

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 3, 1984

EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

LABOUR

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 20

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you had spoken of the marvellous benefits brought to this province by your administration's cheer-leading.

Mr. Minister, I want to give you some specific breakdowns.

Mr. Minister, between 19 . . . And I'm using some statistics from Statistics Canada. Mr. Minister, between 1982 and between March '82 and March '84, the employment in agriculture increased by 13 per cent.

Now you know and I know that there isn't any more workers out there and no more paycheques and no more money. Unemployed people are simply going home to the farms where it is cheaper to live and where things can always be . . . (inaudible) . . . By one more . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Nothing, except for if it weren't the Tory prosperity, they would all be working. Most of those people would be working. They are there because there is nothing for them to do.

Mr. Minister, I want to deal with those areas where there are paycheques. As I say, there were no more paycheques in agriculture than there were in '82.

Manufacturing is down by . . . Employment in manufacturing is down by 23 per cent.

The employment in construction remains virtually unchanged, which I suppose goes to show that 1982 may have been a disastrous year when they were all on strike. But they're no worse off in subsequent years, because there was no work to do anyway. And that may indeed suggest why you've had such a sparkling success in avoiding strikes — because there was no work.

Transportation, communications, other utilities: employment is down 23 per cent.

Finance . . . Sorry, trade is down 5 per cent; finance, insurance, real estate, down 1 per cent; service industry is actually up 4 per cent; and public administration is up by nearly 10 per cent. Mr. Minister, apart from service, the increases in employment have been in public administration, but more particularly in agriculture.

Mr. Minister, surely these figures would suggest to you that this province has participated in the recession and that if your government were anywhere near responsible you would admit that, and attempt to find some solution to what should be regarded even by this administration as a very serious problem.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, if we look at the overall picture of how Saskatchewan fared against the rest of Canada, then I will say that we did not participate in the recession, compared to the rest of the country. When you look at 6.2 and 6.8 per cent unemployment figures compared to the big industrial provinces like British Columbia and Ontario, and the 15.5

per cent, we didn't participate. But sure we . . . And we did have unemployment. You had unemployment in your administration — 28,000 people unemployed in April of 1982. The way you talk, it sounds as if you didn't have any unemployment, either, but you had 28,000 people unemployed.

An Hon. Member: — How many do you have?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Sure we've got more. Sure, look, we have more unemployment, but look at the work-force that we have right now — 463,000 compared to your 440,000. You look at manufacturing, the numbers reading manufacturing — it's gone up 1,000 since January of this year. Transportation's gone up 3,000 since January this year. Services have gone up 2,000 since January this year.

An Hon. Member: — Of course it has.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, certainly, but we have had the interest rate problems and . . .

An Hon. Member: — Are you prepared to take the responsibility for the destruction of all those jobs come fall?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — No, no way. We look at the unemployment percentage against the amount of the people that are in the work-force — 463,000 people — and that's why we're up to 500,000 last year. And you go over your winter months; naturally it goes down. So I don't agree with you. We can argue this all night if you want. But we are laying the base, as I've said many times this afternoon, and tonight I'll say the same thing — that our government is laying the base for long-term jobs: the oil upgrader coming; the natural gas program; Nipawin; the buildings down town; the buildings in Saskatoon; the hospitals that we're planning to build; the nursing homes that we're planning to build — and it goes on and on and on, and those jobs will be out there.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, this government isn't building anything down town. The last contribution that this government made to down-town Regina was the Cornwall Centre, which you people fought viciously, and made all manner of suggestions about what a poor project it was, what a white elephant it is — and it turned out to be a very considerable success, both in terms of revitalizing down-town Regina, and in terms of creating employment. Mr. Minister, your government hasn't done a thing for down-town Regina. You haven't built a park bench in this city. The last thing that was built in this city was done by the NDP. And, Mr. Minister, the next thing of significance that's built in this city is going to be done by the NDP, when you people call an election.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister, this province is number eight in the creation of jobs. That comes from your own documents. Does that suggest to you that this province is leading the country, that we have decided not to participate in the recession, and that you have uncovered the key to something the rest of Canada doesn't? That stands in stark contrast to the picture during the '70s, when this province did indeed lead Canada. Mr. Minister, if you're having such a huge success, how do you explain the fact that this province stands number eight in Canada in the creation of jobs?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, it depends on what month you look at, and I'm going to keep repeating it for five hours, if we have to, tonight. You look at the summer employment figures of the province of Saskatchewan. You never hit 500,000 in your work-force, ever. And you never had the number employed, ever. Ever. You never had the numbers that we have employed. We come to fall; we come through the winter — certainly, jobs are down. But the things that are starting to come now, again, in the spring, with the developments down town; our natural gas program; more jobs this year than we've had the last two years . . . We expect 550 jobs this summer, just on natural gas alone.

Nipawin — up to 1,000 again, 900; and the list goes on and on and on. And there's a number of announcements that are being made on our hospitals and nursing homes and schools. They're starting. And we'll have a look at the figures, come next August and September, again.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I am sure you will have a look at the figures, and I'm sure, Mr. Minister, the figures will show a continued economic decline.

Mr. Minister, how do you explain the fact that, apart from agriculture, there are 6,000 fewer jobs now than there were when you took office? Does not that suggest that we did participate in the recession?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, when we get a work-force that is climbing; the folks are on the railway hand cars coming back into Saskatchewan — 463,000 — to me, that isn't participating in a recession. We did things that is the envy of all of Canada and the United States, even, on amount of the action that's taking place in this province — just the attitude and feeling out there. I was across to Austria, and I saw what you people were doing as far as development of Saskatchewan: nothing in the trade offices, not even a brochure.

But, well, you can't say that, anymore. We are covered around the world thanks to our minister for getting us our name out there and what we have to offer. And I just saw some potash sales, here, today — the highest in record. And if that . . . We're back to four shifts and two mines, again. And we're not piling it up in the backyards like you people did.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you have suggested, Mr. Minister, that there were large numbers of unemployed young people during the days of the NDP administration.

Well, Mr. Minister, I want to refer you to a document which used to be put out by the Department of Labour. You've probably axed that branch, policy and planning, so badly, it's probably not put out . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's sitting on his desk, but he can't read it.

Mr. Shillington: — Apparently that's right. I didn't notice that. Apparently you seem to be unable to read the documents before you. Well I'd invite you to ask for some assistance from your deputy.

Mr. Minister, I have the May '82 report from your department. Mr. Minister, this is the situation when you left office, and it is accurate as of March 31. Mr. Minister, I ask you to compare the figures of May '82 with the figures which are accurate as of . . . March of '82 with March '84. This deals with young people, and this, Mr. Minister, is table no. 6.

Mr. Minister, there are, in the labour force, which includes employed, unemployed, and otherwise, Mr. Minister . . . The number of young people in the labour force has declined by 5,000. Mr. Minister, there were actually . . . In March '82, there were 117,000 young people under 24 years of age in the labour force. There's not 117,000 now; there are 112,000. There are fewer young people in the labour force. There may be fewer young people in the province, but I doubt that. I think that those 5,000 young people just gave up. And someone seems to think that's worth clapping for.

Mr. Minister, I invite you to look at the next column, which is the number of young people employed. Mr. Minister, there were 104,000 young people under 24 years of age employed in March '82 — 104. Now there isn't 104; there's not 100; there's 92,000 young people employed. The number of young people employed has gone down by 13 per cent.

Mr. Minister, I invite you to just slide along that same column for a ways and have a look at the

number of unemployed — the number unemployed. Mr. Minister, there were 12,000 unemployed in March '82. Now there are 21,000. It's gone up from 12 to 21. That's an increase of 75 per cent, Mr. Minister. The number of young people who are unemployed has increased by 75 per cent. The unemployment rate, Mr. Minister, has gone up from 10.6 per cent to 18.4 per cent or about 82 per cent — rounded off to 82 per cent.

Mr. Minister, the unemployment rate among young people has ballooned. Why, Mr. Minister, do you continue to deny the obvious? What if you do what people elected you to do — that is, admit the problem and attempt to deal with it.

And I think, Mr. Minister, the public would forgive you if you didn't achieve perfect success in dealing with unemployment among young people. Mr. Minister, I don't think they are going to forgive you for suggesting that no such problem exists. I think they are going to feel that that is somewhat less than you ought to be able to deliver.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, to respond to these statistics and tell me how young people are so much better off under your administration than they were two years ago when you took office.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, the member is using June's and March's — I'm going to stick with March.

And I go back to March 1977, under the NDP administration, 109,000 — 15 to 24 years of age, in the work-force. You had 14,000 of them unemployed in 1977!

An Hon. Member: — You have 21,000!

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — I know, I know, I'm not denying that. But we do have . . . We have 112,000 in our work-force right now. And you're looking at March — and we are coming with our Opportunities '84 program, and I'm sure we're going to see that number dwindle substantially during the next few months. I'm not denying that we haven't got unemployment in March or February or January. The figures prove that, but the point I'm trying to make is that you had it also. You had 15,000 in March of 1978 with only 111 in the labour force.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you are doing a disservice to those whom you are supposed to serve. You pick the worst year, I believe it was the worst year, of the NDP administration, and you pointed there were 14,000. There was . . . I'm prepared to accept, Mr. Minister's figures, but I will tell you that that was a matter of serious concern to the government. We introduced a number of programs to deal with youth unemployment, and they were successful.

Mr. Minister, I am not suggesting that the unemployment figures are something that you have concocted just to punish young people. What I'm suggesting is, by failing to admit that you have a serious problem, you are doing a disservice to young people, and you are failing to discharge the responsibility of any government, which is to come as close to full employment as you can.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, will you not admit that these figures point to a serious problem which deserves an all out attack by this government?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I'm just as anxious as anyone in this Assembly, and all of Saskatchewan, to see work and jobs for the young people of Saskatchewan. And we have been spending hours and hours and hours in planning our strategy and our industrial development for the long-term, and we started . . . Who's got the upgrader on stream? It certainly wasn't your administration. Who's got the natural gas program on the go? It wasn't your administration. Many, many things are on the go: the oil industry, the jobs there out in the oil industry.

We are setting up the plans and the attitude and the climate to start many, many projects in this

province, and the oil industry's the number one item that's already on the list. We're looking at the beef industry — an industry that can provide more employment, the fastest of any industry that we know. And with our incentive program for that, you are going to see massive changes in that area.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I sadly suspect that this is an unfortunate comment, because the public are going to suffer. I sadly suspect there aren't going to be any massive changes, until this government is voted out of office.

Mr. Minister, you've had no programs which have produced any results. Mr. Minister, you say you've been studying the problem. I well believe that. This is the government, after all, that inspired the saying, "Paralysis by analysis." You spent the whole first year studying virtually everything in sight and doing nothing.

Mr. Minister, you're the minister that has taken one year to do an incomplete survey on the minimum wage. And you've been every bit as resolute and decisive dealing with unemployment as you have with the minimum wage — with some tragic consequences, Mr. Minister, with some tragic consequences.

Mr. Minister, instead of making an inane argument by pointing to a year in which we had an unacceptably high rate of employment — and I admit that — why don't you just admit that the rate of unemployment which you have should be viewed as unacceptable, and you should have an all out attack on it, instead of suggesting that what you've done to date is going to carry you through?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I've already told the member opposite that I don't approve of unemployment, either. Nobody does. We are still the lowest in Canada in unemployment, or virtually so. Hence, the programs that our budget is — have introduced through our budget — are starting to take effect, and the jobs for our young people and that will be out there. And we'll see reductions in the unemployment numbers.

But the other thing that I'm proud of is that we're setting a base for some long-term employment, not band-aid stuff that's going to be gone by next fall, again. The long-term stuff is what the people of Saskatchewan and our young people are wanting out there. And that's what we're working on.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I suggest that is utterly inaccurate. They don't want jobs in 1988; they want jobs in 1984. They don't want welfare in 1984; they want jobs in 1984.

I suggest, Mr. Minister, by referring to some ill-defined, and even more ill-explained, long-term industrial strategy, you are avoiding the problem here and now, which is no work here and now for young people who face a 75 per cent increase in unemployment.

And, Mr. Minister, I suggest you address yourself to 1984 and 1985. Because they don't want to wait for whatever period of time it may take for this long-term strategy of yours to take effect. They don't want to wait, because they don't believe in it. They don't believe that what you are doing is going to accomplish anything more in the next 10 years than it has in the past two.

It has been a disaster in the past two. There is no adequate explanation of your long-term strategy, and no reason to believe that is going to accomplish anything but the destruction of the economy, as it has in the past.

Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that what the people . . . What the public want are something here and now, because they don't believe you, Mr. Minister, when you say, "May be awful right now, but believe me, there is a long-term strategy." They don't believe it, and nor should they — nor should they. This government has not exactly proceeded with the kind of competence that

would inspire people to believe that you can pull off a long-term industrial strategy.

So I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, rather than talking about the distant future, I suggest, Mr. Minister, that you address yourself to the problem here and now. Tell this Assembly what you are going to do in 1984 and 1985 to create additional jobs.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I've told the member opposite many, many times today, already: Opportunities '84 — thousands of jobs for people. The building of hospitals, the building of nursing homes — which you people didn't do; you stopped it.

The Nipawin dam; the adventure capital program will create jobs; the small investment credit for business is going to create jobs. We have to make it possible for the employers out there to feel comfortable in the province, to go ahead and expand and build. And that's what is getting developed right now. We are going through the period of high interest rates. People didn't put their money into investment when they never knew what their future was going to be like.

We've been working on labour peace in the labour force, and I believe that we are accomplishing that by the figures that we can — that I've given you to . . . And high employment, it . . . Was 28,000 high employment, in your mind? You had 28,000; we were at 32,000 last summer — 31,000. But you got to look at the work-force. Look at your work-force; we're 463,000 right now in March, compared to what you ever had. So people are coming back into the province, and that alone is a sign of the confidence that they have in our province.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, would you just deal with a single fact? The number of young people who were employed has declined by 13 per cent in the period of time you're in office. Now how do you explain that?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I think my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, touched on that we are seeing that that age group of 15 to 24 is declining. The baby boom is starting to move through, and you people didn't even take it under consideration, I don't believe, as far as preparing for the baby boom. But that is a fact. It declined during your administration also. From March 1980 to March '81 it declined 2,000 people. So you can bounce around the figures, all night. The fact of the matter is that there are 112,000 in our work-force in that age group. It's dropped by 3,000, but that is a trend that I think we're going to see. I have many articles saying that that is what's happening across the whole country right now.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you can't have it both ways. You can't suggest that people are streaming into the province in vast hordes, and at the same time admit that the number of youth in the work-force has declined. Mr. Minister, these tables suggest that there's been no influx of people from outside the province — in young people.

Mr. Minister, as the Minister of Advanced Education pointed out, the reduction in the number of young people has been, while it exists, has been fairly slight. That accounts for a decrease of 1,000 to 2,000. That does not account for an increase in the number of employed by 12,000. That happens because there are fewer jobs for them. And that comes about in part because of this government's utter and complete neglect of the problem, and because of this government's attempt to wish the problem away. Because of this government's belief that you can talk up the problem, that you can talk it up, that's all it requires.

May have worked well with the Rowletta baseball team, but, Mr. Minister, that strategy will not work in government and the proof of the pudding is in the eating in these statistics.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we've been talking about one segment of the labour force . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And certainly, 15 or — are you saying that the age 25 is old? Look at the age of 25 and over. We went 5,000 from March 1983 to March 1984. 322,000

compared to 327,000 in March of this year. Five thousand more people employed in that age group. From March '82 to March '83, it went up 8,000 people. So you can't look at it in a vacuum on just one age group.

Certainly the younger people are having difficulties with jobs, and we recognize that. And the programs we are coming with are going to address a number of those problems. But you have to look at the overall picture, and the whole work-force from that 25 and up has been climbing over the last few years. And we're happy to say that we had 327,000 out of a work-force of 463.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, that is just absolute nonsense. Mr. Minister, the number of people unemployed who are over 25 years of age — the suggestion that you can credit all of this, the decrease in the number of employed, to the declining birth rate, I suggest is just nuts, Mr. Minister. You might be able to credit one or two thousand of that decrease in the number of employed to the declining birth rate. Mr. Minister, that has largely worked its way through the system. What you have now is a relatively stable numbers of young people. And it will start to increase now, as the sort of echo boom continues.

Mr. Minister, these figures, these increases of 75 per cent, come about because there are no opportunities out there for them. I'm not suggesting, Mr. Minister, you created it; I'm suggesting you've ignored it, Mr. Minister. By ignoring it you have abdicated your responsibility as a minister. If you had tried sincerely and failed, then I think a goodly number of the public might forgive you, but I don't think, Mr. Minister, they're going to forgive you when you try to ignore it. That's something less than your office calls for.

Mr. Minister, further proof of this government's ineptness is the fact that, contrary to what you just said, this province no longer has the lowest rate of unemployment. That's now Manitoba. Mr. Minister, that province has far fewer resources than this province has to work with. For Manitoba to have a lower rate of unemployment than Saskatchewan is a fairly considerable feat on their part and a fairly considerably display of incompetence on yours. This province has vastly more resources to deal with and to work with than Manitoba does. Mr. Minister, how do you explain the fact that Manitoba does now, for the first time in the memory of anyone in this room, for the first time in the memory of anyone in this room, Manitoba has a low rate of unemployment? I would be surprised to learn that has happened in decades. How, Mr. Minister, does that come about? How is it that Manitoba's rate of unemployment is lower than ours?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, we saw some figures, I believe, of Manitoba having a 14,000 increase of people employed. We've done a little research on those figures, and we found that the average length of time of a job of those 14,000 was 13 days — 13 days. And that's the type of thing that we are not wanting to get into. We are wanting employment for people for 250 working days of the year, not 13 days.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to turn for a moment to the construction trades and the effect, Mr. Minister, of amendments made last year which permit spin-off companies.

Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that those in the construction trades have been hit with a double whammy. Not only are there far fewer jobs available, but those jobs which are available are at far lower wages. Mr. Minister, if you set out, as I think you patently must have, to make spin-off companies relatively easy for a company, and if you set out to help the construction industry lower their wage costs, then I think you have been very successful. There are vastly fewer of those jobs which now are union and vastly more which aren't, and the difference in wages are very, very startling.

I hear of skilled tradesmen working for 5, 6, \$7 an hour. They used to work for 14, 15, 16, up to 20. I suppose it's a difference of philosophy, Mr. Minister, but I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you would comment on the lowering of the average wage in the construction industry, as you must admit that that has been the result of spin-off companies. Many are going non-union, and the

difference, Mr. Minister, is startling.

There are any number of examples of it, one of which was the example of city council, Regina city council the other night, wherein there was a difference of some \$400,000 between the successful bid and the lowest union bid, and the difference is labour costs. And that comes about because of your Bill 104. I am sure that there are members opposite who think that's a good thing. That's a good thing, that the construction industry should pay lower wages. But what you're doing, Mr. Minister, is taking that money out of the workers' pockets and in turn out of the small-business people's pockets because there's that much fewer money. Much less money for them to spend at the grocery store and the hardware store.

Mr. Minister, will you admit what I've just said and that is: that there are far more non-union jobs, and as a result the average wage in the construction industry is considerably less?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I do not have any influence on what wages are going to be. I'm not at the negotiating table when these wages are bargained. I'd like to just back up a little bit and talk about Bill 88, where the unionized contractors and the building trades over many, many months in sitting down with us, had grieved that there was problems with that act. And we decided to repeal it. And if I remember correctly, to a man the opposition voted for the repeal of Bill 88. And you're saying that'll open up the doors for non-union. Some are doing it; some are not. But I'd like to remind you that section 37 of The Trade Union Act is still in place. And that says that if a contractor sets up another company, and it's under the same management, there are some rules there that the union contract has to follow. Section 37 isn't touched. It's still there.

As far as the jobs that are available, I believe the unions have found out that the 22, \$20, \$18 an hour are making it difficult for them to compete. And that's why this is starting to happen. It's going to create jobs. It's going to create jobs because they are going to compete now out there. Evidently they feel that they can, or they wouldn't agree to this. They're talking about a roll back, and that's at the bargaining table. The unionized contractors and the unions themselves, they're the ones that's setting the rates. And they've agreed to this. The unions came to us over a year ago agreeing to zero, six and six.

So the fact that they are doing it is showing to me that all sides are becoming very, very responsible, including the building trades and their unions, and their memberships and the contractors. And they are doing their part to help create the business climate and the investment in the province by industrial peace — no strikes, no lock-outs, little lower wages, and that's no different than what's happening all across the country. Ontario has even settled for less in some instances.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I will grant you that there is a degree of industrial peace right now. That comes about not because the workers are more responsible. It comes about because they're more desperate.

Mr. Minister, the legislation which this government has introduced has made it impossible for them to bargain effectively on behalf of the workers. What you have done, Mr. Minister, is to tip the scale in favour of management to the point where they can't bargain effectively. Because if they do, Mr. Minister, if they do attempt bargain vigorously, the jobs will go to non-union workers.

Mr. Minister, another practical effect of the severe weakening of the trade unions is that a lot of work is going to out-of-province people. Non-union firms are coming in. They're using out-of-province people. And Mr. Minister, the problem is epidemic. It is everywhere. It is a problem at Nipawin; it is a problem at Coronach; it's a problem, Saskatoon; it's a problem throughout the province. The jobs, what construction jobs there are, are going to a degree which we shouldn't tolerate, to out-of-province workers. And that, Mr. Minister, comes about in part

because the trade unions are no longer able to protect their own people. And the workers are coming in from out of province, Mr. Minister.

And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that we should be doing whatever we can to ensure that Saskatchewan jobs go to Saskatchewan people. And the result now is the opposite. And if you don't believe me, Mr. Minister, talk to the merchants in — pick it — Saskatoon, Nipawin, any of the areas where there are construction crews — Coronach, and they'll tell you there's a lot of yellow licence plates around. People from Alberta have come here and got jobs which should have gone to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Minister, does that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, they're not coming home, because they're not changing the licence plates. They've been here for many months and their licence plates are still yellow. They're going back home to Alberta. But they're coming here, taking jobs away from Saskatchewan people. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if that doesn't alarm you. Do you not think that we would be better off if our system were such that Saskatchewan jobs went to Saskatchewan people?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to talk about Nipawin for a starter.

Part of the agreement that we renegotiated with the KACR (Kwit, Atkinson, Commonwealth and Ramsey) people was that 80 per cent of the people hired on that site were to be Saskatchewan people. And we monitor that situation by the week.

The newspapers, and what you are reading and believing — and I would suggest that the member hasn't been up to Nipawin — is that the percentage of Saskatchewan people, in what we consider Saskatchewan people, is 88 per cent. I would like to know what the member considers as Saskatchewan people.

Would you consider a person born in Saskatchewan, educated in Saskatchewan, maybe have worked in Saskatchewan, gone away for a few months or a year or two, but has come back and is working in Saskatchewan, as a native? From outside the province? We consider them as Saskatchewan people.

We took every application form, every application form of a person that was hired on the Nipawin site since it was started. Eighty-eight per cent of the people fit the criteria that my colleagues believe to be a Saskatchewan person. Eighty-eight per cent. And I don't think you can do much better than that.

And as far as the licence plates, there is a reciprocity agreement with Alberta where you don't have to change your licence plates. We have the same agreement in Alberta. So the fact they've got Alberta plates on doesn't mean that they're native of Alberta. They are Saskatchewan people that have come home, and have decided to work here on that project.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, that is just simply not accurate. If they have come home to stay in Saskatchewan permanently, they must get, they must change those licence plates. Only if they're working here, but going back to Alberta at the end of the contract, can they keep that Alberta licence plate. If they're Saskatchewan people who have come home, those licence plates must be changed.

Mr. Minister, the facts are that, thanks to this government's legislation and this government's approach, thanks to the fact that you have weakened trade unions to the point where they are not able to defend or protect their own members, Mr. Minister, large numbers of Saskatchewan jobs are going to out-of-province people. And if you don't think that's an issue, then you are as out of touch on this issue as you are on others. Because it is a subject of complaint virtually everywhere.

Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that . . . First of all, I question your figures. But even if your figures are accurate, it should be a cause of some alarm to you that you're losing as many jobs as we are. We must be losing thousands of jobs which could be ours if it weren't for the fact that this government has made spin-off and non-union companies possible, and therefore weakened the ability of trade unions to protect their own workers.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, the member is indicating the fact that there are so many non-union that that has completely closed the door on the union worker.

Right now in Nipawin there are union contractors working on that site. The labourers are certified; they are busy bargaining right now. The operating engineers are certified; they are bargaining right now. The electrical and mechanical contract has just been let, and it's gone to a unionized contractor.

And when I talk about industrial peace, when did you see in the past where a unionized group can be working on the same site as a non-union group and getting along? And that's what's happening right now. And over 50 per cent of those workers on the Nipawin site are going to be union workers.

And I just saw the Ipsco announcement where it's gone non-union, but 90 per cent of the job is going to be done by unionized contractors, subcontractors. So the non-union group are not overtaking the union group totally. At least they're working together.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to turn to an item that I have received a number of expressions of concern about. And I was interested to note in the submission to the Department of Labour by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, a copy of which was supplied to the opposition as it always has been, as it was when you were in office, the following comment was made (and this again is their submission to your department.):

We are receiving more and more reports that your department is unwilling or unable to respond to requests from unions and their occupational health and safety committees for inspections and rulings on hazardous procedures and/or materials.

Until recently Saskatchewan's Department of Labour had an exemplary record of regular inspections of workplaces and co-operation with the employee "chairpersons" of committees. The decline, in our view, is evident of a lack of commitment to improving the health and safety of Saskatchewan workers.

We urge your department to undertake an immediate program of education and enforcement with improvements towards a healthier and safer work environment for the working people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, as I said, that observation parallels my own, as I have received a goodly number of complaints that your department is unable to provide the inspection and the support and the enforcement of occupational health — unable or unwilling to provide the inspection and the support and the enforcement of occupational health and safety committees. Your response, Mr. Minister, when this problem was pointed out to you, when the occupational health and safety committee was gutted as it was during your first budget, your responsibility was, you believed, the management would look after the workers and that the management of any industrial concern should be free to proceed unencumbered by the interference from the Department of Labour.

Mr. Minister, we warned you at that time it wouldn't work and that we would lose the very enviable position which is, I think, aptly described in this document. Mr. Minister, that warning has unfortunately come through. I ask you, Mr. Minister: do you still believe that the government has only a minimal role to play in occupational health and safety, a view which you clearly

expressed in the first set of estimates which we dealt with?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as far as occupational health and safety is concerned, I don't know where you get the idea that I am not concerned about occupational health and safety. There are no policy changes. The same policies are in place that were in prior to us coming into office. There's been no change in the practices that we carry out.

But there's a few things that we've done. We've put together the occupational health and safety advisory committee which was absolutely redundant under your administration. And we've added to that committee where there's been an occupational health nurse on the committee which never was before. There's a medical person on the committee which never was before. And that committee is meeting regularly to supply me with recommendations and any suggestions for policy change. We have labour, we have farmer, we have various people on with various backgrounds.

And just recently we've started *The Safe Workplace* news, a periodical that we are going to put out once a quarter — mailing it all to the employers, to employees, and that gets to the educational part as to what occupational health and safety is all about. We have found that it is not that well-known out of the workplace as far as employee and employers are concerned. We see a massive need for an educational program out there, and it is being done with about a 30,000 mail-out every quarter of our news-letter. And so with those remarks, I don't agree with you whatsoever that we gutted the occupational health department. We streamlined it, we are — the committees are still in place, and we are doing our inspections. We acted very quickly on any of the problems that have raised recently as far as occupational health is concerned, so I don't agree with you whatsoever — that we have gutted anything in the occupational health and safety area.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you are surely ignoring the facts. The facts are — that there is \$150,000 less spent on occupational health and safety, and that you have 14 per cent fewer people working.

Mr. Minister, there may not have been an overt change in policy, but there's been a sharp difference in enforcement, and that has made all the difference, Mr. Minister. The occupational health and safety system will only work if those committees have the support, the full and unqualified support of the department, and if the employer knows that. Now, Mr. Minister, thanks to the change in the philosophy of the department, when this department apparently no longer speaks for the worker, but for management, and thanks to the cutting of both funds and positions, there is not the willingness nor is there the manpower or the resources to enforce the occupational health and safety.

Mr. Minister, if you were so concerned with occupation health and safety, why was there the cuts in the first year largely of both money and positions? Why did you cut those positions if you were so concerned about occupation health and safety? The effects of the cuts we see today in the comments by the Department of Labour and in the observations that I think any fair-minded person makes who has a regular liaison with working people.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, first of all the cuts that we made were all vacant positions and the vacancies were there when you were in the administration. That's all we cut. As for the field force, we haven't touched the field force. There's still as many out there working as there was before.

And certainly we're trying. There's a new philosophy, but it's a philosophy of co-operation by the employer, by the employee, and not remarks like this: the occupational health and safety is not compatible with the production and profit. This is what the previous director of occupational health was running all around Canada preaching. We don't believe in that.

We believe that the employer and the employee have to work together to get a good workplace. And you don't have to talk to me about that because I'm quite aware of the occupational health committees and how they should operate and that they won't work with them in isolation. We've got to have the co-operation of the employers as well as the employees, and putting it together and working. And that's what we're doing with our educational program, the news-letters; our people are going to be out sitting down and talking with employers. Anyone that wishes to have us come out and talk, we will. And I suppose that is the difference in philosophy.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, the difference between your approach and mine is one of, one of realism. Mr. Minister, you suggest that occupational health and safety is like a symphony. You get them all sitting down, and you get them all working together, and if everybody works together what you get you get out of it is beautiful music. That, unfortunately, Mr. Minister, is not the way the workplace works.

The fact is, Mr. Minister, that safety costs often cost employers money. Mr. Minister, that is something that workers — that is a right that workers often have to wrest from unwilling employers because the employers don't want to spend the money on it. Mr. Minister, the occupational health and safety committees are not like a symphony with the employer. Very often those committees make demands on the employer, to which the employers resist, because of the bottom line. And unless the occupational health and safety committees have the full support and backing of the department, the system won't work, and is not working. As anybody will tell you who works in the industrial plants, mills, and mines of this province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I am going to, because the record was not particularly spectacular. The record was not particularly spectacular, so I am about to try and tell this minister something about labour relations, and about occupational health and safety in particular.

Your approach, Mr. Minister, I suggest was accurately stated when you first came into this Chamber; that it was a problem for management to deal with and you were confident they would, just as you are concerned about occupational health and safety.

The fact is, Mr. Minister, it is often a conflict between the workers and the management because there's often dollar bills involved. And unless the workers have the support of your department, and unless you recognize the relationship for what it is, then you fail to support the workers. If you say to them, well now, come on, come on guys, you've got to get together, you've got to work together, you've got to co-operate, that's the system — they'll work together all right, and management will, in many cases, do what they please. And the workers will have no protection.

The role of your department, Mr. Minister, is to protect and back the workers and the occupational health and safety committee where they make legitimate demands to which management resist. I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that your view of the workplace is what one would expect of someone who has spent his lifetime in management, and not what one would expect of a minister of labour.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can't believe my ears. You're telling me about the workplace, the plant, the occupational health committees. Let me tell you, sir, that you don't get anywhere with confrontation all the time. And the only way that occupational health and safety is going to work is by good design; by good planning; by good work education; by good supervision; and I guess in other words it's called good management. And that includes the employee out on the work floor as well. You can't get anywhere, and I support the worker just as much, and our department of occupational health supports that worker out there, just as much, if not more than it ever was before.

There was confrontation out there — and I know, because I was in it — because of the method of how the Department of Labour reacted. And we, we had a good occupational health committee out there. They felt free in coming down or coming into our office and talking about

recommendations and needs out in the workplace, and we listened to them because they were the ones out there, and we felt they knew what they were saying.

But if you are going to have those employees run to the Department of Labour and have us go out there, it's utter chaos. You need that out in the work-force and I'll argue till midnight that you need co-operation with employees and management — that's not some little group off on the side. You've got to work together, and the sooner we get that embedded in all our minds in this province, we're going to go down the tube. And that's what I'm telling our, our union leadership and our non-union workers and the whole works.

We've got to sit down and talk together and talk out our problems, and not the confrontation and the militancy that is being recommended by the member opposite.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, what you have just told this Assembly is that occupational safety, health and safety, is a function of management . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, you did, you said it is design, it is education, it is supervision. Mr. Minister, you don't understand the philosophy behind occupational health and safety, and the philosophy was a divestiture of control over the workplace. Part of the divestiture goes to the workers, so that they may play a role in controlling the occupational health and safety of the workplace.

The whole philosophy behind the committee was that the worker would have a say. And he would be able to do more than just complain. If reasonable standards weren't being met, he would then, Mr. Minister, be in a position to enforce it by complaining to the department. What you've just finished saying is, oh, you don't want the department to run out there and sticking their nose in it.

Mr. Minister, that is the philosophy. The department is to come to the aid of the worker when the management won't meet their responsibilities. And that is your responsibility as a department. And what you've just said, Mr. Minister, is you're not going to discharge that responsibility because it interferes with management. Mr. Minister, your whole approach to your department has been entirely management orientated. This is a Department of Labour which is being run by management for the benefit of management. That's a very long ways, Mr. Minister, from being a department which represents workers.

I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that if you understood the philosophy behind occupational health and safety, you would know that it is not a philosophy which says that the workers must get along with management. It is one which says the worker shall be given a say in the workplace, and if the management isn't prepared to respect that, then the department will enforce it. You, Mr. Minister, stop just short of that last sentence when you say no, we're not going to cause confrontation. Sometimes, Mr. Minister, confrontation can't be avoided if you're going to protect people's rights.

I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that you might try to come to terms with the basic philosophy of occupational health and safety. It is one where the management give up some rights in the workplace and give them to workers who then have the power to enforce occupational health and safety, through the backing of the department, if necessary.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, all I'm going to do is reiterate what I said in the first place. To accomplish good occupational health and safety in a plant, you need the co-operation of the employees, the co-operation of the supervisory staff, the co-operation of management to follow through on the recommendations that's coming out of the occupational health committee, and if that committee doesn't get the results that they look for, they have the Department of Labour to come to.

But I would like to see all those problems solved out on the work floor and in the workplace, and not have a government body regulating and coming down with the heavy hammers all the time.

Why can't we do it out there with the folks that are right in those four walls? And that's what we're doing.

We're here to assist. We will continue to be here to assist. And you talk about the gutting and that of the occupational health. Fatalities down 14.6 per cent in '82-83 . . . Oh, 14.6 fatalities compared to 46 or 31 per cent in '80-81 when you people were in government. Thirty-one per cent increase in '80-81 with your administration. We're down 46.1 in '82, 14.6 per cent in 1983. So where's the gutting and the disaster that's in occupational health and safety?

Mr. Shillington: — A particular occupational health and safety issue, but a very local one, arises at the Queen Elizabeth Power Station in Saskatoon. I am told, Mr. Minister, that by the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) representatives that there is a severe asbestos hazard in that plant. And I gather, Mr. Minister, that the problem has somewhat belatedly been recognized by the SPC management.

Mr. Minister, I ask you: what steps are being taken by your department to ensure that this problem is dealt with in a way which poses no hazard to the workers? I am told, Mr. Minister, that the proper way to use asbestos to cover hot pipes, which I gather is a problem in the Queen Elizabeth plant, is that the asbestos must be covered with a lanimate which must then be covered with aluminum.

An Hon. Member: — With what?

Mr. Shillington: — Aluminum. Yes, Mr. Minister, I gather not only is there no aluminum around the pipes, but the lanimate, Mr. Minister, is also deteriorated to the point where the asbestos is floating around the plant. I suggest, Mr. Minister, that in this case the problem may not be the Department of Labour on this occasion, but the SPC management who have neglected a problem.

I ask you, Mr. Minister: what has the department done to monitor the problem and to ensure that the problem is met as quickly as possible with the least possible hazard to the health of workers?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I have been fully aware of the situation of the Queen Elizabeth Power Plant. We have had a member of our department monitoring the situation. As of today, as a matter of fact, the workplace has been tested and considered safe. The occupational health group has given the Sask Power management a list of several items to get fixed up this week, and it's my understanding that the place will be ready to go back to work totally on Monday or Tuesday.

Mr. Shillington: — Within what time frame did you say that you would have the problem resolved?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — It is resolved.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, you've left the representatives of the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) then somewhat confused about the matter because they have been vehement in suggesting that the asbestos problem up there is not resolved, and that the resolution of it is taking more time than it should. As I say, the problem does not appear to be the department this time, but SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) management who have dragged their feet on dealing with the problem that should have been obvious to them for a long time.

Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that you might want to check on the matter again, and if it is indeed to be resolved this week, then you ought to sit down the representatives of the IBW and tell them that, because they're doing a great deal of unnecessary worrying. I don't have the

facts to argue with you, Mr. Minister. I just say that the local workers' representatives in trade unions do not believe that it is resolved. They do not believe it's being resolved very quickly, and they are upset with the SPC management who, they believe, have been unnecessarily tardy in having that asbestos problem dealt with. If you want to make a comment, Mr. Minister, I'll yield the floor; if not, I'll just ask you to review the matter again.

Mr. Minister, I want to deal with yet another aspect that came up in the federation of labour brief: to point out that the average wage enjoyed — women's wages are on an average 49 per cent of men's, and there's a desperate need to do something to try to correct this. Mr. Minister, in the face of repeated requests by the minister's groups, it appears you have been quite unresponsive. The latest, not the latest, but a recent rather sharp exchange took place between yourself and one Palma Anderson who felt you were less than sympathetic to women's views. Mr. Minister, I ask you if this government has considered taking some bold initiative with respect to the deplorable situation which women find themselves.

And we ought to be ashamed of the fact that, in North America, in Saskatchewan, in 1984, women are making 49 per cent of what men make. That really ought to embarrass us.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, if your government has any plans to deal with that. You have abolished the women's division, replaced it with the Women's Secretariat. No one knows what they're doing, including, I suspect, the women in the Women's Secretariat. And it appears at this point in time to be very little left to advance the cause of women in the workplace.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, if your government has considered any bold attacks on this problem which, as I say, should embarrass us.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Minister, I can't speak on behalf of my colleagues that have the Women's Secretariat and the women's division under their responsibilities.

They may, in fact, be looking at a number of areas, and I'm sure they are, to do with the status of women, and so on. So I can't say what is coming in that area. And it's not a responsibility of us in government to be seeing what has to be paid for women and men.

It can be . . . That's all done out at the employer levels, and I'm sure that women are getting paid just as much as men in a number of the areas where there is equal work. But if there are more women in the smaller scale, naturally their average is going to be down.

But, generally speaking, I can't comment on what is happening in the women's division.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to suggest to you that something more dramatic is needed than your general expression of concern about the public.

It has long been requested by women that we enact provincially what has been enacted federally, and that is equal pay for work of equal value. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, if that has been considered by this government. As I say, I believe that a bold attack is needed on the problem.

What governments in this country have tried to do over the last 10, 15 years, in which the feminist movement has made us conscious of the problem, has not worked. What we need is something a good deal bolder. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if that has been considered.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I'm, I'm . . . That is not my responsibility, and I'm not aware of what my colleagues are looking at that are responsible for those areas. And I would suggest that you ask them when you reach them in your estimates.

Mr. Shillington: — But, Mr. Minister, surely this would be a responsibility of the

Department of Labour to enact this. I would have thought it would have gone into The Labour Standards Act which you administer. Are you telling me, Mr. Minister, that you have no plans to do anything meaningful with respect to the deplorable position of women in the economy? Is that what you're telling me?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — No, I'm not telling you that at all. I'm telling you I'm not aware of what my colleagues are working on in their various departments to do with the women's matters. And if there's recommendations come from them and come to cabinet I'm sure I'll have my input or my — looking at whatever recommendations they come, and if it's something that we are to take over and put into labour standards, we will put them into labour standards. But as of today my colleagues are working on those areas, and we'll wait for their decisions.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that primary responsibility lies not with your colleagues, but with yourself. Mr. Minister, the responsibility for improving the place of women in the workplace has surely got to be yours. And I ask you, Mr. Minister, what are you doing about the problem?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, we have our other departments that are looking after those areas. They are doing the research is what there was necessary in their divisions and their departments. That will come to us in cabinet and caucus. We'll have our input at that time. And certainly we have concerns on many, many issues in the Department of Labour, whether it's women or young people or whatever. We do it as a team effort, and my group are coming and looking at those kinds of things all the time. When that happens, we'll look at it.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I want to pursue this point for a moment simply to clarify in my mind who the minister believes is responsible for improving the conditions of women in the work-force in the private sector. We acknowledge that the Women's Secretariat is doing a job, or is set up to do a job of co-ordinating of government agencies, dealing with the matter of women in the public sector broadly defined. What I want to know is, do you think it's your job to see that women get a better shake, let us say, in working in department stores in Saskatchewan? And if it is not your job, which of your colleagues has that responsibility?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd have to say that we're interested in all areas. Advanced Education and Manpower and their training will be covering the women — all women of the province. Whoever wishes to upgrade and increase their skills or what, will be covered there. My colleague, the Minister of Education, has the Women's Secretariat.

My department of overall with all of labour, including women. We'll be doing it as a group. It's not tied to one specific department. And we will be doing it as a team of people.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, in government and in many other places, what is everybody's business is nobody's business, and perhaps I should ask not what minister is responsible, but what public servant is responsible.

My understand of what I can read about the Women's Secretariat is that it is primarily a co-ordinating institution for people who work in the public sector. And if I'm wrong on that, if it's the Women's Secretariat who has the job of promoting and giving a better opportunity to get more equal wages, let us say, for women who worked in department stores, it is my apology. But I have read the stuff that comes out of the Women's Secretariat and I haven't picked that up.

Now, with respect to training, I can acknowledge that obviously the Department of Education and the Departing of Continuing Education has a role to offer training courses to male and female alike.

But I am asking who is the advocate — who has the advocacy role — for improving the status of

women in the workplace in the private sector? And I ask: is that advocacy role with the Department of Labour, or is that advocacy role distributed nicely around several ministers and accordingly, nobody's responsibility?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, we are doing it as a team. I'm responsible for labour standards, which includes the women of the province, maternity leave, and minimum wage, and it goes on and on and on. My colleagues have responsibilities in various other areas, and as a group we are going to pull that all together, I'm sure.

Anything to do with the labour, as far as women specifically, and that we're responsible for, we'll be part of the team, and we'll be doing it together: the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, the Minister of Education, myself as Minister of Labour; maybe there are some other departments as well that have some input. Social Services could have some input, of programs or whatever it is that we need to upgrade the status of the women of the province. And I'm sure the women of the province will have some say as well. We have some groups coming in and talking to us on various aspects, pension reform and so on, and we're listening to all of that. We are all responsible for certain areas of it, and we'll co-ordinate together as a group to resolve a lot of those problems.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Minister, do I then understand that you acknowledge no advocacy role over and above an advocacy role which might be felt by the Minister of Education, or the minister of continuing education, or the Minister of Social Services, or the minister in charge of the Women's Secretariat, or, presumably, the Minister of Agriculture, to advocate the role of women in that industry? Is that what you are saying, that you have no special advocacy role?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we don't have a minister of women. So we'll be doing it as a team, as I said before. And the way it's been before, you didn't have a minister of women either. We believe that we can accomplish more by having the various departments zero in on certain problems that the women may be having out there. And that's what we are going to be doing.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Minister, I'll just pursue this for a moment and then turn to another subject. With respect to the previous organization of the department, if anyone asked, if anyone asked which minister considers it his responsibility to address, at least, the fact that the average wage for women in the private sector work-force in Saskatchewan is perhaps under 60 per cent of the average wage of males in the private sector work-force — which minister had the responsibility of addressing the problem — the answer was very, very clear: the Minister of Labour, in the previous administration.

There was no doubt about that, he was the one who met with the . . . And it was, perhaps, because he did such an effective job that the spread between the average wage of males and females in Saskatchewan in the work-force was perhaps the lowest in Canada. We believe it was.

And that I think arose because of continued . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Some members assert that that is not true. I know the member who asserts it's not true, Mr. Chairman, will stand up and tell me what province he feels was, had a better record. And he will not, he will not because he sits in his seat saying these things without a shred of evidence; and he will not stand up. I ventured against that — anyone want to put a side bet on that? I would.

But my question . . . my question to you again is: do you accept, do you accept any responsibility over and above those shared by all of your other colleagues? Along with, let us say, the member for Arm River who doubtless has an equal responsibility to promote the interest of women in the fair and free application of the crop insurance program.

Do you admit any special advocacy role, or do you not?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, if a women's group decides to come and talk to me, I'll listen to them. I've done that many, many times over the past few years.

But there's something in there that I feel is my responsibility, I'll take it to my . . . I'll look after that along with my colleagues. If there is something that I don't feel is my responsibility, I'll pass it on. And ultimately, it still all goes to cabinet to be in the final, anyway.

So instead of just having one division to go to maybe in the past, and I'm not aware of what all took place there, the women are perfectly free to come and see me. They're perfectly free to come and see the Minister of Education, or the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and missed the Minister of Economic Development.

But we, as a team, come with our recommendations, and those recommendations go to cabinet if there is any major changes.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I want to change the subject to the matter of workers' compensation. And I don't . . . I think this is the appropriate form to ask some general questions.

And I preface my question with this saying, as I watch the mail coming into our office, that the number of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I get at least 40 pieces a day by way of press releases from the government opposite.

So that there is no, there is no dearth of mail; but, there is a dearth of facts in that, but no dearth of mail.

But what I am addressing to the Minister is that there seems to be a growing number of complaints. We all know that with workers' compensation you have a stream of complaints. No workers' compensation system can satisfy all of its applicants, or all of its assureds, all the time. And so there will be people who will be dissatisfied. And one watches to see whether the numbers seem to be going up or going down. I don't know whether it is simply that I am getting more of them, or that their number is getting greater.

I ask the minister a general question. Do you detect . . . Do you detect any larger number of complaints reaching the board as opposed to the administration of the board, expressing dissatisfaction with the decision which was made by the staff of the board? And that's the process in the first instance.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, as far as the compensation board is concerned, we haven't changed any of our policies there. We've . . . We came with the amendments last fall to pay out more compensation to the people that were injured prior to 1980. Assessment rates are the same, or on the same level — they have not been lowered. We're spending about the same amount of money.

As far as the number of appeals, the board is dealing with more. But the decisions are the same. Like, there's not any change of policy as far as the decision making is concerned. I don't have the exact numbers here. We may be able to get them for you.

As to the change of numbers, if there are any, I would probably agree with you that there are a few more. I believe it's maybe the times, where people are looking for every opportunity to get a little more income, and probably they're trying the compensation board to do that, and maybe justifiably so, but we are dealing with a few extra numbers in the appeals area.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm not surprised at that, and perhaps your explanation is the right one, that jobs are not easy to come by, and if you have an injury and you're not working, and it's marginal, you may well pursue it for a higher rate of compensation

than you would had you a job, if it's not a disabling injury. I will ask this question, Mr. Minister: how many workers' advocates are now on your staff, and what are their names?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Normally, Mr. Chairman, we have four advocates. As of today we only have three. We have one that's just resigned, but we have a new person that we're looking at — it's a lady, I believe, isn't it? — a lady that has applied, and we're going over her resume right now, and hopefully we'll get that in right away. But there is a John Barber, a Lucy Grob, and a Pat Detz at the present time.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Would the minister be able to give a rough estimate, an approximation of the increase in the number of appeals going to the board. Has it increased by 20, 40, 60 per cent? Can you just . . . just a rough approximation.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, my official indicates that there is possibly about 30 per cent more that has built up in the last six months — appeals that we're hearing.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, are you able to comment on whether or not there is any change in the general complexion of the claims? That is, is the distribution between industrial accidents and industrial diseases about the same, or is there a substantial increase in the industrial disease category, or a decrease, or as the case may be. Is there any significant change in that balance?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, there doesn't seem to be any change in the industrial — accident, was it? Yes, disease versus accident. If there's one area that seems to be some increase, is I suppose the area that you could call stress-related. But as far as the two areas that you have mentioned, it's about the same.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I had wondered whether we were seeing increasing incidence, let us say, of emphysema or lung cancer or that sort of thing from mining or from grain elevators or otherwise. We hear, from time to time, stories indicating that there is a significant increase in the incidence of these particular maladies, these industrial diseases, and I was wondering whether the records of the board suggest that these are growing at only a very modest rate, or growing at a fairly significant rate.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I'll have to say no; no real increase. During the 1970s there was a rise in the grain handling people, but since that time it seems to have dropped off. The same with lung cancer, through the '70s seemed to have dropped off as well. If there's anything right at the moment, it may a little bit on, to do with chemicals. But very insignificant numbers at this point in time.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, would the minister advise whether there were any consideration during the year that were — the past year — or, can you anticipate any consideration in the next year to broaden the scope of the act to include agricultural workers or other people engaged in the agriculture industry?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — As you are aware, Mr. Chairman, there is some amendments coming in the Workers' Compensation Act, and we'll be tabling that in the near future.

As far as agriculture was concerned, that was looked at in our committees, and we'll see when we get the amendments all put together whether, in fact, that is going to be in or not. But it is one of the recommendations that we are looking at, but no decision has been made to date.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Item 5

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — With respect to pension benefits, are there any proposals or changes in the policy included in The Pension Benefits Act? Is it proposed, for example, to have any other, or different rules, with respect to vesting which would have the effect of earlier vesting, or have the effect of locking in contributions at an earlier time, or have the effect of having a greater portion of the employer's contribution locked in sooner? Any changes along those lines?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, there's a number of items being looked at, at the present time, due to the federal review on pensions, of which we are a part. There is a meeting coming in June, I believe it is, of ministers. Some of my staff have just returned from the preliminary meeting of pension reforms, so a number of those areas that you mentioned are being looked at, and will be coming with our suggestions and recommendations at the national meeting held in mid-summer.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, without giving a speech on the matter I would urge the minister to take the view that pensions are, in effect, deferred wages. And when we look at the number of people who, for one reason or another, reach retirement age without adequate pensions, the numbers are still very large, even though we've had pension plans in the public and private sector now for goodly number of years.

I would urge the minister, in effect, to go for those provisions which call for early vesting and early locking in, so that the number of people who had attained retirement age with inadequate pensions because they have moved about a good deal is reduced. In my judgement, it is likely that the work-forces in the future will be called upon to change employers more and more frequently, and we either, therefore, need universal pension plans like Canada Pension Plan, which is unaffected by a change of employer, or some way of stacking them up as you go from employer to employer with early vesting and early locking in.

I just urge the minister to address that problem, since it strikes me that it makes sense for us to set up our pension plans so that there is not a penalty for changing one's job. As we all are aware of the belief, and I think well-founded belief, that as technology moves in, the chances are that we'll all have to change jobs much more frequently. This may or may not involve changing employers, but it may well involve changing employers, and we either then have universal-type pension plans, or ones whereby the employee does not lose significantly, simply because he moves from employer A to employer B.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I don't have any argument with the member opposite. All the items that you have mentioned, sir, we have been discussing over the past few weeks in preparation of our national meeting, so I have no argument with you.

Item 5 agreed to.

Item 6 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 20 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCED AND INVESTMENTS

SASKATCHEWAN POWER CORPORATION Vote 152 — Statutory

Item 1

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — I think we're not fully prepared on this, and I don't know whether the minister has his officials, but we, I think, want to reserve our right to ask some questions, as has been traditional, even though it is a statutory vote. And I wonder whether it's fair for us to ask

the minister a series of questions when he might not have his officials here. So . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, nonsense, nonsense. But, Mr. . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! The Leader of the Opposition has the floor. Please let him finish.

An Hon. Member: — He's showing his colours here, now.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — That's right. Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, some person some century ago decided that we would print many of the proceedings of the House — not this House, but another one over in Britain — and it was a splendid idea. Because if we had to rely upon the memory of the member for Souris-Cannington we would be on a very weak reef. And I think there is no question that we have, by tradition, asked questions on the statutory vote. And if that is doubted we will dig up out of the *Hansard*. But . . .

An Hon. Member: — We did last year.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Yes.

An Hon. Member: — We did last year.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — We did last year, but . . .

An Hon. Member: — Yes, indeed.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Yes, and that's right. So if it's in the blues, and we are going to vote it, or going to do anything with it, then it's — somebody has felt it necessary to print it — so, it's there.

Now I indicate to the Chairman that we would like to ask some questions. If somebody wants to raise a point of order, we'll debate the point of order. And so I will ask the question — the Chairman a question, and we then can find out. Mr. Chairman, who is the . . . Mr. Minister, who is the chairman of the board of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation? . . . (inaudible) . . .

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, I don't want to raise a point of order tonight, because we may well . . . My friend, the member from Regina Centre, may ring the bells and step outside and make all kinds of wild allegations and things like that, and we certainly wouldn't want that to happen. So rather than raise the point of order tonight, and since the minister doesn't have his Sask Power officials here, and since I'm not sure that we can raise questions on statutory votes here in the House, I would ask, Mr. Speaker . . . I would ask, Mr. Chairman, that we stand the statutory vote and go directly to Science and Technology.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to thank my officials for being here and backing me up this afternoon and this evening, and thank the members opposite for their questioning.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 15

Mr. Chairman: — Is the Minister ready to introduce his officials?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, Mr. Chairman. At this time, I'd like to introduce my officials for the Department of Science and Technology.

Sitting beside me is Dr. Alex Guy, who is my deputy minister, and sitting in front of him is Mr. Frank May, and Frank is the administrative co-ordinator for the department.

Item 1

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, I just look at the items (as this is a new department as we are all aware) and I look at the administration, the first item, and I note that it represents, on administration alone, about 26 per cent of the total budget.

And I wonder whether you could give an explanation as to whether you feel that, out of a budget of \$1 million, that the amount of \$272,000 in straight administration for 6.3 individuals represents a satisfactory relationship of administration to the other items in the financing of the other items in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, in reply to the hon. member from Quill Lakes, that figure represents the amount of money that we will be expending for the staff that we are putting in place at the present time. So that it doesn't represent the present staff of six, but rather a staff which we feel will be put into place at some time this year of 20.3 people, and it also includes, I might add, four secretaries for the department.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, in respect to the first item then, of the \$272,630, I'm asking the minister, do you have in place the 6.3 people in that subvote?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — We have five of the 6.3 at the present time.

Mr. Koskie: — And could the minister outline the, not the names of the individuals, but could you indicate the particular classification of the five people that you have in administration, and a brief outline of the qualifications and duties?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes. We have, at the present time, a deputy minister, and an executive assistant, or as I referred to him as the administrative assistant. We have a deputy minister's secretary, a clerk typist 3, a clerk typist — two clerk typists 3, and one clerk typist 2.

Mr. Koskie: — I wonder if the Minister could provide a list of his personal staff, any other personal staff you indicated you had . . . within the administration you have an executive assistant, or administrative assistant. Could you give me a list of your personal staff, and the salaries that are paid?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well my personal staff, just for the information of the hon. member, my personal staff or the staff in the minister's office are in the subvote for telephones, but I could give them to you because it's from the same thing.

And they are: Mr. Ron Mitchell, who is minister's assistant, and two secretaries, Connie Lambert and Judy Bergen. These are the same people whom I had when I was in Education and Advanced Education and Manpower.

Mr. Koskie: — Well just before I move on to that, I would like to ask the minister whether, during the course of being Minister of Science and Technology, whether he had any out-of-province trips, and whether he . . . I'll ask you whether you had any, first of all, before I pursue the second part of the question.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Yes, I have.

Mr. Koskie: — Could you indicate how many out-of-province trips that you had.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — I'd be prepared to provide that information with the breakdown of the

trips, and the dates, and other pertinent information to the member, if that's satisfactory.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes. I'd like, if you would, Mr. Minister, to indicate the number of out-of-province trips. I'd like you to indicate the purpose of the trips. I'd like you to indicate the persons that accompanied you on those trips, and I'd like you to give a breakdown of the cost of the trip, separated according to each of the following categories, that is: air fares, hotels, meals, taxis, gifts, gratuities, entertainment, expenses, and miscellaneous. Could the minister provide that information?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned previously, I will be making this information available to the hon. member, and this will include all of the pertinent data. And it'll be provided as information is provided in the customary manner, as tradition of this legislature dictates.

Mr. Koskie: — I'm not sure . . . I'd like the minister to advise me what he is saying when he is indicating that it will be provided in accordance with the tradition of the legislature or something of that nature. I'm not particularly sure on that particular point. What I really wanted to know, Mr. Minister, was in fact . . . I've indicated this to you, Mr. Minister, before — when you were the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower.

We have always had a high regard for your integrity and decency, and what I'm asking you here, I am sure, positively sure, that providing the detail of the expenses as I have itemized to you, would be no problem nor an embarrassment to you. And therefore I would ask you specifically: would you in the honourable way, indicate to me that you will in fact provide the information as requested?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Hon. Member, I appreciate the generosity of the hon. member, and I return the compliment. I have a very high regard for his personal integrity. I don't want to go too far with this thing or else somebody may accuse us of trying to go steady. But there has been a motion for return passed in the legislature, and I will be providing information in accordance with the gist of that motion for return, which I voted in favour of.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I'm not going to pursue it much past 10. But I just want to say, Mr. Minister, that in respect to that information, I hope you are not saying that when we have a motion for return, that when we come into estimates in the event that we ask some other detailed question in motion in return, and that the House Leader suddenly decides that that's the overall direction, that we are not going to be able to get specific and detailed answers from an individual minister. Are you indicating that there is a general government policy, and that the answers which you're giving in estimates have to be guided by, in fact, the decision of the House Leader of the Minister of Justice? Is that what you are saying to me?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, no, I didn't say precisely that, nor do I intend to say it. What I do intend to say is that I am prepared to provide the information that is pertinent, and that has customarily been given by the members opposite when they were in government, and by the members on this side who are presently in the government.

Mr. Koskie: — I started out by showing a lot of consideration for your integrity. I am not saying that I have lost that degree of acceptance of your integrity, but I can see that there is a muzzling of information by the government, a determined effort. And I'll leave that particular point.

Mr. Minister, there was a report, the high tech report, which was presented, I believe, to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, but I take it you will be familiar with that report. What I want to ask you, first of all: are you conversant with it, and was it a joint report, both for your department and for the Advanced Education? Was that the purpose of it?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, yes, I am conversant with the report. As a matter of fact, if I recall correctly, I was Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower when that report was initiated and the team set up to prepare that report. So there has been continuity, from my own point of view, in that I attended the meeting when the report was made, officially, by Mr. Alex Curran and the other members of the committee who were making that report.

The whole idea of the thing was for us to work very closely with the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower in regard to anticipating what the needs for training were at the technology level, at the technician level, at the engineering level; and to work very closely with the university sector, with the technical institutes, with industry, with the Saskatchewan Research Council. As I said before, there will have to be ongoing consultative process with the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower.

Mr. Koskie: — I'll get into a few of the specific recommendations and some of the details in respect to the general report. I'd like to ask a sort of a general question to you, Mr. Minister, and the question I address to you is: can you outline sort of a blueprint of where you see our department; the thrusts that it's going to be making in, sort of, the advancement of the high tech development here in the province; and basically, could you outline how the government plans to be involved, and what the basic future that you see for high tech in Saskatchewan? Just a sort of a general outline.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I will attempt to address myself to answer the question asked by the hon. member from Quill Lakes. First of all I might say that our government perceives technology to be an important part of economic development in this province. That it's an integral part of economic development, not a panacea for everything and for all the ills that develop, but the opportunity to diversify as far as the economy is concerned, and to give it a more substantive base than just depending entirely upon the primary product sector.

As far as the organization of the structure, or the structure of the department itself, we perceive a need for co-ordination of research that is taking place in the province at the present time. There is something like between, on an average, between \$35 and \$40 million that are spent on research within government, that is within the Departments of Health, and Agriculture and Environment and so forth, as well as within the various agencies and crowns.

So we see at the present time, everybody seems, and every agency and department seems to be working independently of the other people. And so we see a need for co-ordinating to some extent in order to maximize the benefit of the money that we're spending within government.

We also see the need for working very closely with the federal government in regard to accessing of the funding that is available. There has been, over the years, a shortfall of money coming into Saskatchewan from the federal government, and perhaps one of the reasons has been that we haven't had the capacity to be on top of money and funding that is available, and therefore, for this reason is one of the reasons, perhaps, that we have had a shortfall, so this would be an important part of our mandate.

I could point out that we have set up a Canada/Saskatchewan Steering Committee in technology, and this is an ongoing work committee that meets frequently, and that addresses itself to issues of common concern between the federal and the provincial government. And we signed recently the first memorandum of understanding with the federal government when Donald Johnson, the Minister of Science and Technology for the federal government, was here, and it was the first memorandum of understanding that was signed between the federal government and any provincial government. Following this, we will be working closely with the federal government to work out subsidiary agreements.

Then we have, within the department, set up an industrial sector where we hope to give support to the development of industry in this province through various ways. One of these is through

introduction of an inventor/entrepreneur program, which I mentioned the other day in this House, to give help to people who have ideas, to know what to do with those ideas, to present them so that they can have them properly evaluated, and then to take them from the evaluation to the prototype stage and development of a business plan, and possibly the setting up of a business to be located in this province.

Involved in that industrial section is also the Research and Development Heritage Fund. We were allocated \$5 million to give support for the development and transfer of research. And we are presently working through what the criteria should be for those support programs.

Then we also feel that it is important for us to support industry through encouraging the setting up of CATS — Centres of Advanced Technology, such as the centre of advanced instrumentation at the Saskatchewan Research Council, and the centre of toxicology that has been set up at the University of Saskatchewan, so that it will serve as a base for research and for continued support to come into our province in these particular areas. We presently are negotiating with the federal government in connection with the setting up of several more centres of advanced technology, and hopefully we will have some announcements in this regard in the near future.

Another aspect, or another part of our mandate will be to develop an awareness program — an awareness of technology, of the fact that it does exist, that it's not about to get up and leave us. And that it's important for us to understand technology, and what technology is about, and how we can embrace it, and try to take advantage of the positive aspects of technology, and minimize some of the negative things that come along with such a rapid change as the introduction of technology.

Along with this, we will try to act as a facilitator in trying to anticipate some of the major problems that technology might bring. And in order to do this, we would have to work with the Department of Labour and with the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower retraining, recycling, and things of that nature.

I think I've covered basically the general mandate of the department. If I have left out, omitted certain things, then I'd be pleased to supply an answer.

Mr. Koskie: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Arising out of your comments, I have a few questions. And as I think you will freely admit that the very good basis for high tech development had been established when your government took over in this province, and I welcome the continuation of the development of that very strong base which we had laid in the province.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: I have taken a look at the report that was submitted to you, and what I want to ask you . . . I don't see it within here but it may have been done. And the concern that I have is: has there been an analysis done as to the development of high tech in other provinces of Canada? And an assurance that we will not be getting into specific areas where we're not likely to be able to compete or, in fact, maybe duplicating and as a consequence, you know, not be as successful as we might be.

So I suppose what I'm asking you: did the committee which did the report do an analysis of that area of high tech which is most likely to fly here in Saskatchewan, and not be a repetition of what is going on in some of the other provinces? Certainly British Columbia is certainly proceeding and, I suspect, Ontario and many of the other provinces. So could you just outline whether or not this has been done to date?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — In reply, Mr. Chairman, to the hon. member, I'm not so sure that that task force dealt with that specific thing. It zeroed in mainly on where we were at as far as training was concerned at the institutes, and what we felt that we needed at the present time, and what we

projected that we would need in the future for as far as training was concerned.

However, in reply to your question: in the short period of time that the office of Science and Technology was in existence, and I'm going back to July 14 when the transition took place, right up until the present time, because the department really wasn't born until January 1 of this year — but during this period of time the deputy minister and myself have been doing some work in connection with what you've asked about. That is, we have visited the people from Alberta, with Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick to see what was going. As a matter of fact, that was one of the trips. We covered four of those provinces in one of the trips you had asked about.

I think that it's a fair statement to say that most of the provinces have not proceeded as far as we have, to date, with the possible exception of Quebec. And that province does have a Department of Science and Technology at the present time.

As far as duplication is concerned, I think you've raised a very, very key issue. And I'm not sure how realistic it is for us to think in terms of getting an agreement between the provinces of Canada, to go the route of establishing territorial rights, as it were, in the whole area of technology. I'm not sure that we'd be successful in getting this kind of an agreement.

The area of technology is very, very competitive, and everybody is looking for his place in the sun. And although I have to agree with you, I think it's almost incumbent upon us as provinces, and for our nation, if we want to compete against Japan and the United States in some of the very highly advanced technology countries, we should be doing this, this kind of thing — we should be doing more consulting. And when I attended a Canada Tomorrow Conference last fall in Ottawa, that was the message that was coming through from many of the people in the hierarchy, and in the provinces. But to have this happen is still another thing.

We are involved in a Western Canadian Committee, and we are the lead province. And we are hoping to have a conference meeting with the western provinces to see if we can make some headway in this direction. And I think it would be very much worth our while.

From the point of view of our own strategy, I could say this: that what we have done has been to try to pick out what our priorities should be, take advantages of the strengths that we have here in Saskatchewan, and place the emphasis upon the areas of our primary products as much as possible, and try to use some common sense in regard to what the needs of this province are, and what the strengths of this province are, and what the financial capabilities of this province are.

Mr. Koskie: — I'd like to ask the minister whether you have in the development of your Department of Science and Technology — whether indeed you have taken a look at the implication for the future in respect to the effect of high technology on labour, the employment aspect of society as high tech becomes more available. Have you done a study of it, or have you, in fact, received any of the studies from some of the other industrial nations of the world? And could you indicate what those studies seem to indicate?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, yes, when I attended the conference in Ottawa — Canada Tomorrow Conference — I was quite amazed at the amount of time that was spent on that very topic and the concern that was expressed. The chief representative from Japan was one of the guest speakers, along with one of Reagan's top technology advisors at this particular conference. As well, a representative from France who, I think, was representing the European Economic Community. And to a man, to a person, I should say, these people zeroed in on that particular topic, and nobody, nobody came up with answers. They were able to identify what the problem was, and what the problems could be, and could become, but nobody had magic answers for these things.

However, having learned what we did learn from those people, plus what we learned from the other provinces in visiting them, we feel that that is one of the important parts of our mandate, at least to develop the capacity to try to anticipate some of these problems: problems of how labour will be affected, how numbers of men will be employed as opposed to women, and vice versa. All those things, I think, will be a part of the era of technology, and we feel that what we would be searching for, more than anything else, is for some very solid, long-term plans, as opposed to short-term gap kinds of crisis kinds of programs.

Mr. Koskie: — Just about. I have a report of a conference in Vancouver, and I'm just wonder what your comments are in respect to at least one so-called expert. It goes on to say that, "Rapid advances in technology will bring about 25 per cent unemployment that will last at least 10 years." And this is Frank Ogden, president of The 21st Century Media Communication, Inc., speaking in Vancouver.

And I'm wondering whether your analysis of the advent of high technology, whether you have an analysis of whether we will be in a more positive position for employment, or a less positive, with the advent of high technology. In other words, do you tend to agree that, certainly during the period of adjustment, that it's likely to be an increased in unemployment as a result of the advent of high technology?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sure that the gentleman that the hon. member referred to is very knowledgeable in his area and has done a lot of research. I have listened to and have read conflicting reports, and this would be, this would be this person's estimate of where it's going to lead us down the line.

I'm not sure that the effect that technology will have on employment will affect all parts of the country or all parts of the world in the same way.

It seems from information that I've read recently that in the area around California and the silicon valley area, that they have found that there has been an increased employment, just a major increase in employment, and that they have a real shortage of people who are skilled in the area of, in technicians, technologists, engineers and so forth; so that it's difficult to say.

I think that we'd be very remiss though, if we didn't — if we just decided that because of the fact that we're afraid that a machine is going to displace a worker, that we would just move out of the area of technology and say that it's going to have more negative than positive things. I think what we have to do is anticipate as well as we can what the needs are going to be here as far as this province is concerned; how it is going to affect our labour force, and try and take advantage of it to the best of our ability. And that's what our department will try to do.

Mr. Koskie: — You indicated, Mr. Minister, that you were launching some form of an awareness program for the general public, I take it, in respect to the effects of high technology and the need for specialized training and retraining and getting people prepared to enter the high-tech society, and I think that's vitally important.

I ask you: how closely are you co-ordinating your efforts in respect to this with the Department of Education? It seems a little bit unco-ordinated at the present time in so far as the necessary computers and technology in the general education system. I want you to just sort of outline what you are thinking of when you're referring to the establishing of an awareness program. Is this a general awareness program for the public, or is it going to be done through the universities and the counselling at university and in high schools, or is it going to be a sort of a general approach to the public?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — I think, Mr. Chairman, that it will be a combination, a combination of those things. We haven't really worked out precisely what the format of this program is. We are presently staffing in this area. We are taking a look at what is happening elsewhere in Canada, as

well as elsewhere throughout the world, and putting all these things together, I think it will be a general program going to the public-at-large for awareness, but it will also be a program that will be aimed at the scientific community and at the industrial community as well.

And as far as the Department of Education is concerned, yes, I feel that we will have a role to play once again, not as a director but as a facilitator, as one, as a department that has the capacity to think, to have the time to anticipate what should be happening, and co-ordinate with education, advanced education, labour, whatever.

Mr. Koskie: — You announced not long ago, and you mentioned again tonight, the program that you have established, that is the inventor and entrepreneurial program. I'm wondering — I know what you're indicating there — that there'll be some assistance to those people who have inventions, or what they think is inventions, and some work will be done, or some assistance will be given.

Can you indicate where these people go for their particular assistance? Are you setting that up in the department, or will they be going to the Saskatchewan Research Council. Is there any grants or funding to the individuals who are looking to develop an invention?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, yes. There are two locations where inventors can get assistance. We're presently preparing the brochures, and these will be in circulation very shortly. One of these is located at the College of Engineering at the University of Regina, and the other is at the Saskatchewan Research Council in Saskatoon.

We do support both those places. We support them to the extent of \$20,000 to each place for the support of those programs, to give assistance to the inventors who are directed to them for assistance.

Mr. Koskie: — Just one final comment on that. Can you indicate that after you have done an analysis of the viability of invention, is there assistance that goes further in helping people to patent those inventions, and to further do marketability research, as to the likelihood of the . . . if it were, in fact, produced on a mass basis, whether there would be a market, and so on.

In other words, how far is the research going in assisting the inventor under the program?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, yes. Following the assistance that the inventor can get from the University of Regina or the Saskatchewan Research Council, we will then provide assistance to those who wish to have assistance to develop a business plan.

And the business plan would — one of the characteristics of the business plan would be the development of a marketing plan, so that they would have some assurance as a degree of viability or not — commercially viable or not.

And also, we would give them assistance in how to go about developing or building a prototype, so that whatever the invention is can be demonstrated. And we would go even beyond that to help them to access venture capital to bring these people together. We are not the people who become involved in giving them the capital, but we would be the catalyst in that we would serve the role of bringing the people from industry — the entrepreneurs — together with the people who would have risk capital to invest.

Mr. Koskie: — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I'm just about ready to let go. I just want to indicate, Mr. Minister, I think you have to agree that Saskatchewan with a very small population . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Just. It was just about there before you took office. I read the book that you put out — almost a million by 1982.

I want to indicate to the minister that I think in developing a high tech industry, if I could refer to

it as that, that you have to be very, very selective. Because it seems that you will be up against the mighty giants of the high tech industry in the world, the United States and various centres of the United States and certainly the Japanese.

Recent reports indicate that the Japanese and the Americans are rapidly doing a lot of research on the fifth generation computer, spending, setting aside billions of dollars in the race to compete for this, capturing the high technology of the world.

And so I think that while high technology in Saskatchewan has some bearing and will bear some fruits, I think that it will certainly be very necessary to be quite selective. And I wonder if the minister can outline if there's any particular areas that you have selected within the competition throughout the world, that you might be able to emphasize here and develop in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I think it would be a mistake for us to become so directive that we would be doing the selecting of what kind of high technology industry could happen in Saskatchewan. But certainly we would feel that the priorities would be in the area of agricultural biotechnology, of agricultural value added, of communications, of micro-electronics.

And I think that there are some pretty good examples of progress that have been made in the area, particularly in the area of Saskatoon, in this high tech field. And I refer just to one company Develcon, as an example. Develcon switching systems are being sold in 17 countries at the present time. Eighty per cent of their sales is to foreign markets. And an example of their accomplishment: they have sold a switching system to, and it's installed in the White House in the United States. So that I do have a lot of confidence in the human resources that we have here, and I think that it's incumbent upon us to give the necessary support for our human resources to be developed, and this applies to the high technology fields.

Mr. Koskie: — I note in respect to the summary of recommendations, that the government of Saskatchewan ensure, to the extent possible, the future high technology growth and development be concentrated in Saskatoon. I know that a fair amount of development has taken place there, in the University of Saskatchewan. I'm just wondering whether you have — Is it your plan, I guess, to totally leave out the campus here in Regina, or do you have some future plans that, indeed, the campus here in Regina will be able to have a part to play in the high technology industry which you are establishing, or hoping to establish?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, I think that high technology does exist in many different parts of the province at the present time; it exists, to some extent, in Regina, Swift Current, Yorkton, Kindersley, Big River. But Saskatoon is the place that has attracted the high technology people. We didn't send them there. They were — they've been attracted there. And I think it's pretty logical for them to have descended upon Saskatoon, because Saskatoon, first of all, has the established university, and many, many things have spun out of that university, out of the engineering school, and out of the physics school. And SED Systems is an example of that, and from SED Systems, SCI-TECH, as an example of another high technology company. Also, the Saskatchewan Research Council is located in Saskatoon, and Kelsey Institute, the biggest of the institutes, is located there.

So that Saskatoon has had a natural advantage, and it seems, it seems that in high technology that what they want to attract is what they refer to, and I'm not sure that I understand this as clearly as I should, what they refer to as a critical mass, a certain number of people that serve as the nucleus, the base from which they can operate, and hope to draw upon the number of skilled people that they need in the industry. And I'm referring particularly to technicians, technologists, engineers, researchers in this field. So that it's something that has happened, and it is something that we haven't directed and we would not really be directing that the mass of high technology be located in Saskatoon as opposed to any other place. That will go according to the wishes of the people who get into this, into this field.

Mr. Koskie: — I'm rather surprised with your conclusion, because, as I said, the first recommendation is that the Government of Saskatchewan ensure that, to the extent possible, the future high technology growth and development be concentrated in Saskatoon. Are you saying that you have no control or the government will not be influencing it? Are you in agreement with the basic thrust that where possible you should be concentrating it in Saskatoon? And I'm asking you: are you in agreement with it?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that happens with private industry being the director as opposed to government being the director. And quite frankly, I think that whoever wrote that particular part of the report was pretty accurate in that they recognized that the nucleus and the base for research and development has been, and is, Saskatoon.

If you take, for example, just in the one area of agriculture where you've got the College of Agriculture located there, you've got Canada Agriculture, you've got VIDO located there, and POS located there. So that, you know, they've got a natural advantage to attract something like the plant biotechnology centre, that was constructed this past year for \$6 million by the federal government, because there is that natural base there from which to grow. And so that really what I'm saying is that Saskatoon does have a natural advantage over the other places. But we as a government will support technology if it happens in Pilot Butte.

Mr. Koskie: — Well are you in fact indicating that the government will essentially be taking a hands-off approach, and that the private sector will be in fact deciding where it's going to be? So really what I want to ask you then: is the government committed to a substantial amount of financial assistance in the development of the high tech industry in this province? Is your government committed to a fair amount of financial assistance?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well, we have committed ourselves to \$5 million in the R&D fund. And whatever money we can get out of the private sector, whatever money we can get out of the federal government — sure we're committed, but we have a limit to which we can be committed as far as financial commitment is concerned. And now we just have to be realistic about the whole thing.

Mr. Koskie: — In the efforts to develop and larger and better science and technology industry in the province, it is my understanding, Mr. Minister, that the employment benefits of a high technology industry is very, very minimal. In other words, there's not a great employment in the high tech industry. And in fact in the report itself, it indicates that the classification is small.

In the United States, it accounted for only 3 per cent employment in 1979. Although it is a fast growing segment of the industry, its employment base in the United States is expected to grow no more than to 4 per cent of the total employment by 1993.

So what I think is clear, Mr. Minister, and you might want to comment on it, is that while we must take advantage of the high tech industry, I don't think that we can really look at it as a strong employment diversification of our economic activities in the province. Do you agree with that?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Maybe at the present time it isn't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . In the United States? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, if memory serves me right, I think we have somewhere between 2,000 and 2,500 people employed in what you call high technology at the present time in the province of Saskatchewan.

We are at the infant stage in the development, as far as high technology is concerned, and what I see is an expansion of employment in the whole area of high technology.

When you take a look at the numbers of people employed, I think these are bonus things to our economy, because in addition to our dependence upon the primary products that we develop here, or the primary resources, such as agriculture and minerals and so forth, any jobs that we can

create through high technology are bonuses. And they add to the opportunities and the benefits for the people of this province.

SED Systems employs something like 225 people; Develcon employs between 180 and 190 people; SCI-TECH, if I remember correctly, is somewhere around 40 people; Northern Telecom is around 300 people. You know, and it goes on and on, and some of these companies are, at the present time, talking about expansion, which means increasing the number of employees.

All I can do is stand there and give them three cheers for creating additional jobs in the province of Saskatchewan.

That's the way I see it, Mr. Member.

Mr. Koskie: — In respect to the rates and growth and future needs, this report indicates the Saskatchewan public sector high technology market is predicting little or no growth within the upcoming five years. The private sector, on the other hand, is predicting near or doubling this same period.

I'm rather surprised that we have here the public sector, which has the largest number of high technology employees, or it is . . . The public sector is the largest high technology employer in the province, employing over 50 per cent. And I'm wondering why it is deemed that the public sector, which has been a very high employee, why it would be felt that in the next five years that the public sector would not, in fact, make any increases, any significant increases at all.

Is this because of the Tory policies to undermine and destroy and sell off Crown corporations? I'm not sure, and I was wondering whether the Minister could, in fact, enlighten us in respect to it, or is there if there is a connection?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, no. No, I don't think that the people who prepared that report even gave consideration to whether we were going to be selling off Crowns or not. I think that what they were looking at was the fact that they felt that they had adequate staffing, adequate people in the scientific sector as far as the public sector was concerned. Where we see the increase in high technology is in the private sector.

Mr. Koskie: — I'm just wondering, well let's go ahead with item no. 1 then, Mr. Chairman. We can approve that.

Item 1 agreed to.

Item 2

Mr. Koskie: — Just in respect, Mr. Minister, in governmental research. Could you outline, you have five of a staff, I wonder whether you have those in place, and what generally are you looking at under governmental research?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Well at the present time we have an executive director on the governmental side, and we are doing interviews for four people who will be working under the executive director on the governmental side. And we are presently going over applications for people in the industrial development sector as well.

We also have a director, I'm sorry, we also have a director at the present time in the communications branch.

Item 2 agreed to.

Item 3

Mr. Koskie: — On item 3, Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if the Minister could just outline what he proposes will be done under the industrial development item.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Under industrial development would be the inventor/entrepreneur program, would be the handling of the R&D funding and the liaising with other departments with whom we have to liaise such as Economic Development and Trade, Small Business and Tourism.

Item 3 agreed to.

Item 4

Mr. Koskie: — And research co-ordination — indicating that you have four people, or intending to have, could you indicate whether you have any of them aboard at the present time — employed. And perhaps indicate what is the intention of the . . . what you intend to do under research and co-ordination.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — We have one person at the present time, and that is the director of communications. And this is the sector that will be handling the awareness program and also the liaison with the universities and the SRC.

Item 4 agreed to.

Vote 15 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 15

Items 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 15 agreed to.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND

BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE (RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 56

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 56 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank my officials from Science and Technology and also the minister . . . the hon. member, for the pertinent questions.

Mr. Koskie: — I join with the minister to thank the staff. And I appreciate the direct answers, for a change, from this minister, as opposed to so many others that duck and dodge and are evasive. Thank you very much.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

THE SASKATCHEWAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 35

Item 1

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce Mr. Jim Hutch, who is the president of the Saskatchewan Research Council, sitting on my left; and over here is John Bergsteinsson, who is the director of special projects; and sitting behind me is Ron McGrath, who is the treasurer.

Mr. Koskie: — I wonder if the minister can provide the name of the — you have provided the name of the president — but other executive officers associated with the Saskatchewan Research Council, their particular positions and, if possible, the salaries paid.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — If this is in order, Mr. Chairman, I'd be prepared to have that information sent over to you.

Mr. Koskie: — That's fine. Can the minister indicate whether there are any special research projects that were undertaken during the course of the last year?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I'm having a little difficulty determining zeroing in on the special projects, because we do have some 70 projects going on at the present time at the SRC. Once again, I'd be prepared to make this information available to the Hon. member.

Mr. Koskie: — That would be fine. Just in reading the report, Mr. Minister, of the SRC's 1983 annual report, there's mention of money spent to study the environmental impact of the Cluff Lake, Phase II. I was wondering: will the minister indicate what work, if any, has been done by the SRC to monitor the situation at Key Lake in light of the recent spill up there as a result of some of the PC government's clumsy response to a rather disastrous event. So I'm really asking the minister whether or not the SRC got involved in any monitoring of the Key Lake spill?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — The Saskatchewan Research Council has carried out tests for the Department of Environment both federal and provincial, and for the client, Key Lake.

Mr. Koskie: — Were those reports submitted to you, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — No.

Mr. Koskie: — Would it be possible to get the reports and make them available to the members of the opposition?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, the research council just did analytical work and that information would be pertinent to what was asked for by the parties who contracted for it, and it would be confidential information.

Mr. Koskie: — The grant to the Saskatchewan Research Council has been increased quite substantially and I take no objections to that. Could the minister outline the basic reason for the substantial increase?

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, maybe it's because the minister did a good job of representing the SRC and was kindly treated by the Minister of Finance.

Seriously, what you see in the blue book represents a 5 per cent increase in the A budget — 9 per cent increase if you consider money as something like \$150,000 that was being spent on a energy conservation project in the B budget. And that's why it shows up in the blue book as 9 per cent.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 35 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

THE SASKATCHEWAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 35

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 35 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my officials from the Saskatchewan Research Council, and also to thank the hon. member from Quill Lakes for the pertinent discussions.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:09 p.m.