

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

April 5, 1984

EVENING SESSION

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, I take pleasure in introducing to the House, some 13 scouts from the Holy Trinity 65th Scout Troop, in Regina, on behalf of my colleague, the Hon. Gordon Dirks. They are sitting in the Speaker's gallery. They are chaperoned by Mr. Wayne Ayre, I think. And I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my colleague, to welcome them to the House, and hope that they find (my colleague is here now; he will add a word to this) find the proceedings interesting. And I would wish that the members here welcome the group to the legislature.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DIRKS: — Mr. Chairman, thank you. I, too, want to join with my colleague. I'm pleased that I was able to be here. I wasn't expecting to be able to get back as quick. We would like to join with the remarks of my colleague and welcome the troop to the Assembly this evening. I look forward, if I am not going to be in estimates in the immediate future, to meeting with you in a few minutes, to chat with you, and talk about the proceedings in the Assembly tonight. I'm sure you will find them interesting.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

EDUCATION

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 8

Item 1 (continued)

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Deputy Chairman. Madam Minister, native people and other minority groups have consistently been the victims of discrimination, and racism, in terms of government policy and legislation that has affected our lives.

History has proven this in the past. As well, the present attitudes of your government's policy and philosophy further compounds and increases this outrageous problem, by alienating native people and minority groups, by your simple give-aways to big oil companies, and to the banks and bond dealers from the East – companies and corporations from outside of this province, Madam Minister.

In your government's budget, you have a policy of giving to the rich and alienating the poor and the disadvantaged. I look at former budgets presented by your government, and there have been no preferences given to the high unemployment in northern Saskatchewan, to the high welfare reliance in northern Saskatchewan, and to the lack of training programs that are so desperately needed in northern Saskatchewan.

Again, I look at your provincial budget, the one that was recently announced here on the 21st of March, and the one that we are debating on estimates on, and again I find a cut, a decrease, in terms of northern education. Item 14, subvote 35: you have cut back from the former budget of 1,663,500, down to 596,190.

That is a drastic decrease in that portion, Madam Minister. And that goes to show the

April 5, 1984

recognition that you have placed in terms of areas that are facing crisis situations in terms of employment; in terms of high welfare reliance; in terms of high incarceration of our people.

I want to go on, Madam Minister, to show you several other examples. I have with me a report that was referred to as the inner city drop-out study. That study confirms that we have taken the blunt end of all your policies, Madam Minister, of any policy that has been advocated and endorsed by the Conservative government in any province, and in Canada. I look at the statistical information that came out of this inner city drop-out study. And it tells me that 94 per cent of native students who complete grade 6 do not ever complete grade 12. And further, it tells me that 83 per cent of native students who complete grade 12 do not complete grade – pardon me – who complete grade 8, do not get the opportunity to complete grade 12.

Madam Minister, the inner city drop-out study clearly demonstrates the very serious problems faced by natives in our city schools, and further, in our remote isolated communities throughout the North. But this study specifically concentrated on inner city schools.

I want to ask the minister, and Madam Minister, why has she never released or published this study although it was completed almost a year ago. This study was completed last May, and still it hasn't been publicized. I wonder if Madam Minister may want to comment on that.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, my colleague from the North has addressed, all in one statement, many questions and many issues, plus many concerns when it comes to native education. I guess if I were to not know anything about the North and anything about native education, in listening to him I would think that the schools, up North in particular, were very ineffective. And I don't agree with the perception that he is leaving.

I recall a trip up there to places like Beauval, Buffalo Narrows. I believe the member even attended a school function with me at one of the communities on the other side of the North, at Brabant Lake or Southend. And I was very impressed with what I saw in those schools, not only with the children and what was taking place, but with the teachers. We also had the opportunity to sit down with the community at lunch-time, and they were very proud of what was happening in those schools. I saw a commitment on behalf of the teachers to address some of the problems the children have when it comes to native education. I saw a commitment to enhance the opportunity for those children to be speaking in their mother tongue. And you had only to walk into the hallways and into some of the classrooms to hear the language of the natives.

He has suggested that we are really lacking under my policies. I would suggest to him that one of the main reasons we have got to a problem when it comes to native education has been the fact that there was never a policy on native education under the present government . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Under the former government, I'm sorry.

Last year, the minister of education, the member from Wascana, set up a native curriculum review committee that consisted of the majority being Indian and native. And they did a lot of hard work and have a study to be release, I believe, next week or the week after. And they have tried to address the issue, and a recommendation to me for the need of a policy because there had never been one, and I see that as a very positive step. So when he talks about my policies, he should perhaps be talking about the lack of any previous policies that were in place before.

You referred to the blue book and you talk about no moneys. Well, that may be on item 14; you will note on item 20 that it is more than double. What we did was move NORTEP (northern teacher education program) out of the northern education, item 14, and into the grants to local authorities and other third parties. And there is a 5 per cent increase to NORTEP, as there is an increase to the northern education, this year.

Now, when it comes to native education, there are also a few other factors. There's SUNTEP

(Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program), the southern training institution, which is receiving a 5 per cent increase this year. The survival schools are also receiving a 5 per cent increase. Curriculum development, we will continue, and put an emphasis on that, and that is with a 5 per cent increase. Plus, we are looking at anew program called the Indian and native education development program. And that is new for the first time in the fiscal year of 1984-85. And there will be \$100,000 put in there for the development of Indian and native education programming.

So overall, the aspects for 1984-85 look very good in terms of addressing some of the problems that we are having when it comes to native education. You mention the inner-city drop-out study: it is to be released in the near future. I would suggest to you that when a study, research, or whatever, is done internally, that it is not unusual that all studies are not released. This one will be released in the near future.

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, you came back to me and stated that there was no policy, with the former administration, with regards to an Indian and native education policy. I just want to remind Madam Minister that you are in government now, and you are the people that are in charge in this province in terms of government policy, legislation, and administration. I find it unfair for you to try to reiterate, and tell me that I could have initiated a policy on native education; but I wasn't in office with the former administration.

I'm certainly pleased that the minister has indicated that the inner city drop-out study will be released for public, for the public in the province of Saskatchewan.

But I wonder, Madam Minister, if that inner city study, drop-out study, will be the same as the one that was released in May of 1983, or will it be condensed down to what your government wants to see provided to the public? Will it have actual facts and figures of what the report actually contained in May of 1983, or will we have a revised edition provided to the public, of this study that is to be released in the near future?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The study that will be released will be an expanded one. What we did was use the same base data. We've never questioned the figures or the statistics that the report has; but what we have done is added an elaboration of the analysis of those figures and statistics.

MR. YEW: — The minister indicated several new initiatives that her government is prepared to take. Is this the outcome of the inner city drop-out study reported that the . . . is that the rationale for these new initiatives?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — That's rather difficult to answer. I guess it's one part of a very much broader picture. I would suggest to you that perhaps the initiative for some new programming, etc., comes from the realization of a severe problem through the various groups that make representation, and that deal with it at the local level, and on a daily basis. Certainly, the problem has been there for a long time, and it's for sure that teachers, and native parents, and trustees, have asked for some, you know, some help in trying to address the problem.

The other factor that comes into it is through my Legislative Secretary, who has been doing a consultation out in the grass root level — not with the educators, but more with parents and people that live with it on a daily basis. And they have certainly said to him, you know, "We want our children with an education; that's our goal, that's our dream."

We know that they have difficulties with some of the programs and some of the curriculum that are presently there. So certainly, we've had some feedback from a lot of areas, from educators to parents, including some students—the older students, 15, 16, the 14-year-olds — that he has had an opportunity to sit down and talk with.

MR. YEW: — Madam Minister, the 1984-85 grants to the four boards in Regina and Saskatoon, I

understand, have been decreased from last year. I wonder if the minister can advise how she expects those boards to meet the serious and urgent needs of those native families and students that get their training and education from those schools.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I guess if I have to explain grants again, I will. Just a reminder to the member: the grants given and that have been discussed – the operating grants with Regina boards of education and Saskatoon – do not include the grants that one would get for the survival school or the community schools which is native programming, because those are very specific grants that are conditional, whereas the basic operating grant is unconditional. So anything for native education into those areas is over and above, and tied specifically to a condition that they be spent into those areas.

You know, I've stated before, and I will do so again – he talks about massive cut-backs and I suggest that he write the figures down and have a good look at them. He's also been told as to how those grants are delivered, what it's based on including all the components in a formula, and this year is no different than any other year when it comes to the formula and how it operates. So I would suggest that maybe the member from Cumberland have a second look at some of the figures that have been given.

MR. YEW: — Madam Minister, you mentioned the 5 per cent increase to NORTEP, 5 per cent increase to SUNTEP, you mentioned the survival school, a certain percentage of funding allotment to that program as well as this new program you referred to as the new initiative that your government has taken. You've allotted \$100,000 for such. I wonder, Madam Minister, if you may provide this information, and I don't know whether that is, you know, approved practice of this Legislative Assembly, but certainly as a member representing a large area, a large number of communities in my constituency that are directly concerned about training and education, this would prove valuable for me in my travels and meetings with the constituents.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I'm sorry, does the member want the figures that I gave on NORTEP, SUNTEP, and the others? Is that what you asked for? It will take us a minute. We'll write them down for you and send them over.

MR. YEW: — The other area I would like to touch on briefly, Madam Minister, is the area of the Northern Lights School Division. Madam Minister will know that the Northern Lights School Division is responsible for some 4,700, 4,800 students in northern Saskatchewan, and is responsible for 28 communities that operate 33 schools, and that they have a heavy responsibility to deliver the type of programs that are required for those communities that are really depressed in terms of economic activity, in terms of training, and as mentioned before, the high reliance on welfare that we have in the North. And the fact is, you know, people understand.

When you and I visited two of the communities that you mentioned just a while ago – we went to Southend and we went to Brabant Lake, of course, several of the others, including several other school openings – we saw that the native people back there recognize the fact that they have to take advantage of this new way of life. We have to have a younger generation. The younger children that are grown up, we have to try to provide them with the tools to survive, to cope, and to become compatible – to compete with the rest of society. You saw for yourself that those people were serious.

Madam Minister, I want to ask you: have you given the Northern Lights School Division the appropriate funding that it requires to carry out their programs with respect to their jurisdictional responsibilities? In terms of funding: have you decreased their funding, or have you increased it in par with whatever restraints that we have – in par with the other agencies that you have managed to increase funding for them?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member talks about the necessity of

change and how it has not been excluded from the northern area. I guess it never hit home so hard as when we were in the school and had the opportunity to view some of the new equipment, like the microwave oven, which is just one aspect of technology. The member is quite right in his observations.

The funds in 1983 that Northern Lights received were \$16,003,000. In 1984, it will be \$17,500,000.

MR. YEW: — Thank you very much, Madam Minister. My other question, my other question . . . First of all, I want to take this opportunity to say that I commend you for not having decreased that important area, in terms of an important area such as education. I'm pleased to see that you have provided what I hope will be an appropriate fund for the schools in northern Saskatchewan, to assist them in their operation and the administration of the type of appropriate programs required by the local school boards.

My next questions deals with capital construction, Madam Minister. Can you advise as to what implications your branch has, your department has, with regards to the renovations or the building of additions to existing school facilities?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Some of the approved capital projects for 1984-85 that affect the area of your concern: there are basically two projects – Sandy Bay, kindergarten to grade 12, the project is worth a total of \$2.4 million and the provincial grant commitment is \$669,000. The second one is at Cumberland House, kindergarten to grade 12, and the total cost of the project is 1.2 million with a provincial grant commitment for '84-85 of \$337,000.

MR. YEW: — Madam Minister, I'd like to get back for a moment on the new program you announced here, the Indian and native development program. This is a new initiative by your administration. I would like to know, Madam Minister, the type of involvement that you foresee with respect to the native groups, the native community, with respect to this program.

Madam Minister – thank you very much, Mr. Chairman – I suppose to clarify . . . what I'm trying to get at is, I'd like to know what the mandate of this program is, and what the terms of references are, and the type of involvement you see the native community having with respect to the administration and operation of this program.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Perhaps if I could give some preamble to your question, the purpose of the Indian and native education development program is an incentive program aimed at stimulating and supporting the development of native education in Saskatchewan school divisions.

In the initial period, priority will be given to schools with a very high native enrolment. The program will look at pursuing some objectives such as stimulating the development of the native education programs; to employ qualified natives in school divisions; to improve native retention and student achievement; to increase the capacity of rural divisions to develop native programs; and lastly but not leastly, to increase native parent and community involvement in education.

You know, some of the content of such programming will be cultural programs, curriculum development, staff in-service training, support services, parental and the community involvement, and student self-development and motivation. Any school division which has a high native enrolment and is not presently receiving funding from Saskatchewan Education for native programming will be eligible to apply for those funds.

MR. YEW: — I take it, Madam Minister, that the program that you mentioned will be administered and operated by your department.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Yes, that's correct.

MR. KOSKIE: — I just want to follow up just briefly in respect to what my colleague has been indicating here. The study that you have received, Madam Minister, the inner city drop-out study, you have hidden that in the department and have not released it. Obviously it represents to you a condemnation of any purpose in the Department of Education to beat the problem. And I want to know, first of all, when are you going to release the document and make it public? And secondly . . . First of all, I want to ask you, when are you going to release the document? Why have you basically not made the study private, or public, rather?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, that's very true, considering, Mr. Chairman, it's the second time that I've answered it, while the member from Quill Lake was somewhere out at the back instead of in his seat where he gets paid to be while the House is sitting. I mean, really, Mr. Member. I would remind the member that the statistics and the figures there in this inner city drop-out study, that has not been formally nor officially released yet, are statistics that have been gathered basically from the time that the member was in government, probably from the time that the member from Regina Centre was minister of education. There's really no reason to hide them, as he says, in the department, and it will be released in the very near future.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to ask the minister when, in fact, she received the report, and why she hasn't released it before if she's going to release it in the near future.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, the answer is very simple, Mr. Chairman. The report had basically not been finished and put into its final form before it was out of the department.

MR. KOSKIE: — When did you receive it in your department?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I believe that the copy that the member is talking about was approximately May or June. That was about the third draft in the department, and it was not completed because the analysis had not been completed on the data that was being used, and that is where it's at now.

MR. KOSKIE: — When did you receive the executive draft, the executive summary?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if my memory serves me right, I believe an executive summary probably came with the draft of the first part of the report.

MR. KOSKIE: — What was the date and month of . . . that you received that?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, I'll say again, I believe it was May or June but I don't know for sure. I would have to go back if you want the specific date, and get the executive summary.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, it's a fairly significant document. I'll advise the minister, just because she doesn't know, that it was in fact dated May of 1983. And as my colleague has indicated, it really, in fact, raises some very major concerns in respect to education in the inner core of the city. My colleague has indicated, it is estimated that 38.7 per cent of non-students . . . 83.1 per cent of native students in inner city schools who complete grade 8 do not complete grade 12. With further analysis it can be argued that 93.7 per cent of the native, and 47.1 per cent of non-native students who complete grade 6 do not complete grade 12 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon.

This is a report commissioned by the Department of Education, and it goes on:

The reasons for dropping out of school were found to be multifactored. In many cases, students experienced a combination of economic pressures, family and personal problems, in addition to strong feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction with the school. Education and related problems are a major underlying factor in the decision to leave school.

This is a report that the minister received in May of this year, I think one of the areas that has indicated the major crisis that is facing the education system here in Saskatchewan.

She received the report in May, and what I want to ask the minister: what, in your budget – in this budget that we're dealing with in Education, in what programs that you are putting forward – attempts to address those problems and the magnitude of the problems as set out in the report that was given to you in May?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, in reply to the member's statement and questions, you know, he is still dealing with a report that was commissioned by the NDP government, and a data base collected that shows . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, he had 11 years, Mr. Chairman, to address the problem. Like, how much time do you need? I'll get to that in a moment.

The data . . . And he's absolutely correct, there is a problem with native education, and there has been for many, many years, with no direct action.

So, we have a data base that basically goes back to the regime of the NDP government. Then we had a new government come in, and the minister of education, the member from Regina Wascana, put in place immediately a native curriculum review committee that did its work, and it was well represented by the native community.

He also set up a consultation process, to talk about native education with parents – not just the educators, but also with the parents – in order to get that grass root level. And what we've come up with are some very specific programs. One is the Indian and native education development program that, for the first time this year, will deal specifically with curriculum and development of those programs, and for the first year we'll have a fund of \$100,000.

We've looked at the issue of native teachers, and we've added 5 per cent to NORTEP, and SUNTEP. We also have the survival schools, and curriculum development, for another 5 per cent increase at \$126,000.

There is still over \$2 million going into community schools. Those are very positive, action-orientated programs, in order to deal with the problem – not another study, but action.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, action, defined Tory-wise, is inaction, Madam Minister. Action, defined by the Tories, I repeat, is inaction, because what you have done is capitulate, set up studies, review, delay, procrastinate, and in fact what you have done to the native community of this province is a disgrace.

I have two colleagues from northern Saskatchewan, and it clearly and significantly demonstrates that you have abandoned the welfare of the native community in this province.

I want to illustrate to you, Madam Minister, that in respect to the programs that were initiated under our administration – the community schools, the Saskatoon native survival school, the SUNTEP, the NORTEP, housing programs for the natives, educational curriculum – a massive step had been taken forward. And, really, what your government has done, in respect to the very, very significant problem in society today, is to turn your back on it.

I think that you're going to reap the harvest of your neglect, and certainly what the minister has indicated today, as I understand it in her press release, is to really basically set up another study.

She got the review on the curriculum development that was presented, also a study under our administration. She seems to indicate that she's always consulting. That's very strange; in respect to the curriculum development, that was a study initiated by the former minister of education, Mr. Doug McArthur.

April 5, 1984

Now she tells me that the study that was initiated, in respect to the inner core city problems in respect to natives, was initiated under the New Democratic Party.

Then what I'm asking you, Madam Minister, what are your . . . Other than setting up a committee, and I think the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood is on some form of a committee that you've set up . . . could you give us the details as to the number of meetings that his committee has held, with whom, and whether any report has been prepared as a result of this Tory type of consultation?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, some clarification first. The member from Quill Lake has suggested to this Assembly that it was Mr. Douglas McArthur that initiated the native curriculum review, and that simply is not true. It was the minister of education, Mr. Gordon Currie, that initiated the native curriculum review. You want to talk about funding. If I look at the increases from the year '82 to the fiscal year '84-85, what I see, for instance in SUNTEP program, is a 59 per cent increase in funds growth over those years. Not an NDP government, but a Tory government.

I look at the survival schools. Over that same period of time, it is 108 per cent increase. We have also seen new moneys being put into curriculum development. Mr. Tusa has had several meetings around the province. For instance, he's met with approximately 94 trustees, about 241 teachers, about 147 Indian native students. He has also met with 108 Indian and native parents, about 50 administrators, and 35 individuals from various related interest groups.

The process of the consultation has been rather interesting in terms of what that grass root level is saying. It's people that work with the Indian native children on a daily basis within the community, the home, and the school. And here are some of their concerns. They see a lack of communication between Indian, natives, and the schools directly. They also have a very sincere interest to improve the situation on all sides. They see a need for more in-service for the teachers. They say, "need for greater parental involvement", and they couldn't stress that enough — greater parental involvement. Several of the comments made to Mr. Tusa was one of simply, "I've never been asked before what I think about the schools, or what I want for my native child within that school system. I've never been asked before." They see a need for Indian native curriculum development. They say that student attendance, or lack of, is high, and so is the mobility of those students, and they've talked about some of the reasons why. They also see, in some cases, a lack of trust between school divisions and native groups. Mr. Tusa is not finished his consultation and over the next couple of months will be completed, and, yes, sometimes after that there will be a report forthcoming.

MR. KOSKIE: — Two supplementary questions in respect to your response and that is: one, when does the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood expect to complete his study? And secondly, can we expect some new and innovative programs in the next year budget to meet this one major problem that is confronting us?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I believe he finished his meetings in June, and the report will probably not be forthcoming until at least September. And as to what you will find in the budget for the year after that will depend on what's in the report.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, I have one more question here before I conclude my remarks on the education portion of this debate. I met rather hastily with some several native groups yesterday evening, and there's some concern expressed to me about the community schools report. And I'm not quite certain here, Madam Minister, but I presume it is to do with the community schools program, and relates to the March 20th release that your department put out.

There is something I am not certain about, in terms of the program itself, is the concern, pardon me, Madam Minister, but the concern that I thought was trying to . . . that the group was trying

to express concern about was that the funds earmarked for this curriculum development was not appropriately being . . . The funds earmarked for this particular section of the program were not being appropriately designated by your department, or utilized by your department for such. Now I don't know, Madam Minister, you may want to comment on that and clarify the situation.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Yes, that was a real . . . (inaudible) . . . of concern in the evaluation report — the funding that went to each community school for the development of curriculum within that school.

We have full intentions of acting upon the recommendations out of the report, and will be addressing that particular concern this fall.

MR. KOSKIE: — Madam Minister, the latest report is that says this: that yourself and the Premier met with two of the major school boards, Saskatoon and Regina, representing both public and separate school, and I wonder if the minister would be good enough to report whether there has been any decision to address the problems that are faced by the respective school boards.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Yes. The Premier and the Minister of Urban Affairs and myself met with the four boards: Saskatoon Public, Saskatoon Roman Catholic, and the two respective boards in Regina. And no, to date, tonight, there has not been any decision made on a solution. And in all likelihood there will probably not be one made until late next week.

MR. KOSKIE: — There is the minister without a portfolio on his feet for the first time in a long time.

I want to ask the minister why is it necessary, having met, and the boards having publicly indicated the basic problem that they face, why the delay, and why is it necessary to wait for a week in order to arrive at a decision?

Surely, Madam Minister, your officials and yourself know the extent of the problem. Surely you and your officials have analyzed the degree of the amount of funds that they are going to get less than the previous year, and certainly they have indicated the problem that they're going to face in respect to it. Could the Minister indicate why the delay? And would she indicate what the various options are that she's looking at in order to alleviate the crisis in the two major cities in respect to education?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we met this morning and it's only a few hours later; we talked about the problem. The implications of reassessment, for instance: Regina still does not have their final figure in from the assessment authority because of the court of revision is sitting, and they will not have that from the city for a couple of weeks. And that alone will tell some of the story, at least to a degree. We will be looking at some options, alternatives, that if you're wondering why it takes time, I've said it before, and I'll say it again to you: if there is any solution to be found it will only be one that is fair and equitable for all school divisions in the province. That the funding formula, the moneys going out to boards of education, to my knowledge, was never intended to be played with when it came to political expediency or a few other things that you may have been into.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, addressing the problem as we have suggested, to at least give them no less than they received the year before, would hardly be playing politics in the Tory style because you have a precedent. Your Minister of Urban Affairs has, in fact, got a formula and he, in fact, used the same thing there. There's problems in respect to assessments and he said no one will get less in the revenue sharing this year than they did the previous year. And I don't know what you are alluding to in respect to playing politics, but all I'm saying is that I think you have a desperate problem a real serious problem. I think you have a problem in the cities of Saskatoon and Regina which are the greatest in magnitude. But I think that you refused yesterday to provide us with the funding of the capital grants for all of the boards across this province.

April 5, 1984

Because if you start doing something for Saskatoon and Regina, you're going to be confronted with doing something to properly fund education in a number of boards throughout Saskatchewan.

And so what I am really asking you, Madam Minister, we on this side are pressing for a proper funding in the city of Saskatoon to the private schools and the public school boards. There's two boards . . . I don't know why you screw up your face . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the separate schools and the public schools, if that terminology escapes you. And what we're asking you to do is to meet the crisis of underfunding in the two major cities.

And you have been consistently hiding under what you term "the formula." "The formula." And we have heard that repeatedly, "the formula." And I suggest to you, not only are we, on this side, insisting that you upgrade the funding in city of Saskatoon and Regina, but that, in fact, if there's any underfunding which you won't provide to us in the other divisions and school boards across this province, that, in fact, the same treatment be given to them.

Will you assure us that if you deal with the problem here in Saskatoon and Regina, that you will equally do it in other school divisions.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I've said it several times to the member before, and I guess I better say it again. I am prepared to discuss with those boards the problems that they are facing with reassessment. If we can come up with some alternatives or some solutions that are fair and equitable — not only to smaller urban centres, but also to rural and those boards — then we shall try and find one.

You know, you make a comparison about Urban Affairs. I don't know if you're aware, but we basically have two departments that look after revenue sharing, one in the urban section and one in the rural. We don't have that in Education. We have one fund that has a formula that says: this is fair and equitable, based on the ability to pay. And that's what the formula is: based on the ability to pay.

So as I told you before, if you live in a constituency that has a very high assessment, you're going to get a very low grant, because the assumption is made that that community can afford to pay a greater share of the cost of their local education system. That's not difficult to understand. You know, if you'd sit down and take a good hard look at it, I'm sure you'd understand it. Now Regina and Saskatoon boards have said: we basically, in principle, agree with the formula. We will pay our fair share, but can we look at some alternatives to help us over this reassessment period.

We have not had time to look at various options, alternatives, and do an analysis on them, and we will do that, and hopefully we'll be ready by the end of next week or, at the very least, the beginning of the week following.

MR. KOSKIE: — You know, Madam Minister, when it comes to what is fair and equitable to the students of this province, is providing sufficient funds to provide an adequate education. You are saying that you are looking at alternatives. I guess what I ask you is: what are the basic alternatives that can be used and looked at in respect to this, your basic problem. I think it's a serious problem. I think it's incumbent upon the opposition to insist that you address this problem with dispatch.

I know the same problem existed last year with the universities, and rather than getting a sufficient amount of funding, they had to go through the process again of trying to establish the budget. And then eventually, with a lot of pressure from the universities, and through the press, and from the opposition, you were able to come forward to the universities and give further funds.

So basically what I'm asking you is: it's a simple question that these people want more money.

They can't operate with about \$2 million for each city, that's approximately what it is, slightly over \$2 million. And so I'm asking you: what are the basic alternatives that you see are possibilities of resolving this particular dilemma?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I guess when one starts looking at alternatives on what there is — if a budget has a decrease in their moneys because of several reasons is to think back a couple of years, and I've often wondered what school divisions did in the past. I recall some of them decided that they would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, that's basically true, and they had the responsibility of looking at the local level for the dollar, and they did that if they wanted to maintain a certain level of programming.

I don't know if you want me to go through it again. I could go through several school divisions that had several years running of decreases, you know, that were pretty disastrous, namely because the salary settlements were so high, back in those years. I take my own school division in 1980, when I was chairman of the board, received almost a 9 per cent decrease in a year where salary settlements were running at 14 per cent, 16 per cent. I don't ever recall a minister of education at that time offering to look at some alternatives with me, but I was probably in to see him.

I guess some of the alternatives that we're going to have to take a good hard look at is the phasing in. what does the phasing in on reassessment do over 1 year, 2, year, 3 year, 4, 5, and so on? Does it, indeed, alleviate some of the problem that boards will face for this year and the year after? That's one alternative.

I suppose some of the others are to have a good hard look at the assessment figures that the city would have, and to question the criteria that was used, and how they came about that. And if there is any disagreement with the school board, to sit down and talk a bout it. Let's see if the assessment figures are indeed right. Those are just a couple of alternatives. I suppose one could also, with a very fine-tooth comb, go through that formula to see if, in fact, there are any discriminating factors. Perhaps that's another one, but that's what we're going to have to do over the next week or so.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Madam Minister, we have been stressing here, tonight, essentially the . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Discussing.

MR. KOSKIE: — Discussing. All right, we have been discussing, essentially, the concerns as have been expressed by the school boards in Saskatoon and Regina. And I want to ask you . . . You indicate that the major ingredient of the problem is really the reassessment and, as a consequence, the capacity or the amount that should be raised locally would have increased by increasing the assessment. Now the reassessment is being carried on throughout Saskatchewan. Since I don't have the schedule — which we tried to receive yesterday, and you haven't turned that over to us — indicating what are the operating grants last year, and what are the operating grants that are being offered this year . . . We tried to obtain that information so that we could see the magnitude of the problem.

My suspicion is that if you jigger with the cities' funding in Saskatoon and Regina, that you really create other problems in other divisions. And what I want to ask you is: are other divisions really also feeling the impact of less funding because of the very reason that you are alluding to, that is, the reassessment as is taking place in Saskatoon and Regina? And if that is the case, could you indicate how many of the school divisions across the province are so being affected?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have the specific information. To the best information that I have with me tonight, two that we would immediately see being affected on that for this year is Battleford School Division and Prince Albert rural.

April 5, 1984

However, I can certainly give the member a few other decisions – what it did in past years. For instance, the Moose Jaw Division – '78, '79, and 1980, we're looking at 15.4 per cent over the three years. And you know, that's in comparison to 18 per cent over those same three years for Regina and Saskatoon.

Prince Albert, the city divisions, they had the impact of 10.4 per cent but they absorbed that all in one year. They didn't go the three year phase-in.

Yorkton Division, for instance, in 1982 the equalized assessment went up 14.4 per cent in early spring of 1982. And of course there's probably some other rural examples. Nevertheless, some of them have phase two, and of course the other issue that they face is if they've had an assessment growth within their division or their rural municipality and it goes up, then that's affected.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, I'll leave that subject matter, and I would only urge that the Minister take the recommendations of the opposition and the urging of the opposition, that the prime concern is continuation of the quality of education. And I know that she will give us full credit, if indeed she decides to give further funding to Saskatoon and Regina – that the Minister will acknowledge the efforts of the – diligent efforts of the opposition in pursuing this matter on behalf of education and this quality of education in this province. I know in her fairness she will obviously give that her consideration and certainly will give us our due credits.

I want to ask the Minister: one other area, and that is the area of really relating to the high technology, that is coming to the educational system. I'm speaking primarily there, Madam Minister, of the introduction of computers into the high schools and throughout the province, and this has been a very, very rapid event upon us, and I know that many of the schools are, in fact, getting computers. I know in my constituency and my home town of Muenster they have computers in the schools, and they have in the other towns and schools in my constituency.

I think high technology, Madam Minister, has a fair amount of promise, and I guess really what I'm asking you here is, since it's been a very rapid addition to the educational system and technique, there are some problems that undoubtedly have arisen. And I wonder if the minister could sort of indicate whether their department and the Department of Education have any particular plans and programs which will assist the educational institution in adopting the high technology as part of the educational process?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the member, I appreciate his concern on due credit. I guess I can't think of anything that I would like to do better than to give the opposition their due credit.

The technology is an interesting discussion, particularly as it applies to the education system. I think that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the member from Shaunavon says its more than a discussion. I would suggest that the implications of it are so great that it should continue to get its share of discussion.

When I look at some of the initiatives – and I'll go over for them –it contains a curriculum guide for a 50-hour formal course in computer literacy. Out of the department, we have curriculum guides for two half-credit courses for grade 10 and 11 in computer applications. For instance, the computer science 10, 20, and 30 courses provide an emphasis upon programming.

In 1983 the SSTA and the Department of Education produced a guide for selection of computer hardware and software for educational applications. Also, through the Council of Ministers of Education for Canada, the department is helping to set up a clearing-house for educational software evaluations at the interprovincial level.

And within the province we have the evaluation and acquisition section of the instructional resource branch, which will have engaged a teacher-librarian to co-ordinate the evaluation of computer-assisted instructional material.

The Department of Education is also continuing to offer consultative services to schools on technologies in education. The department is also a member of a provincial group and state departments of education, which is producing computer-assisted instruction modules.

And I guess the most recent development was this spring when we announced the program of EduNet, and that is just some of the initiatives when it comes to technology and computers within education.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to thank the minister for elaborating on the policies that were initiated by the New Democratic Party when they were the government, and not being able to say a single point on what she has initiated since she has been minister, or since the change of government.

Now, I want to get to two concerns, two basic concerns, that have been expressed, Madam Minister.

The first basic problem that has been cited . . . And I'm not putting blame here, but I'm just indicating two basic concerns in respect to the high technology, as has been expressed. The first concern is really the competence . . . I'm not saying teachers are incompetent, but I'm saying that the in-service training for the teachers, in so far as making their knowledge of computers sufficient, in order that they can properly give instructions. It has been said that computers have been installed in schools, and often the students become more competent than the instructors themselves. Many of our instructors have taken it on older-type equipment, the computer classes and so on, and there has been a considerable amount of lack of proper in-service training. This is an expression, not of me, but an expression of one individual that has been involved in the educational . . . well, he's expressing as one of the experts in the field.

You know, if you want me to go around, I can certainly take a survey for you. Are you denying that, Madam Minister? You see awfully perturbed.

I stress to you that one of the basic concerns of the educational field today is, in fact, the increase in in-service training of teachers throughout the system — not only in high tech, but throughout the system because of the mobility of the individuals within the educational system.

And I'm not coming at this in a confrontation way. What I'm asking you is to address a basic concern, the first basic concern with high technology in education, and that is a continuation of in-service training of the professionals. And I want to raise that with you, and I ask you to consider it. I ask you to indicate whether you have any particular plans in place for the increase in in-service training.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well if the member had been listening, I'd indicated a list of things to be done that he says were done under the NDP, and there's nothing new. And that's not true. One of the items that I had mentioned was the Department of Education is continuing to offer consultative services to schools on technologies in education. That's been over the last one and one-half years. Two resource persons trained by the department have been designated for each region, and they are available to deliver workshops, particularly on technology.

On the broader question of in-service education: yes, it is a concern, because things are changing rapidly. Not only do programs change, but so do individual needs as the child goes through the system. And there has been a question and a concern of the ability to co-ordinate such services within the school divisions and the teachers groups themselves.

And what has happened most recently has been the forming of a Saskatchewan organization made up of various providers of in-service education to try and set up a mechanism so that in-service becomes a continuous learning base for teachers to have access to.

MR. KOSKIE: — As I indicated, one of the areas that teachers indicate to me that they have problems is in respect to the in-service training. We have dealt with that. But, in dealing specifically with high tech, the other area of concern is really in respect to the computer software which consists of the computer programs written in the form that the computer can process. The evaluation of that is whether or not the software that is available, whether or not it has undergone adequate testing under controlled, experimental conditions. How good is the computer software that we are really presenting to our schools? These have been really the two areas that have been raised with me, and I'm wondering, in that area, what the department is in fact doing?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well firstly, one area that we're just nicely getting into is through the Council of Ministers of Education for Canada. And we will be helping to set up a clearing house for educational software evaluations at the interprovincial level. And if all goes well that should have a spin-off at the provincial, and then the local level.

The other thing that is new and that we are just getting into, and it is basically internal to the department, is the matter of evaluation and acquisition of instructional resources to do with computer software and technology. And we will be engaging a teacher-librarian to co-ordinate evaluation of computer-assisted instructional materials.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well I raise those particular issues with you, Madam Minister, because, as I recognize, the new technology came upon the educational system very rapidly. But it also has to be addressed very rapidly, and not only for high technology, but in-service training because, in talking to teachers, they indicate that the mobility of dealing with different groups . . . There is such a great need for the continuation of in-service training with the educational system. I want to turn and wrap this up as soon as possible. First of all, I want to know the minister's, the name of the minister's personal staff, and the amount paid to each of the individuals who are on her personal staff.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I can give you the names, but I'll have to send you the salaries. I don't have their salaries here tonight, but if you want the names, I can write them down and send them over.

MR. KOSKIE: — Provide me with the names because I have a list here, and I just want to check it off with you.

I have your list, Madam Minister. It includes Rita Archer, and was appointed by ministerial assistant regulations. And according to the information that we had that Rita Archer receives \$3,435 a month. Appointment made on August 13th, 1983. There is Rodney MacLean, an MA, a minister's assistant 3, and my information is \$2,928 a month as of August the 17th, '83. And there's a Cheryl Zurawski, MA 2, at \$2,353, a Doris Boyle at the rate of, receiving a salary of \$2,352 a month. I have here a Debra Reiger. I wonder whether or not the minister could indicate whether Debra Reiger, who was appointed in August 2nd, '83, has since departed?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Debra was on maternity leave, came back to work, and the child was sick, and Debra has taken a undetermined leave of absence, because of child care.

MR. KOSKIE: — So Debra Reiger is on a leave of absence. Is that correct?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Debra has left my office, and if and when she can come back to work, depending on the child's health, then I will be giving consideration to taking Deb back.

MR. KOSKIE: — And the one that I do not have on the list is a Ivy Saunders. Debra Reiger was receiving \$1.810 a month, was appointed on August 2nd, '83. Also appointed by order in council, was Susan Whitby, assistant secretary, at \$1.743 a month. I ask the Minister whether Susan Whitby is in her employ?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — No Susan is not. Susan's husband was transferred to Moose Jaw and they left the city of Regina.

MR. KOSKIE: — Have you a replacement for Susan Whitby as the assistant secretary?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well you have the sheet. Ivy Saunders is the person that has been doing the replacing in the meantime. I've got the two secretaries, that there used to be three, for now.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well the point that I'm illustrating here again, and I hate being repetitious, but it's an important principle that I'm establishing. And when I look at the gross salaries here that, including Debra Reiger, who has apparently departed, or may come back or whatever — but at the time of the appointments by ministerial assistant regulations, the total of the cost was \$12,878 a month. Then there was a . . . at that time there was a Susan Whitby, also employed at \$1,743; there's an Ivy Saunders, which apparently has taken her place, and adding those up comes to something like \$14,621 per month. In a total of a year, multiply that by 12, and it comes to somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$175,000 for the personal staff in the minister's office. I take it, Madam Minister, you also have a legislative secretary, or do you have two legislative secretaries? Could you advise us of that?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, the figures that the member has been using may, in fact, be correct. I don't know if they are. I will get my figures from my office and run them off. If the minister is suggesting that I am overloaded in staff, I suggest that he come in the office and take a look at the responsibilities the Department of Education, the second largest department in terms of money expended within the government.

How about provincial libraries, teachers' superannuation commission? How about the Women's Secretariat? What we have at the present time are two secretaries that are basically doing the job of what used to be three, even under the NDP. You know, I suggest that you put things into proper perspective. I guess if I take an overall look at the picture, those salaries and position are absolutely nothing compared to the five Koskies that were drawing a salary under the NDP government.

MR. KOSKIE: — I asked you a question, and you befuddled yourself in your own rhetoric. Have you got a legislative secretary: one or two?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I have two, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KOSKIE: — Legislative secretaries? Well, in my calculation, your personal staff is costing the taxpayers of this province \$175,000, and to that you have to add another \$13,000. And I want to indicate that the personal staff, my friends, the personal staff of this minister is over \$200,000, and that's the cost of running this government.

I'm going to repeat my self. This is a government that has divided its departments up: 25 cabinet ministers, 12 legislative secretaries, and here we have another, yet another ministry — \$200,000 of taxpayers' money to run the Tory political machine — \$200,000, 25 times \$200,000. That's part of the cost of the political machine that is being paid by the taxpayers' money.

I'll tell you, the people of Saskatchewan are getting sick and tired of paying for the Tory machine without any actin. There's no money and no jobs for the ordinary people of this province, but certainly the Tories, when they go to the trough, they certainly help themselves and their friends. Twenty-five, twenty-five cabinet ministers. We've got cabinet ministers here walking around —

April 5, 1984

they should be ashamed of themselves – getting \$70,000 a year, with no portfolio. And here again, we have another minister on the taxpayers of this province, my friends — \$200,000, \$200,000. One, two, three, four, five, six on her personal staff, plus two legislative secretaries — \$200,000 of taxpayers' money to perpetuate the Tory machine.

I'll tell you, the people that are the young people across this province, who are looking for jobs, the young people across this province who are, in fact, being cut off of welfare, and there are no jobs – the young people, and the educational boards, like in Saskatoon and Regina, who are underfunded – they wonder why this government has this type of priority. Two hundred thousand dollars to run the political machine in the minister's office, but no money to create jobs, no money for the students, more transfer of responsibilities of the cost of education on to the local taxpayer.

Every ministry that I have addressed, or every department that I have been a critic for . . . First of all, it was the Department of Highways, oh yes, that mighty big Department of Highways. There was the minister with \$14,000 a year in personal staff . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . A month — \$15,000 a month – that's right.

And here we come to another ministry, another portfolio. And again, here we have, as I said, two, four, six individuals, \$200,000 in taxpayers' money. I think that this is the message that is clear to all the young people across the province, that Tories don't skimp on money when it comes to their own personal looking after themselves, but money is always short when it comes to funding the education adequately. And I'm very concerned with the extravagance that is going on, particularly when you've got a minister sitting without portfolios, and the extravagance of your government that's what it has to do, and the lack of priorities.

I want to go on now, Mr. Minister, and ask you whether a Dr. John Hurnard is still employed by the department – a Dr. John Hurnard; whether he's still employed with the department.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the reference to my office staff, particularly that they are underworked and overpaid, is totally unfair. He is questioning their professionalism and their competency, and I suppose if he wants to do a comparison, he should do a very hard-nosed one.

You know, I wonder about the professionalism and the competency when I go down a list dating back to 1975, and I see Deanna Koskie, Linda Koskie, Morley Koskie, Ted Koskie – all related. Do you want to talk about who's going to the trough? Let's talk about that particular trough. That is what I call a blatant trough . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

In specific reply to the members' question, the answer is: Dr. John Hurnard has been seconded to the University of Regina.

MR. KOSKIE: — I wonder . . . did you answer the question the other ministers were hooting? Is a Dr. John Hurnard still with the department?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Dr. John Hurnard has been seconded to the University of Regina.

MR. KOSKIE: — I was wondering whether the minister could indicate what money has been paid by the department to any of the following agencies: Dome Advertising Ltd., Dome Media Buying Services Ltd., and Roberts and Poole Advertising Ltd. If any has been spent on the Tory-oriented Dome Advertising firm, I'd like to know the amount; what was the nature of the service provided; and the amount of money that was paid.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, we have expended approximately \$16,000 for the last fiscal year for: education milestone, education media, northern education, the French career ad, and through policy and planning a come to school meeting for \$134 and that adds up to \$16,000. That's Dome, and we have \$2,000 for our other firm which is Roberts and Poole.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to just ask one question in respect and we'll be able to go through the various items here very rapidly. And I want to ask in respect to the Official Minority Language Office – what really accounts for the 11 per cent increase in salaries? And I want to know whether, Mr. Rene Archambault, the brother-in-law of the Premier, and the defeated PC candidate in 1982 election, is still an employee with the department?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, to the member's first question – the 11 per cent is a matter of reclassification with in the unit, and to his second question the answer is yes.

MR. KOSKIE: — Would you indicate whether the brother-in-law of the Premier, the defeated PC candidate, is still an employee of the department? And would you also, since it's the second time I asked that question, indicate what his rate of pay is and, indeed, what his duties are?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I guess what we are talking about is a very well-trained, experienced professional, particularly when it comes to French education. You know, I look at the gentleman's background and nothing can say it clearer. He has both teaching and administrative experience. He's taught both at the elementary and secondary level. He's taught core and French designated programs in Regina and Gravelbourg. He's been principal of the Gravelbourg High School. Not only that, he's been the directeur général of College Mathieu. He co-ordinated the summer French immersion program in 1969 and 1970 for the University of Regina. And, of course, Mr. Chairman, he's been involved in various French cultural activities. So I would suggest, you know, don't question the man's competence when it comes to his abilities and his experience and his training. He makes \$42,000 a year. That is his salary.

MR. KOSKIE: — And could you indicate whether he has an office that is provided to him at the cost to the taxpayer, and could you indicate the amount?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the gentleman works at College Mathieu, in a local provincial building there, the court-house, along with two other OMLO staff members. And we haven't done a breakdown as to what it costs per person. I mean, there's one office there with two other people from the same staff.

MR. KOSKIE: — Can you indicate whether that was a position which could be . . . a Public Service Commission where other people had an opportunity to compete for that position, or whether, in fact, it's a personal contract? I wonder if the minister could . . . (inaudible) . . .

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, his employment is basically one of a secondment which is not unusual in the Department of Education. You know, he was seconded for '83-84 academic year on a full-time basis, from College Mathieu, and secondments are coterminous with the school year. It's a typical way for the Department of Education to hire educators to provide some specific educational services. We've done it often, in curriculum development and some other areas. I recall a couple of teachers from my school division, I recall one from the member from Shaunavon a few years back – he may not be aware of it, but there was a secondment – and it's a very normal procedure.

MR. KOSKIE: — Did more than one person get an opportunity to be interviewed or an opportunity to be seconded? Or what this particular person . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Secretly hired.

MR. KOSKIE: — Secretly hired?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the secondments are not through the Public Service Commission, and they never have been advertised in the normal way. What the department does when it has a specific project, or an area of specific expertise that is required, they go to the

April 5, 1984

field level where the expertise is, and they second them through the various divisions or the schools.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2 agreed to.

Item 3

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Chairman, you've got to be a little faster at the switch. In respect to the financial management and support services in item no. 3: the personal services previously were 15.4, and they decreased to 10.4, and I would ask the minister to indicate what positions were deleted and to explain why the major cut.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, there's several very specific explanations: number one, there was an accounting clerk 2 that was transferred to personnel; there was a clerk-typist 2 that was transferred to the information bureau; and there was a clerk transferred to the correspondence school, and there was printing services technician that was transferred to the information bureau, and there is one vacancy.

Item 3 agreed to.

Items 4 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Item 9

MR. KOSKIE: — Item 9 . . . Are you on item 9?

On Item 9, Mr. Chairman, I note that under consultative services, personal services, you have the same number of personnel — 5.6 — but the personal services, the amount have decreased from 347,910 down to 218,240. I would like to ask the minister to explain the decrease when the same number of employees are, in fact, employed.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The explanation is the decrease in code 162. It's the honorarium of the \$145,000 in DWI, the Driving Without Impairment subvote. The responsibility for payment to the co-ordinators and instructors in each of the DWI centres will shift to the Highway Traffic Board on April 1, '84, and Education will retain responsibility for curriculum and training of the co-ordinators and instructors under that program.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, on consultative services, I want to ask the minister whether or not any funds under this subvote are devoted to community schools, or whether all of them are in the school grants subvote.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, community schools don't come under here. They're in policy planning and operating grants.

Item 9 agreed to.

Items 10 to 13 inclusive agreed to.

Item 14

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, the sharp decrease in the amount for northern education, particularly under other expenses, but also under personal services . . . Would the minister explain why the other expenses, and why the personal services, are reduced?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — To take the last first, there has been two positions that have been transferred to regional services in the grant administration.

And to answer your first question about the sharp decrease. If you will note on Item 20, the grants to local authorities and other third parties, there is a substantial increase which includes the money for the NORTEP program, and within NORTEP itself this year there's been a 5 per cent increase.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, could the Minister indicate how many students are, in approximate terms, how many students are under the NORTEP Program now?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I believe there are about 94, 95.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, about how many graduates are you expecting this year under the NORTEP Program, roughly?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I can't answer your question. I know there are several, because I've had an invitation to attend their graduation, but I will get the information and send it to you.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — One, one last question, Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister. Are there any new initiatives proposed in northern education provided for in this budget? Are new or different programs?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — There is a spin-off to also southern education, but it has to do with the Indian native education, a new initiative for this year. And we will be setting up what we call the Indian native education development program, and for '84, '85 we'll put about \$100,000 into it. It's a new program, and my guess is, because of the very high native population in the North, that you will see a substantial use of that particular fund out of the North.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, with respect to that program, is there an outline in writing of generally what you have in mind? I don't want to take the time of the committee, but I'm interested generally in what you propose and would appreciate any, any written outline of what is proposed to, that I might peruse at my leisure.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — All I have before me, Mr. Chairman, is my briefing book. There's basically five objectives: the target group, and the project content. I can give it to him verbally, or I can send him a copy when I run one off, whichever he would prefer.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, if you would run one off in due course, not today or tomorrow, but in due course, and send it over to me, I won't take the time of the committee.

Item 14 agreed to.

Items 15 and 16 agreed to.

Item 17

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, I know this is a statutory vote, and we're not . . . whether we voted or doesn't matter, but what caused a swing in the operation of the Book Bureau from what was, in the bureau's terms, a cost item to you in '83-84, and in the Book Bureau's terms, a payment into you in '84-85. What caused a fairly substantial swing in the operations?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the explanation is the amount shown as expenditure is

April 5, 1984

the difference in cash flow between the revenue and the expenditure . . . And the book bureau provides for a slight profit each year.

Item 17 agreed to.

Item 18

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, you had a meeting with some educators this afternoon, and I know you have talked to my colleague from Quill Lakes on that. But are you able to assure the House and my constituents, both in the public school system and the separate school system, that those two systems will get no less money next year in dollars than they got in the, no less money in this year than they got last year?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — No, Mr. Chairman, I am not.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, are you able to give them any assurance that their grants will not be reduced by figures in excess of 5 per cent over what they got last year?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The only assurance I can give, as I gave Saskatoon and Regina, is that over the next week we would try and look at some options and define some, and some alternatives to see if indeed there is a solution that is fair and equitable.

We had a good, frank discussion with the four boards, particularly on the area of reassessment, and I left them with the understanding that we would try and get back to them, at the earliest, late next week; and at the latest, early the following week.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, you will be aware that, at least according to law, they are to advise the civic authorities of their mill rates, practically now — I don't know what the exact date is. But the civic authorities are supposed to have theirs set by April 15, as I recall the date, and I'm speaking now from memory. You will have known of the effect of your school grant formula, school grant calculation, on these two boards, and will have known it for a good while, and will have considered its fairness or otherwise. Are you not able to advise these boards what your position is, which doubtless you have been formulating for a period of a month now, and which they have only been aware of for seven or eight days? Are you able to respond relatively rapidly to them, so that they can do the job in a very few days, which you have had the luxury of a month to deal with?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Yes, it's close to the time that mill rates are to be set. There's been an extension as needed. Regina city boards, in particular, will probably require a further extension, because the city's assessment is still going through the court of revision. So they are having a difficult time getting a final figure on what that reassessment has done. The boards have been aware of what has been coming through, in terms of grants in the formula, and all the various factors. They, perhaps, have not known the extent of changes that the reassessment might have been taking them through. And that's where we had some discussion today.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, are you advising me and the committee that the boards knew that you were going to raise the computation of the mill rate from 90 to . . . is it 97.5 . . . or whatever it is in your calculation, approximately that? That they knew that before the budget came down?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — They were aware of the estimated grant coming forth, and also the method under which it was calculated, which the equalization factor of the mill rate is one of the components of the calculation.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I don't want to be difficult here; I just want to get the facts. Are you

telling me that either of the Regina boards had a figure other than – it perhaps isn't going to be 90, but a figure of what the computation mill rate was going to be, before the budget came down?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The day after the budget, and I don't recall a date, was the day that a memo was sent out to all board with the details of the calculations.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — That I think is the facts, and therefore one week from today, going back, thus on March 22, they found out. I guess two weeks then from now, two weeks from today, March 22., they found out. They were then able to calculate their grants, and not a minute before would they have any reasonable calculation whatever of what they were going to get. And I think that that doesn't leave them much time to deal with a situation, which obviously none of them was expecting, since a person as skilled, and as experienced as Mr. Holash said that it blew his budget planning all apart, words to that effect. Clearly, he had no idea until March 22 what his situation was, and I think that you have placed those boards in a difficult position. They were anticipating something of the order of 4 per cent or 5 per cent. Because their student load was not dropping as was true of some other boards, the amount you are providing for student, was widely reported to be 5 per cent, and that's substantially accurate.

It was the change in the computational mill rate, that's certainly one thing that had a major effect on their calculations, and they didn't know that until March 22. That had placed them in a very, very difficult position.

And my request to you, Madam Minister, is that you take cognizance of that and consider the circumstances in which you've placed these boards where major changes have been made – changes which they could not reasonably anticipate, at least, or quantify, at least, with any degree of precision. And I ask that that be taken into consideration when you're setting the final grant that you will allow to the boards. I speak of the Regina boards, but the arguments are equally valid with respect to the Saskatoon boards, and perhaps have some validity with respect to the Moose Jaw and Prince Albert boards.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I had already indicated that an extension has already been agreed upon because of the time factors. I also mentioned Regina, in particular, will have a difficult time in getting any kind of firm calculation within the next week because the court of revision has not been completed for the city of Regina, so they don't have the hard figure on what the reassessment has done. And those considerations will be taken.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I want to ask under the next subvote, and I simply give you notice of it – whether or not you have changed the capital grant for schools, and I think that would be a better asked under 19, and I will so ask it.

Coming back to 18, I want to ask about community schools, and you will know that studies have been done on the community schools program, and the studies commissioned by you have come back with reports indicating that the community schools programs is operating well and ought, perhaps, to be expanded. To quote the press report – and it's referring to a report which you have received on community schools – the report recommends without reservation:

that the program be continued for the simple reason that it's working and working well . . . the largest and most successful program directed towards the social problems of inner city students in any Canadian province.

Is it the intention of your department to provide additional funds for the expansion of the community schools programs in, I will say, Regina and Saskatoon?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, we will not be expanding the community schools this year, but we'll be maintaining what is there presently. We have made a decision to put some

April 5, 1984

emphasis over the next year on the curriculum, the native Indian content, the development of program, and also through the development fund that is new this year.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, while I think the community programs have been successful and have worked well, I think that they can stand improvement, in the sense that they are still sort of heavily oriented towards education with, in my judgement, perhaps not enough blend of what I might call the “social contact” between the school and the family. I know much has been done to improve that, and no one is now levelling a criticism at the people who are operating it, except that they and we can all learn.

I think that another comment that might fairly be made about that is that it works a good deal better in the lower grades than it does with respect to the . . . I think the first five or six grades would be its success area.

You will also be aware, Madam Minister, that there’s a good number of discussions going about as to what can be done, with respect to inner city native children, for grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. There are many proposals.

What I would like to ask is this, Madam Minister: does the government have any proposal to offer assistance to a privately operated high school, or perhaps 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, for division 4, and perhaps portions of division 3? That concept, which the minister will be familiar with . . . It’s being talked about a good deal in Regina by a Mr. Stonechild and others. I will simply use that name to identify what I am talking about.

Does the department have any . . . Does the department believe that that’s an appropriate way to go, in order to provide an alternative school – not exclusively for native people – but an alternative school which might provide an environment which might have a prospect of retaining a greater number of those students in the school system, and to alleviate what is acknowledge to be a high drop-out rate?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, some of your observations on the community schools are very correct, that they seem to be successful for the very young child.

I would suggest, however, that they are still too new to see if we are going to be able to bring the retention rate up, particularly for the older student.

You know, you may very well find that those young kids – that were in grade 1, 2, and 3, say, over the last three years, and going through a community school, may, in fact, move into high school and be retained there in order to complete a grade 11 or 12. And I guess it would be my hope that that would be one of the objectives of the community school, is to increase their record on their retention rate of the older high schools.

The point on the high school, or division 4, Indian-native high school . . . I have not had a proposal put forth to me. I have only read about such a proposal in the paper. And so I really think it would be unfair of me to comment on, you know, what it might consist of, when I haven’t seen anything.

I guess when it comes to alternative schools, or alternative programming within a given school, there are some pretty good examples out there right now as to how that works, whether it be a French-designated school, or if you move into a very large metro area like Toronto or Vancouver, you will find a lot of alternative schools for various . . . Some of it might be religion, some of it might be ethnic background. I suggest that size, and a given population, perhaps makes it easier for a school board to move into those areas.

I suppose it would be worth looking at something, if everything else you were doing is failing at this point in time.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, in broad terms there's essentially two proposals out there: one, that the existing school boards ought to tailor a school within the school system to respond to the perceived special needs of native children; and another proposal that there ought to be what would really be a private school, something outside the school system, which would operate on the basis of grants similar to those paid presumably to — and I'll pick a name — Luther College, and presumably operating on grants received by the individual students, who were registered Indians, from the federal government. There are two proposals out there. There may be others, but those are the two I have seen most prominently stated. Does the department have a point of view as to which of those models would work best, or is your position that, since you have seen really so few proposals, you are not in a position to comment?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, my position at this point in time is one of being open, because I have not, as I said, had the specific high school proposal put forth. And so I'm rather open on the subject, and even rather curious in maybe looking at some material about the impact and the success of such schools. I've certainly had some discussion with some people. I guess the interesting thing I find, maybe not so much in Regina, but particularly outside when you get into the rural areas in talking to Indian native parents, they want that child to be integrated with the community, but they also say he or she is not fitting well. What is the problem?

And, you know, maybe it's the curriculum, maybe we just don't have enough role models for the little Indian kid to be able to look up to, and say, "Hey! That's somebody from my background, and they've made it there." So there's various factors that come into play with it and, as I said, you know, the point of view, and the department's point of view right now, is one of being open, because we have not done any research nor seen a lot of studies on it.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, just a couple of further questions along this line. And here I display my lack of knowledge of the success of a program in Saskatoon which is sometimes called survival school — I think division three, basically — but maybe some division four as well. Can you tell me whether, in the opinion of the department, this school, which, while I don't think is so designated, offers special services for native people and is locally and popularly called the survival school, has been, in the opinion of the department, a success, and is a likely model to be followed, or is still under evaluation?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I guess I'm like the Leader of the Opposition. I am not overly familiar with this school. I do know that it was an initiative taken by the Catholic board up there. Obviously, a very much defined need to do something, particularly with the drop-out rate that is with the native students. There has been an evaluation of it that proved to be highly successful and acceptable for that community.

We're basically talking about kids that dropped out of the regular school system, and I am told that the drop-out rate, if I can use that term for the survival school, is approximately 62 per cent. Now, while that may seem high, in comparative terms, it's probably favourable, and the department will continue to support it.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I state what is almost the obvious. That, if any of the projections of the likely ethnic complexion of the school population in cities like Regina, and North Battleford, and Prince Albert are accurate, then the need for some schools which deal specifically with the problems raised by the culture clash that the children of native origin, and students of native origin experience when they're in school.

The need to deal with that will rise, and rise dramatically. And all I can do is urge the department to look at all the models, because it may well not be too many years before we will need many models if some of the experiments which are now underway are less than fully successful.

One further question before I let that one go. It's the big vote. I have been puzzled, Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, by the fact that the minister says that the school grants are going to go up by about 5 per cent, by my calculations from 333 to 350, and . . . all right, let's call it 5 per cent. And yet I can find remarkably few school divisions who appear to be getting much more than 6 or 7 per cent, and I don't want to go through all that list again . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh fine, then that's exactly what I want you to do, and to tell me which of the major divisions getting \$10 million or more are getting increases, and which ones are getting decreases? And if you'd like to, if you think the \$10 million figure is too high, we can cut that back to a smaller figure. Who are getting the big increases in grants? Doubtless you can find what the Meadow Lake Separate School Division, or something that might be getting a big increase in grants.

AN HON. MEMBER: — They're all together in Meadow Lake, no separate system — all together there, everything.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — The Meadow Lake separate is gone?

AN HON. MEMBER: — All public schools, all public schools and all Conservatives there.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Oh well, for years, could be. I'll take the Rosetown one then.

AN HON. MEMBER: — They're all conservatives and all public schools.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Yes, but can you name me then, some divisions — some of the larger divisions that are getting big increases?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — It is basically Saskatoon and Regina that are over \$10 million. That's all. You want those figures again?

AN HON. MEMBER: — No, not the Saskatoon and Regina ones.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well that's all that's over \$10 million.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — That are over . . . Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, tell me all the ones over 5 million that got an increase.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — 5 million and over we're talking about. If I could begin with Meadow Lake, is a 9.14 increase; it's a \$6.1 million budget. You want to know the factors in it? Okay. Nipawin School Division 61, is a \$5.4 million budget, and they have a 10.75 per cent increase. Prince Albert Rural is 7 million, the budget, with a 10.33 per cent increase. Saskatchewan Valley School Division No. 49, is an \$8.7 million budget with a 7.45 per cent increase. And that's about it. I'm sorry — Moose Jaw, a \$6.5 million budget with a 12.59 per cent increase.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I don't know whether the minister is in a position to supply the members with the information from which she's reading. It's been very customary to provide members with the spread of school grants, and I would ask the minister so to do, because I'm puzzled by how the totals can work out to provide a 5 per cent across the board, when every system above \$10 million is getting a reduction, and a good number of systems below that figure will be getting increases in grants of less than 5 per cent.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, as I said last night, we would compile a package of the information that the opposition had requested, and we would send it to them as quickly as we could. And the Leader of the Opposition is confused about percentages, etc. I can only, again, state the various components that make up their grants: the basic per pupil recognition; the adjustments that there might be in enrolments, whether they're up or down; the sparsity factor is up for rural

school divisions; the small school factor from K to 12; the incremental rates, for instance, on special education and comprehensive high schools; special needs students; tuition fee expenditures; transportation. You could also possibly see a change because of the change in tuition fee agreements between various boards. You can see a change with the recognized expenditures on the capital debt expenditures.

So all those components are in there that make up the difference if it's going to be a plus or minus. And if we want to go through all the minuses over the five or six years, we can do that, again, tonight.

MR. ENGEL: — Madam Minister, I asked earlier, when we were talking to Rural Affairs, about the impact of the new agriculture program you announced, where the mill rate, the education mill rate, is going to be paid back to farmers.

And I'm wondering how that's going to impact on the school units, and how do you foresee that this is going to be structured so that the units get their money, and how is Agriculture going to make that transfer through you to the school units, or how come that wasn't a program in Department of Education? Why would that be an agricultural program?

I was impressed that that wasn't in Rural Affairs, but how do you foresee this grant reduction on my home quarter of land being implemented, that it isn't going to impact on the school units by that amount of money? There's about . . . There's a fair number of farmers in the Wood River School Unit, for example, that have home quarters of land that they're living on, and they're not going to be involved in paying the tax on that home quarter according to the announcements, and how are you going to compensate them for that additional amount of money? It doesn't seem to show up in your program here, as far as that reduction is concerned. It could be as high as 10 per cent in my area, and I believe that in the Pelly constituency it might be closer to 35 and 40 per cent of their taxes they're collecting. So I'm wondering how do you plan to compensate the school units for this reduction?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if he wants the details on the mechanics of it, he's going to have to ask the minister responsible. I can simply tell you that it will not affect school boards in their accessibility on that property tax and revenue. It won't affect them.

MR. ENGEL: — I can't see how the minister can be so sure of that because the program that was announced is that you were not going to collect from the farmers that property tax on his home quarter, so the school unit is going to have to get that money from some other source. And that should . . . there'll be a time lag involved, or there will be some interest cost or something. If I had a copy of the budget speech, we could read to you where it indicates that the farmers are going to not pay tax on that home quarter. Just the same kind of promises. You said, "Don't fill her up until the day after the election. You'll save 40 cents a gallon." I'm wondering how you're going to compensate the school units for that large amount of money because in some constituencies, I imagine Pelly would be average five quarters per farmer.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Yes, sure.

MR. ENGEL: — So if it's five quarters a farmer, then you're giving the tax off one of those. You know what percentage of school tax that's going to be. How are you going to compensate them for that additional impact?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can only state what I just stated, that that is not going to affect the accessibility that the school boards have, nor their right to tax that piece of property. Perhaps I could put it into a better picture for you if I said it's very similar to a rebate program where you wonder why this particular one isn't under education. I used to wonder why the other one wasn't.

April 5, 1984

MR. ENGEL: — The other one was a property improvement grant. It was handled through their R.M.'s that paid their property or their municipality, either urban or rural. And here you are telling me that there's not going to be an impact. So what you're really telling me that I should tell my farmers is, "Look, fella, you be ready to pay all your tax this fall because the school unit is going to get their money from you one way or the other." The tax is going to be on that quarter of land. You're telling me they're going to collect it so the farmer's going to have to go over and crawl to agriculture and see if he can get that money back somehow, is what you're telling me.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the mechanics, he will have to ask the Minister of Agriculture. It will not affect the school board's accessibility to be able to tax the home quarter and receive their fair share of their dollar as any other local government. The mechanics, once again, you will have to talk to the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ENGEL: — Okay. All I want to get clear is that you're going to let those local school units and separate boards, whoever, assess the tax like they always did, and collect the tax like they always did. That isn't going to — there's not going to be any impact there at all. That is the point you are making.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The point I am making is, the mechanics of it are with the Minister of Agriculture, and you can ask him if it's going to be either/or. I don't know. I only know that it does not affect the school boards' accessibility and right to tax that property and receive the recognition of dollars from it. That's very simple.

Item 18 agreed to.

Item 19

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I ask the question of which I gave notice a minute ago, that is whether or not there has been a change in the capital grant formula, or alternatively — and I might have asked this under the one before — has there been any change in the operating grant formula with respect to the allowance for debenture payments, and interest, and that sort of thing?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — No, there has been no change on either.

Item 19 agreed to.

Item 20 agreed to.

Vote 8 agreed to.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I would simply like to thank the opposition and the officials, for what has seemed like along three days. Thank you.

MR. KOSKIE: — I too, Mr. Chairman, would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff from the Department of Education, and also to thank the minister. This was her first experience in a very big department, and we will expect a better performance next year.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:04 p.m.