

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 3, 1984

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Katzman: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and members of the Assembly, 45 students from the Martensville High School. They're here today with us in the west gallery. And I'm pleased to say that on Saturday, the Minister of Culture and Recreation and myself will be with you in Martensville to turn the sod on your new community complex. Let all members all welcome them here please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Domotor: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, a group of grade 7 students, numbering 30 in total. They're accompanied by their teachers, Vern Rudneski; parent, Diane Gross and bus driver, Peter Gauley. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery.

I would hope that their trip is informative and interesting. I will be meeting with them at 2:30 for pictures. And I'd like to ask all the members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome them here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Implementation of Welfare Reform

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Social Services, and has to do with the implementation of what he calls welfare reform, what many other people including many church groups are calling Draconian cuts to what was anything but an over-abundance of money given to welfare recipients.

I think it's obvious that the unemployed employables have had their welfare cheques cut by 40 per cent, but was not announced, and what came as a surprise to a great number of people was the 14 per cent cut to partially employable people. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can define what is meant in your department by that group of people. Who would be included in the 14 per cent cut which was unannounced, but came into effect, as well, on May 1st.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, partially employable people are those people that, for one reason or another, whether it be family problems of a short-term nature, or physical problems of a short-term nature or whatever, are unable to be employed for a short period of time. Those are people that are classed as partially unemployable individuals.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I quote now from the *Prairie Messenger* of April 29th, which the headline titles, "More churches attack welfare reform." In the article it says,

The Regina and district Lutheran ministerial and the church in society committee of the Saskatchewan Conference of the United Church of Canada have added their voices to those opposing the recent welfare reforms in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that in this article they go on to say and make two points which I

would like to quote. One:

But we are also convinced that the integrity of our society cannot be maintained when the disadvantaged are victimized by those in positions of power.

And, secondly:

To speak of creating temporary jobs and providing retraining seems almost ludicrous when unemployment in this country is at an all-time high, and our schools of higher learning are bursting at the seams.

Mr. Minister, I want you to tell us here in this Assembly, and to all the people of the province, especially those who are seeing these drastic cuts, how you justify, at a time when Saskatchewan is facing inflation rates, and increasing department rates and interest rates, how you can explain that kind of a cut to . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, what the people of Saskatchewan need to be told is that the former government, for I don't know how many years, had a welfare system here in the province of Saskatchewan which did absolutely nothing to encourage independence, and initiative, and drive on the part of the people in the welfare system. Their approach to welfare was to simply hand out a cheque month after month, and then to wash their hands and say, that's it. That's it. Mr. Speaker, that is not a productive, forward-looking approach to welfare, and I challenge the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the member opposite . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order! Give the member an opportunity to answer the question. Order. I just asked for order, and before I'm seated, the same member is blurting again, and I'm going to ask him to watch himself.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — I would challenge the member opposite to talk to those welfare clients who presently are unemployed and to ask them if they are not interested in having jobs created for them. That is the goal of this government: to create long-term and immediate short-term jobs for those particular welfare clients who have not had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to be involved in a productive experience for a period of time.

Last year, when we ran a similar program, and we surveyed welfare clients who were involved in this kind of a job creation program, we found that 95 per cent of those clients indicated that they benefitted from that experience, and that they were interested in being involved in a similar job creation experience this year. We are providing that experience for them, and they are benefitting from it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister. He has earlier referred to his definition of "partially employable people." I wonder if he will not admit that many of the people in that group are people who are physically and mentally handicapped. In fact, the welfare rights groups in Saskatoon and Regina are saying that they are being flooded with people who had no idea their payments were being cut back.

In fact, one is a woman in her mid-twenties who is blind, who has been on welfare for a number of years, who is seeing her income cut down to \$178 a month, or by \$30.

Another one who walks only with assistance — a 40-year-old woman — with the help of a walker, is seeing hers cut as well. Can you explain to me how many of these kind of people your so-called welfare reform is affecting, and why you would choose to attack these people at this time?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, we have no intention of attacking the kinds of people that the member opposite is referring to. If he was really concerned about this particular case that he was talking about, why didn't he contact me personally and ask me if I would look into that particular situation? He hasn't done that, Mr. Speaker.

We are concerned about the handicapped and the disabled in the province of Saskatchewan. We have demonstrated that in many ways. Indeed, I'm going to be announcing in the very near future an employment opportunities program for the handicapped people here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I take exception to the minister's comment that I did not let him know. The welfare right group who got a hold of me this morning, I took the first opportunity today to inform him of this kind of cut-back because it comes as a shock to everyone.

What I would like to know, Mr. Minister, is why you did not inform these people that they would have their welfare payments cut back, so they could make the arrangements that they would have to make of leaving the apartment that they are in, or cutting back in areas? Why did you not let them know, the same as you let other people know, of the cut-backs you were going to be making?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, we're concerned that everybody here in the province of Saskatchewan who is involved in receiving welfare assistance receive an appropriate level of welfare assistance. Single employable people need an appropriate level of welfare assistance, and we are providing that to them. Handicapped people need an appropriate level of assistance, and we are providing that to them. Seniors need an appropriate level of assistance, and we are providing that to them.

If, from time to time, there are individual circumstances that arise where an individual has not received the appropriate level of assistance that they require, then I, as Minister of Social Services, am most interested in looking into that particular situation to see what their needs are. And if the member opposite will provide me with the information of the case that he is referring to, I'll be happy to look into it for him.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Social Services. Does the Minister of Social Services deny that the category of partially employable has had their welfare entitlement cut back across the board, and does he deny that that category of partially employable includes a large number of people who are handicapped in some way?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, those particular individuals who are partially employable and who do not require the level of assistance that the former government may have been giving to them for one reason or another, may have had some reductions in benefits.

But as I indicated previously, Mr. Speaker, those particular individuals who have needs will have their needs met. And if the member opposite will provide me with the specific information, I'll be happy to look into the case that he was referring about.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. We are dealing with a class of people. The minister acknowledges that the class has been cut back. The minister acknowledges that this class includes a large number of handicapped. And he wants all of those people to be dependent upon whether or not they get to their MLA or their MLA gets to the minister. My question is this: how can you justify cutting back on the class of people, like partially unemployable, which includes a large number of handicapped people, without at least assessing the needs of each of those before you start cutting back on people who are blind, cutting back on people who need walkers, and cutting back on other people who are handicapped?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, this particular government and this particular minister is very concerned about the handicapped people here in the province of Saskatchewan. We have demonstrated that concern in many ways, and we will continue to do that.

The member opposite has not provided me with the information of the particular case that he is referring to and, when he does so, I will be happy to take a look at it. It's one thing for him to talk. It's another thing for him to provide me with specific information.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister has admitted, I believe, that the group of partially handicapped has been cut back across the piece. The minister has admitted that that group includes a large number of handicapped people. My question to the minister is this: before you permitted a cut-back, a general cut-back in the welfare entitlement of people who are partially handicapped, did you take steps to see that that would not apply to people who are handicapped and who are in that category?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, I indicated that the class of people considered partially employable, for one reason or another, may have had their benefits reduced, depending upon their particular circumstances in which they are living. And of course, that is the key situation, their particular circumstances in which they are living.

The member opposite is attempting to suggest that this government is not concerned in meeting the needs of handicapped people and disabled people. And the fact that we have increased the grants to the disabled people, the handicapped grants here in the province of Saskatchewan by over 20 per cent this year is an indication of the concern that this government has for the handicapped people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, by your own admission, partially employable people have had their allowance cut back. By your own admission, that includes people who are partially employable because they're handicapped. You admitted that in your first statement. By your own admission, Mr. Minister, your reason for doing that is to encourage them to go out and look for work.

Mr. Minister, very briefly, I got a call last night (I got innumerable calls about this), but I got one last night at quarter after 11 from a woman whom I know personally who has a heart condition and who cannot go back to work. If she does, it'll lead to an early grave, if she ever got a job.

Mr. Minister, would you explain to me how your program of cutting back her allowance is going to encourage that woman to go out and find work. Would you just lead me through that.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again the member opposite has not provided me with any specific information about this particular case. He expects me to make comments about a particular case without me having the information before me. And of course that's an impossibility for me to do.

And as I indicated to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of the Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan, that if the member opposite would provide me with the specifics of the case that he's referring to, I would be happy to look into it.

And as I indicated to you, and as I want to indicate to the member opposite again, this government is very concerned about meeting the needs of handicapped and disabled people in the province of Saskatchewan. We will continue to demonstrate that need.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I would ask you not to waste the time of the Assembly by suggesting that I have been less than diligent in bringing to your attention individuals cases. I'm sure a few members have brought to your attention as many welfare cases as I have.

Mr. Minister, would you then answer the general question of how cutting back on the allowance of people who are partially employable because they're handicapped will encourage them to go out and look for work. Surely, if it hadn't been for the handicap, they would have gone out and looked for work anyway. Would you just explain to us how cutting back on their allowance assists those people in finding work?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite seems to forget that this particular government is providing numerous training opportunities for hundreds of people, indeed thousands of people, that are on the welfare rolls here in the province of Saskatchewan — something that was never provided for them before by the former government. Never provided for them before by the former government. Their approach to welfare was a very simple-minded and simplistic approach. Hand out a cheque, hand out a cheque. And demeaning, and demeaning as well.

We, Mr. Speaker, believe that there is a new approach that needs to be taken. That is one which encourages people to be trained, to be re-educated, and provide them with a reasonable level of assistance at the same time. That's what the people of the province of Saskatchewan want.

Now if the member wants to waste the time of this Assembly by asking the same question over and over and over again, I would remind him that I have indicated to him that if he would provide me with the information on the specific case that he is referring to, I would be happy to look into it to determine whether or not that person's needs are being adequately met.

And if that person's needs are not being adequately met, and there is a problem, and there is a legitimate concern, then we will certainly look into it. That is the role of the Minister of Social Services, and that is my commitment to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Minister. New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, when this government came into office there was 44,000 people unemployed — on welfare, rather, and now that figure has ballooned.

Mr. Minister, a person who is handicapped has two problems today in getting work. One is the handicap. The second is they are now competing with able-bodied people for the same jobs, and the situation of those who are handicapped is nearly impossible.

Will you admit, Mr. Minister, that . . . Will you just admit the obvious, that cutting back on the allowance of handicapped people doesn't do anything to get them back to work? Will you just admit the obvious?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, we are providing training and education and clothing and transportation allowances to people on welfare, so that they can get the appropriate training and education and job experiences that they require to make them more productive and competitive here in the province of Saskatchewan. And that's something that the former government did not do.

And I indicated that I will be making an announcement in the near future with regards to a very specific job-creation project for the handicapped people here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Women's Great Expectations

Mr. Sveinsson: — Mr. Speaker, while I consider the issues that have been discussed today very important, I have another area that I would like to address for a moment or two. I'd like to ask the Premier a question that is regarding women's issues, and it's regarding a recent article in the

Women's Guide, a very reputable Regina monthly.

In this article, and I might quote, written by the editor of the monthly, several members — and I understand they're members of your advisory staff — a one Mr. Shorvoyce, a one Mr. Tkachuk, a one Mr. Spetz, a one Mr. Kershaw, indicate that the majority of women don't have any expectations. I would like to ask you, Mr. Premier, are these gentlemen espousing provincial government policy?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to women's aspirations, I expect women in the province of Saskatchewan do have very high expectations. With respect to being elected to the Assembly, we elected more women than lawyers. The first time we have two women in cabinet ever in the history of the province of Saskatchewan, and we're very proud of that.

Legislation with respect to wife-battering, Mr. Speaker, has been brought in. Rural spouses have been given new considerations. There are more women on boards. Women, as I've mentioned, have been elected, Mr. Speaker. We find that women have an increasing role in the province of Saskatchewan, are being recognized right across the country, and we're very, very proud of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — While these gentlemen do indicate that the majority of women in this province do not have expectations, they go on to say, they go on to say, as well, that in recent research and surveys it shows that women only want to sit around in soft, cushy slippers — in soft, cushy slippers and watch soap operas.

Again, these gentlemen are the immediate advisers to the Premier of Saskatchewan. I would ask again, Mr. Premier, do these people espouse the policy of the provincial government, and if they don't, what are you going to do with respect to the statements they've made in a very respected public monthly?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that I recall seeing where members of my staff made any statements in any paper. Mr. Speaker, are these quotes from my staff? I mean, I haven't seen any quotes from my staff.

Mr. Sveinson: — My final question, Mr. Premier, would be: recently there were several members of the Department of Highways transferred to the public sector. Would you consider transferring the gentlemen mentioned in this article to the public sector — to the private sector, I'm sorry — for their very irresponsible approach to women's issues in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, let's make it very clear. I don't believe members of my staff said anything of the sort. And I don't believe the member opposite has any quotes that they said anything of the sort. So until I have evidence that they did, I just don't flat believe it.

Spraying of Forest Land by Woodland Enterprises

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of the Environment, and it's regarding the spraying of 500 acres of forest land north of Candle Lake by Woodland Enterprises.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could indicate to the House if Woodland Enterprises has submitted to your department an environmental impact study into the spraying of the 500 acres of forest land?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Speaker, no, they have not.

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Environment. Are you

going to allow the spraying of the 500 acres with the chemical 2,4-D without an environmental impact study in your department?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Speaker, I was unaware of it till I saw it in the paper myself about a week ago, that they were going to do the spraying up there. Since then, I've asked my department to bring forward to me a complete study on what 's going on and fill me in on all the information necessary in regards to what would be required in regards to whether there should be an impact study or whether it should be allowed, and in regards to the role the Department of Environment should be playing in the regulation of spraying. Because, as you well know, most sprays — in fact, all sprays, are regulated by the Department of Agriculture in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Thompson: — A final supplementary to the Minister of Environment. Will you make sure that there will be no spraying taking place until you have an environmental impact study in your hands?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — No, Mr. Speaker, I can't say that for sure. What I have done is ask my department to bring everything available to me and fill me in on what's going on, and at that time I'll be reviewing it with the department and with probably the Department of Agriculture and all the other necessary or people involved in it in regards to what should be done.

The concern the department has voiced to me so far is that, if it's near any water body or any wildlife, they would have a deep concern about it. So those two issues will be addressed before, as the Department of Environment, we would approve it.

Mr. Thompson: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Minister, considering the fact that Woodland Enterprises are going to carry out the spraying of 500 acres of forest land, a situation that I consider to be very serious and one that should be looked into, I wonder if you would agree that, number one, we should not go ahead with that spraying, and that you urge your colleague to cancel that, and that the silviculture program still continue, and that it be done with high school students and university students who can go in there to this area and harvest the trees and sell it for firewood and create much-needed jobs to hire the labour force that we have in this province. Would you agree to that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't really make any comments about that until I have the report, and I can discuss it with the Minister of the Environment. If there is the opportunities of doing work by students, certainly we will look at it. But I can't comment until I know the details of the operation.

Mr. Thompson: — New question, Mr. Speaker, and I direct my new question to the Premier. I have asked two questions of your cabinet ministers, and I haven't got a clear answer to a situation that I consider to be very serious.

When you start spraying the chemical 2,4-D on 500 acres of forest land in the month of August, we all know that the berries are out at that time, the foliage that is eaten by the moose and the deer and the caribou and the elk, the rabbits, and all the animals that will be eating this foliage and the berries from this heavy droppage, what they say in here, of chemical 2,4-D.

My questions to you, Mr. Premier are, in light of what I have just said: number one, would you consider cancelling the spraying of the 500 acres of that forest with 2,4-D this summer, and an environmental impact study should be carried out? And number two, will you replace that program with a program that will go in and do the same job with the labour force of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I believe that your member has asked a serious question, and if

you think that he should have an answer, give the minister an opportunity to answer.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked if we take it seriously. I take it seriously. I believe he says that it will happen in August. Certainly, between now and August and in the next few weeks, as the minister suggested, he will look at it. We have at least two departments — perhaps three — studying what the impact may be. It's the first time I've heard of 2,4-D being sprayed. Obviously it may be serious. We'll look at it; we'll get back to the member as quickly as possible.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Federal Government Involvement in Lotteries

Hon. Mr. Folk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with a great deal of regret and concern that I rise to inform the House of the recent decision by the federal government to re-enter the lottery business. The federal government, in its announcement on Tuesday, made it abundantly clear that they intend to reach an agreement signed by all 10 provincial governments and the Government of Canada.

The agreement signed in 1979, provided payments from the provinces to the federal government which, to this date, has amounted to some \$128.7 million. In 1983 Saskatchewan's share of these payments amounted to \$1.2 million.

When I say concern, Mr. Speaker, I say so on behalf of the sport, cultural, and recreational associations across our entire province who will ultimately suffer because of this federal intrusion. In addition to these associations, the Western Development Museums and the 11 exhibition associations across our province will also be adversely affected by this decision.

All lottery proceeds in this province, which in 1983 totalled \$7.7 million, went directly to those organizations I just mentioned, and directly and indirectly touched hundreds of thousands of Saskatchewan residents.

This government will continue with our efforts to persuade the federal government to cease its involvement in the lottery business. By pursuing this course of action, we reaffirm our commitment and support to the nearly 300,000 volunteers in this province who are most significantly involved in sport, culture, and recreation. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to utter the strongest possible condemnation of the federal government in the actions in which they have taken. Mr. Minister, not only are they in breach of an agreement, as the Minister of Culture and Youth has pointed out — an agreement which I played a role in negotiating when I was minister of culture and youth — but I think more serious than the loss of revenue to the province and to the sporting organizations is, I think, the ill effects of having two levels of government competing for the lottery dollar. When you have two levels of government competing for the lottery dollar, Mr. Minister, I think you're inevitably going to have both levels of government encouraging people to buy their lotteries, and the net effect of it is an encouragement for the public to spend more on lotteries.

If there's one thing that this province and our society doesn't need, it's more money spent on gambling. We need less money spent on gambling and not more, and I think the minister would make a stronger case if, instead of resting his objections on the financial loss to the province and the organizations, he rested it on, I think, a deeper problem, and that is the extent of gambling in our society. And I simply want to, as I said at the beginning, utter the strongest possible condemnation of the federal government for getting into lotteries and competing with the

provinces for the lottery dollar.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 52 — An Act to amend The Department of Parks and Renewable Resources Act

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources, I move first reading of a bill, An Act to amend The Department of Parks and Renewable Resources Act.

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

Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Wildlife Act

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Hon. Minister, I move first reading of a bill, An Act to amend The Wildlife Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 51 — An Act to establish the Industrial Incentive Program

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, at another time I would be more than pleased to oblige the members opposite and tell them a whole lot about my most recent trip. And maybe, Mr. Speaker, even tell them a whole lot about trips that I have planned for the future.

And maybe even, Mr. Speaker, tell them something of what comes out of those trips — something that they should have learned while they were on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and they might well have stayed here. Unfortunately, because they fouled up then, they are going to be sitting on that side for a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the second reading — and I intend to move second reading of a bill to establish the industrial incentives program at the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker — on March 21st my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Finance, presented a budget which introduced a new thrust for economic development.

This economic development and investment strategy is made up of five key elements, Mr. Speaker. Linked together, these five key elements will create a new, positive climate for industrial growth and business expansion in Saskatchewan.

The first element is the venture capital program, a tax credit which will encourage investors to put money into venture capital funds. These funds must supply equity capital to small businesses engaged in manufacturing and processing, tourism, or research and development. It is the up-front venture capital collar which spurs new enterprise, which expands existing plants, and which, therefore, leads to a healthy economy with greater employment opportunities.

A second element of the strategy is the fixed interest rate program, assisting small businesses to obtain longer term loans at stable rates. This kind of stability gives the entrepreneur more confidence in the economic future, thereby encouraging greater investment and growth.

Third, we are eliminating the provincial corporate income tax for small manufacturing and processing firms, to lift a heavy constraint and free up the business person's money for more investment and growth.

And fourth, we are eliminating provincial sales tax on research and development prototypes to encourage the creation of new equipment, products, and processes which are the future for our continued growth.

Finally, Mr. speaker, we come to the Industrial Incentives Program, an innovative plan to generate permanent jobs and long-term investment.

Each of these programs has a particular purpose, and each stands independently as an important contribution to the economic development plan. But they also link together into a larger overall program — a solid and progressive strategy for industrial growth.

Here's how this strategy looks to the businesses which will lead our industrial development. The venture capital program helps achieve an adequate equity base for financing and can improve the company's debt/equity ration to keep it competitive.

The fixed interest rate program provides security in knowing what a company's future financial costs will be, thereby giving the company confidence to undertake new developments.

The elimination of the provincial corporation tax encourages the small manufacturer/processor to reinvest returns into programs of expansion. The elimination of the provincial sales tax on prototypes encourages new products and processes which are the life-blood of industrial expansion.

And finally, the Industrial Incentives Program not only spurs the Saskatchewan company to start acting on its expansion plans, but giving relief on early costs of expansion, but also keeps Saskatchewan as a province competitive with other provinces when it comes to attracting businesses to move here.

Adequate equity, security of financing costs, greater reinvestment of profits in expansion, or research and development, and relief from heavy investment costs — all of these benefits can be achieved by manufacturers and processors who link up the various elements of the new economic development and investment strategy.

That's why I say, Mr. Speaker, these programs are more than individual incentives. It is important to see how they fit into a larger plan — a comprehensive economic program for Saskatchewan.

And with industrial development will come the economic security — the jobs and the climate of confidence which they all want to see, which we all want to see. We are building for tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, we are investing in the development of our future.

That is the overall strategy. Now I'd like to return to the one facet which we are dealing with, Mr. Speaker, in this act — the industrial incentives program. In this program we have targeted manufacturing and processing because that's where we especially want to see more growth and diversification — the kind of development which will stimulate the whole provincial economy. Each new manufacturing job will result in the creation of additional jobs in other sectors. I have described the industrial incentive program as innovative, partly because of the way it links job creation with business investment. In turn, business investment generates more long-term employment.

The program is important in other ways, too. The government does not propose to involve itself in the business decisions. Under this program the investor knows what incentive is available,

makes the necessary decisions, and gets on with the project. The incentive is paid on the basis of performance. If there is no performance, there is no payment. And here's how the program will work, Mr. Speaker.

An amount of \$7,500 will be paid for each new job created in processing or manufacturing, to a maximum of 25 per cent of the new investment in any project. It can be for an existing enterprise, or a new one. The projects can also be for a plant expansion, or for a brand-new plant. The minimum requirements are the investment of \$30,000, and the creation of one new permanent job. Each incentive payment, Mr. Speaker, will be a wise investment which will stimulate an even greater return for Saskatchewan. We ensure this by linking each new job with a requirement on the employer to invest in capital expansion.

Because the incentive payment on a project will have a ceiling of 25 per cent of the project's capital cost, a company will invest at least four times the amount of the incentive payment. To say it another way, the business will be investing \$30,000 for every new job which qualifies for a payment. And each 30,000, Mr. Speaker, will be a capital investment which will expand our provincial manufacturing and processing capacity. It will continue to yield more business, more trade, and more jobs, far into the future.

There is also a stipulation that jobs which qualify for the \$7,500 payment must be long term. The jobs must be in place for a full year before the incentive payment will be made. If the capital investment has been made, and if the new jobs have been in place for a year, we can be confident that the employment will continue for a very long time. So the Industrial Incentive Program meets the test of being a wise investment by the people of Saskatchewan in the province's economic growth and employment picture.

There's another test that incentive programs face, Mr. Speaker, and that's how well they fit the time frame of the people they're supposed to help, and how accessible the programs are. We've taken several steps in this regard.

First, my department is developing a streamlined application procedure. We don't want the application process to be too complex, so we will be trimming the red tape — a one-page application form in a self-contained application kit, Mr. Speaker.

Second, we will ensure that business people can quickly get the facts, can easily understand if the program is suitable for them, and if they're eligible. We can then submit a concise, understandable, and sensible application form. The systems are streamlined so that a business can move promptly to take advantage of the investment opportunity. The vast majority of applications will be processed, Mr. Speaker, within 15 days of the time they arrive in our offices.

Third, the program will accept applications until March 31, 1985. This time frame will allow early decisions — will, pardon me, encourage early decisions by business. However, businesses will not be rushed into hasty action. Once an application has been approved, the business will have 12 months to bring the project into commercial production. And there will be a further six months after that before the new jobs must all be on-stream.

The Industrial Incentives Program is a major part of our government's overall package of incentives for growth. This kind of program provides a valuable incentive to business, and at the same time ensures the incentive is directed at the creation of permanent jobs and long-term investment. The Industrial Incentives Program is also in keeping with the larger mandate and objectives of my department.

For example, we are building a less bureaucratic structure so that our department will become more accessible to the citizens we are trying to serve. Everyone is aware that something in the order of 1,000 regulations have been eliminated by this government, while in my department we are continuing this approach by making sure that new programs achieve their objectives without

a mass of red tape. Simplicity, directness, open consultation, ease of understanding — these are our goals, Mr. Speaker, and they are applied to the Industrial Incentives Program.

(Short power outage in the Legislative Assembly)

I kind of sense that it really didn't matter anyway because they're sitting in the dark on that side, most of the time, in any event.

But to continue, Mr. Speaker, for those that are left. The Industrial Incentives Program is also in keeping with the larger mandate and objectives of my department. For example, we are building a less bureaucratic structure so that our department will become more accessible to the citizens we are trying to serve. Everyone is aware that something in the order of 1,000 regulations have been eliminated by this government, while in my department, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing this approach by making sure that new programs achieve their objectives without a mass of red tape. Simplicity, directness, open consultation, ease of understanding — these are our goals, and they are applied to the Industrial Incentives Program.

My department is also increasing its efforts to attract new investment to Saskatchewan. This means advertising and publishing, to make this province known around the world. It means assigning skilled and knowledgeable experts to work for us in the United States, in Europe, in Asia, wherever we find people prepared to invest in Saskatchewan's future.

We are planning to do more in all of these areas of activity, providing the link between Saskatchewan opportunities and potential investors. But if we want to attract investors, we must do even more. We must provide the climate that is right. That is why our economic strategy is so important.

Trade is also a necessary part of Saskatchewan's growth and my department's mandate. We will be working harder than ever at promoting Saskatchewan products across the globe. Through our agents, through advertising and literature, through our presence at international trade shows, we tell the Saskatchewan story over and over and over again.

Finally, the Department of Economic Development and Trade is increasing its commitment to the task of convincing Saskatchewan people to tap our own markets here at home. The field of major project procurement is where we are concentrating, bringing together Saskatchewan suppliers with the major industrial projects and organizations who are the buyers.

Purchasing agents for major projects now spend many millions of dollars every year on imports which could be purchased right here in our province. That's a staggering amount, Mr. Speaker, and we are investing our department's energies into bringing those dollars home.

On the whole, we are setting ourselves some immense tasks. It is a long-term commitment, Mr. Speaker. You don't expect overnight to change how foreign investors see us, or how foreign buyers make their trade decisions, or how major procurement agencies at home determine their spending.

We must raise Saskatchewan's profile and then keep it high. It's a long-term task, Mr. Speaker; it's a long-term investment. But only through such a strategy of commitment will we build the economic future that the people of Saskatchewan want and deserve. With that commitment in mind, Mr. Speaker, and with that confidence in Saskatchewan's future, it is with pride that I move second reading of this bill, An Act to establish the Industrial Incentives Program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to listen to these earth-shattering announcements made by this minister, because the only other time that I can remember the

lights going out is when the minister was holding forth with a great piece of legislation. This bill, Mr. Speaker, was announced in the budget, and under "Small Business" on page 3 the Minister of Finance read into the record that said:

But more is needed to encourage investment and new jobs in our manufacturing and processing sector. I am therefore pleased to announce three further initiatives for this purpose.

First, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade will be introducing legislation to establish the Industrial Incentives Program.

Under this program, \$12 million will be set aside to provide one time payments of \$7,500 for each new permanent job created by manufacturing and processing firms. Current projections are that this program will create over 1,500 permanent jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest when he made that statement in March. A number that I'd like to draw to the minister's attention and to this House and to the manufacturers in Saskatchewan, that when they took office in 1982 there were 28,000 people working and actively employed in manufacturing in Saskatchewan — 28,000 people. Now that's not a big number. I believe that, if Saskatchewan would be manufacturing all the equipment that we use in agriculture, in oil, and in various industries, we could use more than twice that many people in manufacturing. I'm not saying that there was a ultimate number. I'm not saying that that was perfect, but there were 28,000 people working as of March 1982.

After this government introduced their open for business, open for big business, politics, after they worked at it for two full years — the anniversary which was the longest legislative day in Saskatchewan's history, by the way, Mr. Speaker; the longest legislative day in Saskatchewan's history marked two full years of this government's open for business, open for big business, policies — how many people were employed in the manufacturing section? How many people are employed in the manufacturing section as of this March? Twenty-three thousand. Where did those 5,000 people go?

They say they need \$12 million. Mr. Speaker, they've already blown it. They've already blown it because we've already spent that \$12 million feeding those people. We are spending money feeding . . . We lost 5,000 jobs with your Open for Business concept in just two years — 5,000 jobs. Now the minister says that if these people spend \$30,000, he'll give them \$7,500 for each of those jobs they re-invent.

Just a short list, Mr. Speaker. If I look at Friggstad's down in my colleague's constituency of Shaunavon; if I go out here to Degelman's Construction, Degelman's just out on the north side of Regina; you go to Yorkton and you look at Morris or Leon. You go and look at Schulte or . . . (inaudible) . . . You go and look at . . . (inaudible) . . . in, Mr. Minister, the member for the Quill Lakes' ridings. And you look at all those manufacturers.

Those people are employing 5,000 less people today than when you took over. Five thousand people less are working for these people. If these people, if these manufacturers, if these people would have had the incentive, Mr. Speaker, that the oil companies got, they'd be working.

If you would have taken the millions and millions of dollars you pour down some black holes, these people would be working. The money that you poured into oil, and the incentives that you had ready the day after you got elected, stimulated the oil patch, but it cut off, it cut off the people.

Now they're coming along with a popcorn and peanuts program, saying, "Spend \$30,000 and we'll give you \$7,500 to do it right away." To do it right away, to do it right away, Mr. Speaker. No way.

They're going to have to spend \$30,000 for equipment. They're going to have to spend an additional 12 or 13 or \$14,000 to employ that guy for a whole year. Then they're going to expect us to give them the \$7,500 because you won't be in office by the time this program goes into effect. You won't be in office.

Here's another example, Mr. Speaker and Deputy Speaker, that you are transferring and shifting a program onto the backs of the government that's taking over. We're going to be paying for the program that is a beef incentive program, the \$25 tax credit. We're going to have to find the money to pay for that one, and we're stuck with having to find the money to pay for this one.

You're going to process the applications in . . . (inaudible) . . . You spent the first half of your speech talking about . . . You spent the first half of your speech talking about guaranteed interest. I can't find that in the bill, Mr. Speaker. I can't find that in the bill, where you're going to guarantee a fixed interest rate. If that's in the bill, I'd like to see it.

I think there's many, many more things that need to be looked at. This PC government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this big open for big business politics have not helped small business. They've not helped the middle-sized and small manufacturer. They've laid off 5,000 people. They've not helped Main Street. I can go to Main Street in Swift Current or Moose Jaw or Yorkton or any city in this province, and Main Street is hurting, Mr. Minister.

This government with their programs are not part of the solution, Mr. Deputy Speaker; they're part of the problem, and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

LABOUR

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 20

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

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure for me to introduce some of my staff. On my immediate right, is Mr. Peter Grady, the deputy minister of Labour, and to his right, Mr. Pat More, director of administration and services. To my left, Mr. Graham Mitchell, executive officer of the Labour Relations Board. Directly behind me, Mr. John Alderman, acting director of Occupational Health and Safety, and to his right, Dick Richards, my ministerial assistant. And Brian King, chairman of the compensation board, is at the back . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon me, Ruth. To Dick's right, she's with the acting director of policy planning and research.

Mr. Chairman: — I apologize for the interruption to the Minister of Labour. I believed he was completed his introduction.

Item 1

Mr. Shillington: — I entirely agree with the sentiments of the chairman in trying to hurry the minister through that unnecessarily long introduction.

An Hon. Member: — A very political introduction.

Mr. Shillington: — That highly political introduction. Mr. Minister, I would like to begin with some former questions: — one is the names, titles, and monthly salary of your personal staff.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I have a list of that, and we can send it over.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, would you as well send me the salary of Barry Hodgson. It's not on here. It simply says he's from SPC. Would you give me his salary with SPC?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Hodgson is on staff with SPC. He's not with the Labour department as such.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, this is . . . I hate to get bogged down on the third question, but he's part of your personal staff. It has been traditional for ministers to provide details of their personal staff, whether they are funded out of the line department, or whether salaries are picked up in a Crown corporation. This has been traditional to supply it.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — I have no difficulty with that. We'll send that over. You can have it.

Mr. Shillington: — I note that the list is absent the name of Adrian Lozinsky. It's my understanding that Adrian Lozinsky was a ministerial assistant appointed May '82 (one of the initial people on your staff), was there until the last six weeks or so, and is now manager at the workers' advocate office.

Mr. Minister, when your party took office, you decried the politicization of the public service. Would you not agree that appointing your own executive assistant to a senior position within the department of which you are a minister does indeed politicize the public service and the workers' advocate's office in particular?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lozinsky resigned from his position of ministerial assistant prior to being appointed to the position to look after the workers' advocate division for us.

Mr. Shillington: — Well I grant the minister that he's not drawing two salaries — I wasn't suggesting that. I'm suggesting, Mr. Minister, that it is inappropriate to be appointing executive assistants, two by OC. The minister will be aware, as other members may not, but the minister will be aware that these workers' advocate positions have previously been appointed by order in council. You appointed your own executive assistant by order in council to a position within the department.

My question was not is he drawing two salaries, but, do you feel it is appropriate to be politicizing the public service in this way?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I disagree with the member opposite that it is politicizing the position. Mr. Lozinsky was in charge of workers' compensation all the time that he was with my department. We felt we needed extra help in that department to speed up the appeal process, him knowing that position — and it's a position difficult to get people into. And he was appointed for that position to help the advocates with our work there.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'd ask you . . . I would ask you for Mr. Lozinsky's salary, both as an executive assistant and his salary as a manager of that office. If I have your undertaking to provide it, I do not necessarily need that orally. And I see the minister nodding.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — We will send that over to you.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, did you advertise the position? Did you seek out . . . What steps did you take to determine the number of qualified people? I have difficulty believing that in this day of this new Tory prosperity any job with a decent salary would not attract a goodly number of candidates.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Member, the position is a temporary position until we have the opportunity to advertise for it.

Mr. Shillington: — Are you saying that the position is going to be advertised?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Yes, that's true.

Mr. Shillington: — Do you anticipate Mr. Lozinsky will apply for it? Is he simply doing it during a period in which there's no manager, and will then be returning to your office? Or do you anticipate he will be applying for the position?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, at this point in time I have no idea who will apply for the position. When that happens, anyone interested in the position will apply. Mr. Lozinsky may be one of them. At this point in time I have no idea.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, another question, and that relates to your deputy's relationship with organized labour. Traditionally, the deputy minister has played an important role in relating to organized labour and leaving organized labour feeling that their views are brought to bear on government issues. The deputy has played an important role in that liaison.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you're satisfied with the relationship which your deputy has developed with organized labour and with working people? Mr. Minister, it's my impression that he has had some problems. It may be nothing more than him basking in the fires of your own relationship with organized labour, which have been as stormy as anything in 15 years. So he may be the innocent victim of your winsome ways. But I ask again, Mr. Minister, are you satisfied with the relationship which your deputy's developed with working people generally?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I suppose if I wasn't satisfied he wouldn't be sitting beside me today. And you talk about the stormy sessions. Certainly there have been days that have been stormy, but I would probably suggest that any minister, or deputy minister of Labour has been in those situations on many occasions. If you consider the fact that we only had 28,000 of work days lost last year due to strikes, compared to 175,000 work days lost during your administration, then I'd say that it hasn't been that stormy.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, were you satisfied with the treatment you got at the last convention of the federation of labour when they sat as silent as the hills, both during your speech, and when you walked out?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to say what I think or don't think. The SFL (Saskatchewan Federation of Labour) chose to not respond. That's their prerogative. The year before, it was just the opposite. Next year, if I get invited to the SFL convention, I'll be there, and it will be interesting to find out how they react next year. But I'm certainly not going to stay away just because of the attitude. We'll be there. We're interested in labour, and that's my role, and we'll continue to do that.

Mr. Shillington: — I grant you one thing, Mr. Minister, it will be interesting to see, next year, how they top last year's performance.

Mr. Minister, I want to get on to the minimum wage survey and your survey. On March 10, I believe it was, your deputy minister . . .

An Hon. Member: — Step outside and say that.

Mr. Shillington: — On March 10, your deputy minister? I don't think I will. The way legal suits are flying around these days, it is scarcely safe to say hello. I think I must be the first opposition member ever to be challenged to say outside the House that a minister is covering up. That has got to be a sign of how thick and fast . . .

An Hon. Member: — A lot of innocent people out there.

Mr. Shillington: — There are a lot of innocent people out there, but the minister in charge of SGI is not one of them. He is a political animal, the same as I am.

An Hon. Member: — I notice you weren't anxious to ask too many questions today, though.

Mr. Shillington: — Hang on, Paul, the issue will be around.

To get back to labour estimates — on March 10, Mr. Minister, your deputy said he would have the minimum wage survey results analysed within a month. That month, of course, is almost two. I'd ask you, Mr. Minister, for the results of that survey.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I stated in the House, I believe, that the survey was going to be done in two phases. We have completed the first phase, which is the mail-out to a number of businesses in the province, and we are at present starting the second phase of going to the employees of the province. Once we have those two completed and put together, we will have a final report.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, you didn't say that . . . I don't think you did say it in the House. I think you said that to a gaggle of reporters in a scrum who asked some obvious questions like: why were only employers surveyed? Mr. Minister, I don't recall you ever telling anyone, last year after your debacle with the survey in the Yorkton mall, I don't recall any suggestion that this was going to be a two-stage survey.

I suggest, Mr. Minister, you went with a highly-biased survey. When that was pointed out to you that the results were virtually worthless because of its one-sided nature, I suggest you then ran for cover and said, "Oh well, we're going to do another one which will be a little more balanced."

The obvious question, Mr. Minister: why didn't you survey both employers and employees at the same time and short-circuit the process a little? It took you, Mr. Minister, one full year to survey the employers. I have a suspicion, Mr. Minister, that it's going to take you another full year to survey the employees, by which time it will be the spring of 1985, and we'll still have no increase for those on minimum wage. Mr. Minister, why didn't you survey them both at once, and try to complete this within a reasonable time frame?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I wanted to get the initial reaction from the employers to find out what the wage policies, generally speaking, that is being carried on with by the employer group of the province. We've done that survey. It's being evaluated at the moment.

And I would like to tell the member opposite that we've had a fantastic return — in the neighbourhood of 65 per cent — which we understand from across Canada is an exceptional return when you look at the national average as being 15 to 18 per cent. We've had a tremendous return. We are doing that evaluation.

And the second phase is that we want to give the minimum wage earners out there the benefit of the doubt to cover the summer season when those people are getting summer jobs, and to find out just how many are on minimum wage during those months. And we won't be at the early part of '85 when we get the results. We're going to have them much sooner than that.

Mr. Shillington: — When do you anticipate, just for the record, Mr. Minister — because I'm going to remind you of this next year when spring comes, and we still haven't got them, and I'm sure that will be the case. Mr. Minister, when do you expect you'll get the results of what is now, I guess, the third survey in the minimum wage?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, there has never been a third — or never will be a third survey, and I know what the member is referring to. We are continually doing that every time we go around the province.

The fact that the second one is getting organized and planned now, we haven't set our final date of return, but once we get it put together and get it out, it'll be a matter of a month to six weeks, the same as we did with the employer group, and I expect to have it very, very shortly after that period. It'll be dependent on when we can get the program started now.

We wanted to wait until towards the end of May in any event, to give the students in that part a chance to be out in the work-force.

Mr. Shillington: — Well there's something rather normal about this province. Summer comes every year. Why didn't you do all this last summer, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — I suppose I could ask the member why didn't he do it two or three years ago, too. We have found out that there isn't a jurisdiction in Canada that can tell us the actual numbers of people that are on minimum wage, federally or any other province. And we felt it was about time that we found out for sure. And the member opposite has been talking about the massive numbers of minimum wage, 60,000. And I have a press release here where all of a sudden we're down to 50,000. And now the Leader of the Opposition is saying X number of thousands. Nobody knows. And for us to decide what we do with the minimum wage, you have to have good, solid data to make those kind of decisions, and that's the data we're going to get.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I'll tell you what you're doing. You're stalling. You are stalling on the issue. I know that this government thinks it's good politics to beat up on the victims. And I know the Minister of Social Services thinks it's good politics to stand up in the House and say that if you reduce the level of support for handicapped . . . for people who are handicapped and on welfare, they'll go back to work . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, it is what he said. That, in fact, is what he said in his first question. And I know that this government cannot believe such nonsense. I know you also know that goodly numbers of the public do and therefore you think it's smart politics to beat up on the victims. And I suggest, Mr. Minister, that's what you're doing here — you're beating up on the victims.

Mr. Minister, by what possible criteria could you believe that those who are at the very bottom of the economic ladder should have no increase? Why is it that they should have no increase when members of this Assembly help themselves to a 5 per cent increase, which I voted for? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I've heard some tall tales. I think that's a tall one.

Mr. Minister, we took a 5 per cent. You gave \$3,000 — a \$3,000 increase — to those at the very top of the ladder in your own government. The average increase in the industrial wage index in Canada is 7 to 8 per cent, and it would be about the same in Saskatchewan, although I don't know that figure offhand.

Virtually everybody has been getting an increase. Why pick those at the bottom, those whose grocery bills are the hardest to manage, those whose rent is highest in proportion to total income, those who have the least left over for anything in the nature of a luxury? Why pick those at the bottom of the economic ladder to freeze, as the only people who have been frozen? They're the only people who have been frozen, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite seems to have the idea that someone starting on the minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour starts there and then he's on it forever. How do you know that he hasn't had a 15 per cent increase since he started on the minimum wage this year? That's the kind of information we're trying to find out, and we're going to have a pretty good idea, after we've finished with our evaluation of the employer's survey, exactly what the policies are of business out there is, as far as the minimum wage is concerned. People can start at 4.25 an hour. Three months from now they may be at 4.50 an hour. Another six months from they may be at 4.80 an hour. How many are staying on minimum wage? That's what we're trying to find out. And even with that, Saskatchewan's got the highest minimum wage in North America.

When we have been going through times of some restraint, and the small business person out there is having difficulty with keeping his business in the black and above that line, we have to be very, very careful for that group of people, and how rapidly we increase the starting wage.

We are going to find out how many stay on that 4.25 an hour forever. And I don't think we'll find that it's that many. The employee's survey is what's going out now, and that's what we're going to get back from them as to when they started; how long they have been on it; do they have a policy in their operations where they get periodic increases?

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I suggest it's irrelevant to say as you do, "Ah, but their misery may not last forever, but their misery may not last forever." Mr. Minister, granted their misery may not last forever, but neither does inflation stand still for those people. They have got the same increases in their grocery bills as the highly paid political assistants of this government, which have received such magnanimous increases. They've got the same grocery bill, the same rent as members of this Assembly, the same bills to pay as people, generally, whose increases, as I say, have averaged about 7 per cent.

Mr. Minister, how can you say to those people, "Ah, but you must bear the brunt of the cost of recovery," as you apparently just did? "I know it's tough. I know your bills are going up. But, I'm sorry you people have got to bear the cost of the brunt of recovery." If you believe that freezing people's wages would lead to a recovery, why wasn't that an appropriate thing to do with everybody generally? Why did you just pick that group at the bottom of the economic ladder who have no real means of voicing their complaints, because they're separated and spread out and not, in any sense, organized?

I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that's why you decided to make villains out of the victims was because they have no means of bringing their plight to the attention of the public.

Mr. Minister, how long is this injustice going to continue? In a public sense, have you made any decision as to how long you're going to continue with this wage freeze? Is it something you're going to review in June or May, or not until January, or not until June of next year, or not until after the next election? Have you any time frame for bringing this travesty to an end, which you might share with us?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, when we have the highest minimum wage in Canada at \$4.25 an hour, when you look at some of the major provinces or the bigger industrial provinces in Canada — British Columbia, for example at \$3.65 an hour, or Ontario at \$3.85 an hour — these are starting wages, and I'm sure that's what we are going to find out. It's the basis for starting a salary. It doesn't mean that they are not getting increases. You make it sound that that particular group out there, \$4.25 an hour, and that's it. We are finding out that it is only a starting. I've talked to people that have started at 4.25 an hour and within three months they're at 4.50.

An Hon. Member: — 4.35.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well it could be 4.35, but that's higher than the minimum wage. They

could be at 4.90, 4.80 within six months, seven months. That's employees getting increases. And it's not frozen at 4.25 an hour. This is what you keep dwelling on all the time. We have the highest in North America at 4.25 an hour.

Take Ontario, for example. We're 10.4 per cent higher than they are. Look at British Columbia. We're 16.4 per cent higher. And you can go across the whole gamut. Those are the positions that we are in.

When I get my data together to make reasonable, good decisions, we will look at the minimum wage, and I'll make a recommendation to my cabinet and caucus colleagues. But until I have that data, I have no intentions of doing it. But it could be this summer. We'll know when we get it put together. Once we have that information, we'll make that decision.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, if there is such a paltry number of people on the minimum wage, why has this government agonized so long over the problem?

I suggest to you that the figures which we have put forward are largely accurate, and there are 60,000 people at or extremely close to the minimum wage, whose wages are affected by the minimum wage. Mr. Minister, the survey, as biased and one-sided as it was, is apparently not going to be released. I'd ask you why you announced on May 1 that you wouldn't release the results of the survey.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I didn't say I wouldn't release the results of the survey. I'll release the results when I have the two phases put together.

Mr. Shillington: — "The results of a government" . . . I'm reading from the *Leader-Post* article of May 2, 1984:

The results of a government survey of non-union employees determine how many wage earners are paid the provincial minimum will not be released until a second survey of employees is completed, according to ministerial assistant (Dick Richards).

Why, Mr. Minister, can you not release the results of the first survey now? Is it because, as biased and one-sided as that survey was, you don't like the results, and you want to doctor up the final result with a second survey which will even be more slanted?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well first of all, Mr. Chairman, I haven't got the report of the evaluation of the first survey, and once we have that and the results of the second survey, we'll put it together. And that was a . . . You're saying it was biased. I sent out a survey form to a group of employers in the province of Saskatchewan asking what their wage policies were, how many people they have on minimum wage, how long they keep them on minimum wage. What's biased about that, when we sent out another form to the employees asking the questions that we need to know from that? Once we match them together, you will have your report.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, you didn't answer my question. Do you have any . . . Have you any definite date at this point in time to which the minimum wage freeze will continue? Have you got a date before which you're not going to review the minimum wage?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I've got no specific date. It will depend on when the information comes in. When we finalize the two surveys that we are undertaking, we'll evaluate them and put the information together.

And I'd like to have the members opposite just look back in some of your years of administration as far as the minimum wage is concerned. You talk about the long freeze of minimum wage. From December, or from January, 1972 . . . or pardon me, January 1, 1977 to January 31, 1978, it took you 13 months. Another period here: '78-79, took you 16 months. Back in January 1, '72, 14

months, and you only went 25 cents at that particular time. You didn't do it every five or six months either, and we are wanting to get that information together so we know what we're talking about, and to make a good proper decision for the recommendation to my colleagues.

Mr. Shillington: — It may well be, Mr. Minister, that we might have on occasion waited longer than we should have to increase the minimum wage. But that scarcely is relevant to what you have done which is impose an indefinite freeze on minimum wage which is going now into its third year, and which I predict, I predict, Mr. Minister, the spring session of this legislature will resume with you still analysing the survey results and still not having released them.

I think that, as unfortunate as it is, and as bleak a prospect as this is, I think those on minimum wage are going to face a permanent freeze during the period of time that this government is in office, and I think, Mr. Minister, that you ought to be ashamed of that. You ought to be ashamed to treat those at the bottom of the economic ladder with such callousness and cruelty — and I'll use that word. Those who are least able to withstand the freeze have had it imposed on them.

Mr. Minister, at the time this government took office, the minimum wage was about 50 per cent of the industrial average for Saskatchewan. It's now 40 per cent of the industrial average. Their position is declining relative to the rest of the people in Saskatchewan, and I wonder, Mr. Minister, how you justify a further deterioration in those whose needs are greatest.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, one thing the member is forgetting, and I mentioned this earlier on, that the small-business person that is involved in the industries that have those types of wages have had an extremely difficulty time over the past two or three years.

And when we talk to people that are on minimum wage — and you talk about being callous and so on. I've talked to people — many of them — that are on minimum wage, and those people are telling me, "Mr. Minister, a job is more important to me than another increase or two increases in the minimum wage." They want to have their job.

And if the business shop is having difficulty, and we increase the minimum wage, we've had them tell us also, "If that's the case, we are going to reduce from three to two," and the job is lost. And that is, I'd say, very common around the province, and that is being the balance that we have been trying to create and hold.

And I'm going to be certainly looking at the minimum wage. As I said, we'll be making some recommendation to our cabinet and caucus colleagues as to whether we should or should not, once we have our information.

Mr. Shillington: — Another group that has been a victim of this government's callousness and incompetence is handicapped people. Later . . . most latterly today when we discovered that those whose handicaps makes them partially employable have had a \$30 cut in their welfare, but it didn't begin . . . Your war on handicapped did not begin with the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Minister, another one of your sterling achievements has been the accessibility legislation. You've tripped and fallen in a spectacular fashion on a spectacular number of issues, but this may be your crowning achievement. You voted in favour of a bill introduced by the former attorney general in the former administration . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, you did not, but all of your caucus did — unanimously in favour of it.

The bill was aborted by the election in April. You didn't introduce anything until December 1983, 19 months after the election, and the bill . . . During the 19 months you said that you were consulting with people. Well I don't know who you talked to, Mr. Minister, but it seems you ignored a goodly number of people, because when you introduced that bill last December a goodly number of people were horrified. Such groups as the Mennonite Brethren. I've got the letter in the file in which they pay you a few choice compliments that I'm glad were not paid to

me. Everything from the Mennonite Brethren to The Voice of the Handicapped.

Mr. Minister, how could you have spent 19 months consulting with people and have produced a bill that virtually nobody is happy with?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that the previous administration took 10 years and never did anything. Within 19 months at least we had a bill on the table — it was done in the fall session just before Christmas — that gave us the opportunity . . . And I would like to remind the member that it's what we call talking to people, communicating with people. We gave them the opportunity to look at that legislation. We held meetings around the province with the various groups — eight communities, we held meetings.

Out of those meetings, a number of criticisms, suggestions, came out of them. We listened to the people about those criticisms and suggestions. And I'll probably next week be tabling the amendments and giving second reading to Bill 19.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, I wonder during what time frame you consulted with everybody, because I happen to have in my file an article in the *Star-Phoenix* of February 15, 1984, in which Ken Norman, the former chief commissioner of the Human Rights Commission, is decrying your failure to consult with anyone.

Mr. Minister, who did you consult with since January? And why were you able to keep this such a secret from any of those who were interested? Mr. Minister, I suggest that you did not do an adequate job of consulting before December '83. That's obvious. It's obvious by the bill you brought in. If you intended people to be as angry and upset with the bill as, in fact, they were, then I suggest that you are an unusual person for public life. And if you didn't know they were going to be upset, then I suggest you weren't listening to them.

Mr. Minister, who have you been consulting with since February 15th? And I will just read you a couple of these complimentary paragraphs by Ken Norman:

The next session of the legislature is fast approaching, yet not a word from Labour Minister Lorne McLaren on the subject of his plans with regard to Bill 19, the building accessibility proposal. It will be recalled that this controversial bill was allowed to die on the order paper last session. McLaren's expressed intention at that time was to seek public comments on his draft legislation before carrying it forward to second reading.

Well, a good deal of criticism was levied at the bill in hastily convened hearings in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. And any fair assessment of what McLaren heard leads to the conclusion that Bill 19 is a rather sorry piece of work. The question now to be asked is why Lorne McLaren is not continuing the public dialogue initiated by him.

Mr. Minister, why have you not continued the public dialogue to bring it to some sort of a conclusion that is broadly acceptable to groups such as the Mennonite Brethren, the Voice of the Handicapped? Mr. Minister, your own Human Rights Commission has been critical of your behaviour throughout this. Mr. Minister, why don't you ask people before you bring in these, to use the words of the article, sorry pieces of legislation? Why haven't you brought your proposals before the groups during the intervening period to find out if they're going to be acceptable? Why surprise them and sneak up on them with your incompetence? Why don't you put your proposals before them and get their comments in advance, instead of being the brunt of so much criticism afterwards?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I stated earlier that at least within 19 months we had a bill together. And that's more than 10 years of your administration. And I'm sure there was

The Voice of the Handicapped, and disabled people, and that, back in 1972, '73, '74. Why didn't you come with an act then? At least within 19 months we had something — a base to start with.

And we did talk to many, many groups. We said our doors were open. I met with The Voice of the Handicapped, and the provincial committee on accessibility, in Saskatoon. But sooner or later, Mr. Chairman, we have to come to a point to get something started.

I could have been holding meetings since February to now, but I have to get the amendments drafted which has been happening the last six weeks. And if we continually hold meetings and keep changing it all the time, we have nothing to start with.

That's the only reason we finally said no to any of the groups that wanted to come in the last month to six weeks. We are coming with our amendments; we are coming with second reading of our bill. If there's still problems with it, I'm sure we can make amendments down the road again. But at least we have a basic bill to start with and to try out around the province, and that's what we're doing.

We have listened to many, many people. We have met with the human rights on many, many occasions. But sooner or later we have to start with a bill in the House and work from there. And that's what we've done.

Mr. Shillington: — I'll grant you, Mr. Minister, that your getting started doing anything is an extremely fragile process, and seems to be easily deterred.

Mr. Minister, I remember in the fall of '82, standing on the steps of this Legislative Building with you, in which you promised it right away in the fall session. And a full year went by. And I remember you promising it in the spring, and it didn't happen. I remember, Mr. Minister, you promising this on innumerable occasions, and it just never came to be. So I will grant you, Mr. Minister, that no one would want to discourage you from getting started on something. That seems to take a fair amount of time.

I will leave the subject by encouraging the Minister to withdraw the bill. I do not believe that bill is capable of being remedied without amendments so extensive that I think it would be simpler to start with another bill. If you're going to put a few band-aids on that, then, Mr. Minister, you haven't accomplished anything. If you're going to make it into a proper bill, the amendments are going to be so extensive as to almost unmanageable.

I would recommend, Mr. Minister, that you withdraw that bill and bring in a new bill. And you might look, Mr. Minister, at the bill which I introduced, but which this government, with its overwhelming arrogance, denied first reading — something I have never seen done in this House in all the years I've been here. You might look at that bill, though. That, I think, was broadly acceptable. If you want to find something that the public will accept, I suggest, Mr. Minister, you might do worse than to try the bill that I introduced, or the bill that was introduced by the former attorney general in March of 1982.

I suggest, Mr. Minister, that you try looking at one of those because, if you put a few band-aids, Mr. Minister, on your own bill, you are still going to be in the position of having made enemies out of everyone and friends out of no one.

Mr. Minister, I want to get on to the issue of the workers' compensation. Mr. Minister, I don't have the kind of evidence for this I do with respect to minimum wage, but the administration of this fund has deteriorated, I think, very sharply. At the time the former administration left office, it was one of the best schemes, and one of the most sensitively administered. And that's changed. I sense that the way anyone in public life senses a change. It's something you feel more than something you can count on your fingers. But one bit of evidence is that for the first time in many years, we now have an active injured workers' association.

I don't recall us having an active injured workers' association since the regime of Ross Thatcher. During the 11 years we were in office, they disappeared. They disappeared because it was unnecessary, and now you've got one. And I think, Mr. Minister, that that confirms what I have observed, and that is that the administration of the workers' compensation fund has not been sensitive; it had not been humane; and it has not been very generous. And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to respond to that.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, the compensation board has held two meetings with the injured workers' association, and out of those two meetings we have not had any complaints from that association as far as the administration of the workers' compensation or the handling of the fund is concerned.

Mr. Shillington: — Well why was it, Mr. Minister, that during the period of time the Liberals were in office there was an active injured workers' association? During the period of time the New Democratic Party was in office, the group withered and died, shortly after we came to office. Within a year or two of the time when we came to office the group virtually ceased to function. Now it's necessary again. Does that not suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that there are some, that you are less successful in meeting the needs of injured people?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as far as the injured workers' association is concerned, our understanding is basically they are trying to process their own claims, and we have hardly had that much communication with them other than the two meetings that we've had with the board, and no complaints coming from them.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, if the history of your dealing with any workers' group is anything to go by, they will start off hoping for the best, and wind up with their worst fears realized. Your relationship with organized labour did not begin at the level it is now. They started off hoping for the best and trying to deal with you, found out that was impossible, and have now come to expect the worst from you, and give you the kind of treatment which you got at the last convention.

I will grant you, Mr. Minister, that you may have met once or twice with the injured workers' association, and they may not have been abrasive with you, but, Mr. Minister, if you don't start to meet the needs of those injured workmen, you're going to find that each time you meet with them they are a little less patient, and a little more abrasive. And I suggest, Mr. Minister, to you that unless you begin to administer that fund in a more sensitive fashion than what you have, then your relationship is going to deteriorate with this group as it has with virtually any other group with whom you've dealt. And we're going to get to some of them in a moment, but I can list them off.

Among the Lorne McLaren fan clubs are virtually every women's group in the province, who started off trying to work with you, found it impossible; virtually every trade union in the province; and, Mr. Minister, I now suggest you're about to develop the same sort of warm, cozy relationship with injured workers who are finding themselves, like those on minimum wage, like the partially employable, i.e., handicapped, who had their welfare cut. They're finding, like everybody, like all the other victims of society, that they're about to become the culprits.

Look at the people, Mr. Minister, from whom you're received complaints; the people on welfare, the people on minimum wage, the injured workers — doesn't read like a roster from *Who's Who*, does it?

It suggests, Mr. Minister, that they're another group who have been victims and made into culprits, and I suggest, Mr. Minister, that you avoid, at least, this group, who are, in no way, victims of their own circumstances.

I know — the Minister of Welfare may well believe that handicapped people on welfare, because of some flaw in their character, he may believe that if he cuts the welfare, they'll get up and go to work. I don't think he does. I think he's pandering to a sentiment in society which doesn't do western society any credit.

But I can't believe, Mr. Minister, that you believe that injured workers are somehow or other responsible for their own plight. You must admit that, by and large, they're innocent victims, and I suggest, Mr. Minister, that you exempt these groups from the war that you've declared on the poor and the unfortunate, and you start to treat this group with the kind of sensitivity which they thought was their right during the former administration.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it's very interesting to hear the comments of the member opposite about what a mean, mean fellow that I'm perceived to be, and that doesn't seem to be working out there. It doesn't seem to be happening out there.

The injured workers' association, in three months, have only appealed their own claims. The workers' compensation board has had no other approaches from the association. And I have sat in on a number of my meetings with injured workers and listened to the complaints of how they were listened to previously.

Many of them — and every time I go to Saskatoon, and I'm not going to mention the gentleman's name, because he's there every second time I'm up there, complaining about the past — but at least they can come in and listen or have me listen to them. And that is happening, and we are looking after our cases with just as much compassion, if not more, than was ever done before, also.

And I do not appreciate those kind of comments coming because I do care about the injured worker of Saskatchewan. I do care about the handicapped person of Saskatchewan. I do care about the women's group, and we can talk about the women's groups in Saskatchewan, and what is going to happen with their programs and the programs that my hon. colleague has planned for them to bring them to the forefront.

We've got no argument with them whatsoever, and we will do everything we can to assist those groups, but we still have to keep the economy and that of the province going, and to me that's the priority so that we can have the jobs and that for the handicapped, for the women, and so on. And we are just as anxious to see cases looked after in the workers' compensation area as anyone else.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, by that latter comment, did you suggest that somehow or other the high living of the injured workmen is inhibiting economic recovery? You just said, "We've got to keep this economy going at all costs." Was that some sort of an oblique suggestion that the luxurious circumstances in which virtually every injured workman finds himself is somehow or other contributing to our economic woes?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, if we were concerned about — or not concerned about — the injured workers of the province, we wouldn't be neglecting the assessment rate, for example, and even with the increases that we have come with already, we have not gone down with the employers. They still pay the same as when you were in office. Some categories have changed a little bit, but we did introduce a bill last fall to increase benefits to disabled workers for 1983, and that session resulted in the board spending over \$30 million increasing the benefits for the injured worker of the province.

And besides that, we have a number of amendments to the compensation act that we will be giving first reading in the next few days also to further improve benefits to the disabled of the province immediately on passage of that bill.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, in a letter which appears to be undated actually, addressed to yourself, they asked for a number of things. They asked for a minimum number of members on the board of appeal. They asked for equal representation on the board of appeal. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you've had an opportunity to consider this request, and if you are going to grant it.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, in my opinion we have the best board in Canada, and when a system is working, I'm not going to go and make changes to that system. The letter, I just can't recall that letter, but we have no intention of changing the system of the workers' compensation board at this time.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, the next thing we want to turn to is The Labour Standards Act. You have stated your intention to introduce changes to The Labour Standards Act.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you have given any thought to giving us a reasonable time to deal with it. I recall last year, Mr. Minister, the horrifying amendments to The Trade Union Act were introduced at the 11th hour, and I recall being upset with the brief period of time in which we had to deal with it.

Mr. Minister, are you planning to introduce amendments to The Labour Standards Act? If you are, will you give us the courtesy of giving those of us as soon as possible, so that we may have an opportunity to investigate them, and to check with groups as to how it reacts to them, and give groups in society an opportunity to review it and contact their elected members?

I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you're going to bring in amendments to The Labour Standards Act which affect so many people, many of whom are not organized the way trade unions are, will you introduce them as soon as possible, so that we, and the public, may have a fair opportunity to evaluate them?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Member, yes, we are coming with a few amendments to The Labour Standards Act. But it's basically housekeeping, nothing controversial, in our opinion, and you will have the opportunity to see the bill and what is coming in the normal fashion, the way any bill is presented where it is given first reading, and you have the opportunity to go through it.

Mr. Shillington: — When do you intend to give us the benefit of those amendments, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — It will be in this sitting.

Mr. Shillington: — I assumed that we were going to get them before the session adjourned for the spring, but how soon in this session may we expect to receive them?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, when I have it ready to give first reading. It's being drafted at the present time.

Mr. Shillington: — In a letter dated January 1984, which was widely circulated, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce asked for a number of things. They asked for changes to — I'm going to give these to you one by one, and ask you if you can comment on them. They asked for changes to the provision for two consecutive days of rest. Has the minister had an opportunity to consider this, and if so, what is your reaction?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I mentioned to the member opposite that we are not getting into a number of items in the labour standards, other than the housekeeping problems, that we have been having with the act being presented to us from my administrators.

Mr. Shillington: — Okay. I'll list three other areas, which I would not describe as

housekeeping, and if the minister confirms that his bill will not deal with these, I will leave the subject. The chamber of commerce has asked for one, changes to the present graduated notice for termination; (it's also, I may say, been a subject of complaint by the steelworkers at the Ipsco plant); asked for a repeal of the unpaid paternity leave provision.

I would ask you, Mr. Minister, if you have confirmed those two areas are not areas that your bill will be dealing with. If you can, I think I will leave it and wait until your bill comes to the House.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, that's the way I intend to leave it. I'm not going to be saying what we're coming with or not coming with. I said basically it's housekeeping amendments to The Labour Standards Act, and you will have the opportunity to see it when it gets tabled.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to deal with a subject that polls show in the . . . Virtually every poll done indicates it is the public's number one concern, which I think we, as practising politicians, understand to be the public's number one concern, and that's unemployment.

Mr. Minister, I want to use some stats from the StatsCanada labour force survey, and I want to leave you with some figures. Then I want you to comment on them.

In March, 1984, the total number of employed people was 419,000. One year earlier, it had been 418,000. And — and I think this is significant — it says the total number of employed had increased by 1,000. However, in the non-agricultural sector, leaving agriculture aside, the number of employed had decreased by 1,000. The number of unemployed has increased rather considerably.

Let me just back up a bit. In March, 1984, the number of unemployed was 419,000. One year earlier, it was 418,000. Two years ago, in March '82, it was 416,000. So there have been an increase of 2,000 employed in the first year of your administration; 1,000 in the second. But taking agricultural workers out of the mix, in March '84 there were 339,000 employed. That's a decrease from a year earlier, where it was 340,000, and a sharp decrease from two years ago, when it was 345,000.

How do you square these statistics, Mr. Minister, with yours and the Premier's asinine claims that you are creating thousands of new jobs?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite is taking a March to March figure. I'd like to read a few numbers of my own. Let's look at August to August, 1982 to 1983, where we have 501,000 people in the work force in Saskatchewan — the first time in Saskatchewan's history that we have over 500,000 people. The number of employed — 468,000. Never in the history of Saskatchewan have we had that many people employed.

And you can go back to March, to March back to 1977, for example, where you only . . . Yes, you only had 368,000 people employed, but your work-force was only 393,000, as well. So let's get the percentages and that together. You can look at March — certainly. It's only 1,000 up from the March before, but at least it's up . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm not. We're talking people working, and whether it's agriculture or not agriculture, it's still people working.

But last summer we hit an all-time high in Saskatchewan on jobs created, and I would probably suggest that we'll see some numbers starting to increase again, as far as 1984 is concerned, with the programs that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, is coming with, which total up to 19, 20,000 jobs for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, the August figures are clearly distorted by some very serious strikes in the first year of your administration, and I suggest you be honest and admit that.

Far more accurate figures are March to March when there were no strikes in progress. Mr. Minister, if you have been so hugely successful in creating new jobs, why is it, as the Gallup poll states that in Saskatchewan as in Canada, unemployment is people's number one concern? If you've been so successful, why have you been so unsuccessful in communicating to the public your huge success in creating jobs?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, our government is creating an atmosphere in this province the likes that you people have never seen before. We are going to . . . We are setting the base, creating the base for employment in this province the likes, as I said, you have never seen before. And you can talk about the oil industry by doing a little bit with royalties, a little bit with royalties, but it's going to create millions of dollars into our funds here.

You people don't understand that it takes \$1 to make \$5. You've got to invest first. And you people were stripping the oil industry, so that every barrel they brought up, it cost them to bring it up. That's exactly what you did. And all we've done is make it possible for those oil companies, big and small — a lot of small companies, too — that is creating a tremendous employment factor in this province, and that is only the start.

We are looking at the beef industry. We are looking at processing and manufacturing. We are looking at the venture capital, which is going to create jobs. And all you need to do is talk to people from outside of Saskatchewan to find out what this province is doing, and they're looking at the opportunity to come in here and create the jobs that we're going to have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, it is amazing that this government could have got so out of touch in such a relatively brief period of time. It is just so amazing, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, try talking to the young . . . As we indicated to the Minister of Advanced Education, with whom you share some responsibility for this, try talking to the young people. As I said to the Minister of Advanced Education, this is the first generation who have ever faced the kind of problems which they face in this province.

Whether it was your generation or mine, we talked about the day "when" we got a job. Now the young people talk about "if" we get a job. There is a mood of despair and hopelessness in this province, the like of which nobody in this room, I think, has experienced. I think that's accurate. There's nobody in this room who would have lived through the Depression and have been old enough to understand it. But I suspect you've got to go back to the 1930s to find the kind of hopelessness and despair that exists now.

Mr. Minister, do you really believe . . . I mean, was that a serious statement? Do you really believe that the public think this province is booming and that the good times are rolling? Do you serious believe that?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Chairman, I certainly do. I certainly do. The base is getting built, and it's not going to be jobs where we're going out painting park benches all the time. It's going to be jobs that are long term and that the people can count on having today, tomorrow, and from there on.

You talk about young people being unemployed. Sure. Look at your figures in 1978. How many young people between 15 and 24 were unemployed? Fifteen thousand — 15,000 people in that age group unemployed in 1978, which are supposed to be the boom years. And in spite of that, half of them left the province. But in spite of that, you still had 15,000 people unemployed in the 15 to 24 age group, so don't give me that. There was still numbers and numbers of young people unemployed when you people were in the administration. And as I say, in 1978 there were still 15,000, and you only had a work-force of 405,000, not 463,000 like we have today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I genuinely hope that that applause is carried into every home in Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, it's bad enough that you have the serious problem you have with unemployment, but for the Minister of Labour to stand up and deny the problem simply adds salt to the wound. It would be bad enough, Mr. Minister, if you said, "Yes, we've got a problem, but we can do nothing about it." That would be bad enough. But, for you to stand up and deny the problem, simply rubs salt into the wound.

Mr. Minister, there are some things you people could be doing about unemployment. And here again, it's the same process. The victims — pick on the victims. Those at the bottom of the economic ladder suffer under this government: the handicapped, the partially unemployable — that's the new buzz word, I guess, for handicapped; they have now become partially employable — those on minimum wage; the women whose role I'm going to get to in a minute; the young . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I am not. I'm going to suggest that that was done down in the Saskatchewan Hotel a few nights ago by some people with some rather loose tongues.

Mr. Minister, you really must be proud of that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Minister, I'm enjoyed these insults that are being traded here, but they're not quite germane to your estimates.

Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that this government needs a crash program with respect to youth unemployment. You need something more than the inane cheer-leading which you've done to date. And, really, the Premier hasn't changed since 20 years ago when we used to play ball together and he was the captain, and he used to tell us, "Come on, talk it up. If we're going to have a good team spirit, you gotta talk it up." That's all he's doing today. He's doing exactly what he did 20 years ago. He's talking it up as if . . . That may produce a spirited ball team, but it doesn't do a thing for the unemployed young people. Mr. Minister, it doesn't do a thing.

I suggest, Mr. Minister, that you have a responsibility to do more than just talk it up. You have a responsibility, Mr. Minister, to bring into this province some programs — something concrete. Last year, Mr. Minister, you brought in a program which you haven't discussed since you introduced it because it was an impossible program, as we told you it would be when you introduced it. And I haven't heard any one from government benches talking about the success of last year's employment program.

This year's is even less ambitious. At least last year's program was an ambitious one if an impossibly confused one. This year's really doesn't have any ambitions except to provide some assistance to summer students. Not all young people, Mr. Minister, are summer students. Some of them — a goodly number of them — are looking for permanent jobs. Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that you owe it to young people, but more fundamentally you owe it to the future of our society, to give young people some hope. And there is some things you could do, Mr. Minister, and I suggest to you that you owe this province something more than simply talking it up.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to make the hon. member very, very aware that I am concerned about unemployment. I don't like to see one single person out there without a job. But your administration had people out of work. When we came to office in 1982 — 28,000 people unemployed; 28,000. And you talk about the program last year — 4,000 new jobs. Through 1983 — \$20 million more business tax reduction planned. To 1984 — Industrial Incentives Program will create 1,500 permanent jobs by a one-time payment of 7,500 to businesses which was just announced by my colleague, the Minister of Economic Development; 4,300 students got jobs through the 2.7 million Opportunities '83 program. We had 112 — 115,000 in the age group from 15 to 24 working last summer. A six-point program for youth employment unveiled in 1984 budget. If you add up all the programs that we have planned for this year, you're looking at 19,200 jobs going to be created. And we don't like to see anyone unemployed.

But when I look at the stats, the figures of other jurisdictions across Canada; and British Columbia at 15.5 per cent; and you go out to the Maritimes, and you're looking at 18 or 20 per cent across; and ours at 7 and 6 last summer — the lowest in Canada — I think we have something to be proud of. And we're going to take every effort that we possibly can muster this year to bring that back into line again.

Mr. Shillington: — You'd better make every effort, because if you don't, your prospects for getting re-elected are rather dismal, Mr. Minister. I would recommend you make every effort to improve upon your performance.

Mr. Minister, you came into office on such a wave of optimism. There was so much more we could be. What has happened, in fact, is that the economy has degenerated, and with it, people's hopes have been dashed. Mr. Minister, the public understands something that you don't seem to, and that is that we did participate in the recession.

Mr. Minister, it's the recovery which we have apparently decided not to participate in. Our economic recovery is not occurring nearly as fast as it is in Canada. Our economic recovery, if it exists at all — and go back one step — there's no evidence that we have experienced any recovery. There is clear evidence that in the rest of Canada, the recovery, although painfully slow, is beginning. There's no evidence, Mr. Minister, that's happening in this province. Indeed, Mr. Minister, the evidence suggests that the exact opposite is true — that we are continuing to stagnate.

Mr. Minister, I ask you if you mean it that you dislike seeing people unemployed, and I frankly think you don't care.

I recall seeing in the newspaper a few weeks ago a cabinet document which suggested that higher levels of unemployment have become socially acceptable. I think I may say, Mr. Minister, that people may be resigned to their fate until after the next election. I will grant you that they may expect nothing but the worst out of this government. But I don't think we've reached the point where you people evidently think we have, and that is that you can continue to butterfly your way around the very high levels of unemployment which we're now experiencing.

I suggest, Mr. Minister, that you have let a generation of young people down. I don't believe for one moment the sort of the hopeless scenarios which I hear some people suggesting, and that is that when a whole generation of people cannot find work or cannot find stable work, that the work ethic which I think has been an important part of western society — particularly North American society — may indeed be eroded with this generation. They will not believe in something that they cannot obtain.

I don't believe that that's accurate, but neither do I like the sight of young people resigned to the fate of having no job, or having unstable jobs, or being partially employed.

Mr. Minister, if you have some program to deal with the crisis which everybody — except you, apparently — which everybody believes exists, what are those programs, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member knows well what the programs are. My colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education, is looking after a number of them. We've just had announced today the Industrial Incentives Program, which will create 1,500 permanent jobs. We've got our Opportunities '84 program, which we are expecting to be in the neighbourhood of 5,000 people. We've got a number of things on the go to help create jobs.

But the thing that we have to remember: it's going to be longer term. It's not going to be the band-aid approach. We still have a number of those programs coming which will help the students this summer, but the goal should be long-term jobs. And that's what we will obtain

through the oil industry, the potash industry, the agricultural industry, the manufacturing industry.

When I heard the members opposite talking about manufacturing, certainly it's dropped off. Because the customer wasn't buying any more; the farmer wasn't buying farm machinery any more. You look at the Massey Fergusons and the International Harvesters and the CCILs and so on — a difficult time even staying afloat, these days. The farmers were not buying. And you can't keep producing and piling it in the back yard, the same as you people were mining potash and piling it in the back yard, as well, when we took over.

Sooner or later you've got to bring your inventories down, and that's a fact of life. You people don't seem to understand that type of thing. You've got to do it. And then during that period of time, it means affecting some jobs. But on the long haul, if we do that, and a good business approach to all these businesses, we'll find the long-term jobs will start coming back again. And that is starting to happen already with the programs we've introduced.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, our criticism of your administration is not that you came into office and said: let's create mass unemployment, and let's create a feeling of hopelessness among the public. I don't think you came into office with that in mind.

But, Mr. Minister, our criticisms of you and your administration are that you have done nothing about it. Indeed, you have denied the problem. We have the picture of an apparently grown man, in the form of the Premier, who runs around the province, saying, "We decided not to participate in the recession," — everyone knowing that not to be true, because everybody's feeling the pinch of the recession — that apparently put forward as a serious comment. He now doesn't do it in the province; he does it out of the province where people are less likely to be aware of the mood in this province.

Our criticism of you is not that you created the problem, but that you have done nothing to resolve it except to deny it — and denying the problem exists is not a very constructive solution.

Mr. Minister, will you not admit that something more drastic than the band-aids that you have referred to are needed? What about public works, which will create jobs? What about doing something about the very serious overcrowding in hospitals?

I recall, Mr. Minister, seeing in the *Leader-Post*, in the *Star-Phoenix*, a report of an ambulance which was not able to discharge a patient at a Saskatoon hospital.

And I believe, Mr. Minister, we patently need some additional work on hospitals. We need some renovations in this city. We need renovations to the General Hospital, which your government has canned. I would have thought, Mr. Minister, that this would have been a good time to do the renovations to the General, which I don't think anyone, even the Minister of Health, suggests aren't necessary. All admit they're necessary. But you people apparently choose not to do it when the work is needed and when you can get competitive bids, and you apparently believe it should be postponed to the date when a more competent and humane administration takes over and prosperity returns.

Mr. Minister, if it's agreed that we need public works, like the renovations to the hospital, General in Regina, why aren't we doing it now when the jobs are needed and when the bids will be competitive?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we are going to be building hospitals. We are going to be building nursing homes — new hospitals approved for Nipawin, Cut Knife, Lloydminster. And I'd like to especially talk about the \$8 million project of the addition to my own hospital in Yorkton, plus another 6 million on the laundry that's going onto the hospital in Yorkton. All those . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Besides that, Mr. Chairman, there are projects going on that we are not involved with, which is the private enterprise, the private sector, are building: the twin towers in downtown Regina, the Pioneer Life buildings, the new building in Saskatoon, the twin towers in Saskatoon, the Nipawin Dam project. There were 1,000 jobs; another 800 jobs coming this year. And the list goes on and on. Our natural gas program, 550 jobs this year. And our 1984 program is full to the hilt. I couldn't take another farmer, even if I tried, and we're starting to book 1985 already with the possibility of some going into 1986.

And, Mr. Member, there is activity going on in this province, the like that you'll never see before, with all this basic plans getting started for the long term. And the people are becoming more excited by the day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I sincerely hope that you're right. I sincerely hope that when this government goes to the oblivion, which it so justly deserves, that we will never again see a level of activity, the like of which we see now. Mr. Minister, the level of construction in this province has not been as low since the '30s. The level of unemployment among tradespeople and the stark hunger felt by the construction industry is unprecedented since the '30s.

Mr. Minister, you have someone to my left, in a directional sense only, suggest that the problem with the hospitals is that there aren't enough nursing homes, and that's right. And you haven't done anything about that, either.

You have some rather silly cosmetics in your budget, and you suggest you're going to build — I think it was 1,500 — 1,500 nursing homes, but you haven't budgeted enough money for it. Your natural gas program, Mr. Minister, is a pale shadow of what you promised during the election, and it is a pale shadow of what we promised before the election.

Mr. Minister, why didn't you just keep your election promise and bring natural gas to Saskatchewan farms at the rate you promised during the election? Why didn't you just keep your promise and build the natural gas lines at the rate you promised during the election?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member talks about the natural gas program that they came with. It was very strange that it was a few days before an election, and I can remember the newscasts, and before even getting involved with politics, and hearing about your members saying: it's going to cost a billion dollars in Saskatchewan to put in natural gas, and there was no way that you could afford it or do it. But we did it, and we set up a program that is one of the most sought-after programs in the province right now.

And you talk about nursing homes and hospitals. My colleague, they got three hospitals in one constituency going in here, nursing homes getting built that you had moratoriums on. And don't talk to us about health and nursing home building and the projects around the province. You people had them tied up with moratoriums. We're going ahead and doing them.

An Hon. Member: — Right on, right on. Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — That's about as much applause as those comments deserved, I may say.

Mr. Minister, one of your problems is that you have decimated the department of government services, now Supply and Services. One of your problems is you don't have a department left which can build public works. You have so thoroughly decimated that department that you've nothing left to work with.

One of the difficulties which the NDP administration, which I am becoming ever more confident

is going to replace you people, one of the difficulties we have is that we will have no department with which to work, as you have left that department in absolute ruins — in absolute ruins, Mr. Minister. So many of the competent people in this government are gone. They have fled in the face of your incompetence, your . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order! There are two problems here. There's too much noise for anyone to hear the debate, and it's possible that the member asking the question or making the point is not getting to the point. So if the government members will be a little more quiet, and if the member of the opposition will get to the point, I think we may get on with the debate.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, part of the reason why unemployment is so severe in this province is because traditionally the public sector has played an important part in the construction industry in this province. A goodly portion of the construction traditionally has come from the public sector. You people came in and dropped the province into a deep-freeze, and nothing happened.

You mentioned the Nipawin Dam project. The only reason that's on the go is because you were irrevocably committed before you people took office. That is the only major project which is ongoing now, and solely because it was too late for you people to put the kibosh on it.

Mr. Minister, you haven't done anything. This government has not built anything of substance since you've come to office. You have done very, very little in the area of public works, and it has been a severe aggravation of a problem which, admittedly, you didn't create. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you have urged your colleagues in cabinet to develop and implement a more vigorous program for building public works, like the General Hospital in Regina — things which are sorely needed, which we're going to have to do anyway.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, my colleagues in caucus, in cabinet, are always talking about employment. We are talking about the construction. We are talking about the private sector and their construction. We're talking many, many programs and plans to create jobs in the province. But we're doing it on the basis of let's create an atmosphere and an attitude in the province that people are going to be anxious to come in and work in Saskatchewan, build and invest in Saskatchewan, and that is going to be starting to happen. And it is all ready, just the attitude around the country. And many, many jobs, whether it's hospitals or nursing homes, and the Nipawin Dam, and the natural gas program, and all the other private sector projects that are going on, they're all creating jobs in the province. We're not just sitting down and reneging on it.

And we are going to be, as I've said many, many times earlier, we're seeing the attitude change and the amount of business opportunities that are going to be created in this province with the number of programs that we are coming — the incentives for the cow-calf, the oil industry, and the beef industry. We've got people coming to us and saying, it's the best budget that ever hit this province and the best that they have ever heard. And when we see the results of that — which is going to take some time to get up there — but you're going to see a tremendous change in this province than has ever been in the last 10, 15, 20 years.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, the public have seen the change and they don't like it much. The public have seen this province go from a dynamic, vigorous, economic giant — which it was becoming — to, once again, the weak sister of confederation.

Mr. Minister, it's just an old movie. The CCF took over in '45 when this province was bankrupt. It was bankrupt in everything but name. They left office in 1964. The average income of the Saskatchewan resident was the highest in Canada. What happened? Ushered in a new, right-wing government which had a slogan. What was the slogan? "Open for business." Funny thing. Funny thing.

You know what happened during the '60s? Probably imprinted on everyone's mind was the sign

of the moving van as it headed out across the landscape, people fleeing from the liberal prosperity. You know what happened? And you know, and you know what happened to the economy? It degenerated, Mr. Minister, and this province experienced a recession which was considerably more severe than that experienced elsewhere in Canada.

Why? Because the problem with right wing governments is that you people don't believe in the Saskatchewan resident. The whole thrust of open for business is a call for outsiders to come and do the job for us, and that doesn't work in this province. It didn't work in the '30s. It didn't work then. The CCF came into office and said, "Let's use our people, our resources, and let's do it ourselves." And it was magnificently successful.

Ross Thatcher came in and called upon the outsiders, the open for business — the very slogan is a call to outsiders — open for business, and what happened? The province went . . . (inaudible) . . . on a hand car in the wrong direction.

Mr. Minister, the NDP came into office and we gave support to farmers, to small-business men. We said, "Let's do it ourselves. We are capable of taking control of our own economic destiny." And that philosophy lay behind taking over the potash industry, the establishment of SMDC, the establishment of Saskoil, the participation in uranium in the North. The philosophy that we had to control our own economic destiny, if we were going to achieve prosperity, lay behind virtually everything we did.

And we were successful in achieving that prosperity. During the 11 years the NDP were in office, we went from being the weak sister of confederation to a province whose economic strength produced repeated comments in national business and economic journals.

What happens? You people come into office saying, "We have no faith in Saskatchewan people. They can't develop their economy., That must be done by outsiders. So we'll develop a slogan. And what do we think it should be? It was open for business — something brand new — not more than 12 years old.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order! Rule 81(2) reads:

Speeches in committees of the whole must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration.

And while I appreciate we are receiving a history lesson, I don't see the relevance of this portion of the lesson to labour. And could the member please deal with the topic at hand, being labour?

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I want to clarify my remarks, if I might. Traditionally, the Minister of Labour has had a responsibility to answer questions on behalf of labour and unemployed. It is not Agriculture which relates to the unemployed. It is the Department of Labour, and the Minister of Labour, who presumably speaks on behalf of working people. It isn't bankers who are unemployed. It's not farmers who are unemployed. The people who are unemployed are the very people which the minister is supposed to speak for, and that's the working people. It is they who experience the unemployment.

Unemployment is not a problem which affects bankers or lawyers or businessmen or, particularly, trappers. Unemployment is a problem which affects those at the bottom of the economic scale who draw a pay cheque. And this minister is supposed to be speaking on their behalf. He is supposed to be raising the problems of the unemployed in his government. And I am suggesting he is doing a very ineffective job of it.

And I am suggesting, by running past us this nonsense about open for business, and this somehow ushering in a new period of unprecedented prosperity, when it, in fact, is patently doing the obvious, I suggest, Mr. Minister, you are derelict in your duty as Minister of Labour.

And I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that you ought to start speaking on behalf of the unemployed and not the business community. The business community is not peculiarly your responsibility. It is not your responsibility, Mr. Minister, as Minister of Labour to attempt to attract into the province hoards of new businesses. You haven't had . . . You haven't had a single success in open for business. Your responsibility, Mr. Minister, is to speak for the unemployed, and I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that you haven't been doing it. You haven't related to the business community who have legitimate interests and needs, and I admit that. You have spoken for them in this debate, and there's been nobody, Mr. Minister, speaking for labour, and there's been nobody at that cabinet table speaking for the unemployed.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I find the member's comments very, very odd. How can you have employment until you have a businessman that's working out there or providing the jobs in the first place? I can't hold labour off in a sanctum on one side and not be talking to the business group on the other side. We've got to have the business opportunities first, to create the jobs in the first place, to provide employment.

And you talk about during the CCF days when the people were on the railway tracks going out of the province. What was happening back in the 1970s when all the Saskatchewan workers were out in Alberta and British Columbia? Right now, they're on the hand cars coming back into Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I want to remind you of what took place in this province in the days when we had a minister of labour who understood his responsibility. Mr. Minister, I wonder if you recognize the document from which I am about to quote.

An Hon. Member: — *The Saskatchewan Promise.*

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, and it has a picture of the member from Cannington, the current member from Cannington, and the current member from Estevan, on it. And then it has something about topographical zones, a picture of a child playing in the sand, and some water spraying over some flowers . . .

An Hon. Member: — A board with a nail in it.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, with a board with a nail in it. Then you get to the fourth page, the fifth page, Mr. Minister, and I want to tell you, I want to tell you what happened in the days when you had a minister of labour who understood his responsibility, instead of having a Minister of Labour who has been an anathema to working people. The growth of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The growth, Mr. Minister, in domestic product from 1972 to 1982 was 51 per cent — that in a day when we had a minister of labour who knew what his responsibility was.

Non-residential investment, Mr. Minister, increased by 338 per cent. Retail sales, Mr. Minister, increased by 197 per cent. Personal disposable income, Mr. Minister, increased by 333 per cent. Mr. Minister, now do you want to hear the figures on what has happened in the last two years when we have had a Minister of Labour who views it as his responsibility to speak for the business community?

Well, Mr. Minister, we haven't experienced the 51 per cent in gross domestic product. We have, in fact, experienced a decline in gross domestic product, which, Mr. Minister, is higher than the Canadian average. The decline in our gross domestic product is higher than the Canadian average. Non-residential investment has decreased by almost two-thirds. Non-residential investment has virtually come to a halt under this government. The growth in open for business — you've got to be kidding. There's hasn't been anything at all.

Retail sales during this period of brilliant Tory prosperity have not yet reached the 1982 levels. There hasn't been a 197 per cent increase. There's been a very marked decrease. Current disposable income, Mr. Minister, hasn't increased by 331 per cent, as it did during the period of time we were in office. Current disposable income is lower than it was when you took office.

Mr. Minister, I want you to explain to me: if your success has been so brilliant, how is it that the facts in your own documents don't support the claims you have just made?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we have to look at the times. We have to look at the dollars that the farmers have been generating. We have to look at what I mentioned earlier about the manufacturing sector, which has declined because people can't afford to pay the price of farm machinery. We have to look at all those factors. But what I'm saying is, when you compare Saskatchewan to the rest of Canada, we, as far as unemployment is concerned, have been number one — number one for all of last summer. We were not much higher than what your leader was saying was an acceptable level forever of 5 per cent.

Why don't we look at the . . . You're talking about what is being accomplished in our labour force and what I have with the trade union movement. I don't believe in the philosophy of there being militancy in the labour movement, like you people are saying what should be, the leader of your party saying there should be more militancy in the labour movement, there should be more strikes.

Last year 28,000 worker-days lost due to strikes. Never been so low. If the strikes were that low, sure we're in an excellent position this year. And you talk about not being able to get along with the labour force. I've just put together an advisory committee of the construction industry — six union people, six contractors. They're sitting around a table talking to each other. Were they doing that when your minister was in power? No: 175,000 worker-days lost every year. That's the difference.

And I'd like to just read you a little letter that I got yesterday:

Please be advised that this morning, May 2nd, there will be seven contracts signed in the plumbing trades. The contracts cover domestic and commercial rates for a three-year period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLaren: —

The first year of the contract there will be a \$3-an-hour roll back. The second year will carry a 3.5 per cent increase based on the roll back rate; and in the third year, 6 per cent. The construction unions have agreed to a three-year agreement; no strike, no lock-out.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — And when I came to taking over the portfolio there was a war out there. Those people hated each other. Now they're sitting down at a table talking to each other. That's the way it should be, and that's the way that I intend to carry on, trying to get co-operation with business, labour, and government.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.