

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**April 11, 1984**

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**MRS. CASWELL:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues and I are carrying out a responsibility of bringing the wishes of 4,000 extra people in the province who wanted to sign their name to a petition to stop medicare funding of abortion. This really isn't a new petition, but really an extension of the one that was presented on November 24th, 1983.

I would like to commend the past minister of health, Herman Rolfes, who, as a private citizen, let his concerns be known on this issue, and wants to stop medicare funding of abortion. Also, of course, the other 4,000 people.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**MS. ZAZELENCHUK:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, approximately 45 grade 7 and 8 students from Pleasant Hill School in Saskatoon. They are seated in the east gallery, and accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Bill Sherwin and, I believe, their chaperon Miss Peggy Pepper.

For about two years, I've had only one class from my constituency visit the Assembly, but then I only had to apologize to the opposition once. But all seriousness aside, It's been really nice to have in the last two weeks three classes from my constituency visit the Assembly. Perhaps more classes have come at a time when we were not in session; but I'm glad to have the opportunity today to visit with them, and I will be meeting them at 3 o'clock for pictures.

I hope they enjoy today's proceedings, and I would like all members to join with me in welcoming them here.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. GLAUSER:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of this Chamber, a group of 39 students, grades 7 and 8, from the Mayfair School in my constituency. They are accompanied by Guy Richards and Tad Cherkewich. I hope your stay is enjoyable and educational, and I will be meeting with you later on, around 3 o'clock, for pictures and for drinks.

I would like all members to please welcome them in the usual manner.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome 17 students in the west gallery from Rosthern High School. They're here today visiting with us. They were supposed to be here yesterday, but their bus ran a little slow, I think.

I would like to welcome you here. I hope you enjoy your trip here, and the day, as educational. I must indicate that the deputy House Leader, and your teacher, Mr. Nickel, were teachers together, and he also wishes to pass along the welcome.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. PICKERING:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a great deal of pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, the 1984 Saskatchewan provincial high school boys' curling champions. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I would like them to stand as they're introduced: Skip, Brian McRorie; third, Vern Campbell; second, Brian Clarke; lead, Steven Harty, and the spare on the team, Steven Dombowsky, and their coach, John Hansen.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear

**HON. MR. PICKERING:** — As most members are aware, Mr. Speaker, the town of Avonlea is noted for their curling champions, and I would like to indicate at this time that the member playing third on this team is a son of Garnet Campbell, who brought the first Canadian curling championship back to our province. And I would also mention that it's nice to see there still is a Campbell that can win.

I had the opportunity last night of attending a dinner in Avonlea in their honour, and they packed the hall, and they're very supportive of curling down there. They're very proud of this team, and their coach, and the parents, of course.

Accompanying them today are three of the parents, Jim and Arliss Clarke, Lawrence and Betty McRorie, Lawrence and Ruth Ann Harty. The other parents weren't able to attend.

At the outset of the championship throughout the province, there were something like 200 teams, so you can see by them becoming the winner, the feat they have accomplished.

I understand that they displayed sportsmanlike conduct on and off the ice throughout the play-down, so they certainly are worthy champions, and I would like all members to join with me in congratulating them, welcoming them to the Assembly, and wishing them a pleasant stay, and I will be meeting with them in the rotunda area after question period for pictures and refreshments.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the opposition, I want to join with the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources, and with government members opposite, and to extend our congratulations to these fine curlers. We look forward to many years of success, and perhaps some day this rink, or some semblance of it, will bring back the Brier to Saskatchewan.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SVEINSON:** — On behalf of this part of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, I don't feel — the members to my right don't necessarily speak for me. But I have a long history of wining, and I do appreciate winners, gentlemen, and I'm the fastest growing in numbers in this constituency on the floor of the legislature; and I know that winning is not everything, but it's certainly better than the alternative. So I welcome you to the Assembly today, and continue your winning ways. Thank you very much.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. FOLK:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of Culture and Recreation, I would also like to add my congratulations to the 1984 Avonlea boys' high school curling champions. I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, that it was just a few short years ago, about six — no, maybe it was 16 — when I had the opportunity to play in that championship, and I'd also just once again like to say that I'll be joining the hon. minister for pictures after, just to bring up the average age; and in response to the member opposite, that indeed there are some winners on both sides of the House, and perhaps even more on this side. Thank you.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. YEW:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, the members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of students from Weyakwin. They represent the future leaders of their community, possibly the future leaders of northern Saskatchewan. They are accompanied today with their teacher, Joan Nelson, and chaperons, Irene Ross and Alex Schlichemeyer. I hope they have an interesting and educational tour in Regina, and I wish they have a pleasant stay and a safe trip home.

I'd like to invite all members of the Legislative Assembly in welcoming this group of students from Weyakwin.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MORIN:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker I just want to take an opportunity to join the member from Rosthern in welcoming the students from Rosthern. I'm a graduate of that establishment and can speak highly for the educational qualifications that come with graduation from that place. I don't know how long they're planning to stay, but I can assure them that if they stay in the House for a day or two, their education will be considerably broadened in a way that they would never hope to gain in Rosthern. And I hope that they do enjoy their stay here.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege for me to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly, a group of grade 8 students who are visiting us today from the fine constituency of Regina Rosemont. They attend St. Francis School. They are 31 in number, seated in the Speaker's gallery. I would like to commend them and their teacher-chaperon, Mr. Gerald Small, for the interest that they are showing in visiting the legislature today. We wish you well and hope that you have an educational experience. I understand that you will be meeting for pictures and refreshments after question period.

Would all members join with me, please, in welcoming them to the Assembly.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

### **Selling Price of Former SGI Office Building**

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Mr. Speaker, in the Assembly in recent days I asked the minister in charge of SGI a series of questions with respect to his government's sale of the former SGI head office building on 11th Avenue in downtown Regina for the sum of 575,000. The minister asked me what my point was. I'm about to tell him, but I don't think he's going to like it.

I have documentation, Mr. Minister, which strongly suggests that your government sold the building for tens, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars less than you could have realized. These documents further suggest the taxpayers took a bath on a deal which the board of directors must have approved. These documents further suggest that your statements that Gary Miller had nothing to do with the sale are not accurate.

Mr. Minister, my first question (and it's a specific question, and I'd ask for a specific answer): will the minister confirm or deny that in late September or early October of last year, a Regina businessman was taken on a tour of the building by one Gary Miller, and that during the course of that tour, that businessman expressed an interest in purchasing the building for \$750,000?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I won't deny that.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — You won't.

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Of course not. Of course not.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. Order, please. Give the minister an opportunity to answer.

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — I won't deny that, but I won't admit anything until I find out who he's talking about, because there were more than one.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite prepared to table a copy of a letter. I will say, in addition, it's a letter addressed to the minister by Fossil Fuel Development Ltd. the suggestion, Mr. Minister, is that, as I said, that you walked away from an offer considerably in excess of what you got. Will the minister . . . and I have a supplementary. Will the minister confirm or deny that on October 20th of last year he received a second offer, this one in writing, from another Regina businessman, offering the corporation \$600,000 for the building? Will you confirm that fact?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Well Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Assembly and to the hon. member that if he wants to get into the discussion today I will do so, but it would be better to get into it in Crown corporations. If he wants to refer to the offer of \$600,000, or the other one for that matter, and leave the impression, Mr. Speaker, that we have somehow sold it for a sum somewhat less than that, for whatever reason he seems to think was wrong on our part, let me assure the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that the offer he is referring to was: (a) \$100,000 deposit; (b) \$300,000 after renovations were to be completed; c) \$200,000 in five years time; and (d) we had to lease back from them half of the building.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Will the minister confirm that the individual — will the minister confirm that the individual who received the expression of interest for \$750,000, and who received the letter for the offer of \$600,000, was one Gary Miller, and that Gary Miller was the person who responded to the offer, and that Gary Miller is the same person who, on the day the property was sold, on the day of the announcement of the sale of the property to Silver Developments, announced his resignation from SGI and went to work for Silver Developments. Will you confirm that?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Certainly, I'll confirm that. Mr. Silver is now . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Miller is now working for Silver Development — that is correct. Mr. Silver was, in fact, the gentleman who showed the property to the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh no, no, no, just listen for the answer and you might hear something and might learn something, member from Shaunavon.

The fact is that he showed the building at the request of the officials of that building. The offer was made . . . The offer in writing that you're referring to was made to the officials, and not to Mr. Miller. The offer was also replied to by, as I recall (and I'm going by memory), by the officials of SGI.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Mr. Minister, that's not . . . New question, Mr. Speaker. That is not accurate. It was Mr. Miller who responded, and it defies experience in business, or in government, to have an underling reply. It's normally the person who makes the decision who replies.

I'm going to table, Mr. Minister, a letter of October 25, in which Mr. Miller replies, and refuses to accept the offer of \$600,000. The letter is signed by Mr. Gary Miller. And I'll table that.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, will you now admit that it was Gary Miller who was handling the sale? Will you admit what the documents plainly suggest?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — No. I won't admit that at all, Mr. Speaker. It might have been replied to by him, and the offer was turned down by the officials. And I support the rejection of that offer. There is no way, Mr. Speaker, that we can compare a \$600,000 offer under the conditions, under the terms that was offered to us, as compared to \$575,000 that was cash, up front, and that we have no obligations to re-lease any part of the property. It doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker, that we would be looking at collecting the money five years from now.

As a matter of fact, further to the lease I'm referring to, they wanted an additional five years' extension on it. Now, Mr. Speaker, the deal that we made of \$575,000 is somewhat . . . That isn't a deal that they had accepted four years ago from the mafia, when they accepted a \$1.4 or 5 million, including another piece of property. It wasn't only the part of . . . the piece of property that you're referring to in the question that you're asking.

Mr. Speaker, the \$575,000 would have been better accepted at the time that they were negotiating on the deal in 1980, because since that time it has cost us \$707,000 just to keep it. So, Mr. Speaker, the \$575,000 we accepted, I make no apologies for, and our officials at SGI did well in taking it when they did. It was the only offer they had that was cash up front.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Will the minister save us the recitation of all that, and simply confirm, Mr. Minister, that the individual who showed the building was Gary Miller, the individual who accepted the offers was Gary Miller, the individual who responded in writing was Gary Miller?

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, if that strikes you as the actions of someone who was not involved in any way in the negotiations for the sale of this building.

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Speaker, that is incorrect. It was not Mr. Miller who accepted the offers that were made on the sale of the buildings . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And you said accepted.

I am replying to your question, and it was not Mr. Miller who accepted the offer. It was done by the officials of SGI, and it was the best offer that we had after four years of trying to sell it. You people were trying to sell it, and we had it on listing since we've been government, and you had it on listing two years before that. So I . . .

It was the only offer that we could accept at the time, and we accepted it. It was accepted by the officials.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — New question. The minister is conveniently neglecting the expression of interest, that \$750,000 which Mr. Miller did not act upon.

My question, however, is: can the minister confirm that Gary Miller acted as SGI's facilities manager for six months, which ended on January 20?

I ask the minister, as well: was the minister aware that Gary Miller, who had obviously been involved in the SGI negotiations, commenced employment with the company the same day that the agreement to sell the building at that give-away price was announced?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Well, if I understand the question correctly, you're absolutely wrong. Are you asking the date that Mr. Miller began, or started, for the company?

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — No, I think that's public knowledge. New question. I think that's public

April 11, 1984

knowledge. In your own publication, by the name of *Radiant*, of March 1984, Gary Miller is said to have resigned from the corporation on January 20, and to have commenced employment six months earlier. So I wasn't particularly curious about the length of his employment. That's a matter of public record.

The question was: was the minister not aware of that? And if so, did that not catch your interest as to why a man who had been negotiating the deal on behalf of SGI, and involved in the negotiations, as he patently had been, went to work with the people who he was bargaining with, the same day they took over the building? Did that not catch your interest as something that should be investigated?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Speaker, the date of termination of employees at SGI does not catch my interest or does not come to my attention. There are 1,200 and some employees of SGI, and I do not know when they start employment; I do not know when they're terminated. And I repeat to the hon. member that it was not the gentleman he's referring to that negotiated the sale. It was . . . As a matter of fact, again for his information, I will rename them: Mr. Larry Fogg, who was the treasurer of SGI; Mr. Bill Heidt, who was the comptroller; and Mr. Ken Lerner, director of litigation and legal affairs. And they are the ones who negotiated the deal, the sale of that building, and completed the sale.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — New question. Mr. Minister, your comment that you were unaware of the fact just does not square with what took place in this House. I asked you some weeks ago about the conflict of interest when Gary Miller had been negotiating a sale and then left to work for Silver Developments. So you were aware of that weeks ago. I asked the minister: why did you not investigate an apparent conflict of interest? Why did you wait in the hope that the matter would go away?

I suggest, Mr. Minister, your actions suggest one who has been less than diligent in trying to get to the bottom of this.

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, that's absolutely false. It is absolutely wrong. You did not indicate any conflict of interest, and it wasn't several weeks ago. It was last week, and you asked me the question who the individual was. I didn't know at the time who the individual was. You named him, not I. I did inquire as to what his role was. I was informed, as I am informing this House today, as to what his role was. He did not negotiate the sale. Perhaps if you listen clearly it will get through to you. He did not negotiate the sale. It was negotiated by the three individuals that I referred to.

So, Mr. Speaker, rather than trying to mislead this Assembly, listen to the answer, because you did not indicate at the time that there was any suggestion of a conflict of interest. You asked. I told you I didn't know. You mentioned the individual's name, and I checked on him, and I'm referring back again to you today.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I suggest that you are denying what the letters clearly established, that Mr. Miller was involved in the negotiations. I don't know how your office works, but my secretary doesn't sign my letters for me. I make the decisions, and I sign them, and I assume that's . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. The member is making a speech, and if you have a supplementary question it should be made without a lead-in.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Will the minister not admit that the fact that Gary Miller signed the correspondence throughout proves that he was involved in the negotiations, something you denied in this House a few days ago?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — No, Mr. Speaker. It does not prove that. It proves that he was

assisting in showing the building, assisting those people who negotiated the sale, assisting the officials of SGI. The offers, and the only one that I'm aware of, in writing, Mr. Speaker, is the one that I referred to earlier . . . I admit, freely admit, there were other verbal offers made. But I do not accept verbal offers. Neither does the corporation, and if you do, then I would question your business attitude or judgement. I would question whether or not you would know what you're doing if you would accept a verbal offer.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — New question, Mr. Minister. As I believe you are aware, Mr. Syd Lovell's letter of April 6th, states that he expressed an interest at \$750,000, and was discouraged by Gary Miller who said they had higher offers. He was led to believe it was too low.

Mr. Minister, my question concerns a comment contained in Mr. Syd Lovell's letter of April 10th, addressed to yourself, and delivered yesterday, I'm informed. The minister nods, he has it. The final paragraph reads:

I feel if things had been handled differently, Saskatchewan Government Insurance might have received a better price, certainly more than the give-away it seems to have been.

Will the minister just simply admit the obvious, that Mr. Lovell is clearly right?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Speaker, we might have made a lot better deal if we'd have sold it four years ago for \$500,000. We'd have saved \$700,000 at the time. We might have made a better deal three years ago. We might have made a better deal two years ago. We might have made a better deal yesterday. We might make a better deal six months from now. The fact is, any verbal offer is not worth the paper it's written on, as the member well knows.

A verbal offer, Mr. Speaker, isn't to be considered until I have it in writing, and if he is indicating that the individual laws, in fact, discouraged . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, he is a businessman. He is a businessman. If he had . . . My office is always available to anyone. There was a question of . . . I wasn't referring to this man as being a businessman, by the way. Mr. Speaker, please, I wasn't referring to him.

I'm available. He could have called me. The president is available. The other officials are available. One individual discouraged him — and he may have — and I don't know that to be accurate. He may have. But there could have been any number of offers made — any number.

But, Mr. Speaker, they'd have been better off accepting a lot less money many years ago, and we'd have saved a lot of money today for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

### **Quality of Regina Water**

**MR. SVEINSON:** — Mr. Speaker, while the mud flies back and forth across the House on an issue that at least, at the very least, is clouded from the government side, I have a problem that constituents of mine have addressed to me this morning with respect to press speculation on the quality of Regina water.

I would like to ask the Minister of Environment if he can give the constituents of north-west Regina and the residents of the city of Regina assurances that the problem is well in hand and will be looked after in the best interests of the residents of Regina?

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to be able to just bring to light some of the Regina-Moose Jaw drinking water quality studies that we just completed. Mr. Speaker, it was done by an independent consulting group, and what it says is:

Although the drinking water in Regina at times is marginal, at all times it is safe.

April 11, 1984

I know there's been some questions about viruses, and that's the reason we had the study done. The study says that there's no virus in the water, that it's safe for drinking at all times. But just to go a little further than that and answer the hon. member's question, I think this government last year put up considerable amount of money, made available a lot of interest or low-interest type of money for Regina-Moose Jaw water pipe line, and it hasn't been taken up on.

So I would say that right now, right now I also would say that the federal government – I didn't see any help from the federal government there. So therefore, I think that we have, as a government, done a great deal towards moving towards good drinking water for these people, and I can assure the member opposite that we will monitor very, very closely. That is the job of the Department of the Environment at all times, to be sure that it is safe to be used by the people of Regina. And should there be any concern about it, we will address it properly.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SVEINSON:** — The minister has raised some interesting points. He blames the federal government for an inactivity that was an election promise, by not the federal Liberal party, but it was an election promise that was tabled by the provincial Conservative party. There were no caveats on that promise with respect to financing from Ottawa. My question of the minister would be a little less complicated than the answer he just chose to give me regarding the water situation in Regina. I would ask Mr. Minister, if he would describe the chemical H<sub>2</sub>S, or hydrogen sulphide, and can he outline the problems that we could, in fact, are inherent with that chemical in our Regina water system.

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that's very technical. I do have people within the department I'm sure can answer his questions. I'm sure if he has to go to the department we have a release out just now, *Regina/Moose Jaw Drinking Water Quality for 1983*. I'm sure my department would be very happy to explain to him all the technical parts as regards to the quality of the water in Regina.

He full well knows that 40 per cent of our water comes from wells in Regina, and he also full well knows that the Government of Saskatchewan has put up a substantial offer in regards to building a pipeline for Regina/Moose Jaw, if that is the answer. We have left it up to the city and to the federal government to work out an arrangement that could be put together so the pipeline, or whatever is necessary, could be built. I don't know what else a government such as us could do on such a short term.

I can go back 11 years or 20 years, and nothing was ever done before that. In less than two short years, I've at least put together a program that could conceivably bring good, fresh water to Regina and Moose Jaw.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SVEINSON:** — Mr. Minister, I appreciate your answer, but it doesn't necessarily address the problem. And I think the problem being that the history of this government has been one of maybe addressing a few of the promises that were made in April of '82, but the problem that was inherently on the minds of people in Regina, which did become a provincial platform . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order! If the member has a question, I would like to hear the question, but the long-lead-in speeches are not allowed in question period.

**MR. SVEINSON:** — I apologize, Mr. Speaker, for the inconvenience I've caused your Chair. My question to the minister is: can we, in Regina, expect any further progress with respect to a glass of water or the water problem in the city of Regina from your government?

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, you well know that in the budget it was announced that there would be a new water crown being established. We also well know that we have – again, I could reiterate – that we have put up substantial offers to the city of Regina and Moose



Jaw in regards to a water supply system. Again, I can assure the member that we'll monitor what we have very closely. I guess I would say it would go back to maybe, again, to some new-found friends of his that maybe can help the people of Saskatchewan. Maybe it is their turn to do something out here to help Regina and Moose Jaw in regards to water. I believe sincerely that we've put up a substantial amount of funds to make available to bring good quality water to the province, to Regina/Moose Jaw, and we'll continue monitoring it.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

### **Reduction in Size of Saskatchewan Courts**

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Justice. As the Minister of Justice will be aware that his consistent actions has been to pass orders in council persistently reducing the number of members on the Court of Queen's Bench and, similarly, in respect to the court of appeal. I want to indicate, Mr. Minister of Justice, that this is an action which is contrary to the welfare of administration of justice in the province. This concern has been raised by the bar society; has been raised by the public; has been raised by the opposition. The concern has been so great that a group of criminal lawyers in Saskatoon commenced an action against you.

I want to say, Mr. Minister of Justice, that your actions is deplorable. And, in fact, in view of the decision, the action that you have taken in decreasing . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. Order. Does the member have a question? I'd like to hear the question, then.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I certainly do, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Justice, in light of the fact that a group of criminal lawyers had to commence an action, and in view of the judgement by Mr. Justice Wimmer, will you, in fact, assure this House, and the people of this province, that you will take adequate steps to see that there is, indeed, sufficient judges on both the Queen's bench and court of appeal?

**HON. MR. LANE:** — Well I've been waiting for a question for three weeks for obvious reasons, Mr. Speaker, but the indication that this was a new step, as referred to, and a deplorable action . . . I would like to refer to the legal precedents of actions by the previous CCF government in 1951, where it introduced legislation in this House to reduce both the court of appeal and the Court of Queen's Bench.

Mr. Speaker, in 1951 the CCF government brought in legislation to reduce the size of the courts. Let me refer today to the judgement which the hon. member has not read, because he would recognize that it was a significant victory for the province of Saskatchewan. Let me tell you what the judgement said; let me tell you what the judgement said. I understand . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Minister of injustice.

**HON. MR. LANE:** — He doesn't want to listen. I know why he doesn't want to listen, Mr. Speaker, because he doesn't like the news that's coming down.

The Court of Queen's Bench today recognized that the province's order in council respecting the court of appeal were valid and within the jurisdiction of the province of Saskatchewan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. LANE:** —

The Court of Queen's Bench today recognized that the orders in council respecting the expansion to the Court of Queen's Bench were valid and within the jurisdiction of the province of Saskatchewan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

April 11, 1984

**HON. MR. LANE:** — The Court of Queen's Bench today stated on a matter of statutory interpretation that there should be judges in the judicial centre of Estevan and Yorkton.

On March 9 and again on March 19 of 1984, I offered to the Minister of Justice of Canada a proposal to have appointments made to the judicial centres of Estevan and the judicial centre of Yorkton. At that time, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice of Canada rejected our proposal. I indicate that on July 7, 1981, there had been an understanding between the then Minister of Justice and the then Attorney General of Saskatchewan that there will be full and meaningful consultation. The offer was rejected by the Government of Canada, and there has been no consultation on any appointments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Inventor Services Program**

**HON. MR. CURRIE:** — Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to announce to this Legislative Assembly the initiation of a new program, as well as the extension of a previous program, both administered by the Department of Science and Technology. Today the department has initiated the Inventor Services Program. This program is intended to encourage Saskatchewan independent inventors and entrepreneurs to present their ideas and concepts for commercial evaluation.

The department has entered into contracts with the Saskatchewan Research Council and with the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Regina. Those organizations will accept full descriptions and diagrams of inventions from Saskatchewan innovators and assist the inventors to submit them to the Innovation Institute in Oregon. The Innovation Institute will undertake evaluation regarding the commercial potential and the technical feasibility of the inventions.

Ideas with commercial and technical potential will receive additional attention using the Entrepreneur Program. This program has been used successfully by a number of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs in the planning of new business ventures during the past few months. Guidance is provided in the preparation of a written business plan, corporate development, identification of venture capital sources, and techniques of market research. This program will be continued, having proved its value since inception.

Both these programs promise good economic returns at very little cost. They are indicative of directions the Department of Science and Technology is taking to encourage scientific and technological development for the economic and social benefit of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I first want to express my appreciation to the minister for his courtesy of providing me with a copy of his ministerial statement.

And I want to join with him and welcome the initiative that they have taken in respect to those who are dealing in the area of inventions, that they may, in fact, co-ordinate or take their — or may use the services, really, of the research council and the Faculty of Engineering, in appraising those inventions.

I think that those are welcome steps, and I want to congratulate the minister for proceeding this way.

**MR. PARKER:** — Mr. Speaker, just before orders of the day, I wish to withdraw resolution No. 22.

Resolution no. 22 withdrawn.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 41 – An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act**

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill No. 41 – An Act to amend The Superannuation Act. This bill, Mr. Speaker, gives legislative authority for the voluntary early retirement program.

This administration made a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan to control the growth and size of government through the use of timely and imaginative management techniques. The early retirement program is a thoughtful and innovative method of allowing individuals who have served the people and province of Saskatchewan long and well, to retire early and enjoy life in later years.

It is also, Mr. Speaker, a humane way to reduce expenditures and the size of government. Mr. Speaker, through the use of non-reduced pensions and special payments till age 65, this bill ensures retirement with dignity for civil servants who wish to retire early.

Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in moving, seconded by the member from Qu'Appelle, that Bill No. 41 now be read a second time.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, our critic in this bill, bill 41, is not here today, and we will take some time to study this bill. Therefore, I'll be moving adjournment of Bill 41 in second reading.

Debate Adjourned

#### **Bill No. 42 – An Act to incorporate the Saskatchewan League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents**

**HON. MRS. SMITH:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this bill confers on the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents, which I shall call LEADS, the status of a professional organization. Presently those members of LEADS, who are employed by boards of education, are members of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, while members of LEADS who are not employed by boards of education have absolutely no professional organization to represent them.

These circumstances have caused some concern, not only to the LEADS members themselves, but to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and also to boards of education. The dissatisfaction with these circumstances was formally acknowledged in a memorandum of agreement dated May 20, 1983, which formed a part of the 1983 provincial agreement between the teachers of Saskatchewan, and boards of education, and the Government of Saskatchewan. This memorandum of agreement was endorsed by the executive of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the executive of the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association.

As a result of this agreement, the LEADS organization approached my predecessor to request legislation creating a professional organization. Since my appointment as Minister of Education in the summer of 1983, the Department of Education has worked with the LEADS executive to develop this act. Critical sections have been discussed with the SSTA and the STF and, as a result of this extensive consultation, Mr. Speaker, this bill is before this Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the efforts put forth over the past few months by the organizations concerned must be acknowledged in their own right. The spirit of co-operation displayed by the executive members of LEADS, the STF and the SSTA, and the Department of Education in resolving a problem that touches each of those partners in education is to be commended, and is also a reflection of the positive atmosphere in Saskatchewan's education community.

The establishment of a professional organization for out-of-scope teachers in Saskatchewan is a

April 11, 1984

logical step in a process which began over a decade ago with the decision to encourage the local employment of directors of education.

The acceptance of local employment of the chief executive officer of a school division has created difficulties for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in that those teachers who perform a senior management role for the employer are also members of the teachers' association. In other employee/employer relationships this circumstance would be considered unacceptable and, in many situations, would not be tolerated by either the employee or the employer groups. It is to the credit of all the teachers involved in the STF that circumstances which could have led to difficulties with boards, directors, teachers, and the federation, were avoided.

Boards of education must also be commended for having been willing to accommodate and acknowledge the professional status of directors of education and superintendents.

However, Mr. Speaker, the greatest commendation must be extended to the directors of education throughout Saskatchewan for the professionalism displayed in their efforts to successfully balance the needs of boards in respect to the management of personnel, while at the very same time they have been members of a professional organization which represents those very same employees. And in some cases, Mr. Speaker, that professionalism has been called upon to balance the needs of the board and the professional staff by superintendents of education, who were neither employed by the board nor a member of the teachers' association, but were members of another union.

It is because of a deep dedication to quality education in Saskatchewan, as reflected in the high level of professionalism displayed by directors of education who have operated in a less than ideal arrangement, that I believe, Mr. Speaker, a LEADS bill is wanted.

The bill serves as an acknowledgement of the degree of professionalism displayed by the directors of education in Saskatchewan, and it is therefore with pleasure, Mr. Speaker, that I move second reading of Bill No. 42, An Act to incorporate the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to have more time to review in detail the nature of this bill. I have had some contact with members who are putting forward this bill and had received an advance copy of it. I want to check the details of comparison and make sure that all parties are onside, and I believe they are. I will, in fact, likely be able to support this, but I would ask for an adjournment at this time in order that I might complete my investigation.

Debate adjourned.

### **Bill No. 33 – An Act to repeal The Agricultural Research Foundation Act and to Make provision for Related Matters**

**HON. MR. HEPWORTH:** — The Saskatchewan Agricultural Research Foundation, created by the passage of The Agricultural Research Foundation Act during the 1925-1926 session nearly 60 years ago, has played an important role in agriculture in this province, through research grants and scholarships.

The foundation was first established to utilize surplus funds in the amount of \$284,200, resulting from the termination of operations of the Canada Wheat Board in 1919, which were paid over to the Government of Saskatchewan by the Government of Canada.

The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture of the Legislative Assembly, after receiving representations from public bodies and individuals such as the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association and the dean of the College of Agriculture, recommended that the \$284,200 be used as an investment, and that the income be devoted to agricultural research, thus providing studies into agricultural production and marketing problems to Saskatchewan farmers.

The dean of the College of Agriculture, the chairman of the board of Governors of the University of Saskatchewan, and the Minister of Agriculture of the province of Saskatchewan were

appointed trustees of the foundation, and to accept gifts, devises, and bequests for the purposes of the foundation.

The act designates that the fund income may be used for scientific research by the University of Saskatchewan, with emphasis on plant and animal disease, soil problems, crop pests, land utilization, and farm finance surveys; for special research in connection with the marketing of agricultural products and in providing scholarships to students from Saskatchewan schools at the College of Agriculture, and to graduates of the College of Agriculture.

In 1936, the Saskatchewan Agriculture Research Foundation, through the provincial treasurer, received an additional \$14,237, the funds remaining after the wind-up of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Co. Ltd.

In 1946, the Provincial Auditor released surplus funds of the Kamsack emergency fund — \$40,578 to the foundation. The emergency fund had been collected to repair the damage suffered by the town of Kamsack in the area, due to a cyclone of August 9, 1944. And as I recall, it was one of the first tasks that the new CCF government faced upon their election that year — was the Kamsack cyclone emergency.

The fund received contributions from cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities, school districts, the Saskatchewan division of the Red Cross society, the Government of Saskatchewan, and public bodies. It was felt that the surplus funds could best serve the interests of Saskatchewan through the agricultural research foundation.

The Saskatchewan Agricultural Research Foundation has served for many years as a source of research and scholarship funding for the College of Agriculture. However, with the establishment of the Saskatchewan agricultural research fund in 1979, and the FarmLab program in 1981, the role of the Saskatchewan agriculture research funding, in funding research projects, is diminished and somewhat redundant.

The dean of the College of Agriculture has expressed concern with the \$3,000 statutory limit on scholarships from the foundation, indicating that the foundation can play a major role in supplying scholarships to the college of Agriculture students, since other sources, such as the Saskatchewan agriculture research fund and FarmLab exist for funding research projects.

Rather than amend the act to remove the \$3,000 annual funding ceiling on all scholarships, it appeared logical to repeal The Agricultural Research Foundation Act, and to transfer the funds to the University of Saskatchewan for use by the dean of the College of Agriculture, subject to any terms and conditions that may be imposed by the board of governors of that university.

Transferring the responsibility for the foundation to the dean of the College of Agriculture, a person knowledgeable about Saskatchewan's needs in agricultural research, will ensure that the funds continue to be used for the intended purposes of the foundation, and in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, especially the farming population.

This repeal is consistent with the provincial government's approach to deregulation. This will remove past requirements for an annual report on the fund to be submitted to the Department of Agriculture, and will also remove the requirement of the provincial government for an audited financial statement to be submitted to the Department of Agriculture.

I think all members will recognize that 60 years ago, when the act was put in place, and, in fact, 60 years ago when \$284,000 was a princely sum, there was probably good reason to have a fund that could support research and provide scholarships. But today this fund is somewhat redundant, with FarmLab and the Saskatchewan agriculture research fund in place. It's unfortunate that members opposite didn't realize that when they put the Saskatchewan agriculture research fund in place.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I think everyone recognizes that, after 60 years, inflation has cut into what was a princely sum 60 years ago, and now I think it not only makes good administrative sense, but certainly from the standpoint of the farmers of Saskatchewan and, in fact, all the people of Saskatchewan, I think no better place than the College of Agriculture and the dean of the

April 11, 1984

College of Agriculture to turn this fund over to. It will allow those who use research funding to do as they see fit.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 33, An Act to repeal The Agricultural Research Foundation Act and to Make provision for Related Matters

**MR. LUSNEY:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to say, in looking at the bill, that this bill seems to be one that may make some sense in doing what the minister is proposing. However, when you look at the lack of funding that's available for research in many areas of agriculture, and the lack of funding that has been provided to the University of Saskatchewan for agricultural research, funding for farmers to produce more crops, better crops, and to find a method by which they can maybe make more profits in agriculture, this bill, Mr. Minister, is one that might be doing the right thing. However, I'd like to spend a little time, and I know some of my colleagues would, to look at what that money is going to do, how it's going to be used, and just what is being proposed to be done with that money. And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will be begging leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## **COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

### **CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE**

#### **SOCIAL SERVICES**

#### **Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 36**

##### **Item 1 (continued)**

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Chairman, when we left off last night I was asking the minister about his program for training young unemployed people for jobs in the economy of Saskatchewan, and I was trying to get him to outline the areas where there was a shortage where he would see these young, unemployed employable people going. And I'm sure the minister will readily admit that many of the people who find themselves unemployed and on welfare today are of quite a different category than what he would try to explain here in the Assembly.

In fact, most of the people who are young and unemployed are people who are graduating from our technical schools and from our universities, and they can't find jobs. For him to say that what he is doing to do is increase the educational skills from grade 6 to grade 12, and have them go out and compete in the market with people who have technical training and university training, is hard to believe.

But I would like you to tell me, Mr. Minister, where you see a shortage of trained people in the province, and I would like you to list them out. And if you would, when you answer this time, not bother us with a long, involved skating around performance, but just tell me in three or four words which are the categories where we need more trained people and, therefore, what areas you will be training people for to get jobs.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Chairman, the matter of what particular sectors of the economy are in need of trained individuals is something that falls more appropriately under the purview of the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, and I'm sure he will be able to indicate for the member opposite exactly what those sectors are.

It seems to me though that the member opposite is suffering from a very serious malaise in policy thinking. It seems to me that what he is suggesting is that these people on social assistance who have very little, if any, education, and very little, if any, job skills should be forever assigned to

welfare – should be forever assigned to welfare.

And that was the problem of the administration formerly. They simply forgot about these people that were on welfare. They turned their backs on them. If you had any social conscience, when you were in power you would have thought about those people that need assistance in terms of training and re-education. You would have had a forward-looking approach to policy rather than simply handing out a cheque month after month.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Well, the 61,000 people who find themselves in the unfortunate position to be on social assistance will find the minister's comments interesting that they are uneducated and unknowledgeable. I think that quite the opposite is true. In today's society we find a good number of people who were last year and the year before working and doing an excellent job of building buildings, building highways, working in the private and public sector, who now find themselves, because of high unemployment, on welfare. And, Mr. Minister, for you to say that they are an uneducated lot simply doesn't do them justice.

I would like to know the recommendations that you have brought forward. You will be well aware that your department commissioned and paid for a study on Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. A person by the name of Duane Adams was paid with a staff to do a study. Can you tell me whether or not the recommendations you have brought forward were based on that study?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Chairman, I would like to correct the erroneous impression that the member opposite has left for the public. In fact, many of our clients have very low education, and he doesn't want to admit that. That is the reality: 66 per cent of our social assistance clients have education, grade 10 or less. That's a substantial percentage of welfare clients. And unless government is willing to address that problem in terms of education and retraining and job preparation, those people are going to be forever assigned to the welfare rolls. We don't think that's a compassionate and sensible approach to welfare. It was your approach for 11 years, and that is not a compassionate, sound policy approach to these people that lack basic education and training.

That, of course, is why we have engaged in the production of the over 6,000 opportunities for people on welfare. And I would have thought that somebody on the opposition benches would have recognized the validity of providing that kind of education and training for welfare clients. Everybody else in the province is speaking positively about it, but you people seem to be lost, and really don't appreciate what's going on.

As it relates to the study previously commissioned, the study will be made public in due course.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Well the question wasn't whether it would be made public or not. But do the reforms that you call reforms, and have brought forward here, are they based on that study which was commissioned last year?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well the study reflected input from a variety of sectors. There were a number of public briefs, and while your government is not required, of course, to implement the recommendations of any study that it commission, in fact, in this particular case, many of the recommendations that were brought forward by the author of that study did form the foundation for significant reforms that this government is implementing.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Minister, there's one other issue I would like to raise on the so-called reforms, and that has to do with those individuals living at home – the reduction in the amount that they will receive, living at home, as opposed to living out in another individual's home. Can you give the rationale for penalizing families, and many of them are low income people, who will have a son or a daughter living at home unemployed at the present time, can you explain the rationale for – in many cases, I suppose – forcing them out of the home, and possibly forcing them to another province. Can you explain why you are doing that?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Chairman, the majority of people that we're talking about here are single people, employable people that are on welfare for a shorter period of time. And there's some consideration that needs to be given to the fact that there is a certain obligation that rests on families as well to assist those that are living at home. And it is felt that the rate that we have set is adequate for those people that are living at home.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — But, for example, if there were two families living side by side in the same block and had a young, unemployed person at home, if they exchanged places and lived in the opposite person's home they would be able to get more than they would living in their own home. Is that not true?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, in fact, you're setting up a scenario where you're suggesting that someone wants to cheat the system and, of course, we don't permit that. We wouldn't allow someone to move out from their family's residence to the neighbour's residence so that they could receive more money somehow.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — It would be considered cheating the system if someone moved out of the home and moved into Regina, for example, and lived in a boarding-house? Is that what you're saying?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, that's not the scenario that you were indicating at all. You were talking about someone moving out from his residence and moving right next door to his neighbour's residence and, of course, I indicated that that is something which we would not permit.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Well, can you tell me . . . We have a scenario where it's side by side, door to door, or in the city. Can you tell me the distance that your department would enforce before you would allow it?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The distance is not the issue. It's the intent of the move, and whether or not someone, in fact, is able to live at home, or is not able to live at home. So naturally we take a look at all of the circumstances. There's a complex of factors that would naturally come into play when someone moves out of their home, and we would want to be assured, in fact, that they couldn't be living at home, and then, of course, we would consider the assistance that would be necessary.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — So are you saying that for a low-income family who has a young person living at home you may allow more than what you have announced here, if the family can't afford to keep the son or daughter at home?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Sorry. Would you repeat that again?

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Well, for example, a low-income family who has a daughter or a son who is 20 years old, living at home, and you're now planning to cut back the amount they can get. If it's a hardship on that family, will you be taking that into consideration in allowing them to maintain their present status and not cutting them back?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well evidently there are, in fact, very few cases of the kind that you're talking about, but if something like that did arise, we would look at the special circumstances of the particular case, and certainly the special needs allowance is there to cover off unique special circumstances that might arise.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Minister, in one of the points in your question and answer booklet that you have out, it applies to unemployed employables, and it says: if young people who are living in an apartment and they can't afford to live alone, you encourage, or the social worker is



to encourage them to live together. I wonder what the point in that is, Mr. Minister. Can you explain the rationale behind that?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Chairman, it would be helpful if the member opposite would provide us with the specific page of the document that he's referring to so we could make reference to that particular question.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I have it here, but my colleague from Regina Centre is just going to get it for me, and I'll leave that for a moment and come back to it.

On the issue of the family income plan, I wonder if you could tell me how many families will see an increase as a result of your changes to the family income plan?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — We're forecasting approximately 8,000 families who will benefit from FIP (family income plan) as a result of the increased benefit which is going to increase the caseload. Approximately half of those are FIP, SAP (Saskatchewan Assistance Plan) situations, so approximately 50 per cent of those would benefit from the increased FIP payments.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — So of the 8,000, 4,000 would receive an increase in FIP, but see their Saskatchewan Assistance Plan go down; is that correct?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Yes, that's been the policy for some time under both administrations.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — So there's about . . . Last night, when you were referring to it, you had mentioned that 8,000 would get an increase, and overall there are, in fact, 4,000 who will get any kind of an increase. And I think that that is important to set straight.

The Saskatchewan Income Plan, which is the program for senior citizens in this province, has been changed. And I believe you said that for singles it is being increased from 25 to \$50. Now I wonder if you could tell me exactly what percentage of the senior population — I believe there's 120,000 seniors, and of course that was something which the seniors had been asking for, for some time, as you will recall.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I think what you are telling us, if I have the numbers correct, is about 21 per cent will see some increase; 21 per cent is that correct? Or what percentage? I asked the percentage, and if you'll tell me what percentage will receive any increase, and what percentage will receive the maximum. The numbers I have here would indicate that approximately 21 per cent will get some increase, and 10 per cent will get the maximum, and that 80 per cent or 79 per cent will see no benefit from this plan at all. But I want you to confirm or deny that.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — What I will confirm for the legislature is that under your administration the seniors had asked an increase in the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan for years and years and years, and you offered them a \$5 increase over a seven-year period of time.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Answer the question; answer the question.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — That's what I'm getting to. All right? Let's put it in context; let's put it in context. You don't want the context. You don't want to remember that there were thousands of seniors in this province that were denied a substantial increase under the Saskatchewan Income Plan under your administration.

April 11, 1984

Of the approximately 21,000 low-income seniors who are eligible for the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, 60 per cent of those are going to be receiving the maximum benefit. A jump from \$25 a month to \$50 a month. You jumped them from \$20 a month a measly \$5 over a seven-year period of time. If anybody should be clapping his hands and saying finally the seniors have got what they deserve, it's you. And yet you sit there silent.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — I wonder if the minister, Mr. Chairman, could be made to answer the question as to what percentage of the seniors will see an increase. He will not tell the committee a straight answer. He gets into political rhetoric and yells and rants and carries on. But I wonder if you could just simply answer the question: what percentage of the seniors will see an increase as a result of the changes to your plan? I don't know what you're ranting and raving about, and making a fool of yourself.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, the member opposite forgets that the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan applies — Saskatchewan Income Plan applies to low-income seniors who are eligible for those benefits according to the federal government's OAS-GIS formula. Sixty per cent of those people are going to get the maximum.

Now if you want to ask whether or not seniors who are not low-income seniors should be receiving this benefit, then that's another matter altogether. If you would like to address that question, we can get into that matter.

The issue is whether or not low-income seniors are being substantially increased. And you seem to want to avoid the fact that under your administration you didn't increase them. This administration, in a short two-year period of time, has doubled the benefits to the low-income seniors.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Well I'm going to keep asking you, Mr. Minister, because I think it's fairly important for you to tell me what percentage of the seniors are going to get an increase. Can you tell me what percentage of the total population of seniors, the 120,000 get an increase — is it 20 per cent or 21 per cent? Can you tell me the percentage who will see any benefit from this plan?

I believe, and if my calculations are accurate, that 20 per cent of the seniors will get an increase and 80 per cent don't get any benefit from your government.

Now, Mr. Minister, you will know that over the past number of years, in the last term of our government, we implemented the Saskatchewan Income Plan. You didn't start it. We started the home repair program, which you cancelled when you came to government. We started the home care program, which was a program that is a landmark across Canada. And for you to try to explain, Mr. Minister, that you, somehow, are the advocate of seniors, the minister who has done nothing to offer free telephones which was one of your promises in the last election, you're not being truthful.

And I'll ask you the question again, which you refuse to answer: how many seniors are getting anything out of this change in your policy — what percentage? Now do you understand? I would like you to nod your head if you understand the question. What percentage of seniors are getting an increase?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Let's let the Assembly understand very clearly what the member opposite is trying to do. He's trying to suggest that 120,000 seniors in the province of Saskatchewan should be eligible for the Saskatchewan Income Plan and should be getting some kind of benefit and they didn't get it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well even those with big incomes, and large bank accounts, and farms, and people that have got large retirement incomes who don't need it.

We're talking about those 20,000 seniors, low-income people who need assistance. For years,

and years, and years they approached your government, almost on bended knee, pleading for an increase in the Saskatchewan Income Plan and you denied it year after year after year. One year in seven you gave them a measly \$5 increase which averages out to something like 71 cents a month. In a short two year period of time we have doubled from \$25 to \$50 a month the benefits available to those 20,000 low-income seniors, and we have instituted the home repair program. And we have, in fact, done all sorts of things for seniors that your government never dreamed of doing. So let's not attempt to paint yourself as the saviour of seniors because you failed miserably in that regard.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would answer the question of how many seniors, what percentage will get an increase from his new plan?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well we can continue to go through this exercise all afternoon, if the member opposite wants to. We're not interested, and the taxpayer isn't really interested in seeing this government subsidize those seniors that don't need assistance, those seniors that have got large retirement incomes, those seniors that have the income that is necessary for them to live daily.

We're concerned about those low-income seniors that need a supplement under the Saskatchewan Income Plan. The 121,000 seniors who live in the province of Saskatchewan don't all need a low-income supplement. The 21,000 seniors who are low income, they are the ones who need it. They are the ones who need it. That's what the taxpayer wants. They want income supplements for low-income seniors, and that is, in fact, what we have done, to double the supplement for those low-income seniors.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Well Mr. Chairman, I think it's obvious that what we were trying to establish here that the minister has done nothing for 80 per cent of the seniors in this budget has been firmly established, and that the increase that he's talking about, the maximum applies to 10 per cent of the seniors in the province. And his denial of that will not be forthcoming because the minister, as usual, refuses to answer the question.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can tell me the cost of the report or the study that was done on welfare reform in your department last year. Can you give me an estimated cost of that study?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The study was basically an internal study in the sense that department staff were the people who carried out the study. So we don't have a specific detailed financial breakdown of the costs that were incurred for that study, but we could put that information together for you, if you are interested in it.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Well if you would agree to send that to me, I have another line of questioning that I'll do later, but maybe you can get me some information. It has to do with a list of groups that you fund, Mr. Minister, and I could go through them one by one and get the amount of grant, or if you will give me a commitment that you can send those across to me, I won't bother the committee's time. But I would like it now, if I could, so that we could go over it. Otherwise, I will go one by one, and get it that way.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, we can go through it one by one, and I am prepared to do that, but we don't have a package that we can send over to you right now. We can get that together, and I'll give you my commitment that we will send it over to you when we have it prepared.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask a few questions of the Minister of Social Services. And first of all, I want to start with a request that has come into your department approximately a month ago from the town council in Green Lake, where you are moving your staff and transferring your staff from Green Lake to Meadow Lake, and the request from that community was that you leave the staff in there.

April 11, 1984

Have you made any decision on that request from the community of Green Lake?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The people that live in Green Lake will continue to live and work in Green Lake and handle the Green Lake case-load. We're not transferring the staff as you would suggest.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — You are going to leave the staff in Green Lake? They are going to administer social services out of the Green Lake offices? Is that what you're indicating?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — No, the staff that live there will continue to service the Green Lake case-load. They will be reporting to the Meadow Lake staff – to the Meadow Lake supervisor.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — But they will not be moving their residence to Meadow Lake, and they will not be working out of the office in Meadow Lake then?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Those that service Green Lake will continue to live in Green Lake. Naturally, I can't force anyone to live somewhere, but, you know, if they choose to live there . . . But, that's where they're living now, and then we expect they will continue to stay there and service the Green Lake case-load.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — They will continue to service Green Lake out of the Green Lake office that is in there at the present time? They will use the office facilities that are there? There will be no change in this?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — For client contact, they will continue to utilize the Green Lake area in terms of supervision and reporting. They will be referring to the Meadow Lake supervisor.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Well, you still didn't answer my question. You have a social services . . . The Government of Saskatchewan has an office in Green Lake. They have been maintaining that office for a number of years in serving Jans Bay, Cole Bay, Beauval, Patuanak area – not Patuanak.

Could you indicate to me whether or not you are still going to maintain that service out of the office in Green Lake?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well there's no need to have the Green Lake office open full time, so it's going to be a part time office. The staff that served the case-load in Green Lake will continue to serve the case-load in Green Lake, utilizing that office in Green Lake.

The reporting system will be changed so that they will, of course, be working with a supervisor in Meadow Lake.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay. Mr. Minister, you indicate that there's no need to utilize that office in Green Lake. Could you indicate . . . that was your words, that there's no need to utilize that office there anymore . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Full time.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Full time. Right. Okay. Could you indicate to the committee, considering the remarks that you have just made, has the case-load in the Green Lake, and the Green Lake area, that they were serving, has that dropped? Why do you say that you do not need to maintain that office on a full time basis?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The case-load has remained basically the same, but we have gained some administrative efficiencies by redeploying staff closer to the areas where they live, to La Loche and some of the other surrounding communities. So it's a matter of utilizing the staff that we have in the most effective and efficient manner possible, and still meeting all of the needs of the clients in that area.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Mr. Minister, that Green Lake office has always handled the case-loads from Beauval, Jans Bay, and Cole Bay, and you are indicating now that you have a more efficient means of doing it, and you will be serving it out of the La Loche office. This just doesn't make any sense at all. And to close down your office on a full-time basis, and just use it on a part-time basis at Green Lake, that staff is going to be working out of Meadow Lake and still has to serve the communities 60 and 70 miles north of there. But yet you indicate you are going to serve them more efficiently from La Loche which is, oh, 150 miles north of Beauval. It just doesn't make any sense for you to close that office down. I would suggest that what you are doing is moving staff out to save money, and to recover the large debt that this province has.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — No, we're not moving staff out in the fashion that you're talking about. We're moving the staff closer to where the clients are so that we can serve them better. The clients in Green Lake will continue to be served by staff out of the Green Lake office. They are not going to be served by staff from offices miles, and miles, and miles away.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — My gosh, Mr. Chairman, the minister has just got up and said you are moving the staff closer to the clients, and five minutes ago you indicated that you were moving your staff from Green Lake and they will be reporting out of Meadow Lake, and also the Beauval, Jans Bay, Cole Bay area. How can you stand up in the House and indicate that you are moving staff closer to the clients? This just doesn't make any sense.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well instead of paying two administrators, which was done previously, we are redeploying the staff and paying one administrator so that we can utilize the staff more effectively right out there at the field level where we have direct contact with clients. Now I will repeat again for the member's edification if you didn't hear it the first time. We are going to be serving the clients in the Green Lake area out of the Green Lake area office. The office doesn't need to remain open on a full-time basis because workers are going to be travelling to the outlying regions, Jans Bay for example, so that the clients from there don't have to travel in to the office area. So we can deal with the clients on more of a personal basis than was done previously.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Do you have a director of northern services in the Department of Social Services, and if you do where is that individual located?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — We have a northern region and a regional manager who lives and works out of La Ronge.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Could you give me the name of that individual?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Garth Bayne.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Mr. Minister, I want to continue on the line of questioning with your relocation of workers. You now indicate that Green Lake will be serviced out of Meadow Lake, underneath that supervisor who is in Meadow Lake. Could you indicate where that supervisor — what supervisor the Green Lake office was answering to prior to this decision to move your headquarters to Meadow Lake?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The district director in Meadow Lake is Mr. Krahenbil and the people in Green Lake will be directly under that individual, who in turn has as his supervisor Mr. Garth Bayne in La Ronge.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — So the supervisor out of Meadow Lake is the supervisor that used to be in Green Lake, and is now answering to the director in La Ronge?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — No. The supervisor in Green Lake has been redeployed to do other work because we have gained administrative efficiencies through that, and the supervisor in Meadow

April 11, 1984

Lake continues to be the supervisor in Meadow Lake.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Not answerable to Mr. Bayne in La Ronge?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Sherman Krahenbil, the district director in Meadow Lake is answerable to his supervisor who is Mr. Garth Bayne in La Ronge.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — As we work further north it gets more complicated, and I think it gets more expensive as far as the taxpayers in this province are concerned, for administering your programs.

The Green lake office no longer administers to Beauval, Jans Bay, and Cole Bay. Am I right on this?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Nothing has changed as far as staffing is concerned. The reporting relationships are what have changed. So if your concern is that the clients are somehow not going to be served, and their needs are not going to be met – in fact, we are able to do it better now, because of the redeployment of staff, than we did previously. So I can give the member the commitment that all of the needs of the social assistance clients in that area are being met just as adequately – and we believe better – under this new arrangement than previously.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Well we won't find that out until three, four months down the road.

The question that I asked you was: who is serving Beauval, Jans Bay, and Cole Bay? Are they being served out of the Green Lake office or the Meadow Lake office? Or are they being served out of another office?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, in fact, for the member opposite, the clients in the communities that you refer to will be served out of both areas, depending upon need. A good example of the kind of benefit which is now available for the clients in the North that previously was not there – and this is a benefit that is coming as a result of our reorganization – is Mr. Chris Broten, one of our department staff there, has now been able to develop a child care program that previously was not able to be developed. So there's a positive, tangible example of something which is being done for the people in the Green Lake area that previously was not there.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Well I'm finding it very hard to get any straight answers out of the minister. The question that I asked you was: are the communities of Beauval, Cole Bay, and Jans Bay being serviced out of the Green Lake office, or the Meadow Lake office, or some other office in northern Saskatchewan? That was the question I was asking you.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — They will be served basically no different in terms of delivery of services or quality of services. They may be served from Green Lake or from meadow Lake, depending upon the particular circumstances that you're talking about. For example, Mr. Broten, as I indicated, has developed this child care program out of the Green Lake office for the clients in that area.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay. So what you're indicating is that some of your program s—child care, you singled out child care. Or we could talk about regular SAP programs. Or I believe that you have psychiatric services under your jurisdiction too. But some of these services could come out of the Green Lake office and some could come out of the Meadow Lake office to serve Beauval and Cole Bay and Jans Bay communities.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The services are provided by a worker who goes to the community . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well it depends upon where the needs are. Normally, from the Green Lake area. Okay, in individual circumstances, unique circumstances, the situation may change. We're talking about purely an administrative change that is not impacting upon the delivery of actual service to clients. In fact, because we are now able to go out to the communities better

than we were previously, the quality of service is, in fact, increasing.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — My final question on that then is, Mr. Minister, you indicate that all the services for Jans Bay, Beauval, and Cole Bay are still coming out of the same social workers from the Green Lake-Beauval area. My question is this, right to the point. No services to them few communities is coming out of Buffalo Narrows office. Am I right in saying that there is no services being administered to the communities of Beauval, Cole Bay and Jans Bay out of the Beauval or the Buffalo Narrows office?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, if the client is closer to Buffalo, then we would want to provide the services wherever we could, closest to the client.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — You're getting more confused all the time. You're indicating that a client who lives in Jans Bay, who may be closer to Green Lake or may not be closer to Green Lake, and how do you expect the folks up there to know where to go for services? Have you got a map that indicates that there's 100 miles between Buffalo Narrows and Cole Bay? Or it's 98 miles between Meadow Lake and Cole Bay? Are you sure that you're not providing some of these services to them communities from the office in Buffalo Narrows?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The manner in which clients are dealt with, in which they are communicated with, in which services are delivered, has not changed. You don't seem to appreciate that or understand that. That hasn't changed. The reporting relationships, the administrative structure, the reporting relationships, is in fact where the change has taken place. It's taken place at an administrative level, not at a service delivery level at all. There's no change in that regard whatsoever.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — All personnel that worked for the Department of Social Services, all social workers, regarding if they're delivering SAP or if they're delivering child care, or whatever it is, they all have a certain jurisdiction. They know that if there is a problem at a certain community, that is in their area. Is this not right? Has that changed?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — No, there's no change in that regard.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — It's pretty simple, then. All the services that the citizens of Beauval, Cole Bay and Jans Bay, that they have been getting for the last four or five years, they will remain to get that. They will be getting the same services from the same workers from the same offices. Right?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, the pattern of the delivery of services is exactly the same. You know, workers change from time to time, so we can't guarantee the same individual worker. All right? But the pattern of delivery is, in fact, exactly the same, and the workers that have been delivering the services up until now will continue to deliver the services. If they happen to retire or quit and take some other employment, naturally they're not going to be the ones delivering the services. But the pattern of delivery of service is identical.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay. We all know that if a supervisor retires out of a Green Lake office, he's going to be replaced by some other supervisor in that same office. When a member of the legislature retires, you get a new member of the legislature; he comes to the same Legislative Assembly. What I'm trying to get at is that I want to know if any of the services that are under your jurisdiction are going to be administered by any of your staff to the communities of Beauval, Cole Bay, and Jans Bay from the Buffalo Narrows office.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, whoever was serving the clients before, and wherever they were serving them from, that is going to continue. The only difference is that, in terms of that worker reporting, the administrative structure has changed. So that's very simple. We can continue to go over this ground over and over and over, if you want to; I will continue to give you the same

answers. The pattern of delivery of service has not changed at all.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay, you're indicating that there has been no change. Are you indicating that there will be no change, that there will be no services rendered out to them three communities from the Buffalo Narrows office? It's the same now as it has been, and you're indicating it will remain the same?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, I can't forecast what the contingencies in the future are going to be, but for now we don't anticipate any kinds of significant changes at all. We're naturally reviewing the situation; that's part of the responsibility of workers on an ongoing basis, to consider whether or not the delivery system is the best possible system, and whether or not needs are being met appropriately. And we will continue to do that and monitor the situation.

But as I indicated before, and I will reiterate again, hopefully for the last time, the pattern of service delivery has not changed. It remains the same.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay, I'll leave that. You say the pattern is the same. You are indicating to the House that no services to the communities of Beauval, Cole Bay, and Jans Bay will be coming out of any office except the Green Lake office and the Meadow Lake office. And I will leave that. Do you agree with that? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You don't agree with that?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — What you're doing is . . . You're saying that there can never be a situation where it would be appropriate for a certain kind of a service to be delivered from some other office. And maybe in the future it will be appropriate for some particular kind of service, for example, the establishment of an NGO maybe or something like this, to be delivered from another office. I can't forecast that. What you can tell your constituents is that the pattern of service delivery will continue on as previously.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — I want to move up into the Stony Rapids and Uranium City area. You have made a decision to move all your staff out of the community of Uranium City, and the decision that you have made is one to move the staff to La Ronge and service that Uranium City-Stony Rapids area, Camsell Portage, out of La Ronge.

The folks up in Uranium City were hoping that this government would maintain the services in Uranium City to try and keep that community viable. And every time that they lose a department or lose any civil servants, it just puts another nail in the coffin of the community of Uranium city and that area.

I question your wisdom on moving your staff to La Ronge, which is 400 air miles south of Camsell Portage. And you are going to service that large area, and an isolated area, every two weeks. You're going to send a worker in there every two weeks. I question that move. I wonder if I could get your comments on transferring your staff to La Ronge, and the service that you are going to be rendering up there on a two-weeks basis.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, I'm sure the member opposite is concerned that the Department of Social Services provide adequate services to people as efficiently as possible. I think we would all agree that that is a legitimate objective of all departments of government, and that is what we want to do.

What, in fact, was the situation in Uranium City was that there are 250 people in Uranium City. We had a case-load, a social services case-load, of only 60 cases, including family services and SAP (Saskatchewan Assistance Plan) – only 600 cases. It simply isn't justifiable for the Department of Social Services to maintain an office in northern communities like that that have only 60 cases, when they can be served just as adequately by a worker who makes regular visits to the community. And that is, in fact, what will be happening. A worker will be making regular visits to the community to ensure that the provision of social services carries on.



**MR. THOMPSON:** — You talked about 60 cases in Uranium City. I wonder if your case-load, the number of 60 and the case-load you have just given me out of Uranium City, does that include the communities of Camsell Portage, Stony Rapids, and Fond-du-Lac – Black Lake to a lesser extent?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Yes, that is correct. It includes the Athabasca basin.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — And could you indicate whether the 60 case-load you have in there, the 60 cases, are they permanent recipients who get a monthly cheque every month from your department?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — 45 of the cases are social assistance plan cases. We aren't able to provide you right now with the categorization of how those 45 break down, how many of them are permanent, and how many may be temporary, but we could get you that information if you desire it.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay. To get off that, I just think that it would have been better to take a look at a different area up there. If you are going to move your service centre, if the government has any plans to make another community, other than Uranium City, a service centre, I think you should have taken a look at another community up there rather than moving them out to La Ronge because you most certainly are going to be acting on emergencies. Is this not right?

And that's right . . . You indicate that you are going to be acting on emergencies, and when you have to charter an aircraft out of La Ronge to handle an emergency, and emergencies come up, the only way you can get up there is by aircraft, and you can't go up there on a chartered aircraft when you are dealing with an emergency because it just doesn't coincide. And I would suggest that it's going to cost the taxpayers a lot of money to service that area. And I just don't see how your department, which is a department that prides itself (it always has), in counselling recipients, I just don't see how you can provide that counselling service to the individuals up there, and also the emergency cases, plus the cases that you are dealing with on a day-to-day basis. I just think that there's going to be little or no counselling, and it's going to cost a lot of money to administer that area out of La Ronge.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well surely the member opposite is not suggesting that with a meagre 60 cases that an office be maintained in the Uranium City area. In fact, we are going to be servicing that community in the same way that we service other communities. Emergency services will be available, as they always have been, in the northern communities. An agent is appointed in the area to assist with an emergency that may develop on the spot if there is a worker that is not present. So the community will be serviced as all other northern communities that fall into that category are going to be serviced.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Could you indicate what the average case-load is of a social worker in the province of Saskatchewan?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The case-load figures are as follows: for child protection, it's 30 cases per worker; for child care, it's 40 cases per worker; for adoption, it's 30 cases per worker; for young offenders, 30 cases per worker; and for SAP, it's in the order of 170 to 200 per worker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Would you not agree, Mr. Minister, that the case-load in a situation like Uranium City, where they are isolated and they have to fly 120 miles to get to Stony Rapids or 150 miles to get to Black Lake, that there is quite a difference in the type of a case-load that a worker would have in that type of a situation, rather than a social worker who is delivering SAP in the city of Regina, or the community of Meadow Lake?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Absolutely. That's why there are only 65 cases in Uranium City that we will be servicing on a weekly basis, or a bi-weekly basis, as we fly in to the service. Certainly

April 11, 1984

Uranium City is altogether different than Regina. The case-load there is much smaller, but it is a case-load which does not justify having an office in Uranium City.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — The figures you are giving me – the SAP workers, the court workers, the family services workers – do they specialize just in the one area, or do they cover all aspects of that in Saskatchewan?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well in the urban areas, of course, case work is specialized. In the rural areas, there is more of a general approach to handling the case-load, naturally.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Would you not agree that that same approach would be used in the Uranium City area?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well certainly. That's always been the case.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — You seem to insinuate that when I suggested . . . or your words were that I'm not suggesting that we should have a social worker on a permanent basis up in that area to serve 60 cases. And I want to indicate to you, Mr. Minister, that that 60 cases up there are not all SAP, and they're not all child care, and they're not all court workers.

So you're not going to be sending all these workers in. But I would suggest that on a full-time basis. And I would suggest, also, where the counselling and the emergency-type situations, and the distance between La Ronge and Uranium City and Camsell Portage and Stony Rapids, that it would be far better off – you'd have a far better service to leave . . . You don't have to have your huge office in Uranium City, but you could have a permanent worker there – an office and a permanent worker. You have the houses there. You have everything there to facilitate the worker. But I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that you should have a worker in there at all times, especially when you consider the isolation that exists up in them far northern communities.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well I guess we just disagree on the need to have a full-time, or a number of full-time workers in a community where the case-load is 60, which is a very small number of cases. And I think we simply cannot justify having full-time workers living in a community. The community will be served quite adequately, and it has in the past; it will continue to be served in the future.

And I can give the member the assurance that we monitor regularly whether or not the needs are being adequately met, and we will continue to do so. So certainly the people in Uranium City are going to be served adequately. We don't anticipate problems. Should problems arise, we naturally will look after them.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Well getting off that subject, I just want to close by saying that I think that you're making a big mistake. In a lot of areas in southern Saskatchewan where there's no isolation, you have social workers with case-loads as low as 32, as you indicated.

Up in that region, which is vast, isolated, and 150 miles difference between Camsell Portage and Black Lake, you are indicating that they will be served sufficiently with a social worker coming out of La Ronge every two weeks.

I just want to make that very clear here today, that I think that that's a wrong decision. I think that you are neglecting your responsibilities to the citizens who live up in that region. And I think that time will tell that not only are you not going to provide the proper services to them communities, emergency or otherwise, but it's going to cost the taxpayers of this province a lot of money.

I want to now turn to another issue that has come up here last night. And I want to say that I had three phone calls already this morning from northern Saskatchewan. And I want to indicate to

the House that a lot of citizens in northern Saskatchewan, and a lot of communities in northern Saskatchewan, where on any given night or day in the week or month there will be a bingo game taking place . . . As you indicated in the House last night that any individual who has a winning of \$1,000 or more, that will be deducted.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Two hundred or more, Fred.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Two hundred or more?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — It used to be 1,000.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Two hundred dollars or more – that that will be deducted from their social services income from your department.

I want to indicate also that you also said that you were going to monitor this. My first question to you is: how are you going to monitor the bingo winnings in northern Saskatchewan? And I know you're going to get up and say that everybody's honest when they make their declarations, and that they will indicate to you that they had a winning of \$200 or more.

I want to also ask you to comment on the fact that, assuming that a 16-year-old boy or girl, who is going to high school, staying at home under their parents, and they're on assistance, and they go out and they win a bingo jackpot, or whatever you want to call it, or win at bingo, and their winnings are over \$200, is this also going to be deducted from the mother and father's welfare assistance?

I'd like you to comment on my remarks.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I indicated to the House last night, and I will reiterate this afternoon, first of all the member was concerned about monitoring. Well, he indicated, in fact, that I would say that people are honest, and that we trust them. That is, in fact, the case. By and large, people are trustworthy. They are honest. They declare their income.

We find that to be the case right across Saskatchewan, whether it's income derived from one source, whether it's income derived from gifts, whether it's income derived from unemployment insurance. It doesn't make any difference where the income comes from. We trust people. They sign that declaration. We accept that. The vast majority of people are honest, trustworthy folks.

The issue is not one of whether or not someone who is on welfare should be able to go out and play bingo. Of course they should be able to. And, indeed, they do. And we think that that's all right, if they want to do that.

The issue is whether or not the taxpayers' dollar – your dollar and my dollar – should be funding people who want to go out and make money through lotteries, through gambling. And I don't think that's what the people of Saskatchewan want their welfare tax dollar to be used for.

The regulations at present permit someone in the situation that you are referring to, to win \$200 this week on bingo, and another \$200 two weeks later on bingo, and another \$200 another month later on bingo. He could do that all year long.

The former regulations allowed him to keep \$1,000. And I don't think the taxpayers of the province, and I don't think, if you were honest with yourself, that you would want a situation where people on welfare can earn substantial amounts of money through gambling winnings, using the taxpayers' dollar.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay. Mr. Minister, you have just stood up in this House and indicated that the new regulations permit recipients to make \$200 each week of the year. Is this what

you're saying?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — What I'm saying is that, previously, if they had bingo earnings of \$1,000 this week, and then two weeks later they won a lottery ticket worth \$1,000, they could keep that, and it wouldn't be deducted — \$2,000 of income. And I don't think the taxpayers are too excited about seeing that happen in the province of Saskatchewan. What they can keep now is \$200.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — You got up in the House just prior to your last statement, and indicated that they could make 200 one week, 200 the second week, and 200 the third week, under your regulations. You now stand up and say that the regulations under the former NDP government was \$2,000 a month. You just said \$2,000. And you said \$200 for the first week, \$200 the second week, and you were just going on. Could you get up and straighten this out, for the folks out in the country?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, the member opposite wasn't listening carefully, so I'll repeat it. Listen carefully. Under your regulations, under your regulations, a welfare recipient could have cashed in a winning lottery ticket for \$1,000 this week and kept it all. Next week, he could have won \$1,000 at a bingo, and kept it all. That's \$2,000 in two weeks — and his welfare cheque wouldn't have been reduced at all. He could have kept the whole thing. The taxpayer, in other words, is subsidizing his gambling earnings, \$2,000 worth. Under our regulations, \$200 this week, \$200 the next week, substantially less. It doesn't stop the person from involving themselves in bingo socialization, if that's what they want; but, certainly it does not permit a situation where the taxpayers' dollar is being used to subsidize someone who is now able to earn substantial amounts of money through gambling winnings. The taxpayer doesn't want that.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay. Under your new regulations, an individual could possibly make \$200 in lottery winnings, or, as you say, gambling — you say gambling; you insinuate that they're winnings from gambling. That could be playing blackjack, it could be playing whatever they want. But you just got up in the House and said that they now can make \$200 for every week of the year. Is that right? Without having any deduction?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, the member opposite is drawing a long bow to suggest that someone is going to be winning \$200 every week of the year. I mean, we know that isn't the case. What is the case is that the welfare system is designed to meet the basic needs of people, and if they derive substantial additional income over and above their basic needs, then the taxpayers shouldn't be called upon to meet their basic needs.

Now, if someone is able to win \$1,000 this week and a few hundred dollars again a few weeks later and then \$1,000 again later, the taxpayer shouldn't be called upon to meet his basic needs when he now has enough money through his gambling earnings — whether it be a lottery ticket or blackjack or whether it be bingo on a Friday night — the taxpayer shouldn't be called upon to meet his basic needs.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Well I think that you're going to have to give us a straight answer, because I want to be able to go back to my constituents who want to know just what the rules are, what they're playing here. They want to know what the rules are, and I think you have an obligation to the taxpayers of this province and anybody that's put into a position where they have to rely on assistance, to know what the rules they're playing by.

You have stood up in this House today and you have said, under the NDP regulations, that they could win \$1,000 one week, \$1,000 the next week. So you're indicating, if their luck held out, they could win \$52,000 a year and then still draw welfare. "Under your regulations" — that's what you said. That's what you said. You stopped at two, but you may as well continue.

You say under your regulations — and I would just like to get this straightened out, so that I

know the rules, so that my constituents will also know what the rules are. You indicate your rules is that they can win \$200 this week, \$200 a second a week – as you said — \$200 a third week, and on and on and on. Is this correct, or is it incorrect? How many dollars can they earn – and I use your words – through gambling in a month, and how many dollars in a year?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — You go back and tell your constituents that the exemption for lotteries, for gambling, is \$200. And then you go back and tell your constituents that the exemption under the NDP was \$1,000. So that under the NDP, the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan would be called upon to dramatically subsidize people that may have been lucky to have large earnings through gambling. I don't think the taxpayer would like to hear that, and I doubt very much if you'll tell them that.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm going to ask the question here, because I think that the taxpayers of this province have a right to know what the rules are. You get up, and it's just a blanket coverage. You will not give any answers. I'm going to ask the question once more. How many dollars – and I'm going to use your words – from gambling can a recipient win without being deducted in one month under your government, and also in a year under your new rules?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — I just indicated to the member opposite, you go tell your constituents exactly what I've been saying. If you want to go over the ground again, go over it again. Two hundred dollars is, in fact, what is available for them to keep from lottery or gambling winnings. Okay? You go ahead and tell them that. Under your administration, it was 1,000.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — I'm just wondering if the Minister of Social Services . . . I just wonder what it was like in your caucus when you were consulting with all your caucus members on this policy that you're putting forth here today, trying to put forth. I'd like to see some of your MLAs who were sitting in your caucus when you brought that proposal forward to them. I just wonder how many of them got up and said, "Yes, this is a good idea, but we would like to know what the rules are." You indicate \$200. Is it \$200 per month?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well the regulation has been changed from \$1,000 under your administration to \$200. Okay. The rules haven't changed otherwise. \$1,000 to \$200.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Your caucus must have had a rough time with you when you were bringing that forward to get approval from your caucus. \$200. All I'm asking you is: is it \$200 per month or \$200 per year. What are you saying? You get up there and you say go out, that I should go out and tell my constituents that it has changed from \$1,000 to \$20. We know that it was \$1000 per month under our regulations. What does yours indicate? Is it \$200 per month, for . . . what is your 200.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well as I indicated to the member opposite the only change is from \$1,000 to \$200. That's the only change.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Okay. Then it's from \$1,000 a month to \$200 a month. Is that right?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — I don't know what you were referring to when you said \$1,000 a month as opposed to \$200 a month. Okay. What I'm saying is that your regulations said \$1,000. Ours say \$200. Okay.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm going to leave it at that. I've had it confirmed by the Minister of Finance that it is \$200 a month. The Minister of Social Services will not stand up in this House and indicate that, and I think for a good reason. But I will leave it at that because I trust the Minister of Finance when he indicates that it is \$200 per month. And I'll leave it at that.

My next question to you, Mr. Minister, is: could you indicate how your monitoring committee is going to work either in northern Saskatchewan or in the province. I know you indicated last night

in questioning that you were going to have a certain squad that would go around and check the bingos out, and I just indicate that in northern Saskatchewan the communities, some of them, are 100 or 200 miles apart. Number one: are you going to have a monitoring squad; and number two: just how is that monitoring squad going to operate. I know it's quite simple in southern Saskatchewan where you have bingo palaces and most of the bingos are carried on in one large hall. It doesn't happen up in northern Saskatchewan where all small communities hold bingos. So could you indicate how that's going to operate?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well the department, as far as applying the regulations to social assistance clients, is operating now different now than it did under your administration. And I don't believe that you had committees that were travelling around monitoring bingo halls. I can't think of anything more ludicrous. This government doesn't have committees going around monitoring bingo halls. What this government does have is a more productive and efficient welfare system than was ever in place previously.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm just going to leave that and make a few comments. I think that . . . I find the minister very evasive and I'm just wondering if you operate the same way in caucus when you bring these new proposals before your members.

I want to say that last night in this House you indicated that you would be monitoring the bingo halls in this province, and *Hansard* will bear that out that you are going to have a squad, or a fraud squad, as you indicated. And I just say that I think that your new regulations and the bingo restrictions that you're putting on the social recipients of this province, plus the fact that any family who has, for the last 15, 16 years, put their family allowances into savings to pay for the university education for their children, and all of a sudden come on tough times and have to go on welfare, and have to return \$2,000 of that back to your department. I think that the electorate of this province will make their decision, and you won't be around here in another two years to carry out the type of policies that you are bringing forth in this province. Reform? You call it reform. I tell you, you are just adding insult to injury, and you will have to answer to the electorate of this province.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Just for the member's information, one of the recommendations in the study which was conducted of the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, the welfare reform study carried out by Mr. Adams, special adviser to the minister, made the recommendation that, in fact, all — all — lottery and gambling gains should be considered as income, without any exemption whatsoever, based on the principle that the taxpayer should not be subsidizing people to earn income by games of chance. We didn't accept that. We think that there is some means whereby, some room to move there for the welfare client.

As it relates to remarks made by myself last night in the legislature, concerning the accountability mechanisms that the Department of Social Services has, those continue on as they did under the former administration. Unfortunately, your government did not spend enough money on the investigations and on the pre-auditing of clients, and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money was lost, consequently.

We believe that it is more important to save literally millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money by, in fact, increasing our fraud and investigation units. That has nothing to do with those people who play bingo, and if you read the *Hansard* record of last night, you will see that that's the case.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Just a closing remark on that, Mr. Minister. When we go back to your new policy on bingos and winning, if you go out and you win \$1,000 on bingo or if I go out and win \$1,000 on bingo, or \$2,000, we don't declare that and pay income tax on it. It's another case of the rich getting rich and the poor getting poorer, and you are stepping on the poor when they are down. You know full well that any member over there goes out tonight and plays bingo and makes \$1,000, that he doesn't put that on his income and he doesn't pay income tax on it. And that's right. And the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake full well knows that. So I say that

your new policy is just another examples of this government stepping on the poor people of this province.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Once again the member opposite demonstrates why your government is in opposition right now — your former government now in opposition. The issue is one of need when it comes to welfare. The issue is one of need, and whether or not the taxpayer should be required to meet the needs of people that have fallen upon difficult personal circumstances. And we would agree that society, through government, has an obligation to meet the needs of those people that have fallen upon difficult times.

Society does not have an obligation, by using the taxpayers dollar, to subsidize those people to earn money through games of chance, and keep it. The taxpayer doesn't agree with that. The taxpayers says yes, those people that require assistance, give them assistance. Anything above their basic needs that they get from any source should be considered as income. That's the basic principle that this government is operating on. And I think we are right in line with the sentiment of society in that regard.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't know how long this debate's going to go on. But I want to indicate you have just stood up in this House and said that the policies that we had has put us in this position. We are in opposition. I want to tell you that the policies that you are espousing here tonight are the same policies that your government put forward 50 years ago, and then you weren't the government for 50 years.

You are jumping on the backs of the poor people. When individuals have saved their money for the schooling of their children, if they have over \$3,000, you're going to take it away from them. If they go out and win at bingo, you're going to take that away from them. But if your children - . . . If you put your family allowance away for your children to go to university when they become 17-18 years of age and you've got \$5,000, that remains there and goes towards their education. Somebody who has come upon bad times and has to rely on assistance may have to take \$2,000 out of that account. If you go out and win a \$1,000 bingo, you don't declare that on your income tax, and I don't. But if somebody who is on assistance, they have to declare that.

And you have indicated just now that social assistance is something that is provided for the basic needs of somebody who has fallen on hard times. You are saying that anything above and beyond the basic needs to survive, you have to turn that back to your department. And I say that that is a bad, bad move.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well I simply suggest that the member opposite go and talk to the taxpayers out there and ask them what they want their welfare system to do. I suspect that what you will hear them say is they want their welfare system to meet the basic needs of people that have fallen on difficult times. And they don't want the welfare system to do any more than that. The basic needs of people is what they want met, and that's what we're meeting. Now if you want to continue to use the time of the Assembly — I think we've spent an hour now talking about bingos. If you want to continue to do that, we'll continue to do that. That's fine.

**MR. YEW:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the minister for some welfare statistics. I'd like to ask the minister what the case-load for welfare recipients was in northern Saskatchewan for April of 1982 and for April of 1984.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — We don't have the '82 or '83 figures here. We can get them. We have the '84 figures here if you wish them.

**MR. YEW:** — I'd like to have the 1984 figures then, Mr. Minister.

April 11, 1984

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The northern Saskatchewan region number of cases was 2,020. The average assistance per case was \$419.

**MR. YEW:** — Can the minister provide the total beneficiaries for 1984?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — No. We don't have the breakdown of total recipients in the North for 1984. We can get that information for you though from our staff records.

**MR. YEW:** — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I have the stats for 1982, April of 1982. The total case-load as of April 1982 was 1,303. The employment stats for April 1984, according to your figures and according to figures I have on the statistics, total 2,020. That's an increase of some 60 per cent, Mr. Minister. The total number of beneficiaries in northern Saskatchewan as of April 1982 is 3,924. Now I'm sure there is a significant increase in terms of total beneficiaries for April of 1984, as there is a tremendous increase of 60 per cent in the total case-load.

Now, I want to go on with respect to the average assistance in northern Saskatchewan. You quoted a figure of \$419, and I want to ask the minister what the average assistance is in southern areas like, say, Prince Albert.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, the member opposite, if he has the monthly bulletin, he knows what that is. I will quote the figure for him if he doesn't wish to look at it himself.

It was \$516 average assistance in Prince Albert.

**MR. YEW:** — And I perhaps can add to that, Mr. Minister, that in other areas, it's as high as 550.

I ask you these questions, Mr. Minister, for the record — for the record — so that people in this province, through these proceedings, can begin to analyse and assess the statistical information that we have on your government's performance with respect to your government's policy, your government's programs, your government's philosophy.

In terms of the average assistance, Mr. Minister, I want to raise an issue of concern with respect to that average assistance, as I understand it, and I want to talk a bit about the isolation faced by families living in northern Saskatchewan, where they have to cover vast distances. Many of the communities are isolated. They're not accessible by road. Tremendous high cost of living. Their power rates are significantly different than ours in Regina, in the southern areas, and their heating costs are tremendously high, as compared to the South. The shelter and clothing rates are significantly different. I'm sure that the minister will agree with me on that point.

And I wondered why the difference between the average assistance provided to families in northern Saskatchewan, as it compares to the South, the difference of 419 as opposed to 516 and 550 to southern communities which are much better off in terms of the cost of living and in terms of the fact that they're not as isolated as the communities in northern Saskatchewan.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well perhaps for the edification of the member opposite I should draw your attention to page 3 of the statistical bulletin of the department. You will note there that the average assistance in the Moose Jaw region is, in fact, lower than it is in northern Saskatchewan. And in a number of regions, for example, the Swift Current region and the new Moose Jaw local region, and the Yorkton region, there isn't all that much difference between northern Saskatchewan.

However, I will grant you that there are some unique differences in northern Saskatchewan. The reason why the average case-load assistance is at \$419 in northern Saskatchewan is twofold: first of all, a large number of clients in northern Saskatchewan are able to take advantage of the low income Sask Housing houses which are available to people in northern Saskatchewan.



And secondly, there are far more singles on the case-load in northern Saskatchewan, proportionately, than you might see elsewhere and, of course, the payments to singles are always lower than they are to families. So that's naturally going to impact upon the overall picture as far as assistance per case. I think that provides the justification for the \$419 figure.

**MR. YEW:** — The minister, and many of his colleagues, talk about their economic policies, their training and education policies. And I want to ask the minister specifically what he meant by training spaces, or what his colleague meant by training spaces in terms of the northern people, for people in the northern administration district. Just what do you envisage as having training spaces for the people in northern Saskatchewan?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — We anticipate that approximately 300 jobs will be created for welfare recipients in the northern regions. Last year there was a significant number of jobs, in fact, a comparable number of jobs, created in northern Saskatchewan through our job creation program for welfare clients, and we anticipate the same thing happening in northern Saskatchewan. I'll be able to comment on the training aspect for you in a moment.

**MR. YEW:** — Mr. Minister, in terms of the 300 potential jobs envisaged by your administration, what is the duration of those jobs? My first question is: what is the length of those jobs? And what obligation does the employer have to retain those jobs on a permanent basis?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — The job creation program is a 26-week job creation program, and we believe it is very important to provide work experiences for those people that are on welfare rather than just continuing to consign them to the welfare rolls, and never have the opportunity to engage in any kind of a work experience, earn a salary, be productive in society, contribute to the well-being of a local community.

So the jobs themselves are a 26-week job. The employer is not obligated. We can't force any employer in any sector of society to hire someone for a period of time beyond the normal length of a program like this. We have found that in some instances small businesses have, in fact, carried on the welfare employee, and we would encourage that, naturally.

**MR. YEW:** — So I understand then, Mr. Minister, that these jobs are short-term rather than long-term — a band-aid approach to the long-term solution, the long-term solution to major economic development strategies for northern Saskatchewan, which your Minister for Northern Saskatchewan has assured people in the North, in July the 16th memo in 1982. Would the minister comment on that?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, I can comment most specifically on what my department is doing for social assistance clients, which was never done previously. And we certainly are meeting the needs of welfare clients by providing them with productive opportunities, whether it be jobs, whether it be training — something that was not done on that magnitude before.

In terms of overall permanent job creation in the province of Saskatchewan, I think the Premier very adequately responded to a question from one of the members opposite during question period the other day; and he talked about the various long-term, permanent job creation activities which are taking place in the province of Saskatchewan.

And if you want to talk to the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, or the minister responsible for Parks and Renewable Resources, or the minister responsible for Energy, then I'm sure that they can fill you in, and delineate all sorts of things which are being done to create jobs in the province of Saskatchewan.

My particular responsibility are those people that are on the welfare rolls. We need to provide them with productive opportunities, and surely the member opposite is not suggesting that we

April 11, 1984

don't provide them with productive opportunities. That is what needs to be done. Surely you don't want to continue to consign them to the welfare rolls, without any opportunity to be involved in a productive experience.

**MR. YEW:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I certainly agree that there has to be option and opportunity for the people that are on social assistance, those people that are employable – the unemployed employables – in northern Saskatchewan, and throughout this province.

I can assure you, Mr. Minister, that it's not a good feeling to receive a welfare cheque when you're, in fact, employable. I have drawn social assistance in the past when I was just fresh out of the trap line, when a commercial fishing industry went down. I have had no other recourse but to draw social assistance, and I can assure the minister that it's not a very good feeling to draw social assistance. It's degrading to a person that is able to work, to a person that is looking for work, to a person that wants to work.

In terms of your economic policies, in terms of your training policies, we have yet to see concrete evidence and concrete initiatives on the part of your government.

You mentioned job creation programs now, Mr. Minister. And I took it that the minister is saying that your administration is initiating these job creation programs for the first time in this province. If my memory serves me correct, there have been job creation programs in the past, there have been. Does the minister dispute that? Is the minister trying to tell this Assembly and the people of this province that you have come up with a new innovative program?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, the member opposite should be aware that, in years previous, nothing of the magnitude that we are providing for social assistance clients was provided in terms of productive opportunities. Nothing even comes close in comparison to the magnitude that we are providing last year and that we are providing this year, in terms of an expansion, in terms of training positions.

**MR. YEW:** — Well, I'm sure the minister agrees then, that there have been other innovative programs, band-aid programs, referred to as job creation programs. But certainly the minister will agree, as well, that those are not long-term solutions to the high unemployment that is faced in this province, and particularly faced by Northerners.

Your administration, your government, is prepared to give tax and royalty holidays to big oil companies, Mr. Minister, Your government is prepared to put this province in a deficit of \$829 million – which you have. This is a first for this province since it became a province in 1905. On that deficit, Mr. Minister, we're paying in the tune of \$100 million. The taxpayers of this province are burdened with huge interest payments totalling somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$100 million a year.

Another point, Mr. Speaker: huge deficits cause higher interest payments. The quality of services and education programs, etc., deteriorate. They are costing the people of this province, the taxpayers, a lot of money for your huge deficit. And I recall, as well, in your budget, that you looked after your cabinet. You certainly looked after your cabinet. You gave yourselves a 57 per cent increase for your loaded, increased cabinet of 25, as compared to the 19 of the former administration.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Twenty-one.

**MR. YEW:** — Twenty-five. Don't forget you have a minister of hail-stones over there. And then you increased the legislative secretaries just to keep your back-benchers occupied, and that's costing the taxpayers of this province millions of dollars. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if your conscience – if you do have a conscience.

We look at the North where we have 95 per cent unemployment. Welfare rates are up 60 per cent. You cut back on the economic development funding for third parties and local organizations, 85 per cent cut on the economic development branch itself. In fact, economic development is non-existent in northern Saskatchewan. You dismantled DNS without any consultation, without any input or public participation by northern communities, by northern leadership . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order, order, order! The question before the committee is social services estimates. The member from Cumberland seems to be getting quite a ways away from the business before the committee, and I would ask him to get back onto the estimates for social services.

**MR. YEW:** — My point, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, is this: where policies and your philosophy . . . your government's policies and philosophies is not doing anything for the unemployed in northern Saskatchewan and in this province — the disadvantaged, the minority groups, the nature groups, and particularly people in northern Saskatchewan.

I want to turn for a moment, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Speaker. I want to turn for a moment to the area of day care. I want to ask the minister if, in fact, he has a copy of the report, the day care report that was conducted by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well I think, Mr. Chairman, that I should respond to a few of the comments that the member opposite made about the compassionate government. Let's talk about a compassionate government, and compare whether or not the estimates in the Department of Social Services — see how those stack up against what the former government did in northern Saskatchewan.

The former government's approach to northern Saskatchewan was big bureaucracy — the DNS. Everybody knows that. Everybody knows that. Solve the social service problems, solve the welfare problems in northern Saskatchewan. How? By hiring more bureaucrats, by building big buildings to house bureaucrats. You know that that's not the solution to welfare in northern Saskatchewan. It never was, and it never will be, and that's why the people of Saskatchewan are very, very satisfied, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, that bureaucracy run amok, is no longer a bureaucracy. It's gone, buried, dead.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — What about the estimates in the Department of Social Services in terms of compassion and caring for people? Well, what about grants to seniors? Grants to seniors — the increase this year, almost 13 per cent. Almost 13 per cent increase in grants to seniors.

What about the increase in the grants to the handicapped? 5 per cent? 10 per cent? No. almost 30 per cent — 27.9 per cent, 28 per cent increase in the grants to the handicapped.

What about the employment support programs in the province of Saskatchewan designed to help people find work, people that are socially or physically or mentally disadvantaged? What was the increase in the overall grants allotted to employment support programs? 12 per cent, Mr. Chairman.

And what about the increase in grants to community services. The overall moneys allotted to community services this year are increasing by 8.5 per cent.

Now the member opposite, if he had taken a close look at the Social Service estimates, he would know that this government has placed a very high priority on delivering high quality social services to the people of Saskatchewan.

April 11, 1984

With regards to the day care study that was being carried out by my Legislative Secretary, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, I have yet to receive the report from my Legislative Secretary. I expect it in the not too distant future.

**MR. YEW:** — Mr. Minister, in terms of that report re day care in this province, will that report be made public as soon as you receive it?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, that's a possibility.

**MR. YEW:** — You didn't indicate a positive yes or no, Mr. Minister. I'm just not certain what you mean by "that's a possibility". Will you make that report public?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, that's a possibility.

**MR. YEW:** — You sure have a way of evading question, Mr. Minister.

If, in fact, you will make this document public, I wonder if I can ask the minister when it becomes available how long will it be before you make it public? Can you give an approximate time? Is it May? June? November? December?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, when I make the final determination as to whether or not the report will be made public, then we will determine at that time when, in fact, it will be made public.

**MR. YEW:** — What is your position on profit day care, Mr. Minister?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, I have indicated on many occasions to the people of Saskatchewan that I am opposed to large corporate profit-making, commercial-type enterprises coming into the province of Saskatchewan and establishing themselves here. I believe that the modes of delivery in the province of Saskatchewan are too narrow, restrictive. I think that was characteristic of the former government's approach to social policy. It was narrow and restrictive. And I think that there is a legitimate argument to justify the expansion of modes of delivery. I have not received the report of my legislative secretary, as I indicated, and when I receive that report, we will take a close look at the recommendations, and we will take those recommendations into consideration when we determine what changes will be made to the day care system here in the province of Saskatchewan.

**MR. YEW:** — With respect to the question of day cares, Mr. Minister, I understand that there was a pilot project in 1982 for native day care. And I understand, as well, that there was funding allotted for this major program in excess of \$100,000. And that, further, I understand that a good number of people in the native community were looking forward to this program on native day care.

I wonder if the minister may provide information as to the whereabouts of this program, as to whether or not this minister and this government will try to enhance or encourage this type of program in the future?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, evidently, there was some kind of a committee — not a government committee — called the Saskatchewan native day care committee, which did some kind of a proposal for some kind of a pilot project. There never were funds committed for this pilot project under the former government. Under your government there never were funds committed for such a pilot project, and there haven't been any funds committed for such a pilot project under this government. Evidently the committee involved, which was looking at this thing, sort of just disbanded, so that's where the situation is today.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Minister, you gave me a commitment earlier about some grants that you'll get me for this year for all the groups that you give grants to. Can you make sure that

tomorrow when we come in you have that list on last year's grants. So we can make that comparison?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — We'll endeavour to get you that information tomorrow.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Minister, before we move on, Bob, I just would like to get a commitment from the minister that when we come back in here tomorrow, because I want the committee to know why it's taking so long is because we can't get any commitment of information or any answers. If you'll give me the commitment, we could move forward fairly quickly.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Yes. I indicated that we will get that information for you tomorrow. We're talking about the NGO grants basically. Is there a specific area? Do you want ESP, NGO, handicapped, or what? Because I don't believe that we have the seniors available, but we have all the rest that we could get you tomorrow.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Okay. If we get the commitment that when we come in here tomorrow and start the day, you have all of them except the seniors, good.

**HON. MR. ANDREW:** — Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.