

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 5, 1983

EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

LABOUR

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 20

Item 1

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Would the minister please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure to introduce my officials from the Department of Labour. And I'll start behind me. To the left is Mr. Don Goss, director of policy planning and research, and to his right is Mr. John Alderman, acting director of occupational health in the safety division. To my right Mr. Pat More, director of administrative services division, and behind him Mr. Mans Crozier, superintendent of pensions and to my immediate left Mr. Peter Grady, our deputy minister.

And before we start, Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to comment that we've had a very interesting year in our Department of Labour this year. And I would just like to commend and thank all the groups that came to see us, including the employees, the trade union groups, the management groups, for being very frank and expressing their interests; and everyone was very courteous and I want to publicly thank them for that kind of courtesy and respect that they did show our department. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Shillington: — I noticed, Mr. Minister, quite appropriately you didn't take long to thank those who have supported and been complimentary about your department, because there aren't a lot of them. Not a very large group.

Mr. Minister, I want to know, Mr. Minister, what happened to you. What happened to you on the way to the treasury board? I say, Mr. Minister, that your department came in for cuts as severe as any. The minister, I suppose, of consumer and corporate affairs has reason to be as ashamed as you, but no worse, no worse, Mr. Minister, I really want to know what it is. Are you people de-emphasizing the role of Labour, which has been by and large been one of supporting the working man or in some fashion are you making this more efficient? Like the minister of consumer and corporate affairs, who is getting the film classification board to watch two films at once and so be more efficient, have you instituted similar economies in your department?

I'm just going to quote, Mr. Minister, a couple of articles I've just picked out at random, out of a sheaf full of derogatory news reports. But I picked a couple at random off the top of the pile. *Leader-Post*, 31st of March, 1982.

An Hon. Member: — Dale Eisler.

Mr. Shillington: — It is not . . . It's editorial staff that wrote it, not of one of the reporters.

Spending by the Labour Department will drop 20 per cent to 9.6 million with a staff cut of 55.

I know that your response is going to be, 'But they all went to the minister of continuing education.' I say they didn't, because the answer isn't accurate. They didn't.

Another article, same date, March 31st: 'Tuesday's Budget Cut Deeply into the Department of Labour.'

Tuesday's provincial budget cut deeply into the Department of Labour, even if the recent government reorganization is taken into account.

The department's 1983-84 budget of 9.6 million was cut by \$2 million, or 17.24 per cent . . . Staff was cut by 55 positions or 18.33 per cent . . .

I say, Mr. Minister, that the cuts in percentage terms . . . I think it's fair to say that the cuts in percentage terms were higher in your department than in any. I think that's an accurate statement. I wonder, Mr. Minister, what that means to the working men and women of Saskatchewan. Does it mean that they can expect the Department of Labour to play a less supportive role? Is this part of the open for business philosophy — that you aren't going to hamstring business with all these petty regulations like labour standards and the other protection that working people have come to enjoy in this province? Is that what this budget means?

If it doesn't, if it's more efficiency, if you're getting them to watch two films at once, I'd appreciate knowing precisely where the efficiencies are going to take place, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the member opposite and all the working people of the province of Saskatchewan that they are not going to suffer any cuts in service. We have no intention of doing that whatsoever. In fact, we are going to improve it, and we are going to do it by — the member opposite mentioned it — through efficiencies. I think we are accomplishing that; in fact, I know we are accomplishing that already. The role of the department is going to be enhanced. We are working with an open-door concept. We've got the people, we've got the employers, the employees, the trade union leaders, and the groups coming in to see us. And as I said in my remarks, that we've had frank discussions. And as I said earlier, we have no intention whatsoever to cut any service for the employees in the work-force of this province. And as I said earlier, we're going to enhance that also.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, it's pleasant to hear about the increasing efficiency, but I really would appreciate some kind of detail. Is it your view that your department was overstaffed before this, and thus you can provide the same services with fewer staff? Is that what the minister is telling us?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, we've got fewer staff because we had not filled a lot of the positions that were designated as vacant positions. It's been that way for a

number of months.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, working men and women are painfully aware of that — that you've allowed positions, well, not allowed, but positions in your department have been frozen. That doesn't change the fact, Mr. Minister, that you have cut staff and you've cut the budget — the funding. And I say again, is it your view that you were overstaffed on May 8, 1983 when you took office. Is that your view?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate that we have not cut staff and as an example, positions in occupational health and safety included four positions for uranium which were never filled by your administration, one position of the mining engineer which had never been filled. It was there under your administration. A chief occupational medical officer which had not been filled for two years; six positions cut — they weren't cut, they never existed under your administration.

Mr. Shillington: — That's an interesting list, Mr. Minister. What about the other 51? I heard four names; you are short 55. Now, I know some went to Advanced Education . . . Manpower and Advanced Education or some such, whatever the member from Wascana's title of his department is. But surely you're not going to suggest that all 55 positions were vacant on May 8, 1983.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — 23 of our positions went over to continuing education; 16 positions went to PSC for a total of 39 positions which went across to the new departments that we were setting up. So these are . . . You can't consider them as being cuts.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to go on to a different issue. I want to deal with this issue in a more specific fashion. I want to deal with the transfer of the women's division and I want, Mr. Minister, to ask you about the reasons for that. I've recounted for your benefit, Mr. Minister, in the past the deplorable status of women in the economy in this country and again I'm picking some facts from a newspaper article, *Leader-Post* of April 27.

An Hon. Member: — What year?

Mr. Shillington: — 1983, for the benefit of the member from Rosthern.

Data from the 1981 census released earlier in the day (of the 27th) shows the average annual income of women was less than half that of men in 1980, despite gains made by women in the last decade.

And it goes on. The full-time employment of women over that decade had actually increased to 63.7 per cent from 59.9 per cent. Women are paid a fraction of what men are paid. They occupy the lowest echelons in society.

When I'm speaking I often use the example of a law office where the men are the lawyers and the women are the secretaries. That's the typical office . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I may say with respect to our office it is not. There are more women lawyers in my office than male lawyers. So mine is the exception. But I will tell you that that's the exception. That is the exception.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Let's keep on with the business at hand. We're getting straying off the topic.

Mr. Shillington: — The subject of the position of women in the economy is not off the subject, I submit, Mr. Chairman, although the exchange between the member from Rosthern and I may have been.

And the average law office is just so typical. Women occupy the lowest echelons of the economy. That means that their wages are a fraction of what men's are. Their unemployment rate is considerably higher — they're the first ones to go. They have by far the largest percentage of the minimum wage jobs.

I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that that problem is one that cries out for redress, and I ask you, Mr. Minister, about your callous disregard of that problem when you abolished the women's division.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, for 12 months, talking about our government and our open for business concept, I have stated at every speech that I've made that the women of this province are going to have a huge part to play in our industrial strategy — the thing that we're looking at to create jobs and get more people off minimum wage and so on. The women of this province are going to have a big part to play in that. The reason that the move was made in the reorganization was to enhance that position of the women of this province. And to give you an example, in the Department of Labour in 1982-83, the budget for the women's division was \$811,000. For '83-84, the Advanced Education budget was \$423,000 with a staff of eight. Public Service Commission — \$762,000, with a staff of 10.2. In Labour we still have two positions for \$63,000. If you add that up, we are committing \$1.2 million to the women's division this year in Saskatchewan as compared to \$811,000 last year, for a 54 per cent increase in funding.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you haven't committed anything to the advancement of women, because you've abolished the one positive instrument and division which was available to promote their interests, Mr. Minister, have you any idea at all why the abolition of the women's division has been the subject of such scathing criticism from virtually every women's group? Have you got any idea why they have been so critical of this move?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the answer is, we inherited a deplorable situation that the women's division was in in your administration of 11 years. If they were so important, why weren't you doing something about it? We feel that getting them and having them in the advanced education field to upgrade themselves . . . you've just finished stating that they were the biggest number on minimum wage. We intend to do that. And they are going to find out that the programs that we're coming with . . . You can ask the Minister of Education on a number of the programs that are coming to help the women of this province get into the work-force and into the positions that we will need them in to carry out our industrial strategy program.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, your response is typical of the problem with this government — is it's all platitudes and no specifics. It's all platitudes and no specifics. I noted that even the chamber of commerce, who I suspect are as solemnly behind this government as any group in society, said that at their recent chamber of commerce annual meeting that the problem with this government is it's all rhetoric; it's all slogans and there's no specifics . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Minister, I want to say to the two members that I know this minister is so weak that he needs all the assistance he can get. And I know that's what you two are trying to do, is to buttress up a weak

minister, but I tell you, you can't do it.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Order. Order. Order! It's very difficult to hear the member asking questions when we have a bunch of talking. So could we have order of that the member can ask his questions, and the minister can answer the questions and that we can get on with the point on hand?

Mr. Shillington: — I want to compliment the chairman on your ability . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Chairman, I accept your ruling on the talking of the House, that it is loud at times, but I would suggest also, Mr. Chairman that you make a ruling as to the members opposite sticking to the topic that is in front of them, and not wandering off in other directions.

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — The member was discussing the women's division which is part of Labour. He did mention a reference to the two members so that part would be not in order, and therefore, he should stick to the topic.

Mr. Shillington: — I was going to, Mr. Chairman, compliment you on the fine art of understatement when you describe their interjections as talking, but I guess that would be unparliamentary so I won't pass on the compliment to you.

Mr. Minister, the problem with your response, as has been the approach of this government, is the lack of any specifics. There's so much more women can be, and what you've said amounts to little more than that. Mr. Minister, the idea behind the women's division, which was pioneered in this province by the former administration, was that women's problems were such that we needed a specific division whose responsibility was to promote women within the economy, and that to disperse the services available to women through all of the departments would simply not work.

It's perhaps a specific application, Mr. Minister, of what Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said from the U.S. Supreme Court bench, and that is that: 'Equal laws applied to unequal people is a form of discrimination.' I say that to you, Mr. Minister, that when you apply programs equally to unequal people, that's a kind of discrimination. If they're to be as effective in dealing with women as they are in dealing with men, then they must be specifically targeted at women. And I ask you . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . I can just say to the member from Regina North you're very fortunate your constituents can't see you in the back row . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Mr. Chairman, it is extremely difficult to continue over the energetic interjections of the member from Regina North.

The difficulty, Mr. Minister, is that the philosophy behind the women's division and the reason why the objections to its abolition were so vehement is that it was a targeting on that problem and it was an effort to ensure that women didn't have to compete with men in the other areas of government. And that was the philosophy behind it. And I think, Mr. Minister, that that is why the objections to its abolition were so vehement. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you accept the concept of the need for a special division or section in government whose function it is to advance the interests of women in the economy.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the member opposite is suggesting that we should not be training our women. The reason that they're going over into the continuing education or the Advanced Education is to give them the skills

and the training and that, that we are going to need, and the technological changes that are coming in our business and in our society today. And the reason that we got some mail was that the women didn't understand what we are planning to do. We've got statistics up there — more areas are being targeted to women right now than they have been in the past. We've got more information now that the women in the province have got more jobs now than in the past, at least that they're starting to grow.

We are committed to the trend to upgrade, to be able to allow the industry in this province to grow, and as I said earlier, the women are going to have a big part to play in that.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'm unable to dispute your comment that more women are employed. But I can tell you with every assurance that if they are, they are employed at the lowest echelons in society. If there are more women employed, it is very likely to be at the minimum wage. And the solution which the former government adopted and which I may say, Mr. Minister, was . . . They say that imitation is the finest form of flattery. The women's division, and that concept was adopted in all other jurisdictions, and when we left office, every single provincial government in Canada had a women's division or an equivalent thereof. And I also want to suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that the women's division in Saskatchewan achieved a reputation for excellence in their work which was known throughout Canada.

You're now, Mr. Minister, in the unhappy position of being the only government in Canada among nine Conservative — and I don't know what time the polls close in B.C., but in a half an hour it'll be eight Conservative governments and two NDP — you're now in the position, Mr. Minister, of being the only government without . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I've got my bets made . . . without any specific division which targets itself at the problems that women face. Mr. Minister, this women's division achieved a reputation for excellence. The concept was followed by all other provincial governments. And I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, if you accept the concept of a special division which is targeted at promoting women in the economy.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, I should say, all I can do is say that just because there are women's divisions around the country in every province of Canada doesn't mean that the women's division in Saskatchewan needs to be the same. We are looking at it to be unique in Canada, that we are going to zero in on . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . That's your opinion. That's not our opinion. We have just made the transfer. You gentlemen across the way have not seen the programs that are going to be coming to assist the women in this province. And I agree with you that the women that are going into the work-force are the ones that are taking the lower paid salaries. We are going to change that. We are going to offer them the education and the opportunities to upgrade themselves to be able to get the better paying jobs in the province, and what better place to do it than through the Advanced Education department in our government?

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, the problem with the solution you just espoused is that it has been with us for a very long period of time and hasn't worked. I'm not going to ask the minister if he knows how long it has been since women were prohibited from attending schools in this country, but it is a very long period of time ago. Women have always been able to walk through the front door of educational institutes. The problem, Mr. Minister, is it hasn't worked and it's had long enough to prove itself — like several decades — and it doesn't work. Suggesting that all you've got to do is make the same opportunity available to women as is available to men doesn't work. It doesn't work with

women any more than it works with natives. And what the former government was attempting to do — and I suggest it was the proper approach — was the affirmative action program, the targeting of public employees and resources at a specific problem. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, for the umpteenth time, do you accept the idea of the need of a special division targeted at women? And please do not relate the fact that women can go to school. I know that. They have been able to go to school for some time. It's been a long time in the northern half of this continent since women have not been able to go to school — and frankly it hasn't changed their position very much.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to suggest to the member opposite that we have two areas now that are going to be assisting the women's division compared to your administration where you just had the one. And I'd like to just let you know what happened in 1982-83, after the change of administration in April.

Although the change of administration in April, 1982 has meant a hold on some areas of the management training program for women, the 23 government departments participating in the program continue to show commitment and support. A total of 64 women participated in the management training program, receiving approximately 650 days of training. Two series of lunches with the deputy minister were held in 1982-83 for women in the program.

This means, Mr. Chairman that we are concerned and we are working on that program. I'm sure that you will be very pleasantly surprised when that program gets announced, with the help of the women in the division to help plan the curriculum and the programs.

Mr. Shillington: — I suggest to you, when you said that women were annoyed when you did away with the women's division, you said the reason was because they didn't understand it. I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, those women understood a good deal better than you do, what that women's division was all about.

Mr. Minister, I just happened to pick up a document which flowed across my desk. As is the case of all members, I get a fair amount of paper . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not another leak, not another leak.

Mr. Shillington: — Another leak, another leak. This leak comes from the Legislative Library, and the leak is titled, 'Checklist of Saskatchewan Government Publications.' And that's the leak.

Mr. Minister, it contains a list of the publications put out by the women's division and I want to read these and then I want you to tell me who you think is going to put out this type of publication now. Because one of the reasons the women's division achieved excellence — achieved the reputation for excellence — was because of the high quality of some of the educational work they did, and the high quality of some of these publications (1) 'The A B C of What I Can Be: A Colouring and Activity Book for Kids About Careers'; (2) 'Adoption Leave/Paternity Leave'; (3) 'Did You Know?'; (4) 'Equal Pay for Similar Work'; (5) 'Guidelines for Affirmative Action'; (6) 'Life Options Workbook'; (7) 'Look out World, Here I Come'; (8) . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Well, the members think this is very funny. The members think this is very funny. I say that one of the problems, Mr. Minister, one of the problems that women have is the awareness that they have these opportunities available to them, and the publications to which I am referring, I suggest, were not apt and effective and we need more of them. We do

not need the derision of members opposite for the work that this department was doing.

I'm going to . . . (9) was 'Only She Who Attempts the Absurd Can Achieve the Impossible'; 'Resume Writing'; 'This is the Law: Legal Guide for Women'; 'Women Working: No One Ever Becomes More than She's Never Heard Of'; 'The Women's Division; We Work for our Women'; 'Working Women Have Babies, Take Leave and Go Back to Work: Life Goes On.'

Mr. Minister, I want to know who is going to do this educational work now. Who is going to do this educational work now? I suggest that much of that work will just simply die, much of the special work directed to advancing the awareness that women have of the opportunities available to them.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman I am not the minister in charge anymore of the women's division so it would suggest that you will have to ask the Hon. Minister of Education to find out what they are going to continue with and not continue with. I would suggest that if you look back to 1974 to present time when the women's division was established that they haven't had one penny increase in the average wage compared to the male over that period of time. And I understand that in public accounts when you had the human rights commission there that the member from Regina Centre said that the affirmative action program for women had not worked and admitted that their government had not done well either at getting women senior positions in government.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I hesitate to ask the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower because I will hear all about his . . . everything from the spring chickens to the number of telephone poles between Lloydminster and Maidstone and Yorkton.

Mr. Minister, I just want to ask you one more question about this and I think your record will speak for itself. I think, Mr. Minister, this government has made a number of minor mistakes which will probably not be remembered long. And you have made a few major mistakes and this is one of your major mistakes. I say to the member that the day when you can ignore women as a factor in our society and as a building block is long gone and I say, Mr. Minister, you are going to regret this.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, who you consulted before you did it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Listen, I would never, I would never allow politics to intrude on this discussion before the . . . I want to know, Mr. Minister, who you consulted before you abolished the women's division.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we can argue until midnight. And I don't agree with the member opposite that time will tell. I think time will tell what we are attempting to do will prove the results that we want to do.

There are three basic points that we are doing. We've already offered 300,000 more dollars into our budget to help the women's division. We are concentrating on education and training and the concentration on the PSC employees as far as the expansion of their work around Canada — we are enhancing all of that. And I absolutely don't agree with you that the women's division is going to be hurt by the moves that we have made.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'm interested in the comments of the minister. And Mr. Chairman, I want to address a question in respect to what he claims to be all of the improvements that he has introduced in respect and on behalf of the women of Saskatchewan. I want to ask him: what, in fact, was your method of consultation in arriving at this grand design which you have alluded in building a better environment for women?

Now, I want to say, Mr. Minister, we have been less than impressed, less than impressed with your comments to date. And I hope that you will indeed be able to answer, with some depth, this question. Otherwise, I suggest that perhaps what we should do is to turn the question over to your Legislative Secretary, the member from Turtleford. And indeed, if you want to decline answering this, I indeed, Mr. Chairman, as the Premier has said, that if we want to address a question to a Legislative Secretary, to get indeed an answer, I would prefer, if it's in order and this has been the standing rule, to address that question to the Legislative Secretary, the member from Turtleford . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — For a number of months there's been a reorganization, a cabinet reorganization planning committee. Out of that committee came a program which included the transfer of the women's division to the Advanced Education and the PSC area. We did that because we felt that it was going to be the better thing for the women of this province to gain the education and the needs to look after our industrial strategy program.

An Hon. Member: — They had that anyway.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — They did not . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Not to the extent that they are going to have it now in our Advanced Education area. To me they were buried in the Department of Labour. They are going to be exposed; they're going to be brought out and be high profile. And what more can we ask for the women of this province to set them up as a high profile group of people.

Mr. Koskie: — To continue to repeat myself, and since I don't obviously have the option to ask your Legislative Secretary, I won't pursue it in any great depth. But if I could repeat my question. Would you indicate to what extent in designing this new program, which you are alluding to is going to be of a great assistance to the women, to what extent, indeed, did you consult with the women's organizations of the province?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I was not a member of the cabinet planning committee. And that committee, in consultation, once their program and that was starting to be designed, they met with us and that program was put together. And if you want to know more about what is coming as far as the women's division is concerned, there's a lot of plans under way right now under the Minister of Education, and our minister that is in charge of PSC.

Mr. Koskie: — Well I take from what you said, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman . . . I want to pick up on what the minister said. Now there was a review and there was a decision to introduce this grand design — a program for the women — and you indicate: here is a division for women in the Department of Labour. Are you indicating to me, as Minister of Labour, that you had no opportunity to make any input into that cabinet committee, which in fact emasculated a women's division from your department?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I told the member opposite that I was not a member of the cabinet planning committee. That does not mean that we didn't have some input into the planning as far as any areas connected with our Labour department was concerned. As far as the cabinet planning committee going out and checking with various groups, I can't tell you tonight who that was. But we did have a part to play in deciding the final decision as far as the various divisions, whether it's the women's division or the apprenticeship division was concerned in the Department of Labour.

Mr. Koskie: — In view of the fact, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that the women's division was being done away with — I'll use a simple word so the rest of the back-benchers can understand it — rather than emasculate it, done away with, that was a division being done away with in fact in your department. And what I am asking you specifically — since you weren't a member of the planning committee, you indicated you hadn't the power to make representations in respect to changes — I'm asking you: did you in fact make a recommendation that there should indeed be consultation with the women of this province and the women organizations before this grand design which you say was decided upon by the cabinet planning committee? Did you in fact make representations that they should be consulted?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — First of all, Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate that the women's division is not being abolished. It was transferred because we thought and know that we can enhance the women's division by moving it into a new department.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, 'we thought.' That is the word that you used. 'We thought we would enhance and therefore we transferred.' But I have asked three times: did you consult with the women organizations of the province to decide whether or not what 'we planned' was what they in fact wanted?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I'm going to answer the same way I answered before: that I'm not aware of the person that was in charge in the cabinet planning committee, who they went to, or which areas or which groups they talked to, on the transfer of the women's division. As I said, I wasn't part of the cabinet committee. But the people that were in the cabinet planning committee, they have talked to every group of women in the province, for all I know. But we are committed to enhancing that and with the discussions that took place, we agreed with the cabinet planning committee that that rule could be expanded by putting it under that new department.

Mr. Koskie: — That clarifies my understanding, Mr. Minister, and if I understand you correctly, you, as Minister of Labour, with a women's division in your department as to what was going to be done with that, went to a cabinet planning committee, and what you're saying is that you indeed do not know, nor did you insist that there be representation to the women groups of this province and allowed it to be emasculated from your department. Am I correct in interpreting your comments?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I'll just state one more time that a total program was being devised for a number of changes within our government. The women's division was one of them, from the Department of Labour. And as I stated from the outset that women are going to have a part to play in this province and that we are wanting to put them into the Education department to upgrade the many changes that are going to be coming as far as industry in this province is concerned — the computer age — and that department is the one where we can co-ordinate and not have a duplication of effort like was out in those areas before. As far as the actual asking of

groups — that was done by the cabinet planning committee. We agreed with the move. And as I stated earlier also, the women of this province are not going to suffer because of it.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, you have instituted what you indicated ‘we,’ meaning the cabinet planning committee, a direction which you have alluded to tonight, which you also indicate will be of specific benefits to the women of this province. I ask you: in view of the amount of protestation by the women groups of this province, do you agree that in fact they’re not impressed with the lack of consultation and in fact not impressed with your so-called new direction?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, as a minister I’m not an empire builder. I want the best job done and I will take a part to play in getting that job done to the betterment of what we want to do. And if our women can be improved by giving them a higher profile in the education side, we will agree to do that, which we did. And you will see, I assure you, the difference that’s going to happen with having our women in our Advanced Education department.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to say that I am becoming more in agreement with the comments as it continues with the minister. He indicated that he’s not an empire builder. I agree. I mean, he is essentially a destroyer of solid programs which were in fact set in place in this province. I want to say that it has been a long time since this province has seen a Minister of Labour do what you have done to the women’s division and the women of this province and to labour generally. But we’ll be getting into that a little more.

I want to close, and say that I agree that what you say is that you have no power in that cabinet. It’s passed over to a little cabinet committee as you indicated, and apparently you had no input into it, and so what I’m saying to you is: if you can’t run a department, why don’t you resign?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, my only response is that I will not resign, and we have every intention of getting the job done, but we don’t have to be doing it by building a great big empire. We’re going to be doing it by efficiency and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He’ll have his chance. I will give you every assurance that this job is going to get done without the hoop-la and that that you people should have to come with it.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to get on to an issue which is in fact related. It’s quite related and it has to do, Mr. Minister, with the minimum wage. This is not a new subject, so between the minister and the member for Regina Centre, I’m going to skip the preliminaries, and I want to challenge you with a statement, Mr. Minister, and ask you to respond.

You have frozen the wages of those at the very bottom of the economic ladder. You have frozen those at the very bottom of the economic ladder while providing scandalous salaries to those in Executive Council. You’ve doubled, in many cases, the salaries of those in Executive Council, and you’ve frozen those on minimum wage, Mr. Minister. And it is harsh and cruel to suggest that those who can barely get along as it is should go two years in a period of time when we’re suffering 10 per cent inflation with no increase. Mr. Minister, it is harsh. It is absolutely illogical. There’s no evidence to suggest that a freezing of the minimum wage is going to spur a recovery. During the period of time when this province had the highest minimum wage in Canada, it also had

the strongest economy. I am not suggesting that the high minimum wage was responsible for the strength of the economy, I think it was largely irrelevant. But I say to you that those two facts, the prosperity of this province in the '70s, and the high minimum wage, should suggest to the minister that your economic thinking belongs in the Dark Ages. I finally say to you, Mr. Minister, in addition to being harsh and illogical, it is inconsistent.

Mr. Minister, if what it's going to take to bring an end to this Tory-induced recession, is freezing minimum wages, then why not be consistent, Mr. Minister, and freeze everybody's wage? Why treat those on minimum wage . . . Why single them out to bear the burden of economic recovery?

Mr. Minister, I suggest your activities are harsh, they're illogical, they're inconsistent, and they're explainable in only one way. This, Mr. Minister, is part of your back to business philosophy, this is part of your back to business philosophy. You aren't going Mr. Minister, to discourage business from locating in Saskatchewan with a high minimum wage. I suggest to you that fact, and that fact alone, explains your regrettably harsh and insensitive decision to freeze the minimum wage for a year.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, when I look at the minimum wages from all across Canada and we see that Saskatchewan is the highest minimum wage in Canada, the member opposite can't tell me that there are people in British Columbia — who has a \$3.65, I think, minimum wage; Ontario at \$3.80 or \$3.85 — that there aren't people in those provinces that are going through tough times now, as well.

We are the king in Canada, and I am getting letters. I would like to suggest, probably nine to one in favour of the stand that we took. I'm getting letters from people that are already on minimum wage, thanking us because he was afraid he might lose his job. In these times when small business — and this is where the normal minimum wage goes; laundries and so on — and they're having difficult times to stay in the black, or even they're in the red, a lot of them . . . They will go down the tube, and with it the jobs. And job security, even at \$4.25 an hour, is meaning more to people than the fact of raising it to \$4.50 or \$5.00 an hour and losing their job. We could have \$6 an hour, but if there's no job, that's no sense. And people are accepting that fact during these tougher times.

Mr. Shillington: — I suggest, Mr. Minister, they are not accepting that fact. And the fashion in which this government has plummeted in the polls should suggest something to you, should suggest something to you, Mr. Minister. And that is, that those letters that you're getting may not be entirely representative of the way people feel out there.

Mr. Minister, if what you're saying is that this is necessary for economic recovery, and if you wish to entirely ignore my suggestion that you be consistent and freeze everybody's wages, if you want to entirely ignore that — and there's no way I know that I can make you answer a question — if you want to sit as mute as the hills and refuse to answer, that's your option. The public are going to be the judge of it; but that's your option.

Let me then, Mr. Minister, try and draw your remarks to some sort of a logical conclusion. If this decision — as harsh and unfeeling as it is — is done to bring about a recovery, Mr. Minister, what level of unemployment will we need to reach before you give these people some relief from the cost of living that they're experiencing?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — I just want to advise the member opposite that we are monitoring it constantly. And just to give assurance that as of such and such a date, that we are going to increase the minimum wage, I can't do that. We will cross that bridge when we come to it. I'm more concerned with the fact that people have jobs, and I think that's the general consensus out there — that people want jobs and they're willing to work for it at 4.25. And raising the minimum wage, it's not a profession. What we want to do is create jobs that are worth five, six, seven, eight dollars an hour so that we can do away with minimum wage, if that's the ultimate goal. And I think everybody in the province would appreciate that, instead of saying that this is what people will get paid, period . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I know I find the term objectionable, too, but I hadn't turned out the light. We're having a problem with my light. It's going off and on. I wonder if I might . . . Is it just the light or are we losing the sound system, as well? It's just the light. All right.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you if you have any intention of dealing with the question that I asked you. I'd just as soon be spared your comments about the desirability of economic recovery.

I would be surprised, Mr. Minister, if you could find anyone who would disagree with what you just finished saying, that you need more jobs and the higher the wage at which the jobs come in, the more preferable it is. I would be very surprised if you could find anyone who would disagree with that. That wasn't the question I asked, though. I asked you at what level of economic activity, how low does the unemployment rate have to go before you'll adopt a more humanitarian approach and increase the minimum wage?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — I have said earlier, and I don't think the member heard me, that we are monitoring the minimum wage and there are a number of factors that will take place before we will make that move, if at all.

I know I look at the minimum wages in the United States — \$2 an hour in Indiana, \$1.90 in Colorado. By cutting down the cost of living which we are doing with our gas tax removal, our mortgage thing . . . the mortgage interest rebate, all this has a part to play in determining whether the minimum wage should change or not. We are in one of the more fortunate provinces in Canada right now with one of the lowest rates of inflation. When we are at the top of the range as far as our minimum wage is concerned, we feel that it's not necessary to change right now, and with the response we are getting from the people out there . . . And as I said earlier, a lot of them that are on minimum wage right now are thanking us because we didn't change it.

Mr. Shillington: — This is extremely awkward, Mr. Minister, I say that some may be thanking you, but a lot more are cursing your hide for what is a harsh and insensitive decision, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I want to deal with the question of unemployment, the area where you claim to have had such a startling success. The figures, Mr. Minister, bespeak of a tragedy in our society. One week ago, headline, *Regina Leader-Post*, 'Employable Jobless Rate Up 66 Per Cent.' Mr. Minister, there are untold tragedies lie behind that: of men and women who want to work and who can't; of young people who leave school full of the idealism that marks the youth and should mark the youth — and woe betide us but it doesn't — and they have that dashed as they sit at home day after day after week

after month unable to find employment; of single-parent families; women who have children to support, who are thrown out of their work; of middle-aged men and women, 10 to 15 years from retirement who lose their job, lose the only job that they are trained or skilled in and walk away from the plant asking themselves with every good reason, 'Will I ever work again?'

Mr. Minister, I'm not suggesting that your government inspired, conspired to bring this about. I am suggesting that your response to it has been woefully inadequate, and please, I would ask that you save me the comments about 12,000 jobs in the agricultural sector. I think many of the people in my riding who are unemployed would love to go out and wash potatoes on the farms, if that's what they're doing out on the farms, because I don't think they're putting in anymore acres. I don't think there's that many more tractors running around out there, Mr. Minister, and even fewer acres being planted in January. That's right.

Mr. Minister, I suspect that people in my riding would go out to the farms if the farmers were able to pay them anything. But therein lies another tragedy that we won't get into. The suggestion that . . .

An Hon. Member: — I think your mike's out.

Mr. Shillington: — I trust someone's going to interrupt me if, in fact the system goes out. It's working? She tells me it's working. Mr. Minister . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's a sad day for us all, Ned.

Mr. Shillington: — Yeah, I know it's a sad day when you're unable to hear me . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . I'm not sure it is a great tragedy. I was in this House for many years before estimates were even transcribed and I suspect that we can carry on these estimates without it being transcribed, if that's necessary.

Mr. Minister, I'm not suggesting you conspired to bring it about. I am suggesting your response has been woefully inadequate. There are some things you could have done and have not. You have frozen public works construction. All last summer when the need for public work construction was so acute, you people dithered and analyzed and accomplished virtually nothing. It wasn't until fall that you announced some construction projects are going ahead, and by that time it was too late. What I suspect was the largest in the province, the Nipawin project, you yourself, Mr. Minister, personally sat on like a mother hen until September.

You could have instituted a public works program. You could have built the schools and the hospitals, the other buildings which we are going to need. The Nipawin dam project could have gone ahead several months earlier. All of that could have been done, but you, Mr. Minister, your government chose to do none of that. And so you failed to take one of the very positive steps that you could have taken to bring about some relief.

Another thing you have done to exacerbate the problem is the firings in the public service. And some of it is absolutely illogical, irrational and done, I suspect, strictly for public consumption because you think that's good politics to fire public servants, because in many parts of this province the public service is not viewed with the kind of respect which I wished it were.

I can tell you the minister from industry and commerce — I wished he were here — SGI. He's fired 120 people and out of the departments which they have fired people, they're bringing back people to work on Saturdays and Sundays. And that doesn't make any sense, Mr. Minister, and that exacerbates unemployment in this province. So I say to you, Mr. Minister, your government did not conspire to bring this about, but your government is woefully negligent in bringing some relief to these people who are suffering the effects of the recession, far more than any other.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I wonder what the member opposite figures is the line of unemployment that should be acceptable.

An Hon. Member: — I'll take any figures . . . (inaudible) . . .

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — I'll go back to January 16th, 1982, which is still under your administration . . .

An Hon. Member: — 4 per cent.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — I don't care about percentages. You had 26,000 people unemployed in January 1982. Our administration . . . Since that date, 23,000 people have come into the work-force in Saskatchewan. So you subtract 26,000 from 39,000, that's 13,000; there's 10,000 more jobs in this province in the last year. So don't give me that on the percentage. Look at the numbers. You're telling me that you're happy with 26,000 people unemployed, which was what was unemployed under your administration.

I think we've done a lot in the last year, our administration, as far as the jobs are concerned. You just need to look at the Opportunities '83 acceptance this year. You can look at the housing starts. You can look at the Nipawin dam where 1,100 people are going to be working.

An Hon. Member: — They're going to be.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — They are. They're hiring every day up there. Our rural gas program is getting started in about three weeks time. A lot of jobs are going to be created this year. A lot of other construction is getting started this year. And in a period when the rest of Canada is going the other direction, I think we can feel very proud of what's happened in Saskatchewan in the last year. I think the people of the province are saying that to us as well, that the things have bottomed up and we're on our way up.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I will grant you the corporate balance sheets don't look quite as disastrous as they used to. To that extent, the recession is no longer on the toboggan . . . the economy is not on the toboggan ride it once was. But, Mr. Minister, the rate of unemployment remains at unacceptably high levels.

You suggested we had 4 per cent unemployed. We did; that was unacceptable to us; we said so; we had a number of programs in effect to reduce that. You, Mr. Minister, are prepared to accept a 66 per cent increase in the unemployed. And somehow others suggest that because right-wing governments elsewhere have managed to do worse, your record and your efforts to bring relief to these people is acceptable, I suggest to you that it is not.

Mr. Minister, apart from the open for business philosophy, you have yet to achieve a

single major success. You have yet to achieve a single major success. Of all the highest bits of nonsense, open for business must rate as high as any. Apart from the platitudes, Mr. Minister, which are hard to eat . . . When you're finished eating some of these slogans, you're just about as hungry as when you came to the table. Apart from the slogans, Mr. Minister, and apart from the pitiful program which the Minister of Social Services announced, apart from that pitifully small program — and she admitted, as inadequate as the goals were, they were never reached — apart from that, Mr. Minister, what have you done to bring relief to the unemployed in this province?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I just told you three minutes ago what we are doing to help unemployment in this province: Opportunities '83 program, the Nipawin dam, the natural gas program, housing starts, 3,000 or 4,000 that were announced to this House this afternoon.

I'd like to just mention about your friends across the boundary, in Manitoba — 54,000 people unemployed; 36,000 the year before. Unemployment has gone up all over Canada, but it's gone up over Canada a lot faster and a lot higher than it has done in Saskatchewan, and I'm looking forward to the figures for the end of April to see what our unemployment figure is. We came down 1,000 in February when normally it shouldn't have come down. It came down another 1,000 in March, plus the fact that 9,000 people came into the province during those two months. And to me, if that isn't creating jobs, I don't know what is.

Mr. Shillington: — The problem, Mr. Minister, that the government has in Manitoba is that they followed a Conservative government. And you know, Mr. Minister, there is just so much more the Conservative governments can be — so much more they can accomplish in terms of throwing people out of work. And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that when this sorry, insensitive, incompetent administration is finally turfed from office, the administration which follows it is going to have the same problems.

Mr. Minister, I want to go on to occupational health and safety. Another one of the pieces of paper which crossed my desk is a somewhat esoteric newsletter put out by the 'Canadian Occupational Health and Safety News.' And I want to quote from some of your comments. Mr. Minister, because I suggest that you have completely misunderstood the whole concept of occupational health and safety. The idea of occupational health and safety is that the workers shall have a say in safety in the workplace. And the concept, Mr. Minister, is, to the extent that their safety is involved, workers share the management role. We passed an occupational health and safety act. They're required to set up committees. If they don't meet the standards set out in The Occupational Health and Safety Act, they may call upon the department. So the concept behind the legislation is that they share the management function when their safety is concerned.

What you're saying, Mr. Minister, goes back to a different era. You said — I want to quote for a bit here, because I have to believe you were misquoted — 'Under the new approach, management will be assuming a greater direct responsibility for safety on the job.'

That's exactly the opposite of what occupational health and safety was meant to do. The workers shared that responsibility.

Now we learn, Mr. Minister, that an occupational health and safety committee's success is not determined by its diligence in going to management and bringing its problems to their attention. If that doesn't . . . (inaudible) . . . their courage in taking it to the Department of Labour, we now know that that's not how they're going to be judged. The committee's success will now be linked . . . And here is a direct quotation from you — according to McLaren, I use your last name because it's used in the article.

The committee's success will be linked to its ability to influence management, according to McLaren. The committee should not be trying to circumvent the responsibility system, because effective occupational health and safety must come from the enlightened employer.

The problem, Mr. Minister, is not all employers are enlightened. Some of them don't put the safety of their workers as their first priority. And you say a lot of committees aren't working, really, because they're not co-operating with management. You say that management is saying to us, 'Get off our backs; let us do the job. So my response is (This is a direct quotation) 'Okay, we'll get off your backs,' says McLaren.'

Mr. Minister, I want to suggest to you that what you are saying is in direct contradistinction to the philosophy behind The Occupational Health and Safety Act, and that you are . . . In fact, Mr. Minister, you are in fact setting about dismantling the occupational health and safety system in this province.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, that is absolutely not true, that we are abolishing the occupational health and safety department. I have been involved with the occupational health and safety committee for 10 years before I got involved with politics.

I know that we had committees. Our occupational health committee worked. We feel that there are some that are not working in the province, because it isn't understood. And unless we train our management around the province to understand fully what the committees' roles are to be, we will never succeed. All we're saying is that we need management's input just as much as the employees' input to be able to sit around tables together and discuss safety on the plant floor.

And the reason that we say that it isn't working . . . Since the occupational health was implemented back in 1972, the number of accidents: 1972 was 31 — these are fatal accidents, by the way — 1974 there was 53; 1975 there was 45; '76, 40; 1977, 32; but in 1978 it climbed to 47; 1980, 58; 1981, 76. The average has been going up and we've developed a policy for occupational health and safety. And the policy of the department is that the health and the safety of workers can only be achieved by the application of all the resources available, and that means the employee and the management as well.

And we are wanting to create an educational program through our department and in the occupational health area, to work with employers, to get the committees working properly and to not have a philosophical mumbo-jumbo that seems to be operating out there right now.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to tell you why you're dismantling the

occupational health and safety, I want to congratulate your deputy on his candid comments, because on the back of the same document is the real reason why you're dismantling occupational health and safety — because you're pandering to business — it's part of the open for philosophy. The same document quotes one Peter Grady, deputy minister of labour, summing up the reasons why you're dismantling occupational health and safety. He says:

We're open for business. And that means we're not going to put employers out of business by pursuing academic occupational health and safety rules.

It may be academic to management, but to the workmen who are injured and who may not work again because of a lack of safety in the plant, it's not quite academic; it has some actual meaning to their lives, Mr. Minister, I suggest that further evidence that your deputy gave the actual reason for this — that you're pandering to business.

I suggest, Mr. Minister, that the estimates are further proof of it. You cut staff; you have cut funding. All that can mean is that your department is going to play a much less active role in occupational health and safety, and those committees can go and kiss management, and if it works, fine; if it doesn't, well, tough because 'We're going to get off the backs of people.' You're getting off the backs of management, but the working people of this province whose occupations are often very dangerous, I do not think have requested you to get off their backs by doing away with occupational health and safety.

I've said, Mr. Minister, that a carpenter stands a higher statistical chance of being injured than a policeman. A man who works in an industrial site has a dangerous occupation. And not much has been done about that for a very long period of time.

One of the changes and one of the pioneering efforts to do something to make the industrial site safer was occupational health and safety — pioneered in this province and, once again, achieved a reputation for international excellence. Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that what your deputy said is absolutely accurate. You're doing this at the request of the business community and for their benefit you are going to play a less active, vigorous role. That's why you are able to cut staff and funding. I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, you are in the process of accomplishing, at the provincial level, what you were never able to accomplish in private life. You are, Mr. Minister, dismantling occupational health and safety.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — I think I can answer. Mr. Chairman, very simply, that we in the Department of Labour have no intention whatsoever, of dismantling the occupational and health department . . .

An Hon. Member: — You're doing it.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — We are not doing it. You say we're cutting staff. We are not cutting staff. There are vacant positions there that we are not filling. We haven't cut any staff whatsoever. Whatever is stated in that article can be misquoted, which it was. And, there are other comments that have been made, is that in the construction area, even with our occupational health which was supposed to have been so good, that our record in the construction field is worse than in Alberta. Let me reiterate again. We are

not cutting the occupational health division whatsoever. We're going to streamline it. We're going to be working with the employers of this province to get them more acquainted with what is expected in occupational health, and I know the business community will respond to that.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to get on to another one of your special . . . one of the areas where you have a special passion, and that is pensions. I know, Mr. Minister, that this is the be-all and the end-all of your existence. I can tell that by your estimates and the way you have cut staff and funding Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I want again to quote from a newspaper article. I'm sorry to be using the newspaper. Given the limited research staff we have, this is what passes for research in an eight-man opposition — is clipping articles to save for estimates. So, let me refer, Mr. Speaker, you to some comments made by an editor of the *Leader-Post*. And, this, Mr. Minister, is a direct quotation:

According to 'Three in One', a study prepared by the Economic Council of Canada, prior to a major national pension conference sponsored by the federal government two years ago, 68 per cent of women (Here again, it's women. I know this makes it a trifling problem, it's something suffered by women and is not relevant to your concerns, but I'll just soldier on here and finish this up), 68 per cent of women over 65 years of age were not the beneficiaries under CPP, apart from any benefits they might be receiving based on spousal contributions to the plan. The council projected that by A.D. 2031, as more women join the labour force, 88 per cent of women over 65 would be entitled to some . . .

It goes on to suggest, Mr. Minister, that most people wind up without any pension but CPP, the vast majority of women wind up without even that. The number of people who wind up with adequate pensions are a very small fraction, Mr. Minister. I'm not suggesting that I have an answer to it. It is a difficult, complex problem. What I am suggesting is that it is a problem which every government in Canada ought to be working on. We ought to be pooling our resources and we ought to be working on it because it is a serious problem, Mr. Minister.

I am critical of your administration, Mr. Minister, not because you haven't solved the problem but because you've decided that you're not going to try. Once again this great Tory bird has stalled out and you're not going to interest yourself in pensions, Mr. Minister.

I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that rather than cutting your staff in funding and pensions, you should have redoubled your efforts to solve what must be one of the most critical problems in society — the inadequate pensions enjoyed by the vast majority of Canadians. I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you will reconsider this gutting of the pension branch and continue to do research and work on improving pensions for Saskatchewan people.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I agree with the member opposite that the whole pension field is deplorable. But we . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I just want to tell you that we are working on pensions, and in fact we had a meeting this afternoon or this morning. We are continuing to look at the whole pension area. The federal government is working on pension reform right now. We are watching what they are coming with. One of our directors is a member of the pension society, the federal pension society.

I'd just like to remind the member opposite that reductions in the pensions branch were recommended by the executive director of the branch and supported by the previous deputy minister in your administration. We are working on pensions. We are watching it very closely and the federal government is coming with a green paper. And once we know what their intentions are, we will be putting our input into it and negotiating with the federal government, as far as improvement in pensions are concerned.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'm working on pensions. A fair percentage of the calls I get as a member are about pensions, Mr. Minister. But I'm not doing very much about the larger problem of pensions. I'm simply putting out the brush fires here and there with individuals.

Mr. Minister, you have the opportunity to be so much more. You have the opportunity to do something positive about the larger problem. So what do you do? You gut the department, Mr. Minister. You gut the department. I'm delighted to know, Mr. Minister, that you are prepared to follow whatever lead the federal government take and I say to you, Mr. Minister, that this country at a national level is leaderless, well leaderless anyway, but particularly in the area of pensions. The federal government hasn't given this country adequate leadership in pensions.

There is no reason whatsoever that it has to begin at the national level. This is an area where provincial governments can make a meaningful contribution and I am disappointed, Mr. Minister, in what you've just said, that you are abrogating your responsibility and leaving it to the feds. Because I say to you, Mr. Minister, your administration is going to come and go and the federal government will still be issuing papers.

Mr. Minister, I can tell you from experience: they start off with a green paper; and they go to a grey paper; and they go to a purple paper; they go to a white paper; and years go by; and they are still issuing papers. There are, Mr. Minister, when it comes to issuing papers, there are few dilettantes to match the federal government. Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that something more is required by the Saskatchewan senior citizens and you can make a contribution, Mr. Minister, and I ask you to do so.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, we are not, Mr. Chairman abdicating our responsibilities and leaving it to the federal government. The federal government has established a task force, including members of our party and I believe your party as well, to be a part of that task force. Until that is done, we can't come with our reform until we know what the overall plan is to be. And as far as the cuts are concerned, we finalized in 1982 the reform that had taken place recently in the pension reform and three extra people were needed to do that legislation work, and that is all that has gone. We are back to the normal number of people that are in the pension department previously to that new pension reform coming into force.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to hear your comments about the Provincial Maintenance Ltd. I want you to tell me, Mr. Minister, if you think what SPC is doing with Provincial Maintenance is good labour-management relations policy, if you think that the idea of having multi-skilled representation is going to bring labour peace to this province. I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that the existing union structure for the trades

has by and large served us very well. We have had a bad strike or two, but we may well have that under this system as well. It has provided a high quality of trade service to Saskatchewan people.

I suggest, Mr. Minister, that what SPC has done with Provincial Maintenance is not in the best interests of the society as a whole, and I think the money you're saving . . . One of the questions I want to ask you, to which you can respond orally or in writing, is how much money SPC is saving by it. I suggest the money you're saving is peanuts compared with what it may well cost us. I also want to suggest that it's harsh and it is insensitive. Because what you're doing is taking the money out of the pockets of the working man, and you're giving it to SPC and you're giving it to Provincial Maintenance. It isn't money that's coming about because of any increased efficiency. You're taking the money out of the pockets of the working people of this province and you're divvying it up between SPC and Provincial Maintenance and they've agreed that they're going to share the bounty. And I suggest to you that a Crown corporation should not be a party to such a shoddy arrangement.

So I suggest, Mr. Minister, the arrangement is shoddy; you're taking the money from working people and divvying up between two institutions, neither one of whom are particularly needy. I also suggest to you that by attacking the existing structure for representation of the construction trades, you are also doing this province a disservice.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we as the Saskatchewan Power Corporation Board are looking at bids, many, many bids covering many, many areas, tenders that we have to decide on awarding. When we came to the maintenance program for Boundary Dam and Coronach, 16 companies bid on the project; we chose Provincial Maintenance because they were the low, next to the low bid, but they were a local company. And as a board, we can't go investigating every bid as to how that bidder is going to accomplish the work. He bid so many dollars to do that. We accepted his bid. And what happens between his work-force that he has hired to do the job is their responsibility. It's not SPC's. We accepted the bid to save the people of this province some money, to help reduce the demand for rates that we have to come with. And that's all that was done. There's still union workers working on those sites.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, this is a matter that I doubt that you and I are going to reach agreement on. I do want, Mr. Minister, some specific information to which you may respond in writing; I wouldn't expect you'd necessarily have it. The information which I want is the amount that SPC saved by accepting the bid from Provincial Maintenance. And I want to know what percentage of that saving accrues to Provincial Maintenance. So if I have your undertaking you'll undertake to provide that information, I'll go on to the next question.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Yes, we can provide that information.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to know, and I'd be satisfied with the answer in writing, the total amount paid to the chairman of the labour relations board. If you'd break it down into salary, if any, per diem allowance, and thirdly, expenses, the information would be more useful to me. If I had your undertaking to provide that, I'd go on.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Yes, you have our assurance that we'll do that.

Mr. Shillington: — Workers' compensation board — it may surprise you to know

that I'm not particularly critical of your appointments to the workers' compensation board, Robert McWillie and Philip Leduc. I would like to know their qualifications, what qualifications they had. You may respond orally or you may respond in writing. And it may be more useful, indeed, in writing.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, we have resumes for both those gentlemen and I'd be pleased to give you copies of them.

Mr. Shillington: — A couple of questions about when, if ever, are you going to get around to it, that type of questions. The Trade Union Act, the construction trade relations act and the labour relations act, Mr. Minister, I wonder when you're going to put yourself out of misery and the rest of this province by telling us what you're going to do. I don't know how many congratulatory letters you've received from the people whose minimum wage you've frozen, but you've received a lot more mail on these three subjects. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, when you're going to tell us what you're going to do. When are you going to introduce the legislation, which I assume is coming before this session?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it will be coming very, very soon and coming in this session. Once I have it totally — all the amendments in place — you will be notified and we will be notifying the interested groups around the province as well.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to ask about the final report to the workmen's compensation board. I wonder when you are going to implement this. Mr. Speaker, I see by the annual report which you have filed, there is sufficient funds to cover the increases in benefits and I wonder when you are going to implement the final report of the workmen's compensation board review committee.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, we haven't met with the new board as yet and once we have done that we will be able to advise the parties.

Mr. Shillington: — This is virtually my final question, Mr. Minister.

An Hon. Member: — Can I ask a few? Ask the minister?

Mr. Shillington: — You certainly may ask the minister questions. I don't control that.

Mr. Minister, in an article in the *Leader-Post* on January 7, you set out some of your goals as a minister, the sort of things you hoped to accomplish. You said that early in 1983 you hoped to accomplish the following: a new minimum wage structure; action on the final report on the WCB; you hoped to introduce accessibility legislation; and you hoped to have changes in the labour legislation.

Mr. Minister, those were four goals you hoped to achieve early in '83; you've achieved none of them. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you'd like to tell us what your goals are for the next three months in 1983. Do you have the same goals or do you have some new goals? I would ask you to comment, Mr. Minister, on your failure to accomplish your goals to date.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I have already mentioned The Trade Union Act. The accessibility standards are very, very close.

An Hon. Member: — How close, Lorne?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Depends how long we go this spring. It will be this year. As far as the minimum wage is concerned, we . . . (inaudible) . . . are wanting to look at the basic with minimum wages and try and to determine what we need to look at to be the determining factor of setting minimum wage rates. And that's research. I don't think we are very far off with any of the suggestions that are in the article as far as coming with them this year.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, we can speed this up. I will want to know, in the case of each subvote, why you did it, how you could do such a dastardly thing. No, more specifically, I want to know with respect to each subvote what positions you have deleted. Secondly, I want to know, and, Mr. Minister, you can supply it in writing; I don't need it orally. I want to know what positions were deleted; whether or not there was any person in the positions; if so, were they transferred to another branch in the department, or given bumping rights, or were their services terminated?

I'd also like a breakdown on the grants given under subvote 9. It's no great shattering amount of money — \$36,000 — but I would appreciate a breakdown as to what that is budgeted for, who you anticipate giving that to, if you can, I know you haven't spent it yet, but if you have it budgeted for different groups, if you'd give it to me.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — We can get that information. \$20,000 of that grant was a donation to the Toxicology Centre; \$4,280 to the Labour College of Canada, and there is \$7,000 of miscellaneous smaller grants.

Mr. Shillington: — Do I assume, Mr. Minister, that have you the undertaking to provide the information with respect to deletion of positions?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Yes, we will do that.

Items 1 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 9 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS POTASH CORPORATION OF SASKATCHEWAN

Vote 58 — Statutory

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS SASKATCHEWAN POWER CORPORATION

Vote 52 — Statutory

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

Mr. Shillington: — I'd also like to thank the minister and his officials for their co-operation and the assistance they've provided and I look forward to receiving your answers as soon as you're able to put them together.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to thank my officials, also. And the members opposite, we hope we have given you the answers you required. And the ones in writing will follow very shortly.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — If we could just take about a five or six minute break . . . The minister's staff are not here yet. We finished up Labour, I guess, a little quicker than we thought, and we'll just wait for about five minutes until they get here.

Motion agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

HEALTH

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 32

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, when we ended our discussions, I believe it was on Tuesday night, we were talking about home care boards and what some of the home care boards are saying is a lack of funding. I would like to, just to get us back on track here, quote only one paragraph from this letter that was sent from the home care board to clients in the Watrous-Davidson home care district, which talks about the lack of funding from the provincial government. It says:

Due to the economic crisis in existence at the present time, we are receiving almost no increase in government funding. And as you are aware, the cost of materials, food, and labour has increased tremendously since we started providing service in March of 1981.

Mr. Minister, we have a group here who has been in existence since March of '81 and has had no increase, but because of a lack of funding from your department in the past year, and in fact in this budget, they are now seeing increases in the price of a meal for these people who are in their own homes and needing that kind of a service, as well as a 45 per cent increase in the wages that they have to pay for handyman service and home-making, a 45 per cent increase there. Can you tell me, for example in the Watrous-Davidson home care district, what increase you in fact have given in terms of grants for that home care district?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, I'd be pleased to inform you of that — and I think I did the other night — that they, along with other districts, have received a 7 per cent increase in funding in keeping with the guide-lies to most sectors this year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I think that when you're talking about a 7 per cent increase in a program that is just recently established — and you go back to the trend that was established in the previous two budgets — you'll know that the increase was in the area of 40 or 50 per cent, because you'll know that in any new program, if you're going to get it up on its feet and operating, you don't go by a traditional type of grant formula. You will have to give enough so that the program can expand, because if it's not expanding, then it's going to be going backwards.

I see this happening with the home care program, and it causes a great deal of distress not only for the people who were involved in setting the program up, but more

importantly and most importantly, for those individuals who, if this program isn't in place, if it's costing them more to stay in their own homes and get home care than it would to go to a nursing home . . . You will see your waiting lists sky-rocket in the very near future . . . I predict that the case-load that you have in waiting lists, I use the example of Santa Maria here in Regina, where the waiting list in the nursing home is now 800 people, and they are saying that to get into level 4 care in Saskatoon, it's two and one-half years. And we can talk about whether you put in an increase in grants to construction or a decrease, and I can argue that it went from 6.4 last year to 4 million this year in grants for construction, but the simple fact is, is that the waiting list in nursing homes, or for nursing homes, is getting longer and longer. And by forcing home care districts to increase the cost of meals 50 per cent, and the wages that the seniors have to pay to get work done in their home by 45 per cent, as evidenced here — and I'll give you a copy of this letter — what you are doing, in fact, is forcing people out of their homes and to apply for nursing homes because they can't afford to stay at home at the present time. You add a 50 per cent meal increase to a 22 per cent increase in power rates, 19 per cent on telephones, 25 per cent on natural gas, and I ask you, Mr. Minister, how you expect these seniors to stay in their own homes?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, I'd like to answer the member again. In view of what I said the other night, you are picking one home care district out of many in Saskatchewan as your example. I don't think that one is really a good example of the whole provincial picture, but that's the one that you care to discuss, and we will discuss that with you. And I think that I did say last meeting that the local home care associations make their own decisions, and they may have decided to keep their rates much lower than what they were across the province. However, that was a decision made by the Watrous board.

I want to point out to you though that the funding for home care — so that we'll just keep the record straight — during the four years under the previous administration the value of the funding formula increased by an average of 6 per cent a year — 6 per cent. This year it's 7 per cent, and I want to point out that that 6 per cent increase was in years when inflation was running at 11 and 12 per cent. So, therefore, it would seem obvious to me that if this particular district chose to keep them low, and were only getting a 6 per cent increase when the inflation rate was much greater, no wonder that in this year they're having to increase their funding.

Now you are attempting to show that this may be very difficult for some seniors, I want to assure you that the maximum charge that a senior would have, a senior on the low income, take a very low-income client, would be \$30 a month; \$30 a month would be the maximum. I think that's very fair.

The other thing that I want to point out to you is that to address the situation of home care, to improve it more than the 6 per cent that you people did in the last 4 years — and we've come 1 per cent higher in this year of tight economic times — but to address the situation and to work in consultation with the home care boards, we are at this present time under a constant review with them. And I would just point out to you, and to anyone else that would be interested in knowing, when I say a constant review, and a look at how we can better target, as I said the other night, target the moneys available to help the needs and address the needs that are out there . . . Tomorrow, at the united services institute at noon tomorrow, I am meeting with the home care boards to address this very issue. And I'm sure, in consultation with them, listening to them — Watrous as well as every other home care board in Saskatchewan that want to tell me how they feel that we can use the moneys available to best address the needs of the

seniors receiving home care — I'm sure out of that type of mutual consultation of the government working with the local boards, we will come up with a program that will address these needs.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — You were talking about setting the record straight. Well, you have done everything but set the record straight, because if you're trying to make people believe that over the last four years there was an average of a 6 per cent increase, it simply is not true. I would like you to give me the numbers that was paid out to home care boards for the home care program over the last four years that you are referring to, and I want you to get this straight: I want the amount of money that was paid for home care from the government under the last three years of the NDP administration, in total, and we'll see whether it's a 6 per cent increase or not. Because it isn't. And you're trying to fudge the numbers and use a little smoke and mirrors in order to play games here, because there wasn't a 6 per cent increase. In fact it was much larger than that. It was more like a 40 per cent increase. And so let's just get the record straight.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, I don't like to use the term, 'smoke and mirrors.' That seems deceptive to me. But since you raised it, I would think if there's smoke and mirrors, you're trying to bring the smoke and mirrors, because you're asking for a total payment. All right. Now a total payment would not be the accurate amount that is made to specific boards under the funding formula because — let me explain this to you — new boards came into place, boards that were not in existence before. So that isn't a true picture. That, my friend, is smoke and mirrors. To say what the increases in the funding formula of existing boards was, that is the true picture, and the true picture was 6 per cent, 6 per cent under you and 7 per cent under this administration.

An Hon. Member: — Give me some numbers.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, it'll take a minute or two to get these, as you realize, I think that's fair. I can't just pull them right out of the air. But I can give you the percentages, and maybe that is a little grating for you, but it is 6 per cent on the funding formula.

An Hon. Member: — It's just that it's not true.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — It is true, on the funding formula for your administration for the last four years, and 7 per cent for ours in this year. The total amounts would be smoke and mirrors. And I have no intention to put out figures that are smoke and mirrors.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — It simply is not true that if we take the Watrous board, for example, for the last two years . . . Or give me . . . Use one home care board. Let's use Gravelbourg for example. Give me the number in the last three years where there was a 6 per cent increase in total grant to the Assiniboia home care board and you will find, Mr. Minister, that your statement that there was a 6 per cent increase is not accurate and you should correct that for the people who will want to know what the increases were. The grants to each individual home care board was not increased by 6 per cent but in many cases was increased in the area of 40 per cent. And I would like you to use an example or two to show me where those increases were.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think the hon. member will bear with me that I would have to extract that material. But I'd be glad to give it to you. You asked for Gravelbourg as a specific example. We will give you that. But I would like to point out at the same time

that between the 1978 and 1981, the value of the formula increased by an average of 2.5 per cent.

An Hon. Member: — What formula are you talking about?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The formula for the home care funding. That's the formula we're talking about. Now we can give you specific figures if that's what you want, and you asked for Gravelbourg and we will comply. I can't give them to you right now. I think you understand that that would be pretty tough to drag that out at this point in time. But we will provide them for you.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, the question is the grants that were paid to home care boards. You're now trying to tell me that it increased by 2.5 per cent?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — In explanation to your question, if you take out the number of boards that came on stream over that period of time, that between 1978 and 1981 the value of the formula increased by 2.5 per cent per year. Does that . . . is that understandable to you? Taking out new ones coming in — those were existing ones in that period of time — 2.5 per cent per year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, are you including the extra grant that was given on a per capita of seniors over 65 in each home care district?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — In consultation with my officials, they tell me that this is correct — that one the per capita between 1978 and 1981 the value of the formula increased 2.5 per cent.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I would like to know which home care district you're basing this on. You seem to be very able to come up with numbers that show a 2.5 per cent increase, but then when I ask you for a home care district that you're basing it on, you say you don't have it. And it seems to me that you're just making up numbers to meet your purpose. And what I would like to know is which home care district you're saying they got only a 2.5 per cent increase, and then give me the numbers.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — It was the increase on the formula on average across all the home care districts. I told you for a specific — you asked for Gravelbourg — I told you that we would give you those figures. I have to get them extracted, though.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — You will have, or one of your officials will have, a sheet that will give you the list of various home care districts and the amount of grant that they got; for example, in 1980-1981-1982. And what I want you to do is give me the home care district you're using where there was a 2.5 per cent increase between various years, and I'll guarantee you that you won't be able to do it because that isn't the kind of increase there were. The increases were much larger than that, and that, Mr. Minister, is why meals were 2.89 while we were the government, and that is why they are going up by 50 per cent when you are minister. And you can attempt to play games with percentages and numbers and try to fudge the numbers to the point where no one understands, but the home care boards were having to increase meals by 50 per cent, because, as I quoted before, 'Due to the economic crisis in existence at the present time we are receiving almost no increase in government funding.'

That is the reason that they are having to increase both in meals and the salaries they pay the individuals for home-making and home repair. And you can attempt to say that

under the previous administration there was only a 2.5 per cent increase, but I will defy you to go to the home care boards and say that they have a better funding formula now under your administration than they had then.

I will wait until you get me the home care board where you can show a 2.5 per cent increase, year-to-year, in any one of them in the province while we were in power. I will defy you to do that, because very simply, Mr. Minister, you cannot do it. You are attempting to give out a number here that is not accurate. I'll wait and we'll see which one you're basing that on.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — To the hon. member, I think I explained before, you picked one which may not be representative of any in Saskatchewan. You picked one; I'm taking about across the board. On the per capita increase, it was 2.5 per cent. My officials indicate to me that there was no increase, no increase from 1979 to 1981 under your administration. And the figures I gave you were from 1978 to 1981 — 2.5 per cent increase per capita across all the home care districts. Now you picked one as your example. You asked for Gravelbourg; I told you we will give you the figures for Gravelbourg. I think that's fair, but I stand on that 2.5 per cent per capita increase across all of the home care districts.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, you will . . . I asked for Gravelbourg, but you give me any one, give me any home care district in the province where you can show a 2.5 per cent increase in the total funding from the provincial government while we were in power. I would like you to do that for me. And you may not be able to dig up Gravelbourg, but use whichever one you want, where there was a 2.5 per cent increase in the block funding and the per capita funding which they received. Because what you are doing is attempting to pick out one item and one item only where there may have been a number that will suit your fancy, but what I'm talking about is the total funding for home care boards.

The increase was not 2.5 per cent. In many cases it was 40 and 50 per cent and what I want to know is for one home care district, what the total grant was for 1980, '81, '82 and now '83. And you can pick which one you want and I want to see where that 2.5 per cent increase comes in because I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, you won't be able to do it, because you won't want to stand in the House and say it because you'll much rather send it across, because you can't do it. No home care district got a 2.5 per cent increase in funding in any of those years. It was always much more. And I defy you to stand here now and use any example where the funding increase was 2.5 per cent for any home care district.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, as I said earlier, we'll get you those figures. We can't get them right now, but I do have some that are available for you. And that is that the block funding when you started it in 1979 (as I understand) was \$25,000. And that remained exactly the same until 1981 when it was raised to \$40,000. But the biggest funding, the per capita funding in '79 was \$12.30 per capita. The per capita funding in 1981 was raised to \$12.49 — an increase of 19 cents, which, if you want that as a percentage increase, I don't think is a very great increase.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, you picked out one part that you want to dwell on. I'll tell you the block funding was increased from \$25,000 to \$40,000. There was a new introduction of a new grant (totally new) that paid out a per capita to those over 65, and I would like to know what that per capita grant was for the number of people over 65. Because you are attempting to create a picture that didn't exist by picking out one part

and dwelling on that, and that's why you won't give us a total number, because you're trying to deceive the people into believing something that isn't there. And I would like to know what the per capita grant for those over 64 was and when that came into effect, and whether or not you consider that to be an increase.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, in 1981 that seniors' adjustment grant, per capita grant was \$11.42 for anyone over 65. Let me remind you the home care districts and the home care concept had been in place for two years before your administration thought of doing this in October of 1981, which might tell someone something. Let me indicate to you that with this administration, we have been in power for one year and we are presently in consultation with them, ways in which we can target the funds available better to serve their needs. I want to tell you this so that it'll be in the record.

And I think it would be interesting to the members on the other side that since May of 1982, when I became the minister in charge of the Department of Health and now have the responsibility for continuing care, I have met with 221 individuals and groups and talked to them about their needs. And I think I would compare that record with any health minister the NDP ever had in 10 years. And if you want to go to the fair city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, from whence your past health minister — and I liked him; he was a nice guy . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Chairman, has this got anything to do with . . .

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Let me just explain this because this has consultation with groups. This is delivering the health care system in this province, Mr. Chairman. I will ask you to talk to the groups in Saskatoon and do you know what they'll tell you? They will tell you that the present Minister of Health has met more groups in Saskatoon than the past minister did and he lived there. And I'll stand on that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, we were talking about home care grants and somehow we got around to how many people the minister meets with. I'm not sure how that's relevant, whether he meets with 2 or 200, and here again, he would have to prove that for someone.

But what I would like to say to you, Mr. Minister, that in the years you're talking about, the grant was not 2.5 per cent increase and if your officials would bother to tally it up properly for you or if you would translate it from them to me straight, what you would see is that many home care districts got a 30 or 40 per cent increase in the years that we are talking about. If you include the new grant for seniors over 65, the per capital grant of 11-and-some dollars, if you include the increase in block funding from 25,000 to 40,000, you would see a 30 or 40 per cent increase for many home care districts. And that's quite different from what they're seeing today where you are increasing it not 30 or 40 per cent but 7 per cent.

You can pick out one area that may be 2.5 if you stretch it and stretch it properly but very simply the home care boards will know that the funding arrangement under our government was so adequate that when your government came to power they had a formula. It was called the recovery formula — and I would like you to defy this — that asked for money that was in the accounts of the home care boards to be sent back in to the tune of \$3 million. And I would like to know whether or not that wasn't the policy of your government and whether or not you've given up that ill-conceived plan to re-collect money that was given out by a previous administration to the tune of \$3 million

called the recovery program.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, I think your opening remarks again indicate the attitude you had. You know, I was shocked, dismayed, and disappointed to hear you say in this House it makes no difference whether you meet with two or 200 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I hope you believe it, because it is the facts. Those are the facts. I think that's important, and I think that's one of the reasons that we're here and you're over there, and you're going to stay there if you keep that attitude, because we are talking to people.

I'm meeting with people tomorrow in the home care, as I told you, to discuss this. And you know what we're going to be discussing? Would you like to know what we're discussing? We're discussing funds for pilot projects for home care clients requiring heavy care. That's the concern the home care districts are telling me. That's what they're bringing forth to this government, and that's why we're meeting with them tomorrow to discuss that — to get their idea on how pilot projects can be brought about that can be introduced in the home care program of this province to improve the delivery of service.

I tell you, that's a lesson you never learned, and I don't think you ever will, with the attitude you have now, but if you listen to people out there and react within the resources available to address their needs, that's what I call the delivery of service.

Now, you asked about the recouping of the surpluses. I want to point out that that the recovery of this surplus was done in consultation with the Saskatchewan Home Care Association, which agreed with the process undertaken. The amounts recovered from unexpended operating grants and client fees varied from district to district. In each district, the amount to be recovered was resolved with no appeals, and the amount recovered was 2.2 million.

As I say tomorrow we're sitting down with them — something you didn't do — sitting down with them and discussing with them ways in which we can improve the delivery of the service.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, here we are, the NDP government — the terrible government — gave the home care boards so much money that you, as a minister, decided you wanted to get \$2.2 million back from them. And you have the nerve to stand here and say what a great job you're doing of providing money for home care districts, when in fact what you're doing is taking money from them, rather than paying out increases.

What I would like is a list of the moneys that were collected from each of the 44 home care boards, or as many who sent money back in. I would like a list of those to find out just who sent money back in to the government, which a previous administration had given to them. Because for you to stand here and pretend that you are a champion of home care, when your government has asked for money back from the home care districts, is insincere. I would like you to tell me which home care districts sent money back in and how much.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — We will provide that to you. It'll take a while for us to do that. I hope you realize that. I want to point out though, as there were 2.2 million recovered, they also retained 2.8 million, and I'd just like to remind you that the NDP policy was to

recover all surpluses from non-government agencies funded by the Department of Social Services.

An Hon. Member: — You're goofy.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I am not goofy. That is the policy.

An Hon. Member: — Yes you are. Tell me where you got that.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, you just stand up and you try and prove that then, my friend. You just be a little bit careful with your words in here, Mr. Chairman. There's certain things that are parliamentary in debate, and there's certain things that are not, and I would ask you to pay attention to it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, the reason that I said it was goofy was because of the previous statements you made about a 2.5 per cent increase that had come under our administration, which is not accurate. And I say that this is not accurate either because I would like you to prove that we had intended to collect that money back. You made the statement; you made the accusation and I want you to prove it.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I can't say what you intended to do . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, because you're not in power to do it, thank God. But I sure have some . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I did not say that. I said your policy was to do this, and I will repeat your policy. Your policy when you were in power was: in the first quarter payment, you deducted the surplus that the board had before. Now if that isn't recovering it, I don't know what is. That was your policy. Now what you intended to do is all hypothetical because — thank God — the people of Saskatchewan never gave you the opportunity to do it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, the people of Saskatchewan, I think, did expect things from this government, but one thing they didn't expect was the day you came to power to ask the home care boards for 2.2 million back from them, and try to tell me that that was our plan is a little bit unbelievable because we had increased funding by 30 and 40 per cent in the two years previous. We had no intention of collecting money back. You on the other hand are talking about a 7 per cent increase after you collected \$2.2 million back. Do you know what that means, Mr. Minister? If you add those two little things together, is that home care boards are actually getting a reduction under your government if you include the take-back of \$2.2 million. You take back \$2.2 million and then you say you're giving an increase of 7 per cent. Do you really think that people are that naïve, that they are going to give you money back and then you say you're going to give a 7 per cent increase, and then you're the hero? People aren't that naïve, and they will not believe it, because it isn't true.

And what I would like to know is whether you're going to give me a list of those home care boards who sent money back in and how much.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — We will give you the list of the increases and the recoveries from boards that you asked for. I think again, we talk about the smoke and mirrors. When you're talking of 30 or 40 per cent, you're trying to, you know, you're trying to mislead there in saying . . . You're grouping in new boards that started up and so on. We'll give you the figures of what was given out and what was brought back. We'd be glad to give you that information.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I think the facts are that home care districts like Watson-Davidson home care districts are having to increase their meals by 50 per cent. You can't argue with that. That's a fact, that they're having to increase their meals by 50 per cent.

An Hon. Member: — We've discussed that already.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — This is dated April 1st, 1983, for the member for Regina North West, who is continually talking from his seat and has little idea about what's going on. Mr. Minister, the facts are that meal rates are going up 50 per cent. The facts are that you did take \$2.2 million back from the home care districts. Is that not true?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — As I have told you many times, I'm going to be in consultation tomorrow with these boards and discussing with them. I told you, when you first . . . You cite one board, Watson, 50 per cent increase you say. They could have been charging much less than the provincial numbers before. I don't know if you understand that, but they could have been. That's their decision. There may be an increase of 50 per cent, but there's a \$30 maximum on there for anyone that can't afford it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, you may say that it's because of how they operate their home care board that there's a huge increase. But in the letter it says, 'because we are receiving almost no increase in funding' is the reason it's going up 50 per cent. Are you disputing that?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I repeat what I said before. They got the same as everybody else, 7 per cent. If they think that's almost no increase, then they have the right to say that, but they received 7 per cent, the same as everyone else is this year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, you took back \$2.2 million That's been established. You took back \$2.2 million. You say they got the same as everyone else, which means that every home care board is going to have to do basically the same thing, and that is increase the charge for senior citizens by the same amount — if they all got the same amount taken away from them, and they all got the same increase, which is no increase when you do the addition of the \$2.2 million that was taken away plus a 7 per cent increase. And if there's a definition of smoke and mirrors, I would say this is it, where you take \$2.2 million away and then say, 'We're going to be the good guys and give a 7 per cent increase.'

All boards are going to be looking at these kind of increases and I'm wondering if you would not look at enriching the funding for home care boards because, very simply, the seniors cannot stand much more of this generosity and consultation of this government — where we see telephone rates going up 19 per cent; power rates going up 22 per cent; natural gas going up 25 per cent; home care rates going up 50 per cent. And your generosity is . . . I don't know how long the seniors will be able to take this generosity and as well, no guarantee that nursing home rates in the homes isn't going to go up this year. And what I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, is whether or not you think you could get some money for these home care districts.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Once again, let me repeat you what I said a few minutes ago, and obviously you don't listen. I said that tomorrow I'm meeting with these boards; we're looking at pilot projects for heavy-care clients in the home care districts. That is the concern expressed by the home care districts to our department. You try and indicate there is a 50 per cent increase. I'm telling you that there is a maximum of \$30

for all services for any low-income senior.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I would like to try to find out one more time about these home care boards that have had money taken back. If you will give me a guarantee that you will ship them across to me in the very near future, then we will move on and my colleague from Assiniboia will ask a few questions on nursing homes.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — We'll ship them to you just as soon as we can do it and if that's acceptable, I give you that commitment.

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I've been having quite a bit of pressure in the last little while and all of it is on the same topic, and basically that is families trying to get their loved ones into senior citizens level 2 or 3 or 4 care, whether they're getting some help.

The one neighbour of mine that drew attention of his mother's need today said that they're looking after her; it's just beyond their care; they're providing 24-hour care and it's really been a strenuous load for them. They've applied in the nursing home in Gravelbourg a year ago. The last three months they've contacted Assiniboia; they've contacted Moose Jaw; they've contacted Swift Current; they are desperately trying to get some help. What would you recommend they do? What should they do to get some relief this summer with the pressures of farming and everything else?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think you realize that I've taken this department over within the last month, and what you are saying . . . I understand that situation exists, not just with your neighbour. I think you've given me a logical and a true case. There are other cases, I'm aware of these. I have no easy solution for it. The home care, enriched housing, more facilities, all of these, to various degrees, can help this situation. In your particular case, and I wouldn't ask for the name of the individual, but if you would be kind enough to send it to me, I can give you the assurance that I'll use all my offices to try and alleviate the situation.

Mr. Engel: — Just one further thing, if I may, Mr. Chairman, on this particular type of situation. I've been meeting, I think, since as long as I've been elected, with the local hospital board at Lafleche. In fact, I served on that board up until the time, and even maybe two years after I was an MLA. And they have a small hospital. It's been running fairly efficient. Their per diem is as low as any in the area. You know that is a seven and eight bed hospital — the Lafleche hospital. They're running a good ship. They've got a good administrator, a very interested board that's working hard at it. These people are anxious to expand to provide the needs for people like this lady I've mentioned. And they've been pushing with the former administration as well as with yours.

The suggestion that I made earlier, and you during your last estimates said you would look at it: have you given some consideration to doing a similar thing? I think Southey, Saskatchewan, has some nursing home beds, and using the same kitchen and facilities as the hospital does. I'm familiar with that one. And I think this is one way where we can provide care in Lafleche today. Today, there's one patient in that hospital. They're down to one lady that's had a baby. So there's actually two. A mother and daughter are in that hospital. And there's six, seven beds empty, plus they could use some additional room and house some of our senior citizens.

The district there — if I may just take another minute to explain — while I was even on

the Lafleche RM council, signed an agreement with Assiniboia to contribute funding and to . . . (inaudible) . . . people there, because at that time you had to have about a 5,000 population base before you get into nursing homes. That was lowered to 3,500. I'm wondering if you would consider salvaging some of these small hospitals. I can think of hospitals like the one in my colleague's constituency at Kincaid, and at Mankota, Rockglen, Coronach. Those kind of hospitals could adequately function and provide a service because they need a kitchen staff, they have the facilities there — with a couple of beds and an inexpensive wing, could provide that service. Because I think your argument will be that we have lots of beds per 1,000 in our cities. Some places there might be some room. But, boy, we've got some problems down in that south country. And I could give you a list of five people right off the top of my head that are waiting for beds and additional five or six that have written to the former minister, the member from Swift Current, too, and gotten letters transferring it back from you to her and around until it's been decided.

So now that it's all in your lap, what should these small hospital boards do? Or does it help to bring them in to meet with you? What can they do to get started on it? This is something they've been planning and talking about for a long time.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank the hon. member for explaining his constituents' concern and I think he did it in an admirable fashion and in a sincere fashion. And some of the things that you pointed out were of course, to my mind, feasible alternatives. And we're quite willing to look at that. You mentioned Southey. I'm under the impression that probably that is a very good way to address the situation.

I would say to you that you've had some exchange of correspondence. You were in your seat a few minutes ago when I said that I've already met with 221 boards and groups. I met with two today discussing this. I would encourage you to bring your group from Lafleche and yourself into my office and we'll sit down and talk about this and look at some pattern in which we could perhaps address your situation. I welcome you to come. Just make an appointment and we'll be glad to see you.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, is there funding in place that you could go ahead with — not study — with some more pilot projects over sites like that? And about what would you estimate, say, eight or ten additional beds to a hospital, like either at Rockglen or . . . Rockglen's been pushing for the same thing for a number of years. And the same size, say an eight-, ten-bed addition to a hospital? What kind of a ball-park number would they look at per bed price and how much of an expenditure is this?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think before I could . . . You know, I wouldn't want to mislead you with a ball-park price on a bed because I think it depends on the type of option that one would use — whether it would be an extension on a hospital or it would be some housing facility using the kitchen of the hospital, and so on. So I think the first thing would be to discuss with that local community what they felt were their needs and wants of the various type of modules that we may be able to come about would best address their need.

Certainly we would be building some level 3 and 4 homes in this coming year and looking at some housing components that attach to these, and so on. I would like to sit down and discuss with your people before I tried to put a ball-park figure because until I know exactly what might fit it would be hard to give you an exact figure.

Mr. Engel: — Just one final comment I'd like to make, Mr. Minister, and that is that in our area in particular, we have a greater need for people that need partial care. The hospital administrator told this family, 'Look, unless she's chronically ill, I can't admit her or take care of her for you,' type of thing. What's chronically ill? Is somebody that needs continuous care a chronically ill person or isn't she?

So consequently I'm not sure if you have to amend some of your formula as to under what criteria these people use some of these hospital beds. But I think heavy level 3 would be the terminology that I think this person would be, and if you have something . . . I'll bring that name for you tomorrow morning likely and we'll discuss it from there.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — If you would do that, I'd be glad to follow up and hope we can do something to help this individual. I think what our conversation over the last few minutes has indicated is why we have brought this all together, because you know, where are these various dividing lines? It's a pretty grey area in some situations, if you're dealing all with one department, one ministry, we hope that we can sort things out better in that regard. So thank you very much and I'd be glad to look into your personal situation.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would like to turn for a few moments to the dental plan or what used to be the best dental plan in the world. I would like to ask the minister about a few things and why he is doing some of the things he is doing with the dental plan.

For example, why is it that the four-year-olds are not included in the dental plan this year? I think when they were cut out last year there were many people who expected that that program would be re-established for the four-year-olds — and also the 17-year-olds I think there was an expectation that 17-year-olds would be included in the program. Can you tell me whether you have any intention during your term in office of extending the dental care program; or whether or not you will continue to undermine it to allow people to be fired or positions not to be filled in the dental plan; and whether you will continue to encourage adolescents to go to the private sector?

I would just like to get your opinion of your general policy of this government, because when looking at the *Estimates*, it looks obvious that your intention is to undermine the program to the point where it is ineffectual and then people will leave automatically and you will say, 'No one is using the program, so now we will get rid of it.' A much more honourable thing for you to do if you don't believe in the dental program is to make an announcement that you don't want the dental plan. To undermine it and to do it this way is a very, very, I think, dishonest way of carrying on with the dental plan.

To cut back 22 staff in the dental plan; to cut out the 17-year-olds, who many expected to be included; to cut the four-year-olds; to cancel the Wadena project; and to encourage people to go to the private sector, I think leads everyone to believe that you are out to undermine the program and make it ineffectual. And what I would encourage you to do, if that's your intention, to get rid of the dental plan — to do it honestly, to stand in this House and say that on principle you don't believe in it and you want to get rid of it. And we would appreciate that much more.

I think the people of the province would appreciate your honesty. But to undermine it to the point that it is ineffectual, I think is being dishonest and I think you should reconsider and either cancel the program or else fund it properly and let it do a good job.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, you know, it was a pleasure discussing with the member from Gravelbourg. He had sincere and really, I think, heartfelt concerns which he addressed in a gentlemanly fashion and I thanked him for that. I wish we could continue this because I think this is serious.

I want to first indicate that in no way do we have any intention, and are we, undermining the dental plan. We support the dental plan and we are funding the dental plan. I want to indicate to you that there were 12 groups in the dental plan under your administration; there are 12 groups under the dental plan in this administration. The four-year-olds were never under the dental plan. It was proposed by you before you lost office that you might bring them in. We decided different; we thought on a school-based program. The 16-year-olds have been in the plan; we want to see them moved into the private sector and select their own dentists; we think that's the road to be going.

And finally I want to indicate to you that there are 5,000 more children serviced by the dental plan today than when you lost office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, you will know that under the previous administration that you mentioned a number of groups that were in the dental plan, and you will know that over the last number of years two of your so-called groups were added every year — every year like clockwork — one year at one end; one year at the other. And we had anticipated adding the four-year-olds and the 16-year-olds, and you decided to include one of those groups, as I understand it.

My question to you is: you haven't added any new groups. You say there were 16 . . . I believe you mentioned that there were 12 groups in the program when you took government; you have added none. And that is a drastic change from what there was under the NDP where there was a progression every year — two new groups were added. And what I would like to know is if you have any intention of extending the program during your administration or your term.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think the important figure here is the number of students being treated by the dental plan, and as I reiterate, there are 5,000 more children being treated now than there were under your plan. I want to say that there may be an increase in groups down the trail — I'm not saying there won't — but just to increase groups isn't the main factor. It's how many students are being served, and I repeat — 5,000 more than when you lost office, and that's a considerable number. And if you think treating 5,000 more students is undermining the dental plan, then again you and I fail to follow the same line of logic.

I think 5,000 more Saskatchewan students being treated is an improvement and not an undermining of any plan.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me what the increase was in the previous year? You say it was 5,000 last year. What was the increase the year before in the number of students? I would also like the total number in the dental care program. And if you can tell me the total number that there was the year before and give me the increase, let's say over the last three years, each year how much was the increase,

because I think that you will find that the 5,000 is not a great number to be throwing around.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — We'll get you that information, but as I pointed out, you wanted to know the total number — 159,000 now. That's right now. When you were in office — 155,000.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So there was an increase of about 5,000, and if we go back to sort of a formula where there are certain number of children in each group, you would anticipate that there would probably be about 10,000, or something like that — 10,000 or 12,000 in each group. So I would assume that in the last year when we added two groups to the system the increase would have been about 24,000. But I will wait and we will see what that increase was. But at any rate, I'm sure that the increase under your administration in your first year is not one to be proud of after the progression where about 20,000 children were added each year under the past four or five years. But I will wait for your reply on the number that there were in the last two years prior to your increase of 5,000.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — We're going to supply you with that information of the numbers in the last few years. We're working on that for you.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could explain to me how you will be able to do the dental work if you are not undermining the system and carry out 5,000 more children and do their dental work with 23 less staff. Can you explain that to me?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, I'd be pleased to explain — I think you asked how we were going to deliver the service with 23 less staff. First let me indicate to you that there will be no decrease in the quality of service — 16 of the 23 staff will not be needed because we are transferring that portion of the work to the private dentists. There are enough private dentists in the province, now practising, that they can adequately serve those people. I think it's important that as a youngster becomes a teenager he identifies with a dentist that becomes his dentist, and as he would come out of his school years, he would work with that dentist and have his own personal dentist.

Four of them, and I'm pleased to announce this, that four of the staff that we will not . . . The requirement that we'll not be needing is because of the very good work by the dental teams who are able to treat more students. And three of them, the other three, are because of the rolling in of the Swift Current Health Region into the overall plan. So that makes up your 23. To recap: 16 because of the shift to the private dentists; four because of the efficiency of the dental teams, which I'm very proud of — they can treat more students; and 3 because of the rolling in of the Swift Current Health Region.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — How many students will be transferred in the area you mentioned, to the private sector?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — 24,000 students now. That will increase to 29,000 students come September when school — I got some good news here on my desk — when school enrolls again in September. Do you want this?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I think I have that. I wish you would be as prompt with the questions I'm asking you.

I have here a news clip from the *Star-Phoenix* which says 'Collegiate Clinics will Close,'

which says that:

Dental clinics at Aden Bowman, Mount Royal and Nutana Collegiates will be closed at the end of the school term, Health Department officials announced.

I wonder if this is the beginning of the end of the dental program, where you are now not only cutting staff, not only not including more groups of children, but now we're seeing dental clinics closed. Is this the tip of the iceberg? And how many others are being closed in the province at the present time?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — If I could have the attention of the House, I would answer the question. I know there's reason to be rather happy, but you asked about . . . Is this the tip of the iceberg of destroying the dental plan? Absolutely no. We are bringing the high school students in the cities of Saskatoon and Regina into the private sector.

There will be some dentist chairs and equipment that's in those schools that will not be used in the schools, but we will use that to enrich the program — better facilities, better equipment in the public schools. But certainly, let me reassure you that this is not an attempt to in any way undermine the dental program.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, you will have to do a lot of convincing after the evidence that we have, and your record in the dental program, where groups are not being included in the plan who most people would accept should have been; where the Wadena project has been cancelled; where the private sector is becoming more and more involved; and now where we are seeing actual dental clinics being closed.

You will have a hard time convincing many people that you are not undermining the dental plan and that very quickly we will see the demise of this program as you go back to your basic philosophy of allowing the private dentists to do more and more of the work. I say that that's a sad day for the people of the province and the dental plan — the province where the children's dental care has been top-notch anywhere in North America. To see it cut back now at this time leads one to wonder where we are headed in terms of health promotion and health care, as well as the dental plan.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I just can't let that statement go without response. There is no cut-back in the dental plan. There are 5,000 more students being treated. There is a shift. We are moving the adolescent and the high school students to the private sector. I see nothing wrong with that.

In fact I think that will help that student become acquainted with a practising private dentist and he will follow that dentist through his adult life. I think that is the right move to make, and that is the culmination of the dental program. So to say that we're undermining it and we're taking the service away from the students is absolutely misleading and not correct because there are 5,000 more students being treated.

I make no apologies for putting some of the treatment over to the private-sector dentist. I think we want to see dentists across Saskatchewan. I think we've got to the point where we have an adequate supply of dentists and this helps keep them in practice, and again I must say, hooks that young person to a dentist that he can associate for his life.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:07 p.m.