

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 16, 1983

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you, and of course to the other members of the Assembly, a group of grade 5 students from Whitewood by their teacher, Mrs. Santo, Mrs. Hintz, Mrs. McCormick, and their bus driver, Mr. White.

The group of students will be meeting with myself later today after question period, at which time, Mr. Speaker, I would hope they would take the opportunity to ask myself a few questions. And I will be meeting with them there on the second floor rotunda for pictures and of course refreshments afterwards. So I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in wishing the students a good visit here to our legislature and to the city of Regina. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. LANE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure I welcome a second delegation from Ranch Ehrlo, outside Regina. I look forward to meeting with them. They are in the west gallery — some six students between the ages of 13 and 16. They are accompanied by Mr. Ken Erickson. I look forward to meeting with them after question period, Mr. Speaker, for questions and refreshments. I hope all members will join with me in welcoming them to this Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SAUDER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you, and to the other members of this House, 29 grade 7, 8, and 9 students from the Ridgedale School in Ridgedale. They are accompanied today by their principal, Mr. Allan Brown, teacher, Judy Reimer, also by the bus driver, Allan Breadner, and two parents, Maizie Parbst and Arlene Breadner. I'd just like to ask everyone here to welcome them. Their first comment this afternoon was, 'You sure have a lot more snow here than we got a home.' I think it's a change that we're not usually used to: to have more snow down here at this time of the year. They've got a full two-day tour of the city, and different things in the area: the museum, the RCMP barracks and such things. I'd just like to wish them a good time, an enjoyable time, in the city, and I'll be meeting with them at 2:30 in the rotunda area.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MYERS: — It's my pleasure to introduce a group of students from Saskatoon to you and through you, a group of 48 students from grades 6, 7 and 8 from Prince Philip School, which is situated in my constituency. I hope that their trip is informative and their stay pleasant, and I will remind them that I will be meeting with them at 3 o'clock

for pictures. They are located in the Speaker's gallery, and I would encourage all members of the House to give them a warm welcome.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WEIMAN: — Saskatoon Fairview, thank you, Mr. Speaker — just a point of clarification and just to show that even the Speaker sometimes errs in his designations. The point of clarification is: those fine students that were introduced by my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana are from St. Philip, as in Catholic saint. I too would like to wish them well, and I will join you a little later on also.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Salary Increases for Out-of-Scope Staff

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Finance in the absence of the Premier. Mr. Minister, this has to do with the government's decision to increase the salaries of the highest paid civil servants and the political staff, while at the same time freezing the minimum wage for the 60,000 or more workers for a full two years. Could the minister advise how many out-of-scope staff were affected by the government's decision to increase the salaries by 6 per cent? Could you indicate also, how many out of that total received the actual \$3,000 maximum increase?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — I'll, Mr. Speaker, take notice of the question to the exact number, and return when I have those exact numbers. I can advise the Assembly that most of those people were members of out-of-scope that have been here for some time. Many of them, deputies primarily, did not have an increase in salary last April — went through the entire year — but other than that I will take notice and get you the exact number.

MR. KOSKIE: — Further supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the minister if he would provide how much will these salary hikes for senior civil servants and political staff cost the taxpayers; that is, the total cost of the increase overall.

MR. ANDREW: — Well, I will take notice of that and get you the exact numbers.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — A question to the acting Premier, and it has to do with a related issue, and that is your government's decision to increase salaries for your highest paid civil servants and political staff by up to 3,000 year. I want to refer the Acting Premier to an editorial in last Saturday's *Star-Phoenix*: 'Conservatives breaking faith.' I quote briefly:

The fiasco over executive salaries has left an impression that the government views restraint in its inner circle somewhat differently than it sees the issue in the rest of the province.

My question is: do you not agree that those people who honoured your government's inflation-minus-one guide-line this year have every right to feel betrayed?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that 6 per cent is something

under inflation minus one, number one. Number two, I understand that had the natural course of events been followed as to the contract that the previous administration was taking a look at, the out-of-scope people would have got something in the neighbourhood of 13 per cent. So I think, Mr. Speaker, that by and large our Minister of finance negotiated, I think, a pretty fair deal with the out-of-scope employees.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that those without sin should in fact be the first to criticize. And when I take a look at this document, Mr. Speaker, that says one Eiling Kramer, after he had retired from this legislature, was put into some cosy little arrangement, Mr. Speaker, that would net him in the neighbourhood of \$656 a day . . . I think, Mr. Speaker, that is despicable, and those who are without sin should be casting the first stone.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do you not, Mr. Premier, feel that those on minimum wage . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Acting Premier . . . Do you not feel that those on minimum wage who have been asked to take no increase to assist economic recovery, do you not think they have every right to feel betrayed by this exorbitant increase?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I think, Mr. Speaker, that 6 per cent of negotiated contract is not exorbitant. I think those on minimum wage who are receiving the highest minimum wage in Canada — receiving the highest minimum wage in Canada, Mr. Speaker — have not in fact been betrayed. I think that any government in other economic circumstances would like to see the minimum wage in fact increased many times, but in fact that wasn't to be the case. The negotiated settlement of 6 per cent is not unreasonable and I commend our Minister of Finance for keeping it at that level.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Acting Premier, you justified this increase by suggesting it met the guide-line of inflation minus one. How does the Acting Premier justify the increase of 26.4 per cent to a Mr. Craig Dutton, the executive assistant to the Premier?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, that's last week's question. I won't be held to this, but I think the Premier answered it at that time by saying that it was a job reclassification. But if you like, I'll take notice and get the answer for you.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, I would ask the Acting Premier to do that and I'd ask the Acting Premier at the same time to report on the two orders in council, both of whom describe him as an executive assistant with no change in job description. So I'd ask the Acting Premier to report on that as well, if you would.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I'll take notice.

Availability of Orders in Council to Public

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to direct a question to the Acting Premier. As you will be aware, that the Premier's statement in the House last Friday, that members of his government will always tell the truth in the legislature, and also the Premier has indicated and repeated many times, last week during estimates, that cabinet decisions in the form of

orders in councils are readily available to the public within hours or a few days of being passed. And so what I ask you, the Deputy Premier: can you explain to the Assembly why the cabinet orders 628 and 629, both of which were approved on April the 20th, still are not made available to the public?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, clearly I don't have the foggiest. I don't even know what 628 and 629 might be, but I'll take notice of the question and find out for the member.

MR. KOSKIE: — As a supplement, I would also, in view of what the Premier has said, Mr. Deputy Premier: after you investigate, I would like, if whether you would give a guarantee that the proposition which he indicated to the House that they would be made available within hours or within a few days, that you will in fact guarantee that these two particular OCs will be made public, which were passed on April the 20th.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, firstly Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to guarantee the member nothing. I told him I would take notice, I told him I would take notice of the question and find out where they were and I am sure . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Hidden away.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I can remember, Mr. Speaker, when we were in opposition and we would walk down to Executive Council and beg them please to get a look at the OCs, and from time to time we would get one and they would allow us to copy it and then sneak back to our office. But you know, compared to the standard set by the previous administration, Mr. Speaker, I think we have been more than co-operative with the members opposite as it relates to access to orders in council.

Saskatchewan Forest Products' Lumber Yards

MR. THOMPSON: — I direct my question to the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation. On May the 5th you took notice of a question which I asked concerning SFPC's retail lumber yard in Prince Albert and Sturgis. The next day on May the 6th you told the Assembly that you were still waiting for the arrival of written material on this issue. So I ask you again, Mr. Minister, did Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation sell the inventory at its retail lumber yard in Prince Albert? Was that inventory sold to Econo Lumber of Prince Albert?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, I had the information last week but it was being taken up — the questions — with the Crow and I thought that was probably more priority to the government here than answering this at the time, although I'll make the information available now.

The sale of the inventory of the P.A. retail yard was sold to Visionex Enterprises Ltd. of Prince Albert. There was considerable amount of dimension lumber in the yard which was weathered badly, grey in colour, which was obsolete and which would reduce the value further. Also, it is realized that there would be a cost of about 15 per cent to remove the stock, so it was sold at approximately 15 per cent less than market value of the lumber as per market value. We thought it was a very good return for it in which they took all the entire stock.

In regards to the lumber yard itself, after it has had approval, we hope to put it up for public tender — the yard itself in P.A. The yard in Sturgis right now, we're in the process

of selling the material out at a discount of 10 per cent to everybody in the province. It still gives us a return of about 25 per cent profit. We hope to realize a good return from the merchandise, which was about \$500,000 worth of merchandise there that was in stock. It's gradually going down, and when it gets down to a reasonable amount left, then we'll probably tender the balance.

MR. THOMPSON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Was the inventory sold without calling tenders?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Yes, it was.

MR. THOMPSON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could you indicate the reason for Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation selling this lumber without tendering, or without notifying other lumber yards in the area that you were going to sell the material?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, I gave the answer a moment ago. What we had done, we had some people come in and did a market appraisal of the value of the lumber. We took the entire stock market value, what it would have been worth, less 15 per cent. And so all the stock, they took it all out of the yard. They've cleaned the yard entirely, and when it's all cleaned out of there and left it in a tidy condition, then we'll put the rest of it up for tender.

Documents Concerning Staff at Valley View Centre

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Social Services. It has to do with the recent meeting at Moose Jaw involving her deputy minister and a number of people concerned about her decision to fire staff at the Valley View Centre. And I was interested in the press report of that meeting and particularly in a portion of it which quoted the deputy as follows:

Near the end of the meeting Mr. Podiluk agreed to supply the association with documents outlining what the department feels the job reductions will mean at Valley View. He also called for any evaluation the other groups could give him.

Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in hearing that the deputy had documents in relation to that particular discharge of employees when those documents were refused when we asked the minister for them during estimates. My question to you, Madam Minister, is this: is there documentation anywhere which justifies your dismissal of people at Valley View and, if so, will you make it available to members of this House?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps before I answer his question, just a point of clarification. These people were never fired. I know we keep going around and round on that, but we'll do it again. I believe the deputy's intent in talking about the 'documents' were the information available as to what it means to the program of Valley View, and that certainly has been shared with the opposition in this House.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the documents just referred to by the minister, the documents which outline what the department feels the changes will mean to the program at Valley View, will the minister indicate what documents have been shared with members of this House in that regard?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I believe it's been a sharing of information, and that was what I had said the first time. As to what the deputy specifically means by the document in the article that you were referring to, I will take notice and bring it back to you.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — A supplementary. When you have found out from the deputy what documents he was promising members of the public, would you then advise us whether you will supply us with the same documents?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, until I clarify what he means, first of all by the word 'document' . . . It would be rather ludicrous to guarantee you anything else until I find out what that means.

Regina Native Community Awareness Society

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a further question to the Minister of Social Services. And this is a different subject; it has to do with yet another non-government agency which has had its money cut, its funding cut. And the latest victim . . . Perhaps not the latest, but last week's victim at least — it's already Monday — is the Regina Native Community Awareness Society which has had its funding cut in half for this year and advised that it will be discontinued for next year.

This is the latest in a long line of budget cuts. I ask the minister: are you saying that the work which was carried on by the Regina Native Community Awareness Society was not necessary work? Or are you saying it will be carried on by some other agency?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The function of the group that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to was one of counselling, information and referral, and housing location. And if you take a look at the other NGOs that are in Regina; for instance, the Regina native women's association gets funding for approximately \$174,000, which also includes a family worker, that they do the housing location, information and referral, and the counselling; we also have the transition house through the Regina native women's association, and that's approximately \$194,000, and they too do counselling, information and referral, and housing location when they can; we also have the family workers program through the friendship centres that basically does the same thing. Now that is within mine. There's a couple of other — at least one other agency that I'm aware of that does that same type of thing and that is the Regina low income housing authority. So I think, given when you look at the entire picture, you perhaps get a better perspective as to what services are there.

I might also add it is my understanding that this particular NGO that you are talking about will receive federal funding for the year '83-84.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Is the minister not aware that all of those agencies were operating last year, the one's she identified, including the Regina Native Community Awareness Society? And is she not aware that all of them were having their facilities fully taxed by the many issues being faced by native people in Regina?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Yes, I'm aware of that. I'm also aware that such organizations like the Regina native women's association has received considerable support from this government in a 7 per cent increase in their funding.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I hope the minister . . . Are you suggesting that the 7 per cent increase that you're providing the Regina native women's organization will allow them not only to do the work they did last year, but all the work done by the Regina Native Community Awareness? And if you're not, then what is the relevance of saying you're giving 7 per cent more to the native women's organization and cutting all the funds for the Regina Native Community Awareness Society?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, the relevance is probably in point to clarify some very poorly misconcepted ideas that you choose to leave out there, and that is that all NGOs have been cut. That simply isn't true. I just wish to point out that there has been some increases.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, new question to the Minister of Social Services. While we concede that a 7 per cent increase is an increase, I hope no one is suggesting that it allows for an increase of program. And when you are providing the Regina native women's organization with 7 per cent, which permits no increase in programming, and using that as a justification for cutting the Regina Native Community Awareness Society, surely do you not agree that you are using specious arguments, and that in fact the work done by the Regina Native Community Awareness Society will not be done by any organization now?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I had pointed out that they will receive funding during the fiscal year '83-84 from the federal government.

Economic Development Plan for Northern Saskatchewan

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On July the 24th of last year, the Minister for Northern Saskatchewan indicated to people in the civil service that he had an economic development plan for northern Saskatchewan. I wonder if the minister would be able to indicate to this Assembly what that economic development plan is in terms of economic self-sufficiency.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure, it's about two weeks since we went through this with the hon. member in estimates — went through it in a good deal of detail, in fact, as I recall, for about five hours, back and forth, and it appeared to me that the hon. member was quite satisfied with the answer at that time.

But just to reiterate very, very briefly, I would say that the economic development plan of the North under this administration will be different from the former administration's approach in this way; our approach will be the economic development for the benefit of northern communities and people living in those communities will be with jobs that are viable in an ongoing way — that can last in an ongoing way — rather than jobs that are created only by government, to work only for government, and for building that is only done by government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. YEW: — The minister for Northern Saskatchewan will know that the unemployment rate is, at the very minimum, 85 per cent, and the welfare case-load is sky-rocketing at the moment for northern residents. Now you indicated to us last year that you had an economic development plan for northern Saskatchewan. I have been waiting patiently to see that economic development plan. People in northern Saskatchewan have been

waiting. When can we see that economic development plan?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, I've said to the hon. member before that certainly we've been working on it. It should also be pointed out, Mr. Speaker, that while the hon. member has been rather impatient — and, you know, I believe that, you know, it has been a year that's gone by, that's true — but as we've seen in many areas of what went on in the former DNS there was one awful mess to clean up, and it's been an ongoing process in cleaning that mess up, and we don't make any apologies for that.

But I would say in the area of economic development in northern Saskatchewan, even while we have been in that clean-up process, there will, for example, be a wild rice processing plant that was very much talked about by the former government but now will be a fact under this government. Wild rice processing is an industry that has some long-term benefit for northern Saskatchewan — indeed, long-term benefit for all of Saskatchewan. And working in the marketing plant and so on, that will be going ahead.

My colleague beside me tells me that this year there will be 150 houses being built in northern Saskatchewan. We don't apologize for the freeze on housing units last year. Over last year's term while we tried to clean up the awful mess that was there in northern housing, now we're able to, after that clean-up has gone on, to a great extent at least, we are now able to get under way and start into the housing projects of northern Saskatchewan, which as the hon. member has said, are much needed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. YEW: — Mr. Speaker, a new question. I must say that prior to 1971 there was no mess in northern Saskatchewan . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. YEW: — Thank you, thank you very much . . . because nobody took the initiative to recognize the problems that were there. There were 1,300 houses built in northern Saskatchewan. People appreciated those homes. And there were at least so many more programs and \$21 million spent on economic development. Now I want to question the minister and that government on that side of the House: what are you prepared to do for northern Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, the question begs a certain response, but I'm sure it would take quite a long time. He says, 'prior to 1971 there was no mess in northern Saskatchewan,' and I tend to agree with that to some extent. There were long-standing problems, and have been long-standing problems of unemployment, as the hon. member suggests, in northern Saskatchewan for an awful long time. And it's important that he has now recognized that it was there prior to 1971. It had remained through from 1971 to 1982 and those problems are there. We recognize them. The former administration addressed what they saw as the problems of northern Saskatchewan in their interventionist and socialist sort of way. We will be addressing them in a very different way, and we think that we should be allowed at least a year, or more than a year now, to address those problems and to put our plans into place. They were allowed 11 years and they showed the people of northern Saskatchewan and the people of all Saskatchewan that their plans wouldn't work.

Alleged Housing Arrears in Northern Saskatchewan

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. New question. Just a few days ago, Mr. Minister, your caucus, your cabinet, and your back-benchers accused me of having arrears on my house, but at the same time, you accused 1,100 other people in northern Saskatchewan of having arrears, of mismanagement. Now tell me, Mr. Minister, tell this Assembly what you want to do about those 1,100 other cases.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has pointed out, it goes back to the reply that I gave just a few minutes ago here about the extreme problems that we found in taking over that administration. There were many problems, not the least of which were the problems of housing units being built with no one paying, with a lack of responsibility placed upon the people who were the beneficiaries of the various benefits — housing, for example. I believe, in the case of the 1,100 that the minister talked about, there were some that didn't pay for as much as 10 years.

What we're saying is that it's a chronic problem and what we've identified there, and what has been identified, is an extreme problem that's been on for a long time. What we have said is, we'll clean it up, and that also is an ongoing process. It hasn't been done in one year and I doubt if we could have it finished by the end of this next year. But that process is under way and we're committed to that clean-up. We're committed to that clean-up. As well, we're committed to a change of direction, and that change of direction will augur very well for northern people, and should develop along with some responsibility upon the northern people themselves.

MOTION

Hours of Sitting

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, one week hence is Victoria Day and that's the long week-end providing we want it to be a long week-end. And so I would move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, with leave of the Assembly:

That when this Assembly adjourns on Friday, May 20th, 1983 that it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, May 24th, 1983.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not debatable)

The following motions for returns (not debatable) were transferred to motions for returns (debatable): returns 113 and 114.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Andrew that Bill No. 47 — **An Act respecting the Administration of the Finances of Saskatchewan and to repeal Certain Obsolete Statutes related to Financial Matters** be now read a second time.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I want to address a few remarks to the house with respect to this bill, and I want to say at the outset that I will be opposing this bill. I will be opposing the bill not because of any substantial objection to the main principle of the bill, but there are so many subsidiary principles within the bill to which I object that on balance. I will be opposing the bill. I want now to outline some of the reasons why I believe this bill has many flaws and ought to be substantially redrafted.

The minister, in introducing the bill, indicated that his objectives were: to modernize the statute by attending to certain housekeeping items, with which one cannot object; to reorganize and improve the role of the auditor and the comptroller, to which I have no objection. I earlier stated my approval of the idea of a separate statute dealing with the Provincial Auditor and I expressed my reservations about having the comptroller separated from the Department of Finance and placed in the new Department of Revenue, or placed anew in the Department of Revenue. There are proposals in the bill for streamlining the government's borrowing procedures — and I'll have more to say about that — and there are proposals which, in the minister's opinion, maintain the government's accountability and responsibility to the legislature — and I will have more to say about that.

With respect to modernization of housekeeping, the statute replaces a statute which was old, and which lent itself to the suggestion that there ought to be changes, and for the most part the number of housekeeping changes are unobjectionable.

With respect to the auditor and the comptroller, I think the proof there will be in the eating — the proof of that pudding will be in the eating. We will see whether or not there is any particular change in the functions of the auditor and the comptroller. The auditor will be under his new statute, to the Bill 48, and I think that as I read that bill, which we can more appropriately debate at another time, there are provisions for the establishing of the auditor as a servant of the legislature, but no provisions for expanding the role of the auditor. Again, with respect to the comptroller, I have already expressed my views on that.

Moving on, Mr. Speaker, to the areas about accountability and responsibility, the bill seems to me, Mr. Speaker, to incorporate a couple of major principles. First, in the guise of clearing away the underbrush of material which must be dealt with in order, let us say, to borrow money, the bill in effect means that the legislature will have a much lesser voice in how the finances of the province are administered, and the public and the legislature will have a much smaller flow of information.

To give an example of the former, the former treasury department act, and The Department of Finance Act which succeeded it, laid out what investments the Minister of Finance could invest in, and it indicated what types of securities could be purchase. Now by and large that will not be the domain of the legislature, but it will be the domain of the minister and in some instances the cabinet. And shortly put, where the legislature could in the past indicate what types of securities the Minister of Finance could invest in, it will no longer have that role, but the minister will have that jurisdiction, requiring in some cases cabinet approval, but in no case the approval of the legislature. So that's point number one.

Point number two, with respect to a flow of information, as I read the act — and we can perhaps pursue whether or not my interpretation is correct — there will be a good

number of instances where orders in council would have been required in the past, but will not now be required, which in effect means that the information which would have been available to the legislature and the public through the order in council process will no longer be available. And those are important changes.

There are a couple of other points that I want to mention. There is one that gives me some concern, and that has to do with where the funds belonging to the public may be deposited. In the past this has been confined to banks and credit unions. And we are aware of the very considerable safeguards which exist to make sure that chartered banks will not go bankrupt. And I think we're all aware of those, and it's been more than just about 60 years now since the last chartered bank in Canada failed. We are aware of the very stringent regulations under which credit unions operate with an elaborate mutual aid board structure which offers many protections for depositors.

And the new regulations in effect permit the minister to deposit money in trust companies and other such institutions. One would wish that the record of trust companies in Canada was as good as that of banks and credit unions in Saskatchewan, but such is not the case. And all of us know that trust companies have not proved to be safe vehicles for depositing funds. Arrangements have been made to protect small depositors up to \$60,000, I believe the figure is, but that is not of much protection to the Crown who would be, very possibly, a large depositor. I question whether or not the legislation should permit deposits in trust companies and like institutions until some safeguards are available.

I turn to another area where the legislature used to have some measure of control, but which measure of control is now being removed. The act is in effect a compendium of a number of other acts, including The Saskatchewan Loans Act which will be repealed by this act. The Saskatchewan Loans Act had a provision in it whereby there was a statutory limit to cover Consolidated Fund deficiencies, and I believe the statutory limit was \$250 million that might be borrowed to cover Consolidated Fund deficiencies. And that ceiling is being removed. One can understand why the ceiling is being removed, because \$250 million as a Consolidated Fund deficiency is with this government a relatively trifling sum, and they are likely to see much larger deficiencies than that.

But none the less, it would have been I think in keeping with the spirit of the previous act to put in another ceiling. If they have to put in a ceiling of a billion dollars, indicating that that's the likely amount of their Consolidated Fund deficiencies at a given moment, then so be it. But I think that this ceiling which has been in the act for many, many, many years should remain in the act, even though under the circumstances the ceiling may need to be raised.

I come to the matter of accountability, and I am less than convinced that this government has a commitment to accountability. Notwithstanding frequent comments, I am aware of the extremely lengthy delays in answering orders for return. I think of the session in 1971 where the session convened within a month of the government taking office, and within 10 days of the session convening there were answers to written questions on the order paper — a government which took office at the end of June of 1971 was providing written answers to a legislature before the middle of August in 1971. The records are there in the *Journals* and cannot be gainsaid. They're certainly all there and no one can deny that, and one can look at the *Journals* for succeeding years and you will see . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order please. I find difficulty in relating what the hon. member is now talking about to the bill that's before the House, and I'd just ask you to return to the subject.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I was coming to the matter of accountability, and I was referring to the remarks of the minister when he opened debate on this bill respecting the objects of this bill, to maintain and perhaps to increase accountability. I was expressing my doubts as to whether or not the government had that commitment. I will refrain from giving further instances and proceed directly to the bill itself.

I am not clear, and I will be directing some questions to the minister in committee, as to whether or not the bill covers, in its requirements for treasury board approval and investment board approval and like approvals provided throughout, whether these apply to revolving accounts which we have recently established in a number of departments. And that certainly is obscure since, at least in my judgement, there is no clear statutory requirement for the reporting of these revolving funds. We'll have an opportunity to pursue that matter further in committee.

I want to pursue this matter of whether or not this bill does increase the accountability of the Department of Finance to the legislature and to the public and to pose a number of questions. I ask whether in section 15, for example, and I'm not going to deal with the terms of these sections, but whether or not these revolving funds are excluded from the accountability provisions of the act as being accounts that are managed by a minister. I ask whether or not the investment board, which is given very, very wide responsibilities, has any obligation to table reports of its affairs. I ask whether or not the provision which allows special warrants to be passed up to within seven days of a session, to do things which otherwise would need to be done by supplementary estimates, expands or contracts the accountability, I asked whether or not the provisions of this bill mean that some borrowing which previously required orders in council, particularly for Crown corporations but for other agencies as well, will now be able to be done without orders in council, and I ask the same question on this bill that I did with respect to the Department of Revenue, whether or not it permits remissions by a minister without any publication of what debts to the Crown have been forgiven by the minister. And those are a number of questions which one asks when dealing with the assertion that this bill preserves the accountability of the Department of Finance and the minister to the legislature and to the public.

There are one or two other points that I wish to raise, Mr. Minister. I am concerned about whether or not the definitions of public funds which are very wide will permit the trust accounts and documents of legal aid lawyers to be available for scrutiny. I raise that issue because of the proposals being put forward by the Minister of Justice in centralizing the operations of the legal aid system, and I raise that issue because it's been the manner of some litigation which will be known to the minister, and the question I raise is whether or not this act is meant to overturn the legal judgement which heretofore has held that trust funds and similar documents of the public in the hands of legal aid lawyers were not available for scrutiny by the Provincial Auditor and by the Department of Finance.

Let me turn to some other aspects which deserve to be looked at with some care. One of those is the affect of this legislation on the financing arrangements of Crown corporations. On the face of it, it looks as if under this bill, all borrowings by Crown corporations will need to be approved by the treasury board and all the investments by the investment board. Investments is not defined, so this really means that any buying

ahead of inventory, or a great number of other things which might be classed as investments. Investments are, after all, the expending of money in the hope of getting a return, and any buying ahead of inventory or like matters are, in a sense, investments. A great number of things can be classed as investments. Indeed, getting a term deposit or something for 30-day money might well be investments.

If the Crown corporations are not going to be able to manage their affairs, not only their financial affairs but their commercial affairs (the ordinary buying of, let's say, a stock of inventory without the approval of the investment board, which is a committee of cabinet ministers), we are substantially changing the nature of the Crown corporations and the authority of the boards of directors, and we are implicitly changing the legislation which governs those corporations. I ask myself, for example, how Sedco can operate if it is negotiating and it is called upon to, perhaps, offer to purchase a building and lease it back to a prospective client (which is undoubtedly an investment) and this must be cleared by a committee of cabinet ministers, all, I would take it, in secret, so that we will not know whether or not the investment board or the board of directors of the corporation or the minister is responsible for these decisions. I think that those are very, very real questions: the impact of this bill on the way that the Crown corporations are likely to operate.

In a similar way . . . And I have real questions on that. I do not object so much on the other side, saying that the treasury board shall approve all of the borrowings of Crown corporations, because basically that is the situation as it now is with respect to all of the larger borrowings, including the overdrafts, although no doubt some borrowings in the sense of running up accounts is done by corporations without any approval. But with respect to investments, and I think here of Sedco's normal operations of frequently buying buildings and leasing back, or taking equity stock — all of which is apparently prohibited — I really question whether or not those moves are wise.

I have, Mr. Speaker . . . There were one or two other topics which I hoped would have been dealt with in the bill. One of them is this perennial question of whether or not departments can overexpend their budgets. And we all are aware of the fact that departments in fact do order things in February for delivery in May, and they do order amounts which are greater than their unexpended balance for the end of March, and the auditor duly reports these matters. And there is no rational way to solve it other than to acknowledge that some forward ordering must be done.

I noted that the members opposite, when they were in opposition, used to put around the story that this was all unauthorized expenditure. And in one sense of the word, I suppose it is. But no attempt has been made to address that.

But even more seriously — and this is the real point I make — it appears that this rule has now been applied to all agents of the government. Now all of the Crown corporations are agents of the government. And one is then left with the question of whether or not all Crown corporations are prohibited from incurring any liability greater than the unencumbered balance of their appropriation. That is perhaps a strained interpretation because they don't ordinarily have an appropriation other than a statutory appropriation. But many, many Crown corporations habitually incur liabilities which are greater than the money they have in hand at the moment.

I would like to know how the power corporation could go about the construction of a power dam without making commitments well beyond not only the money they have in

hand but also the statutory appropriation which is provided because they are buying things for delivery two or three years hence. And that certainly is a matter which I will want to inquire about, and it seems to me that the bill is taking a wrong approach to.

To deal with a couple of other more minor matters, I raise again my objection of any minister of the Crown being able to forgive a debt payable to the Crown without having to indicate this either by order in council or, at minimum, in the *Public Accounts*. And secondly, I am not attracted to the bounty hunting provisions which are contained in the bill which provide that where someone advises the Crown that someone is avoiding taxation, that the adviser, the person giving the information, will be able to share the penalty payable. It has perhaps the merit of efficiency, but it has certain odium connected with it. Those, Mr. Speaker, are among the very serious questions that I have with respect to this legislation. On balance, therefore, I will not be supporting the legislation, because I believe that it cuts down the accountability of the Department of Finance to the treasury, to the legislature and to the public, and because it contains a great number of other provisions which, as I read them, at least, will not add to, but in fact will hinder the efficient administration of the financial affairs of the Government of Saskatchewan taken as a whole.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I advise the House that I will be opposing the bill.

MR. SPEAKER: — It is my duty to inform the Assembly that the hon. member is about to exercise his right to close debate. Thereafter, all members will be precluded from speaking. If any member wishes to speak, let him do so now.

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, only two or three points in response to the hon. member's address. Number one, to clear off some things . . . Number one, the question he raises with regards to remissions. That matter was dealt with when we dealt with at committee stage in the bill on Revenue and Financial Services. At that point in time, I advised the hon. member that the *Public Accounts* would in fact reflect any remissions of taxes that were being done by the government. The reason for it is hardly sinister in nature. What happens to make any kind of a remission — whether it be \$50, or whatever it is — you have to have a cabinet document prepared, taken to cabinet, having approval of it. The net result is that the total cost to the government to generate that OC probably costs more than the tax that you were in fact remitting.

With regard to the revolving funds, we went through that earlier on when we dealt with advance accounts. And clearly it was stated at that time, Mr. Speaker, in no uncertain terms, that this in fact would be far more accountable than the previous system of advance accounts wherein the auditor will come in, the auditor will audit those particular funds. They will be disclosed to the legislature. There's a particular vote that has to be passed now by the legislature; it wasn't before. So clearly that is far more accountable than there were before.

But I think the more important thing, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about accountability, what we're having here with this new act and its sister acts — particularly the Provincial Auditor's act — for the first time this government has listened to the concerns expressed by the Provincial Auditor for the last 10 years as to wanting some independence. And clearly, how can you make the legislature more accountable than to provide the independence that has been sought at and been sought after for so long by the Provincial Auditor?

The Provincial Auditor many times raised the concern that he was concerned about his

independence. And the main reason he was concerned about his independence, Mr. Speaker, was he was concerned that if he came down with the wrong decision, to paraphrase it, if he come down and ruffled the waters too much, the cabinet could cut his salary in half. That will be solved now — a separate act. Those things, Mr. Speaker, are far more important, and the hon. member did not refer to it. With regard to the deficits, he jumped in and talked about the deficits. I wonder if he mentioned the fact that the neighbouring province of Manitoba has just received a downgrading with a higher deficit. And that's a province with the same political colour as the members opposite. I take it you are critical of that particular government whose budget deficit is gone to the point where the bond rating now shows a double A-minus, heading towards a single A. I wonder if he's concerned about that.

With regards to the comment about the banks and the trust companies, I will certainly take that under advisement, but I think it is unfair, Mr. Speaker, for the hon. member to try to paint all trust companies as being somehow sinister and dishonest. I think that is an unfortunate statement to make, Mr. Speaker. Clearly some have troubles, but that doesn't mean that because one has trouble all trust companies are bad, all trust companies are sinister, in that type of way.

With regard to the Crown corporations . . . The rules with regards to borrowing dollars from the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, will remain basically in place. And what that says for the Crown corporation to borrow money . . . They can't go venturing off on their own to borrow money but it must all channel through a single borrowing agent, which is the Department of Finance. That's a policy developed before under the previous administration and carried on with this administration. The hon. member tries to make the point as the ongoing scare tactic that somehow this government is out to dismantle all the Crown corporations. And that's the nature of that particular line of questioning. Mr. Speaker: we're going to dismantle all the Crown corporations. We heard that argument prior to the election, and one year later I don't see many Crown corporations being dismantled.

It's much the same as we heard about medicare, that: after a year, let them into power, and medicare would all be gone. Well, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that medicare is still strong and in place. I think, Mr. Speaker, if I was to venture into my crystal ball, the people of Saskatchewan believe that this government is performing the job of managing the economy as it relates to health care, better — better, Mr. Speaker — than the previous administration did.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I simply close debate on second reading of this bill and would ask all members to support a very good bill.

Motion agreed to on division, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

PARKS AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 39

Item 1

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Would the minister introduce his officials, please?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left here I have Lyle Lensen, assistant deputy minister. Behind me I have Mae Boa, director of administration. Sitting at the back I have Pete Edwards, superintendent of northern fisheries; Alan Appleby, director of resource lands; Tony Richmond, executive director of forestry division. And on my right here, I have Ross MacLennan, director of wildlife.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have a number of questions today. I don't think it will take too long to get through your department, however. I think before I get into the questioning, I would just ask you to give us a brief explanation of the new department that we are discussing here right now — Parks and Renewable Resources. What has been added to your department and what has been taken away and, as a result, the new name — Parks and Renewable Resources?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, what we've taken out of it is marketing and development . . . Marketing, promotion, and tourism is taken out, and we've brought into it historic parks — really, some parks that would be part of the whole Parks and Renewable Resources. At one time historic parks used to be in there, I understand, so it's not just something new. It's just been brought back in again.

MR. THOMPSON: — Could you indicate how many historic parks we have in the province, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. HARDY: — We have 10.

MR. THOMPSON: — I now want to, Mr. Chairman, turn to forestry, Mr. Minister, I want to turn to forestry. First of all, could you indicate to the legislature how many mills you have under your jurisdiction?

HON. MR. HARDY: — We don't have any directly under our department, but would you like to know how many mills are operating in the province? Is that sort of the question?

MR. THOMPSON: — No. I don't, Mr. Minister. The Saskatchewan Forest Product's mills are under . . . It's not under tourism, not under your jurisdiction, but the forestry is. Is this right?

Okay. I will turn to the forestry then. Could you indicate to the legislature today just how many nurseries you have in the province and how many trees that you intend to plant in Saskatchewan this summer?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, we have approximately 14 million trees available for planting this year, 11 million of which we will be planting. The balance will be: through the schools there'll be one tree for every child; some for tree farm wood lots, and the wildlife federation are going to plant some trees.

MR. THOMPSON: — You have 11 million trees that are now growing in your provincial nurseries. Could you indicate if you have any plans for expansion of them nurseries or has there been any cut-back in trees started in the nurseries or jobs that have been lost in the nurseries? And I speak of the nursery at Big River and Prince Albert.

HON. MR. HARDY: — To our knowledge, Mr. Chairman, no trees, or no jobs have been cut back in the nurseries. You asked me a question before there: how many nurseries? There's four nurseries; two main nurseries and two satellite nurseries. I didn't answer your full question there before. In regards to the jobs, we don't know of any jobs or aware of any jobs being cut back in the nurseries. I think that was all the question.

MR. THOMPSON: — You're indicating that there has been no cut-back in positions at any of the nurseries, and I specifically ask you: has there been any cut-backs in positions or in the starting of new trees in the Big River nursery?

HON. MR. HARDY: — As far as I know, Mr. Chairman there has been no cut-back in staff nor no cut-back in the number of trees for Big River, although it was mentioned just a minute ago we might like to expand there.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay. Mr. Minister, you're indicating that there will be an expansion of the Big River nursery which will create more jobs and there will not be any less jobs in the Big River nursery in the year under review.

HON. MR. HARDY: — What I said, Mr. Chairman, is that I didn't say there would be an expansion. I said we would like to expand and that's something we're looking at Big River. As far as I know, anyway, they tell me there'd be no cut-back in jobs this year. Whether there will be an expansion of jobs this year or not, I couldn't answer that one.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, is it fair to say that you're not sure whether there will be any expansion of the Big River nursery, but you will guarantee that there will be no less jobs in the Big River nursery this year than there was last year?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman and hon. member, I can't guarantee there will be no cut-back in any jobs any place, but we don't anticipate any job cut-backs. As you know, you look at all the nurseries each year on a year-to-year basis, I did say that we had looked at, and will continue to look at, a possible expansion of the Big River one, which would be more jobs, but I can't say there wouldn't be a cut-back, or I can't say there will be more jobs. I'm saying that we anticipate it will stay about the same this year as it did last year.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, could you indicate when the contracts will be let for the tree planting in Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Most of the tree contracts have been signed and let out. There may be a few yet to come, but most of them are already out.

MR. THOMPSON: — The contracts have been let for the planting of 11 million trees in Saskatchewan. Could you indicate who the contractors are that are going to be planting these trees, where they will be planting, and how many trees each contractor has received?

HON. MR. HARDY: — They're looking up to see. If we can't find it we'll send it to you. But in regards to the number of trees that's out, it was 8.5 million that was tendered out or that we had processed so far, and the balance are in the fall.

MR. THOMPSON: — You will send me that information across when you get it?

HON. MR. HARDY: — I understand that we don't have it with us, so we'll send it to you, yes.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay, thank you, Mr. Minister. I now want to turn to fisheries, and I'll ask you a few questions regarding fish hatcheries and fish policies in Saskatchewan.

I first want to turn to the fish subsidy that we have in northern Saskatchewan, and I believe that's under your jurisdiction. Could you indicate if there has been any policy change in the fish transportation subsidy to the fishermen in the province of Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, I understand we have one hatchery in the province. There has been some change in the subsidy on transportation, although the rate is still the same at 27.5 cents a pound — up to 27.5 cents a pound. About 90 per cent of the lakes now come under that. There's about 35 lakes or about 10 per cent of the lakes are paid up . . . The maximum that we pay now is up to one-half of the market value of the fish. So, you know, it's been a bit of change there, but it affects about 10 per cent of the fish caught in Saskatchewan.

MR. THOMPSON: — One-half the market value of the fish is what the transportation subsidy is today.

HON. MR. HARDY: — To clarify that, it's one-half of the price received by the fishermen from the . . . (inaudible) . . . co-operative.

MR. THOMPSON: — Yes. Mr. Minister, this has been quite a change in the policy. The policy had been that 95 per cent of the transportation costs were covered by the government. Now you are going to pay one-half of the cost of the fish for transportation. Now let me give you an example of what that is going to mean to the commercial fishing industry in this province.

If you are fishing at Dore Lake and the transportation costs you 1 cent to get that fish to market, and there's a 600,000-lb. fishery — or in that neighbourhood — on Dore Lake, the government will pay one-half cent for the transportation of that commodity. Most certainly that is not a big problem on Dore Lake, as a transportation subsidy. But let me give you an example of what it's going to be if you are fishing in Pasfield Lake where the transportation costs may be 35 cents to 40 cents a lb. to get that fish into market. And you are going to pay one-half of the price of that fish, and he takes a jackfish out of the lake, and when he takes that jackfish to market he is going to get 20 cents for it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Kind of like the Crow rate.

MR. THOMPSON: — Yeah. Or he is going to get . . . Let's just say he's going to get 30 cents a lb. for that fish, and you are going to pay one-half of the cost. It's quite fair and it's no problem to the commercial fisherman who is fishing in Canoe Narrows, or is fishing in Dore Lake, or is fishing in Diefenbaker Lake. But let me tell you when you get up into the northern lakes and you start fishing on well, let's just use Carén Lake . . . Well we could use Athabasca Lake, and that's even worse. But we could talk about Cree Lake where it's going to cost you, say, 35 cents to haul that fish in, and the price of your trout — and the markets are going down in commercial fishing — is about 27 cents and you're only going to get half for it. You can just see that this leaves the fishermen in a real tough position, especially the fishermen who are fishing in our northern lakes.

I just wonder, Mr. Minister, do you agree that this is a very unfair way of transportation subsidies? Did you and your department discuss this with the commercial fishermen in northern Saskatchewan prior to implementing such a policy?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, just to clarify that, although that is the policy that we're looking at, it hasn't been clarified as per se exactly that's where it's going to be. That's our understanding of how we want to go with it. My understanding is that we haven't had any dialogue with the commercial fishermen to date, or very little. We can in fact have some dialogue with them. But one thing that should be noted is that the department was paying more for freight subsidy than the fisherman was getting; in other words, it would have been cheaper for us to just give the fisherman the amount of money than to have subsidized the freight rates, so there was no relevance to it. So I think that's one of the reasons it was changed.

MR. THOMPSON: — Oh, yes, that's right. You most certainly were paying more transportation subsidy than some of the fish was worth. However, let's take a look at the 600,000-lb. limit that you have on Dore Lake where you're paying a half a cent transportation subsidy. You most certainly can't say that you're paying more than the fish is worth. It doesn't work out equally across the board, and that's why that transportation subsidy was in there, and it was put in to pay 95 per cent of the transportation of the produce to take it to market, or to the agency. And to say that in some cases that you're paying more transportation subsidy than the fisherman was getting for the price of fish, that is right. And I suppose that probably happens to the pig farmers in the South where you have the hog marketing stabilization for hog farming and such things that apply to farmers in the South.

But I want to say that that transportation subsidy and 95 per cent of the cost of freighting the fish equalizes itself out when you go across the board. We have many, many hundreds of thousands of pounds of fish that are taken out in the transportation costs, and 95 per cent doesn't cost the department any more than 2 to 3 cents a lb., and most certainly not any more than 10 cents a lb. for hundreds of thousands of pounds of fish.

But if we were going to go into some lakes and say, well, the price of fish . . . And the price of fish varies from year to year. The price of pickerel has been up over \$1 a lb., and now this year it's dropped dramatically. And we have these fluctuating prices which makes it very tough for commercial fishing industry in this province. And, as you have indicated that you have not discussed this with the commercial fishing industry, and taken into fact and taken into the consideration that we have so many pounds of fish that are taken out at reduced costs to the department with the transportation subsidy. I would ask you as the minister to take another look at this before implementing this type of a program, because I know that there are some fishermen who are very concerned about it in northern Saskatchewan.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, one thing that I should maybe clarify is that — and I know that maybe isn't the concern of the member — but half the rate of subsidy of the freight rate only applies to where it exceeds the market average price. So in other words, if you were flying out of Dore Lake or one of those lakes that you say is close, we'd get the full subsidy back. But where it exceeds the market price is where we only pay half. In other words, I guess what they're trying to say is to market the better quality fish to keep the price up and to keep the subsidy within line.

In regards to looking at it again, yes I will. I haven't had no chance, as I told you previously. I was very unfamiliar with the whole fish industry, and as part of the department, I have been making an effort to find out some things about it. I certainly will take a serious look at it before we bring it in.

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Minister, I'm a little bit confused on your last statement. I'm just not too sure as to what you meant there. However, you have agreed to look into it and I would suggest that you take another serious look at it. Because when you take a look at the lakes, and you have different types of grades of fish, in particular in the trout-fishing industry, and in the whitefish industry, where you have your cutters and your exports and your premiums, and all these fish you get are the same type of fish, only the fisherman receives a different price for them. And they are in lakes up there — such lakes as Cree Lake and Pasfield and Preston, Patterson — they all have these different types of fish and different grades. And it's quite complicated.

I think that the 95 per cent of the freight cost to the fishermen was quite fair. The fishermen agreed to that and I would just ask that for the upcoming commercial fishery this season that you leave it at 95 per cent of the cost, and if you're going to make any other changes, to get the feeling of the commercial fishermen in northern Saskatchewan. Go out and have some meetings with them and just work out a new agreement, if you have to work out a new agreement, along with the commercial fishermen.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, just to clarify it, it was 90 per cent before, not 95, and that part still would apply, except for those few lakes we're talking about. Like I said to the member, I will look into it. I'll take a serious look at it. There's been a deep concern. I had a gentleman in my office this morning concerned about it, about the overall . . . especially in my office this morning concerned about it, about the overall . . . especially the one at the Uranium City. He's concerned about the closing there. So there is some concern and it's starting to be addressed, or it's been coming to my attention now. But like I said, I'm not very familiar with it but I will look into it.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I now want to turn to the fish hatcheries. First of all, I wonder if you could indicate if there are any plans for expansion at the Qu'Appelle hatchery?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, there's a \$790,000 in this year's budget for the completion of the expansion there and rejuvenation of the plant at Qu'Appelle. So I suppose I could say we're in the process of just completing it now — the rejuvenation and the expansion, which is all in one.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you. In the last couple of years, I know you've been experimenting, the department has been experimenting with lakeside hatcheries in northern Saskatchewan — and I only assume that it's just in the North — where they plant fish in small lakes adjacent to larger lakes. And these lakes, I would presume, are all dead-water lakes, where they don't have any other fish in them. I wonder, could you indicate how many of the lakeside hatcheries that you have used, and what has been the success of the lakeside hatcheries in northern Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. HARDY: — I think it has been recognized that there's been quite a bit of potential for it. There's seven fishery enhancement rearing ponds that will be operating in '83, and we're looking at eight other sites right now. So it's in the process of looking into it and maybe expanding it.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay. You have eight operating right now. Could you indicate what success you had in the lakeside hatcheries that you had in the last couple of years, in transferring the fish out of the lakeside hatchery into freshwater lakes?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, my understanding is, as the member probably knows, it's sort of in a new stage. But they have been fairly successful to date. The one in the North, they tested it last year; it was quite successful. The one out of Kenosee Lake was quite successful in the South. Just to clarify, there was seven enhancement rearing ponds, not eight. It's eight that we're looking at, and eight additional ones.

MR. THOMPSON: — Okay. Could you indicate, have you had any success in transferring the fish from the rearing ponds to the freshwater lake?

HON. MR. HARDY: — My understanding was that, the only one that we tried, it as Buffalo Narrows, and we netted them out. We didn't have the gate to drain the lake down to get them out and catch them. We didn't have too much success with transferring them from that into the other lake.

MR. THOMPSON: — I'm surprised that they would try and fish them, Mr. Minister, because I think it's common knowledge that whitefish were planted in the lake, and you just do not expose whitefish to nets and open air, because you're going to lose them; they're going to die.

I would want to stress to the minister that I feel it's very important that we increase the capacity to raise fish in the fish hatcheries, not only in Qu'Appelle but in lakeside hatcheries, as I see Saskatchewan as a great potential for tourism — and especially northern Saskatchewan. We have so many lakes up there and now with the road system that we have, I think that tourism can really flourish in northern Saskatchewan — and I believe that it should flourish.

On the other hand, I think that we have to take into consideration the fact that if we're going to have a lot of tourists go into northern Saskatchewan, we have to maintain that supply of fish, not only for the tourist but for the local people and the commercial fishermen in this province. In order to do that, I think we have to make darn sure that we supply these lakes and take a look at stocking your speckled trout and rainbow trout in a lot of the small lakes that we have that there is no fish in them right today. I know you're doing it in some of them, but I would ask that you would put these fish into as many as possible. I know a lot of fishermen when they do come into northern Saskatchewan — and the big lakes get pretty rough up there — they can go into these smaller lakes and take these speckled trout and rainbow trout, and then that eases up on the commercial fishery that we have. I would just ask that you continue to expand the hatchery program in the province, both the lakeside hatcheries and out at Qu'Appelle, because I think it's important to the province, to the commercial fishermen, and to the tourist industry and to the province as a whole, that as long as we have an abundant supply of fish in our lakes, then I think the province will be better off on the whole, both the commercial fisherman, the tourist, and the taxpayers of this province.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I certainly agree with you in regards to tourism. As you well know, our government plans to promote tourism. We'd like to see it and its benefits to all. It certainly would be a benefit to the Northerners and we'd create some jobs up there. I agree fully with you that to stock as many lakes as possible certainly will be a priority. We plan to expand the program — I've already said that — and we'll look at your advice there. I guess just basically we agree that we're going to do everything we can up there to stock as many lakes and to promote the program as much as possible — and promote tourism within it.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I have a question on park rates, some of the rates that have been increased this year. Could you tell me, give me an example, say, of the rate that we had for park entry last year and this year's rate, what percentage increase is in it?

HON. MR. HARDY: — I was glad the member asked that question. I had planned to sort of clarify that. It was asked in question period the other day, and I could probably answer it all right here for you today. I had some material along with me but I didn't bring it in. In regards to it, most of the permit fees went up \$1 per. The only one that went up in excess of \$1 was the annual users permit fee which went to \$15 from \$10, but it wasn't an annual one before. It was a seasonal before. We've moved it from seasonal, because there's a lot of winter use now, to an annual pass, so we went from \$10 to \$15 which gives you a whole year instead of just a summer pass into there.

We also have . . . The senior citizens are free. There's a pass-through permit; it's free. There's a one-hour permit that doesn't include any use of facilities that is free. We allow children which are school children to go in. Before they had to pay; now they are free to go in if they're doing some exercises . . . (inaudible) . . . school. That's free also. I guess that's about basically what that was, except maybe I could go into some of the other things. One of the things that we brought in, as you know, we brought in seasonal campsite permits. You can apply. There's so many in so many parks. You apply, you send your \$250 in, you can leave your camper there for the entire season. A lot of people are doing it. They were just changing names or whatever, leaving it there anyway. This way we know who's there and it's better for them because they know they can stay there a whole season without getting kicked out. It's also good because some people can't get cottages at the lake. A lot of people would like to have cottages. It's a sort of an alternate to the cottages.

We've got a reserve-a-site which we charge \$3 for. You can reserve a site. A third of the sites . . . In a portion of the provincial parks, the popular ones, you can reserve a site there. It costs you \$3. But if you are going out to camp for the evening you can go out, you can phone ahead, you know you'll have a site when you get there. You've got till 8 o'clock to get there. If you don't get there by 8 o'clock you lose your right to that site. But the thing is that you do know it's there when you drive out. You pay an extra \$3, but most people, if you're driving considerable mileage, don't really mind \$3 because you know you'll have the site when you get there. So those are some of the things we've done, brought into the program.

The other one is voluntary payment in some of the campsites, where instead of having someone come around trying to collect we have a voluntary honour system. One down in my area is McBride Lake. I'm sure you're familiar with that one, where there's nobody there to really collect it. There's about seven of those places that have the honour system. So we've put in a few new programs we think will be well received by the public, and we think they're better because it gives you a better opportunity, first, to have a site reserved; second, if you had a site where there isn't anybody on you, it's an honour system to pay, and I'm sure most people are honest. And the other one, it gives you an alternative to a cottage. If you don't have a cottage at the lake for the seasonal \$250, it gives you an alternative to take your camper there and use it as a cottage.

MR. LUSNEY: — On the seasonal one, Mr. Minister, apparently all parks don't have that availability of seasonal rates. Could you indicate what parks do have the seasonal rates and which ones don't?

HON. MR. HARDY: — I think it was made. I had a new release out, and I think I sent it to you, but I can read it off to you. The ones that have the sites are: Meadow Lake have 15 — that's in the north compound. The Sandy Beach campground has 33. Etter's Beach has 33. Danielson Provincial Park has 44. Blackstrap has 13. Saskatoon Landing Provincial Park has 23, and McLean's Trans-Canada campground has 43.

MR. LUSNEY: — The ones that aren't in that, Mr. Minister — why are some of the parks left out? There must be some rationale to it. Could you tell me why some of the parks are left out?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, two reasons. One, first of all, we think we announced it as a pilot project and we just picked certain campgrounds. Secondly, these are the ones that we felt were probably the most under utilized, so we didn't want to put them into the heavy utilized area, so we tried to put them into the lesser ones. Those are the reasons. First, it's a pilot project, and, second, that we try to pick areas that weren't as heavily utilized as the other ones.

MR. LUSNEY: — Do you anticipate making any expansions to the campground areas within the parks?

HON. MR. HARDY: — We haven't any major plans for any parks. There may be some small expansions here and there, but we're evaluating the utilization. If there's a need for it, we'll look at it, I guess, on a park-by-park basis, but we haven't any major expansions in mind right now.

MR. LUSNEY: — On the accommodations at the various parks, Mr. Minister, I noticed there's been a substantial increase in the rates for condominium rentals, and one, and that is Cypress Hills, for instance, has gone up from \$47 to \$60 a night for the deluxe lodge. Does this apply to all accommodations within the parks? That is roughly about a 28 per cent increase. Are all the parks going to see that kind of increase in accommodation?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, just to clarify the first part is what you are talking about is the most deluxe lodge's rooms that we have at Cypress. That's two bedrooms. Four people would be involved; it would be \$60. That's \$15 per person per night. It brings it in line basically what a hotel or motel would charge on the side of the park or in the immediate area. So it sort of brings it into the area of costing of whatever normally would be charged within the area. So it's basically what is . . . I guess most of the parks all over the — I guess Canada — have that same type of range, so . . .

MR. LUSNEY: — Well previously, Mr. Minister, last year's rates were down at 47. Has it been because of the loss of revenue or you found yourself losing too much money within the parks that you made the increases? Was it justified? You're saying it's as high as a motel may charge. Should we be charging the same amounts as a motel, when you have people coming to the park, spending money there and saying that we're going to charge the same as they would in a town that they'd have to drive some distance to and get a motel in?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all you must remember those are the most deluxe rooms we have. They were booked solid full all the time; the demand is there. Many of the other ones are much lower if you wanted to stay in anything but the deluxe one. And I suppose if you're staying in a deluxe one most people that stay in it

probably can afford it. So I really don't think . . . I suppose it's those who can afford it will pay that and at \$15 a night, that's not a very exorbitant price to stay any place, per person.

MR. LUSNEY: — You said this was for the deluxe model and I accept that. On some of the other accommodations — cabins and light housekeeping cabins, different accommodations within the parks — have they increased to a similar rate, say 28 per cent, or have the increases there been a lot lower than the deluxe accommodation?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I don't have a percentage increase, but I could look . . . Like, a one bedroom, two people, has went from \$16 to \$18 . . . Would give you an idea basically. A two bedroom, four persons, has went from \$20 to \$23. So that would sort of give you an idea of where they went.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, now that you say that accommodation is required or needed within the parks, that they're being filled all the time, has the department got any plans to increase accommodation within the parks to build more units like the condos that were built here a few years back?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, just to correct a statement I made a minute ago — just to clarify it anyway — is that they're full at peak-use times. There's times in the wintertime when some of those cabins, or the deluxe T cabins are not full in some areas, although I can think of some areas, like Greenwater, I think they're full most of the time.

In regards to expansion, what we're looking at now is, if possible, maybe the private sector go in. As you well know, we don't make any money out of those cabins. So they could well go in. Although we'll keep the others to keep a monitor in the price, so they don't get out of range in pricing.

MR. LUSNEY: — At some of these parks, Mr. Minister, some of them are used year-round and others aren't. Do you propose making more of the parks a year-round park rather than just a seasonal park?

HON. MR. HARDY: — What we will be doing is where the public demand is for such things as cross-county skiing, snow tobogganing, winter recreation — if there is a ski hill, or whatever — certainly we're going to make them available, if the public requires them. We'll sort of go by public need and want. It's hard to say any particular park. But all parks are open . . . Some part of all parks are open year-round. But we're prepared to make other facilities available if the need is there and the public requires it.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I only have one more question, Mr. Minister, and then I think we could start moving on the subvotes. And I wonder if you could indicate, or give us an update on what is taking place with the grasslands park. And then with that we can start moving on the subvotes, Mr. Chairman.

HON. MR. HARDY: — As you know, we've had some problems there, and we've been trying to work out with Parks Canada. Right now we're presently negotiating with Parks Canada to expedite the sale of the land, provided we can have the oil and gas exploration later, because that seems to be the hold-up. We're working towards that goal and we're hoping we can achieve that in the near future, which in fact will protect the grasslands and go ahead with the acquisition of properties, and still give us the oil and gas explorations. I suppose it's just a matter if we can sit down, and we've been working with them, and hopefully it'll settle and it'll be resolved and we can go ahead

with it.

MR. LUSNEY: — I have one question here, Mr. Minister. On fire suppression, I noticed you've cut down in staffing on it. Could you indicate why there's less people? Do they expect less fires this year, or what the reason is for it?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Just to clarify that, it's in the *Estimates* that that's the number of people that we show to meet the *Estimates*. If the need is there — if there's any fires — there'll be lots of these people be called back. So we haven't . . . That's the reason that number shown. As the member well knows, that you've got to sort of match the *Estimates*, so that's why that number is shown there. The number of people, whatever is needed, will be called. I hopefully won't need that many, although they're all working right now — a good portion of them are. We've had some snow up our way and I think that'll reduce our costs somewhat. So it's one of those years that I hope that we never have a forest fire.

MR. LUSNEY: — I notice, Mr. Minister, the money is down also, and you had to gear the amount of people according to the money provided. I thought maybe somehow, with the amount of people that you have left, and the amount of money which was down, and because of the snow that has been coming lately . . . I figured maybe somehow you might be responsible for getting this snow in, and we wouldn't be having too many fires if you continue that. But on the amount of moneys provided, you're saying then that if the fires do occur and you require more personnel and more money, that that would be available.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, just a couple of years ago, all the former administration budgeted was \$250,000. So I'm sure he's aware of how it works. If the need is there, the need is there. We budgeted what we think was a fair amount and estimated on last year's costing. We're hoping, and it looks like we may not have to use that much. We hope that's true. But it's based on what we think is a realistic amount of money and not \$250,000 as originally done. But if the need is there, I'm sure the member knows how it comes about. And I'm glad that he mentioned . . . (inaudible) . . . get a good Minister of Environment to keep the snow on there, but I don't think the farmers were too happy with that.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to direct a question to the minister. Can you indicate the apparent change in policy in respect to the development of the parks? It seems to me that what has been indicated is that in the future . . . or at least a sizeable amount of it were to come from the private sector . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I didn't say it was bad. I wanted to know the outlines of the policy.

AN HON. MEMBER: — How do you feel about it? Tell us how you feel about it?

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Speaker, I've been quiet all . . . Mr. Deputy Chairman, I've been quiet all afternoon and now I have to be heckled by the Deputy Premier.

You have indicated that parks, to a more substantial nature, will indeed be developed, or at least you will turn to the private sector for the development. What I'm asking you is for a sort of general outline of your policy on that, and what areas you hope to invoke that policy.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, I'm sort of glad the member asked that question because I sort of forgot to mention that before. He asked what our policy is. Our policy will be that

where the private sector can build and use their capital to enhance the parks — and we will certainly have control over what goes into there to enhance the parks — and to make better facilities for the public that use the parks, we intend to do it. We intend to do it on a one-to-one basis. We intend to monitor each development that goes into the parks, and to date we've had 31 applications for different things within the parks in the province of Saskatchewan. And that'll be all capital funding that will create jobs. It'll certainly create better facilities for the people using the parks. It'll promote tourism within the province.

We think it's a positive plus without reaching into the government's pockets for money. The return to the government is always good because of the jobs, because of the tax base, the tax structure. There's many things there. The leasing of the land — we'll be leasing the land. It'll give us returns from the lease of the land. We think that if we monitor it very carefully, that we can have a tremendous return from such initiatives without costing the people of Saskatchewan directly any money.

Just to touch on a few things that we've had applications for — we've had applications for miniature golf courses; we've had applications for condominium developments, for rental cabins, for stores, for dining and beverage room facilities, for marina facilities, for licensed dining-room facilities, roller-skating facilities, sailing, concessions, wind-surfing rentals, golf-driving ranges, boat operations, boat rental, food concessions — just to give you a few that's come in. The people are ready to spend their money in the parks, but our concern will be that they fit in with the whole park; in other words, we'll control it very carefully, that it's suitable to the park. It won't be at an ad hoc type of basis. It will be at an ad hoc type of basis where we'll do it one-on-one to be sure it fits with what we want. We're coming up with a plan for every park to see what we need there and what can be used there, and if that fits within those needs or uses we'll certainly be prepared to look at it very closely.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to ask you what your intended direction insofar as expanding the licence outlets to the individual parks. I'm thinking of Madge Lake; I'm thinking of Greenwater and the various parks throughout the province where there isn't, at the present time, any liquor outlets. And I want to know what is your overall policy in respect to the expansion of licensed liquor outlets to the parks.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, if it fits what we need in the park, we'll certainly look at it very seriously. I know we've had applications to such parks as Greenwater, to Madge Lake, to Kenosee Lake. We'll look at each one. We wouldn't be setting any precedent, because already there's one down at Cypress Hills and been operated and has for quite a few years very successfully. And there's one at Kenosee Lake, I understand, too. So we're prepared to look at each one, evaluate it. If it's needed in the park and it will fit in . . . We've had a suggestion at Greenwater where they would build a log-type structure to match the cabins that are there. Now, you know, that's something that's very good to look at. So that's the type of stuff we'd look at very seriously. If the need is there, if it's designed properly, handled properly, certainly we'll look at it.

MR. KOSKIE: — So you're indicating that, if in your opinion, that it's the structure and the facility that's being offered fits in with the general format of servicing the particular park, that there will be a general expansion of liquor licence outlets in the various parks. I guess that's what you're saying.

HON. MR. HARDY: — It certainly would have to meet the process that we'll be setting up.

There'll be chance for public input into it. Also, it certainly would have to be approved by the liquor commission. There's lots of stopgaps there. Just in case we made a bad decision, there'd be lots of protection there. We would hope that we will do it in consultation with the people. Certainly, like I said, the liquor board commission will have the opportunity to review it. There's lots of stopgaps there to be sure that it's done properly.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want you to be a little more specific as to the public input into the decision-making process. Is it going to be simply the Liquor Licensing Commission that will make the decision on the application or will, indeed, the people who have invested a good deal of money in many of these parks — will the cabin owners for instance — be given the opportunity to have a local option vote as it applies to that given park? Or at least, will the cabin owners be consulted, rather than just someone going with an application to the liquor licensing board? I know that you can put up opposition to that if you're not in agreement with it. What I am asking you is that many of the cabin owners have indeed had a very substantial amount of investment. They like the way in which the park has developed. I think it's only fair that since they have made the substantial investment that they be given some opportunity of knowing what your plans are. It's not good enough just to say 'public input' and then not describe the mechanism. While you may have it . . . If you do have it, then why don't you indicate what method you're going to use for public input? Because many of these . . . As I say, it could change very drastically the nature of the park that many people have a substantial investment.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in answer to the hon. member's question, first of all, in regards to how we'd handle it, we'd have a public information meeting. It depends on the size and the expansion of the project. If there's any type of major expansion or major building going in there, we'd have a public meeting. If there was a lot of disagreement or showed a lot of concerns and that, we'd have a full public hearing. So there's room there to make sure that we don't step out of line. We don't want to put something in the parks that people don't want, either.

Just going back a little bit, I understand that when it was put in the Cypress Hills area by the former government, there wasn't even no information or full public hearings held. It's a government building, and they lease it to the private sector. So I'm not too sure, you know, that we wouldn't . . . At least we'll have public hearings, and certainly if there's a concern there, we'll go further than that.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, when you say 'public hearings,' in respect to a given park, what does that encompass?

HON. MR. HARDY: — What I said was we'd have a public information meeting first and if it was necessary — not necessary, if there was a concern showed by those people, the residents there, we could go further even to a full public hearing. So there's room to do both if necessary.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 12 agreed to.

Item 13

MR. LUSNEY: — On the Melville region, Mr. Minister, I see a decrease in staff there.

Could you indicate where this decrease came about?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Actually it's just a transfer from the ordinary budget to the commercial revolving fund — a transfer of people. So there was no reduction as per se. It was just a transfer of people.

Item 13 agreed to.

Items 14 to 18 inclusive agreed to.

Item 19

MR. THOMPSON: — Just a question here — and I'll take 19 and 21 — both of them, Mr. Minister. I see there's quite an increase in 19 — La Ronge region — and 21 — Buffalo Narrows region. Could you just indicate what this approximately one-million-dollar increase in both these subvotes . . . Could you just indicate what they are?

HON. MR. HARDY: — That was transferring from DNS into Parks and Renewable Resources.

Item 19 agreed to.

Items 10 to 26 inclusive agreed to.

Item 27

MR. KOSKIE: — I'm wondering if the minister could provide us with a list of the agencies and organizations which grants are provided for, and indicate the amount provided to each organization to make up the total?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Okay. The Saskatchewan Forestry Association for \$8,030; the central forest production association for \$5,350; the ski clubs for \$3,740; fisheries and wildlife projects, the trapping education development incentive of humane trapping, \$165,000; graduate student assistance, \$18,000; national wildlife evaluation, \$9,340; and endangered species assistance, \$4,000; Northern Saskatchewan Outfitters' Association, \$20,000; fish transportation subsidy, \$705,000; fish utilization study, \$23,500.

Item 27 agreed to.

Vote 39 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

PARKS AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Capital Expenditure — Vote 40

Item 1

MR. THOMPSON: — Yes, Mr. Minister, in recreational facilities, you have a drop here in expenditures of close to \$1 million. Could you indicate the reason for such a large drop in recreational facilities?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Member, we felt that through the private sector we have some developments coming in that will have more expenditure in that by a considerable amount. And so we reduced, seeing where the private sector would come into it. It's just a general type of reduction really; no particular or any one thing was taken out. It's really . . . (inaudible) . . . and we feel that the private sector, with these 31 initiatives that we have so far, looking at it, that there'd be probably much more spent in there then we would have spent.

MR. THOMPSON: — So the large reduction is mainly caused by your new policy in recreation?

HON. MR. HARDY: — I would just correct that — not caused by, but anticipating for more development by the private sector. We anticipated the private sector would like to come in. It appears that they're going to, so I think our anticipation will be good.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 agreed to.

Item 3

MR. THOMPSON: — Yes, Mr. Minister, you have a large increase in roads, quite large. Could you indicate when these new roads are going to be constructed, or are we just talking about maintenance of roads that are already in place?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman and hon. member, these are new roads that would be constructed, or reconstructed. There's two in the Hudson Bay region: the Little Swan road, the reconstruction of that going down towards Parr hill in that area; the Little Swan road for gravelling. The Meadow Lake region — the Lac Clare road, clay capping around Turtleford, and the Caribou Trail reconstruction; in the Prince Albert area . . . (inaudible) . . . road near Shellbrook; in Creighton — the Denare Beach road, Denare Beach gate and bridge, the remaining projects on Miniwaka road, and McBride Lake, clay capping. So that's some of the ones. There's other ones here. There's some in the Woody Lake construction, some Little Swan construction, the Pike Lake pump and site redevelopment at Biggar. In the Swift Current area there's Saskatchewan Landing cold storage unit. I'm moving into some other stuff other than roads, so I guess I've gone a little further, but the roads I've named are there.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, you mentioned something in the Woody Lake area. Are you going to be constructing some roads there, or what are you going to be doing in the Woody area?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Yes, we're going to do some reconstruction in the Woody Lake area to about \$70,000 worth. I don't have the specific area, but in the Woody Lake area.

Item 3 agreed to.

Items 4 and 5 agreed to.

Vote 40 agreed to.

MR. THOMPSON: — On behalf of the opposition I want to take this opportunity to thank

the minister and his staff for the co-operation they have given us this afternoon.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Chairman, I too would like to thank the staff for the information they've given me. I needed it greatly here; I just took it over. I'd also like to thank the members opposite for their line of questioning. It was certainly a way that I think we'd like to proceed with each time. I think it's the proper way of going about it and we'll get you the proper answers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The next item of business is Tourism and Small Business. The minister will be getting his officials.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

SMALL BUSINESS AND TOURISM

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 45

Item 1

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Would the minister introduce his officials please?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have on my right Dale Folstad, who is the deputy minister of Tourism and Small Business; immediately behind Dale is Ken McNabb, assistant deputy minister; directly behind me, Karl Crosby, executive director of tourism; and over to Dale Folstad's right is Harvey Murchison, the director of administration.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Minister, I want to review first of all a bit with you, and that is the somewhat of the deception in respect to one program that you have established, and that is the small business tax rebate job creation program. I want to say that . . . What I want to ask you first of all is: can you in fact explain how you can refer to it as a tax rebate? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm going to ask the question. Whether the Minister of Finance doesn't think it's important — that's fine. But it's a deception that you're trying to put across to the public and I want the minister . . . I believe it's a deception that you're trying to allude to a tax credit, but in fact it's nothing more than a grant. It's exactly the same thing as a grant. After you carry through a certain number of the criteria and meet the qualifications that in fact a grant will be made to an individual business.

Now what I want to ask you is: how in the name of the heavens can you refer to it as a tax rebate, when it's nothing of the sort?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, Mr. Chairman, you know, the hon. member gets into a bit of semantics here. Certainly you could call it whatever you would like. We wanted to get away from the terminology of 'grant' because of what we have seen for a good number of years in the province, Mr. Chairman. And the word 'grant,' Mr. Chairman, in the minds of very many people in Saskatchewan, and especially if you get into the small business field out in Main Street, Saskatchewan, the business community is very concerned about the . . . Oh, about grants that are there, and there's . . . The former government would have certain grants that would come out, but the criteria would be so difficult to adhere to that really they didn't help very many people.

So what we have said is, first of all, we recognize something that small business people said to us over a good period of time when we came into power. And one of the things they said to us is, 'We have a great number of business expenses; taxes are one of them. Taxes are one of the most important expenses that we have, whether they be municipal taxes, property taxes, business taxes, provincial tax, federal tax, whatever.' All of those taxes, and you put all of that into one package, and they have a good deal of tax to pay in the small business community. So what we've said is, 'We'll recognize that tax expense that you have, and we'll try to alleviate some of that through this program.' And at the same time — and this is the most important aspect of it, and I would hope that the hon. member will address himself to the most important aspect, and that is the creation of jobs in a time when jobs are very, very important to people in this province. And so we've said, 'Yes, we'll address the problem of small business and target this program directly at Main Street, and secondly, we'll address it to the creation of jobs,' which we have done. And there are some very interesting statistics which I could get into in a few moments.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, I want a clarification, because there's a lot of people that are concerned, including the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*. In an editorial they challenge the minister for his deception. And what I want to say is that this government has been a government of deception all the way along, every since a year ago on April the 26th when they started the big deception. And now they're continuing the big deception. Here's what the *Star-Phoenix* wants to know:

And finally, it should be explained how the program is a tax credit, as the minister insists on calling it, when the initial information suggests it is simply a payment from the government to the employer after conditions have been satisfied.

So let us be perfectly frank. What the minister has indicated is that what he has done is to allude to a misrepresentation to the public, and he has confirmed it this afternoon. When I asked him, he said, "We called it a tax credit because we didn't want to call it a grant." And that's exactly what I suspected. And what I can conclude on this is that this . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Every good major program we've had, the *Star-Phoenix* has been against. Every one.

MR. KOSKIE: — That's right. They don't trust you. They don't trust you; you keep misleading the people. But I want to ask the minister: why did you put no limitation in respect to the number of employees that a corporation can have and indeed it seems to me that the total amount of income is very substantial. And as a consequence, as has been alluded to when you introduced the program, that here you have a new department which is supposed to emphasize small business, separate and apart from this new monster that you created called Economic Development and Trade. And so what I am asking you: if you are alluding to small business and if you are running this program, would you not think that it would be more meaningful to provide it primarily to small business? In other words what you have done is practically allowed no cut-off in this application.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, two or three comments, Mr. Chairman. First of all we go back to the fact that we call it a refundable tax credit and I made that point. I would say to the hon. member that when you talk about it — if he wants to call it a grant — I would say if you call it a grant, it would be where the money is out front right away before the

business that would be eligible would have to do anything. What we have said: you must hire your employee and have that employee on staff and have a net increase of one person on your contingency of staff before you're eligible for the money to be paid in hand.

But I don't dispute the hon. member's contention that yes, in fact, it is \$5,000 in the hand of the business person out there who does in fact create another job. And it addresses the very important thing — as I said earlier, the fact that we wanted to address the unemployment problem and the job creation problem in a targeted way — which we know now, with the statistics that are coming in, that we have done.

And I just should point out to the hon. member some of the details of the program to now. He says something about that the program is not directed at small business. I contend that it is directed right at small business. We use the \$200,000 taxable income as a bench-mark. Where you come up with that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No. We came with that number because, Mr. Chairman, as you will know, and I'm sure the hon. member will know if he wants to admit it, that the definition of a small business has never been arrived at by any level of government as yet. And the federal government has a very difficult method there to determine what a small business is. But in any case, the applications and the approvals that we have to this date are translating into about 1.8 jobs per application, or 1.8 jobs per firm that applies and is approved.

And just to show the way things are happening — just this week and starting to move even more so this week — as of last Friday, we had 466 applications that translated into 862 jobs. Those were the ones that were approved. 862 jobs approved. But as of today — just one day — as from Friday until this afternoon, 57 more applications in with 115 more jobs this afternoon, which is 977 jobs and enough applications out — enough applications out, Mr. Chairman. Now the applications that have been requested — and this is an important point — those applications that have been requested by firms that have shown a definite interest, there are enough applications out to more than fulfil the goals of the program — which were 4,000 jobs, 4,000 more people working under this program. And we're sure that there will be, long before the program comes to an end at the end of August. So we'll have more than the 4,000. And that, to me, translates into a very successful program, and I'm sure the hon. member will agree with that.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, an awful lot of rubbish comes from the opposite side.

AN HON. MEMBER: — He forgot to put the gunpowder in it, though.

MR. KOSKIE: — No, he's trying to justify that it's not a grant, and he says that, 'Oh, this you've got to do certain things and then afterwards you get paid.' Well wherever a grant is provided you do certain things and then you qualify and get it as a grant. So I mean, don't be so ridiculous.

But I want to ask you that in a time of considerable stress with the business community and a great number of them having a considerable amount of difficulty in increasing the number of employees that they can hire, the concern that I have with this program is there's not a red cent, not a single cent, not a red cent or a blue cent in this budget — or a blue chip. There's not a single dollar that has been allocated for this program. It all is to be paid a year hence. And I want to say that in the business community — and if you read the various reports across Canada — the difficulty is right now, that people need assistance in order to employ individuals. So while you're purporting to create a number of new jobs it should be clear that first of all that there is not a single cent in this budget.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Not a blue cent.

MR. KOSKIE: — Not a blue chip. And I really think that that is a delusion, what you're doing.

And also I'm now going to ask you too . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Ah, not so good, not so good. What I'm going to ask you is: whether or not — and what criteria, or what method of assuring that what is being taken on now by an employer is in fact a new job? Whereas, subsequently a month or two or so prior to that, a job was eliminated. Now with the grant coming into effect, what they do is create a new position — have already eliminated three or four — how do you grapple with the possibility of shifting around and purporting to be creating new jobs when in fact it may be just a new title?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we addressed the problem as of the end-of-March date, at the end of the fiscal year, the problem being that the unemployment was there and that we had to take on the responsibility of addressing job creation, which was did in various programs. This particular one we said the cut-off date was March 31st. And what we're saying to businesses who were trying to grapple with the decision is the recovery coming? — those kinds of questions. And we said, 'Here is some incentive for you to hire another staff member, another two staff members, increase your contingent of staff, and go from there.'

Indications are to this point, and certainly our projections are that the business community that we have targeted the program at has been very, very receptive. And in fact, in my travels around the province, talking to chambers of commerce and business people about this specific program, they've been very, very receptive to the way in which we've handled it. And I don't know what more I can say to the hon. member.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, what I would like to ask you: you know, you are a Minister of Small Business, and the thing that you haven't addressed is that major corporations — oil companies, for instance — can qualify. And you have already given them a hand-out of 130 million bucks. Now, I thought, it would have been time for Saskatchewan business people to get assistance. You know, I think a number of these corporations don't need your hand-outs or the taxpayers' money. They're doing quite well. But with the oil companies, you have already given them 130 million, 150 million bucks, and here is the small business community which is the greatest employer in Saskatchewan, and the Minister of Small Business — not of Economic Development and Trade — Small Business and here he's pouring it out to . . .

I want to ask you a specific question: how many firms — and will you give me a list of them and your analysis — have been cut out of qualifying for the grants because of your criteria?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the answer to the question. First of all, the hon. member expresses deep concern in the way that NDP members always do, Mr. Chairman, that the big, bad multinationals are going to come in and steal the programs from the small business man of Saskatchewan. You know, when they say the word business, they use that term as though it's synonymous with large, multinational corporations, and they don't realize that there are various stages in the business world. And although the hon. member would say that the greatest employer . . . He says here today in his rhetoric that the greatest employer is the small business man. Well, that's

very true, and I'm not sure at what stage, since 12 months ago, he's finally realized that, but it's just been very recent. It's a very recent conversion, let me tell you. In any case, Mr. Chairman, there have been no large firms, very large firms, that have applied for any grants under this program — not one, zero. As far as rejections under the program, there have been four applications that were denied for various reasons under the criteria. So not a great number of rejections of the legitimate small business people that are applying for the program from all parts of the province.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, let us be honest with each other. You've screwed up in this program and you changed it after the budget. Nothing else, Mr. Minister, explains such a twisted, weird program as what you have here. Nothing else explains the program that is as twisted and weird as this one, Mr. Minister. You give every impression, Mr. Minister, of having announced a program in the budget, of having realized that it was unworkable as you had intended, and changing it between the time of the budget and the time we got the details.

Mr. Minister, everybody, at the time of budget, understood that the program consisted of a tax incentive program — a deduction from your taxes directly, not something the government paid to the small business man, but something the small business man deducted from his taxes. And that was what was understood. That was what was said, Mr. Minister. The howls of protest after the budget led you to believe, Mr. Minister, led you to understand that such a program was unworkable.

Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that between budget night and the 10 days or so it took you to get the details out, you changed the program. Otherwise, why on earth would you make them wait for a year for their money, why on earth exclude tax-exempt organizations? They have, in the past, been the most fruitful source of jobs. Mr. Minister, it is apparent to all concerned that you screwed up. You tried to repair the program after the budget, and what we have, as I say, is one of the most twisted, difficult, weird programs that any government has announced in a long time.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Chairman, I did notice in the hon. member's remarks that he did have difficulty keeping a straight face when he referred to a program that has been accepted by the business community in Saskatchewan as no other program that has ever come from their provincial government to the business community has been accepted. This one is accepted by them and they're heralding the program. So for him, for the member opposite to say that it's a . . . I forget his words now, but to use words like twisted and weird and all those kinds of things for a program that's been very well received in the business community, you know, it just baffles me to understand that.

As far as the changes in the program and so on, the program was announced in its bare-bones form by the Minister of Finance in the budget speech, which as hon. members should remember — it's not that long ago that some of them were over here — they'll know that the basic framework is announced in the budget speech or in the throne speech, whichever the case may be, and then the program is put together by the department that is carrying out the program. In this case, it's this department carrying out the program, and I just have handed to me here the statement by the Minister of Finance in the budget address of March the 29th, and what he said relating to job creation in the province, and he says:

Fourth (the fourth point), I'm pleased to announce a \$20 million tax reduction for small businesses, targeted directly at job creation.

Now if that's anything different than what I said here, I don't know where the hon. member gets that. So what the hon. member says, Mr. Chairman, about how everyone — and I believe he used the word 'everyone' — thought it was something else. I don't believe that's the case. The business communities to whom this was directed didn't think it was something else. And all of the members on this side of the House, of whom there are many more than there are there, didn't think it was something else. The only people in this province who thought it was something else were the gang of eight, so what can do about that? I'm sorry if we can't make ourselves more clear than that, but as long as we as government make ourselves clear to the public, and to the groups in the public that these programs are directed at, we'll be all right, and you'll be the gang of eight, reducing.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, there is a lot of people who will never be convinced that you didn't change this program. Nothing else can explain so many difficult features. For instance, why exclude charitable organizations? Why exclude charitable organizations? In the past, Mr. Minister, they have been among the most productive source of jobs.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I've said to the hon. member's colleague a while ago, the program was targeted . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The reason it was targeted — because it makes good sense to target various programs of job creation. The problem — and I want to get into this in very minute detail now, Mr. Chairman — the problem, as I said before, was unemployment and job creation. The solution was a many-pronged attack at that problem which we undertook and the Minister of Finance mentioned in his budget. So we're going to take a nine-point job creation program — one of them administered by my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, called Opportunities '83 that's a huge success. And we added another million dollars to it after that because of the fact that we were addressing that job creation program, Opportunities '83.

JOBS, tied to the federal program administered by the Minister of Social Services — another program targeted once again at various non-profit organizations, as you asked about, and so on, but still targeted, but at the major problem which was job creation. This one, targeted at the major problem of job creation, and targeted directly at Main Street Saskatchewan — at the small business community that have been neglected for so long by you boys that it's unbelievable.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Minister, let me assist you with the facts, and I can put it a great deal more succinctly than you just did. The reason why tax-exempt organizations are not eligible is because they don't pay tax. As you had initially planned this program, it was a reduction in taxes and therefore they couldn't qualify. There isn't any other rational basis for excluding tax-exempt organizations, none at all.

Mr. Minister, I want to get on to one of your other rather interesting manoeuvres, and that is your promotion of winter tourism. Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed, indeed. This minister does not lack imagination. He does not lack imagination. I refer, Mr. Minister, to an article in the newspaper on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, the *Star-Phoenix* as a matter of interest. October 10, October 9, and you are quoted as saying:

McLeod says (and I use the name because it's used in the article) it is simply a matter of effective marketing. We're not going to ask them to move in here for the whole of January, but we can certainly say common experience of

something in Saskatchewan that's a bit different. See what it's really like.

Whoever was writing the article then went on to say:

The promotion will be aimed at midwestern and southern states whose residents might welcome a little of Saskatchewan frost-bite.

My question, Mr. Minister, is: what are your plans to market Saskatchewan frost-bite down in the south-western states?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I'm really glad you asked that question. I could say that the . . . In any case, Mr. Chairman, what we do and what I have done since I came into this department that had been much neglected for a long time, and through this department the province had been much neglected for an awful long time, was to look at all of the things we have in a very positive way, and which I have done. And I think you can say the same thing about this government. Whatever we do, we are going to look at it in a positive way. We haven't put a great deal of money . . . It doesn't cost very much money to make those kinds of statements and deal with it. But I'll tell you what it does. It shows a positive attitude which is something that I could recommend very carefully to the gang of eight in the corner.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — But Mr. Minister, how can you assure the poor people who travel here from Nevada that they're not going to arrive in nice weather and so avoid the frost-bite? I just don't see how you can guarantee you're going to deliver on your program, Mr. Minister.

I want to repeat a question which the reporter asked you, Mr. Minister. The question was: what winter activities is it that you plan on promoting, apart from frost-bite? And you said then:

When asked what winter activities are worth promoting, McLeod was a bit vague. He said, 'I think we have great things to sell here in Saskatchewan. There's no question in my mind that we have things to sell in Saskatchewan and we'll do it.'

Mr. Minister, what activities were you planning on marketing in January, in the dead of December and January?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, first of all, the word frost-bite I believe, was used by someone from the press gallery. That wasn't my word. What I was talking about is that we have some very good experiences, and all of us I know have had many good experiences in the winter-time in this province.

What I would say to the hon. member and the kinds of things that I've talked about that we can use in this province are the very good business and convention facilities we have in our two major cities, for example; those things are here and can well be used to a much greater extent than they have been in the past, in the winter-time as well as in the summer months. And the other one, of course, is the better use of our recreational facilities and our park facilities in a season other than only the summer season.

And just to reiterate what I said to you before, I really believe we're going to bring about positive results and in any of these areas, a positive attitude is the first step toward it and we are advancing that.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, apart, Mr. Minister, from providing nearly endless amount of amusement for the reporters and for the members of this House, do you have any concrete plans to sell frost-bite, any concrete plans at all?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I've just told you that the plans we have are to make use of our recreational facilities in a lot longer seasons. And the tourist and convention bureaus of our cities, and the convention industry in this province — the meetings industry — has been neglected for an awful long time, and we're going to try to promote that at all seasons of the year.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I just came in to the last part of this discussion here, and quoting from your own article in April the 7th from *Hansard*, you were saying, 'However, many small businesses have been hurt by the current recession and are not in a position to increase employment.' I agree with many people are hurt by the recession — small business men — and aren't able to increase and generate the activity to increase employment. So this is why you were talking about your \$20 million employment program.

But then when you talk about funding it, when you talk about funding it, you say the objectives of the program are intended to assist small businesses through a permanent job creation, the program will provide some temporary assistance through refundable tax credits to small businesses. And you maybe went through this with me. But just try it on a former small business man, and someone that was a business man in the province.

I would like to know what benefit a tax credit would be to me. I used to be a contractor, if the minister isn't aware of that — but what tax benefit would a tax credit be when you're not in a position because of the current recession? I've talked to a number of — particularly contractors — and their least worry in the world is how much tax they're going to have to pay. Because thanks to your tremendous job creation in the past year, the activity has been so great that they're not going to be paying any tax. They're not in a position to pay tax. So what are you telling these guys? What are you telling these guys that they're supposed to do? What are they really supposed to do? You know, these are road builders and earth movers and sewer and water contractors, and the kind of guys that aren't working. I think that . . .

I would like to know what benefit a refundable tax credit this is. If you would have some job creation programs, and would be calling tenders on major job creation, these guys would put people to work and they'd work. But if you're telling them, 'Look, we'll give you a tax credit,' when they haven't paid any taxes last year, and for sure aren't going to pay any this year, that tax credit isn't really much of a program to them.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, first of all, Mr. Chairman, it's the same question that you will note that was asked by his colleague a few minutes ago. And it sort of . . . I guess it reiterates what I had said regarding the only people in the whole of this province who didn't understand what the program was about were in that corner. And there is another example — there's another one that didn't understand it and that's where he sits.

The question the hon. member has is about the tax credit program. I said that there are many taxes paid by small businesses, whether they be municipal, business tax, property tax, all of those things, including income tax and including provincial tax. And what we have said, that that's a major expenditure, or major expense that the

businesses have. And we said, 'Well, we'll recognize that and at the same time address job creation,' which is one of the most important — probably the most important — socio-economic problem that there is in this province, and certainly in this country today. So we directed it at the small business people and, as I said to your colleagues earlier, the small business community in Saskatchewan has received this very, very well — very well. So I'm really surprised to hear . . . The only doom and gloom I've heard regarding the program are from you people right there.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I would like you to tell this House what group of small business men in this province are in a better position to increase their work-force, and by 400 and 500 and 600 per cent, immediately, without any capital investment at all, than a contractor. I know contractors that are down to three and four and five men this spring who two and three years ago were employing 40 and 50 people — in my constituency. These are the people I'm talking with and communicating with. They are my friends; I've known them for a long time. What other business sector are there in the small business field, guys that are in that category, that can put those kind of people to work? When you talk about job creation, and you talk about putting people to work, you tell me who could put more people to work than the small contractor — either road building or sewer and water or whatever, or house building?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, just to reiterate the way in which we targeted our job creation, we targeted it at the various sectors. You mentioned the contractors in this province. The programs of my colleague who sits next to me, the minister responsible for Sask Housing, with a \$3,000 Build-A-Home program tied in with the federal program — our \$3,000 — we believe and all statistics will show that more house starts per capita in this province than any other province in the country because of that program. That program, from this government, was targeted directly at the contracting sector. And that's why that contracting sector was not included in this particular program that we're talking about here in these estimates, the small business employment program. Fact: in March of 1983 we had 3,000 more people employed in this province in the contracting sector than there were in March of 1982 — 23,000 in 1983, 20,000 in March of 1982, an increase of 3,000 people working in the contracting sector over what they were one year ago in March of 1982. Now those are the facts, those are the results.

Once again, our program is a targeted one and we believe that's reasonable and it's good management to operate from this targeted point of view rather than the all-encompassing kind of job creation that your government used to enter into with your cousins, the feds, and say, 'Go and prune some trees and paint some fences.' Because those kinds of jobs, while some of them for a short term can do some good, they shouldn't be the be-all and end-all of job creation.

MR. ENGEL: — Can the minister tell me when the construction strike started last year — in '82?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, Mr. Chairman, just some more statistics to bear out what I was saying. I'll answer your question in a few moments. From '81 to the '82 year, the percentage change in housing starts in this province was 36.85 per cent increase of housing starts — increase from '81 to '82; it's 36.85. And the average annual percentage change for the 10 years prior to that, from '71 to '81, was 6.61 per cent. So those initiatives by this government, and targeted once again — and that's a very key word here — targeted at that construction industry, targeted at housing starts, targeted

at an industry where jobs could be created in the quickest possible way, from this government, good initiatives, 36.65 per cent increase.

MR. ENGEL: — You were going to answer that question on the construction strike . . . (inaudible) . . .

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I'm not sure of the date of when the strike started, but the figures that I've just given you will give you the kinds of success that those programs we've talked about. And if you take it out over a 10-year average, it certainly shows that that one year there's some real impetus there, and that real impetus came from this government.

MR. ENGEL: — The minister is making comparisons between a month when there was a construction strike on and the same month this year, and I think that's not fair. I think that isn't a fair comparison, Mr. Minister, when I sat in public accounts and we talked about how many housing starts there were in half of this province — and you know which half I'm talking about; the half you're familiar with — the construction starts were zero — zero. Not one house in your first year of office in northern Saskatchewan, and you call that a positive program. The point I was making is that if you want to get people working and if you're serious about getting people working, go ahead with the construction projects that were in place and that you people put on freeze and that are still frozen to this date. Nursing home starts — I have a problem with people getting into nursing homes. Those nursing homes need to be constructed, and those kind of projects will put people to work.

If you're talking about tax refunds and tax credits to the person that's not paying tax and that could be employing 40 or 50 guys and is just coasting on his five or six major people that he's holding just to keep his business intact, it isn't a very comforting program, and the minister knows that. If you want to be in charge of small business and you want to have small businesses that really sing, you put the contractors to work, and the spin-off to the local hardwares and to the local business men and to the car salesmen and to everybody else, that spin-off will be there. But if you freeze the contractor, you're killing the entire program. And you can talk about tax credits till you're blue in the face. If my friends aren't paying any taxes, they're not going to spend any money and they're not going to create any jobs. And with that note, I would suggest we go on to our estimates.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, Mr. Chairman, a coupe of points. You know, I agree with you in terms of the spin-off effects of having small business back to work and increasing the sizes of their business and expansion of their business; there's no question about that. And you talk about the contracting sector, and just some more figures that I have in front of me, and we talked about the housing sector a few moments ago and I think you said something about the strike and so on.

The housing sector continues to lead the recovery in Saskatchewan. (This is a quotation now.) Single starts in urban centres increased tenfold between April 1982 and April 1983. (Tenfold.) Urban Saskatchewan recorded 1,203 housing starts in April. This is the highest April total ever.

The highest April total ever. So we can talk about the unfairness, or the fact that it's unfair to compare last year when there was a strike on and this year, but if it's the highest ever, we're comparing this with every year that you guys were in power, every year, and even those before that, and we're on top. We've been here one year and it's the

best ever, remember that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Before we get off subvote 1, Mr. Minister, I'd like to get some undertakings from you. One is that you provide us with last year's figures for staff complement and funding under the various subvotes. And if you indicate you have it there, that's fine. At this stage of the game, I think you might as well simply send it to me by other means. It is somewhat late in the hour now to get it.

Also, Mr. Minister, I would appreciate getting from you, if I could, the reasons, the detail of any decreases in funding over last year, or increases in funding over last year. I got it from the minister of culture and youth. He gave it to me in an extremely useful, compact form, if I can just refer your officials to his to get an idea of how to provide it.

And also with respect to staff, I'd appreciate knowing, if there's a reduction, what positions were eliminated, and whether or not any deleted positions contained incumbents which were laid off. Finally, if there are any increases, I'd appreciate knowing what increases are, what the increased positions are intended to be used for.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Chairman, just to . . . Yes, we will provide that information, I should say. Just to wrap it up, as the hon. member will know, in dividing the departments, we wanted to have it done in time for the blue book, as you can well appreciate. I have the information here. I'll send it over to you, and we'll give the details as per increases or reductions in staff. But I would give you the assurance, and the House the assurance, that it hasn't been our intention to reduce positions. I mean, the people are not losing their positions over this reorganization. But we'll provide all that information that the hon. member asks for.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Chairman, I wish I'd have the minister's rosy glasses and rosy outlook. We've been accused of being pessimists and dragging and a negative attitude. But if April is so rosy, as you say it is, tell me, Mr. Minister, just as a measure of a indication of what's happening in Saskatchewan, why are bankruptcies the highest they've ever been? Why is unemployment ranges from 75 and 80 per cent in the North down to 25 per cent in any given town in the country? Why is welfare up just out of sight? If things are that rosy, and if what you're saying is working so well, how come things are so tough? How come things are so tough out in the country?

I think you have the major role in your caucus and in your cabinet to tell your Premier, 'Look, we've got to get on with those housing starts and those construction projects, the nursing home starts, the new nursing homes, new hospital beds, new schools.' All these major buildings that you're sitting on, they could make a difference to the economy, not dragging your feet like that.

Sure you had a deadline and you scared the people around the country. I've a lot of neighbours who are breaking frost in trying to get their basements dug so they could get in on that \$3,000 program for April. They would have started in May and June and July. A bunch of basements went in. That's great. That's great, but you held the bloody hammer over their heads. You forced them to start in April. That's not a fair program. You talk to any of the contractors and they're saying . . . Now you've extended it after they've had the expense of digging their holes in the frost, then you extended it. But why didn't you announce a reasonable program? But to tell somebody he's got to have his basement made by April, and then your colleagues in Ottawa are backing off, and they

said, 'That could be awful tough because there's people expecting \$6,000 who'll only get three.' And they'll say, 'Hey, maybe I won't rush and pay you that extra to get it done in April.'

I think the main indicator of where it's happening and where small business is is: how many bankruptcies are there, what's the unemployment rate, and how many people are on welfare? I think your record is pitiful. I think it's just downright pitiful. The minister better pull up his socks and get his colleagues in cabinet to agree with him that he needs some funds where it's going to help. Get the construction business moving and everybody's going to move ahead.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I'm not sure, Mr. Chairman, if all of that really deserves a response because there's a bit of grandstanding going on there. But I would say in reply to that, Mr. Speaker, he mentions the fact that his neighbours, and other people in Saskatchewan, were out there rushing to get a hole in the ground, in the frost, before the April deadline. Our program was extended in August.

The people dug their holes in April, in the frost, because they were so excited about being able to build a house, now that they have a government that will do that, and other people are out there today still digging holes in the ground to put new houses in — the best record, as far as housing starts across this entire nation, by far, and the best record in terms of housing starts, ever, in this province, even despite the difficult times that all of us that are reasonable at least will admit that we're in.

So all reasonable members, and all reasonable members of the public in this province know that we're in some difficult times, but they also know that the government that they now have, through the targeted ways in which we go about our programs, are solving those problems better than any other government in this country, and they appreciate it.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Item 9

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Would the minister undertake to provide me with the grants which you anticipate making under subvote 8? I don't need it now, but if you could undertake to provide me with the list of the grants you have budgeted for . . .

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Yes, we could provide it. We'll provide that information to the hon. member, Mr. Chairman.

Item 9 agreed to.

Item 10

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'd like, if I could, the same undertaking for subvote no. 10. It's not clear to me what subvote no. 10 is. That's not, I assume, your . . . I assume that is not your small business employment program, because nothing's budgeted for this year, so perhaps you might give me an explanation, either orally or in writing, and I don't much care which it is, Mr. Minister.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Well, I can provide the detail of it to the hon. member, but just by way of clarification, no. 10 deals basically with winding up our involvement — what was industry and commerce involvement — in the Special ARDA program.

Item 10 agreed to.

Items 11 to 15 inclusive agreed to.

Item 16

MR. SHILLINGTON: — The same breakdown under this subvote, Mr. Minister, if I could have your undertaking.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Yes, we can provide that, Mr. Chairman.

Item 16 agreed to.

Vote 45 agreed to.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

RESOURCES DIVISION

TOURISM AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Provincial Development Expenditure — Nil Vote

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'm wondering what the explanation here is, Mr. Minister? Are you going to let the lions and tigers forage for themselves on Main Street in Moose Jaw?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I believe, Mr. Chairman, that should be voted under the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I gather, Mr. Minister, that's also the explanation for the net . . . It's the same item, just the total. Okay.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I just want to thank the minister and his officials for their fine, courteous, and attentive assistance.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.