

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

April 6, 1984

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. SWAN: — This morning it's my privilege to introduce to you a group of students sitting in the west gallery. We have 13 students from grades 2 to 12. They are from the Wordshop Christian Academy in D'Arcy, Saskatchewan. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Marian Wallis. I'd like all hon. members to welcome them to the Assembly, and I'll be meeting with them for pictures and drinks at 10:30.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Speaker, some of these students and adults were from Outlook, my constituency, and I'd like to add to your words, Mr. Speaker, congratulate them for coming to the Assembly, and wish them a very good day, and ask all the members to give the same applause to them again, please. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DIRKS: — Mr. Speaker, we don't frequently have the pleasure of receiving into this Assembly out-of-province high school students, and so it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and to all members of the Assembly this morning, a group of 23 high school students who are seated in the Speaker's gallery, who are visiting us today from the Crystal Lake School in Pickle Lake, Ontario. So they are here a substantial distance away from home. We want to welcome you here. They are here with a number of chaperons. I will be meeting with them at 10:45 in the members' lounge for some refreshments.

We hope that your stay here will be enjoyable and educational, and that you'll have a safe trip back. I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them this morning.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BOUTIN: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, a group of 53 students from my home town, Domremy School, grades 7 to 12. Their teachers and chaperons are Mr. Gabriel Gareau, Ron Tessier, Diane Dowhay, Ernie Kalynka, and parents are Paul Boutin and Andre Mercier.

I will meet with you at 10:30 for pictures by the rotunda and for refreshments in room 218 at 10:35. I would like the Assembly to welcome them here today.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce through you, and to the members of the Assembly, a group of grade 10 students who are sitting in the Speaker's gallery. They're from the Muenster High School. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Dick Bleisinger.

It has been the tradition for grade 10 students from the Muenster High School to come on an annual visit to the Assembly each year, and certainly I'd like others to join with me in giving them a welcome. I hope that their stay here is enjoyable, and that they will indeed see the effectiveness of the opposition, shortly. I will join them shortly after the question period.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Unemployment Statistics

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Premier, and my question deals with this morning's truly startling unemployment statistics which show that in March there were 44,000 people unemployed in the province — 6,000 more than just a year ago. And the figures show that the number of unemployed jumped by 6,000 during the year, and the number of employed people went up by only 1,000.

In the light of the many statements made by the government opposite, and particularly by the Premier, about the oil industry booming, the potash industry rebounding, the province being open for business, the fact that we're not participating in the recession — how, Mr. Premier, do you explain these shocking figures of sharp increases on the unemployment, and minuscule increases in employment?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member will review the facts, both adjusted and unadjusted with respect to employment in the labour force figures, Saskatchewan is up significantly in the number of people into the labour force. We find that we are growing. I believe it's now over 20,000 people, since March of 1982 over March of 1984, that are into the labour force in the province of Saskatchewan. That is growing significantly, Mr. Speaker.

Now I will agree that our population, and the people looking for jobs in the province of Saskatchewan, is up, and we're breaking records in population. More and more people are coming into this province to look for jobs.

From time to time, Mr. Speaker, we can't keep up to the number of people coming into the province looking for jobs. We've broken the barrier of a million people. We're increasing the population rate at a faster rate than it's been in the past, and we see the number of people, both looking for jobs and being employed in the province, going up steadily.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier admit that, during the last year, the number of people who were in the labour force went up 7,000 — a figure much lower than normal — and that, of those 7,000, your government found jobs for 1,000, and 6,000 are out of work?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the labour force from March of 1983 to March of 1984 went from 456,000 to 463,000. In the last two months alone, the labour force has jumped 4,000 in January, and 4,000 in February. January it was 455; February it was 459; March it was 463.

The number of people employed has also increased. It went up 2,000 from January to February, and up another 1,000 from February to March. So that's an increase of employed people of 3,000 people in the last two months, Mr. Speaker.

All right. So the employment figures in the labour force have increased by 7,000 people. Those employed in the last two months have increased by 3,000 people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. One year ago, Mr. Premier, your government said that Saskatchewan people want permanent, productive jobs created in our province for themselves and their children, in your budget, which you said was focused around job creation. In your throne speech in November, you again said that your policies were

focused around job creation.

Do you not admit that those policies have failed when they create only 1,000 jobs – 1,000 jobs in one year – and create 6,000 more unemployed people in a single year?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that we are looking at a season where you're post-Christmas. You're looking at students signing up all over the province, both from high school and universities – right across Canada. At this time of the year they'll apply for the labour force, so the applications are there. If he wants to look at June over June, if he wants to look at August over August, or February over February, he'll know that the figures are different.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Is there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — The Premier tries to justify his poor performance by claiming that it is a seasonal problem. Presumably the seasons are the same in Manitoba. Would you concede that in the last year, in the last year Manitoba has created 14,000 new jobs and Saskatchewan 1,000 new jobs? What do you think of those figures?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at Manitoba. I thought that the member might ask about Manitoba, so I did a little homework on Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the labour force in February in Manitoba was 515,000 people, according to StatsCanada. It's down to 511,000 in March – down by 4,000 people. Employment, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba – employment in February of 1984 was 471,000 according to StatsCanada, in February. It's down to 469,000 in March – down by 4,000.

Unemployment, correspondingly, Mr. Speaker, dropped from 44,000 to 42,000. The rate dropped from 8.5 to 8.2. It's not unlike Saskatchewan was, in the '70s. People are leaving the province, and certainly the labour force is declining, so they're bragging about lower unemployment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I'll ask the question once again. You have the figures before you and I hope, therefore, you won't deny answering the question. Is it not true that in the last year – and you have the year-over-year comparisons – Manitoba has 14,000 more jobs than they had last year at this time?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I don't have the total figures for Manitoba last year. I know that we were the only province in '82 to create new jobs. We created 10,000 new jobs in '83, second only to Prince Edward Island. When I look at what Manitoba is doing now, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the trend, obviously the fact is that people are not looking for jobs in Manitoba, because the labour force is going down, the employment is going down. As a result, they're looking at a change, probably in population, because ours is going up.

We suffer some problems of growth, Mr. Speaker. We are growing. The population is growing, the expansion is here, as opposed to our neighbouring province that is looking at a decline.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. We note that the Premier uses highly selective statistics. I am using the statistics put out by Statistics Canada today for March; you are quoting February statistics, and two-years old statistics.

Referring to the March statistics, the ones that are out today, and for all the provinces in Canada,

April 6, 1984

will you concede – will you concede that when it comes to job creation, the percentage of new jobs created, Saskatchewan stands, not number one or two or three or four or five or six but, in fact, is number seven; and that six other provinces have done a better job at creating jobs than Saskatchewan in the last one-year period?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — No, I won't. Mr. Speaker, I won't concede that at all. We can battle out statistics as long as he likes, but the facts are, Mr. Speaker, that we were the only province in Canada in '82 to create new jobs, and we were second in 1983.

And I want to make a point, and I'm sure the hon. member understands this. It's not only the percentage, as I mentioned yesterday, it's also the level of where you've been and where you're going. You may find a percentage in Newfoundland or Prince Edward island that from month to month would be an increase. And it would be really great to go from 24 per cent unemployment down to 19, and the percentage increase would be significant. From what level?

Similarly in terms of gasoline prices. Gasoline prices in Manitoba – they only go up one or two per cent, Mr. Speaker. Here they might go up three per cent, but from what level? We have consistently had the lowest level of unemployment as we're growing, Mr. Speaker; they have a level of unemployment, now, that is lower because they are going the other way around. It's significantly different.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier concede one simple thing: that we no longer have the lowest level of unemployment in Canada?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — I will agree, Mr. Speaker, that our unemployment rate is 8.4; that Manitoba's, because of the loss of population, is going down to 8.2; and I will also concede the fact, Mr. Speaker, that I believe the most recent statistics in terms of popularity in terms of both administrations, theirs runs about 11, and ours is 54.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Unemployment in Saskatchewan

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Speaker, I want to address a question to the Minister of Labour. I saw him clapping at the great statistics, or the answers of the Premier. I want to indicate to the Minister of Labour that, as the Premier has agreed, Saskatchewan no longer has the lowest unemployment rate. When we left government, it was around 5 per cent. It is almost doubled.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour: do you realize that the number of unemployed in Saskatchewan last month is equivalent to the whole, entire combination of every man, woman, and child in Yorkton, Melville, Estevan, Weyburn, and La Ronge?

I want to ask the Minister of Labour: do you find that rate of unemployment, which is so desperately high among young people, satisfactory? And do you believe that the policies of your government are adequately addressing this problem?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, we look back at the spring of 1983. We find that there was 40,000 people unemployed. We go back to April 26, 1982. We look at your record. You had 28,000 people unemployed., with a work-force of about 445,000 people.

When we look at September, we hit the 500,000 work-force in Saskatchewan – 500,000 in the work-force in Saskatchewan, in September of 1983. So there are 55, or 45,000 people come into the province. We created 41,000 jobs, because our unemployment only went up by 4,000 people.

And when we look at our capital projects that are coming – 19,000 people, jobs coming on-stream this year – let's look at it in a couple or three months and find out where our unemployment figures are going to be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to ask a supplemental question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour. Will the Minister of Labour agree that today we have the highest number of people on welfare – 62,000 people – 62,000 people on welfare; that we have, in fact, 44,000 people in Saskatchewan, unemployed?

I ask you again: are you satisfied with the economic policies of big business, and the invitation, and the tax royalties to the oil companies? Are you satisfied that they are providing the necessary jobs to the people of this province?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier indicated that we have been, and are still going to be, the number one in Canada. We have 19,200 jobs planned with the capital expenditures that are coming in our budget. We will be up to the 500-plus again, probably, in the work-force early in the new year. We have a number of projects on line that is going to bring that unemployment figure down.

The problem is that we are talking percentages of factors that the unemployed is being increased because people are coming into our province. But we are attempting and are going to create the jobs that keeps that inflation, or the unemployment rate, down to the levels that we had last year, if not better.

MR. KOSKIE: — Further supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, as you are aware, and you will agree, there's 62,000 people on welfare – 44,000 unemployed. Following the budget which you said was going to be such a great boost to this economy, not only are those statistics available, but what your government did was to fire – fire from employment – over 480 people. How is that consistent, Mr. Minister, to the duties of a Minister of Labour in providing jobs when you are not, in fact, creating any jobs in the private sector?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, if the member would like me to read the number of the projects that are planned for this year, we could take up the rest of the question period.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned to the member opposite that in the spring of 1983 we had 40,000 people unemployed, with an unemployment rate of around 9 per cent. We finished up the fall of 1983 with an unemployment rate of about 6.2 per cent, with a work-force of 500,000 in the province, and that's an increase of 45,000 people during that year and a half, which, to me, tells me that we created 41,000 jobs over that period of time.

Rate of Job Creation

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a new question to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Speaker, members opposite have attempted to defend what are disgraceful employment figures and unemployment figures on the grounds that there are a large number of new people coming into the work force, and that is why the unemployment figures are high.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I want them to explain some other figures then because that story is totally false, and I am now going to ask questions, not about the unemployment rate, but about

April 6, 1984

the rate of new jobs created. And this has got nothing to do with the number in the work force now, nothing to do with people coming into the province.

How many new jobs have you created? And I ask this question: do you not agree, or do you dispute *Statistics Canada* figures which say that the actual number employed went up in Canada in the last year by 2.8 per cent; in Manitoba by 3.2 per cent; and in Saskatchewan by less than 1 per cent.

Now these are the number of people working. Do you deny those figures, or do you still say that there is still a huge number of new jobs created? Do you deny the fact that you're creating jobs at less than one-third the rate that Manitoba is?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it depends what time of the year, and what months, and what they refer back and forth to. We will be creating 19,200 jobs this year with our capital projects and our programs in our budget.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary to the minister. Does he not agree that the only fair comparison is March over March, or April over April, and not try to compare March with September, and September with June, and any other comparison? Does he not agree that the only fair test is comparing March of 1983 with March of 1984? And does he not agree that that will show that there are only 1,000 additional jobs in this province and 6,000 additional people without jobs?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, it depends what month to what month. If you want to take it from June to June, and whatever, you can see a lot of changes in the number of jobs. We are aiming at 19,200 jobs for this summer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McLAREN: — And when you look at our work force, which is climbing steadily and got to 500,000 people by last September, you people never even came close to reaching that kind of work force in this province. And one of our election campaigns was that we were going to bring the kids back home, which you people drove out of the province, and we are doing that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It was last March that your government brought down the budget saying you're going to create 20,000 new jobs. It is now this March, and one year, and you have created 1,000 new jobs. My simple question is: where are the 19,000 additional jobs that you said you were going to create?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Well, Mr. Speaker, how did we get . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. It's impossible for me to hear the answers, and I'm certain that it's impossible for the members who are asking them, as well, and I would ask for some decorum.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, never in the history of Saskatchewan have we had 500,000 people in our work force, which we reached last fall, and I am sure we are going to be higher than 500,000 by the end of 1984. And if that isn't creating jobs and bringing the people back home to Saskatchewan, I don't know what is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Unemployment in Northern Saskatchewan

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll direct my question to the Premier. My question deals with the high unemployment in northern Saskatchewan. If unemployment is a serious problem in southern Saskatchewan — and I say it is — then it certainly is a tragedy for us in northern Saskatchewan. It's a serious crisis. It's disastrous. The unemployment rate in northern Saskatchewan is 85 to 95 per cent.

I ask the same basic question which I asked and never did get an answer for, following the introduction of your budget. What specific job opportunities, and how many, and where — will be created as a direct result of your budget presented here on the 21st of March?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I said a week ago, or whenever it was, and I'll say again today: a good part of the entire tourism package that we have developed is for northern Saskatchewan, and the hon. member knows that. I mean the Outfitters' Association of Northern Saskatchewan, when they travelled with the Minister of Tourism and Small Business to California to solicit people to market here, and to develop here, and spend their money in northern Saskatchewan, is designed specifically for northern Saskatchewan.

We look at the timber changes. We look at the changes in the royalty structure and the tax structure for mining and minerals. That's for northern Saskatchewan. You look at the processing plant for wild rice. That's for northern Saskatchewan. All the programs that are in agriculture, tourism, small business, mining, timber, and so forth, taken in northern Saskatchewan as well as southern Saskatchewan. There's not much timber around Regina. In fact, it's mostly in northern Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I also said at that time, and I think it's relevant, it is not isolated to Saskatchewan. If you go to the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and look at the two, I think there's 47,000 people unemployed in Manitoba today. There are 44,000 in Regina today. And in northern Manitoba, there is just as many people, or more, unemployed as there is in the province of Saskatchewan. And if you look at those programs across Alberta, or B.C., or northern Ontario, the hon. member knows that.

I'll come back to the budget, Mr. Speaker. There have never been so many exciting changes for job creation in a budget in the history of this province, or across Canada, when you look at venture capital, you look at the livestock, you look at the change in forestry, the change in mining, all that combination is typical to northern Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I supplementary question. I want to . . . For your information, Mr. Premier, the information that I'm getting, and the feedback that I'm getting from northern Saskatchewan is that services and programs are getting cut back. And every time I pick up a newspaper from northern Saskatchewan, it talks about more northern jobs lost, more people getting fired. And now they're even talking about the North being a "third world" country.

I want to ask you, Mr. Premier: when are you going to announce major economic development initiatives, specific major economic initiatives for northern Saskatchewan, to help alleviate the dire situation that the North is faced with today?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we are not going to rebuild the department of northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I don't know the individuals that the hon. member is talking to, but the people I talked to, they didn't want the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. People that I talked to all across northern Saskatchewan didn't want to see the government continue that program. They said: provide us with some concrete economic opportunities in tourism, in fishing, in timber, in mining, in agriculture, in wild rice, and so forth.

April 6, 1984

Not just a government, Mr. Speaker; not just a bunch of civil servants running around, but . . . (inaudible) . . . The approach that we've taken in the budget is for sustained economic activity, not just for bigger government in northern Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 41 — An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to amend The Superannuation (supplementary Provisions) Act.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

MOTIONS

Membership of Standing Committee on Public Accounts

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, just prior to orders of the day, and by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by my colleague, the member from Moosomin:

That the name of Mr. Petersen be substituted for that of Mr. Young on the list of members comprising the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

Membership of Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the member for Moosomin:

That the names of Messrs. Young and Hampton be substituted for those of Messrs. Sveinson and Baker on the list of members comprising the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I rise, and I am puzzled by the latter motion, particularly with respect to Mr. Sveinson, who now represents a third party in this legislature . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — No yet. They haven't accepted him.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Well, represents an independent then, and may or may not represent a third party, depending upon the events. Members opposite are obviously very touchy about their crumbling ranks, but my point is this, Mr. Speaker.

It has been traditional to have representatives of third party groups on the various major committees. I can well understand why members opposite would not wish Mr. Sveinson to be the chairman of the committee, and that is thoroughly understandable, since the chairman of the Crown Corporations Committee must ordinarily represent the majority party in the legislature. But to remove the member from the committee — the representative of the third party — and I obviously have no brief for Mr. Sveinson's views, but only for his right to represent them in the legislature, and his right to be represented on some of the major committees of the legislature, and therefore I question the attitude taken by the government, of simply knocking off the committee — and a major committee, the Crown Corporations Committee — this particular member, who now represents some sort of a third force in this legislature.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, I would just make a couple of comments with regard to

the remarks of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. First of all, his points about all members in the House having a right to serve on some of the major committees – all of those things are true. Certainly we would undertake to look at the representation on committees once things settle down and, as the hon. member can well appreciate, things certainly haven't. I don't know that the member referred to has even been accepted by another party as yet, but we will certainly undertake to look at that at that time.

I do note, however, Mr. Speaker, that it is interesting to the House, and I'm sure to everyone, how quickly the Leader of the Opposition rushes to the defence of that hon. member so quickly, and he's rushing to his defence very quickly now that he's joined the opposition benches.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 35 – An Act respecting Noxious Weeds

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Noxious Weeds Act was enacted in 1940, and the existing act provides local municipal governments with the authority to require those responsible for property to control, destroy, and prevent the spread of certain noxious weeds. These types of powers are essential if a municipality is to be able to control and, hopefully, eliminate certain types of weeds.

For example, if some weeds are not controlled when they first appear, they may spread onto adjacent property where they cause further problems to crop land, pastures, and recreational land. It is essential that individuals not be allowed to neglect their responsibilities and contribute to the establishment of weed infestations, which act as a reservoir to infest and re-infest adjacent properties.

Although this act has served municipal governments well in the past, the existing act is an old one and in need of revision, in order to simplify the language of the act and to reorganize the provisions in a more logical fashion.

In addition, there are certain provisions that need to be modified to reflect changes that have occurred over the past several years. Several changes are proposed for your consideration. They are changes to the weed species listed as noxious by the act; the noxious weeds present that would permit the destruction of a crop; the allowable expenses a rural municipality could recover for weed activities carried out under the provisions of the act; the noxious weeds present that would prohibit the sowing of a crop; the allowable expenses that municipal government could recover for weed control; activities carried out in the urban areas under the provisions of the act; the penalty to be imposed in the event of the violation of a municipal by-law requiring the covering of field crops in transport; the levels at which municipalities must inspect and provide itemized statements when the work must be carried out under the provisions of the act; and the fines to be imposed in the event of a conviction for a violation of the provisions of this act.

First of all, addition of weeds. The first change would add white cockle, all yellow flowered perennial toadflax, dandelion, wild buckwheat, scentless camomile, and musk-thistle, to the

schedule of noxious weeds in the act. Although these weeds have been declared noxious by ministers' orders in the past, municipal government can more easily determine what comprises noxious weeds if the weeds are listed in the act. In addition, it is proposed to add diffuse knapweed, spotted knapweed, cleavers – or for those of you into Latin, *galium aparine* – round-leafed mallow, and common milkweed, to the act. This will permit municipalities to undertake control measures and prevent the spread of these weeds under the provisions of the act.

Secondly, destruction of a crop. The existing Noxious Weeds Act permits the destruction of a crop if infested by perennial sow thistle or Canada thistle. It is no longer necessary to include these weeds, since herbicide control measures are available that would control or suppress the growth of perennial sow thistle and Canada thistle. It is also proposed to delete perennial sow thistle and Canada thistle from that section of the act which deals with the destruction of a crop.

Thirdly, allowable expenses for weed control activities. The Noxious Weeds Act currently limits the amount a rural municipality can charge to a person in control of property for weed control activities to \$200 per quarter section, or \$300 per quarter section in the case of certain persistent perennial weeds. The present limits, I think all members would agree, are too low, and do not reflect the present-day costs of weed control activities. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the present limits encourage property owners to allow the municipality to control weeds on private property at the expense of the general public. The proposed amendment would raise the level of allowable costs, which would permit a municipality to recover expenses actually incurred, regardless of the weed species present.

In addition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendment would encourage those in control of property to undertake their own weed control measures. The proposed level for allowable expenses will be \$100 per acre, to a maximum of \$4,000 per quarter section.

Fourthly, prohibition of seeding land infested with noxious weeds. The Noxious Weeds Act currently permits the prohibition of seeding a crop on land infested with perennial sow thistle or Canada thistle. This is no longer necessary since there are herbicide control measures available that will control or suppress the growth of perennial sow thistle and Canada thistle. It is also proposed to delineate, to delete rather, Mr. Deputy Speaker, perennial sow thistle and Canada thistle as weeds, the presence of which would result in a prohibition against the seeding of a crop.

Fifthly, allowable expenses for weed control activities on urban land. The Noxious Weeds Act currently limits the amount that a municipal government can charge for weed control activities against a controller of property to \$20 per lot or \$50 per acre. These values are too low, and do not reflect current weed control costs. These values rather, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these values are too low and do not reflect current weed control costs. The proposed amendment would raise the limits to a level that would encourage property owners to accept the responsibility of conducting their own weed control activities. The proposed levels are \$80 per lot or \$200 per acre.

Sixthly, penalty for transporting exposed field crop material. Under the provisions of the act, the municipal government may pass a by-law requiring that any field crop product be covered in such a manner as to prevent the spread of weed seeds during transport. The current penalty for the violation of this by-law is a fine of \$5 to \$50. The level of fines is too low. It is less expensive for violators to ignore the by-law than comply with the by-law. The intent is not to fine people, but to prevent the spread of noxious weed seeds. The proposed maximum penalty would be increased to a fine of not more than \$500.

7. Changes to levels for providing statements. The existing Noxious Weeds Act requires inspection and itemized statements of all work carried out under the provisions of this act if such amount exceeds \$25. This value is too low. It results in excessive amounts of time and money

being wasted in the inspection and documentation of almost all work carried out under the provisions of the act. The proposed change would raise the level at which documentation and inspection is required to reflect the present costs of weed control. The proposed level whereby the municipality would be required to provide documentation and inspection of work performed is to be set for work exceeding \$100 per quarter section.

8. Penalties. The current penalties for persons who neglect their duty, obstruct the weed inspector, fail to comply with a weed control order, or violate any provision of the act, range from \$5 to \$50. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think all members will agree that this level is too low. At this level, violators often find it less expensive to ignore the existing act than to accept their responsibilities, and comply with the provisions of the act. The proposed change will increase the maximum fine to \$500 for persons convicted of an offence under the provisions of the act.

The Noxious Weeds Act is being introduced as a new bill to make the act more straightforward and easier to understand, consistent with our regulatory reform, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The proposed changes reflect requests from rural municipalities, particularly in the areas of allowable expenses and fines, and are required to update the act to reflect present-day weed problems, and weed control costs; allow municipal governments more flexibility in the control of noxious weeds which occur within their boundaries; and finally, provide adequate incentives for those in control of property to adequately control noxious weeds that may occur on the property over which they have control.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 35 – An Act respecting Noxious Weeds.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When I was looking at the act, when I first got it, I realized that the department decided to re-write the entire act, rather than try and do some amendments. I think that was wise on the department's half.

There's some areas of concern that have been raised with me in my constituency in the past, and I'm not sure that this act deals with those areas. I'm going to be adjourning debate at the end of my remarks, but I want to just ask the minister, or share with the minister some concerns that constituents have had, and that is basically with right of ways.

I see that you've increased the fines, and levied heavier penalties, that seem to apply to farmers, and the responsibility they have, and property owners – the responsibility they have for their property.

But what I'm concerned with, in this entire noxious weed act is: how are we dealing with people like railway right of ways, for example. There was some major grade work being done along the railway right of way in my riding, and certain noxious weeds were developing.

The farmers involved tried very hard to get the railway to control their right of way. The terrain was such that they couldn't control these weeds themselves, and the spread of some noxious weeds was causing a pretty serious problem. The control was such that the farmers, or the R.M., or the weed inspectors, had trouble getting at the CPR, and getting some action there.

And I'm wondering if there should be some special consideration given to right of ways that apply to railways, that apply to the Department of Highways, that apply to municipal roads, that the farmer has some avenue where weeds in these areas will be controlled, and that governing bodies, or the owners – be it a railway – would take the responsibility to clean up their right of ways. And I think that area should be, in particular, addressed.

April 6, 1984

There are more things that we will want to look at, according to remarks in there. And, therefore, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 38 – An Act to amend The Education Act

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am indeed pleased to present this Act to amend The Education Act to the Assembly.

The amendments proposed throughout this bill are designed to serve various purposes. The majority of the amendments are of a housekeeping nature serving to clarify, update, and strengthen existing legislation. It is essential that legislation be changed or modified to meet the needs of changed conditions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some minor changes are proposed in section 9 and 10 of The Education Act. These sections pertain to the powers of the minister. The changes are intended to clarify meanings and reflect general practice. It is proposed to repeal clause 9(e) and replace it with a broader clause. This will give the minister the discretionary power to prescribe lists of textbooks, apparatus, and equipment for general use in schools, rather than for use only in instruction or resource centres as the legislation presently reads.

Subsection 10(1) will be amended to provide the minister with discretionary powers to authorize textbooks for use in schools, but to recommend reference books, maps, globes, charts, apparatus and equipment for use in schools rather than to authorize all these items as the legislation presently reads.

Subsection 10(2) will be amended to update and replace inappropriate wording.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, section 26 is to be amended by the addition of a subsection that will specifically require members of the minority religious faith, in those jurisdictions where separate school divisions have been established, to pay their school taxes to the separate school division, and to require those who do not belong to the minority religious faith to pay their school taxes to the public school division. This principle has been reflected in court decisions throughout the years. This is intended to prevent situations which have arisen previously whereby persons, who are not members of the minority religious faith that established a separate school division, direct that their taxes go to that separate school division. Because they pay their taxes to the separate school division, they have a right to representation and therefore have the right to vote in a separate school division election or to run for office in separate school division elections. The Catholic section of the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association has asked that steps be taken to prevent any erosion in the authority of the religious minority to operate and control the separate schools of this province. This amendment is intended to assist in preventing such erosion of authority.

Subsection 122(2) is to be amended to eliminate retroactively regarding the effective date of school district boundary changes. All school district boundary changes, approved by boards of education, will be effective from the beginning of the school year, following the approval of the changes by the board of education.

An amendment to clause 125(c) will eliminate the provision allowing multiple members, subdistricts, and local school districts for election purposes. This means that, in school districts that are divided into subdistricts for election purposes, the representation will be similar to that for subdivisions in school divisions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association has suggested, through resolutions passed at annual conferences, that the election procedures for board of trustee

elections be simplified. In view of this, a new clause, 125(e.1), will give boards of education authority over the posting requirements for board of trustee elections. This will allow for some simplification for the present procedures.

With the amendment to clause 125c), which provides for single member subdistricts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, section 135 becomes redundant and will be repealed.

Section 127 is to be amended to remove from it reference to section 126 which is also to be repealed. Section 126 repeal will result in the election of school district members on an identical basis to school division members at large or a single member ward.

Section 130, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is also to be repealed. This section deals with procedures for determining the terms of office for trustees elected at large in the first election after the establishment of a school district in those cases where the number of candidates equals the number of trustees to be elected. The necessary provisions for determining this are contained in the local government election act.

Section 172 will be amended by adding the phrase, "Subject to the regulations," at its beginning. This amendment confirms the present practice of requiring boards of education to charge only the cost stipulated in regulations when recovering costs for educational services provided to individuals who do not have the right to free educational services under section 144 of The Education Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under present legislation, if a vacancy occurs on the Educational Relations Board, the term of office of the replacement is four years. It is proposed to add subsection 236(4.1) following subsection 236(4). This amendment will permit the appointment of a person to the Educational Relations Board to fill a vacancy for the remainder of the term of the person being replaced.

It is also proposed to make amendments to several subsections pertaining to assessment and taxation procedures. These amendments are designed to clarify procedures to provide certain options, and to increase the involvement in service of the Saskatchewan Assessment Authority in the processes.

An amendment to section 278 will advance the date, from February 15 to February 1, by which clerks and municipal secretaries are required to transmit the certified statement of the total taxable property and business assessment in their municipalities to the appropriate boards of education. In addition, a copy of the certified statement of total taxable property in business assessment is to be transmitted to the Saskatchewan Assessment Authority by the same date. Advancing the date of transmission is intended to provide sufficient time to the Saskatchewan Assessment Authority to consider the statements and develop the equalized assessments which must be forward to the school divisions by March 15.

Subsection 279(2) is to be amended to require the Minister of Urban Affairs or the Minister of Rural Development, as the case may be, in addition to a statement to the board of education of the current assessment consequent upon the revaluation of the equalized assessment for each municipality or hamlet which has been revalued, to provide a statement of the current assessment and the equalized assessment of each municipality or hamlet that has not been revalued.

Subsection 279(3) and 279(4) are to be amended for purposes of clarification, by changing the term "new assessment" to "current assessment" in both subsections. A new subsection (7) will be added to section 279, which will provide boards of education with the option to calculate a uniform adjusted mill rate, based on the sum of all equalized assessments for which an adjusted mill rate is required.

April 6, 1984

A new section, 302.1, will provide for an alternate method of calculation business assessment. Subsection 302.1 will permit school divisions to enter into an agreement with the council of an urban municipality, to allow the municipality to fix the tax rate on the assessment derived, on a rental basis, of all the business in the municipality, and to apportion the revenue derived between the municipality and the school division. Subsection 302.1 will make provision for boards of education that have entered into such an agreement to levy a tax rate other than the uniform tax rate prescribed in section 280.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to ensure that sufficient time is provided for electors to make personal or written submissions to the board, with respect to proposed borrowing for capital expenditures, subsection 316(2) will be amended to require the date fixed for the electors to make submissions, to be at least five days after publication of the notice of the board's intention. This will ensure that the electors have at least five days to prepare a submission, if they wish to do so.

Section 344 identifies areas of investment for a board of education's sinking fund. Because neither the Government of Canada nor the Government of Saskatchewan issues stocks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, clause 344(1) will be amended by deleting the word "stocks."

Clause 372(r.1) will be added after clause 372(r.) This amendment provides for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations governing the recovery of costs through tuition fees by a board of education, pursuant to section 172.

And finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, section 373, regarding the tabling of documents, is to be repealed, as this requirement was transferred previously to the Department of Education.

I will also, in the very near future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, be presenting an amendment, and it is simply a housekeeping amendment, to amend clause 42(b) of the printed bill, by striking out "other book in print material" in the first line, and substituting "other books and print material."

It is with pleasure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I move second reading of Bill No. 38 – an Act to amend The Education Act.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. speaker. We spent a day and a half, Mr. Speaker, discussing the education estimates. To put it mildly, what this government has done to education should not have occurred. You have created very serious problems in the majority of school units and the majority of boards in this province, and I and my colleagues may be forgiven if we see another bulldozer coming at the educational institutions from a different direction in the form of this bill.

We have not had an opportunity to look at it, but I can assure you, given this government's track record in education and this minister's track record in education, this bill will be given the utmost scrutiny to ensure that the kind of damage which was done in the budget isn't repeated, Mr. Speaker, in the bill. I, therefore, beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

CONSUMER AND COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 4

Item 1

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Would the minister introduce her staff?

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me today, representing the department, Mr. Higgs, the assistant deputy minister; Mr. Dwyer, the director of administration; Mr. MacGillivray, who is the chairman of the provincial mediation board, and also acting rentalsman; Mr. David Stuewe, who is the director of policy and planning branch; and we also have Mr. Gil Johnson, who is the chairman of the securities commission.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you. Madam Minister, might I inquire who your deputy minister is?

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — My acting deputy minister is Mr. Bill Lawton, who has come to our department on a short term basis from the Attorney General's department and is away today on a court case.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, who was the last unfortunate soul to occupy the position of deputy minister under Madam Minister? Who was your last deputy minister of this department, full time?

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — Michael Crosthwaite, who is now with the economic expansion and trade.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Madam Minister, you have a lengthy parade of associates who work with you. I have examined your estimates in virtually all three sessions. I don't think I have ever (in three or four different departments) I don't believe, Madam Minister, I have ever had the same officials here with you. You have gone through deputies like most women go through nylons. They just come and go. You really have, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, I want to raise with you the number of people you have fired in this department because I think you ought to be ashamed of it. I want to ask you, Madam Minister, with reference to the former . . . I want to go through a parade of officials whom you have fired. Let us begin with the chairman of the securities commission, Ken Stevenson – former. I'd ask you, Madam Minister, why this soul was asked to walk the gang plank?

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — Mr. Chairman, you can tell how out of touch the member from Regina Centre is. Women don't wear nylons today, they wear pantyhose. With respect to the former chairman of the securities commission, yes, he was dismissed for a very good reason, I think. I felt that the securities commission, with the rewriting of the act, needed someone with a lot of private sector experience, some basic experience in the field. And Mr. Stevenson is, I suppose, very well respected across Canada as an expert in security law, he has a great deal of regulatory-type background, and I wanted someone in there with more practical background.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — At the time that you dismissed him – and Madam Minister rarely sticks with anyone for longer than a couple of months – but at the time you dismissed this person, you indicated that you wanted someone more dynamic. Has that explanation now become inoperative?

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — No, because I think with Mr. Kuskie who came in under the first draft on the bill, is an extremely dynamic, well-known, respected Regina lawyer.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Madam Minister, are you suggesting that Mr. Stevenson did not have the expertise to oversee the drafting of the bill. Is the House expected to believe that? Because if that's going to be your position, that he did not have the expertise to oversee the drafting of the bill, I'm going to ask you to give his background. And if you are asked to give his background you will have to agree that his background would have more than qualified him to do that.

April 6, 1984

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — I don't think I ever questioned the background of Mr. Stevenson. I think I made it very clear that I wanted someone to oversee the drafting of the act who had very practical experience in the Saskatchewan business field and, I believe, that is exactly what we got with Mr. Kuskie.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Madam Minister, you stated – and you were asked in the newspaper for your explanation at the time; presumably Madam Minister's memory of it is better now than it was at the time – but you were asked at the time: you said you needed someone more “dynamic.” And I gather that the industry found Mr. Stevenson plenty dynamic because the industry welcomed his departure as being a bit too aggressive. So if Madam Minister found him to be not dynamic enough, I think the industry found him plenty dynamic.

I may say, Madam Minister, that it was less than a week separated Mr. Stevenson's departure and the Pioneer Securities affair. I ask you, Madam Minister, whether or not the Pioneer Securities affair had anything to do with Mr. Stevenson's departure? I may say, Madam Minister, that whatever your explanation, the timing of your move was most unfortunate because it gave the public the impression that the two were connected. And if Madam Minister hasn't a better sense of timing than that, I suggest that you should seek advice from more experienced heads, Madam Minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes, I'll be glad to offer the minister my advice whenever it's asked.

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — The departure of Mr. Stevenson, and the Pioneer Securities issue, had no correlation at all.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Madam Minister, did you not foresee a problem in the timing of the two? You must have known the Pioneer Securities . . . If you didn't, you're negligible. You must have know the Pioneer Securities thing was brewing. Did you not think the timing of his departure was unfortunate?

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — Obviously, the hon. member, who happens to be a lawyer by trade, I understand, doesn't understand the function of the securities commission, vis-à-vis the minister's office.

The securities commission is a totally independent, separate, quasi-judicial board, established to look after investors in the province. And I can indicate to the member that, in August of last year, I was in the process of finding someone to replace Mr. Stevenson, and that was well before Pioneer Securities came under the purview of the securities commission.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Madam Minister, that's my point, precisely. The securities commission is an independent body, and it must have the appearance of being an independent body, or it simply can't function.

By firing the head of the securities commission in such close proximity to one of the major problems it has faced in the last few years, created an aura of dependence, and suggested there was political interference.

Whether or not there was, I don't know. But you certainly gave the public that impression. And I ask you, Madam Minister, if you don't think your timing was a little unfortunate.

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — I can indicate to the member opposite, perhaps that that is the difference between this government and that government . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We have a lot of sense of politics, but we also are up-front on what we do, and we don't worry about little innuendoes that might come from the other side of the House.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I don't think I've ever accused Madam Minister of worrying about little

innuendoes, which might affect people's careers. That has not been Madam Minister's primary concern. This, after all, was the first of a lengthy string of deputies which have not been able to work with you, with someone who was dismissed on women's intuition.

I, Madam Minister, have never accused you of being overly concerned with little innuendoes when they affect people's careers. In fact, I have been concerned, as Madam Minister knows, with the opposite.

Madam Minister, as some of my colleagues are going to want to point out to you, I think this department is suffering from not having permanent staff in a number of positions. And I wonder, Madam Minister, if you'd tell the House what progress you're making in finding a permanent head for this department, because I think it needs it.

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — Well, obviously the member is speaking without any knowledge. I can indicate to the member that the staff within the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, over the years, probably since 1976-77-78, in those areas, the morale was absolutely horrendous.

But I can indicate to the member that with this government, with the change in government and the hands-on interest shown in the department, the people in the department are extremely enthusiastic about the future of the department and, quite frankly, so am I. It's an extremely challenging department with a lot of expertise people working in it. And I'll tell you, they work hard, and they work well.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Only this government could be so isolated and arrogant as to think the morale in the public service right now is good. Madam Minister, if you really believe that, you are more to be pitied than feared.

Madam Minister, I want to talk for a moment about the role of the department, and what role it plays within government. Your government, Madam Minister, was elected on a platform of cutting taxes. And you picked out a few small trifling taxes which you were going to chop. You were going to abolish sales tax. I believe we were going to see the income tax reduced by 10 per cent. Though I don't think anyone will forget the gas tax, no one heard about the cut in oil royalties until it happened.

Madam Minister, two of those taxes primarily benefited the business community — the gas tax and the oil royalties. The gas tax is a bit of a mixed bag, but we know now from the estimates of the Finance department over the last couple of years, that the majority of that tax is, in fact, paid by the truckers and by the commercial travellers. The oil royalties are paid entirely by big business, almost all of them foreign national, foreign multinationals.

Madam Minister, your government chose to cut the taxes for big business — the oil royalties and the gas tax. You chose to ignore the tax cuts which would have benefited the consumers — the sales tax and the income tax. Madam Minister, did you protest that? Did your department play a role of advocating within government the tax cuts which would have been of more benefit to the consumers and of less benefit to big business?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I think this is, Mr. Chairman, probably breaking down into a very philosophical type debate. It's obvious that the member opposite does not understand, either through ignorance or through choosing not to acknowledge, the way the market-place works, and the significant impact tax cuts and incentives have on the consumer of today.

I can indicate to the member that the gas tax removal was the single largest tax cut in the history of the province, if not in the history of Canada. Every person benefits from it, right from the consumer to the school boards, to the hospital boards. Everyone benefited from the removal of the gas tax.

April 6, 1984

As far as the oil royalty, I don't think that the statement that you just made would be very popular down in the south-west, of which the member from Shaunavon comes. Forty-one million dollars in oil royalty changes to promote activity, for small towns to get the spin-off benefits, or the thousand jobs that was created in the oil patch alone, to get all those service industries back on their feet again and working. Mr. Member from Regina Centre, I don't think you actually understand business. That's the old NDP socialist philosophy: you tax, tax, tax, until there's nobody left to tax, and you get everybody on the welfare roll.

We have removed the E&H tax on electricity to farms, to urban homes. Yes, we removed the gas tax, and we, in fact, rescinded the bill. And that tax will never come back on unless we're up-front about it and debate it in this House. And it would be interesting to see how you would stand on that issue.

As far as the sales tax: yes, we will reduce the sales tax over the course of the next years; and yes, we will reduce personal income tax over the course of the next few years.

Our platform that was presented to the electorate in April of 1982 was sound, gave hope to the people of Saskatchewan, and the results, I think, were resounding.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, Madam Minister, that statement is patently not accurate. The Minister of Finance made it crystal clear there would be no reduction in sales tax in the oncoming year, and you just finished saying there was. I would ask you, Madam Minister, to take some time off the pressing concerns of a crumbling caucus and spend some time reading the Minister of Finance's address. Because what you just said doesn't jibe with it.

Madam Minister, if I may ask you a question, do you see it as a role of the department to speak on behalf of consumers in the government? Is that one of the functions of your department, or do you just answer complaints of people who ring you up and complain that the car they bought last week isn't working? Or do you have a large role of speaking for the consumer within the government? If you do, why on earth haven't you been playing the role in areas like taxation and the other areas where consumers have been overlooked by this government?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — I don't think consumers have been overlooked by this government. I think the polls show it. When you sit at 11 per cent, and we sit at 54, I don't think that the role of what this party is doing has been overlooked by the voters and the consumers.

As it relates to the function of my department, my department has an extremely key function in society today. It is up to us, as a department, to bring about a balance in the market place — a balance between consumers and business. Each has a role to play, and each can play that role so that the market-place functions, so that free enterprise flourishes, so our small towns remain economically viable. That is a function of the department — to seek, and promote, and establish an equitable market place.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Chairman, my colleague will be back shortly. He had to leave to speak to several hundreds of unemployed workers in Saskatchewan.

I want to ask the minister some pertinent questions in respect to her department. I wonder if she could provide us with a complete list of those people who were with the department at the time this government took over, and the number that had been actually fired from the department during her time, and during the time of this government.

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Yes, we can provide you with that information. But you want us to go right back to 1982? I understand that a lot of that information was given to you last year, so you want it for both years or just this year?

MR. KOSKIE: — It's more convenient if you could put it together, the total record of the Tories in respect to consumer affairs. That is '82 and the past year.

In particular I want to, and you are providing that information, but I have heard that a director in the department, a Barbara Zimmer, I believe . . . Is it correct that there was a lady by the name of Barbara Zimmer? I have my first name correct. Can you indicate whether she was fired, or other wise transferred from the department? And could you advise that if she's been transferred, where she has been transferred?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — The position of regional manager, Saskatoon, was deleted from the department establishment for the 1984-'85 budget. The employee affected by this position deletion was, in fact, Mr.s. Zimmer, and she is afforded her rights under the collective bargaining agreement. And I do believe she went over to Social Services, I believe, a position that was available in Saskatoon. I might indicate to the member that that particular position had only been in place for one year.

MR. KOSKIE: — Did I hear the minister correctly, that the regional office in Saskatoon has been closed down or, in fact, decreased in size or existence?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — No, the office in Saskatoon hasn't closed down. It's gone back to the way it had been previously run with the deputy rentalsman reporting directly to his line manager, and consumer people reporting directly to their line managers in Regina.

As I indicated, that particular position was a new position – regional manager – and it was felt that it was not necessary as a full-time position. And I might also indicate that that particular deletion of that position was the only position deleted that was encumbered in my department.

MR. KOSKIE: — How many regional offices do you have operative in respect to the Department of Consumers Affairs? How many regional offices? You have the main branch here in Regina, and you're saying that you have a regional office in Saskatoon – and I want to come back to Saskatoon – but can you indicate the others?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — We only have two regional offices, one located in Regina that serves the southern portion of the province, and one in Saskatoon that services the northern part of the province.

MR. KOSKIE: — Do you have no staff in respect to Consumer Affairs in Prince Albert? It seems, if my recollection serves me correctly, that we had, indeed, established a regional office in setting up some staff to handle the consumer complaints in the city of Prince Albert. It seems to me we were also either had, or were looking at Yorkton. Can you indicate?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — There is a office in Prince Albert with three people employed there, and it's run out of the Saskatoon office.

MR. KOSKIE: — And just in respect to the Saskatoon office, the regional office in Saskatoon, has there been any cut-back in the number of staff that are employed in that regional office in Saskatoon during the past year?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — You've already asked that question. I indicated to you that the position of regional manager, Saskatoon office, was deleted in the past budget. And that was the only deletion of a position in the department that had incumbent position.

MR. KOSKIE: — And why did you find it necessary to delete the position that you indicate that Barbara Zimmer occupied? Why do you think that it's going to be advantageous to further consolidate the direction of the department from Regina, rather than the decentralization as was the direction of the previous government? We were trying to provide a full range of services in

April 6, 1984

the various communities, certainly in Saskatoon, and having a regional director. Certainly they were capable there of having some decision-making ability.

It seems to me now what you are doing, and this is a trend throughout government, is to again to . . . Because of the massive cuts in staff, really what's happening is that you're centralizing the general control and the decision-making solely in Regina. My understanding that this is happening in Social Services, and now it's happening in respect to Consumer Affairs. What is your justification for centralizing the control?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I'm afraid the member hasn't done his homework too well. The position of regional manager was a position that was created about a year ago. Prior to that the program people reported directly to their program managers herein Regina. And I think that it is more efficient to have those program people report directly to their program managers, who happen to be located in Regina, than to have people report to another person, and then another person, before it gets to where an inquiry wants to go. The way it is now, it's just going back to the way it was under your administration.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, I guess what I'm really asking you then is: do you have another major city, nearly the size of Regina, and what you are practising is central control herein Regina. And what I'm asking you then: do you have any plans to somewhat decentralize the control all here in Regina?

You talk about efficiency, and may be efficient in dollar terms. But I'm wondering, in respect to providing meaningful services, is it not advantageous to have some essential or some form of decision-making process? Certain, considering Saskatoon and the size of it, and having consideration that it deals, as you said, with the northern half of the province, I would have thought that it might have been a better approach.

If you want to cut down on staff, and if you want to cut down on the services, certainly you can centralize. But I would have thought that if you were trying to improve, especially in these very difficult economic Tory times, where people are wanting and needing more and more consumer protection, I would have thought that your direction would have been to provide, perhaps at that location, a more decentralized service in Saskatoon.

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I don't believe for one minute that the services offered, or the efficiency of the Saskatoon office, has been hampered by the decision to delete that position one bit. All it was, really, another extra layer of bureaucracy that we just don't need. And I think it is more efficient for program people to be able to report directly to their program manager when they're having problems, rather than have to go through an extra layer of bureaucracy before they can get the answers that they're seeking, in order to efficiently and effectively carry out their duties in whatever branch they happen to be.

MR. KOSKIE: — Madam Minister, there's another area that the federal government was pushing towards, and that is the strengthening of the anti-combine legislation. I know when I was minister myself, I met in Quebec City, and one of the major discussions with the federal government and all the provinces was to deal with the intent of the federal legislation. As you may be aware, there was investigation done in respect to the magnitude of the rip-off of the people of Canada by price-fixing by the major oil companies, the Bertrand report. And as a consequence of that, the federal government was attempting to put together a consensus on strengthening the anti-combine legislation to prevent the multinational corporations, the oil companies, from price-fixing, and ripping off the consumer.

At the time that we were government, our government made a very strong presentation in order to encourage the province to proceed with that type of legislation. And I'm wondering whether you, as minister, have had an opportunity to review the area of the federal legislation. And would you be good enough to indicate what is your position in respect to the concerns that are

expressed by the federal government, and certainly that investigation that you may be familiar with?

I hear recently again, that not only that massive job of checking into the price-fixing by the oil companies occurred during that period, but more recently there are reports that there is a massive price-fixing again by the multinational oil companies. As a consequence, the consumer is getting ripped off.

So I ask you simply: where is that at; and secondly, what is your basic position of your government? – whether you support, or whether you take the position of Mr. Walker of the Tory government in Ontario, whether he explicitly, at the conference, indicated that he would be opposing any tightening up of the legislation. Is your position consistent with that right-wing minister of the Davis government?

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — That was a rather lengthy statement. I think there was several question had been asked. You implied that the combines investigation that's going on now, concluded their massive rip-offs by the major oil companies. I might indicate to the member that the conclusion on collusion between the oil companies has not been finalized yet, as to whether it was or was not there.

As it relates to the amendments that were introduced in the federal House on April 2, my department and I have just recently received them. In fact, the deputy minister will be getting more information from Ottawa today. And as a basic position, I would say that the Government of Saskatchewan does accept the necessity of rules relating to competitive behaviour in Canada.

As far as a comment on the amendments that were introduced in the House by Mr.s. Erola, I would have to have more time to study them, present them to cabinet before we take a firm position on them. But we do agree that there is the necessity that you have to have some rules in place.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well we have some rules in place now. The question is, the federal government is indicating that those rules are not sufficient. And what I'm asking you is . . . And they have been attempting to get the consensus of various provinces. And when we attended the conference, we put forward very clearly our position. What I'm asking you is, are you prepared to indicate, after two years in government, whether you have a position as to whether there should be any strengthening of the anti-combine legislation which is ripping off the consumers in a magnitude that is unheard of?

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — Well, I agree we have been in government for two years, but the amendments to the Combines Investigation Act were tabled on April 2, 1984, so I think it's rather silly to expect us to come out with a statement the day after. We have to have time to look at them, we have to have time to assess the impact. It was discussed in Whitehorse. But you are asking us to take a firm position two years ago on something that was just tabled in the federal House the other day. Well, that's ludicrous.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, you may call it what you want, but what I was indicating to you is that the federal government had a dialogue going with the provinces. What I'm asking you is – and you indicated you had a meeting at Whitehorse, and there they were discussing the basic problems and some of the basic principles, in order to correct the problem that they saw – what I really am asking more specifically: in your discussions at Whitehorse were you taking a positive position of supporting the federal government in putting forth more meaningful anti-combine legislation? I guess I ask you that . . . Well, I'll let you answer that.

HON. MRS.S. DUNCAN: — Well yes, we did discuss some of the general thrusts that the federal government wanted to see in bringing changes into the Combines Investigation Act, and I stated earlier that the Government of Saskatchewan accepts that some rules are necessary. But for me

April 6, 1984

to take a definitive position on something that we didn't see till just two days ago is asking a lot. I can tell you that we agree that there is the necessity for rules on competition within the confines of Saskatchewan and Canada. There are need for those type of rules. But for me to specifically give a position on the amendments that were brought forth on April 2nd is just a little too soon.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to ask the minister whether she has had an opportunity to review the business trade practices act that had been drafted in the department, was being prepared to be presented to the legislature, and it was discontinued due to an impending election.

But the department had, in fact, drafted in great detail . . . had done a tremendous amount of discussion with other provinces in respect to the introduction of a business trade practices act. I think my terminology is correct – but your staff will know, some of them were there. And what I'm asking you: whether you have had an opportunity to review it, and whether you intend, during this session, to bring that type of legislation forward.

It was our feeling that this was a very, very positive step – certainly an act which would overcome some of the pitfalls, would strengthen the rights of the consumer. And I wonder if the minister could advise us whether she has reviewed it, what she thinks of it, and whether she'll be bringing it forward?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Well, I can indicate to the member that he sort of alludes that, you know, had April 26, 1982, not happened, they would have introduced the business trades act in the House. I can indicate to the member that I know that that particular act and draft and thrust has been around since 1976, not 1982. Yes, I have looked at it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What do you think of it?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Well, it's not a bad act . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I haven't decided.

MR. KOSKIE: — Could the Madam Minister advise me why she has taken so long to decide on something which would be so good for the consumers?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Well my goodness, you had it hanging around for six years. I've only been in this portfolio for 10 months, or 8 months, or whatever. But yes, I am having a good look at it, and we're having discussions with various groups around the province. And I'll just leave it at that.

MR. KOSKIE: — You indicated that you are having discussions. Could you indicate how far the discussions have gone on and could you indicate some of the groups that you have met with, and could you kind of indicate the type of reaction that you have in respect to the proposed legislation?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — I wouldn't say it's proposed legislation. It's a thought. It's an idea that we are looking at, and to call it proposed legislation, I think, is jumping the gun.

I've met with the consumers association, Saskatchewan branch. I've talked to various retail people about it, real estate people, insurance people. I've talked to a whole host of people, and I'll just leave it at that. To call it proposed legislation, I think is presumptuous on your part.

MR. KOSKIE: — I can see that the minister wants to duck on the use of a word – the legislation, obviously – and she knew it was in the final draft, ready to be prepared and submitted to the legislature when we left office. And I suppose that indicates, with the change of government, that's not necessarily proposed legislation, but it's certainly legislation which is much needed by the consumer, and legislation, I may say, that has been advanced in other provinces. I ask the minister, in reviewing it, could she indicate to me what other provinces have

indeed taken steps to introduce a business trade practices act or principles, as set out in this here – what we had as proposed legislation.

Can you indicate what other provinces have legislation somewhat similar to what we had been proposing, when I refer to the business trade practices act?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Other provinces that have business trade practices legislation are: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and New Brunswick.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to get a few of the initial details away. Could the minister provide us with a list of her personal staff, their positions, and the amount that is being paid to each of them? Could you send that over to us?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Yes, we can.

MR. KOSKIE: — And could the minister provide to us also, any travel expenses incurred . . . accounting for through her travel? In other words, have you had any conferences? Have you had any tours to Europe? Have you been on the see-the-world tour, as with the other ministers?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — You guys should get your act straight because that question is already on the order paper, that particular question. I can send you that information, of course I can. But I might indicate to you that I attended, as Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, a conference in Whitehorse, last September.

MR. KOSKIE: — Has your department had any advertising done during the course of the past year? And are you consistent with using the Tory firms of Dome Advertising, and Roberts & Poole? Are you consistent with the Tory directive?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Yes, everything is handled very efficient through a central mechanism.

MR. KOSKIE: — Can you indicate the amount of money that has been expended in advertising, with what firm, and the amount?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Therefore, the fiscal year 1983-84, dome Media Buying Services Ltd. was in the neighbourhood of \$47,000; Robertson Poole was in the neighbourhood of about \$6,800.

MR. KOSKIE: — Were there any others – any other advertising?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — No, just those two firms.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, could you give me the name of your superintendent of insurance at the present time.

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — The acting superintendent of insurance is the assistant deputy minister, Mr. Higgs, H-i-g-g-s.

MR. LUSNEY: — Madam Minister, are you aware of Mennonite Hail Insurance which has, I guess, declared bankruptcy and now is in liquidation? Are you aware of what's been happening with that company in the past few months? Has your department been aware of it?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Yes, the department is aware of Mennonite Hail and the problems they have encountered.

April 6, 1984

MR. LUSNEY: — Has the department been taking any actions to see that the farmers that have insurance policies with Mennonite — have they been looking to see that these farmers are being paid, at least a percentage of what's owing to them? Apparently the company has a fair amount of money on hand, and in the last few months there has been no payment going to the farmers whatsoever. They have been promised a lot, but nothing's been happening, and it's being a little difficult, trying to get hold of either the company or someone from the department to find out what is happening.

Could you tell me just what is happening within the department to assist the farmers?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I might indicate to the member from Pelly that the company is in the process of winding down. I understand that 50 per cent of the payments have been made to date. As far as the department's role at this point, because it's in a winding-down situation, we can't go in there as such and order them to pay out at this point. All the legal steps have to be taken from a while back until this point.

MR. LUSNEY: — Who has appointed the liquidator, and has the department had anything to do with appointing a liquidator for the company, or who does the appointing of the liquidator?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I could indicate to the member that, as far as Mennonite Mutual Hail Insurance Company is concerned, they are in a voluntary winding up of their affairs. They were not petitioned into bankruptcy. It was the decision at a meeting held last fall, by the members of this mutual company, that they go into voluntary winding up. And until all claims are in, and once they determine the total asset position of the company, that's when the final decision on the amount paid out will be made. I might indicate that one of the people looking after it is Harold Arneson and Irwin Janzen. But they're not in a bankruptcy. They weren't petitioned into bankruptcy. It was a decision of the members of that particular mutual company that they wind down the affairs of the company.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Madam Minister, is the department looking at what is happening and having some insight into the dealings or the winding down, as you call it, of the company, since they haven't declared bankruptcy? Are you making sure that somehow the farmers are going to get the balance of their claims with the company? Or is it going to drag on to a point where the company, at this point, is not in a legal form of bankruptcy or liquidation, and can dispose of the money elsewhere, and many of the farmers will be left without having any payments? They have been promising the farmers to be making some pay-outs before Christmas. Now they promised, about a month ago, to make a pay-out. And apparently there is a fair amount of money within the company, and yet there seems to be a delay on a pay-out. Has the department looked to see why a pay-out isn't being made if the money is there?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — They cannot make complete payments and final payments until they are in an audited position, and that's where my department assists them. We're in close contact with Mr. Arneson, and I might indicate to the member that these people are totally committed to solving this problem and getting those payments out as quickly as possible. We will be doing the auditing, and we assist them on general terms. The books will be audited next week by officials in the superintendent of insurance branch, and, after that, once the audit is complete, then the final pay-out should be available.

MR. LUSNEY: — Madam Minister, you say now you're auditing, or you're going to be auditing, the books of the company. Have you put some kind of freeze on the assets to assure that all claims against the company will be paid out on a percentage basis — if that is what will happen — if there isn't enough funding or aren't enough assets left within the company? Have you secured the funding, the money that's in there, to make sure that these claims will be paid?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — The reason my department would do an audit would be to make sure that there is sufficient money, or all moneys are there to pay out the claims. As I indicated earlier,

the officials of my department will be doing the audit early next week, and there could be a pay-out as late as later next week.

There was a complicating factor in December as to why the claims were not paid out then. There was an indication that one of the members of this mutual company was going to seek court resolution in a dispute between himself and Mennonite Mutual. So that was a complicating factor in December.

MR. LUSNEY: — That was a question that I had, Madam Minister, but seeing as the company is self liquidating rather than being forced into that position, I suppose would suggest why they were able to do that, or to use that as an excuse to pull back some of the funding if they were expecting court case. Apparently there is one that has been filed. Don't know if it's proceeding or not.

But according to the attorney of the legal advisers of the company, they have suggested that there is in excess of a half a million dollars there that's available. And they were talking about a pay-out for the past month or so. And even if there was a claim or a pending court case, why could they not have paid out at least a portion of that money to the people that have the policies with them, rather than holding all of the assets of the company in abeyance until such time as they might clarify whether there will or will not be a court case? Could they not have held back the amount of the possible suit against them and paid out the balance?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — That's exactly what is happening. I believe that they're in negotiation right now, and the books have to be audited before pay-outs can be made. An amount will be set aside pending what happens with this notice of a court action, but it is with Mennonite's lawyer that we negotiated an agreement that they couldn't pay out until an audited statement had been received by our department.

MR. LUSNEY: — So then, Madam Minister, what you are saying is that your department does have some knowledge of what's going on. You are going to have some control on what's happening with the funding of the company. And once you audit the books, that you are going to, I guess to some extent, make sure that the company does pay out whatever moneys might be available to some extent, make sure that the company does pay out whatever moneys might be available on a percentage basis, or in total, if the funding is there. If the assets are large enough to do that, your department will make sure that this pay-out is made shortly after you complete your audit.

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — That's correct on that. That essentially is the function of the superintendent of insurance, to ensure that things are done properly, and things run smoothly, and that there's very little chance for hanky-panky.

MR. LUSNEY: — Just to get your assurance, Madam Minister, I can then go back, I assume, to the farmers, and tell them—the ones that are concerned – that . . . (inaudible) . . . may be losing all of their claims, because nothing has been happening. They can't find out what is happening. I can go back there and assure them that they will be getting, if not all, at least some of that money, within the next two or three weeks.

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — Hopefully, yes.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I have trouble pronouncing Melville, as well.

Madam Minister, I have an issue with respect to the Film Classification Board. In last year's budget the staff was cut from four to two I asked the then minister how we were going to accomplish the work – the same work, presumably, half the staff – and I was told that the difference was that they would no longer be censoring Chinese films. And I got no better explanation than that.

April 6, 1984

Now, madam, I notice that the staff has been cut again to two-thirds of what it was. I am wondering, Madam Minister, was the volume of Chinese films greater than you expected? Is that why you cut the staff again?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — Well, I don't know whether it had anything to do with the Chinese films or not, but I can indicate to the member for Regina Centre that there has not been a cut in positions as it relates to the film classification branch. There is one permanent position. That is the director, Mr. Hartt. And he is helped by a casual projectionist that we get in on an as-needed basis, plus four people that are appointed to the Film classification Board.

I might indicate to the member that we had, in fact, a 25.86 per cent increase in the work-load in 1983-84 as opposed to '82-83. In '82-83, 174 films were viewed. In 1983-84, 219 films were reviewed and classified.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Madam Minister, there must be a misprint in my *Estimates*. My *Estimates* show a staff of 2.1 per cent last year, 1.4 per cent this year. I'm a few years from my grade 2 mathematics but that, when I went to school, was a reduction, and I ask the minister for an explanation of that reduction in the blue book — man-years.

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — The loss of 9.7 man-years was for the clerical support which is now being done by licensing and investigations branch and in other areas.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'm going to make a comment, Madam Minister. Then I'm going to leave the subject.

I object, and I think our caucus objects, to the continuous downgrading of the Film Classification Board in terms of staff and resources to do the job, and there is no question but what that has happened. You have gone from 4-point-something — I don't have last year's *Estimates* with me — to 1.4 of a staff. If it were an isolated problem, Madam Minister, I think I'd be less concerned, but it's part of a trend with this government of increasing liberalism with issues that are patently creating problems.

Clearly, Madam Minister, alcohol consumption in our society is a problem, yet you permit the advertising of alcohol. I would have thought the last thing our society needed was more encouragement to drink alcohol.

I thought I heard the Minister of Education, the Minister of Social Services, and the Minister of Justice complaining to a federal committee — grandstanding I might have said but I didn't — complaining to a federal committee about pornography and prostitution, and yet prostitution are allowed to advertise in the Saskatchewan telephone books, and you have downgraded the only way we can control pornography to the point where they now must be spread extremely thin.

I say, Madam Minister, that the activities of this government across the board, whether it be alcohol or pornography, the increasing liberalism of this government on some of those issues, is not serving the best interests of our society, and our caucus takes the strongest objection to that broad pattern.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — Yes, it's easier to talk from the other side of your mouth than it was to be active when you were in government. As it pertains to the Film Classification Board, I do take exception with what you said. Previously there was a three-member (middle-aged male) board that reviewed all films. And to say that they controlled the pornography that was coming into the province is absolutely ludicrous. The four board members, three board members, that sit on the board, do not show up in the blue book because they are paid on a per diem basis.

And now we have a cross-section of the community to give a broader perspective to the situation. We are not a censorship board. We are a classification board, not a censorship board. Films are classified, not censored. I want to make that very clear.

As it pertains to alcohol advertising, we on this side of the House understand the need to get good advertising out there as it pertains to aware programs, the ups and downs of abuse. We don't stick our head in the sand and pretend it's not there.

Alcohol advertising under your regime was coming into this province from both sides of the border on the cable network, and there was no requirement, particularly on the cable network, there was no requirement for companies to spend money on ads that told of the responsible use of alcohol and what happens with an abuse of alcohol. Now they are doing it.

And let me tell you, it is having an effect. In my own town of Maple Creek the number of impaired driving charges has gone down significantly since this government came in and started a promotion of being responsible people when you use alcohol. So don't preach to me.

MR. ENGEL: — The minister has prompted me to get involved in several topics. One I could talk about is: so what's so bad about being middle-aged and being male? I really want to assure the member that it's not bad at all. It's not that bad at all. And I feel that I have a place in society, and that they still can use a middle-aged male.

But you were talking about this little survey you did, and you reminded me of the Minister of Labour that went out to do his little survey. And when you were down in Maple Creek and kind of have a survey that alcohol consumption is being . . . has become much more moderate, and there are less people involve din traffic violations that relate to alcohol .08, I'm not sure if the minister expects us to believe for one minute that alcohol consumption is down since they started their advertising campaign.

I didn't stand up to get involved in alcohol advertising as such, or the consumption of it, Mr. Chairman. But I want to suggest to the minister that if you look at the estimates and the total revenue from . . . Alcohol is up by about 20 per cent in this province. That indicates to me that the consumption is going up.

Now I want to ask: in your department, would you give me a comparison of about the last three years of the amount of money Saskatchewan people are spending on instant wins, calcuttas, lucky 7's, that kind of involvement? How is that compared from about '82 on, to today? What do you feel . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Has there been an increase or a decrease in the amount spent on gambling?

MR. ENGEL: — Nicely put by my colleague from Quill Lakes. Where is the spending going in relationship to those three areas: instant wins, calcuttas, or lucky 7's?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Yes, I can give the member that information. First of all I'd like to comment on some of the comments you made earlier.

I didn't do a survey. It was information provided to town council by the local establishment of the RCM Police that indicated (and one of the reasons they gave was for the more aggressive stance in advertising) responsible use of alcohol — the aggressive programs instituted by this government through the Minister of Highways, through the Minister of Health, through the Minister of Social Services, and that type.

As far as it pertains to being middle-age, I'm pushing there myself. So it's not such a bad place to

April 6, 1984

be either.

But getting to the facts that you wanted, in the fiscal year 1982-83, total profit to the charities for bingo, raffles, casinos, and break-opens, was \$5,433,874. And for the fiscal year '83-84, the total amount paid to charities as a result of these activities was \$9,711,739. Is that the figure you wanted?

MR. ENGEL: — When we were travelling together, I had the occasion in the month of January to spend most of my week's travelling with some of your colleagues. And I watched them line up when it looked like there could be a \$16 million win. I watched them line up with groups of other people at drug stores in various towns, and wherever these tickets were sold, and buying these \$1 tickets. I went in and I bought \$1 card for my wife, and I was the only winner of a group of five that were on that committee.

We're developing in this country an attitude amongst our residents that there's a hope out there. You get in line, and you buy a ticket, and you get in line and you can do something about that situation you're in. And we are financing on the backs of people who can't afford it because of the dire straits they are in.

You haven't increased the minimum wage since you've taken office. You haven't done anything about those people that are on the that lower level of our echelon. And some of your staff are laughing, and think it's funny. But I think those 500 or 600 people, or 700 people, that are out in the doors of the legislation today are looking at your department and saying, "We're in a bad way. A lot of us haven't got jobs. Those of us that have jobs aren't sure if we're going to keep our jobs." They're trying all kinds of things.

Gambling in one year in this province, in one year, has doubled, doubled in one year. That's not a matter of order. She told me it was 5.4 million, and the Minister of Education doesn't know what the numbers are. And it's gone to \$9.7 million in revenue from just instant wins, and calcutta's, and lucky 7's, and bingos. In one year, the people have gone to gambling double to what they were the year before.

If she'd give me a number from a year back, prior to 1981, I wonder what that number would be. I don't know what that number is, and I shouldn't ask her a question when I don't know the answer. But I can assure you, the thing we're talking about, gambling, I could even say I'll make you a wager that it's a lot, lot less than \$5 million. A lot less than \$5 million. And you're creating a society where you're dragging the people down.

You talk about the good advantages of advertising. If I'd have brought some paper ads along where the one ad is this big, and another one is that big, and both tell you to buy rum and use it in moderation – one is supposed to be the 15 per cent spent on moderation, and it still encourages people to buy rum. And who are you trying to kid? Who are you trying to kid, Madam Minister?

There is more gambling. There is more pornography. There are more escort services advertising. Moral decay in this province is on the downward trend. The decay of the morals of our people are slipping, and it's because of your open and free stance you're taking. You're saying, we're not going to interfere, we're going to allow open and free advertising. Because ads were getting in on cable, we'll let everybody advertise now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

You can tell me. I know where I am, Mr. Moosomin. And on Saturday night I'm going to be in your constituency talking to people that are sorry they've got a member like they have. And the member from Moosomin maybe doesn't like what he's hearing – the member from Moosomin maybe doesn't like what he's hearing, but the people have doubled the amount of gambling they're doing, and I'd like to know if the minister thinks that's good?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Well, I don't know if there was a question, but I can assure you that there's bunch of crocodile tears when it comes from the members opposite. The member gets up and yarks and yaps about gambling, and moral decay, and a downward trend. Well I can tell you that the \$9,711,739 that went to charities are doing a lot of good in this province. I might also indicate to the people of Saskatchewan and to the members that are sitting in this House, that he says: since 1982, the moral decay, etc. etc., the increase in gambling . . .

Well on December 16, 1981, an NDP cabinet approved a wider definition of charitable organizations to include political parties. And let me tell you, as far as I'm concerned, that is stretching a long bow. When we talk about the increase that went to charities, I wonder how much of that increase is a result of the NDP party holding giant cash bingos, \$10,000 prizes. Don't you point your finger at me when it comes to morals, boy.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask a few particular questions in respect to the gambling issue. My concern with it (as some of the experts have indicated) is that the people most affected by it — those who seek to purchase Lotto Canada, or Western Express, or whatever, or instant wins — are traditionally and by the huge proportion are the lower income people. And the concept, or the reason for that is this belief of wanting to come out of their economic conditions, their poverty, and the hope.

It seems to me, Madam Minister, that the whole concept of these gambling and lottos really strike hardest at those in the lower income group. The most recent one was the Lotto Canada, I guess it was, where there was some \$16 million, or in that neighbourhood, and people lining up to buy tickets. The sad part is that the chances of the possibility of winning. But the expectations of many of these gambling games really lure many of the lower income people, even people on welfare, into entering into this type of gambling.

And so what I'm asking you, in so far as the relaxation that you have introduced in your regulations: do you have any basic concerns that there is any . . . that you have sufficient grip that, in fact, they are being properly supervised throughout the province in order that, not only is it increasing, as we know, but more particularly that there are not, in fact, devices being used to, in fact, decrease the individuals' right to the proper chances of winning. In other words, some of these devices can be jiggered very simply.

And what I'm asking you: what is the mechanism that you have put in place, and are you confident that it's being properly supervised? Because certainly that was one of the basic concerns that we had with it, and we would have thought that you would have, out of necessity, had to strengthen the branch in order to supervise it. I know in Ontario that they have a very sophisticated method of control over the gambling that goes on in the various provinces. And so what I'm really asking is: what steps has the minister taken in order to properly supervise the gambling, and are you satisfied that it's sufficiently in tact, that it will protect the consumer?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — I would indicate initially to the member that in the area of who buys lotto tickets, or who goes to a bingo game sponsored by the NDP, or who buys a Western Express, demographic studies do not indicate that the lowest income groups are mainly involved. It crosses all levels of society. And it's an area where even the experts — psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists — are split. Half of them think it's terrible to play a game of chance, and half of them think it has no down side effect on a human being to be able to dream for once in awhile.

As it pertains to the department, the RCM Police and the city police departments monitor the situation on an ongoing basis, and recently there was a conviction in Saskatoon of a false raffle lottery.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I want to thank the member from Yorkton, or was it Pelly, Mr. Chairman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I see. Your cultural education has been sorely lacking, Mr.

April 6, 1984

Chairman, if you don't know the finer points of Regina geography.

Madam Minister, I want to raise an issue about which, as Madam Minister knows, I feel very strongly. I have been critical of some of your triumphs in the past. I don't think I was particularly complimentary about the Nimbusgate affair, and I suppose I was less than complimentary when you fired a career public servant on the basis of woman's intuition.

But I don't think I have ever been angrier than I was with respect to rent controls – angry, Madam Minister, because I questioned you twice in the House, and I don't know where you come from, but I put a lot of stock in the traditions of this House.

Madam Minister, I questioned you in the House on Friday, December 9 about rent controls, and you were less than forthcoming. I questioned you Monday in the House. You were less than forthcoming. Indeed, you said nothing at all. Your answer was a study in evasion. The House adjourned Monday night, and Wednesday morning you bombed rent controls.

I'm going to leave it, Madam Minister. Your refusal to face the music, your prescience that your actions would meet with howls of protest from tenants, speaks for itself. Your actions speak for itself.

I want to get into the substance, Madam Minister, and I just want to put on record my irritation with your discourtesy to this House in treating that matter as you did. Common, accepted courtesy suggests that you make announcements in the House if that's possible. It was clearly possible, and you chose two days after the House adjourned, in a blatant, flagrant, arrogant disregard of the courtesies of this House.

Madam Minister, I want to deal with the substance of what you did, because in the end result, I suppose that's more serious. The removal of the controls, as you well anticipated, were met with less than wild enthusiasm. Tenants complained that it wouldn't work. Landlords complained. And they've all been right.

And it's not working, for a number of reasons. The system is punishing the good landlords and rewarding the bad, Madam Minister. You gave 5 per cent guide-lines, which may not be unfair. That's the rate of inflation. The problem is, you didn't provide any means of enforcing it. And that's why the good landlords are complaining, because they're sticking at 5 per cent, and the rogues are taking whatever they like.

Madam Minister, I'd ask for your comments on what has proved to be a huge gap, a cannon-sized gap, in the rent controls, and that is the lack of any controls when a tenant changes. It is admitted by all concerned (hopefully, yourself included) that there are no controls when a tenant changes. What that is causing, as is notorious at this point in time, is landlords asking for rent increases which are outrageous. If they don't get them, they are asking tenants to leave.

I saw a notice given to all tenants of an apartment block. I'll give it to you in writing, if you like. But the apartment block is small enough the landlord might be able to trace the source of my source. But I'll certainly give it to you, Madam Minister, in writing.

This landlord set it out as succinctly as any I've seen, on a single eight and one-half by eleven sheet of paper. He said, "Dear tenants: Please mark your choice." A, was a 24 per cent increase; (and there are little boxes to check) B, a 26 per cent increase staggered over three months; C, vacate the premises. That was their three choices. I thought that put it rather well.

The one individual who has fought the system with a dogged – with no resources – is not a middle-aged male for whom you have apparently little respect, but a middle-aged female who is not possessed of great resources she wouldn't claim to be, Rheta Lang. In half an hour's time, I'm

assured we'll get her decision. Whatever the decision is, I am sure it was arrived at in all good conscience by the officials involved. But it was a torturous process to go through.

The fact is, Madam Minister, tenants don't have any protection. The landlord will kick them out. They can stay past the eviction notice; they can go through the process; but darn few have the steel in their backbone to take the process, because it's an agonizing process.

I ask you, Madam Minister, If you will not now admit that the 5 per cent guide-line is only an honorary system, rewarding the rogues and punishing the honest landlords?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Okay, the member, in his wisdom . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — What wisdom?

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — Well, that's stretching it. The member, in his wisdom, made some very serious allegations when he first rose to his feet. We had no way of knowing that on Monday, the House was going to wind down. Indications were that we would be going probably till Thursday or the end of the week. It was your decision to wind down the House quickly and get out of here because you were losing badly – daily, in the papers, in question period, and what else. You had nothing else to say.

The announcement that I made on Wednesday wasn't ready until it had passed cabinet, and as the member full well knows, cabinet meets on Wednesdays.

With regard to what you have just stated, rewarding bad landlords, and penalizing good landlords has no basis in fact. In fact, as it pertains to evictions, your statement bears no relationship to the provincial trends that are showing up in that there is no indication and no basis for the allegation that, as you claim, that landlords are attempting to kick out long-standing tenants in order to get a new tenant in there. That has no basis in fact. In fact, we have four cases in the whole of the province dealing with that very matter. And yes, a decision will be made today on the first one. And I'm sure that the act will be followed as is stated.

And for you to stand up, either here or outside the House, and say people are going to be thrown on the street, landlords can put their rents up as much as they want, tenants have no rights, no protections – that is absolute balderdash. Because all the rights and protections afforded tenants, under the act, that have been in place since 1976, are, in fact, still in place. And the onus has always (and I will emphasize AL-WAYS) been on a tenant, if he or she is not pleased with the rent increase to approach the Rent Appeal Commission for a ruling. The onus has always been on a tenant.

AN HON. MEMBER: — That's not accurate.

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — That is accurate. A tenant always had to . . . After the Rentalsman had set a rent under controls, if the tenant at that point was not happy with the rent increase set by the Rentalsman, he or she then had to apply to the Rent Appeal Commission for another ruling. So the onus has always been on the tenant.

But I'll tell you what the changes to the act did. It has increased the number of tenants who now have protection of a government-imposed guide-line. Twice as many people today come under the general guide-line than came under it before.

And I'm happy to say to the member from Regina Centre that the average rent increase today stands at 5.6 per cent – 5.6 per cent. And I think you do yourself a disservice, and you do your party a disservice, when you try to deliberately cause, or mislead the tenants of the province – many of them who are elderly, many who are on fixed incomes, many of them who you have just frightened out of their wits. And that lies directly on the misinformation which, I think,

April 6, 1984

probably was given out deliberately by you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Radical NDP statements is right – to create a political issue to cover your own behind.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well I suppose, Madam Minister, you come by it honestly. Yours is the Premier, after all, who went through a provincial election promising a 40 cent reduction in tax. And his arithmetic error was pointed out to him earlier in the election. But that didn't stop him from promising 40 cents—he continued to promise it – the same Premier who has insisted we're not participating in the recession. Notwithstanding, the statistics in the budget address of this year would suggest that we participated more fully than the average Canadian.

I suppose you come by it honestly. If the Premier can close his eyes to the obvious and prefer to deal with his fantasies rather than the facts, I suppose there's no reason why his ministers shouldn't do likewise.

Madam Minister, will you not admit, will you not admit that the only protection a tenant has, if the landlord asks a tenant to leave because he wants to increase the rent by 45 per cent (which is the actual example), will you not admit that the only protection that tenant has is to hold over and make the landlord kick them out?

And as secondary question, if you admit what I think is the obvious, will you then admit that that's an inappropriate procedure for a lot of tenants who aren't up to that sort of a protracted two or three-month struggle?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I'll tell you what protection the tenants have as it pertains to a landlord asking for an exorbitant increase. All the tenant has to do is phone the department – phone the department, and I think most tenants know of the program.

The basic rents increases have been reduced from the range of 12 to 13 per cent down to around 5.6 per cent and, not only that, the extension of the program to cover all units – rental units – that become four years old means that the program will be ongoing and, each year, more and more tenants will come under the act – more and more tenants will be afforded the protection that is offered by the act.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, I know a slew of tenants who would prefer the protection of the old act rather than the new.

Madam Minister, since we're into the subject of the average rent increases before January 1, 1984, I'd like to know why it took you so long to act on a problem that was so obvious – that formula which was out of whack.

The problem was revealed for all the public to see in *Public Accounts* in December of 1982, when your officials came before the committee and admitted the average rent increase at that time was 11 or 12 per cent. I raised it with the minister in his estimates last year – a full year ago. We went through the same song and dance. This is an old movie with some new actors – one, really, I suppose – yourself. Nothing was done until January of this year when suddenly, out of the blue came this bizarre proposal to turn the rent controls into an honour system.

Why, Madam Minister, did it take you so long to act on a problem that was so obvious for many months?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — Because the area is a very complex area, and I took the time to check to see what was being done right across Canada. I think it's an agreed principle right across Canada, perhaps with the exception of Alberta, that governments will always have some place in the rental market industry. They'll always have some type of control review mechanism in place. I think that's an accepted fact across Canada. Even Alberta has a tenant-landlord court to settle disputes. I wanted to make sure that the changes that I proposed to my colleagues would:

one, be workable; and secondly, be fair. And I think we have achieved that.

I might also indicate that in the groups that I have met with since the announcement in December, I was absolutely astonished at the number of people that did not know what their rights were, did not know what type of program had been even previously in place. Rent controls were focused at a very narrow, narrow number of buildings.

I think there are very positive aspects out of the announcements that I announced in December. One was the changing of the formula – and some landlords weren't very happy about that – the changing of the formula to bring rents more in line with the economic reality of today. But secondly, and probably more importantly, is with the expansion of the program to cover any or all rental units that become four years old – they automatically fall under the guide-lines of government. That's a positive step, because the number of tenants that will be protected has increased significantly and will continue to increase as newer apartment buildings or rental accommodation come on-stream, and become four years old, and falls under the purview of the government. Those are positive things.

The protections. The statutory conditions of the act are still in force. More and more people know of those conditions. We have taken a very aggressive view in our department. You know, you asked earlier, what does my department do? We are there in the market-place helping both consumers and business people. We are aggressive about it. We have a very aggressive campaign. We want to inform people, and I think we have accomplished that. It will be an ongoing thing. People are aware of what their rights are. People are aware of what their responsibilities are, and they had little, little chance under the former administration because this program – even the rent control program – wasn't advertised. People didn't know. People living outside the controlled area didn't know.

But you know, you say, why did I make the change? I looked at the stats in the department, and it is not very often that I would compliment the former administration, but when you did a comparison of the stats between Saskatoon and Regina where controls were in place and not working very well, and the rest of the province where rent review had been established by your administration in 1979, it was working very, very well, with little interference from government. And I think the people living in Regina and Saskatoon are not unlike the people living in other centres in the province. And that was a positive move you made, and we extended it from the rest of the province to the cities of Regina and Saskatoon.

And indications from the Rentalsman – things are going extremely well in the Office of the Rentalsman. Certainly, initially there was some alarm and some confusion – I think a lot brought on by some of the inflammatory statements you made every change you got. And I think you did that deliberately, knowing that the change to review was a good move. Things have settled down.

I get very, very few letters any more. Most of the letters were asking for information, and certainly there was a change. But I feel very strongly, and I think, in support of my department, that the changes we made, the change that you people made in 1979 is working very well, and flowing very, very well. And what we set out to accomplish has been accomplished.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, Madam Minister, you've said some very unpleasant things about me and the former administration. But if, in the latter part of those comments, you were crediting us with the changes which eventually took place, that is about as low a blow, I think, as you have landed. We do not particularly want credit, Madam Minister, for the changes that eventually took place.

I want to deal with one other item and then, I think, in the interests of time, we've simply got to leave it. The communications budget was up 203 per cent. That contrasts sharply with other areas of your budget, and I wondered . . . I would appreciate an explanation from you

April 6, 1984

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — Okay. Actually, I'm very pleased with the increase. It does sound large; it probably is. But I can tell you that I am pleased with the increase that I got from the Minister of Finance, because I feel very strongly that the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs has a very key role to play in the social fabric of our province.

And we will become very pro-active this year in advertising the type of programs we have in place, the type of market-place education that is needed, and has been sadly lacking.

I look at our money management program. That's an awfully good program that has helped an awful lot of people. But it's never been advertised. I look at consumer product information. We're expanding throughout the province in that area.

Consumer Week has always been sort of come and gone, and nobody knows about it. The consumer plays a very, very vital role in the economy of our province, and so does the business sector play a vital role. And if we can bring a better understanding of both sides, if we can inform consumers of the type of information they need when they're buying major investments – or making major investments, that's the role of the department.

From my point of view, I'm more than pleased with this type of money, because we'll have a more informed public and more productive public.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Time is running out, Madam Minister. With respect to your communications budget, let me just make a comment which is not intended to be inflammatory.

I reviewed your annual reports over the last years. The number of speakers being supplied by the department appears to be declining. The number of speakers being supplied, and occasions upon which the department supplies speakers appeared to be declining. Also, the number of pamphlets being issued appeared to be declining.

It appears the department has come to rely more and more on the electronic media and I, for one, am not sure that that is . . . And this department is not alone in that approach. I think all across the spectrum – political parties, governments, everybody else, is ceasing to rely on the spoken word and the written word, and relying more and more upon the electronic word.

I, for one, Madam Minister, am not convinced that's a very sound approach, and you may comment on it if you like. As I say, it wasn't intended to be inflammatory; none of my remarks have, but I was being particularly careful of this one.

I wanted to raise one other subject before time escapes on us. It had to do with the differences in the food costs between Regina and Saskatoon. There was quite a difference in the food costs between Regina and Saskatoon. It is apparent, I think – and you may disagree – it is apparent that that is because the food stores in Saskatoon are more competitive than they are in Regina. I and my caucus believe that the dominance of the food industry in Regina by, Safeway (I think), plays a significant role in that.

And I wonder, Madam Minister, if you agree with that analysis of the difference. And, if so, what is the role of the department in doing something to correct what appears to be an over-pricing in Regina?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I would like to indicate to the member that last October was the first time the CAC, Saskatchewan branch, undertook to do a price survey in some of the cities in Saskatchewan.

The October survey indicated that prices in Regina were lower than prices, on the same basket, in the city of Saskatoon . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We're talking about food now, to the

member.

Now it's very, very evident that there is an anomaly going on in Saskatoon, in that there is a large supermarket chain – their store is called Super Valu – trying to establish a market in the Saskatoon region. And there is actually . . . What you have in Saskatoon is a price war, and that didn't start until November, and those changes – the changes in the November, December, and subsequent food baskets – clearly indicate that there is such a thing going on in Saskatoon.

As it relates to the Regina scene, I think that the concentration –whether it's too much or too little – of Safeway in Regina, will have to be monitored, and I think some of the requirements set down by FIRA (foreign investment review agency) in approving Safeway's application to buy Dominion Stores here in Regina are very, very stringent, and we'll just have to monitor it. I think perhaps some of the amendments that were proposed the other day by the Combines Investigations Act may be relevant to this situation.

But I want to indicate that, you know, CAC (Consumers' Association of Canada) does a food basket; StatsCanada does a food basket; CBC does a food basket; and any time you get this type of information being public, there's only one winner, and that's the consumer, and the consumer becomes more and more aware of the need to shop around.

What's really happened in Regina is that, because the food basket is printed in the paper, the stores in the Regina area have become very, very competitive on that particular food basket, and what's found within that food basket. So that's a plus.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Item 9

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I want to note here that we are experiencing, I think, delays in dealing with the corporations branch in getting material in and out. It seems to me to be taking a couple of weeks or so. I think that's unacceptably long, given this branch.

I'm therefore not enamoured with the notion that we are going to have two fewer staff next year than last. And I ask Madam Minister to take a look at this branch. The amount of revenue produced by this particular branch is enormous, and it is unfair to those who patronize it, I think, (if you don't mind me putting it in that language) – unfair to those who patronize it to make them wait very long, as I think is now happening.

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — I might indicate to the member that the reduction in two staff is a result of computerization of the corporations branch, and those two people have taken up duties within the department elsewhere.

Item 9 agreed to.

Items 10 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

Item 13

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I recognize this is not going to cause rioting in far provinces. It's not the great issues of our time. The amount being voted is a reduction of last year by, in percentage terms, a considerable reduction. I wondered why the reduction is, Madam Minister.

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — I think I could advise the member that we feel we have greater efficiencies. We've purchased some of our own equipment. Our fees for service have been

April 6, 1984

increased to reflect what's being charged in other cemeteries, and it's just good management.

Item 13 agreed to.

Vote 4 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSUMER AND COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 4

Items 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 4 agreed to.

HON. MR.S. DUNCAN: — I'd like to thank my officials for coming over this morning. I appreciate the questions from the opposition.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank these officials. I look forward to the sea of new faces which will undoubtedly be here next year, as has always happened in the past.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:03 p.m.