're maintaining the same size of staff, I note that the total amount being spent has been decreased. I wonder, what are you trying to achieve by cutting other expenses, and what will be the impact in respect to those?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, there is a slight reduction in administration. The other factor is that there is one fewer students attending Brantford, Ontario. That accounts for the reduction in that area.

As far as special education is concerned, we have substantially increased it as far as grants are concerned.

Mr. Koskie: — The question of provincial superintendents came up previously. I would like to know the status in respect to Humboldt Rural School Division where there were complaints in respect to the heavy-handedness of the officials in the department, and also the Sturgis School Division, where they were less than impressed, Mr. Minister, with the way in which the department and presumably through your instructions, were in fact almost literally directing that there be a change from a provincial superintendent to a local director of education. Can you give me the status in respect to those particular units, because they have been in contact with me and I want to know whether they have been forces to comply or not?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, there wasn't heavy-handedness, as has been inferred by the hon. member. However, in regard to the Humboldt rural division, they have been notified that if they choose to use a provincially hired superintendent, they're free to do so, and I just assume that they are going to. As far as Sturgis is concerned, they have also been informed of that fact, but there is still a committee that is negotiating with regard to . . . They still haven't made up their mind one way or the other in Sturgis.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could send to me a complete list of all the grants to various schools in the province, separate and public, with the increases or decreases. I don't want that today, but if you would give me an assurance that you will send that to me.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, I can assure the member from Shaunavon that that will be forthcoming.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — As well, do you have any information compiled on the numbers of schools that would see a decrease and the number that would see an increase at this time, that you could give me off the top of your head?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Not off the top of my head, but I could provide you with that information when I give you the detail that you were asking for.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me how many schools in Regina at the present time — I understand that there are four that are closing at the present time — where there may be negotiations going on with the department as to whether or not they will close? Is four the number that there are closing at the present time?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's right. There are four, but they are not negotiating with the department at the present time. That is purely a local matter, and we leave it to the school boards involved.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I understand that there was a petition taken up in the Hillsdale area, and the reason that I'm aware of that is because, being a constituent of yours from time to time, I know that there were people knocking on my door and apparently they were going to present you with a petition. I wonder if you did receive a petition, and if in fact you have responded to that.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I did receive a petition. I did receive a request, first of all, to meet with the committee that was organizing the petition, and I did do that, following which time they presented a petition to me and asked for a reply, and I did give a reply to them, yes.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I think that what we are seeing in the province is a large number of school boards – and you will of course come back and say that it's a local responsibility and they will decide which schools they close and which teachers are laid off, but I think ultimately the responsibility of education lies with the Department of Education and the grant formula that you have. And here again, if you are saying the grant formula is the same that we used, it seems that there are problems that are arising now with the school closures and staff lay-offs that weren't around when we were in government.

And if the formula is not working in the best interest of the school units and the schools, then I would recommend that you very quickly set in place another structure that will see the abatement of closures and staff lay-offs, in particular in rural schools. I know a number of K to 12 schools which are relatively small schools, and I suppose you can use places like Admiral, Saskatchewan, where they are facing very, very tough decisions as to whether or not to lay off staff, or cut programs. And I think either way you look at I the student in those rural schools, when they graduate, if in fact they do, and come to the universities, face a very difficult time.

And I would encourage you to use the powers that you have to see that the proper funding will come into place in the next budget cycle, which I don't think was there this time. Many of them may be able to survive one devastation like that, but another one . . . I think we will see a large number of staff laid off and a large number of small schools closed in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I think the very basis of many of those communities is the school. If you allow them to close, and if you allow staff to be cut, you start the process of the death of many communities. And I would encourage you to look very closely at getting the funding that those rural communities need, that those rural schools need.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the member from Shaunavon for his advice, and I concur with him completely. It isn't a thing that has just happened this particular year. It has been a thing that has been happening and escalating. And I would agree with him that I think it's something that's going to continue to escalate as far as a real problem and a real concern is concerned. And as a matter of fact, what we have been doing over the past three to four months is discussing this with different groups who have vested interests in this. And, as a matter of fact, I've asked my deputy, Mr. Ray Clayton, to formally to get in touch with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and we're going to be sitting down and trying to, not overhaul necessarily, but review the foundation grant structure and the different kinds of factors that have been built into it. Because I agree with you that sometimes things just . . . Circumstances change, conditions change, which warrant a review of something that's as important as our equalization formula is. So, we certainly do plan on going through – not just going through that exercise, but perhaps if there are ways that we can improve and try to do the maximum amount of good for the maximum number of children.

As far as the dealing with it specifically this year is concerned, it's part and parcel of the small schools factors, and we have increased that by something like 47 per cent, as I recall, for this particular year. But it's still a problem and we're still going to be looking at it in the context of what you have said.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect to the superintendents item – item 11 for your convenience – there's a sizeable decrease in the number of personal services, from 44.3 to 31.3. And could you advise me of the reason for the rather substantial decrease there?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, as an explanation, four of the superintendent positions have gone locally employed, and one small and private school superintendent and one other redundant position has been deleted. And that's the explanation for the decline in that amount.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, there's a decline from 31.3 to 44.3. I don't think that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, from 44.3 to 31.3. I don't think that you explained the full deletion of positions in respect to it.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, we had expected that it was probable that all the superintendents, or the divisions, would opt for locally employed superintendents, and so we took all the superintendent positions out of this particular subvote with the exception of two that deal with small schools and private schools. And so we budgeted this money for these superintendent positions in the grants formula, and so as it becomes clear exactly how many of these will opt for continuing provincial superintendents we will then transfer those moneys into the superintendent subvote.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, how many did you calculate or estimate would in fact be opting for a director from the provincial superintendency?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we had initially budgeted for all of them opting to go locally employed, but it looks as though there are going to be approximately six of them who will go locally employed.

Mr. Koskie: — If all were to go, as you budgeted for, how many would that be? I guess that's the question I'm asking.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — That would be 12.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect to the educational media services, a new subvote. I note that you have person-years, 33 there, Mr. Minister. And what I ask is: first of all, were any of these people that were employed, formerly employed by SaskMedia . . . of those 33?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, they all were.

Mr. Koskie: — You're saying all 33 of them, Mr. Minister? Okay, fine.

In respect to item 17 – and we're winding down here – to provide a net expenditure recovery from the Saskatchewan Book Bureau revolving fund (statutory), and this is a new innovation by the government opposite. As the Minister of Finance said, all accountability would be available and that we should, in the particular estimates, if we wish, to get a full disclosure of the nature of the revolving fund. And so what I am asking you is: can you give me the details and the breakdown of the purpose of that revolving fund in vote 17?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, if I could ask the hon. member: did you mean for me to send it to you, or to give it to you right now?

Mr. Koskie: — If you have it and can send it to me, that's fine, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — I'd be pleased to do that.

Mr. Koskie: — One other item that I mentioned just a short time ago . . . When we went through these *Estimates*, it seems that one almost overlaps the next estimates with this government. But in respect to the correspondence school, there was some significant increases in the fee schedule, and you indicated at that time it was an adjustment because they hadn't been increased since '57 or thereabouts. What I'm asking you: have you made any further adjustments so that the individual will be . . . so that you'll be passing on further of the costs to the individual taking correspondence courses?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — No, Mr. Chairman, we haven't made any further adjustments.

Mr. Koskie: — The grants to educational agencies and organizations . . . Here again I would appreciate if you would send me a copy of the breakdown of the particular grants to the educational agencies and organizations if you don't have that at the present time. Will you do that?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, I will do that.

Mr. Koskie: — There's only one other item that I want to raise, a concern which I have previously, and that is in respect to the grants to the schools. As I indicated, your grants that you're proposing to schools this year is down considerably from about 17 million last year. I want to say that that is of some considerable concern to the education community, that this government deems fit to reduce its commitment to providing an upgrading facilities in education.

I think what I want to say in closing, Mr. Minister, is that we have gone through the *Estimates*, a short time ago in January-February, and many of the questions I have received answers from. I doubt if they have changed in respect to school population and the number of teachers. I want to indicate that I have received many of the answers from you, and for that I thank you. It's somewhat unlike the Premier, who has not provided that information. So I think I want to thank you and your officials, and I think I have no further questions.

Mr. Yew: — Just a couple of brief questions, Mr. Minister. Is there any plans for the expansion of the school at Cumberland House?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, we have no specific plans at this moment, but our officials are up there at the present time, today, and they're meeting with regard to the overall needs in that particular area.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, I understand as well that there is a joint effort being made to construct a school at Wollaston Lake post. Could the minister provide to me some information as to what input the province will have in this respect in terms of funding and in terms of employment of people in the area?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, we are aware of the needs in Wollaston and the problem at the present time is that the federal government hasn't firmed up its decision and it's negotiated between the federal government and us. But they're the main player in regard to what happens at Wollaston. So it largely depends upon their decision-making.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Minister, in terms of that negotiation between the feds and the construction of that school, is the community of Pelican Narrows involved in some way with respect to the educational facility?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, Pelican Narrows is in the same category as Wollaston at the present time.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you very much. I have no further questions.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 13 inclusive agreed to.

Item 14

Mr. Yew: — Just a brief question here, Mr. Minister. In terms of the current dispute between the Northern Lights School Division and the federal government, is this portion in any way to be used to cover the interim expenses that are incurred by the school board?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — No, this is not to be used for that purpose. This is operating. This is not to be used for that purpose.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you very much.

Item 14 agreed to.

Items 15 to 22 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 8 agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:03 p.m.